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‘Queer’ in Portuguese Contemporary Artistic Practices: Galleries Fostering Dialogue and Acceptance

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Master in Art Markets

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Abstract

This study explores the articulation of ‘queer’ attitudes in contemporary artistic practices and their integration into exhibition spaces and commercial circuits. The study considers the role of art galleries in formulating and consolidating cultural discourses that can potentially amplify the acceptance and recognition of these artistic practices in the art markets. Using a qualitative methodology and semi-structured interviews with artists and other art market agents, the study analyzes the perceptions surrounding ‘queer,’ seeking to understand its history, artistic manifestation, and the place it occupies on the national art scene. The research starts from the assumption that galleries can function as key places of dialogue, capable of promoting and making visible artistic expressions that have been marginalized and under-represented in the art scene, with particular emphasis on visual arts that configure ‘queer’ notions. Binary dichotomies in art market practices - including inclusion/exclusion and the center/margin dynamic - are examined to identify patterns and deviations in the perceptions of the different interlocutors. Through direct engagement with artists, gallerists, curators, and collectors, this dissertation contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the reality of ‘queer’ artistic practices in the art markets sector. The study highlights, on the one hand, the improvements that have been made around their acceptance and artistic diversity and, on the other, possible structural challenges that hinder their proper integration.

Keywords: Art Galleries, Queer, Cultural Discourse, Margin

Resumo

Este estudo explora a articulação de atitudes ‘queer’ nas práticas artísticas contemporâneas e a sua integração nos espaços de exposição e nos circuitos comerciais. O estudo incide sobre o papel das galerias de arte na formulação e consolidação de discursos culturais que podem, potencialmente, amplificar a aceitação e valorização dessas práticas artísticas no mercado da arte. Através de uma metodologia qualitativa, e recorrendo a entrevistas semi-estruturadas com artistas e outros agentes dos mercados da arte, o estudo analisa as perceções em torno de ‘queer,’ procurando compreender a sua história, manifestação artística, e o lugar que ocupa no panorama artístico nacional. A investigação parte do pressuposto de que as galerias podem funcionar como lugares-chave de diálogo, capazes de promover e visibilizar expressões artísticas que têm sido marginalizadas e sub-representadas no cenário artístico, com particular ênfase nas artes visuais que configuram noções ‘queer.’ As dicotomias binárias nas práticas dos mercados da arte - incluindo inclusão/exclusão e a dinâmica centro/margem - são examinadas, de modo a identificar padrões e desvios nas perceções dos diferentes interlocutores. Através do envolvimento direto com artistas, galeristas, curadores e colecionadores, esta dissertação contribui para uma compreensão abrangente da realidade das práticas artísticas ‘queer’ no setor dos mercados da arte. O estudo evidencia, por um lado, as melhorias que têm vindo a ser feitas em torno da sua aceitação e da diversidade artística e, por outro, possíveis desafios estruturais que dificultam a sua plena integração.

Palavras-chave: Galerias de Arte, Queer, Discursos Culturais, Margem

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In recent decades, the term ‘queer’ emerged as the one that best encapsulates an attitude expressed in certain artistic practices in terms of political and cultural confrontation, referring to the articulation of issues such as sexuality, gender identities, and the relation with the body, all of which question and challenge prevailing norms and socially constructed assumptions. This is not to say, however, that I am taking the meaning of ‘queer’ for granted. This term, whose genesis dates back to the 20th century, was resignified by artists, activists, and academics in the late 1980s to become an inclusive hypernym associated with a wave of political and social demands from the LGBTQ+[1] community that took on a global projection (Getsy, 2016). The term ‘queer’ was legitimized in North American academic circles during the 1990s, giving rise to the interdisciplinary field known as ‘queer’ studies, which is concerned with the deconstruction of the categories of sex, sexualities, and gender identities, challenging possible prejudices in social and cultural structures (Manning, 2016). In this research, ‘queer’ has been adopted as an approximate term that allows to group and analyze a set of contemporary artistic practices that share some similarities, especially in their critical and disruptive qualities to the categorical and binary inconsistencies of gender and sexuality; in their resistance to conformity; and their celebration of difference in the face of the pressures of hegemonic normalization.

If, on the one hand, the term ‘queer’ refers to the qualities inherent in the artwork and the attitudes or identities expressed or represented in it, the term ‘queering,’ in turn, was adopted as referring to a type of operative practice in the research process, used as a fundamental methodological tool in the exploration of this dimension (e.g. process that allows a work of art to be qualified as ‘queer’; Cascais, 2016a). The aim of this research was not to limit the view of artistic practices to a single definition of ‘queer,’ but rather to emphasize this quality among other possible qualities that make up the artworks. Even so, it was intended to leave

[1] LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people. The term was born with the addition of a Q in 1996 to represent people who identified as queer or questioning. The Q primarily represents queer and is used as an umbrella term for additional groups that are currently not explicitly represented in the acronym. The term LGBTQ is used in this context to include all individuals who do not feel represented by current social norms of gender and sexuality (Merrill et al., 2016). The + allows to broaden and forge a more comprehensive approach to the multiplicity of sexual and gender identities (Princeton Gender + Sexuality Resource Center, n.d.).

room for the artists interviewed to position their work within the conceptual framework previously mentioned, using self-referencing whenever possible.

The growing presence and appreciation of 'queer' artistic practices in the international art markets is a phenomenon that has gained momentum in recent decades, following a trend that began in the 1990s with their institutional legitimization in the main artistic centers of the Global North (Schwärzler, 2012). The emergence of these attitudes must be understood in the context of a global movement for equal civil rights, driven by the 1969 Stonewall riots in the US, which gradually spread to other parts of the world. The 'queer' aesthetic appeared associated with a broader category of artistic activism in the following decades (such as the second wave of feminism and the Black Power movement), constituting a collective struggle in the development of visual strategies as an important tool in a social fight for human rights. In the second half of the 1980s, the HIV/AIDS crisis and the inaction of governments reiterated the importance of a strong and organized response. Some artists, including Keith Haring and Félix González-Torres, used art as a means of raising awareness and demanding the implementation of measures to combat the disease (Getsy, 2016). Interestingly, many of these artists, who previously belonged to the margins of the art circuit, have gradually entered the cultural mainstream, and their works are now part of the main art institutions, galleries, and collections, achieving high sales volumes on the international markets.

This dissertation seeks to understand this phenomenon in the Portuguese context, considering the specificities of its historical, political, and social context. In doing so, I recall the strategies for controlling and punishing homosexuality during the Estado Novo, as well as the weight and hegemony of religious customs in the collective mentality that considered immoral all those who deviated from the traditional family model (Godinho, 2019). It was only eight years after the revolution of April 25, 1974, that marked the end of the Portuguese fascist regime, that there was a change to the penal code, which, until then, criminalized homosexuality (Afonso, 2019). Similarly to other countries, the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s accentuated the social exclusion of the homosexual community, associated from the outset with the spread of the virus. Ultimately, however, it also catalyzed the organization of LGBT communities and for greater visibility in debates on equal rights and combating sexual discrimination (Amaral and Moita, 2004).

The first ILGA Pride March, in 2000, was the result of social and associative efforts over the previous decade and represented a significant milestone in this context. This event marked the first moment of LGBT visibility on the streets of Lisbon, and in the following years, the march would also be held in other regions of the country. The transition to the new

millennium was crucial for the more systematic manifestation of 'queer' attitudes in contemporary artistic practices, benefiting from a growing cultural and art exchange, as well as the creation of important socio-cultural events in the country. Of particular note is the appearance of Queer Lisboa: Queer Film Festival, whose first edition took place in 1997, becoming an essential platform for contact with local communities, encouraging debate and promoting the visibility of 'queer' culture (Cascais & Ferreira, 2014). It was during this period, favored by the political and social context, that a group of artists, already born in a globalized democracy, driven by an awareness of the new theoretical and social debates, began to take an interest in the systematic exploration of the body and its identities in their artistic practice (Melo, 2023). Yet these artistic transformations seemed to lack a theoretical and institutional framework, making it difficult for the cultural milieu and the public to integrate and value these attitudes. In the museological context, we have to wait until 2017 to find an exhibition that articulates these issues, namely: "Género na Arte. Corpo, Sexualidade, Identidade, Resistência," held at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Chiado (MNAC). Despite the importance of this exhibition on the national scene, particularly given the scarcity of similar exhibitions in an institutional context, some criticisms were raised regarding the limitations of the deeper historical, sociological, and institutional framework. In particular, it was emphasized, on the one hand, the absence of a critical stance towards the marginalization of these artistic practices on the national scene and, on the other, the lack of cultural initiatives that promoted social and transformative debates around these themes (Crespo, 2017).

Against this background, this study aims to understand how contemporary art galleries can influence the art markets and shape the art scene, particularly around the acceptance and appreciation of 'queer' attitudes in the visual arts. Starting from the assumption that galleries, in addition to their commercial/economic role in the art markets sector, can play an important socio-cultural part in developing and fostering contemporary debate around the acceptance and valorization of under-represented or marginalized practices on the local scene. To this end, and recalling the contributions of fundamental authors in the field, such as Howard Becker, we understand the art world as a sphere of a social nature. The different agents that constitute it collaborate interdependently in artistic production, where collective knowledge defines what is perceived as art in a given context (Becker, 1982). In the specific field of art markets, the collaborative aspect is maintained around the transaction and acquisition of works of art, with the gallery being the entity that promotes the artwork to collectors, cultural institutions, critics, and other agents in the sector. In the case of the primary art market,

intermediation is even more significant since, in the absence of a commercial history, the prestige of the gallery ensures the value of a particular artwork (Varet, 1995). This puts galleries at the center of an artist's career, being responsible for promotion and economic management but also directly influencing their valuation on the market and in the world of contemporary art. This is not a new subject, especially considering the contribution of some historic gallerists in the legitimization of artistic movements (Impressionism, Cubism, among others). The choice to focus on the visual arts stems from the need to narrow the research focus but also the fact that they represent the majority of works traded on the art markets. That said, the following questions arise: (i) Can the art markets contain dynamics and biases that reinforce the marginalization of 'queer' artistic practices? (ii) What importance do 'queer' artistic practices assume in the contemporary art scene? (iii) To what extent are contemporary art galleries an important force in promoting under-represented or marginalized art forms?

The academic relevance of this study is linked to filling a significant gap in studies on contemporary art and 'queer' art in Portugal, particularly about understanding and valuing these artistic practices within the framework of the national cultural context. In the international scenario, the programming of some prestigious institutions reflects the interest in these themes. For example, the "Over the Rainbow" exhibition at the Centre Pompidou sought to show the contributions of art to the cause of advancing LGBTQIA+ rights (Centre Pompidou, 2023). And more notably, at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), which dedicated its entire 2024 program to giving visibility to the articulation between queer/LGBTQIA+ representation and its connection with visual culture and artistic practices around the world (MASP, 2024). By looking at the dynamics of marginalization and representativity, as well as the relationship between queer artists and art galleries, the study engages with the debate around diversity, inclusion, and the intersections between art and identity. This task is of particular importance if we take into account the Portuguese scenario, which, unlike what is observed in other parts of the world, still lacks an in-depth analysis of, on the one hand, the perceptions and attitudes aroused by 'queer' artistic practices and, on the other, the role that galleries play in amplifying them. However, the importance of this study transcends the text on the following pages - that is, its scientific importance - since, in the very act of interviewing the gallerists, artists, curators, and collectors, they were asked questions that carried the underlying goal of provoking reflection that would go beyond that moment and give rise to new questions and, ideally, new ways of acting - that is, its social importance.

1.1 Structure

This study is organized into three main sections. First, the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) aims to systematize the knowledge of key authors relevant to the fields under study. Second, the methodological section (Chapter 3) outlines the methodological choices guiding the organization and creation of this research. Finally, the empirical section (Chapter 4) cross-references data from semi-structured interviews with contributions from other theorists.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) is divided into three parts: Subchapter 2.1 explores the origin and evolution of the term ‘queer,’ considering how ‘queer’ artistic practices have entered international art markets. Subchapter 2.2 aims to understand the specific dynamics of art markets and the importance of contemporary art galleries. Subchapter 2.3 reviews various historical periods to contextualize ‘queer’ existence in Portugal and its artistic developments.

Chapter 4 (Results and Discussion) is also divided into three parts: Subchapter 4.1 analyzes the state of ‘queer’ culture in Portugal, focusing on how contemporary artistic practices have evolved, especially during the transition into the new millennium. Moreover, it analyzes the main challenges in integrating ‘queer’ artistic practices into the art market. Subchapter 4.2 explores the possibility of increased representation of queer artists in exhibition spaces and the importance of a social conscience within the art market. This section also evaluates the themes of recent ‘queer’-related exhibitions and their relevance to the contemporary art scene. Subchapter 4.3 focuses on how contemporary art galleries can contribute to the acceptance and appreciation of ‘queer’ artistic practices, emphasizing the importance of the relationship between artists, gallerists, and the art markets. Subchapter 4.3.1 presents suggestions, based on interview findings, to foster a more accessible and inclusive art sector.

Finally, Chapter 5 (Conclusions) reflects on the study’s findings, revisiting the main research questions and outlining the study's key contributions to the field of art markets. It also offers suggestions for future research to further expand and deepen the insights gained in this study.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 International Perspectives on ‘Queer’: Definitions and Aesthetics

As I began writing this dissertation, I faced a challenge regarding the concept of ‘queer’ and the extension of its significance. Essential to my approach was an understanding of the multifaceted evolution of the term over time, tracing its origins as a derogatory label to its contemporary status as an inclusive and dynamic identifier. From an interdisciplinary lens, I looked at its origins, exploring how the term has been used and developed by theorists, activists, and artists throughout history, offering an understanding that goes beyond sexual orientation to encompass social, political, and artistic dimensions. The following analysis is supported by a critical reading of works by indispensable authors in the field of ‘queer’ studies and its intersection with art, such as David Getsy (2016), Jack Halberstam (2011), José Muñoz (2009), Heather Love (2009), and W.J. Simmons (2015), among other authors. This first subchapter is intended to create a dialog between their contributions, and understanding what makes this field of study so interesting for contemporary debate. It is important to note that this dissertation does not seek to homogenize ‘queer’ experiences and narratives, but rather to systematize the understanding derived from the intersection of various testimonies. The many contributions made by the authors made it possible to construct this academic dissertation, giving it a solid and multidimensional basis.

The origin of the term ‘queer’ is intrinsically linked to a history of repression and violence. During the 20th century, the word was widely used as a pejorative term (or slander), constituting a recurring means of humiliation to individuals who are attracted to the same sex (Kim, 2016) and, more broadly, to those who were perceived as ‘different’ or who did not conform to society’s normative prevailing standards. At the end of the 1980s, the USA government’s inaction in the face of the HIV/AIDS crisis and its intentional suppression in the media called for a noisy and relentless reaction in declaring its presence and demanding a solution (Getsy, 2016). It was in this context that the word ‘queer’ was reappropriated and used as self-designation by sexual minority groups in an act of political resistance. According to Heather Love (2007), the term was chosen “because it evoked a long history of insulting and abuse - you could hear the hurt in it” (Love, 2007: 2). The word ‘queer’ resounded through the streets as the basis of a social and political movement also linked to ethnical and

racial marginalization (Katz and Söll, 2018), representing a claim to identity and resistance against historical stigmatization. This idea is evident in a text of the manifesto produced by Queer Nation (an North American activist organization) and distributed as a pamphlet on the streets of New York in 1990, as shown below:

> Being queer (...) means everyday fighting oppression; homophobia, racism, misogyny, the bigotry of religious hypocrites and our own self-hatred. (We have been carefully taught to hate ourselves.) And now of course it means fighting a virus as well, and all those homo-haters who are using AIDS to wipe us off the face of the earth. Being queer means leading a different sort of life. (...) It's about being on the margins, defining ourselves; it's about gender-fuck and secrets, what's beneath the belt and deep inside the heart; it's about the night. (Queer Nation, 1990: 2)

The term 'queer' began to be adopted as an expression of pride by activist groups such as ACT UP (Aids Coalition To Unleash Power) and Queer Nation (Love, 2007). Emerging after the Stonewall in 1969,[2] these activist groups embraced the term as a 'badge of honor' (Getsy, 2016), reclaiming it for gathering awareness and questioning sexual and gender categorizations. Thus, the proud use of the term 'queer' by gay and lesbian activist groups is driven not only by a desire for identity reaffirmation but also as part of a wider movement of resistance and search for equal civil rights, radiating from the USA to other parts of the world. According to Jimmie Manning (2016), activist organizations have started using the term 'queer' in their titles as a way of welcome to a wide variety of people and as a way of radically asserting their difference. This is how the term came to be used as an alternative to limited sexual categories (especially for those who do not identify as gay or lesbian), providing an umbrella term for gender diversities and non-sexual identities. In addition, 'queer' is often associated with a socio-political attitude that challenges established norms and seeks acceptance and celebration of diversity. It is a term that defines itself against the

[2] The Stonewall Riots, which took place on June 29, 1969, is considered the catalyst for the modern LGBTQ rights movement, giving rise to the first public demonstrations organized by the queer community. From that moment on, many LGBTQ people never again subjected themselves without a fight to the stigma, criminalization, and pathologization that society as a whole tried to inflict, marking the beginning of an era in which they reclaimed their identities and fought publicly and openly for equal civil rights (Murphy, 2016).

conventions; therefore, its meaning is amorphous and full of possibilities. As José Muñoz (2009) points out: "Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not queer yet" (Muñoz, 2009: 1). Since its use, the term ‘queer’ has carried such cultural and political weight that it continues to be a catalyst for artists and thinkers in contemporary times (Getsy, 2016), as we will confirm below.

> Sexuality defined in images gives me comfort in a hostile world. They give me strength. (...) I find that when I witness diverse representations of ‘Reality’ on a gallery wall or in a book or a movie or in the spoken word of performance, that the larger range of representations, the more I feel there is room for my existence, that not the entire environment is hostile. (Wojnarowicz, 2016 [1991]: 78)

In the text excerpt above, entitled "Close to the Knives" (1991), the artist and activist David Wojnarowicz takes a critical look at the censorship of works of art that represent non-heteronormative forms of sexuality, particularly highlighting their exclusion from major museums in New York and the USA in the early 1990s. Wojnarowicz (1991) denounces an ingrained tendency in society to restrict and limit discussions around sexuality that deviate from socially accepted standards in a heteronormative world, speaking of the particular cases of legislative attempts to block support for artists Robert Maplethorpe[3] and Andres Serrano by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The author argues that this phenomenon contributes to the marginalization and suppression of diverse sexual experiences, perpetuating a restricted and exclusionary view of ‘queer’ existence in the public sphere. At the end of the 1960s and during the following decades, ‘queer’ aesthetics emerged as part of a much vaster field of ‘artivism’ that was building momentum, namely within “the Black Power movement [and] the second wave of feminism”, in the context of a broader, effervescent, sociopolitical and cultural environment also marked by “the youth culture, the civil rights movement, the drug culture, the hippies, the yippies, and rock and roll” (White, 1995:129). This intersectionality among marginalized minority groups has resulted in a collective endeavor for

[3] The solo exhibition “The Perfect Moment” (1989) by Robert Mapplethorpe, initially intended for display at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., faced cancellation due to significant pressure from Christian organizations, particularly the American Family Association (Silver, 2016). Another revealing example of persistent censorship took place in 1993, following a retrospective exhibition of Mapplethorpe in Italy, where the Bishop of Prato threatened the director of the contemporary art center Ida Panicelli with excommunication (Melo, 1994).

social justice and equality, developing visual strategies as an instrument of activism and resistance. As Getsy (2016) notes: "Because of the adjectival apparatus and performativity of 'queer,' it is fundamentally about appearance, in many senses" (Getsy, 2016: 15). The author highlights the importance of 'visibility politics' and the demand for 'queer' representation, particularly through street performances and guerrilla art developed as an activist counter-tactic to invisibility. In this sense, 'queer' aesthetics are central not because they offer an escape from the tumultuous present, but because of their ability to map out future relations and as the representation of a collective's hope for a more inclusive world (Muñoz, 2009).

> From the margins, queers have picked those things that could work for them and recoded them, rewritten their meanings, opening up the possibility of viral reinsertion into the body of general discourse. (Blake, 1995: 4)

The institutional openness to 'queer' artistic practices has been a long process, marked by various hesitations on the part of the main museums and cultural institutions. Even so, the appearances that have been accentuated in exhibitions over time reflect the victories of activists, artists, and academics who continue to tirelessly defend the relevance of these themes to society, demonstrating that they are not just the interests of a subculture but the interests of society and that they should be recognized as such. In this context, several exhibitions mark some important initial openings to 'queer' artistic practices, namely: "Extended Sensibilities: Homosexual Presence in Contemporary Art," which took place in 1982 at the New Museum in New York City, the 1993 Biennial at the Whitney Museum (which included the participation of several queer artists),[4] and also Lawrence Rinder and Nayland Blake's 1995 "In a Different Light," at the University of California and Berkeley Art Museum. These exhibitions can be considered innovative in the ways they integrated 'queer' artworks with other works and exposed them to a wider audience (Silver, 2016). As Nayland Blake, curator of "In a Different Light*"* points out: "my third requirement was that the exhibition should not have the words gay, lesbian, or queer in its title. If we essentialize the work of these artists in the title, we limit the viewers' chances of being able to find new

[4] The 1993 Biennial at the Whitney Museum of Art is considered a milestone in the institutional opening to the representation of queer artists. With the participation of prominent artists such as Catherine Opie, Del Lagrace Volcano, and the Fierce Pussy collective. By highlighting these artistic expressions in a broader context, the 1993 biennale challenged prevailing social and cultural norms, reflecting a response to demands for greater visibility and recognition of queer activism (Silver, 2016).

information and connections among the works. The artists would be once again ghettoized" (Blake, 1995: 4). Curatorial strategies, such as the one mentioned above, have been employed to promote an impartial examination of what can be described as 'queer' artistic practices, emphasizing evaluation based on formal characteristics rather than discriminatory prejudices. Exhibitions conceived from a 'queer' point of view aim to break with the conventional role of the spectator, promoting engaged participation and critical inquiry. These initiatives strive to involve the public, cultivating an atmosphere that encourages curiosity and promotes a change in conservative mentalities.

The increased presence of 'queer' artistic practices in commercial spaces is a phenomenon that is being understood in contemporary times, following a trend that began in the 1990s with academic and institutional recognition. In this context, some 'blueprint artists' who have started from the margins and built their way to the main art institutions, were visionaries in the way they challenged and redefined notions of gender and sexuality in their work. Some artists such as Andy Warhol, Félix González-Torres, Julie Tolentino (from the Gran Fury collective), Stanley Stellar, Tom of Finland, Keith Haring, Judy Chicago, Nan Goldin,[5] Robert Mapplethorpe, Jack Smith and Barbara Hammer (within the realm of the experimental film), among others, contributed significantly to the integration of what has been described today as 'queer' in the broader artistic discourse. For example, Warhol played a decisive role in subverting the prevailing norms of the American art establishment in the 1950s, particularly the Abstract Expressionism movement, characterized by a sexist bias and hetero-masculinity (Silver, 2016). Founding *The Factory* in 1963, after moving to New York, Andy Warhol actively engaged with and embraced individuals who occupied marginalized social positions, including homosexuals, trans persons, femboys, lesbians, and people who use drugs. This openness and diversification introduced by Warhol in the cultural New York scene laid the foundation for a more receptive environment in the art markets for non-heteronormative artists of the generations who followed, such as Keith Haring. A much more politicized generation of artists achieved visibility in the 1980s with a body of work that intertwined art and activism.

[5] In 1989, Nan Goldin curated "Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing" at Artist Space in Manhattan. The exhibition featured several artists such as Peter Hujar, David Wojnarowicz, Kiki Smith, Greer Lankton, Mark Morrisroe, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, among others. The exhibition had its funding cut by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) because of its explicit work on AIDS and its critique of the lack of political response regarding the crisis.

The appreciation of LGBTQ themes within the visual arts has evolved alongside the institutional recognition of 'queer' studies in academic settings.[6] Foucauldian ideas laid the critical foundations for the evolution of 'queer' theory, emphasizing the social construction of sexuality and power relations.[7] These ideas were revitalized in the 1990s by a number of scholars from different areas of scientific knowledge (including Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Judith Butler), whose publications helped legitimize 'queer' studies in academia.[8] However, the small steps toward equal rights are accompanied by a series of indecisions and setbacks, especially in the light of the neo-conservative political movements that have been gaining strength in various parts of the world (with great growth in Western society). While courses dedicated to 'queer' studies, or mobilizing 'queering' as a method of research, began to emerge and gain visibility essentially at the end of the 1900s and early 2000s (albeit timidly),[9] these achievements have often been contested and even reversed in certain contexts, reflecting a territorial struggle within academia (Arthur, 2016). It is important to recognize that progress in legitimizing 'queer' studies has not been uniform or global, while in some cases there have been advances, in others there have been setbacks. Overcoming today's challenges and fostering inclusion and diversity remains a constant struggle, especially against the forces trying to reverse the gains achieved regarding civil rights and the recognition of diverse identities. When it comes to the specific realm of the art markets, if, on the one hand, there is a growing presence of 'queer' art in the markets on the main cultural metropolises of the Global North (such as New York, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, San Francisco, and London);[10] on the other hand, in cities in the Global South (especially in Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East), political factors result in a very different reality. In these regions, repressive policies often result in the invisibility or avoidance of 'queer' artistic practices, in

[6] The field was initially called gay studies and later gay and lesbian studies, while 'queer' studies programs did not come into being until the 1980s. The title 'queer' studies represented a more inclusive category, embodying a more encompassing framework and permitting considerations of a wider variety of concepts and ideas (Arthur, 2016).

[7] Michel Foucault's work, in particular his book *The History of Sexuality* (1976), was fundamental in laying the foundations for the field of 'queer' theory. Foucault analyzed the historical construction of sexuality and how society's power structures influence the understanding of sexuality. His ideas on power relations, discourse, and the social construction of sexuality provided a critical framework that would later be developed by 'queer' theorists.

[8] Notable works for 'queer' studies include Eve Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, both published in 1990.

[9] According to Arthur (2016), by 2014, less than a dozen colleges and universities had full majors in 'queer' studies or related courses in the USA and Canada. It is more common for these courses to appear as minors, with around 50 courses appearing in the USA by that same date.

[10] Although the circle of 'queer' art collectors is quite limited.

contrast to their more prominent presence in the geographies of the Global North (Schwärzler, 2012).

2.2 Galleries' Key Role on International Art Markets

Since the pioneering work entitled *Art Worlds* (1982) by Howard Becker, we learn that just as in an orchestra, where a vast number of musicians and collaborators come together to create a harmonious symphony; in the art world, artists, galleries, institutions and the public also collaborate in an interdependent way to produce and interpret works that resonate in the conception of artistic culture (Becker, 1982). This work is of great significance, shifting the barometer of meaning towards the collaborative and social nature of artistic production,[11] where conventions, social interactions, and collective knowledge play crucial roles in defining what is considered art in a given cultural context (Becker, 1982). This collective and cooperative essence inherent in the art world serves as the theoretical foundation for comprehending the art markets as a more restricted field of study. The latter can be defined as a kind of network with multiple interconnected and mutually dependent agents and institutions, where works of art are moved and consumed (Afonso and Fernandes, 2019). In this sector, social relations significantly impact acquisition processes, where various actors (such as artists, collectors, and gallerists) navigate established canons, certification procedures, and state intervention (when the nature of the transaction requires it). This intricate framework highlights the nuanced dynamics of the art market, shaped by diverse agents influencing multifaceted transactions and legitimization processes.

The art market regulates the interaction between demand (buyers) and supply (sellers) in the specific realm of works of art, permanently adapting to its mutations. Although the sale can be made directly between the artist and the buyer, often through a visit to their studio, most transactions are facilitated by specialized intermediaries (from auction houses and antique dealers to different types of gallerists and brokers[12]). According to an updated Art Basel Report on the art market: "The most used channel for buying art in 2023 was through a gallery or dealer, with 86% of respondents buying art directly, online or through an art fair"

[11] Particularly when compared with the article "The Artworld" published in 1964 by Arthur Danto. Contrary to Becker's vision, Danto introduces the concept of the art world as an intellectual ecosystem that makes it possible to support a certain artistic theory that aims to differentiate art from non-art. Later, Howard Becker (1982), from an anti-elitist perspective, was mainly interested in using this concept to explore the sociological aspects related to collaboration and the collective sharing of conventions and values by all those involved in the various sectors of artistic production.

[12] This term is used in English to define a contemporary art dealer with no premises open to the public.

(Art Basel Report, 2023: 84). These findings underline that galleries are the preferred venue for collectors to acquire works of art. This preference can be explained by the specificities of the primary market,[13] where galleries play a key role in the first commercial exchange of a work of art. According to Afonso and Fernandes (2019), when a collector buys an artwork on the primary market, they still determine whether they will keep or change economic or cultural value. The uncertainties inherent in the market are increased by the absence of a price history for the works traded, especially those by artists entering the market for the first time. Predictive analysis and economic evaluation of these works become more complex, given the absence of an absolute value for artistic objects often affected by changes in tastes. Often characterized by a greater lack of liquidity and high volatility, primary market operations are riskier, especially compared to the secondary market, which mostly deals with established artists. The allure of the primary market stems from its unique potential to enhance the value of works of art, positioning art as an investment linked to the artist's career path. It also offers the opportunity to directly support promising artists, reflecting an appreciation for the creative process and artistic innovation. In this context, galleries can be described as "arbitrators of aesthetic risk" (Varet, 1995: 516), mitigating the inherent risk associated with acquiring works on the market from emerging artists, whose works may depart from convention or challenge traditional norms. Contemporary art galleries play a decisive role as intermediaries, with their scope of action extending from selecting and promoting artists' work to facilitating reputation on the market. This multifaceted involvement puts galleries at the center of building the artist's trajectory, giving them resources to pursue their practice, influencing their perception towards other market agents, and ultimately, helping legitimize their work.

This dissertation focuses on the study of contemporary art galleries, exploring how galleries can influence the market in shaping the art scene, especially in integrating under-represented or 'marginalized' expressions such as 'queer' artistic practices. The heterogeneous role of galleries forms an essential basis for the subsequent analysis. As has been emphasized, galleries have an importance that is both economic/commercial and also socio-cultural, from closing the sales to showing and promoting works of art to a wider public. Contemporary art galleries are highly hierarchical, a reflection developed based on the more or less perceptible presence of these two domains.

[13] The art market is divided into a primary market and a secondary market. The latter has to do with the resale of works of art, including antique dealers and auction houses. In this sense, the primary market is associated with the initial sale of an artwork, so both contemporary art galleries and artists are part of this system (Moulin, 1992).

> Several types of distinction can be made between gallerists and galleries. The main one is the economic hierarchization (...) This hierarchization does not correspond exactly to the cultural hierarchy, and for the same level of economic power there can be galleries with degrees of cultural prestige ranging from zero to the maximum. (Melo, 2012: 43)[14]

The main distinction between galleries is made through the economic factor, which is the most objective and easiest to quantify compared to the cultural one, which is more subjective. According to Melo (2012), it is possible for an economically driven gallery also to contain a substantial degree of cultural prestige. This statement is supported by Afonso and Fernandes (2019), who added that galleries that assert themselves on the market as having great economic power "must have a degree of cultural prestige that is between medium and maximum" (Afonso and Fernandes, 2019: 325). Through this way of categorizing galleries, we can identify three different types. Firstly, there are those driven by commercial interests, focusing on already legitimized artists who will certainly attract financial gains. Secondly, there are galleries with a predominant cultural leaning, establishing themselves as spaces of opportunity for artists who need more critical acclaim and whose works are not easily marketable. Lastly, some galleries adopt a mixed model combining economic and cultural components, not putting one before the other (Serpa, 2005). This dissertation primarily explores cultural or mixed domain galleries, namely those specialized in emerging artists, which focus on the cultural and theoretical promotion of artworks. Predominant cultural leaning galleries privilege relationships with important agents in the art world (critics, researchers, collectors) and with culture departments and contemporary art museums, which have greater legitimizing power (Melo, 2012).

Contemporary art galleries that operate in a cultural domain, can introduce and legitimize under-represented or 'marginalized' artistic practices to their audiences. These efforts involve uncertainties about market reception and financial return, requiring in-depth knowledge of art market dynamics. Success depends on a thorough knowledge of the dynamics of the art market, combined with a willingness to embrace aesthetic diversity and innovation. I want to emphasize that galleries have historically played a role beyond the commercial realm and

[14] Original text in Portuguese. All the translations of materials I have consulted in Portuguese that have not been translated into English have been performed by me.

have played a part in promoting and legitimizing new artistic movements. As Afonso and Fernandes (2019) note, art galleries emerged as primary distribution channels at the end of the 19th century, in response to the saturation of the traditional salon model and the Academy (which represented the majority of salon jurors). The rejection of impressionist and post-impressionist art at these salons drove the need for new cultural and commercial spaces, and galleries played a key role in supporting artists and legitimizing the impressionist and modernist movements at the turn of the century. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiller's gallery in Paris, founded in 1907, became a center for innovative artists such as Derain, Braque, and Picasso. His support extended to the exhibition of Braque's cubist works which had been previously rejected by the Salon d'Automne in 1908, marking the emergence of Cubism movement. Through extensive connections with collectors and critics, Kahnweiller contributed to the international recognition of these artists (Poli, 2008). It can be asserted that Parisian galleries played a crucial role in sustaining and promoting avant-garde movements. In the mid-1920s, it was possible to observe the interest and attention of a group of enthusiasts spreading to a wider segment of the upper class and international society through the work of galleries (Poli, 2008). In particular, by publishing catalogs and exhibitions in affiliates abroad, the notoriety of its artists was progressively strengthened. This statement is emphasized by Fitzgerald (1995) when he mentions that the market was not marginal to the development of modernism, but central to it.

As we have concluded in the last paragraph, galleries have operated as spaces for integrating and promoting artists since their beginnings, actively contributing to legitimizing artistic styles. We can find yet another example, closer to the topic of this dissertation, in the legitimization of Outsider Art (also known as Marginal Art or *Art Brut*) in the 1970s. According to Richard Polsky (2011), this feat was achieved thanks to market players such as John Ollman, at the time director of the Janet Fleisher Gallery, who by exhibiting these works in the gallery managed to bring recognition to an artistic style that is often underestimated or misunderstood. The exhibitions he organized helped highlight the talent of these artists belonging to minority groups, marginalized and neglected by the art scene due to factors such as the possible stigma associated with mental illness and lack of academic qualifications. This is proven by a comment from art critic Roberta Smith, who says that Martín Ramírez (one of the artists represented) was "one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century - insider or outsider" (Polsky, 2011: 118). Although we do not know the intentions behind Ollman, most likely associated with a commercial motive, his contributions to the institutional and market legitimization of this style were remarkable. Given the legacy established by historical

gallerists and the impact they had on the consolidation of artistic movements, this dissertation argues that today's contemporary art galleries can continue the tradition of these gallerists, playing a similar role in the way they can choose to present and promote under-represented art expressions, namely those described as 'queer,' on the Portuguese art markets.

2.3 Tracing 'Queer' in Portugal: From Repression to Resilience

Concerning 'queer' visibility in the Portuguese context, we must consider that for historical reasons the debate on equal rights for sexual and gender minorities started quite late, in fact for a long time it was a non-subject. This is explained by the persistence of the longest fascist regime in Western Europe, which lasted 48 years (from 1926 to 1974).[15] But it was also due to the hegemony of conservative Catholicism and its influence in politics, which contributed to the consolidation of a set of normative and patriarchal principles that exerted control over society, allowing no room for difference. The following pages trace the history of those without History, recognizing and giving visibility to the lives of oppressed groups erased or placed on the margins of mainstream historiography. Halberstam's (2011) perspective on the value of failure[16] can be applied to this context, recognizing it as an integral part of the history of oppressed groups in their struggle against the dominant logic of power and discipline (Halberstam, 2011). To this end, various historical periods are revisited in order to trace what is understood today as 'queer' existence in the Portuguese context, emphasizing memories of repression and resilience that have marked the community and the way it is perceived. With a greater focus on the dictatorship and the entrenchment of prejudices and stigmas in society that continues to this day, but also on the emergence of a community that remains united in the fight against HIV/AIDS and in demanding its rights. At the end of this section, will be considered how the historic Portuguese context has determined artistic production and the 'queer' imaginary in the country, as well as the changes that a new generation of artists expect to achieve.

[15] Preceded by almost 800 years of monarchy and the brief liberal-democratic period that followed and ended in 1926.

[16] "We can also recognize failure as a way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power and discipline and as a form of critique. As a practice, failure recognizes that alternatives are embedded already in the dominant and that power is never total or consistent; indeed failure can exploit the unpredictability of ideology and its indeterminate qualities" (Halberstam, 2011: 88).

It is noteworthy that after the end of the monarchy, precipitated by the revolution of October 5, 1910, Portugal experienced a liberal-democratic period that lasted sixteen years.[17] Although very brief, and unstable from a social and political perspective, the 1920s were associated with the liberalization of social norms, which provided the circumstances for the appearance of non-heteronormative literary works. Some of these poetry books are *Canções* (1921) by António Botto, *Sodoma Divinizada* (1923) by Raul Leal, and *Decadência* (1923) by Judith Teixeira, which were truly unprecedented in the way they addressed desire and sexuality (for which they became known as the poets of Sodom). In Portugal, similarly to Spain, the persecution of homosexuality was carried out by conservative groups who exerted pressure on the government to implement tough measures to restrain a libertine society. This happened on March 3, 1923, when the governor of Lisbon agreed to ban these works as 'immoral literature' in response to the demands of a group of conservative catholic students (Zenith, 2008).[18] Meanwhile, the dictatorial period that followed was much more severe, repudiating everything that deviated from the ideological principles of 'God, country, family,' further accentuating the oppression of sexual and gender minority groups.

To understand the persistence of the stigma surrounding non-heteronormative individuals and its lasting consequences, it is imperative to delve into the deep marks that the dictatorship left on Portuguese society. As Godinho (2019) points out, Portuguese fascism policed customs for a long time, homosexuality was marginalized in opposition to heteronormativity in a regime "that erased the boundaries between the intimate sphere of choices and the omnipresent surveillance of the state" (Godinho, 2019: 12). In this regard, we must ask ourselves: how did people survive the 'sexual dictatorship' (Afonso, 2019)? During Estado Novo, homosexuality's constant surveillance and persecution was supported by a penal code that condemned its practices. Moreover, theories supported by medical and psychiatric science considered homosexuality a pathology, which resulted in widespread practices such as internment in psychiatric institutions, the application of electric shocks, and other irreversible medical procedures. It is worth remembering the tragic events involving the dancer Valentim de Barros[19] who, at the hands of the regime, was interned in a mental institution and subjected

[17] It ended in 1926, with the coup of May 28, which dissolved Parliament and ruled in a military dictatorship.

[18] According to Richard Zenith (2018), the renowned poet Fernando Pessoa defended his writer friends saying that the students should focus on their studies and let the writers write. He also reacted to their homophobia: "Have fun with women, if you like women; have fun in another way, if you prefer another. It's all right, because it's just the body of the person having fun" (Zenith, 2008: 716).

[19] Valentim de Barros (1920-1986) was an internationalized Portuguese dancer whose life was marked by his internment in the Miguel Bombarda Psychiatric Hospital in Lisbon between 1949 and 1986. Subjected to a lobotomy during the Estado Novo regime, Valentim was imprisoned until his death,

to a lobotomy because of his homosexuality and “transvestite tendencies" (Cascais, 2016b: 144).

Society imposed widespread repression, resulting in a culture of concealment and self-policing among those who diverged from heterosexuality. As can be inferred from the prevailing conjuncture, society's mentality conformed to what the State and the Church defined as morally correct, perceiving homosexuality as a curse, shame, and infamy. This is in line with the ideas of Raquel Afonso (2019), who describes the mentality of the time as what Pierre Bourdieu calls *Habitus*, i.e., the assimilation of practices and perceptions that reproduce the ideas of the ruling classes and that are durably incorporated into society (Bourdieu, 2006 [1979]). The strategies of control and punishment of behavior contributed to the internalization of stigma towards homosexuals, exerting a great influence on the daily lives of people who deviated from the established paradigm (Godinho, 2019). When it comes to a fascist regime, it is essential to think of a great discrepancy between the elites classes, who lived in privacy and protected by the regime, and the repercussions applied to the lower classes, who lived in constant fear of punishment, humiliation and exclusion. However, stigma and marginalization, albeit in different ways, end up being transversal concerning non-heterosexual individuals. This aspect is evident in the segment below, which refers to Mário Cesariny, a homosexual artist who circulated in the intellectual circles of the time:

> Mário Cesariny de Vasconcelos, (...) lived through moments of deep despair, caused by the persecution he suffered for being homosexual and shouting it to the world (...) He was only once sentenced to five years of security measures of supervised freedom in Portugal (1953-1958), suffering various restrictions on his freedom of movement. (Almeida, 2010: 194-195)

The permanent surveillance and control over society made it more difficult to oppose the system. However, recalling the thoughts of Michel Foucault (1998), where there are forms of power and control, there are also forms of resistance. Risking more immediate repercussions such as physical aggression and public humiliation, resistance occurred in everyday life, namely through the veiling of same-sex sexuality. Homosexuality was confined to camouflaged or clandestine sites, functioning as places of refuge (such as gardens, public

forgotten and neglected, despite his contribution to the arts and his importance to the LGBTQ+ community (Cascais, 2016b).

toilets, stations and docks, and later in nightclubs). There were no currents of support or a sufficiently large mobilization capable of provoking collective action in a time of dictatorship. It was not until eight years after the revolution of April 25, 1974, which put an end to the fascist Portuguese regime, that there was an amendment to the penal code that criminalized homosexuality (an amendment made in 1982). Quoting a statement made by Galvão de Melo (a member of National Salvation Council [Junta de Salvação Nacional][20] appointed after April 25) on national television: "The revolution was not made for prostitutes and homosexuals" (taken from Melo, 2023: 27). Even after the end of the dictatorship and the arrival of legal measures intended to protect individual rights and equality, discrimination, and homophobia remain deeply rooted in Portuguese society. Although there has been a change in the penal code, the mentality of the Portuguese population has generally remained unchanged (Afonso, 2019).

In 1983, the first news reports about the arrival of HIV/AIDS in Portugal were published, one of which stated: “AIDS: Deadly virus terrorizes Portuguese homosexuals” (Tal & Qual newspaper, 1983 [Figure 1, see Annex A]). Although the first cases were known in the USA in 1981, it was not until four years later, by order of the Minister of Health,[21] that the first official group dedicated to fighting the disease in Portugal was formed. Initially, the disease was associated with male homosexuality, and in the USA, it was almost labeled as GRID (Gay Related Immunodeficiency Disease) (Teles and Amaro, 2006). In the early years of its appearance, there was a lack of clinical knowledge about the disease, which was associated with so-called ‘risk groups.’ The media reported that homosexual sex was one of the main ways in which the disease was spread, along with the sharing of contaminated syringes and needles by drug users. In a column inside the newspaper quoted above, we can read: “In Portugal, medical experts advise ‘gays’: stop promiscuity” (Bandarra, 1983: 5 [Figure 2]). The way AIDS was presented to society would have enormous consequences on mentalities regarding sexuality, resulting in negative and discriminatory attitudes towards sexual minorities (and people living with HIV infection). As Fernando Maltez (director of the Curry Cabral hospital, in Lisbon) stated: "in the more religious sectors there was an idea that this disease would somehow punish behavior that was becoming liberalized" (Caldas, 2023, episode 1, 10:21-11:09). In the more conservative sectors of society, the disease is frequently associated with sin, namely as a ‘divine punishment’ for post-revolutionary sexual freedom.

[20] Military group that took over the government of Portugal after the revolution of April 25, 1974, until May 16 of the same year.
[21] Specifically on June 20th, 1985 (Teles & Amaro, 2006).

In a deeply religious and conservative society like the Portuguese, homosexuals were victims of overwhelming social exclusion. According to Melo (2023): "AIDS also revealed the structural homophobia behind the politicians' odious stalling in implementing essential precautionary measures and which set in motion a wave of militant resistance" (Melo, 2023: 13). The stigma that associated homosexuality with the disease and caused so much suffering to the victims ultimately encouraged the visibility of gays and lesbians, creating a context for the development of studies and research, and for the emergence and empowerment of the LGBT movements.

It was from the 1990s onwards that issues of sexuality began to be discussed systematically and a collective voice emerged in the fight against discrimination, creating a context for the emergence of the LGBT movement in Portugal (which since the 1990s has included bisexuals and transgender people) (Amaral and Moita, 2004). The movement brought together sexual and gender minorities, cooperating in the common struggle to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis, against discrimination and abuse, and in favor of sexual freedom. The LGBT movement in Portugal had a significant milestone in 1995, with the first celebration of the Stonewall riot, on the initiative of the Homosexual Labor Group (Grupo Homossexual do Trabalho)[22], and the founding of ILGA Portugal *(*Associação de Intervenção Lésbica, Gay, Bissexual, Trans e Intersexo*)*. The cooperation between associations[23] was evident in the organization of the Arraial Lisbon Pride, which took place for the first time in June 1997, being the first massive celebration held in the streets of Principe Real.[24] The fight for visibility took place on several fronts, some artistic initiatives have accompanied this movement. In this sense, it is worth highlighting Cinema Positivo (film festival, 1994 [Figure 3, Annex A]), later called Cinema Gay e Lésbico de Lisboa (Lisbon Gay and Lesbian Cinema, founded in 1997 [Figure 4, Annex A]), which played an important role in giving visibility and allowing access, for the first time, to films that were unknown to the majority of the population.[25] The significant development in the following decades resulted from

[22] The celebration was held on the symbolic date of June 28 (the day of the Stonewall riot) at the Climacz, a nightclub in Lisbon.

[23] The Pride march and the Arraial were organized by ILGA-Portugal, with the support of the Grupo Homossexual do Trabalho, Clube Safo (an organization that defends the rights of lesbian women) and the gay and lesbian bars of Príncepe Real. On the same day, the Opus Gay association presented its founding manifesto (Maia & Louçã, 2007)

[24] Given that the first Pride march (with a starting and ending point) was only held in June, 2000, in Lisbon (Maia & Louçã, 2007)..

[25] Before the revolution of April 25, gay and lesbian films circulated among restricted groups of the cultural elite, for whom films were produced and shown behind closed doors in private houses or

collaboration with other social movements and initiatives involving the state, the European Union (EU), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These efforts consolidated the vital role of activists in promoting the visibility and integration of the LGBTQ+ movement in Portuguese society.

The spirit of tolerance within the limits of the invisibility felt during Estado Novo and the stigma accentuated during the HIV/AIDS crisis had a significant impact on what can be characterized, in the light of current knowledge, as 'queer' artistic practices. In Portugal, the pre-history of 'queer' artistic expressions were marginal and clandestine poems, censored by the dictatorship, and placed on the margins of historiography.[26] After the Carnation Revolution in 1974, Ernesto de Souza organized the exhibition "Alternativa Zero" (1977)[27], which was truly remarkable for showcasing the tendencies that had been consolidated in contemporary national art. It was at this exhibition that, according to José Mário Brandão, the first openly gay portuguese artwork was exhibited (personal communication, April 5, 2024), referring to *Dialogue du Sphinx* (1976) by António Lagarto and Nigel Coates, an installation made up of two photographs showing two naked men lying on the beach (figures 5 and 6, Annex A).

> When I think, only six names spring to mind - Joaquim Pinto and Nuno Leonel, João Pedro Rodrigues and João Rui Guerra da Mata, and you [João Pedro Vale and Nuno Ferreira]. And no one else. There's a woman, Maria do Carmo Peralta, who published a novel (...) And literature? Painting? Sculpture? Photography? While in New York, for example, there was so much to see! (Campos, 2023: 170)[28]

bars (such as the Scarlatty Club in Lisbon), from which the lower classes were, for the most part, excluded (Ferreira, 2013, pp. 98-99).

[26] In the context of the pre-emergence of art that can be read today as 'queer' on the Portuguese scene, the following artists stand out: Bocage, Mário Cesariny, and lesser-known authors such as Pedro Homem de Melo, Judith Teixeira, Raul Leal and António Botto (Melo, 2023).

[27] The exhibition "Alternativa Zero" was organized in 1977 by Ernesto de Souza at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Lisbon. It was a collective exhibition on "Controversial Trends in Contemporary Portuguese Art," a documentary exhibition on the "Pioneers of Modernism in Portugal" and an exhibition of posters on the theme of "The Avant-Garde and the Media." There were also performances, debates, film and video screenings, and experimental music concerts. The exhibition was a perspective and forward-looking look at the state of art in Portugal after the 1974 revolution.

[28] From "BECAUSE AIDS EXISTS" with Maria José Campos, in *1983*.

During the 1980s and the following decade, there were some artists who began to manifest attitudes in their work that can now be described as ‘queer.’ Still, in most cases, the absence of more direct artistic approaches to ‘queer’ themes and issues reflects the stigma and invisibility of the epidemic itself, as well as entrenched conservative mentalities towards non-heterosexual visibility. It is important to remember that the Carnation Revolution was still a very recent event, issues related to non-heteronormative sexuality were seen as taboo, and queer affirmation movements had yet to mobilize strongly to reach the different social spheres. The excerpt above was told by Maria José Campos (doctor and activist) during a conversation with the artists João Pedro Vale and Nuno Ferreira, describing the reality of ‘queer’ artistic production and its contribution to the visibility of HIV/AIDS, establishing a comparative connection with the intense North American artistic activity of the same period. It can be seen that when the HIV/AIDS epidemic required a strong response in terms of image production, only a small group of Portuguese artists addressed issues related to non-heteronormative sexuality and gender, mainly in the field of cinema. However, although there was no articulated public discourse around these issues, there are some works by a number Portuguese artists that, due to their attitude or radical nature, can today be (re)evaluated and discussed from a ‘queer’ perspective.[29]

Since the turn of the millennium, new generations of artists born in a democratic society have navigated issues of sexuality and gender in their work, informed by a political awareness fostered through new theoretical debates and social activism (Melo, 2023). This socio-political attitude, described in this research as ‘queer,’ is revealed in new artistic approaches through various mediums (including painting, sculpture, photography, installation, and performance) and has progressively entered exhibition spaces, museums, and collections (albeit in a residual way). The first exhibition to circumscribe these themes in Iberia was "Trans Sexual Express Barcelona 2001," organized by Xabier Arakistan and Rosa Martínez, which was an initial approach to the subjects of sex, sexuality, gender and power dynamics expressed in contemporary art (Arakistain and Martínez, 2001). The exhibition opened in 2001 at the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, with the participation of 24 artists from different geographies. The exhibition featured the participation of the Portuguese artist Vasco Araújo, with the works *Diva - A Portrait* (2000 [Figure 7, see Annex A]) and *La Stupenda* (2001 [Figure 8]), marking the start of his international career. In 2005, "Radicais Libres:

[29] In the period of transition to the 1980s and during that decade, there are works in the visual arts that can be retrospectively (re)valued and discussed through ‘queer’ perspectives, such as some of the works by Julía Ventura (in her self-portraits), Albuquerque Mendes (series of variations of self-representations), António Palolo (series of figurative paintings), among others.

Experiencias Gays e Lésbicas na Arte Peninsular"[30] was the first research exhibition, held at Santiago de Compostela (Auditorio de Galicia), dedicated to a set of innovative and 'radical' artistic approaches on gay and lesbian experiences in Portugal and Spain (Bran, 2005). Among the various artists and collectives who took part in this exhibition, the following Portuguese artists stand out: Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Ana Vidigal, Nuno Alexandre Ferreira, Vasco Araújo, João Pedro Vale, and João Vilhena. These first exhibitions reflect a concern consolidated at the turn of the millennium with the legitimization of gender and sexuality studies in academia and with the growing LGBTQ+ movements in Europe and North America.

As far as Portuguese initiatives in an institutional context are concerned, one can mention the exhibition "Género na Arte. Corpo, Sexualidade, Identidade, Resistência,"[31] presented in 2017 at MNAC. The exhibition, curated by Aida Rechena and Teresa Furtado, brought together the works of a group of artists intending to provide a space for reflection and debate on the fluidity and plurality of gender identities in contemporary national artistic production.[32] Despite the importance of the exhibition in the context of the scarcity of national exhibition proposals around these subjects (which led the museum to receive an award in 2017[33]), Nuno Crespo (2017) criticized it in the *Público* newspaper. The art critic pointed out the lack of a historical, sociological, artistic, or institutional framework for the displayed artworks. The curatorial choices resulted in an exhibition that was "predictable and literal, without taking advantage of a deeper reading of how identity is constructed between the public and private realms" (Crespo, 2023 [2017]: 200). This reveals a lack of effective questioning of the 'Museum' institution and its exhibitions, dissemination and appreciation protocols, which marginalize certain artistic expressions to the detriment of others and do not make room for proposals that generate debate and social transformation.

According to Lisboa and Teixeira (2017), 'queer' theory in articulation with artistic expressions constitutes a breeding ground for experimentation, a deconstruction of identity and sexuality norms, and can play an important role in transforming social structures. Artistic language has contributed "to the questioning and transformation of norms and, in the

[30] "Free Radicals: Gay and Lesbian Experiences in Peninsular Art" (2005).

[31] "Gender in Art. Body, Sexuality, Identity, Resistance" (2017).

[32] The artists who took part in the exhibition "Género na Arte. Corpo, Sexualidade, Identidade, Resistência," in 2017, were: Alice Geirinhas, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Ana Vidigal, Carla Cruz, Cláudia Varejão, Gabriel Abrantes, Horácio Frutuoso, João Gabriel, João Galrão, João Pedro Vale e Nuno Alexandre Ferreira, Maria Lusitano, Miguel Bonneville, Thomas Mendonça and Vasco Araújo.

[33] The National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC) won the 2017 ILGA-Portugal Arco-Íris (Rainbow) Award for the exhibition "Gender in Art. Body, Sexuality, Identity, Resistance."

intertwining of multiple aspects of identity, has the enormous potential to bring out new discourses" (Lisboa and Teixeira, 2017: 19-20). ‘Queering’ as a methodology of analysis and cultural criticism has enormous relevance in understanding contemporary art and culture, seeking to deconstruct normative notions of sexual and gender identity and exploring the diversity of human experiences (Cascais, 2016a). However, as mentioned by António Cascais (2016a), these works often remain misunderstood by cultural critics who are not familiar with ‘queer’ studies. It is in this sense that galleries and institutions, by investing in ‘queer’ programs (and working with queer artists), actively promote awareness and dialogue around diversity and representation among their audiences. In chapter 4 of this research, through interviews with various art market agents and artists, it was explored in depth how ‘queer’ artistic practices have been articulated in the art gallery sector.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In the present context of contemporary artistic practices and their articulation with the national art market, the representation and visibility around artists who explore 'queer' attitudes in their work (or whose work is recognized as such) emerge as crucial points for discussion and research. As we observe a growing international openness that embraces artistic diversity, both in institutional and market terms, it becomes necessary to analyze how art galleries can shape the narrative around 'marginalized' or under-represented artistic expressions whose underlying meaning departs from socially established norms. The term 'queer' emerges as the most pertinent to capture some of the artistic and ideological practices of the first decades of the 20th century, especially in the context of political and cultural confrontations addressing questions of non-heterosexual sexuality and gender identity. This research arises from the need to understand and contextualize these issues in the context of the art markets in Portugal, in the specific segment of contemporary art galleries. In addition, it aimed to fill a gap in national academic production on these matters, especially in the cultural field and in the art markets.[34] This dissertation focused on understanding the role of galleries in shaping the cultural field and the art markets, investigating whether they position themselves as partners in a socio-cultural movement that demands visibility and integration of artistic expressions and identities that are often placed on the margins of cultural discourse. The underlying questions that guided this research were: Can the art markets contain dynamics and biases that reinforce the marginalization of 'queer' artistic practices? What importance do 'queer' artistic practices assume in the contemporary art scene? To what extent are contemporary art galleries an important force in promoting under-represented or marginalized art forms? To answer these questions, it was essential to understand the complex dynamics between gallerists, queer artists, curators, collectors and the art market's specific logics.

This research was based on the assumption that art galleries are not just neutral spaces for exhibiting works of art, but active agents that historically contributed to the perpetuation of cultural discourses and the legitimation of artistic expressions. This methodological chapter

[34] According to Fernando Cascais (2004), in Portugal, the themes and theoretical references appear in academic works spread across disciplinary areas such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, literary theory or cultural criticism, without claiming any great affiliation with queer or gay and lesbian studies.

therefore focuses on explaining the empirical approach adopted, going through its various stages: justifying the sample selected, discussing why qualitative research was chosen over a quantitative one (and explaining the main differences), collecting data, and conducting semi-structured interviews, the data analysis procedures, and the ethical considerations involved in researching minority groups. To achieve this, an attempt was made to emphasize the complexities underlying the visibility of 'queer' artistic production within the context of the Portuguese art market, as well as to analyze the possible evolution towards greater diversity and inclusion in this sector.

The research focused on the analysis of artists whose works are fundamental to discuss in terms of inclusion in this socio-cultural universe that I am trying to characterize as 'queer' and their relationship with the various market agents. To do this, it was necessary to get in touch with artists, curators, gallerists, and collectors to have a more comprehensive, multifaceted, and holistic view of the case under study. The choice of this sample was the result of several fundamental considerations. Firstly, it is of social and cultural importance to research queer communities, identities, and cultures from an affirming point of view rather than through a normative lens (Cascais, 2004). Such an approach seeks to challenge the stigmatized and stereotypical representations often associated with the LGBTQ+ community, promoting positive visibility and recognition of the artistic contributions of this minority group, which is often neglected in historiography and academic research. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive surveys on non-normative artists, who incorporate 'queer' notions into their work further amplifies the relevance of this research. The study of 'queer' artistic expressions offers significant potential for distinctive and revealing insights into the community, as well as for critical reflection on dominant social and political structures. It seemed plausible to choose as a sample artist whose identity or work reflected these same themes, drawing on a wide range of academic, social, and cultural dimensions. The aim is to offer a comprehensive and contextualized understanding of the intersection between artists, art agents, and the art market, around 'queer' in contemporary artistic practices. Finally, the method of selecting artists and market agents for interviews was based on chain sampling, reflecting a strategic and inclusive approach. The aim was to provide a complete and comprehensive representation of the 'queer' experiences and perspectives of Portuguese artists and the art market, drawing from a wide range of participants who then nominated other relevant individuals for the study.

Just as a camera lens can frame different aspects depending on what it wants to emphasize, qualitative and quantitative methodology similarly directs the researcher's

attention to different types of data and analysis frameworks (Kielmann et al., 2011). The methodological lenses' offer different perspectives and strategies for investigating social factors, each with its advantages and limitations depending on the theoretical assumptions. The main differences between the two methods can be defined by the relationship established between the researcher and the object of study, the degree of structuring determined by the researcher, the data generated, and how it is analyzed. The quantitative methodology uses structured and rigorous methods, focusing on objective measurements and statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of the data collected. Data is acquired through polls, questionnaires, surveys of the selected sample,[35] and pre-existing statistical data utilizing computer software. According to Babbie (2010), quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data and generalizing it to groups of people to explain a particular social phenomenon. The relationship with the object of study is distanced, with the researcher maintaining total control over the data collected. The main objective of a quantitative research study is to classify characteristics, count them, and build statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed. In opposition, qualitative research focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena by exploring individual perspectives and experiences. Data is obtained through interviews, observations, and content analysis, which generally involves identifying patterns, themes, and underlying meanings, emphasizing the importance of context and situationally in understanding social dynamics. According to Denzin (2005), qualitative research emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality, requires greater proximity between the researcher and the object of study, and the situational constraints that shape the research. A qualitative researcher's approach is subjective, since interpretation is used to understand the data in a given context, and their aim is above all to explain rather than describe (unlike the quantitative approach). This interpretation is carried out through the researcher's theoretical assumptions and background, using the data at their disposal to justify or support the argument of their research. The advantage of using a qualitative method is the greater substance and detail of the data collected, highlighting the perspectives of the participants and providing multiple contexts for understanding the sociological phenomenon (Anderson, 2010). It is also relevant to mention that there are studies that use a mixed methodology (also known as triangulation), frequently using a qualitative phase to complement the quantitative data.

In this master's dissertation, qualitative methodology appeared to be the most appropriate choice to research in depth the various aspects related to ‘queer’ in contemporary art practices

[35] The results are based on larger sample sizes that are representative of the population.

and the way it relates to market agents, emphasizing the role of art galleries in shaping the Portuguese art scene. The multifaceted nature and importance of historical context in the perception of 'queer' artworks requires an in-depth understanding of the individual experiences and perspectives of each artist and the various curators, gallerists, as well as the people who constitute the artistic community. A qualitative methodology made it possible to capture this complexity by presenting the experiences and points of view of the participants, providing a more holistic and contextualized understanding of the phenomenon under study. This statement is supported by Jimmie Manning (2016), who refers that "many guides or handbooks related to qualitative research methods include sections on queer theoretical approaches, as the fluid nature of 'queer' theory matches up well with the iterative nature of qualitative research methods" (Manning, 2016: 917). Furthermore, qualitative research has allowed for greater flexibility in the process, making it possible to readjust the research questions as the investigation progresses. As a result, a qualitative approach provided a more suitable opportunity to investigate the complexity and variety of human experience in 'queer' art in Portugal, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the dynamics between art galleries and artists. Besides conducting interviews with the possible sample of artists and market agents related to 'queer' artistic practices, documents from past talks and exhibitions (namely exhibition room sheets) were also analyzed, making it possible to gather more information that was indispensable for carrying out this research.

One of the decisions in preparing this qualitative research was to choose the most appropriate data collection method to explore the complex and delicate subject of the representation of 'queer' artistic production and artists by galleries. In this context, I chose to use in-depth semi-structured interviews as the main source of information. The selection of this method was considered due to its ability to allow a detailed and flexible exploration of the participants' experiences and accounts. As observed by Kielmann et al. (2011), less structured interviews are often preferable when dealing with sensitive topics, as they provide a space for careful investigation and allow participants to express their experiences more openly. As the name suggests, semi-structured interviews contain a mixture of predetermined open questions and others that emerge during the conversation, allowing for a richer and more intricate understanding of the subject under study. According to the interviewee's permission, the interview audio was recorded to facilitate the process. During the interviews, a topic guide was used with some key themes for the research, ranging from simple to more complex questions. The concern to address similar themes in the various interviews was mainly due to the need to compare the data and allow for discussion, bringing the various perspectives

together in a coherent text. However, the intuitive nature of semi-structured interviews made it possible to change the order of topics, with the flexibility to alter or introduce additional questions that made sense in the course of the dialog and that followed the interests and individual knowledge of the interviewees. At the end of each interview, given the potentially sensitive nature of some topics, it was essential to obtain informed consent from the participants, explaining the aims of the research and the procedures involved.

From the data collected, an inductive and holistic analysis was carried out. This approach involved immersing oneself in the specific details of the interviews to uncover important patterns, themes, and interrelationships between the participants. The analysis was not limited to identifying simple patterns but also sought to understand the phenomenon under study as a complex social system. With a greater focus on the relationships established between the various agents around 'queer' artistic practices, the research favored an in-depth understanding of their interactions, allowing for a more comprehensive and contextualized view of the phenomenon. Apart from this, data analysis was key to confirming or refuting the theoretical arguments discussed at the beginning of the dissertation. This was achieved by comparing the data and intersecting it with existing theory, analyzing their encounters and discrepancies. Data analysis was based on principles of balance between understanding and the most accurate representation of what was found. This required self-analytical awareness, which ensured greater impartiality and objectivity in interpreting the data, as well as an ethical and conscientious stance.

When researching queer artists and the relationships established with the various agents of the contemporary art market, it was essential to consider ethical issues that ensured an inclusive and conscious approach. According to the ethical approach described by Henrickson et al. (2020), it was crucial to recognize the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations within the queer community, as well as the intersectionality[36] of other dimensions of identity (such as race, ethnicity, and social class, among others) that influence the participants' individual experiences and perspectives. This involved using appropriate language (namely neutral language) and terminology that the participants felt most comfortable with, ensuring that their contributions were heard and respected at the various stages of the research process. The approach of this research was conscious of the dominant

[36] Intersectionality, a theoretical framework that emerged from the theorist and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw and refers to the complex way different aspects of identity and oppression work simultaneously to shape individuals' lived experiences, and can allow for these lived realities to become known (Henrickson et al., 2020: 3).

heteronormative and cisgender systemic framework,[37] seeking to diversify points of view and challenge normative discourses that can perpetuate stigmas and oppressions. Through a reflexive and critical stance concerning the position of the researcher and the power dynamics involved in the research, an ethical and responsible investigation was sought that would contribute to a more inclusive vision of the representation of 'queer' artistic expressions and artists in the sphere of contemporary art.

[37] "Cisgenderism refers to the cultural and systemic ideology that denies, denigrates, or pathologizes self-identified gender identities that do not align with assigned gender at birth as well as resulting behavior, expression, and community" (Lennon & Mistler, 2014: 63). In addition, Ansara (2015: 15) states that cisgenderism often functions at systemic and structural levels: even when individuals might reject some aspects of cisgenderist ideology, they may live and work within broader structural contexts that perpetuate and manufacture cisgenderism.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

4.1 ‘Queering’ the Art Scene: Between Strategies and Challenges

More than two decades have passed since the first Pride march in Lisbon, held on June 28, 2000, an important milestone in the history of LGBTQ+ social and associative movements in Portugal. As the origin of the largest queer visibility event held annually in various regions of the country, this date is the starting point for a critical analysis of, on the one hand, the progress made in terms of visibility and acceptance in the various areas of human activity and, on the other, the challenges that still lie ahead, especially in the cultural and artistic sector. Although important victories have been achieved in terms of visibility and legal rights,[38] progress has often resulted from European Union policy directives and influences, which may show some reluctance on the part of the responsible national entities (Ferreira, 2013).[39] The art, in particular, was at the forefront, anticipating legal and social changes in the way it questioned and challenged, more or less directly (sometimes in codified ways), the hegemonic structures that have historically silenced or allowed any sign of 'deviation' from the categorical norms by which they are ruled.

This subchapter begins with a reflection on what can be the basis for the specificity of a national ‘queer’ culture and its reflection in contemporary artistic practices. To do this, and as André Teodósio (actor and collaborator with Teatro Praga) points out, we need to be aware that ‘queer’ can be present in different modes of artistic procedure: the ways of labor, display, in the discourses created, and how they are contextualized (Teodósio, Annex B.6). Contemporary practices often express ‘queer’ attitudes through various forms: literature, performance, theater, film, music and visual arts. Despite the lack of studies with exact data in this area, there is a national mobilization around cultural ‘queering,' visible in the various initiatives that take on this project and that are being developed on different action fronts (leisure and recreational spaces, associations, academic and cultural projects). For instance,

[38] Including the controversial legalization of gay marriage in 2010 and adoption by same-sex couples in 2016.

[39] For example, former president Cavaco Silva disapproved four times of the law that allowed same-sex couples to adopt (a law that came into force in 2016; Santos Silva, 2016). In January 2024, President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa vetoed parliamentary decrees on choosing a neutral first name and measures to be adopted by schools to implement the law establishing self-determination of gender identity and expression (DN/Lusa, 2024).

Rua das Gaivotas 6 is a project that brings together various forms of artistic expression in a space that emerged as an extension of Teatro Praga (a theater collective founded in 1995), a structure for producing and presenting shows that develops a so-called 'queer' agenda in the way it integrates "artists, curators, and other professions who don't have a space", giving them the venue and the means to carry out their projects (Teodósio, Annex B.6).[40] Queer Lisboa: Festival de Cinema Queer (and, since 2015, Queer Porto)[41] has taken on the project of showcasing national 'queer' cinema since 1997, increasing its range of action with performances, debates, conferences, and art exhibitions (e.g. "Shocking Pinks," in 2009[42]), entering into dialogue with the local community and actively encouraging theoretical thinking around these themes (Cascais & Ferreira, 2014). In the field of literature, bookstores focused on 'queer' and feminist theory (and also reading groups[43]) are appearing, such as Livraria Aberta (in Oporto), Livraria Greta and Livraria das Insurgentes (both in Lisbon), completing their activity with workshops and exhibitions. In the context of the growing range of 'queer' cultural projects in recent decades, the question arises: how has contemporary national artistic discourse reflected/manifested these notions?

> Artists talk much more concretely about their bodies and about their personal practices. Whether these are sexual practices, gender disruption, *drag*, or something else. The artist's body and their experience outside of art have tended to enter art more and more in recent decades. (Odete, Annex B.2)

As Odete (a multidisciplinary Portuguese artist) points out in the excerpt above, in recent decades, there has been an increase in the number of artists developing new negotiations linked to the body, sexuality and gender identities, or other forms of self-identification in their

[40] "Rua das Gaivotas 6 is for projects, exhibitions, concerts, theater shows, performances, happenings, and more. It also has collaborative spaces like the library or the sound studio. Teatro Praga is an entity with many fronts of action. It is a theater collective that also curates books and has a programming space, among other things" (Teodósio, Annex B.6).

[41] Previously called Cinema Gay e Lésbico de Lisboa (Lisbon Gay and Lesbian Cinema), its name was changed in 2007 to Queer Lisboa as it was considered a more inclusive title and more faithful to the festival's programming (Lusa, 2007).

[42] The "Shocking Pinks" exhibition, held in 2009 as part of Queer Lisboa: Festival de Cinema Queer, was curated by João Mourão and Nuno Ramalho and brought together the following artists: Ana Pérez-Quiroga, André Alves, Carla Cruz e Ângelo Ferreira de Souza, Carla Filipe, João Leonardo and Luisa Cunha (Queer Lisboa, 2009).

[43] Some of these queer reading groups are: Clube ILGA-te à Leitura, the Queer Book Club (at the Fable café-bookshop, in Lisbon), and Leia Mulheres Porto.

work. This seems to align with what was discussed in the Literature Review, quoting Alexandre Melo (2023), when he states that new generations of Portuguese artists, born in globalizing democracies, are expanding their approaches to body-related subjects, merging them with new forms of theoretical debate and social activism. If, in the USA, 'queer' art forms were identified in the light of a socio-political attitude that was consolidated in the 1980s, in Portugal, it was only in the transition to the new millennium that a group of emerging artists began to convey a more 'queer' attitude to the visual arts. This delay can be understood by some particularities of the Portuguese context. On the one hand, while it was possible to map some initial attempts in the field of literature, performance, or even cinema (albeit in a veiled way), there was also a devaluation of the visual arts in comparison to other forms of artistic expression: "the visual arts were seen as decorative arts" (Ferreira, Annex B.5). From a market analysis point of view, the visual arts were essentially acquired to decorate the interiors of homes, and their status changed mainly in the 1990s and 2000s, particularly through the emergence of large contemporary art collections (e.g. the António Cachola Collection, EDP Collection, Ellipse Foundation), which helped their national appreciation. Despite these changes, in some circumstances, a series of artistic forms have been negatively impacted, both in technical and thematic terms, devaluing works with radical approaches or that depart from categorical norms. On the other hand, the Portuguese fascist dictatorship had social, moral, and ideological repercussions that have been perpetuated in the collective memory and which were accentuated by the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, conditioning avant-garde artistic production that expressed reflections on gender, sexuality and non-normative identities.

> We started working on these ['queer'] themes coinciding with the appearance of the first ILGA march, and the appearance of the first gay and lesbian film festival at the end of the 1990s. This allowed us to feel shielded and with some sort of feedback (...) looking back, it's as if the conditions were right for us to appear. (Vale, Annex B.5)

The introduction of 'queer' attitudes into contemporary artistic practices in Portugal is intrinsically linked to the opening up of the sector and the increase in cultural and artistic exchange that began in 1994, the year Lisbon was designated European Capital of Culture. This milestone constituted a platform for the diversification and internationalization of the

Portuguese cultural scene, with a positive boost for the artistic practices that were being developed. In the second half of the 1990s, significant socio-cultural events emerged, such as the first edition of the Lisbon Gay and Lesbian Film Festival (later called Queer Lisboa, the aforementioned festival) and the first ILGA Pride march. These events not only promoted a wider debate on issues of sexuality and gender but also provided essential platforms of visibility and support for emerging artists, allowing them to express their queer identities more openly. According to João Pedro Vale (an artist who began working in the late 1990s, Annex B.5), this context provided the necessary conditions for the emergence of a group of artists who, as part of their training at the College of Fine Arts (Faculdade de Belas-Artes) in Lisbon, began to develop work that progressively distanced themselves from the previous generation, particularly in the way they reflected on non-heteronormative sexuality. In this context, Nuno Alexandre Ferreira (a fellow artist from this period) highlights the mutual support between friends and colleagues who encouraged him to pursue his interests, also mentioning the vibrant cultural environment of the time: "We didn't feel alone (...) It was a very specific moment before Expo 98, when there was total euphoria in Lisbon (...) The second half of the 1990s was very vibrant culturally" (Annex B.5). The spirit of cooperation within the LGBT community, combined with the urban cultural environment of apparent tolerance and progressiveness, established the necessary conditions (geographical, political, social, cultural) for some artists to begin experimenting and reflecting on their identity (sexual and gender) in their artistic work.[44] In this regard, Vasco Araújo identified the first openly homosexual artists and their initial contributions to Portuguese art: "The first openly gay artists who appeared and made work that was identified as such were myself, João Pedro Vale, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Pedro Casqueiro, and Ana Jotta. All these people were gay, but nobody thought their work was" (Annex B.1).

It can be inferred that, as 'queer' attitudes began to be introduced into contemporary artistic practices and to form part of exhibitions (collective and individual), the general public did not have the discursive tools to identify the works as 'queer,' reflecting the absence of a theoretical and institutional framework to make this dimension visible. The initial acceptance of these works may be linked to the thematic novelty they presented in the national art scene, differing completely from the works of the immediately preceding generation that reflected a strong activist attitude (see the work of Pedro Portugal and Paulo Mendes). In many of the

[44] These changes in the artistic and cultural field manifested themselves predominantly in the major cities (Lisbon and OPorto). The interior regions of the country remained relatively unchanged, possibly due to their isolation from the emerging discourses that were being developed in the urban areas.

works that circumscribe a 'queer' attitude at the beginning of the millennium, the activist dimension is often introduced in a subtle, coded way, using "lightness as a survival strategy" (Ferreira, Annex B.5). In other words, the artists developed strategies that allowed them to express their messages and validate their identities while avoiding being marginalized or excluded by the Portuguese cultural milieu. For example, in the installation *La Stupenda* (see Annex A, figure 8), presented in 2001 at the former Galeria César, a domestic environment was recreated: a living room with art deco furniture, a sofa, and embroidered pillows. This is where a video is shown in which the artist plays an opera diva, assuming her identity, her body, and her misfortunes. In the world of opera, the artist finds a timeless refuge full of possibilities that distances himself from the vulgarity and injustices of the present (Bran, 2005). According to Vasco Araújo, an important characteristic of his work is its aesthetic appeal, which works as a strategy to capture or hold the viewer's attention. After that, it is as if the artist is "preparing a human wound" (Araújo, Annex B.1) by deeply questioning social stigmas.

In addition to the factors mentioned above, Vale and Ferreira (who started working as a duo in 2009[45]) believe that the acceptance of queer people by the cultural milieu may have served the interest of some agents, particularly those who wanted to convey an image of tolerance and inclusion, in line with what was happening on the international scene. In this sense, the possibility of queer artists having contributed to filling diversity quotas by being included in some exhibitions is introduced, and not only due to the total valorization of their artistic qualities: "a few years later, we realized that we had been completely tokenized" (Ferreira, Annex B.5). According to João Pedro Vale, as the artwork became more politicized and more directly challenged prevailing norms, some homophobia, and conservatism in the Portuguese cultural milieu became more evident: "Later, when the work becomes more politicized and questions the norm, we realize that the cultural milieu is deeply homophobic and conservative" (Vale, Annex B.5). It can be observed that the initial phase of reception did not come without more explicit resistance from some agents of the artistic milieu as the artists began to express, more directly, a 'queer' political consciousness in their work. Resistance to full acceptance and equality for queer identities and their forms of artistic expression reveals a society in transformation, where advances in terms of visibility and acceptance have coexisted with a structural inability to respond to persistent forms of social exclusion and

[45] The first work João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira collaborated on was the film *Hero, Captain and a Stranger*, in 2009. From that year onwards, they began to sign their works together as a duo of artists.

marginalization. And, sometimes, even with aggravated reactions of cultural and political backlash. These factors should not only be understood in a cultural framework but also allow us to question the progress of mentalities more broadly. In the context of this dissertation, it is essential to understand, on the one hand, how some signs of progress in this field are manifested and, on the other, possible discriminatory biases in the practices of art markets.

If marginalization consists of a complex and contested process through which, in a given context, certain groups of people and ideas are privileged to the detriment of others (Tucker, 1990), it is important to consider that the national queer community suffers from a structural marginalization that manifests itself in the artistic and commercial sphere in different ways. In particular, through a subtle form of discrimination that poses as "tolerance by omission" (in portuguese *tolerância por omissão*), which perpetuates a less explicit but still damaging form of marginalization, keeping queer identities on the margins without formulating an open or direct opposition. While this form of discrimination is less noticeable in its practical manifestation, it also represents an aggravated risk in the way that it is difficult to identify and denounce/expose. In this context, Vasco Araújo mentions the presence of structural homophobia within the Portuguese artistic milieu: "Even in the Portuguese artistic milieu, they didn't reject [homosexuality], but there was a structural homophobia. Just as there is structural racism. And there still is. I still hear jokes to this day" (Annex B.1). The artist explains that discrimination does not always manifest itself directly and visibly but is rooted in society; although homosexuality is no longer openly rejected by the various agents in the artistic field, there is discrimination that takes less perceptible forms. This is in line with what João Pedro Vale said when he mentioned social prejudices that manifest in "countless micro-aggressions" (Vale, Annex B.5). The artists talked about the false expectations and assumptions that often arise from the stereotyping of queer identities: "they assume that queer people are more nocturnal (...) this idea that you (queer person) can't miss a meeting in the same way that a straight person can, with the same excuses" (Vale, Annex B.5). Concerning artistic practices and their reception by the public, there is constant pressure, particularly when artists decide to explicitly express their queer identity in their art.

> We heard a lot of things like: "Aren't you afraid of working with these themes that many people don't understand? Aren't you limiting your audience to just other gay

> people?" And I'd reply that being gay I could also understand Romeo and Juliet. (Vale, Annex B.5)

Based on João Pedro Vale's observations, we can understand that when artists open up their body of work to the exploration of the body, sexuality, and personal identity, they can face questioning and reluctance from both the public and agents within the artistic field. This creates pressure from both the market and institutions to adopt normative or consensually accepted artistic practices. The continuous need to justify their work to a society with components that are still very conservative can, in some cases, result in artists self-censoring. Queer artists run the risk of self-policing being internalized to the point of not being aware of it. This is a consequence of the need to balance their artistic expression with the expectations and prejudices of the cultural milieu to which they wish to belong. This is because, in most cases, artists need the broad acceptance of the milieu to survive, and this dependence is linked to cultural institutions and art galleries. Furthermore, the constant need for justification to which queer artists are subjected contributes, according to Nuno Alexandre Ferreira, to the development of an "enhanced sense of justification" (Ferreira, Annex B.5), both in their personal lives and their artistic practices. In other words, the repeated processes of justification required of queer artists means that, in the long term, they develop an *a priori* ability to justify their creative choices or decisions. This process is driven by structural discrimination that reproduces mechanisms of marginalization and omission, questioning, even if unintentionally, the validity of artistic expressions characterized as 'queer,' particularly those that deviate from consensually accepted norms.

> They [gallerists] look at trans people as a trend. They don't think it's a smart choice. Maybe only time will prove that some people's art is really worthy. In that sense, it can show discrimination against the quality of certain people's art. It's not considered good enough for certain galleries and for certain collectors. (Odete, Annex B. 2)

In the excerpt quoted above, Odete[46] discusses various aspects of the relationship between queer artists and art market practices, in particular, the possible discriminatory biases that can

[46] Odete had her first solo exhibition at BARDO in 2020. She presented an installation entitled *MFT priestess cutting the bone to reveal its lie*.

affect trans artists in Portugal. The artist tells us about the difficulty she feels in working with economically driven galleries, which tend to consider art made by queer people as 'less collectible' and as a trend with high investment risk, as if it were an ‘art trend.’ To this extent, it presupposes the possibility of *an a priori* devaluation of the intrinsic quality of the artworks, manifesting itself in an ambivalent way. While we mentioned earlier that risk is inherent in most transactions in the primary art market (especially when it comes to emerging artists), these factors can be accentuated when the works distance themselves from the aesthetic ideal subordinated to the prevailing standards of presentation. This aspect is reinforced by the observation of gallery director José Mário Brandão when he says: “Sometimes people aren't sure if it’s good to exhibit certain works” (Annex B.3). As contemporary art galleries are a business that responds directly to the interests of the market, namely the demand of buyers, professionals in the sector may be reluctant to exhibit works that they consider commercially unviable or more difficult to sell. In other words, galleries invest in emerging artists mainly with a medium-term financial return in mind. In this respect, Odete points out that it is common for gallerists to devalue some artistic practices to the detriment of others, particularly in the way that artistic practices described as 'sanitized' are privileged (Annex B.2). That is, works of art that are in line with more conventional aesthetic standards, that follow labor norms and that are consensually accepted by the art world. In this sense, the question arises: could there be, in circumstances similar to those described, a marginalization inherent in commercial practices that could impact artists whose work reflects 'queer' notions?

> The gallery is a commercial space but they won't stop exhibiting a work because it’s difficult to sell, it’s important to show the artist's work (...) Of course, within the artist's oeuvre, some things are easier to sell, more domestic works. But I like to hold good exhibitions. (Guerra, Annex B.9)

In the segment above, gallery owner Cristina Guerra points out that there are indeed works that are considered ‘less saleable,’ particularly when they move away from what is associated with a familiar, everyday environment (not only in subject matter but also in size). However, Guerra contends that it is essential for gallerists to reconcile the commercial dimension with the cultural dimension in their exhibitions and for artists to have a work that meets both. In

this sense, it is important for artists to have a good "work management" (Guerra, Annex B.9): quality, consistency, and attention to the market in their artistic practice. It can be seen that the commercial transaction of works is a fundamental part of the artist's valorization because, as well as directly helping them to survive, it is essential for the dissemination of their work and for the progressive building of a reputation (which in turn guarantees the persistence of their appreciation in the medium and long term). To this end, the artist needs to maintain a presence in the market, holding regular gallery exhibitions to enhance (or maintain) their reputation in the field. If, on the one hand, there may be art market dynamics that pose a challenge to the valorization of 'queer' artistic practices, on the other hand, if a collective effort is made between the various agents in the field, these challenges can be successfully met.

4.2 About Visibility: 'Queer' Discourses in Galleries

Cultural visibility refers not only to the ability to be seen but also to recognition and validation in a context that often excludes, omits, or invisibilizes certain subjects and artistic expressions in favor of others. In the context of contemporary artistic practices, addressing 'queer' visibility implies analyzing how their identities and narratives are represented, received, and understood in the cultural and artistic milieu. However, as mentioned earlier, this is not a straightforward issue. The fact that visibility can provoke exacerbated reactions of cultural and political retaliation makes the issue much more complex (see what happened with the "Queermuseu" exhibition in Brazil[47]). In the context of artistic practices, visibility must be supported by sustained discourse that appeals to social awareness. Only then can visibility be an important instrument for laying the foundations for a more inclusive and diverse cultural space. The entry of queer artists and ideas into exhibition spaces not only promotes inclusion but also revitalizes the artistic field, challenges prevailing norms, and enriches cultural narratives. This implies recognition and validation within art institutions (public and private) and the various agents of the medium (including gallerists, curators, and collectors, among others), promoting a more diverse and equitable representation in the art field.

Turning to the specific field of art markets, the question arises: is it possible to talk about a growing influx of queer artists and expressions into art galleries? If, on the one hand, the

[47] The exhibition "Queermuseu - Cartografias da Diferença na Arte Brasileira" took place in 2017 in Porto Alegre. The controversy surrounding the theme of the exhibition and the artworks on display generated a strong reaction from religious groups and conservative-liberal political parties who threatened to boycott Santander Bank (the organizer), leading to the definitive closure of the exhibition (referência).

majority of interviewees have the impression that there is a growing presence of queer artists in art galleries, on the other hand, factors were raised that point to the complexity of the issue and the need for it to be analyzed from various points of view. This complexity is primarily rooted in the historical omission and concealment of sexuality and gender in art and everyday life, making it difficult to carry out an exhaustive survey of artistic and cultural manifestations centered on the affirmation of sexuality and gender issues. According to Pedro Faro (art critic, curator, and co-programmer of Galerias Municipais), the presence of queer people in the art world has always existed, but it was camouflaged and omitted (Annex B.8). The public 'coming out' of artists (and even gallerists) and the possibility of openly transposing it in art is something historically recent, driven by the visibility of the feminist and LGBT movements that began to consolidate from the 1980s in the USA (and at the end of 1990s in Portugal).

If, as mentioned before, the apparent context of globalization and democratization of Portuguese institutions led artists in the late 1990s and early 2000s to express ‘queer’ notions more openly in their artistic practices, it is now pertinent to understand how these discourses are taken up and articulated in the Portuguese gallery sector. According to Vasco Araújo, the Filomena Soares Gallery was one of the first to represent a group of homosexual artists: “There was a time at Filomena Soares when there was me [Vasco Araújo], Ana Pérez-Quiroga, João Pedro Vale, Pedro Casqueiro, Ana Jotta, Rodrigo Oliveira, João Penalva, among others” (Araújo, Annex B.1). According to Vasco Araújo, the work of this group of artists does not always express their queer identity, and there are works in which this dimension is more evident than others. It is possible to understand that the choice to work with these artists was not based on their sexual or gender identities but was made taking into account the quality and appreciation of their artistic work (which sometimes passes through the ‘queer’ imaginary, but not always) resulting in a coincidence of queer representation at the Filomena Soares Gallery during the early 2000s. In this context, Vasco Araújo observes that nowadays, with the appearance of new galleries, these artists are more dispersed, and there is no specific interest on the part of Portuguese galleries in seeking out queer artists: “But most of these artists have since left the Filomena Soares Gallery and now... It's all very spread out. There isn't a specific gallery that is looking for queer artists” (Araújo, Annex B.1). Today, Vasco Araújo and João Penalva work with Francisco Fino Gallery, Ana Pérez-Quiroga works with NO.NO Gallery, João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira (as a duo) are represented by Cristina Guerra Gallery, Pedro Casqueiro and Ana Jotta are at Miguel Nabinho Gallery and Rodrigo Oliveira is at Balcony Gallery. It is possible to understand that, with the growth of the national gallery scene and the emergence of new generations of artists who

express ‘queer’ notions in their artistic practice, there is no great concentration of queer artists in the same gallery but rather a wider and more heterogeneous distribution.

According to Pedro Faro (Annex B.8), it is clear that some galleries have developed projects whose themes are tangential to what has been characterized as ‘queer’ expressions in contemporary art, namely feminist approaches and the exploration of gender identity: “I've seen feminist projects, such as Helena Almeida's exhibition at the Filomena Soares Gallery (...) Ana Vidigal, for example, has had exhibitions in commercial galleries with this feminist marking” (Faro, Annex B.8). According to Pedro Faro, the exploration of these themes in the exhibition context always stems from the work of the artists, finding a place, in a more or less articulated way, in the programming of the commercially driven galleries. Although ‘queer’ approaches are not usually the main focus of exhibitions, they have found a place in gallery programming. In this context, it is important to highlight the work *Vampires in Space* (see Annex A, figures 9 and 10) by Isadora Neves Marques, a video installation selected to represent Portugal at the 2022 Venice Biennale.[48] According to the artist, this project was very important because it constitutes the “most explicit work about my relationship with ‘queer’ themes (...) Thematically, it was the first work to speak directly about these issues” (Marques, Annex B.4); a significant achievement for the valorization of ‘queer’ notions in the field of contemporary art. In this context, the artist highlights the interconnection between galleries and art institutions, showing that galleries can play a crucial role in financing and promoting artistic projects at high-profile events (such as biennials and international art fairs). Curators and galleries collaborate closely to make exhibitions possible, which challenges the view that galleries operate only as spaces of commerce (see Annex B.4). This is especially relevant for the visibility of queer artists, as it involves strategies that transcend local galleries and reach international platforms of great visibility (with a high number of visitors, both from the public and art professionals).

> What happens when we look at the gallery scene in Portugal is that it doesn't match up with what people are actually doing. And this is a very serious problem. The work that artists are doing is not what is in the galleries (...) there is an unequivocal split

[48] The Portuguese Official Representation at the 59th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia 2022, was curated by João Mourão and Luís Silva.

between what the gallery is and what contemporary artistic production is. (Vale, Annex B.5)

Revisiting the reflection carried out in the Literature Review (subchapter 2.2), where it was discussed that commercial galleries have historically played an active role in valuing and recognizing marginal or less visible artistic expressions, the quote above reflects João Pedro's perspective on the Portuguese art scene. Like João Pedro Vale, Nuno Alexandre Ferreira, Odete, and Isadora Neves Marques also share the view that, although galleries can be active agents for the recognition of 'queer' artistic practices, their actions generally reflect neutrality on the subject. In other words, they are seen essentially as commercial-driven spaces and not as having an assumed or particularly developed social concern. This aspect is evident in the following observation: "there isn't a kind of awareness on the part of the galleries to have greater gender equality, or to try to diversify (...) I don't know if they engage or see themselves as part of this social process" (Marques, Annex B.4). Although there has been some progress in terms of programming exhibitions around 'queer' themes, the opinions gathered are that galleries, generally, focus mainly on the financial component, favoring commercial interests. However, despite assuming the difficulties in ensuring inclusivity for all, João Pedro Vale reinforces the importance of private galleries having a 'social responsibility' towards the artistic environment that translates into an effort to represent a more diverse group of artists (Annex B.5).

In this context, the Municipal Galleries of Lisbon and Oporto (Galerias Municipais) have done a remarkable job, taking the lead in the promotion and visibility of all kinds of artistic projects, especially through careful, attentive, and conscious programming of the various types of inclusion and diversity in the world of contemporary art. The Municipal Galleries of Lisbon, overseen by the City Council and directed by Sara Antónia Matos,[49] are committed to invigorating the artistic community and reflecting contemporary culture through various exhibition spaces, each dedicated to specific objectives that support this cause.[50]Although they are called 'galleries', these spaces have a purely cultural dimension, providing resources, space, and a specialized team for artists to plan exhibitions and present their work to the

[49] The direction and programming of the Lisbon Municipal Galleries has been held by Sara Antónia Matos from 2017 to 2019, and currently from 2023 to 2026.

[50] Lisbon's Municipal Galleries are made up of five exhibition spaces that periodically host temporary exhibitions: Pavilhão Branco, Galeria da Boavista, Torreão Nascente da Cordoaria Nacional, Galeria Quadrum and Galeria Avenida da Índia.

public. According to Pedro Faro, the co-programmer of the Municipal Galleries of Lisbon, the fact that they are a public facility reinforces social responsibility even more, noting that: “A whole lot of work is being done to ensure that the Municipal Galleries are open to everyone” (Faro, B.8). Despite arguing that private galleries should have a social conscience towards the artistic community, Pedro Faro points out that this dimension should always be present in the conduct of state cultural institutions since they depend on public funds for their operation. This is evident in the way the Municipal Galleries embrace exhibitions that encompass a wide range of themes and are constantly aware of what is happening in the national contemporary art scene. For example, in Galeria da Boavista (one of Lisbon's Municipal Galleries), there is a program dedicated to emerging artists, and in 2023, it hosted the exhibition “Artifício” by Odete (see Annex A, figures 11 and 12). In this exhibition, the artist articulates a queer and feminist discourse by talking about the artificiality of beauty and appearance, reconciling Artificial Intelligence technology with the universe of medieval alchemy. Curated by Marta Espiridião, the exhibition unfolds unconventionally: divided into two floors, the exhibition begins with a library where the public is invited to 'dive' into the artist's interests and obsessions (from queer and trans literature to magic, among other topics). The exhibition continues on the second floor, this time in the dark, where the public, using a flashlight, explores “a secret society of transsexuals, hermaphrodites and androgynous creatures” (Odete, as cited in Kruglyak, 2023, para. 2), where visitors can find a tapestry and a herbarium (built using artificial intelligence) and the projection of a video about the concepts developed in the exhibition can be found. In a slight geographical shift, the exhibition “forms of the surrounding futures” (see Annex A, figure 13), curated by João Laia (director of Ágora's Contemporary Art Department), opened in June 2024 at Porto Municipal Gallery (Galeria Municipal do Porto). The collective exhibition, which brings together a group of eleven artists (national and international), aims to be a platform for imagining, making visible, and rehearsing the emergence of multiple futures. According to João Laia, a queer stance has been adopted in the way it assumes an emancipatory and collective position, embracing various non-normative identities, questioning hegemonic understandings of society, and empowering alternative narratives that celebrate diversity and collective capacity (Laia, 2024).

Due to the extremely exiguous nature of the art market in Portugal, the acquisition of works of art by state-sponsored institutions is of fundamental importance to the normal functioning of the art markets. This aspect is highlighted by Isadora Neves Marques when states: “Talking about the art market in Portugal is a problem. The art market in Portugal is made up of four or five institutions that erratically collect and a hand of collectors. It is very

small" (Marques, Annex B.4). In this regard, government intervention in its various forms is of enormous importance, whether through the Ministry of Culture or through semi-private cultural foundations, namely when it comes to the acquisition of works of art that not only benefit artists at various levels (cultural appreciation and prestige, financial resources) but also support the galleries that represent them. Although there has been an undeniable effort to improve state intervention in the support of the cultural and artistic sector throughout the 21st century, there are still huge limitations. These constraints are mainly due to the discontinuity of cultural policies associated with changes in government or the direction of cultural institutions.

In the context of the variety of contemporary artistic expressions characterized as 'queer' that are emerging in the Portuguese context, it seems pertinent to present a type of interest or a topic that has become increasingly prominent in the artistic landscape. If, previously, it was possible to understand that there are artists whose queer approach reflects the limitations of the present to imagine and project future realities (a discourse articulated in "forms of the surrounding futures"), there is also an interest in reflecting on and navigating the traumas of the historical past, using art as an instrument to establish new negotiations between the past and the present. After reading subchapter 2.3, it is possible to understand that the historiographical work on queer identities, their history, and their artistic expressions is still to be done, as a result of the censorship, repression, and marginalization that was perpetuated during the Portuguese fascist dictatorship and which left deep scars on society. The fact that queer people generally have no direct descendants may explain the interest of the community itself (indirect descendants) in valuing and legitimizing their contributions, whether artistic, literary, activist or otherwise.[51] According to Nuno Alexandre Ferreira, the need to remember these figures in his artistic practice stems from the political awareness that it is possible to rewrite history from a personal perspective: "By analyzing what history is, you become aware that you can write your own history. I want these people to be part of my history! Because it is my history" (Annex B.5). But it also stems from the perception that the values of respect and equality that have been achieved are proving to be fragile in the face of the current political landscape, particularly in the face of the increase in hate speech and policies that subvert fundamental freedoms. It is essential to appreciate the courage and determination of all the

[51] Interpreting this historical heritage through a 'queer' lens, bringing non-normative figures into the contemporary debate, and valuing their artistic expression is work that has been done recently in some literary, cultural, and art projects. Some brief examples of this are QUEERQUIVO by André Murraças, the performance Invested Landscapes by André Teodósio (Teatro Praga), the book O Mundo Gay de António Botto by Anna Klobucka, among others.

artists and activists in Portugal who, despite being in the minority, have challenged their oppressive regimes in pursuit of their values.

In the exhibition "A Mão na Coisa, a Coisa na Boca, a Boca na Coisa, a Coisa na Mão," presented in 2018 at the Cristina Guerra Gallery in Lisbon, the duo João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira recalls gay resistance during the fascist dictatorship, exploring a collective queer imaginary in danger of disappearing. The exhibition is developed around the mechanisms of repression and punishment during the Portuguese dictatorship, exploring the manifestations of queer resistance and their importance in the formulation of a contemporary 'queer' culture. The title of the exhibition makes direct reference to a 'document' that decrees prohibitions and penalties for men who engage in *cruising* (a term that designates sex in public space), celebrated here as an emancipatory act against the moral and political persecution of homosexuality during the dictatorship. Among the works of art displayed, *Vadios* (2018) stands out: a life-size metal sculpture covered in graffiti that aims to recreate the structure of public urinals.[52] The title of the work refers to a pejorative term used by the legal-penal system to designate homosexuals involved in 'immoral' practices, while the work recovers a space potentially used for anonymous sexual encounters. This piece references Michel Foulcault's views on the theory of the *panopticon*, which argues that social control is exercised not only through direct surveillance but also by the fact that people, unaware that they are being watched, internalize norms and rules, leading them to self-police and become their repressors (Bullock, 2017). When interacting with *Vadios* (illustrated in Annex A, figure 14), the viewer is invited to wander outside and inside a circular structure, offering a symbolic experience of this clandestine practice during the period of Portuguese fascism, where homosexuals balanced the potential dangers and fears of being caught with sexual desire. An interesting aspect is that the walls are covered in poems, slogans, and phrases that mix literary and political statements, creating a kind of alternative "queer archive" (Marques, 2024). Some of the inscriptions present were written by a selection of Portuguese poets known for their references to homosexual sex: Judith Teixeira, António Botto, Raul Leal, and Mário Cesariny. Regarding this exhibition, Bruno Marques (2024) raises the question: "How can art help to understand and deal with the traumas resulting from these suppressions, silences, and negative identities?" (Marques, 2024: 282). In *Vadios*, the artists deconstruct the idea of immoral, pathological, and clandestine sex, celebrating *cruising* as a valid form of queer resistance

[52] The sculpture Vadios (2018) is currently part of "Casa Vale Ferreira," an anthological exhibition by João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira, curated in 2014 by Inês Grosso for the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art (Museu de arte Contemporânea de Serralves).

during the fascist dictatorship. Reinforcing the argument started in the Literature Review chapter (subchapter 2.3) about the possible historical impact on contemporary artistic practices, it can be observed that, through a queer positioning, Portuguese artists have used their artistic practice to confront historical erasure and conceive counter-narratives that value a historical and artistic legacy absent from official historiography. According to Ferreira, the concern to give visibility to the repressed figures and contents of history can be linked to the awareness that the mechanisms of omission persist, albeit in different forms (see Annex B.5). In this sense, using a 'queer' lens to reflect the traumas derived from historical erasure, omission, and exclusion is, on the one hand, doing justice to the memory of these figures and, on the other, reiterating the importance of freedom.

4.3 Galleries and 'Queer' Art Practices: Market Dynamics and Inclusion

In the context of the present dissertation, it is essential to deepen our understanding of the relationship between artists, gallerists, and collectors, with particular emphasis on how this interaction can influence the inclusion of queer artistic practices in the art market. As mentioned before, in the Literature Review (subchapter 2.2), it is important to remember that the art market is a social field whose function depends on the relationship between the multiple agents and institutions that constitute it. The valorization of an artistic practice arises from the convergence of perceptions between the various agents (with different degrees of prestige, or symbolic capital), who interact and influence each other within a given *artistic field*.[53] Through the experiences and perspectives of the interviewees, the aim is to prove the veracity of this statement by understanding the influence that contemporary art galleries have on the inclusion of artistic practices characterized as 'queer' in the Portuguese art market. Finally, the subchapter 4.3.1 is dedicated to a broader reflection on the inclusion of under-represented artistic practices in art markets.

In 2011, as a result of an artistic residency in Provincetown (a small village in the USA), João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira developed a joint project that was to be presented at the Espaço Arte da Tranquilidade (an exhibition space created in 2008, owned by an insurance company), in Lisbon. The space was programmed by three private galleries, including Filomena Soares Gallery, with which João Pedro Vale had maintained a professional

[53] The concept of 'artistic field' is used in this context from Pierre Bourdieu's theory, which defines 'field' as a social space of interactions and disputes between agents seeking legitimacy and prestige, each possessing different levels of capital (cultural, social, economic, symbolic). For more details, see Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The Field of Cultural Production*.

relationship since 2004 (Vale, Annex B.5). The project, entitled "P-Town," addressed the relationship between various aspects of the American village, namely the fact that it brought together three very specific and, to a certain extent, unusual aspects: Portuguese emigrants, a strong connection to the homosexual community and its past as an artistic center.[54] However, weeks before the opening, and without warning, the exhibition was shut down by the insurance company that was financing the space. According to Vale e Ferreira, the organizers' concerns began to emerge during the setting up of the exhibition, namely when they saw the poster that was going to be displayed on the façade of the building. The image was to be printed in large dimensions, transforming the village monument into a phallic symbol (illustrated in Annex A, figure 14). This image referred to the themes dealt with in the exhibition, whose attitude can be described as 'queer.' This aspect is evident in the inscription on one of the works: "AIDS is killing artists, now homophobia is killing art" (Horta, 2011). According to Ferreira, the organizers told him in a private email that the exhibition had been abandoned because it was "too gay-themed" (Ferreira, Annex B.5), which could be unpleasant for the company's shareholders. This event illustrates the possible challenges that queer artists face in the cultural and artistic environment, reflecting an attitude of censorship derived from possible prejudices and discriminatory biases of a homophobic nature, which would manifest itself again in a similar manner in 2018, with the controversy surrounding Mapplethorpe's exhibition at the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art (alongside the long history of censorship on the international scene).[55]

> It was then that we felt completely let down by the gallery. And that ultimately led us to stop working with the Filomena Soares Gallery. The gallery that represented us didn't defend us against the market (...) When the work started to become more political, our relationship with the gallery changed (Ferreira, Annex B.5).

[54] The first part of the project was exhibited at the NurtureArt Gallery in New York City.

[55] In 2018, another controversial case of censorship invaded the newspapers at the time, namely about the exhibition "Robert Mapplethorpe: Pictures" at Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art. It concerned the banning of minors from a part of the exhibition considered to be sexually explicit (organized in a specific room). This event cannot fail to be understood in the context of a history of censorship of the presentation of Mapplethorpe's work on an international scale (as mentioned earlier), which has become a symbol of the recent struggle for freedom of artistic expression. In an opinion piece in the newspaper Público, Alexandre Melo asks: "Would the censorship drive have the same intensity if the relationships represented were heterosexual or, in other cases, if the skin color of the bodies represented were white?" (Melo, 2018a). The media pressure ultimately led the artistic director and curator of the exhibition, João Ribas, to resign the day after the exhibition opened.

The "P-Town" case is invoked in this context to open up a discussion about the responsibilities and challenges that exist in the relationship between artist and gallerist, particularly when it comes to artistic expressions characterized as 'queer.' According to Ferreira (Annex B.5), in the excerpt highlighted above, Filomena Soares Gallery, with whom they had an exclusive contract, did not give them the proper support in the face of the cancellation of the exhibition. As a result, the professional link between the two artists and the gallery was ultimately broken, and they remained without a gallery for more than a decade.[56] The fact that the gallery does not openly defend the artists in the face of censorship imposed by the market could reveal a concern not to displease the partners, which ultimately denotes a fragility in the relationship between artist and gallerist. This example highlights how galleries can be complicit in the exclusion of queer narratives instead of challenging such prejudices, prioritizing commercial interests even in the face of episodes of social injustice. Given the fundamental role of galleries in the primary art market, especially concerning artists with less exposure, breaking this relationship can generate insecurity and obstacles to their professional progression. In this case, it was the media (with countless opinion articles written in newspapers), the support of the cultural milieu, and institutional help that brought some justice to the situation, with the reopening of the "P-Town" exhibition at Galeria da Boavista (in November 2011), supported by the Lisbon City Council and Catarina Vaz Pinto, Councillor for Culture.

> Throughout my career, I've always been concerned about holding the first exhibitions of certain artists (...) I agree with opening a gallery to make money because it can be a place of commerce. However, in addition to that, other values have to be highlighted (Brandão, Annex B. 3).

In the sentence above, José Mário Brandão reflects on the importance of galleries actively promoting artists and creating cultural discourse. Although Brandão (Annex B.3) argues that the quality of the works is the element that weighs most heavily when choosing an artist to promote, the director of Graça Brandão Gallery shows solidarity by opening his doors to people who might have difficulty accessing galleries, either because of their identities or the specific characteristics of their work, demonstrating the importance of ethics and inclusivity

[56] More specifically until 2022, the year in which João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira began to be represented by Cristina Guerra Gallery.

in art market practices. The gallerist adds that the exhibition "Uma Cerveja no Inferno" (present from January to March 2024)[57], which brought together a group of artists who developed 'queer' notions, was the recent exhibition with the most public attendance at the gallery, demonstrating a growing interest in these themes (Brandão, Annex B.3). José Mário Brandão also notes that, from his perspective as director, having exhibitions in the gallery that address these themes can have a significant impact on the acceptance of artists in the field: "If an artist is good, this will be reflected in the acceptance people will have on their work and their way of being in life" (Brandão, Annex B.3). Cristina Guerra also highlighted the transformative power of art, especially when there are developed perspectives that are not widely understood or known by the general public, working to raise social awareness. The gallerist notes that exhibitions that transported her to a "different world" (Guerra, Annex B.9), of which she was unaware, provided her with valuable lessons, capable of changing misconceptions about certain subjects.[58] Even so, Brandão believes that there are still challenges to the full acceptance of attitudes that are not subject to the normative standards prevailing in the art markets, especially about the reluctance of some agents to publicly assume their support, reflected in the few texts produced[59] and the scarce acquisitions of works resulting from these attitudes by collectors and cultural institutions in Portugal (Brandão, Annex B.3).

Based on the interviewees' experiences, it can be observed that the relationship between artist and gallerist must be deeply rooted in values of trust, respect, and collaborative effort. According to Vasco Araújo (Annex B.1), the fact that Portuguese galleries are generally small (especially compared to the big international galleries) can favor greater proximity between the artist and the gallerist. Vasco Araújo, represented by Galeria Francisco Fino since 2016, says that he has a very close relationship with his gallerist: "The gallerist is our friend, the person who supports us, looks at the work, and is also critical" (Araújo, Annex B.1). As well as the gallerist directly supporting the artist's practice by facilitating the sale and providing resources, they can also play an important role by offering a critical view of the artist's work.

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[57] The exhibition "Uma Cerveja no Inferno," took place in 2024 at the Graça Brandão Gallery. The group show was commissioned by Manuel Santos Maia and featured Carla Castiajo, Dylan Silva, Inês Coelho, João Paulo Balsini, Pedro Moreira, Raul Macedo, and Susana Chiocca.

[58] Cristina Guerra refers to *1983*, a performance done by João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira in 2022 at Rialto6. The project focuses on the stigma suffered by the homosexual community during the HIV/AIDS infection crisis in Portugal (Guerra, Annex B.9).

[59] In this context, Ferreira adds that, generally, the texts that accompany exhibitions with a 'queer' theme do not develop these issues in a direct way: "I don't think this courage exists. We've had exhibitions where the press-releases have the subjects very disguised, camouflaged" (Ferreira, Annex B.5).

The aspect of cooperation is also mentioned by Cristina Guerra (Annex B.9), who describes working with her artists as a journey based on mutual trust. Guerra observes that the public's perception of an artist can vary over time, and it is necessary to cultivate the artist's long-term appreciation in the market, which requires a great deal of effort and dedication on both sides. This process comes from great complicity and trust, where the gallery appears as "a kind of boat in which I'm at the helm, but we're all rowing in the same direction" (Guerra, Annex B.9). Isadora Neves Marques (represented by the Umberto di Marino Gallery in Naples), in turn, emphasizes honest and transparent communication with gallerists. As a transgender woman, Neves Marques argues that it is essential for gallerists to respect and understand the values and demands of the LGBT community (see Appendix B.4). It becomes essential for their professional collaborators to respect the different forms of identity expression, both in their artistic practice and in one's personal life. This aspect is evidenced by the following observation: "In my relations with my gallery, I have a very open conversation about my life (...) They have to be our partners in making changes happen" (Marques, Annex B.4). Neves Marques believes that a healthy professional bond between queer artists and gallerists depends on an understanding and support of the central causes for respecting sexuality and identities that do not conform to the prevailing normative models, with a view to equality and tolerance between people. This approach, when applied well, fosters a working environment where queer attitudes are valued and supported, laying the foundations for a more inclusive and egalitarian sector.

> Collectors can help change this situation [inequality of opportunities] by promoting the acquisition of queer works of art and themes. The interest in acquiring these works by collectors, especially those with collections that are presented to the public, leads galleries and other institutions to respond to this demand by including queer artists and themes. (Silva, Annex B.7)

Whereas earlier it was mentioned that the art market is regulated by the interaction between supply and demand, it is now understood that this dynamic can be a way of enhancing 'queer' artistic practices. In the excerpt above, the collector Ângelo Silva, who started his collection in 2010, highlights the central role of the articulation between the various market agents (galleries, collectors, artists, and institutions) in the potential valorization of these forms of

artistic expressions (Silva, Annex B.7). By acquiring works of contemporary art, collectors act as "agents of legitimization for the artists" (Silva, Appendix B.7), injecting capital into the market, which ultimately influences the commercial valuation of a given artistic practice. Although the Ângelo Damião collection[60] incorporates several works that can, according to his perspective, be read as 'queer,' Silva observes that interest among collectors in this type of art is little or limited in the Portuguese market (Annex B.7). Sharing this point of view, José Mário Brandão notes that the majority of transactions in the Portuguese art market are sustained by national collectors, which may limit the expansion of these artistic practices (Annex B.3).[61] Brandão also says that the number of transactions of what can be considered 'queer' art is insufficient to maintain a gallery, and that a heterogeneous offer is needed to appeal to a greater number of buyers. This aspect is also mentioned by Vale, who says: "We don't work much with international collectors (...) The core of our survival is national collectors" (Vale, Annex B.5). In other words, the artist sells artworks abroad, but that is residual in comparison with their overall sales. In addition to the acquisitions of large Portuguese collections, which, when open to the public, achieve greater visibility, Vale and Ferreira refer to the positive impact of national "small collectors" (Vale and Ferreira, Annex B.5). In other words, buyers who have little economic capital and buy smaller works regularly. According to the artists, although these purchases are for private or domestic purposes, they believe that their works have a social impact, expanding market niches. This is evident when the artist states: "in those works sold to small collectors, our works create small waves" (Ferreira, B.5). The importance of the commercial transaction of artworks is also mentioned by Cristina Guerra (Annex B.9), who argues that in addition to supporting the artist financially, it is essential for the dissemination of the artist's work and for building a consistent reputation in the contemporary art field.

In the context of the specific dynamics of commercial transactions, it has been possible to identify some different types of collecting of artworks that can be described as 'queer,' based on the specific characteristics of each work. The acquisition of a particular work of art can be the result of the intersection of one or more types of collecting. Firstly, there is the practice of buying based on subjective criteria, based on an appreciation of the aesthetic characteristics of the work or the theme represented. It was also possible to identify the interest of collectors in supporting artists belonging to the same community, motivated by 'pride' or a relationship of

[60] Ângelo Damião é o nome da coleção de arte de Ângelo Silva e de Paulo Damião.

[61] According to José Mário Brandão: "Foreigners who come to Portugal don't usually buy Portuguese art (...) They hire a decorator who makes the choices for them. There are few collectors living in Portugal who buy Portuguese art" (Brandão, Annex B.3).

personal and emotional identification with the work. Collector Ângelo Silva, for example, notes: “There is, therefore, an extension of ourselves in the acquisition of works (...) As such, the influences and inspirations for collecting these so-called ‘queer’ works refer to our biography, our emotional relationship, and our personal identification with them” (Silva, Annex B.3). According to Vale and Ferreira (Annex B.5), it is also common for collectors to buy their works to value their private art collections. In this regard, Ferreira says that in the case of established artists, collectors buy “because it’s ours, because it already has a market value (...) It’s a logic of valuing the collection, not because of the theme it deals with” (Ferreira, Annex B.5). The fact that the artists are well-established in the Portuguese market may be a valid reason for the acquisition of their works, although it is common for collectors not to be fully aware of the values involved: “I think they [collectors] often buy artworks without knowing their meaning; they don’t have the codes to decipher them” (Ferreira, Annex B.5).

According to the different types of collecting, gallerists can value the specific characteristics of each work to encourage its acquisition. In the case of ‘queer’ art practices, as Teodósio points out (see Annex B.6), gallerists can encourage collectors to participate in the collectivization of queer history, reinforcing the idea that the commercial transaction of artworks can be an act of cultural involvement and support for minority and historically underprivileged communities. At the same time, by emphasizing the individual relationship between art and the public, they are contributing to the social recognition of new forms of artistic expression. In this way, the gallerist, by promoting a particular exhibition or artist to the public, can directly raise interest in perspectives that distance themselves from the norm and their relevance in the field of contemporary art. This influence in the cultural field is particularly relevant in the primary art market, where the commercialization of a work of art has a direct impact on building or maintaining the artist's career. The mediating agent, in this context the gallerists, must act as a transfer point, leading the viewer to certain works and actively participating in their valorization on the market.

4.3.1 What are the next steps?

> In my opinion, it doesn't make sense for a contemporary art gallery not to be completely inclusive nowadays (...) The contemporary world is diverse, a world of inclusion. A contemporary art gallery is a gallery that lives in today's world and today's world must be inclusive. (Guerra, Annex B.9)

The excerpt above refers to the observations of gallerist Cristina Guerra and her perception of what the position of contemporary art galleries should be in the cultural and artistic landscape. According to Guerra, galleries should reflect the transformations and debates taking place in the art world but also know how to reconcile their commercial objectives with the promotion of a fairer, more diverse, and representative sector. To keep up with changes in society, contemporary art galleries need to constantly update their practices, ensuring the inclusion of new artistic approaches that reflect the plural reality of today's world (Guerra, Annex B.9). This aspect is also mentioned by Neves Marques when she says: “If galleries want to keep up with society, then they have to open up (...) Otherwise, they become obsolete. They are no longer keeping up with what’s happening in art” (Marques, B.4). To this end, a gallery must try to be inclusive on its various fronts: exhibition programming, support for artists, accessibility of the space, and the production of cultural discourses that are relevant to the contemporary debate. However, as inferred above, the issue of inclusivity on the part of galleries in Portugal is a complex matter, with a lack of consistent strategies aimed at combating the phenomena of inequality and under-representation.

In their role as indispensable agents in the art market, gallerists must be aware of their importance as facilitators of the inclusion of under-represented artistic practices and expressions. This aspect is highlighted by Vale, when he says that although galleries are private entities, “there is a social conscience that everyone should have” (Vale, Annex B.5), namely towards the environment in which they operate. The diversification of the artistic portfolio and the programming of queer artists by galleries is one of the ways that galleries can contribute to inclusivity in the sector, creating a platform that reflects artistic and social diversity. The urgency of this issue becomes even more evident in the representation of trans artists in Portugal. As Odete points out: “I don’t think any gallery represent trans artists. I’m not represented by any gallery (...) I have no support from any gallery to sell my works”

(Odete, Annex B.2). The artist adds that although the main agents in the Portuguese art field knew her name, few tried to understand her artistic practice (Annex B.2). To combat this reality, Odete suggests that agents in the field should adopt a proactive stance, visiting a greater diversity of exhibitions, debating and critically reflecting on them. By recognizing and valuing the diversity of experiences and identities, galleries can play a crucial role in building a more inclusive and representative art market.

The organization of diverse and intersectional exhibitions can be an important tool in promoting a 'general awareness' in the contemporary art milieu, especially in its ability to engage the public and help question possible structural prejudices. According to Alexandre Melo (2018b), the exclusion of under-represented people and artistic practices in exhibitions can, in some cases, represent a type of "involuntary omission" (Melo, 2018b: 114). In other words, the exclusion of some artists may be the result of ignorance or negligence on the part of the organizers of exhibitions (gallery owners, curators, programmers), the result of a lack of critical reflection on the prevailing mechanisms of exclusion, possible discriminatory biases and unequal opportunities in the sector. To confront this reality, it is essential to have sociological research that accompanies the curatorial process, promoting greater knowledge of the social and cultural dynamics that shape the artistic field (Melo, 2018b). This approach proposes that those responsible for designing exhibitions, particularly curators, should be more proactive and informed about issues of representativeness, promoting a more inclusive and equitable artistic practice.

João Pedro Vale (Annex B.5) emphasizes that inclusivity in the art market should not be limited to selecting a greater diversity of artists and curators but should also encompass all the agents involved in organizing and staging exhibitions, such as: "the staff of galleries and institutions, the design and communication departments, the people who write the texts, among others" (Vale, Annex B.5). Vale's perspective proves to be highly relevant, as it underlines the need for a structural and comprehensive transformation in the art market sector, aimed at greater inclusivity at all levels. By understanding that the market operates as a network of agents and institutions that influence each other, it becomes clear that only greater inclusivity across the sector could result in a deeper understanding of the social and cultural issues to which queer art practices are intimately related. In addition, a more diverse and pluralistic team enables different perspectives to be reflected on throughout the various stages of designing an exhibition, contributing to a greater awareness of the importance of the visibility of queer artistic practices and other under-represented expressions on the contemporary scene. Ultimately, this transformation can generate greater sensitivity and

understanding of the contemporary art context, promoting a more ethical representation of the various artistic practices involved and creating a more equitable sector as a whole. A commitment to inclusion in the various professions that make up the art markets, as mentioned by Vale, can be a way of intensifying and enriching the cultural debate, promoting the valorization of queer artistic practices in the art market.

Another relevant issue is related to the concern to ensure that an exhibition is accessible to as wide and diverse an audience as possible. According to Pedro Faro (Annex B.8), for an exhibition to be truly inclusive, it must be physically and intellectually accessible. Physical accessibility refers to the concern on the part of exhibition organizers to ensure that a person, regardless of their physical or motor limitations, can access and move around the space. Intellectual accessibility refers to the care taken to ensure that the information and discourse created around the exhibition are intelligible to a diverse public. Ambivalent attention to accessibility may require adaptations to the physical space, such as providing access for people with reduced mobility, adapting catalogs and room sheets for people with disabilities or visual impairments, as well as initiatives to make the content more accessible, such as simplifying language or guided tours for people with functional and cognitive diversity. By this, I do not mean to say that all galleries should make adaptations that go beyond their capabilities, but rather that each one, within their possibilities, should consider this type of social responsibility when designing exhibitions. Greater concern at this level could help the art market to be a more inclusive and equitable sector, contributing to greater representation in the contemporary art sector.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

This dissertation came about amidst a period in which ‘queer’ artistic practices have been gaining ground in cultural programming and commercial circuits. This circumstance has also motivated research that seeks to understand the phenomenon in greater depth. In this context, this dissertation sought to explore the need for these practices to be properly represented and valued in the Portuguese art markets, particularly through the intermediation of galleries, in an attempt to answer the following key questions raised in the introduction: (i) Can the art markets contain dynamics and biases that reinforce the marginalization of ‘queer’ artistic practices? (ii) What importance do ‘queer’ artistic practices assume in the contemporary art scene? (iii) To what extent are contemporary art galleries an important force in promoting under-represented or marginalized art forms? Before outlining potential future questions that could be explored in-depth in future research endeavors, it is worth summarizing the main findings of this study.

Although the research indicates an increasing openness in the sector regarding the visibility and representation of ‘queer’ artistic practices in galleries, several structural challenges still prevent full inclusion in the art markets sector. On the one hand, these limitations manifest themselves through subtle forms of marginalization, referred to as “tolerance by omission,” which perpetuate less explicit yet damaging forms of exclusion, creating barriers to the full acceptance of ‘queer’ artistic practices. In some cases, structural marginalization has manifested itself through the incorporation of queer artists into exhibition spaces to fulfill diversity quotas or to convey an impression of tolerance and inclusivity, rather than due to a genuine appreciation and understanding of their artistic practice. On the other hand, the specific dynamics of the art markets tend to favor artworks that are commercially viable or widely accepted by the art scene, leading more commercial/economic-orientated galleries to see ‘queer’ artistic practices as a passing trend and less marketable.

This scenario can have a direct impact on ‘queer’ artistic production, as it can generate pressure for artists to adapt their work to the prevailing market norms, limiting its disruptive and critical characteristics. In addition, the questioning, reluctance, and constant need for justification to which artists are subjected can, in some cases, generate aggravated, sometimes unconscious, forms of self-censorship.

Despite these barriers, there has been a consolidation of a support network of cultural projects and exhibition spaces, such as the Municipal Galleries and Rua das Gaivotas 6, which have emerged as alternative platforms for ‘queer’ visibility outside of private galleries. João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira highlighted the importance of seeking greater social awareness on the part of private galleries and the other players that comprise the contemporary art scene, intending to undermine conservatism and possible discriminatory biases still prevailing in the sector. Ultimately, these results emphasize the importance of a proactive stance and critical involvement from the agents that constitute the art market and cultural institutions, thus ensuring that ‘queer’ artistic practices are not only visible but that they are valued in the contemporary art scene, working towards a fairer and equal field.

Throughout this research, it has been possible to attest to the transformative role of art in the contemporary scenario, namely regarding how ‘queer’ artistic practices can function as an important awareness-raising tool in the fight against possible prejudices. Artists like Vasco Araújo used strategies, such as a strong aesthetic appeal, to capture the viewer's attention and induce them to question preconceived ideas and internalized stigmas. In the context of a variety of ‘queer’ artistic practices on the Portuguese contemporary scene, there is an interest in navigating the historical past, particularly concerning the traumas resulting from the repression, silencing, and social exclusion that homosexuals suffered during the long period of fascist dictatorship. As part of their creative process, Vale and Ferreira are inspired by historical figures who are important to the ‘queer’ community, legitimizing their contributions and reinforcing the importance of memory reparation and cultural justice. In the installation entitled *Vadios* (2018), the artists re-signify the idea of clandestine sexual practices, such as *cruising*, at a time when sex between men was punishable by law, establishing counter-narratives that seek to value a legacy omitted from national historiography. In addition, the walls of the piece create a kind of alternative “queer archive,” incorporating poems, slogans, and phrases that mark the passage of a group of writers and other figures associated with the community, reaffirming the importance of these testimonies in the construction of a collective and cultural memory that has been systematically silenced.

As well as revisiting the past, queer artistic practices also manifest themselves in the projection of utopian and emancipatory possibilities, as exemplified by the exhibition “forms of the surrounding futures” (Galeria Municipal do Porto, 2024), which explores new imaginaries through a ‘queer’ lens. The critical and disruptive vision that rewards ‘queer’ art takes on particular urgency in the face of the current global political context and its dangerous social and cultural consequences. In this way, it was possible to understand ‘queer’ artistic

practices in their multifaceted and complex dimension: While reflecting on past traumas and understanding their mechanisms of omission, exclusion, and marginalization, 'queer' also contains the ability to imagine possible futures, reiterating the importance of freedom and enhancing contemporary artistic discourse.

In addition to the aforementioned considerations, it was possible to understand the role of contemporary art galleries as indispensable agents in the primary art market sector, underlining their practices as a potential way of fostering acceptance and further valorization of ‘queer’ artistic practices. Through the selection and programming of artists in their exhibitions, galleries can shape what is seen and discussed in the world of contemporary art, and their choices have a direct impact on the visibility and success of the artists. José Mário Brandão believes that the programming of queer artists by galleries can ultimately have a positive effect on their ambivalent acceptance, both in their artistic practice and in their personal lives. This underlines the central role of galleries in not only enabling artists to survive through their artistic practice by providing resources and career management but also in contributing to their acceptance and recognition in the art world.

By understanding the different types of collecting, gallerists can act as important mediators between art and the public, especially in the case of ‘queer’ artistic practices. This mediation can involve promoting the acquisition of works as an act of cultural involvement, encouraging support for historically under-represented and marginalized communities within and beyond the art scene. To do so, and as Cristina Guerra emphasized, art galleries must balance commercial/economic interests and their cultural contributions, holding exhibitions with a heterogeneous offer that appeals to a wider variety of audiences while also holding a strong cultural component.

Within their scope of action, galleries should seek to adopt an inclusive and comprehensive approach in all dimensions, from curation to physical and intellectual accessibility, fostering an environment in which 'queer' artistic practices and other underrepresented expressions can be understood and valued. Ultimately, queer artists don’t want their art to be placed at the center or normalized, but rather to dismantle the still prevalent patterns of omission and exclusion to which they are subjected. By positioning themselves in favor of these changes, art galleries can serve as active agents in promoting cultural justice, honoring their historical legacy, and reaffirming their role as fundamental players in the contemporary art world.

To deepen knowledge regarding these topics, future lines of research could include an in-depth analysis of how ‘queer’ performance navigates the world of contemporary art and,

more specifically, the art markets. This form of artistic expression is central to an understanding of queer culture but was not addressed in this study, which focused mainly on the visual arts. Another interesting point that deserves its singular focus of investigation concerns the inclusion/exclusion of trans artists in the art market sector. This is particularly important since this dissertation found a lack of representation of openly trans artists by contemporary art galleries in Portugal.

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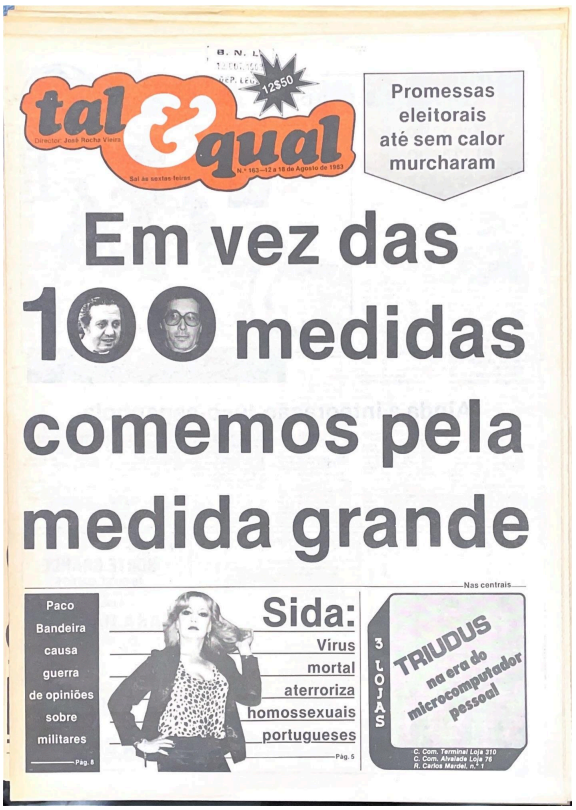
Annex A: Figures



tal & qual

Promessas eleitorais até sem calor murcharam

Em vez das 100 medidas comemos pela medida grande

Paco Bandeira causa guerra de opiniões sobre militares

Sida: Virus mortal aterroriza homossexuais portugueses

TRIUDUS na era do microcomputador pessoal

tal qual

Vírus mortal aterroriza homossexuais

Vitor Bandarra

SIDA — QUE É ISSO?

CONTÁGIO

Câmara Municipal de Coruche

SENECA T:40092 SENECA T:822776 SENECA

Figure 1 [on the left]: "AIDS: Deadly virus terrorizes Portuguese homosexuals" [cover]. Tal & Qual [Portuguese newspaper], 18th August 1983.
Source: Archive of Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal

Figure 2 [on the right]: "In Portugal, medical experts advise 'gays': stop promiscuity"[Pag. 6]. Tal & Qual [Portuguese newspaper], 18th August 1983.
Source: Archive of Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal

Figure 3: Cinema Positivo: A SIDA e as suas imagens [Cover of Film Festival about AIDS]. Culturgest. 1994.
Source: Archive of Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal

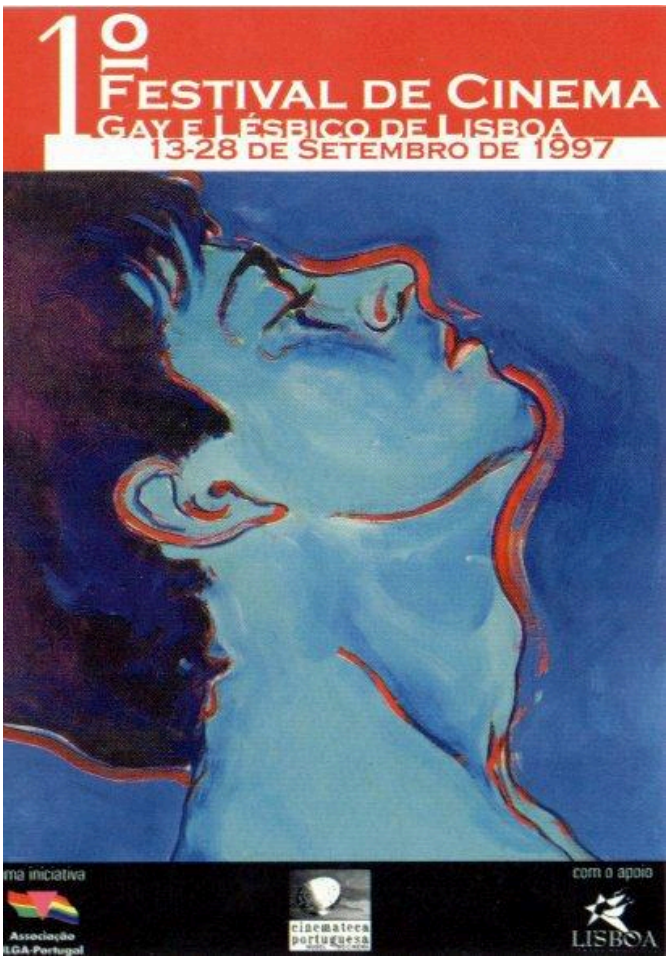


Figure 4: 1º Festival de Cinema Gay e lésbico de Lisboa [cover of the 1st Lisbon Gay and Lesbian Film Festival]. 1997.
Source: Archive of Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal

Figures 5 and 6: *Dialogue Du Sphinx* by António Lagarto and Nigel Coates. Two black and white photographs, 144 x 49 cm each. 1976.

Source: Coelho, E. P., & Sousa, E. (1977). *Alternativa zero: tendências polémicas na arte portuguesa contemporânea*. Mirandela & Ca.

Figure 7: *Diva, A Portrait* by Vasco Araújo. Installation with dressing table, clothes rail, items of clothing, props, fresh flowers, 16 black & white photographs. Variable dimensions. 2000. António Cachola Collection, Portugal.

Source: http://vascoaraujo.org/Diva_a_portrait

Figure 8: *La Stupenda* by Vasco Araújo. Installation that comprises a living room of an opera singer and a video projection. Video duration: 16’45’’. Installation dimensions: 300 x 400 x 190 cm. Projection dimensions: 180 x 250 cm. 2001.

Source: http://vascoaraujo.org/La_Stupenda

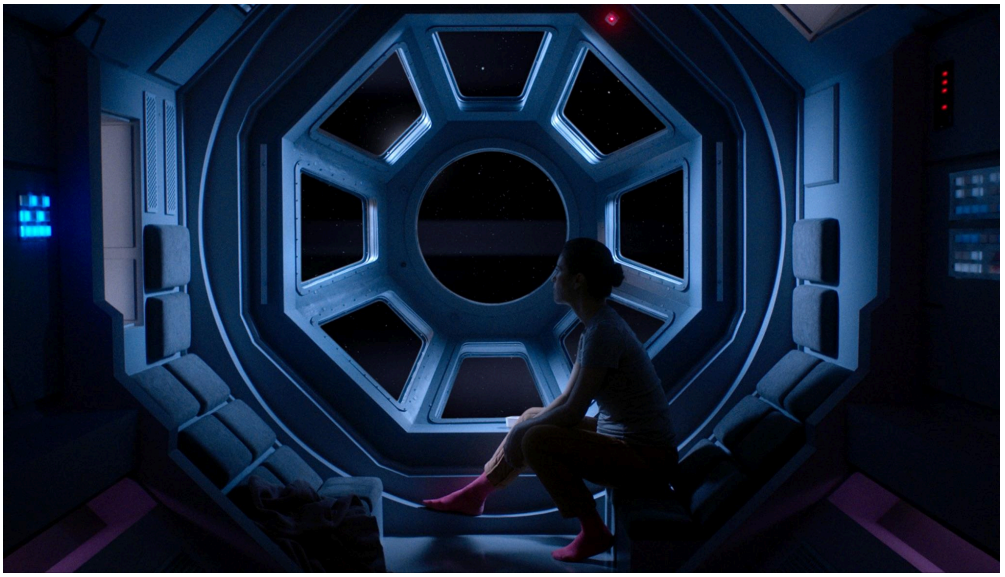


Figure 9 and 10: *Vampires in Space* by Isadora Neves Marques. Three-channel film installation, 75' loop, video, dolby surround and stereo sound. 2022. Source: https://www.isadoranevesmarques.com/vampiresinspace_movie.html

Figure 11 [above] and 12 [bellow]: Images from “Artifício,” an exhibition by Odete. View downstairs [figure 11] and upstairs [figure 12] of the exhibition space at Galeria da Boavista, Lisbon Municipal Galleries/EGEAC. Pictures taken by Bruno Lopes. 2023.

Source: https://contemporanea.pt/edicoes/ed-10-11-12-2023/odete-artificio

Figure 13: Image from “forms of the surrounding futures,” an exhibition at Porto Municipal Gallery. Picture taken by Dinis Santos. 2024.

Source:

https://www.galeriamunicipaldoporto.pt/en/programas/das-exposicoes/formas-dos-futuros-ao-redor/20240614-exposicao-formas-dos-futuros-ao-redor/

Figure 14: *Vadios* by João Pedro Vale e Nuno Alexandre Ferreira. Sculpture made of iron and paint, containing amyl nitrate (Poppers). Dimensions 380 cm x 380 cm x 230 cm. 2018.

Source:

https://www.joaopedrovale.com/jpv.aspx?Lang=PT&ID=m02_201801180279

Figure 15: Poster for the exhibition "P-Town" by João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira at Espaço Arte Tranquilidade, which was canceled, 2011.

Source:

https://www.publico.pt/2011/08/24/culturaipsilon/noticia/companhia-de-seguros-cancela-exposicao-de-joao-pedro-vale-sobre-tematica-homossexual-1509036

Annex B: Interviews

B.1

Interview with Vasco Araújo (VA)

Lisbon, March 25th, 2024

47 minutes

TL: Your work frequently explores questions of identity and gender. How did your interest in working with these subjects come about?

VA: These subjects came about because they always interested me. From the time I was studying Fine Arts, there was something I thought was more *pessoana*,[62] from the point of view of heteronyms or the construction of identity. In the past, the term gender identity wasn't used. It was sexual identity but a few years ago, it was differentiated. I used to believe that we were more than one. There is something false about the human being and its construction, which allows us to wander through our personality, what we are, and how we present ourselves. On our own, we are one thing, and in public, we are another. The whole gay thing, which is what I am. In my first years at university, I wasn't out, but it was already in me. And also because I have a strong relationship with lyrical singing.

I studied lyrical singing for 13 years. I had a fascination with opera that allowed me to be farcical - today I'm this, tomorrow I'm something else. I hadn't changed my voice yet when I started singing, so I sang all the women (laughs). I used to dress up at home, among other things. My mother fed all that imagination, buying me fabric and making capes and costumes and all that stuff.

When I started working on these questions of the multiplicity of characters, it was based on opera, and opera already came from that tradition. There were the *castrati* who played female characters. Then, in neoclassicism, Mozart had a series of characters of young boys who were women who sang. A woman performed a young man who wasn't yet a man. All of this is embedded, if you look at it that way, in 'queerness,' figurative and representative transsexuality. But more than that, the possibility of being more than one. And that's what interested me! And that will always interest me. This is how it all began.

[62] Referring to the work and style of the Portuguese poet Fernado Pessoa (1888-1935).

TL: Have you considered that your work can be read as ‘queer’?

VA: Already! Here's the proof: an exhibition I took part in called “Radicais Libres: Experiencias Gays e Lésbicas na arte Peninsular” (2005). The first exhibition I took part in was called “Trans Sexual Express” in Barcelona (2001), maybe because there was little context in Portugal. The first openly gay artists who appeared and made work that was identified as such were myself, João Pedro Vale, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Pedro Casqueiro, and Ana Jotta. All these people were gay, but nobody thought their work was. Alexandre Melo wrote about Pedro Casqueiro from that perspective, but most things... Nobody bought their work because they were queer, people didn't identify that.

TL: The very concept of ‘queer’ is open to change.

VA: Yes! And it wasn’t talked about much; we knew about it because we read a lot. But we didn't talk about what it meant to be queer in Portugal. When we were your age, it was just gays and lesbians. The term trans wasn’t even used. We didn't have access to it, and the people who were trans were those who performed in nightclubs and did night work. From an artistic point of view, things have come along. But there is still a giant weakness in Portugal. There are openly gay, lesbian, and trans artists, but they have no strength.

TL: Are there any challenges that are more specific to queer artists or those belonging to minority groups?

VA: I think there always is. We've had to face certain things that the younger generations no longer face or do so much younger. For example, coming out. Even in the Portuguese artistic milieu, they didn't reject (homosexuality), but there was a structural homophobia. Just as there is structural racism. And there still is. I still hear jokes to this day. Even from my friends who love me. It doesn't occur to me to make jokes about heterosexuals or women. I think we all continue to face challenges, each in their own way. Of course, when someone has more financial power, everything changes. It seems that nothing and no one harms another, but silencing is even worse. Silencing us is making us invisible. I don’t know what it is like to be trans, but I can imagine the great difficulties, both physical and psychological. Doing street

work is truly radical! My work is not radical. I don't suffer from rejection, but I think there are a lot of challenges ahead.

TL: In my dissertation, I explore the relationship between center and margin. How do you think this dichotomy is reflected in our cultural environment?

VA: I'm the center; I belong to the center. But I'm always on the margins because I feel like I'm on the margins. And I want to be the margin. I'm a mainstream artist: I've exhibited in several institutions, I work with one of Portugal's most important galleries, and I'm included in a large number of national and international museum collections. But if I wanted to be truly mainstream, I couldn't do the work that I do. I had to give in to a lot of things that I didn't give in to. In particular, giving in to power. Which is what most artists do. And I don't give in; I don't condescend.

TL: Do you feel a sense of responsibility when, both in Portugal and abroad, you exhibit in important institutions?

VA: Of course! I don't do activist work, but my work talks about things and makes people question situations that shake their whole structure. If it is a very conservative fringe of society, it shakes everything up. Artists can't be false. We already use lies and metaphors to create questioning mechanisms. We can't be false.

TL: Do you think your art provides 'food for thought'?

VA: Sometimes, I think so; sometimes I think not. People find my work very beautiful and aesthetically appealing. But more often, when they take a closer look, they are hurt or even wounded. In my early work, particularly in the installation *La Estupenda* (2001). This took place in the former Filomena Soares Gallery, called César. There's a text written by Miguel Castro Caldas which is horrible from a psychological point of view. As it's a very intimate text, people were completely overwhelmed. It went right through people's chests. My work is very appealing, but then it has this effect of making people... it's as if I'm preparing a human wound.

TL: And do you think this ‘wound’ could be related to the factor of discrimination, or stigmas that are rooted in society?

VA: I think so. Ultimately, every human being is discriminated against. Of course, queer people are the most discriminated against because, by definition, they are outcasts. But in reality, we are all discriminated against as human beings. Whether it’s because of physical or economic characteristics. And I like to work on this idea of how we construct ourselves. In the past, I used to think that we always built ourselves negatively and that we learned through negative events. Nowadays, I don’t think so; it can be negative or positive. If a trans woman finds a love that satisfies her very early on, her life changes. I’m sure of that because she feels less excluded than someone alone for many years without any support. Neither family nor anyone else. But the fact is that there are probably more unfavorable stories, I don’t know.

TL: In my dissertation, I argue that contemporary art galleries should not be a neutral space for exhibiting works but that they can play an active role, namely through the selection and promotion of artists and in the creation of cultural discourses. Do you agree with this statement?

VA: Yes! And I think that throughout history, there have been many gallerists, not gay, lesbian, or queer, who have supported queer artists in times that were much more complicated than now. Many people I know, or have heard stories about have supported artists who were pushed aside both because of gender and racial discrimination. Of course, it was always intended to make money, but it doesn't matter. There must have been other reasons than economic ones why they were chosen over others.

TL: How important is it for galleries to promote queer artists?

VA: Two things are important. The first is that artists feel supported, like a family. Because being an artist and working with a gallery is not the same as working in an office. The gallery is a structure, which in Portugal is generally not very big. Therefore, the gallerist is our friend, the person who supports us, looks at the work, and is also critical. It's not just a commercial thing. When gallerists are good, they're real, and they're a kind of curator of our work. The other importance of promoting ‘queer’ art is that you're contributing to the diversity of the

world. It’s completely boring and monotonous to only see art of the same type. Having other realities is super positive.

TL: Which are the main galleries working with queer artists in Portugal?

VA: The first gallery to represent queer artists was a coincidence. They weren't chosen because they were queer, but because they were good artists. It was a coincidence that there were a large number of gay and lesbian artists working with the Filomena Soares Gallery. There was a time at Filomena Soares when there was me (Vasco Araújo), Ana Pérez-Quiroga, João Pedro Vale, Pedro Casqueiro, Ana Jota, Rodrigo Oliveira, João Penalva, among others. That's not to say that their work is openly queer, there are differences between artists who are queer but don’t express it in their work and queer artists who address these themes. And then there are what I call the in-between. That is, queer artists sometimes address these themes but not always. I consider myself an in-betweener. I think that because people know I’m queer, they take my work as always being ‘queer.’ The truth is that sometimes I do it and sometimes I don’t.

But most of these artists have since left the Filomena Soares Gallery and now... it’s all very spread out. There isn't a specific gallery that is looking for queer artists. I don’t think any gallerist is looking for queer artists. I think they're looking for good artists. If an extraordinary trans artist emerges, they won't turn them down because of that, I don’t think it’s an issue. But I don’t think these people have reached the mainstream yet because of society's prejudice. That does happen.

TL: How is the ‘queer’ discourse articulated to a wider audience that may not be familiar with these issues?

VA: I've never worried about it. I think that people who don’t know and are curious will search for it. Nowadays, the information is all out there. Artists shouldn't explain themselves too much. We ask questions; we don’t explain anything. One thing is to have an introductory text to put the exhibition into context, but even that sometimes kills the work.
For example, I've always used opera in my work, and most people don’t know much about opera. However, they have a psychological, aesthetic, and sensory reaction to that work. And that's enough. Unless you want to make deeply activist art, that's another story. But I generally

don’t like activist art because I think activism has another place, it can be used against the artist.

TL: Is it possible to talk about an increase in queer artists entering exhibition spaces?

VA: Yes, There’s an exhibition space called *Galerias Municipais* in Lisbon, and now also in Oporto. In Lisbon, they have a space called *Galeria da Bela Vista*, dedicated to young artists. And I know that the curators, Sara Antónia Matos and Pedro Faro, are concerned with inviting the widest range of people. They recently had an exhibition by Odete, who is a trans artist. I think that, at least, this institution in Portugal does this work. It’s a systematic effort to show all kinds of people. I think There’s a lot more attention than there was a few years ago.

TL: How can galleries contribute to the inclusion of queer artists in the art market?

VA: It’s about programming them. It’s inviting them to work with them. Above all, to support them. Museums, public galleries, and commercial art galleries have a great obligation to support artists. And supporting artists means ensuring that they have the money to produce works and a stable psychological and social situation.

TL: Do you think there are ‘queer’ art collectors in Portugal?

VA: Not exactly. I know a couple, Ângelo Silva e Paulo Daniel, who mainly collect ‘queer’ art. But other than them, I don’t think so. Collectors are driven by aesthetics and the value of the works. If we're talking about artists who are discriminated against, they're not the ones worth the most. So I don’t think there is.

TL: Do you think the art market is moving towards inclusion and diversity?

VA: I think so, completely. There’s an example of a collection in Portugal, the António Cachola Collection. For a long time, they only collected men, and the fact that António Cachola has a daughter who is a curator has led them to buy only young people and mostly women, trans and queer people. There has been progress in this direction. Many museums, such as the Reina Sofia Museum, now only buy women and queer people. These are strategies

to balance out the large number of men in the collections, making room for the representation of important artists who didn't have works in museums. That they forgot they ever existed.

TL: What recommendations can be made to promote inclusion and diversity in the art market?

VA: People being open-minded and curious. Curiosity for new thoughts and new ways of looking at the world. Queer artists look at the world slightly differently from the norm. Anyone, even a queer person, has to be open-minded. Although queer people, in general, are open to new and different things. It's about being open to the new, that's the most important thing of all.

B.2

Interview with Odete (O)

Lisbon, April 4th, 2024

1 hour and 4 minutes

TL: Your interests range from ‘queer’ theory, trans-historiography, and non-heteronormative historical characters, among others. When did ‘queer’ subjects start to become part of your artistic expression?

O: To use your terms, what characterizes my work as ‘queer’ is the way I see certain things. It’s the positionality of the work in relation to things like history, love, philosophy, and so on. I wouldn't say that there are ‘queer’ subjects in my work, but that there are positions and perspectives, and practices that edify or transsexualize certain things, whether these are material things, literature, historical or mythological characters. It’s a way of relating to my experience as a queer person, without a doubt. It’s this experience that gives me a kind of framework, a kaleidoscope lens, which makes me re-imagine reality.

TL: Considering that the historical narrative has erased or excluded the existence of queer people, I'd like to know how the Portuguese historical context has influenced the experience of non-heteronormative people. Do you think this historical context may have contributed to a delay in the emergence of queer artists in Portugal?

O: I think there have always been queer artists in Portugal; it was a question of categorizing them as artists and what they do as art. The problem for a long time was not giving dignity to certain types of practice. If we think about the case of Valentim de Barros, of course, he suffered a lobotomy, was arrested, and ended up in hospital, among other things. But he is a person who is at the threshold of gay man, trans person, non-binary person, effeminate person, crossing many things. He was a person who had artistic practice as a dancer and playwright but also as a person who painted and made sculptures. But because it was within a place of pathologization, what he did was not considered art. Even today, it’s not considered art except by people like André Teodósio, who have an active attitude of dignifying and removing work from the pathological constraints of history.

I think they've always existed queer artists, but of course, the Portuguese context was a dictatorship until 1974. One of Europe's last dictatorships. The way we look at 'queer' art needs a refresh so that we can look at the history and legacy of LGBT people and manage to dignify what they have always done as an artistic practice.

TL: As a queer person, do you feel responsible for working and reflecting on these issues?

O: Absolutely. Some people have already done it: André Murraças, with the QUEERQUIVO project. Some things are questionable, but they are part of a legacy of people who relate to Portuguese heritage and try to re-imagine it based on what 'queerness' would be. André Teodósio and Teatro Praga also do this all the time. João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre also do this work and perhaps feel this responsibility. In the beginning, I felt this responsibility towards knowledge, to transpose it, but when I tried to transpose it into art, I felt that there were always gaps and misunderstandings between me, the documentation, and the public. So I've been rethinking my relationship with this historical material, with heritage, and with queer people. I don't think it can just be artists who do this work; there has to be more historiographical work and work in different areas outside the realms of art.

TL: In my dissertation, I argue that, as queer people don't usually leave direct descendants, it's often people from the community itself who, years later, worry about legitimizing these people's contributions. Do you agree?

O: Yes, of course. My work is mainly about lineages but the lineages, at least mine, don't have much historical veracity. It's an artistic work. So, I would say that my relationship with this legacy is a bit more spiritual and invisible. Of course, I feel a responsibility and a duty, but it's like a double-edged sword. While I do my work, honoring them as a descendant, I feel it's not enough. I feel there should be more descendants, and I feel there should be more families.

TL: Do you think there are any challenges faced specifically by trans artists in Portugal?

O: Yes, definitely. I think the biggest challenge at the moment is to free ourselves. And when I use the plural, take it with a grain of salt because we're all different people. But I think the traps can be the same. I think we have to free ourselves a little from this discourse of trans as

an identity; I think it creates traps. Not just because we fall into the tokenization trap of creating territorial limits on what we can say or do as artists. I feel great sadness at the bifurcation between gay art and trans art. For me, my artistic practice has always been about holding hands. I don't see things with big separations. Of course, there are separations; I realize that it's necessary to reclaim certain types of expressions and places because of a political struggle. But, to a certain extent, we have to decide what the political struggle for rights is and what our artistic discourses are so that we can have a horizon that is bigger than politics. Because we are human beings full of philosophy, poetry, whatever, it's important to always imagine ourselves as more than occupying a specific place within art.

TL: In my dissertation, I defended that contemporary art galleries should not be a neutral space for exhibiting works but that they can play an active role, namely through the selection and promotion of artists and in the creation of cultural discourses. Do you agree with this statement?

O: I agree. Especially since we live in an era that is very much based on visual styles. The peak of this is the TikTok cores, cottage core, dark academia, Portuguese girly, you name it. This transformation of things into styles, although it can be very problematic, brings with it a responsibility to constantly question how it happens. I think that art galleries, not only historically but also because they allow discourses to be created, have a responsibility to bring to the public and to the concrete reality styles and aesthetics that are part of groups that are usually oppressed or misrepresented. This, in some way, contributes to the expansion of what the visual, poetic world can be. Then, we can talk about the ethics of this use and demonstration of the visual world. But it seems to me that they do have this responsibility, even though galleries are mainly focused on sales.

TL: Do you know of any private galleries in Portugal working with queer artists?

O: No, I don't know any.

TL: Your exhibition "Artifício" was held at Galeria da Boavista, a state facility. Do you think that public institutions give greater visibility to queer artists or those belonging to minority groups?

O: Absolutely. Private galleries are focused on the economic interests of selling works and on the art market. And we know that certain types of practices don't fit so well into that market, so they don't favor private interests. Public institutions have obligations towards certain people and groups. I think that public institutions are better able to provide representation and a platform.

TL: Do you think it's possible to talk about an increase in artists addressing 'queer' issues entering exhibition spaces?

O: To do this, I think we need to define what 'queer' issues are and how they are expressed in art. There is undoubtedly greater freedom and comfort in talking about plurality in terms of art. That is, what has tended to happen is that artists talk much more concretely about their bodies and about their personal practices. Whether these are sexual practices, gender disruption, *drag*, or something else. The artist's body and their experience outside of art have tended to enter art more and more in recent decades. They become the subject of art.

Nevertheless, I go to exhibitions in Portugal, and I don't feel that the identity of the artist is the subject of their art. I think it's certainly a way of seeing in many cases. Of course, many artists do this. In Portugal, we have a handful of paintings of men kissing men, João Gabriel, among others... But I don't think There's been any growth in terms of themes. I simply think that more queer artists are getting a platform. But that doesn't necessarily mean an increase in 'queer' themes within the galleries.

TL: Is your audience familiar with 'queer' theory and discourses?

O: When I think of an audience, I think of an audience like me. My first impulse is to make art for trans people who have lived through many kinds of situations. Of course, when you make art that's shown to the public, you have to be aware that you're also talking to people who don't know. I always try to strike a balance, but without ever falling into the risk of being didactic, I don't feel like explaining things. I want people to empathize with me or laugh with me without really understanding who I am. I don't want to be explaining who I am. I want to get people into some kind of question and aesthetic. I don't want to create friction with justifications and explanations. I think There's more to what I do than my identity. So, I would say that my ideal audience is a bunch of trans people I know, but I know that the audience is

bigger than that. I always try to articulate my practice, taking into account that there are people who end up there without knowing it.

TL: How do you articulate your discourse with art collectors?

O: Sometimes, with collectors, you have to play a kind of seduction game. I only give them enough in terms of art for them to understand what I might think or who I am. But I see a tendency among collectors and museum directors to want to know more. But There's a kind of culture of mystery that I feel I practice around me in these circles that I think is very beneficial for queer people (laughs). I think it's very beneficial for LGBT people. Especially if the collector doesn't have the same kind of 'queer' life as you, they'll want to understand some things. I only give a finger instead of a hand. Even when explaining my work, there are limits to what I say. The art market is sometimes so dry that the only way I can survive is by cultivating a kind of persona. Or by turning my art into a kind of perfume that comes out of my body. And when collectors buy my work, it's like buying Odete's perfume. Somehow, historically, trans-feminine people have always been the muses of many male artists. Instead of completely denying this reality, I play with it a little. I almost want to be the muse of collectors. Not really, because I'm an artist. I don't need someone to paint me, but I do need someone to buy my work. I want to inspire other people's collections to pay the rent. It's a bit like that.

TL: Do you think you can create interest with this 'distance'?

O: I think so. I've always sold everything, so I'm going to believe it.

TL: Are most people who buy art Portuguese or foreign collectors?

O: I don't even know. I only know when a public institution buys things from me when they are bought by the city council or a museum. I asked Lehmann + Silva Gallery to sell some of my things, and they sell to many private collectors, but to whom and where, I'm not sure. Sometimes, I don't know where things end up. I don't know if they're Portuguese or not, and I'm not interested either. I'll never see the work again when it's sold to a private collector, regardless of where it is, in Portugal or abroad. I know of two Portuguese collectors who have my works, but I don't know about the rest.

TL: Do you know if the Portuguese collectors you mentioned buy works by other queer artists?

O: Yes, they do. At least António Cachola does. I don't know what the percentage of queer people is, nor do I know if there are any other trans people. Instead of queer people, we could ask how many trans people are in their collections. And how many trans people in Portugal sell works? That's a very big question for me. I know someone who sold a work to the Oporto City Council called Aurora. But I don't know of anyone else. I ask myself, it's 2024, is this real? And I don't do that many exhibitions, last year was an exception. But where are the galleries?

TL: Do you feel a responsibility in your work to talk about these subjects and bring representativity to the collections?

O: There's no lack of trans people out there. It would be good if there were a greater effort. I feel that people come to me because I'm easy in that sense. After all, I'm more used to selling my work. But there are other people. I always try to direct the work and get other people to work with me. But an artist alone doesn't do that much. I don't have the economic power to do exhibitions on my own. And when I do exhibitions, I'm at the disposal of institutions and galleries. So I have the same questions you have. I don't want to be telling the truth here because maybe there are trans people selling works to collectors that I don't know about. But it's strange because we're not such an infinite community. We're a minority of minorities, that 0.01% of the population. There's no lack of trans artists, and I wonder why they're not in collections. They aren't.

TL: Do you think it's because you also have an academic background that makes it easier for you to access art collections? Is it that support that is often lacking?

O: Maybe. There's no doubt that more intellectual art is work that sustains itself in the long term in that sense because it creates understandable discourse which is certainly the case with mine. And other practices don't create such an intellectual discourse. But even so, I don't think that's an argument. Because when we look at other types of artists who aren't trans and have art that's just pretty, they still sell. What are these double standards? Of course, some

artists came out as trans after having a career, like Isadora Neves Marques. She's a super-hyped artist who represented Portugal at the Venice Biennale, among others. But I think There's a difference when you have to fight for your space from the beginning of your career as a trans person and someone who already has a career and has come out as trans. I think galleries and museums take advantage of this moment a lot. Because they're like "Oh great, this person was already in our collection and is trans, we don't have to do any more work." The challenges are not the same. And when we talk about trans people in the collection, they'll even point them out. Of course, they're trans, but when did they buy their works? They bought them before they knew it. I think it's important to make these distinctions. People can't be afraid to make these distinctions. Otherwise, institutions will never change, and galleries won't change. One issue I've been thinking about recently is how people put me in dialog with these people who already have a career before coming out. I look around and see a lot of trans people trying to get opportunities and nothing is given to them.

I think the biggest scandal was that of Keila Brasil when she took to the theater stage to denounce the fact that no trans people were playing trans people. And then, that role was given to Maria João who recently came out with an established acting career. Opportunities are given to people who are already established and who happen to have come out as trans people. And that reassures the people around them that their work is of quality. And that relationship scares me.

TL: I want to explore the relationship between the center and the margin. In your opinion, how is this dichotomy reflected in our cultural environment?

O: We live in a society in which most of us are exposed to TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, among others. And this has visual narratives and visual discourses that are somehow reflected in the art we make. I'm thinking of that video I made for the "Artifício" exhibition, in which I channel a 'YouTube persona.' In which I try to grab the viewer's attention using quick effects. And this is reflected because this is also our life in some way. And in certain types of social media, greater attention to 'queer' aesthetics can also be reflected in the art of people who aren't queer. And I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing; it's part of a proliferation of discourses and places. Of course, social media can often lead to appropriation because aesthetics are removed from meaning. And social media like TikTok and Instagram become a bunch of visual accumulations without the meaning they would have in their community context. And it's very dangerous to be influenced by this contextless visuality and be inspired

by it to make art. That can certainly be dangerous. But at the same time, it's a dynamic that happens.

For me, talking about the center or the mainstream is a bit strange. I think it only makes sense when we realize that when we say this, the art market and the cultural media are separated from people's lives, and if they remain separate, that's a problem. It means that art is still in a kind of imaginary bubble. For me, some people create content for TikTok and YouTube who could be in an exhibition. For example, videos by ContraPoints should be in museums. I don't understand why no museum buys these videos. I think it could be interesting to break it up a bit. If many of us are influenced by this, why is art still so attached to these systems? We know that most people don't go to exhibitions. It's not that I'm making a speech in favor of social media, I hate social media. However, we are influenced by it. The opposite could also happen: how does the cultural milieu influence certain types of mainstream practices? In music, for example, practices that are not mainstream constantly influence what is mainstream music. We now see Beyoncé using the Ballroom scene. In recent years, the Ballroom has become very mainstream, but at the same time, hardly anyone goes to a Ballroom.

TL: Yes, we are witnessing the culture of the margin being pushed to the center.

O: Yes. Even with RuPaul's Drag Race, which turned *drag* into a more mass scene than it was. The influence of this show creates many things. *Drag* is a part of life. We see many drag queens on RuPaul's Drag Race, not just one. I believe that this influences the art that many people make and the performances of many people.

TL: Do you think social media and television can be a tool for decentralizing culture?

O: When we talk about social media, we talk about visibility. I question whether visibility is the right mechanism for inclusion. Because I think visibility has many traps. I think that the more visibility a group of people has on social media, the easier it is to manipulate, criticize, hate, and so on. Social media is a format that doesn't create empathy. If abusive anonymous comments are possible, it's because the platform allows things that don't happen so much in real life. In real life, you wouldn't say certain things to someone because you're showing your face. So, online visibility has some traps, and I don't know if it's really inclusive. Because I don't think visibility, in general, is inclusive. I think it's a trap we fall into.

TL: From your perspective, how can galleries contribute to the inclusion of queer artists in the art market?

O: Starting to represent artists. At the moment, I don't think any galleries represent trans artists. I'm not represented by any gallery. I can sell works with galleries, but I'm not represented. I have no support from any gallery to sell my work.

TL: And why do you think this is?

O: I don't know... I can't say why. Sometimes I wonder if there isn't enough demand from the private market, but I sell all my stuff.

TL: Do you think there exists discrimination in the sector?

O: I think so, but people will say it doesn't exist. Sometimes they say it's because the work isn't good. Private galleries are afraid of certain practices, of works that are less collectible. Art like mine is harder to sell. But at the same time, when you make an effort, it sells. There are certainly risks involved, but we have to think that those who buy also want to buy art that retains its value. They want to make an investment that will last for the future. They [gallerists] look at trans people as a trend. They don't think it's a smart choice. Maybe only time will prove that some people's art is really worthy. In that sense, it can show discrimination against the quality of certain people's art. It's not considered good enough for certain galleries and for certain collectors. One thing I've heard a lot is that "our" art isn't polished enough.

There's a type of art that collectors love, which is sanitized art. There are certain types of practice where you might not find that. I remember when I sold my first piece. I made a piece for a group exhibition and only found out later that the aim was to sell it. I made a piece with tape, hair extensions, and a frame from Ikea, all very crafty. It was different from other people's work, I never thought it would sell. And I only sold it because Ana Cachola went to a collector and said he should buy it, she made a big speech. And I ended up selling my first piece. The other artists' works were very straightforward. Normally, galleries like everything to be very straight. I'm not that person. I look at other artists who are represented by galleries, and they have studios and everything, a kind of practice that I consider very sanitized. I understand that collectors don't want to buy works that will be gone in five years. But I think

you have to understand that certain people don’t have certain practices because they can’t afford them. It's a machine that feeds itself, that sees some people's work as saleable and others as not.

TL: Do you think there is room in the market for galleries associated with queer artists?

O: When you speak to gallerists, you have to talk about it, I can’t say. I know I sell to collectors, I have my dinners with collectors. And I’m always very surprised. Just the other day, I received an email from the state collection saying “Hello Odete, we'd like to see your portfolio so we can buy a piece, do you have a gallery?” and I don’t have a gallery. I have to sell a work to the state on my own, sell a work without understanding how. So we're talking about the Portuguese state buying works from me, but I’m not represented by any gallery. This is where we are... I can’t honestly say why. Your master's thesis will have to answer that (laughs).

TL: What recommendations can be made to promote inclusion and diversity in the art market?

O: I'd love to see more exhibitions with trans artists. It would be good for galleries and institutions to look at more trans artists capable of doing solo exhibitions. I did “Artifício,” and for a long time, I felt the weight of responsibility. I remembered that no other trans person in Portugal had had a solo show in a gallery, so I was a bit nervous. At the same time, there wasn’t much money. It was my introduction to the visual arts on my own, but at the same time, I feel that my aesthetic and my way of doing exhibitions are a little different from other artists. I’m not saying it’s better, just a different approach to the rest. And I was afraid that people would attack me, that no one would like it. None of that happened. Allowing queer people to have opportunities to explore and show their practice is a first step. It’s the bare minimum. My exhibition was simple and accessible, but it was important for creating a relationship with the public. What's missing is generosity on both sides to create a relationship with your practice, to show how I think and see the world. Galleries need to wake up and start entering into this relationship. I understand that sometimes it’s not just a tokenization thing, taking a trans person and putting them in my gallery. It’s trying to understand the other person's art and go towards it. And even if they don’t want to represent the artists, they need to go and see it, think about it, talk about it.

Last year, I spoke to many artists, collectors, and gallery owners. Everyone knew who I was, and no one knew what I did. They've had so many opportunities this year to see my work, and they still don't know what I do. At a certain point, I can't do anything anymore. If I do too much and people still don't come, it's not my fault.

TL: Why do you think people know your name and don't know your work?

O: I don't know. Is it discrimination? I don't want to believe that, I guess. That's why I'm so in denial. But maybe it is! Maybe we have to use these terms to wake people up. I can also have a kind of art that might put some people off galleries. I don't think so. My art may be a little different from commercial art but it's not difficult to access. I don't think it is. Some things are done but only time will tell if it's discrimination or not. If in five years, everything remains the same... I think it's serious.

TL: Do you think our society is moving towards accepting diversity?

O: Maybe I don't know. We've just had elections, and the results were what they were. That's why I think the identity discourse can be a trap. We queer people have to know how to play with a frustrated society. I think that in five years, everything might be a little better. But a little better is like two trans people in galleries. I don't think it's going to change much.

B.3
Interview with José Mário Brandão (JMB)
Lisbon, April 5th, 2024
Duration 48 minutes

TL: Contemporary art galleries should not be a neutral space for exhibiting works, but they can actively promote artists and create cultural discourse. Do you agree with this statement?

JMB: Yes, of course. A gallery has to be a commercial space above all, but I would never exhibit artists I don't like. Throughout my career, I've always been concerned about holding the first exhibitions of certain artists. Nowadays, people can wake up in the morning and think they want to open a gallery, but it's not the same as opening a restaurant. A gallery is something that only happens when a person likes it. You have to show interest. I agree with opening a gallery to make money because it can be a place of commerce. However, in addition to that, other values have to be highlighted.

TL: Is it important to open up the gallery space to emerging artists and those from minority communities?

JMB: After a few years at the Árvore Cooperative Art Gallery, I joined the *Nasoni* Gallery in 1985. This was a gallery geared towards established artists. I always fought for space for younger artists. The first exhibition I organized at the Nasoni Gallery was *FINISTERRA* (1986), which featured works by Albuquerque Mendes and several young Portuguese and Galician artists.

TL: What is the current state of 'queer' art in Portugal?

JMB: That's not something that concerns me very much. I've never liked labels... Although it's now fashionable to say "I'm this, I'm that," I don't care. I'm interested in the quality of the people I show. Whether it's 'queer' or not doesn't matter to me. I had an exhibition of contemporary African art and I was attacked a lot. Because I only showed white artists. And that's wrong because I had a series of high-quality, anonymous, African artists. Labeling is always a double-edged sword. The last exhibition that we did was curated by Maia. Upstairs I

had works by Diogo Nogueira, and downstairs I had a collective of artists. But always with a different focus. From then on, you wouldn't believe how many emails I received from openly LGBT artists. And that's not important to me. It's important to me whether I like the work or not. But I'm attentive to supporting a quality artist who finds it more difficult to find space in a gallery.

TL: Do you feel a responsibility to bring queer artists into the gallery?

JMB: It's the work that interests me. I try to help if I can.

TL: Given what you've experienced throughout your career, do you think we can talk about an increase in openly queer artists exhibiting in galleries?

JMB: Yes, that's notorious. Because the generation I call Netflix, which has no taboos, is coming out. The new generation almost feels obligated to come out. This is reflected in the work of many artists. It's commerce that will respond to this trend, from the point of view of galleries, which are always a commercial house. Sometimes people aren't sure if it's good to exhibit certain works. In my house in OPorto, for example, I had a work by Victor Arruda at the entrance. A painting of a woman who had a male sex. It taught my little niece a lesson. And for her, it's always been natural, it's never been a problem. There must be museums in Portugal that have these taboos because, unfortunately, the people who run them are from the old bourgeoisie. And I think it's more complicated for that to happen.

TL: Do you think it's more difficult for these artists to be bought by these institutions?

JMB: Of course. Today, the painting in the Sistine Chapel wouldn't be accepted because there are too many nudes.

TL: How do gallerists articulate the 'queer' discourse with collectors, clients, and the public media?

JMB: Bad. People who write about art are afraid of losing their positions. In our past events (*Uma Cerveja no Inferno* and *Encontro Inesperado* by Nuno Nogueira), everyone liked the exhibition but no one wrote about it. I think that was due to the theme of the exhibition and

Maia's curatorship... Many people sent me congratulations on the exhibition and yet they didn't come to visit. There were museum directors asking for the price list and to this day they haven't said anything more.

TL: What strategies are used to communicate the meaning of 'queer' art?

JMB: I'm past the age of wanting to be a teacher. And so nowadays things are so accessible that people can look them up. Exhibitions are usually accompanied by texts from the person who organizes them and explains their meaning. Nobody enters my gallery without picking up the room sheet.

TL: What is the public's reception of exhibitions of this nature?

JMB: The last exhibition I did [*Uma Cerveja no Inferno* and *Encontro Inesperado*] that had this character was the most viewed exhibition in my gallery in recent times. There was always someone visiting the gallery space. But people who buy for museums are afraid to buy work of this quality.

TL: And why do you think this is?

JMB: Because they don't want to get into trouble. At the last ARCO Lisbon fair I attended, a Spanish beer brand was a sponsor and set up a competition. One of the artists I presented, Gonçalo Pena, was chosen. Gonçalo's work was censored by the sponsoring company because it didn't conform to the morals of the family that owned the brand. And so it ended up with a page written by a journalist against this event. You see, we're in the 21st century, and it's incomprehensible that it should be censored because it has some sort of sex drawn on it.

TL: Do you think people are being discriminatory?

JMB: Yes, of course. Most people aren't free; they live with a few ghosts. This censorship happens even at art fairs. This year, I was a second choice to take part in ARCO Lisbon. I don't think it has anything to do with my attitude. What's certain is that a gallery with this level of history became a second choice. And now, recently, they've accepted me and given

me one of the worst places in the fair. I hope it's not related to that event.

TL: Is there evidence of the emergence of collectors who are interested in 'queer' art?

JMB: I know that openly gay people are customers not to be despised, but they're not enough to hold up a gallery.

TL: But do you think it's a growing market?

JMB: No. A few years ago, there was a lot of talk, especially in France, in the Bastille region, that commerce revolved around gay themes. Bookstores and other businesses focused on these issues. Gay people didn't have children, they lived together... it was easier to make money. Nowadays, they have children.

TL: So do you think queer artists make art mainly for queer buyers?

JMB: It's a bit like that. I sold a lot of Diogo Nogueira's work at our last exhibition, which had this theme very present. I sold to Brazil and Switzerland above all, the plates were easy to sell because they were cheaper. I sold a lot of small drawings but not so many large canvases.

TL: Are there more Portuguese or foreign buyers?

JMB: Portuguese, of course. Foreigners who come to Portugal don't usually buy Portuguese art, in my opinion. They hire a decorator who makes the choices for them. There are few collectors living in Portugal who buy Portuguese art.

TL: Do you think the art market is moving towards inclusion and diversity?

JMB: I think society is moving in that direction, and things are connected. It's moving in the direction of inclusion, although There's a great danger of it going backward. The political situation is frightening, not just in Portugal but throughout Europe. The advance of the right-wing parties is terrible. The first thing the new government did after the elections was to restore the symbol that the previous government had altered. They're not at all interested in modernity; they're focused on the past. When you try to do things differently, everything is

more complicated.

TL: Do you think that the achievements made by the LGBT community will prove fragile in the long term?

JMB: I think people are afraid. And the conservative right is afraid of losing the privileges they had in the past. When I see pictures of the past, kids used to walk around barefoot and with a string tying their pants; people forget that. We need to constantly talk about what fascism was and talk about what the past was so that people learn.

TL: Do you think some artists have less access to galleries because they belong to minority groups?

JMB: No, that question no longer arises. If an artist's work is good, it has to be exhibited.

TL: Do you think that exhibitions that bring ‘queer’ themes into commercial gallery spaces can influence public perception of the queer community?

JMB: I think the more people assert themselves, the better. Of course, this will be reflected in the wider public. I think people should become good professionals. If an artist is good, this will be reflected in the acceptance people will have for their work and their way of being in life. One way of overcoming discrimination is through your profession, integrating into society, and being good.

B.4
Interview with Isadora Neves Marques (INM)
Online meeting, April 20th, 2024
59 minutes

TL: When did the themes of gender identity, sexuality, and 'queerness' become part of your work?

INM: On the one hand, I think it wasn't until later, as I accumulated years of practice, that I realized certain things the work was addressing. Feminism and gender issues were transversal in various things I was doing. In other words, I don't go into art with a purpose in those terms. I enter as a person with an artistic practice interested in various personal and social issues. I didn't go in straight away with some sort of idea that I wanted to express to an audience; it happened over time. On the other hand, my relationship with categorizing work in such closed or categorical terms is complex for me. Although, of course, my work undoubtedly brings together the themes we're talking about.

TL: Do you feel that the emergence of these themes in your work has accompanied the discovery of your identity?

INM: More or less. There's a symbiotic relationship in which the work helps me understand things about myself, but I also discover things about my work. And I accept my work as something that comes out of me, a dual relationship. And sometimes the work knows more than I do. Other times, I know more than the work. I remember looking at a series of my works and seeing a certain pattern, there was always a female voice. Some of them were on purpose, others I only noticed later.

TL: How did the public welcome the fact that you represented Portugal at the Venice Biennale in 2022?

INM: I didn't feel discriminated against by the public. But at the time, I wasn't publicly recognized as a trans woman. I came out as a non-binary person. It was already very confusing, perhaps even more confusing. But it was obvious to many people that the process was happening. The work I presented in Venice, *Vampires in Space*, was the most explicit

about my relationship with ‘queer’ issues. It’s a very personal work, biographical in a way. But I didn't feel any friction, the reception, in that sense, was very warm. Thematically, it was the first work to speak directly about these issues. I had a team of transgender people, a plural team at various levels. And the work talks about what that is.

TL: You have your work exhibited in highly influential collections and institutions, reaching a wide national and international audience. Do you feel a responsibility to use these platforms to communicate or give visibility to ‘queer’ issues and experiences?

INM: I’m going to confess, I’m practically uncollected in Portugal. I have very few pieces as an artist in Portugal. I don’t have any artwork in Serralves, Gulbenkian, or the EDP collection. I have one or two artworks in the State collection. But I’m not in the big Portuguese collections. I’m in many international collections. It’s not because I’m a queer person, they had many years to buy before I came out publicly. It’s curious... The António Cachola collection is one of the few Portuguese collections that has bought things from me, but it’s one of the rare cases. For me, this reflects other market issues on the national scene, but it doesn't necessarily have to do with what we're talking about. My path is very specific and goes against the ideas of many. I think it mainly has to do with a lack of institutional awareness.

TL: When you have your work exhibited in museums and other institutions, do you feel a responsibility to incorporate ‘queer’ themes that often don’t find a place in exhibitions?

INM: I feel responsible, of course. It’s almost inevitable not to. Anyone who knows me knows I like my work to speak for me. I believe in this aspect of art that it is transformative. My presence is there too, but the work comes first. And my work deals with these themes, so I feel good. If I were an artist doing abstract work, it would be different. My work doesn't hide thinking about these things; it’s very present in my work.

TL: When you came out as a transgender person, you already had an established career. What new challenges have arisen in your professional career since then?

INM: I've met very few people on my path who have had the same experience as me. People who already had a pseudo-public figure or who already had a career and suddenly had to go

public. I didn't meet many people in my process; it was difficult. I had peers with similar experiences to mine, but not with the same life experience. And it's private and complex because it has a lot of implications and logistics. I'll be honest: There's a weight as an artist. My name has changed, and that was one of the elements in the timeline of my transition. It was a process that was done very calmly. There were things around me that were complex. After that, when it started to become more public... I didn't feel the consequences openly. If there are consequences, I don't feel them directly. I haven't stopped having a job, and I don't necessarily have more work either. My life is still very unique, and that's a good thing.

TL: How do you think these challenges coincide or differ from the challenges faced by people who start their careers having already come out as transgender?

INV: I think each of them has their difficulties. For me, that would be a big fear. For example, my transition would create problems in my work. It could; you never know how these things work out. There was that fear. Or the fear of it being a transformation that you don't want to have but you have to because it's you. But, on the other hand, the fact that people already knew my work was proof that it was already given. There was fear, but there was also an established audience. The works already exist, and so do the texts. It's very different for a younger person because they haven't done any work before to prove themselves. I imagine it's very different to enter the field as a trans person, but I don't know.

TL: In my dissertation, I argue that galleries should not be a neutral space for exhibiting works, but they can play an active role, namely by choosing and promoting artists and creating cultural discourses. What is your perspective on this?

INM: These places are involved in what is happening, they're not isolated. Yes, obviously. They're a place where the market and the art world are simultaneously. Things are completely connected.

TL: How can galleries contribute to the inclusion of queer artists in the art markets?

INM: First of all, it's important to point out that art galleries and institutions aren't very different, that's a complete illusion. All the big art institutions are closely linked to market trends and the galleries that finance the events. At the Venice Biennale, this connection is

obvious. In the exhibition in the central pavilion, put on by the director, most of those artists have funding from the galleries. The galleries finance these projects. Anyone who doesn't know this thinks it's a curator's project, and it is! There is an intimate dialogue between the curator and the galleries because the Biennale has little money for developing projects. The curators talk to galleries looking for artists; the curators exhibit artists who don't have galleries, and the galleries pay the artists. There's an ecosystem here. To think that galleries are purely commercial spaces is wrong.

On the subject of 'queer' issues, first, There's a cynical view. If There's a moment when the gallery knows it's going to profit from an entity, they're going to do it. That's clear. Not all galleries, but this is a reality. They take advantage of it because the artist makes money. This is the most cynical view. There's a game, and the artists either get carried away or are at peace with it because they deserve to receive money for their work. On the other hand, I don't think that's entirely true. Some galleries continue to do their work according to their interest in the artist. If they like an artist and they are LGBT and if that matters for selling his work, of course, it does, but it's not that important. I think the reality is somewhere between these two scenarios.

TL: Do you think galleries can contribute to the entrance of queer people into exhibitions?

INM: Yes, it's important because they've never been in those spaces very much. Or, if they were, it wasn't very well known, and now they're starting to, and galleries play an important role in this.

TL: Do you think There's a tendency for galleries to be more representative?

INM: Internationally, yes! Since at least the late 1980s, we've started to see more openly LGBT artists. But the debate is recent. This is not to devalue the fact that there needs to be more. In Portugal, I think we've had some openly LGBT artists for a while. Not many. Institutionalized, There's João Pedro Vale, João Penalva, there are several younger ones. But in Portugal, it's still a question. Portugal is still lagging; There's still work to be done to normalize this. The Portuguese milieu is so complicated (laughs), that's the problem. Talking about the art market in Portugal is a problem. The art market in Portugal is made up of four or five institutions that erratically collect and a hand of collectors. It's very small. That's why international galleries come to ARCO Lisbon once and leave. There are strong relationships

with Brazil, the Portuguese-speaking African countries, which fortunately increase the size of the market. But to be honest, there is no market in Portugal. There are half a dozen collections, and that's it. And yes, it's a politically conservative market. Collectors tend to be conservative in the sense of not being visionary. They're not willing to take risks.

TL: Is there any evidence of the emergence of collectors interested in acquiring 'queer' artistic practices?

INM: Internationally, yes, there is. There is a lot of focus and interest in collecting LGBT identity art or an effort to amend history. In Portugal, it would be nice if this were done. It's well known that in the 1970s, Portuguese artists were studying in Paris, in Germany, and that they had homosexual or bisexual tendencies, and it would be good for this to be integrated. Not to read the work to the detriment of that, but it's a good question for the exhibition texts. I think there tends to be more of an interest in asking these questions.

TL: Do you think it's important to re-read the history and try to identify these figures?

INM: I think so. We have few in Portugal and the ones we do have have not been publicly acknowledged. Many cases in art and literature weren't acknowledged because they weren't well accepted.

TL: Are you represented by any gallery in Portugal?

INM: Not in Portugal. I worked there many years ago when I was much younger. I worked with Pedro Cera for about five years. I was already abroad, and then we stopped working by mutual agreement. I wouldn't have been the most marketable artist either. If I wanted to work with a gallery in Portugal again, it would have to be under the right conditions.

TL: Do you think the art market is moving towards inclusion and diversity?

INM: I think inclusion and representation are important, of course. That's not in question. I think it's inevitable that it will happen. The meaning of those words is a more philosophical conversation. Abroad, There's no doubt that movement is being made in this direction at various levels. Not just gender identity but also racial identity. In terms of the market, they're

taking advantage of these issues, becoming very important and institutionalized. Or because they are starting to see a greater openness. In Portugal, I don't know if galleries are thinking about this.

TL: Do you know of any galleries in Portugal that work with queer artists?

INM: Yes, but I don't think There's any awareness, it's different. They're working with galleries because they're artists and they're successful, but there isn't a kind of awareness on the part of the galleries that there should be greater gender equity or galleries that are trying to diversify. I feel that Portuguese galleries don't care about this. Even if they have queer artists, I don't know if they are committed or if they see themselves as part of this social process. I don't think that's the case with galleries in Portugal.

TL: What recommendations can you make to promote diversity in the market?

INM: The art market is an economic part of society, just like any other. It's a market. In other words, I don't feel that the art market has any more political responsibility than any other area. They all have to be inclusive. Of course, art has a very important role to play in society, a transformative role. I also think that contemporary art doesn't have to do what the rest of society fails to do. At least more than the others. But I think that if galleries want to keep up with society, then they have to open up. Otherwise, they're not living in reality; they're not living in the present. They have to open up because society has opened up. We are here. There are many LGBT people here, so they have to open up. Otherwise, they become obsolete. They're no longer keeping up with what's happening in art.

TL: The role of a contemporary art gallery should be to keep up with what's new in art.

INM: And reflect that! Fortunately, LGBT issues are no longer taboo or problematic. If it weren't for the conflicts of the political right-wing parties. But society is increasingly living with LGBT people, it would be good if galleries were our partners. If they like the artists and their work, they have to be partners in this struggle or revolution. That's how I like to see the people I work with. In my relationship with my gallery, I have a very open conversation about my life. I could never work with a gallery that I couldn't talk to about this. They have to be our partners in making changes happen.

TL: Do you know of any trans artists being represented by a gallery in Portugal?

INM: I'm not aware of any trans artists being represented by galleries in Portugal. Although I recognize that there aren't many trans artists, there are enough to justify them being in galleries. Why is that? It's a complex question. I don't think it's because they don't want to work with a trans artist, but maybe I'm being too positive. I think it's because they don't understand, I don't know. I can't say too much. But there isn't. Even with an established international career and a volume of sales that could make it possible for me to be represented by a gallery, I'm not represented in Portugal. This is not necessarily due to a refusal on the part of the galleries but perhaps to a lack of opportunities or the failure to establish a viable business relationship. If even I, with my experience, haven't found representation, I can imagine the difficulties faced by young artists whose ability to sell is uncertain. From the pragmatic point of view of an art gallery, the need to build up a track record of sales and convince clients of the value of the investment can represent an additional obstacle. There is a problem.

B.5

Interview with João Pedro Vale (JPV) and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira (NAF)

Lisbon, April 22nd, 2024

2 hours and 16 minutes

TL: Your works often reflect on masculinity, camaraderie, and homosexual desire. All embedded with pride and 'queerness.' What was the public's initial reaction to your works?

NAF: At the time, when we started, it was something new. We thought our works were successful because they were different, and people were willing to see them. A few years later, we realized that we had been completely tokenized. However, the idea of tokenization had not yet been developed. It was only when it came up, for example, concerning the trans or the black population, that we began to think that ourselves, at the beginning of the 2000s, were the 'gays on duty' because we knew how to eat with cutlery. We were invited to all the dinners because we were funny. We started having more problems a decade later, when the work became more politicized as a result of moving to New York, first in 2008 and then in 2012. We became more politically aware, and our work began to reflect that.

JPV: We've always been very open because we grew up in a very permissive environment. We never needed to come out or be afraid; it was superfluid. I've only just started to realize, through psychoanalysis, that I was never a victim of bullying. I always built a character; I wasn't aware of it. We had some homophobic reactions, but suddenly it was as if everything went very smoothly. And, in reality, we've always been very free to do whatever we wanted. We were always very reactive to what the school tried to impose on us. Me, Vasco Araújo, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, and the rest of the class... That was very important for us as artists.

I knew I had to be at school because it would give me the tools to earn money from my work. I always thought that the exercises we were given in Fine Arts could be circumvented. It was in this idea of circumventing the exercises that the work could exist. It still happens today. When we're told that we can't, for example, make dicks. We go around and make suggestions of dicks everywhere without representing a single dick. Sometimes, it's much more effective and provocative than an obvious image.

When this group started working, we realized that what we were doing was really different from the work of the previous generation. People began to work on their sexuality, and this sexuality was not heterosexual. I say non-heterosexual sexuality because when I had

my first exhibition at the Módulo gallery, I presented some sculptures made from gym objects, and when the review came out in the newspaper, it said that I was working in the non-heterosexual imaginary. When we look back, we realize that we're talking about an exhibition that took place in 2000, ILGA and the first Pride march are contemporaries of that time. People didn't have the discursive or intellectual tools to analyze things differently. The work was accepted because it was different and that otherness was not seen with negativity but as fresh, playful, and tokenizing because it served the purpose of people from the culture being seen as advanced and open. Later, when the work becomes more politicized and challenges the norm, we realize that the cultural milieu is deeply homophobic and conservative. When we started, we didn't have that idea. On the one hand, we were well received by Alexandre Melo, João Pedro Rodrigues, and João Rui Guerra da Mata, the places where Frágil nightclub. We were comfortable amid this group of people.

NAF: Then There's the other side, which is the collectors and the people who buy. We start to see the patrons of institutions, usually conservative families. When the work grows and needs other support... it's difficult.

TL: Considering that we can't talk about a history of using openly 'queer' themes and discourses in the field of visual arts in Portugal. When you started working on these subjects, were you aware of their political and ideological relevance?

JPV: Not immediately.

NAF: Our political awareness began later in life after we moved to New York, where there is a political environment. It's not that the work didn't already have that 'queerness,' it existed because it was ours. It was more self-expression than activism.

JPV: We heard a lot of things like: "Aren't you afraid of working with these themes that many people don't understand? Aren't you limiting your audience to just other gay people?" And I'd reply that being gay I could also understand Romeo and Juliet.

NAF: Being gay, I've had contact with romantic love between men and women all my life, from cartoons to Brazilian TV novels. And I can understand it. Why shouldn't I understand the opposite, with two men or two women.

JPV: We weren't aware that we were constantly being attacked. This concept of micro-aggression. And over time you start to realize that you can use your work to talk about these things**.** When we became aware of this, we were already mainstream artists on a Portuguese scale. In other words, we were already being invited to an exhibition somewhere, we were part of the circuit. We decided what we were going to exhibit. We used the places we were exhibiting to talk about these matters.

TL: Bearing in mind that the historical narrative has ignored or marginalized the existence of queer people, how do you consider the impact of the Portuguese historical context on the experience of non-heteronormative people? Do you believe that the historical context, namely the persistence of fascism, may have delayed the visibility and recognition of queer artists in Portugal?

JPV: We're always trying to understand what was done before us and suddenly There's a lot we didn't know about. It's not so obvious in the visual arts.

NAF: Yes, the visual arts were seen as decorative arts. During the dictatorship, more interesting things were happening in literature and even the performing arts. At least as far as we know.

JPV: One thing is the Estado Novo period, which obviously slowed things down. The well-known Poets of Sodom appeared before Estado Novo, so there were already 'queer' things happening. If Estado Novo hadn't existed, we would have had a different path.

NAF: Yes, there was an opening at the beginning of the century with the First Republic. Queer people were appearing in the arts, and there were newspaper reports both for and against, but it was talked about. If there hadn't been 40 years of dictatorship, it might have developed differently. It ended up being completely silenced by Estado Novo. During the dictatorship, it's also important to talk about social class. Because the queer population faced different types of sanctions from the state if they were rich or poor. For example, Fernanda de

Castro married António Ferro, who was Salazar's propaganda minister. And there was a whole lesbian circuit going on. Some figures lived together quite openly. For example, Virgínia Victorino had an affair with a woman for a long time, which was public knowledge. But they belonged to an aristocracy above Salazar himself. These people existed, created, and produced. Virgínia Vitorino wrote plays that were super conniving with the regime and then had books of poetry that were completely sapphic. And one thing compensated for the other.

TL: Yes, it's important to bear in mind that the sanctions applied to the rich are not the same as those applied to the poor. But we can say that marginalization was transversal, in the sense that they couldn't live openly as homosexuals.

NAF: Yes, there wasn't. But somehow people knew. It's a bit like "don't ask, don't tell" (DADT) applied to Portuguese society.

JPV: The fact that people can't be open about their sexuality or identity doesn't mean that there weren't things during Estado Novo. I wasn't aware of this when I started working, but now we're digging into things and understanding how they happened. You have the history of Estado Novo, that period following the revolution with the opening of the Scarlatty Club and Finalmente [nightclubs in Lisbon], João Paulo Ferreira's films, and the circulation of magazines like Órbita Gay Macho. There was a crescendo of openness, and suddenly, the 1980s came along with the HIV crisis. And because of that, this openness is perceived as a death sentence. When we started working in the 2000s, the imagery surrounding us wasn't very 'queer.' It was still very ghettoized**.**

NAF: You had some figures, but they weren't socially accepted. They were still very ghettoized. You'd find queer people in certain spaces, whether they were linked to the arts, the nightlife, fashion, or literary circles, but always in those areas. In the last twenty years, the way people present themselves in the public space has completely changed, something that was previously unthinkable. It's all very recent.

JPV: We started working on these ['queer'] themes coinciding with the appearance of the first ILGA march, and the appearance of the first gay and lesbian film festival at the end of the 1990s. This allowed us to feel shielded and with some sort of feedback in an environment where, at first glance, it's not a big problem to be gay. It's not as if it was all that easy, but looking back, it's as if the conditions were right for us to appear.

NAF: There was a reciprocal empowerment of people. We didn't feel alone because we had our peers. It was a very specific moment before Expo 1998, when there was total euphoria in Lisbon. Also Lisbon as European Capital of Culture in 1994. The second half of the 1990s was very vibrant culturally.

JPV: In the 1990s, we had a much more politicized generation of artists. For example, artists who spoke out against Cavaquismo.[63] The generation before ours was very politicized, due to economic and social issues. I'm thinking of the work of Pedro Portugal and Paulo Mendes. This opened doors for us to come. But we always tried to make our work 'light.'

NAF: Yes, lightness as a survival strategy. Which is: how am I now going to talk about what I want, how am I going to show that my body is valid, that my body has a place, but in a sweet way, so that people don't pull me into a corner? It was always this ambivalence.

JPV: It's also important to talk about the CHR (Coletivo dos Homossexuais Revolucionários) in João Grosso, in the 1980s. It was a social theater. And suddenly society is so conservative and homophobic that it stopped existing.

TL: As queer people don't usually leave direct descendants, it's often people from the community itself who, years later, are concerned with legitimizing these people's contributions. Your work is also historiographical, in that you make references to a group of Portuguese artists whose work is not as highly valued as it could be (namely António Botto, Raul Leal, Mário Cesariny, among others). Do you feel a responsibility to bring these authors into the contemporary dialog?

NAF: I completely agree. Things don't come out of nowhere, we didn't come out of nowhere, we felt that there were conditions. I mean, it's something you intuit, it's not that you're there pondering whether or not there are now conditions to speak, to have a voice. But you sense that you have the will and you're going to start there, but that will doesn't come out of nowhere. There are no descendants, but there are ancestors. It's important to show what these people have done. And it's also a way for us to say that those were our tools for feeling comfortable doing these things in our artistic practice. And then, we feel this need to keep

[63] "Cavaquismo" is a term used to define Cavaco Silva's supporters and their political positions.

talking about those people, that history is always being rewritten, erasure is always happening. It seems like 10 years go by and things lose their importance. Even when you've gone from a time when there were no records of anything to a time when there are records of everything. From too much non-existence of records to too much existence of records. People are still lost, not knowing what happened.

The other day, at the invitation of a friend, we went to the Fine Arts Faculty to give a lecture on the 1990s. It's impressive because in this decade, everything was already recorded, and a few years later, the internet became widespread. And yet, for people in their 20s, it's as if we were talking about the 19th century. It's been 30 years, not 200 years. For us, it was yesterday. In other words, this work of always talking about what happened is very important.

JPV: Another thing that's important to mention is the fact that our training is hyper-Americanized. We celebrate Pride on June 28 because of something that happened in the USA. Even in terms of what Stonewall was, which was the culmination of several things. It wasn't even the first riot. It's the culmination of a series of things happening in America. And people need these symbols. And then we start to think, what happened in Portugal that is important to our history? And why are figures like Mário Cesariny so important? Or why is the Lux nightclub so important? Lux is a good example because it opened in 1998 and had a huge impact on Lisbon. The opening of Lux was more important than people give it credit for today. Before, no boys were walking around in skirts or wigs. This is directly related to the fact that Lux existed. There's a difficulty in looking at our past.

NAF: Returning to your question, about the importance of bringing back these figures and this need to remember them. I think it stems from a political awareness of what it all means. It's about feeling yourself and being able to write your own history. By analyzing what history is, you become aware that you can write your own history. I want these people to be part of my history! Because it's my history.

JPV: This aspect is now visible in the trans community. They are finally starting to tell their own story.

TL: Is the work of researching people who have been marginalized or erased from history a continuous one?

JPV: It has to do with something personal. In other words, we're already addicted to this methodology. Now we're preparing something we've never done before. An anthological exhibition for the Serralves Museum. In that sense, we're looking at the work in retrospect. So now we're going to make a series of references to figures from the past but to start to look to the future. It's also important to think about the importance of these people, more than from the point of view of historical legacy, but rather because they give you the tools to anticipate things in the future.

TL: In 2005, you were part of the exhibition "Radicais Libres: Experiências Gays e Lésbicas na Arte Peninsular." After that, were there any exhibitions in Portugal that brought together queer artists or focused on this theme?

JPV: Yes, an exhibition called "Género na Arte. Corpo, Sexualidade, Identidade, Resistência" in MNAC, 2017. It was organized by the museum's director at the time. And by a professor of gender studies at the University of Évora. But the exhibition is problematic.

TL: Problematic in what way?

JPV: Because, even at the time, it was very binary. Made by two heterosexual, cisgender women. With some ignorance of the environment.

NAF: Then There's always this gap between academia and what's really happening, and we always try to point that out. That's not why we didn't take part. It wasn't a mirror of what was happening.

JPV: The "Radicais Libres: Experiências Gays e Lésbicas na Arte Peninsular" was more interesting in its time. More extensive and more appropriate.

NAF: At the institutional level in Portugal, I can't think of any other exhibitions.

TL: Do you think there are any challenges faced specifically by queer artists in Portugal?

JPV: We face the same challenges that a queer person faces in any other field. These are things that range from the meeting can't be scheduled at a certain time because it's too early for us. They assume that queer people are more nocturnal.

TL: Are these micro-aggressions?

JPV: Yes, there are countless micro-aggressions.

NAF: And when they say “I can’t come at that time because my son is ill.” As if you were always available because you don’t have children.

JPV: For example, Esteban Muñoz talks about ‘queer’ time and straight time. This idea is that you (queer person) can’t miss a meeting in the same way that a straight person can, with the same excuses. We feel that in people's minds, our work is just about dicks. And that it has a very graphic dimension. That's why they're always afraid to engage with us. When an artist is invited to do an exhibition, from the outset, the artist is free to do whatever they want. Nobody tells a non-queer person that they have to be careful with certain themes. And that's a constant for us.

NAF: We end up developing a kind of self-censorship without realizing it. Because you have to survive and start measuring the consequences of certain things. As a queer person, you spend a lot of time giving justifications, by the way you speak or present yourself. So the mental exercise of justification is much more refined.You develop an enhanced sense of justification. This extends to what you do, to your artistic practice. When people ask you why you did what you did, you already have a speech all prepared.

JPV: Because nobody asks a kid why he's straight. But the gay kid is constantly being asked and has to justify himself. So you hone this justification thing. And this also happens at work. The answer to your question is yes, but it’s difficult to answer. It requires a little more thought. And what we've talked about are minimal examples.

TL: In my dissertation, I argue that contemporary art galleries should not be a neutral space for exhibiting works, but that they can play an active role, namely through the selection and promotion of artists and in the creation of cultural discourses. Do you agree with this statement?

NAF: They're not neutral, but I'm not aware of the importance of galleries in creating cultural discourse. They are important for the market. There is a process of legitimization where they are important.

TL: I say that because, historically, there have been galleries and gallerists who have helped legitimize certain artistic expressions.

NAF: But nowadays, I don't think that happens. It's a phenomenon that has happened. Galleries were important in the formation of certain artists.

TL: But nowadays, couldn't galleries choose to be more active in this sense?

NAF: Of course they could! But that's not the case.

JPV: It doesn't happen because galleries respond to a market need. They're not concerned with shaping it. An example of this is Marina Abramovic, who now sells things because, together with the gallerists, they have found a way to turn that work into a saleable object. There are strategies for doing this. In the case of Marina Abramovic, Tino Sehgal, and Anne Imhof, more different works. The galleries thought about how these works could be marketed because they were part of exhibitions in museums and biennials. They had to be turned into economic assets. The same thing happened with video. These things were defined by the market, and the galleries played an active role. What happens when we look at the gallery scene in Portugal is that it doesn't match up with what people are actually doing. And this is a very serious problem. The work that artists are doing is not what is in the galleries. The galleries aren't looking for it either. And the kids, when they're at school, don't do what they want, but what they see reflected in the galleries. So, there is an unequivocal split between what the gallery is and what contemporary artistic production is. In other words, artistic production doesn't start with its creators; it's manipulated by the galleries. And when you look, the galleries are once again racist, homophobic, sexist... they're all of these things. And it's everything around it, too: the people the galleries call to write the texts, the photographers, the people who are invited to the dinners, among others. The affinities that are made do not give priority to what is being produced or to the artists but rather to the economic dimension that generates everything.

NAF: I don’t think galleries should be neutral, but I think their importance concerning artistic discourse is very neutralized. As agents of the art world, the reality we know is the Portuguese reality. You only have to meet half a dozen artists and see what they're doing in parallel events in places outside the field. When you visit galleries and see what they're exhibiting, you realize that There’s a gap. Things don’t intersect, they don’t talk to each other, they don’t mix.

TL: And in institutional terms?

NAF: In institutional terms**,** it’s even worse. And institutionally, the responsibility should be greater. You can’t demand social responsibility from a private individual who owns a gallery, but you can demand it from institutions. Because institutions, especially state institutions, live off public money. They should be the first to show signs of representativeness, intersectionality, and diversity. There are attempts... but they are often the last ones.

JPV: It’s not that the institutions are all turning their backs on the world. There are some attempts to do things. For example, Pedro Faro and Sara António Matos at the Lisbon Municipal Galleries play a very active role in this search. Galeria da Boavista allows young artists to show their work under the right conditions. Then There’s Galeria Avenida da Índia with colonial issues. There's the gallery space in Torreão Nascente da Cordoaria Nacional, dedicated to more institutional things. Pavilhão Branco, for example, is concerned with this.

NAF: In institutional terms, the machine is slower. In specific situations, you can have people in charge who have those kinds of concerns. There are aware directors, but it’s not just them who decide what is shown. The pace is different.

TL: Were there any moments when you didn't feel supported by the gallery you were working with?

JPV: I’m going to tell you about two episodes that are related and have to do with our relationship with the Filomena Soares Gallery. And, ultimately, with our departure from the gallery. Our departure from the gallery wasn’t directly caused by what I’m about to tell you. However, it was as a result of this that our relationship with the gallery worsened. This is a very complex story with many layers. I started working with the gallery in 2004, and it has always been a very productive relationship. And the relationship between artists and galleries

is very important because it gives them the means to produce. In other words, they give you money to do your work. In 2008 or 2009, we went to New York with a Gulbenkian grant. The purpose of the grant was to do a piece on Portuguese immigrants in the United States. We ended up doing a project on Herman Melville's Moby Dick. The work consisted of a gay pornographic film based on a text by Jennifer Doyle called “Moby Dicks’ boring parts: pornography's allegorical hothouse.” It was for an exhibition at the gallery that we showed in two parts. We made an installation with the set where we had made the pornographic film. And we showed the movie at Cine Paraíso, where Cinema Ideal is today. Because it was a pornographic movie theater. The work was a pornographic movie, but it was artistic because it was made in a gallery context. As we had been away from Portugal, we were doing what we wanted instead of doing things that responded to the market. We received a lot of internalized homophobia from the milieu. It was very badly received.

NAF: Yes, the reaction was terrible.

JPV: I loved doing it. But we had a difficult time. It went well because we managed to do what we wanted. But it wasn’t the most successful work. In the meantime, the Gulbenkian grant ended, but we continued between Portugal and New York. While we were there, we discovered that there was a village near Boston called Provincetown. This town brought together three specific communities: the LGBT community, the Portuguese immigrant community, and the artistic community. We did an art project in Provincetown for three weeks. In 2011, we had an exhibition in a space owned by the Tranquilidade insurance company that was related to this project. Espaço Arte Tranquilidade, in Lisbon, near Avenida da Liberdade. And we arranged for the “P-Town” exhibition to open in September. No one from the exhibition space or our gallery was concerned about the content of the works. When we started preparing the promotional material, they realized that it wasn’t what they had thought. And that the image we had used on the poster was 'too phallic.' They didn't permit to put the poster on the façade of the building. This triggered a series of events that led to the exhibition being canceled due to homophobic censorship.

NAF: We were told that the exhibition had been canceled because it was too gay-themed. Whatever that means (laughs).

JPV: Shortly afterward, Bruno Horta wrote about the exhibition for censorship for Time Out. The Público newspaper followed. From one day to the next, it was a scandal because of the censorship. It was really heavy.

NAV: It was then that we felt completely let down by the gallery. And that ultimately led us to stop working with the Filomena Soares Gallery. The gallery that represented us didn't defend us against the market. That has to do with our political awareness. When the work started to become more political, our relationship with the gallery changed.

JPV: The Tranquilidade insurance company was linked to the Espírito Santo group, which had a large art collection and sponsored the prize. So the gallery didn't want to buy a war with the Espírito Santo family. As a result, in 2011 we left the gallery and were left without a gallery for around 10 years. In 2018, Cristina Guerra invited us to do an exhibition without the commitment of being a gallery artist. In 2022 we began to be represented by the Cristina Guerra Gallery.

TL: Was there censorship and discrimination from the artistic community?

JPV: I think we were protected by the milieu and not by the gallery. The other artists, the other agents, defended us. There was no support from the gallery, but there was institutional support. The story appeared in many newspapers and opinion pieces because it was a matter of denunciation for what had happened, for censorship. We felt supported.

NAF: João Mourão, who was in charge of the Municipal Galleries at the time, wanted us to hold the exhibition two months later at Galeria da Boavista. The Lisbon City Council and the Councillor for Culture were on our side; they wanted to show this project. I think this event helped us realize that this is what we want to do. Then There’s another issue: we had an exclusive contract with the Filomena Soares Gallery. It was the gallery that chose the works it put on sale. So, it’s the gallery that decides what is art and what isn't.

JPV: When we stopped working with the gallery, and collectors stopped buying our work, we began to realize that the art world was bigger than this. That we could work with other people and in other places. Places outside of galleries and museums. This was important in the way we structured our thinking about our work and how we positioned ourselves outside our

studio. More than being artists, we are people of culture. We're interested in being able to discuss and talk about things, and we do this through the visual arts. When we left the gallery, we realized that we could do many other things and have other ways of earning money without being subject to the scrutiny of the galleries. Of course, now we're working with a gallery again. But we continue to do other things to which we attach the same importance.

TL: How do you articulate the 'queer' subjects and themes of your artworks to collectors?

NAF: That has to do with the gallery. But even when we didn't have a gallery, we showed the work when there was interest. But never in a structured way. When you have a gallery that acts as an intermediary, that's their role. The people who work in the gallery know whether a work is better suited to a collection or to that collector. It's obvious that after 25 years, we know what might best suit a collection. But it's not a strategic thing.

JPV: For example, we have a small work made with cotton buds that says AIDS. And a collector turns to me and says, "Oh, I love that piece, but as long as my mother is alive, I can't have it in my house." And I said that maybe it's me who doesn't want him to buy it because There's absolutely no problem with it. Because There's absolutely no problem with what it represents.

NAF: There is one thing that can sometimes help the sale. The people buying sometimes don't have the codes to decipher everything. Especially if they're straight, they often don't know the meaning of what they're buying. They know what they see, but they don't know what it means.

TL: Is it because the work is aesthetically appealing and not because of the message?

NAF: Yes, that's right. Because of 'pride' or because it's fashionable, or because it's ours, it already has a value on the market. You know? It's a logic of valuing the collection, not because of the theme it deals with. Several things happen here. I think they [collectors] often buy works without knowing their meaning; they don't have the codes to decipher them.

TL: And you don't usually explain these codes to people?

JPV: No, because we have rent to pay. We're not going to ask if the person knows what the work means or what it means. If they buy it, we won't explain. And sometimes, these codes aren't just from gay culture. Often, people buy just because they think it's pretty, because they like it, or because it belongs to a certain artist.

TL: Are the collectors interested in your works mostly Portuguese or international collectors?

JPV: We don't work much with international collectors. In other words, we sell abroad, but it's residual. The core of our survival is national collectors. And some Portuguese collectors have several of our pieces and buy from us again. But I can't think of any collectors who buy because of the theme. Over time, we have given great importance to small collectors. Those collectors who don't necessarily have a lot of money but who, from time to time, buy smaller works. And we are aware of the impact our work has on their collections and their lives. I remember, for example, a couple of friends who bought a piece from us. And their young children coming to our studio was important in building them as people.

NAF: Yes. This dissemination by small collectors and small collections has a social impact that can't be measured. You can't measure it like a work that's in a large collection, on permanent display. In those works sold to small collectors, our works create small waves. We don't control it, but it has that effect. The truth is that during the years we were without a gallery, we lived off those small collectors. Because the big collections are connected to the galleries, it's a game that's played between them. So if you're outside the gallery, you can hardly access the big collectors. It was the smaller market that showed interest and helped us survive.

TL: You are currently working on an exhibition that will take place this year at the Serralves Museum. What does it mean to you to have your work in such an important institution? Do you think there is greater recognition of historically marginalized artistic practices, particularly on 'queer' topics?

JPV: It's important to us.

NAF: And I think it's also important for people to see our work on display.

JPV: It's important to mention that our most visible exhibitions, whether at MAAT or Serralves, were both made possible by Inês Grosso. In other words, I don't think it has to do with the institution, but with that person. You have to recognize that. Another important thing to mention is that we've always been careful to do things with the same commitment, regardless of where we're exhibiting. What matters to us is the work.

NAF: I like to look at all the work and feel that it was done with the same commitment.

JPV: Given the visibility of the Serralves Museum, we've been thinking about how we want to present our work. We are aware of the impact our work can have there. And for us, it's important to think about what might be pertinent to exhibit at this time, what might provoke or raise questions from the public. The only thing we can condition is the type of proposals we make when we choose one work over another.

We know the impact the work has. When we were doing the exhibition at MAAT, we were talking about a series of issues that aren't usually in that space. And for me, more important than money and visibility is that my work has had a positive impact on the public. Regardless of where our work is exhibited, the important thing for us is that it contributes to something good.

NAF: Yes, and we are aware of what we want to convey when we look at the work, choose the pieces, and put together an exhibition discourse. What do we want to talk about in 2024, and what does the space provide for these discourses? We realize that this is important because we have access to a different audience than a gallery or a smaller institution.

JPV: The exhibition will be named "Casa Val Ferreira" and will be held at the house in Serralves. And Nuno and I are planning to get married at the exhibition. We've always defended the freedom of marriage, but we've never wanted to get married. And we decided to do it for the exhibition because it's an anthological exhibition. But if you get married in this context, it will create a different reading of the exhibition. And we're getting married at a time when we may no longer have that opportunity. In other words, we grew up fighting for rights. Now, we find ourselves thinking that the future struggle will be to maintain those rights.

NAF: At this stage, we must strive to preserve what we have accomplished.

JPV: And something as simple as getting married has already resulted in a huge institutional mess. And we thought, just for this, it's worth getting married. For us, getting married was thought of as a strategy to bring our work together. We came up with the idea of getting married because of the title of the exhibition linked to the house.

NAF: But from the moment we started dealing with the institutional antibodies because of the wedding, we realized that it was pertinent to do this. But it's going to happen, no matter what! Since we're not allowed to get married at the inauguration, we're thinking of getting married in the Serralves chapel a few minutes before. We're going to turn the inauguration and the exhibition opening party into our wedding party. It's important to get married there because it's like we're legitimizing marriage as an artistic act. There are always ways of making the act visible because it won't be invisible, everything will be photographed. But it's not a ceremony; it's a contract signing in the Serralves Chapel.

TL: Do you think the exhibition you're going to hold at the Serralves Museum could open up space for other exhibitions by queer artists?

JPV: I hope they open doors to other artists. However, museum programmers are very paternalistic towards their public; they think that the public won't like it because they'll feel excluded when they approach these subjects. Thinking like that, many things are put aside. I'm not saying that this happens at Serralves, but that it's widespread. It has always happened.

NAF: I think we tend to be moving in that direction. However, I don't know if the institutional speed is keeping up with reality.

JPV: We can open doors, but it can also happen that we fill a quota. And then the quota is filled, and there are no more exhibitions with queer artists. It can have both effects.

NAF: We don't think that we're the pioneers and that everything will be easier later on. We're aware that it's also easier for us because we already have a consolidated career because of the amount of work we've done and the struggles we've had and have. But we are still two white cisgender men. So they might think that it's a quota that goes to us and not to others. On the one hand, it can create an appetite for diversity. And I think we're tending in that direction.

The perverse effect could be exactly the opposite, which is to fill the quota of queer people. But we can’t do anything about that; it’s out of our hands.

TL: What recommendations can you make to promote diversity in the art market?

JPV: There is a difference between public money and private money. There is a social conscience that everyone should have, but we can’t tell people how to spend their money.

NAF: At the public level, I think There’s still a lot to be done in this regard.

JPV: Collections have to be intersectional and diverse. It’s not just about the artists and curators. But also with the people who are included in the market, all the agents involved in organizing exhibitions: the staff of galleries and institutions, the design and communication departments, the people who write the texts, among others. We have always been concerned with working with different people who have helped us along the way.

NAF: There's also another issue. When artists complain about the lack of diversity in institutions, it’s important to know that there is also individual responsibility. They also have to show, above all, how they want to do it. Sooner or later, I believe that galleries, institutions, and collections will look to diversify. When it comes to younger artists, There’s always this voracity for what's new. Someone needs to realize that this is what's new now! This also happened to us, and we didn't wait around complaining or whining. At the time, we had no idea what the art world was. I think that people in important positions of direction, choice, selection, and legitimization have to make this effort. But artists also have to make the effort to impose their rules and show their work.

JPV: For example, our gallerist was offended when we pointed out that she only exhibited male artists at art fairs. She's a woman, and she comes from a time when to be a successful woman, you had to behave like a man. Some misconceptions are difficult to deconstruct. Even if the gallery can have a balanced distribution between men and women, if it goes to an international fair and only takes men, it will be giving off signals that this is the gallery's image. It doesn't even correspond to the truth.

NAF: Or what will a young non-binary, trans, or female artist think of that gallery? They'll think There's no point in going there because there are only male artists there.

JPV: In other words, even though we're talking about a private entity, there is a social responsibility towards the environment. But sometimes it's not easy to count the number of artists on this basis. However, there needs to be more visibility, and there needs to be more of them. I think that's what needs to be done.

NAF: There's a lack of institutional courage. When there are queer artists, their work is always advertised as something else. There's never any emphasis on 'queer.'For example, the courage of the São Paulo Museum of Art to say that this year's program is all dedicated to LGBTQIA+ artists. For example, the courage of the MASP (Museu de Arte de São Paulo) to say that this year's program is all dedicated to LGBTQIA+ artists. Nobody does that here. It's about not upsetting the founders or the people who fund it. Things do happen, but then the discourse around them always goes sideways. I don't think this courage exists. We've had exhibitions where the press-releases have the subjects very disguised, camouflaged.

JPV: The press releases for João Gabriel's exhibitions are always about painting, never about the content. It's never about his work being inspired by pornographic films.

NAF: I remember the exhibition we did at MAAT; they focused a lot on Mário Cesariny. We used Cesariny to talk about homosexuality as a sin, a disease, a punishment, a crime, and a penalty. And for that, we used a fact from Mário Cesariny's life. But it wasn't an exhibition about him; it wasn't a tribute to him. How discourses are manipulated around exhibitions always ends up happening.

B.6

Interview with André Teodósio (AT)

Lisbon, May 8th, 2024

1 hour and 16 minutes

TL: What tasks and themes are on the agenda for Teatro Praga?

AT: Teatro Praga has several projects underway. Firstly, Teatro Praga is a structure, a theater collective. In addition to putting on its shows, it has various activities. One of them is a publishing label, Sistema Solar and Documenta. It's a medium-scale publishing house focused on art books. We have an imprint dedicated solely to the performing arts because we found a gap in Portuguese publishing houses. None of them offered books on performativity. This idea of performativity is performance as art, but also performance in its political expressions, aesthetic ways of acting, and in its working modes. For example, There's a book we're going to do on music made during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's not necessarily about the music itself, but about the ways of working around music. So, it's performativity in multiple forms. And then There's Rua das Gaivotas 6, a project that we say is for artists, curators, and other professionals who don't have a space. Therefore, Rua das Gaivotas 6 is for projects, exhibitions, concerts, theater shows, performances, happenings, and more. It also has collaborative spaces like the library or the sound studio. Teatro Praga is an entity with many fronts of action. It is a theater collective that also curates books and has a programming space, among other things. Teatro Praga is an organization with many fronts: It's a theater collective that also curates books and has a programming space, among other things. The way to act and reconcile all this is to somehow find sources of funding and balance between these structures. If some of them can generate income, others cannot. A balance is made between all the branches and the central activity. Teatro Praga is largely subsidized by the state and its support has been increasing over the years. The structure has been active for almost 30 years. Even so, we earn 60% of our income from outside the state. So everything that is sold from shows is money that doesn't go directly into this state support. Nevertheless, most of the sales of shows go to public institutions. But it's money that could come from other sources. Then, as Rua das Gaivotas 6 has no funds of its own (apart from residual support from the city council) the idea is for artists to be able to experiment and not be dependent on funding to pay for their stays. What happens is that this income or the extra money that comes from selling shows and from Teatro Praga's activities is channeled into maintaining Rua das Gaivotas 6. So that, in the

future, the artists will have the autonomy to do their own projects. So it's a production and presentation structure. The books are made 50% by Sistema Solar and 50% by Teatro Praga. Recalling the ideas of Peter Sloterdijk, it's possible to think of Teatro Praga as if it were a larger sphere with several spheres inside. These spheres are all interdependent on each other and balance each other out. When there are no big sales of Teatro Praga shows, we re-organize ourselves so that the money can come from elsewhere.

At the moment I'm working on books that are going to be published. We do four books a year. Not long ago, I co-curated with Anabela Mota Ribeiro, among others, the *FeLiCidade 2024 festival*, which Teatro Praga was producing. It was a celebration of language and freedom that took place at the Centro Cultural de Belém, with music, and so on. And I'm writing a new play, a show called *RE: Antígona*, as if it were an email response. And Rua das Gaivotas 6 continues to have its many activities. Recently we've been slowing down to reflect its operating logic.

TL: In your artistic practice and critical intervention, have you always had a political and social conscience or responsibility?

AT: There's an interview with Almada Negreiros in which he is asked what united him with Fernando Pessoa, and he replies, "misfortune." And I think that's enough to unite. When you come out and grow up, you're constantly placed in a situation of fragility, whether it's because of your phenotypes, the way you present yourself, or the ideas you defend. There's no way of not taking action. In other words, you can deceive yourself by coming up with power strategies, as happened a lot in the survival of queer people during the dictatorship in Portugal, absorbing the mechanisms of power and trying to escape, somehow, through characters. But since I was born after the revolution, There's no escaping the fact that I was an emigrant, that I'm gay, that I have a paralyzed arm... or that I have very specific things that are usually phenotypes associated with Jewish people. There's no getting away from these things, so instead of suffering from these insults, I've always used them as discursive assets. In this sense, what has united me with other people, or what unites Teatro Praga with its collaborators, is a kind of "misfortune." A misfortune that is not equal because neither misfortunes nor sufferings can be compared, constituting a structure around people who don't have their own space. And in fact, Teatro Praga is made up of very different people. People seen as disabled, racialized, gay, queer, among others. It's like the concept of *demos* for Jacques Rancière, which is the part of the 'without part. Sometimes, this is linked discursively,

and sometimes, it isn't necessary because our presence is enough to do a certain action for this to be inherent. So the answer is yes, but that doesn't mean it's completely thought out. Sometimes, just the fact that I'm doing a certain action already binds me to participate in those discourses. But it was also discursively what we wanted to do. So, we've always been used to confronting canonical texts in theater or reversing roles.

TL: Talking about and giving visibility to themes of non-heterosexual sexuality, non-normative bodies, and expressions of gender identity has always been part of your interests or concerns?

AT: Yes. There was no such field in Portugal. The existence of this field in the arts, in the history of theater, is very recent. Some figures were outlawed or disappeared. It's a very vanished history, a history made in rooms and little rooms. People who were openly queer (to use that term, but referring mainly to gays and lesbians) in the performing arts were medicalized or hospitalized, outlawed, or strangled. So, it's a story that has yet to be told. In the Revolutionary Period in Course [PREC], many forms of identity expression emerged that had ancestors. In the theater, a man playing a woman could be an escape hatch so that he could publicly assume his transformation, even if he led his life as a man. After April 25, these actors, as transformers, began to take part in activities in *cabarets, cafés-concerto* and 'queer' bars that were appearing. Retrospectively, we realize that there were escape mechanisms in the show for a life that wasn't allowed. From the 1980s onwards, there began to be a sedimentation of these discourses that we use to identify ourselves as a continuous process, but also to get out of what is going on. In other words, to get out of what is becoming crystallized as artistic discourse.

TL: When you spoke about the performing arts before April 25, Valentim de Barros immediately came to mind. It's only in recent decades that these figures have started to be talked about and given the value they weren't given in life.

AT: Yes, I've always been involved in that in some way. I've done a performance around it, and I've written and spoken about it. It's a story that needs to be revitalized. It has very few visible points, and the rest is destroyed, you'll never find out unless someone has a photograph of something that happened. But all of this is a history of resistance that we're trying to catch up with and which is increasingly necessary, even if, in the artistic field, it's sometimes the

reason for a crystallization of ‘queer’ understanding and even of ‘queer’ practices through affective capitalism or an excessive archiving of these stories.

TL: Do you feel any responsibility to look to the past and bring these figures into the contemporary debate?

AT: I feel that I participate in a common interest among queer artists to bring visibility to these erased histories. I feel that I do. But I feel that my work doesn't try to capitalize on these stories or this tragedy. What unites me with people is tragedy, but I don’t try to capitalize on tragedy. But it’s an artistic system; it’s a washing that ends up being necessary.

TL: Do you think it’s appropriate to use the term ‘queer’ to describe works of art?

AT: It’s very complex, because it’s a very broad hat. Is it ‘queer’ in its form of expression? In its form of production? By the artist who produces it? By the context in which it is inserted? Is it ‘queer’ in the eyes of what is identified as ‘queer’? Or, as a procedure, is it already ‘queer’? There can be several points of analysis. I try to avoid this term. I can use it to describe what I present. In other words, if someone asks me what kind of work it is, I can say that it’s ‘queer.’ As it’s an inclusive term, it allows me to avoid answering. But some markets are ‘queer,’ markets that try to escape institutionalized production logic. That could be a point of analysis. It can be found in the ways of working, the ways of making, the ways of presenting and the context in which they are placed. It’s a very ambivalent concept, a very elastic hypernym.

TL: From your perspective, can ‘queer’ being an ambivalent term be a limitation or, on the other hand, an advantage?

AT: Nowadays, it’s a word that serves to capitalize. Because it’s so broad, everyone can talk about it in the context of their specific knowledge (be it botany, post-colonial studies, literature, and so on) as being a ‘queer’ procedure. It serves to create a kind of second-rate capitalism. It’s a term used almost as a third way. A kind of univocal response that unites all interests, which involves doing studies in a non-normative way, bending concepts. In this sense, the word ‘queer’ is applied. I think it helps to break free from normativity, but you can capitalize on it.

The word ‘queer’ has to be analyzed in the light of the temporal and geographical context in which it is presented because, in 2024, ‘queer’ doesn't mean the same thing in Portugal as it does in Mozambique. Therefore, it also has very specific geographical contexts. It is not the same word. Even if it was a pejorative word, it was never as strong as, perhaps, other identity words or words that define identities. It’s a word that has become very broad, unlike others, such as gay or lesbian, which are still very specific words. Words that are not all-encompassing hats for an immense latitude of conceptual offerings and ideological defenses. I think that because it’s not as pejorative a word as others, it’s allowed itself to be stretched. It’s like *larilas* in Portuguese if you start to open up its meaning. It’s a pejorative word, but not as pejorative as faggot, dyke, and so on., which are very specific and have been ingrained for a long time. The word *larilas* can be non-binary; it can be a rococo effect on something, or it can become an adjective.

TL: In the national context, the term ‘queer’ has come to us with a new meaning. It's a new word in our vocabulary.

AT: Yes. But you could go the other way and say that, for an English speaker, *larilas* could be equivalent. A word that has a pejorative function, which could open up semantically to become something bigger. Because the other words are understood as an insult and can’t free themselves from that symbolic function.

TL: Do you know of any important cultural projects with queer people?

AT: There are many online cultural projects, from ‘queer’ literature *bookstagrammers* to information creation spaces, such as the Flecha project by Laura Falésia and André Tecedeiro. There are bookstores, like Livraria Aberta (‘queer’ bookstore). There are very different things, even recreational ones, like Planeta Manas (cultural association), among others. Some of these spaces are free to enter, others you have to consume. I know that at Livraria Aberta, for example, you have to buy books for the bookshop to sustain itself. However, access to the books, the exhibitions, and the space is free. They also have free workshops. And then there are things like *bookstagrammers*, which are completely free and only depend on their investment. Then There’s *Flecha*, which is a platform that creates talks on diversity that can be free or not, depending on the place. So, for me, these are very important sites in their plurality. There are many LGBTQIA+ artistic projects whose expression is mostly literary,

theatrical, or in the visual arts. But I can't say that these are the things that interest me the most. I'm interested in the work of João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira and in the writing of some authors, such as André Tecedeiro. These things are very scattered. I can't answer the question of the most important projects that have been done. I think that's it, it's a cultural market.

TL: Do you think there has been an increase in 'queer' culture in recent decades?

AT: Of course, it's quite obvious. More artists that come from 'queer.' This possibility, not only as artists and civil agents but also in their artistic discourses and their work modules, is huge. So that's obvious. That's not to say that it's very exciting in terms of what's being done in the name of that. I often feel that there is a kind of romanticization of the queer community. It's as if there can't be bad, right-wing queer people. So There's a romanticization and hyper-capitalization on the archives, through the remixing and reinvention, often even miserabilist, of this history, or else, the absence of artistic critical culture for the sake of identity, as if identity took precedence over any critical capacity around an art object. So there are these things that come into play, which often mean that I'm not close to them either. But yes, there are many more things, and I'm glad there are, and I'll always support them. However, there were works done under dictatorship, in a veiled way, that were just as interesting. Perhaps even more interesting to me. For example, Lucia Maria Martins in the theater. Or, in the field of literature, Ary dos Santos, Natália Correia, António Botto, Judith Teixeira. These are people who give you an intense reading experience.

TL: Do you think that art galleries can be partners in these social demands that accompany institutional openness to queer artists and themes in other parts of Europe?

AT: I don't have a lot of information on this; I needed concrete data. Objectively, laws and rights for queer people, for LGBTQIA+ people, are very recent. Before that, it was difficult for them to study and survive, they were persecuted or imprisoned, as happened to many of the people we've talked about here. So this is a social difficulty. This social difficulty extends to the institutions that depend on the state. They certainly bought fewer gay and queer artists. They've certainly bought even fewer racialized people and perhaps even fewer disabled people. So it's something that extends to everything that is minority.

TL: From your perspective, can the galleries be part of these social demands?

AT: For example, the São Mamede Gallery, which represented Mário Cesariny... Obviously, during the dictatorship, galleries couldn't participate in social demands. But it did participate by putting on exhibitions of Cesariny, and everyone knew he was homosexual. So, it's not measurable in that way. You can participate in what you can participate in. It wasn't that the galleries didn't want to take part, it was because they couldn't, namely because it was illegal to hold peace meetings during the dictatorship. You could''t even call for peace in that general sense. Having freedom and being able to capitalize on it, yes. But your starting point is one that I'm very far from. I don't care if the galleries take part in something social. So I'm not alert to that either. On the one hand, it's good that the galleries that do this are reiterating a social need. On the other hand, it's bad because they're going to crystallize it and benefit from it uncritically. And the artists will repeatedly repeat what the galleries want them to affirm, even if they are in a different social reality because the social innovator has changed for many of them. I know that, socially, these people are all persecuted, precarious, and injustices, and this is echoed in private or public institutions. But I can't say that they haven't done something. You need concrete data.

TL: Do you think that the public who are interested in 'queer' art are essentially members of the queer community? Or, on the other hand, is there a wider interest?

AT: Good question. I think there are different audiences. When the artistic discourse or the artists' affirmation is 'queer,' the public looks for that 'queer' affirmation, either because they identify with it or because they want to support it. Maybe even because a smaller part is curious about it. But this is speculative. I have never done an audience census. I think there are other procedures, which are 'queer' procedures, which may or may not involve queer people, but which are not affirmatively 'queer'... sometimes it's in their way of working or in their way of thinking. I think they have a smaller but more diverse scope. In other words, they're an art form that promotes a certain type of artistic experience, which is less close but reaches a wider audience. You don't identify with it as much, but at the same time, it's also free from you not identifying with it as an audience.

TL: Do you think there is a greater institutional concern or awareness of sexuality and gender issues?

AT: Yes, there are more and more. In theater, you have Acesso Cultura (a cultural association), among other platforms. They're precisely trying to enter into dialogue with public and private institutions to raise awareness of all kinds of inclusion: from programs, lights, relaxed sessions, accessibility, and so on. So, yes, this kind of awareness of inclusion is part of the institutions.

TL: Do you think that society is tending towards the representation and visibility of non-heteronormative people or those belonging to other minority groups?

AT: Of course, I think that more and more queer people are asserting themselves. In the field of music, for example, it's becoming increasingly clear that queer artists are gaining ground. And that space can't be captured. While in politics, you can do something that is reposted and can create friction (because of a position or a vote), in music, there is an increasing opening up of the field. On the other hand, in the political field, there may be a retraction. This is because identity politics has been captured by the left as if the political right had no right to them. As if there were no queer, racialized, or disabled people who come from the political right. When I say the political right, I'm talking about the PSD [Social Democratic Party] and the far right. They are seen as ungrateful about their current achievements. And I think that's a problem. It's important to realize that there are people on the political right who contemplate all these differences because queer people are not just one thing. There aren't just good queer people; there are also thugs, murderers, scoundrels, everything. There is still the idea of exceptionalization created by the community itself, thinking that all 'queer' people are exceptional. In the artistic field, for example, 'queer' art tends to be perceived as left-wing. Music is different; it has very distinct genres (rock and pop, among others). Theater, literature, and the visual arts tend to be about something. It's a problem I identify with the visual arts. Art tends to be about something; it is circumscribed by a logic of identification. And while this is increasingly visible, it can be increasingly circumscribed, that is, easier to pinpoint. Suddenly, all 'queer' painting is neo-figurative paintings of boys in a lake with trees behind them. And this is perpetuated by many different painters. In Portugal, there are at least two or three who do this. It's the idea of art being about something, about the romanticization of the

figure, about the inscription of history. From my perspective, certain artistic mediums are very capturable. To answer your question, yes, there is more representation and visibility, but at the same time, I'm afraid that art will be captured. If it's captured, it's destroyed in three seconds. It becomes its cliché. A queer person doesn't have to operate on stereotypes. There are very closed ways of looking at what a 'queer' understanding can be. I understand that they capitalize on this because There's an exotic look to all these things, isn't there? Someone seeing those figures *cruising* or seeing exuberant clothes that aren't everyday clothes. It all creates a kind of exotic look about it.

TL: Do you have any recommendations or suggestions as to what can be done to solve this problem?

AT: I think two things can be done. Firstly, art should be independent from the art market. An artist can't just produce for commissions or exhibitions in institutions. They have to produce continuously, regardless of whether there are exhibitions or not. Keep testing their discourses, materialities, and so on. I know that artists need to survive, but they have to produce. And maybe find the means to exhibit what isn't exhibited in institutions by finding their means and trying to socialize as much as possible, for example, through exhibitions in the artist's own home, among others. I've spent most of my life working on things other than theater. And I'm aware that the city has changed a lot. It's very expensive to live in the city today. This changes the way we work, the way we live, the way we socialize, and our customs. But you have to find the means to create your art and not be dependent on a closed system in which you only produce to receive money, which is only given to the artist if they keep producing the same thing over and over again. Secondly, art must be perceived as a science of experience and not as a leisure activity or decoration. Art is different from other sciences, which are often objectified. Art is about experience itself, haptic and somatic capacities. As long as we don't have an elevated discourse about this experience and we don't see our profession as a science of experience, and as long as it is an art about something, we are conditioned to being an illustration of other forms of knowledge (historical, economic, sociological, and so on). The artistic field must have autonomy! Which doesn't mean that this autonomy is averse to all other knowledge. I think it is subsidiary to this knowledge. But it is for the creation of experiences that are haptic and somatic experiences.

From my perspective, the only way that art can be minimally operative today is if it doesn't encourage other sources of knowledge, even if it's subsidiary to them. And to be able, with high and intense knowledge, to trigger somatic and haptic experiences in people. And to produce it, regardless of whether or not there are conditions to do so. Imagine a historian who only makes history when he commissions a book; it doesn't make any sense. You have to keep writing regardless of the means. Knowledge, experience, and materiality don't come about only when there are orders but in a continuous process, even though there are more structures, more freedom, and more private and public institutions, which are increasingly able to make these discourses (of identity or social change) visible and train artists. At the same time, they are crystallizing these discourses so that they are perceptible to a large audience. When you're trying to do something new, but it has eligibility, it only works if the eligibility agreement, like the spelling agreement, has crystallized. Because if it opens up, it enters a field of literature, visual poetry, and so on. People get very disoriented because they can't deal with it all.

TL: It raises another complex question, which is: how do you convey the meaning of 'queer' art to a person who is unfamiliar with the associated themes and claims?

AT: I don't think you should use art to do historical justice; I think you should write. I did a show that started with Valentim de Barros, but it wasn't about Valentim de Barros. It was about two things. Valentim de Barros had a German teacher, Ruth Aswin, who fled Nazi Germany to survive in Portugal. *In* turn, Valentim de Barros fled Portugal to survive as a gay man in Germany - *Inverted Landscapes*. It's about two pretenses looking for two different places to survive, but these two territories don't originally allow each of them to survive. It has to do with surviving in a field that is adverse to someone else, and when Nazism becomes more intense, especially in recent years, they have to leave Germany. When that German gay culture, which existed within Nazism, is dismantled, and therefore, as a result, he comes to Portugal. It's not to tell Valentim's story. If I wanted to tell Valentim's story, I'd write a book, I'd have direct sources, interviews, and so on. After doing *Inverted Landscapes*, I know at least two or three people who did shows about Valentim do Barros. Someone comes in with a fan and plays Valentim de Barros. As far as I'm concerned, that's not art; it's animation in an anthropology museum. And sometimes, that happens in the visual arts, and it doesn't happen in music. It doesn't exist; it's much more free. And possibly, the 'queer' procedure is present

in other ways, sometimes by appropriating things that have been denied or by articulating things that don't fit. And they can range from singers like Björk to Maria Reis. I don't know if they're two queer people or not, but they both have a kind of intensification of this experience of the work and of rearticulating things that aren't supposed to be articulated or dismantling things that are expected: showing your face, for example. I think art is trapped in the name of this consensus and this third way, this understanding. It's stuck with certain forms of expression so that it can be captured, capitalized on, and transferable. Some artists don't do this but have mediators in the art market to fool the buyer or the viewer that this is what is happening. And that's the job of a gallery owner! It's not to explain what that work means but to enhance the value of that work using the factors of the potential consumer and buyer. If they buy a work because they think its market value will increase, it doesn't matter what is represented. If, on the other hand, they think they are participating in the collectivization of 'queer' history, then let the gallerist encourage them to participate in a transfer of capital to communities that have been made precarious. In other words, the artist may not be working on things that are linked to these discourses. But that's the mediator's job, to be a point of transfer. The mediator must be invisible and must lead to a particular work but be invisible in the face of the complex reading of that work. What is happening more and more is that the artist himself is the mediator.

From my perspective, what's wrong with art in general, but with 'queer' art specifically, is an excess of being about things. The 'queer' can be present in the way people work, it's enough to be a collective. It's already quite queer. Usually, it's always an artist who signs. There are some artist duos, João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre, for example. Making a curatorial collective is already a very 'queer' procedure. The artists don't even have to identify themselves as queer. It's an idea of bending expectations, bending the norm that poetry has, and that I think needs to be carried over to the other arts. It's not about lyricism, getting into the business of poetry or formalism, but about change.

TL: We have already talked about the financing of shows, would you like to add anything about what makes it possible to financially support artists from marginalized communities?

AT: The shows are held at Rua das Gaivotas 6, and the money from the audience goes directly to the artists. So the audience is very important. The financing of Teatro Praga's shows is different; it doesn't depend on the public. It's the institutions that buy the shows: museums,

theaters, cultural centers, and foundations. These are the organizations that have the means for the Prague Theatre to operate. This has to do with relationships of scale. A large-scale show, apart from not fitting into the space of Rua das Gaivotas 6, needs that capital to be able to pay the people. Since our shows have no commercial scope, the State has its own devices to fill gaps in the cultural offer in Portugal. In the sense that there are forms of expression that could not exist without this support, either because they are too experimental or because they belong to certain social groups. Teatro Praga receives this funding and depends on many institutions. One of them is the state, and the others may or may not be the state. Rua das Gaivotas 6 depends on the state and the public because the money it receives from the state, a part of our activity, is not enough for the shows themselves. So the bigger the audience and the more successful the ticket sales, the better. Here, the audience's money is part of the artists' return. The artists themselves invest money in the things they're doing, and they need that return to be able to pay or even to get extra.

TL: So there must be a different commitment to publicizing your cultural agenda. What are your main promotion strategies?

AT: As it’s a smaller space, we don’t need to put it in newspapers; it doesn't have to have a reach outside the city of Lisbon. Then, There’s also a change in communication regimes. Nowadays, nobody reads the council magazines, and so on. As people are far away from this area, putting up posters isn't a priority. So what we do is work a lot with social media and with the communities that have developed over time around the activities of Rua das Gaivotas 6 or the artists themselves.

TL: It’s essential to understand the target audience for your activities.

AT: Yes, but very clearly, through social media and things attached to the artists themselves. Instead of working the way institutions still do, working with the whole public, we work with a kind of pocket audience. In other words, we try to understand the target audience for each artist and activity. There isn't one audience, there are related audiences for each thing.

B.7

Interview with Ângelo Silva (AS)

Online Communication, June 2nd, 2024

TL: When did you start collecting works of art?

AS: The Ângelo Damião collection started in 2010 with a few works that Paulo Damião had from some colleagues. However, we have been actively building a more structured and deliberate art collection for the past 4-5 years.

TL: How extensive is your art collection?

AS: The collection consists of around 150 artworks to date and is still growing. It includes works by national and international artists. Some examples are: Lucas Blalock, Andrés Serrano, Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, Rosângela Rennó, Joel-Peter Witkin, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Pierre Gonnord, Andres Respino, Fernando Martín Godoy, Mané Pacheco, Paulo Damião, João Gabriel, Fernão Cruz, Teresa Murta, Fábio Colaço, Rui Serra, Daniel Fernandes, Noé Sendas, José Loureiro, João Galrão, Rui Chafes, Cabrita Reis, Rui Pedro Jorge, Miguel Ângelo Rocha, Tiago Santos, Ana Jotta.

TL: What criteria do you use when selecting works and artists for your art collection?

AS: The criteria for inclusion in the collection are essentially as follows: the particular taste of the collectors, identification with the themes represented, and subjective quality/price ratio.

TL: When you buy a work of art, does the purchase usually involve the mediation of the gallery, or, on the other hand, is the deal made directly with the artist?

AS: Most of the time, the purchase of a work of art involves a mediator (predominantly a gallery owner and sometimes an auction house). Sometimes, the purchase is made directly with the artist, particularly when they don't have gallery representation.

TL: In your perspective, has there been any recent change in Portugal in the appreciation of and interest in queer artists or works that can be read as such?

AS: In my opinion, there has been some openness on the part of artists to develop works that can be read as queer and there has also been greater appreciation and interest in this 'niche' market, although still somewhat limited.

TL: What were the main influences and inspirations that led you to start collecting 'queer' art?

AS: The Ângelo Damião collection is an art collection, which includes works of various types (including paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures...) that also deal with wide-ranging themes. Although it incorporates works that can be understood as queer art, the collection is not being thought of by us as 'queer' art. There is, therefore, an extension of ourselves in the acquisition of works, that is, collecting reflects our history/biography, our taste, and our nature. As such, the influences and inspirations for collecting these so-called 'queer' works refer to our biography, our emotional relationship, and our personal identification with them.

TL: Do you believe that 'queer' art can have a significant impact on promoting social and cultural change?

AS: Yes, art (and culture in general) has a significant impact on changing society due to the enormous power it has in raising questions, highlighting certain issues for social reflection (such as discrimination and prejudices related to sexual orientation and gender identity), and also suggesting solutions to solve the problems addressed.

TL: Do you think collectors can play an active role in contemporary art practices, especially in buying works by emerging artists or those from marginalized communities?

AS: Yes, absolutely. Collectors are an important part of the development of artistic practices because without an art market (without art acquisitions) artists will find it difficult to carry out their profession. Artistic practice should be seen as a job and should therefore be remunerated as such. Collecting (public or private) makes it possible to remunerate artistic work by buying works.

TL: Which Portuguese galleries do you think have the greatest social concern?

AS: I think that Portuguese galleries, in general, don't have a particularly developed 'social concern.' Art galleries are generally seen as commercial entities that make a living from selling works of art to make a profit. I think that the galleries' main concern has essentially been financial.

TL: Do you think that if more queer artists were represented by galleries, it would result in a more inclusive and diverse sector?

AS: I think so. There's still a long way to go for that to happen.

TL: Do you think collectors can be partners in these social demands that accompany institutional openness to queer artists and themes?

AS: Yes, I think that collectors can help change this situation [inequality of opportunities] by promoting the acquisition of queer works of art and themes. The interest in acquiring these works by collectors, especially those with collections that are presented to the public, leads galleries and other institutions to respond to this demand by including queer artists and themes.

TL: What are the future goals for your art collection?

AS: The future of the collection is still open. We want it to continue to grow. Perhaps the collection could become available for the global public to enjoy by being presented in exhibitions in institutions/art centers/museums. I think this is also the responsibility of the collectors.

TL: Do you think that society is moving in the direction of representation and visibility for non-heteronormative people or those belonging to other minority groups? Or, on the other hand, do you feel that the achievements made so far are proving fragile in the face of political circumstances?

AS: I think that society is tending to become more inclusive. However, I am concerned about the growth of parties with ideologies that are not inclusive or favorable to minority groups. We must always think that the rights that society has won today, with many struggles and difficulties, can be taken away, so we can't take them for granted.

TL: What strategies do you think galleries and collectors could adopt to support queer artists more effectively?

AS: The gallery's strategy is to promote queer artists by giving them gallery representation and showcasing their work in the gallery space, at art fairs, and in other places of artistic visibility. By acquiring works by these artists, collectors help to keep them on the art market, both financially and by being agents of legitimization for the artists.

B.8

Interview with Pedro Faro (PF)

Lisbon, June 4th, 2024

1 hour and 13 minutes

TL: You're the deputy director of the Lisbon Municipal Galleries and are responsible for co-programming several exhibition spaces. Can you start by talking a bit about the different spaces, their organization, and their objectives?

PF: Lisbon's Municipal Galleries are made up of five spaces: Galeria da Boavista, Galeria Quadrum, Galeria Avenida da Índia, Torreão Nascente da Cordoaria Nacional and Pavilhão Branco. At the moment, each space has specialized in specific things.

Torreão Nascente, located in Cordoaria Nacional, is our largest space, used to present major retrospectives of artists and for exhibitions of established institutional collections.

Galeria da Boavista is a space mainly for young artists. Although it's a space that doesn't receive as many proposals, it allows us to act more curatorially. In other words, by looking at what's around us, we define who should exhibit in this space.

Galeria Avenida da Índia, due to its location close to Padrão dos Descobrimentos, has been a space focused on post-colonial issues, gender issues, issues of the body, and issues attached to a more political and social aspect.

Galeria Quadrum opened in 1973 and is part of a complex that was quite utopian for the time. A unique project consisting of two modernist buildings with 50 studios. Galeria Quadrum was created in the 1970s by Dulce D'Agro. It was a very important gallery in experimental terms, where many performance-related projects were developed. As it's a gallery that doesn't have walls, it encourages us to program things that go a little outside the plinth and the wall. And so the gallery itself is trying to continue this legacy of experimentation. We now have an exhibition, 50 years of Galeria Quadrum, a project that draws on the gallery's documentary collection. It seeks to take a retrospective look at the history of the gallery space and obviously try to present new proposals to continue this legacy.

Pavilhão Branco has mainly been used for exhibitions by mid-career artists, in other words, to present artists who can't have their exhibitions in the big museums. It serves as a moment of presentation where artists can consolidate some avenues of research that they have developed.

So these are the purposes of each gallery, and the Municipal Galleries don't have a curatorial project like some museums do (for example, the Serralves Museum or MAAT). Above all, it's a space that still proposes some things on its initiative and that welcomes many proposals it has received over the years. In other words, they send us exhibition proposals, and we try to fit them into a program that is coherent and relevant to the art world and the artists who ask us. These are often artists who have consolidated their work and who, at the time, don't have the possibility of having a more institutional presentation space (such as a museum) and they find this exhibition possibility in the Municipal Galleries.

The Júlio Pomar Museum, where I am deputy director, is a monographic museum dedicated to the work of Júlio Pomar. We have a collection but no permanent exhibition. They are always temporary exhibitions based on the collection and the figure of Júlio Pomar. Often, they are exhibitions that cross Júlio Pomar's work with other contemporary artists. In other words, we vary between monographic exhibitions and exhibitions that cross his work with contemporary artists in order, in some way, to show that Júlio's work (which begins in the 1940s and lasts until 2018, the year of his death) continues to have a lot of validity in the contemporary scene due to the concepts he addresses and the radical nature of his proposals. So, it's a more closed project because it's linked to the figure of Júlio Pomar.

TL: So that there is no discrepancy between what artists are doing and what is being exhibited in Municipal Galleries, what strategies do you use to reflect what is being done in contemporary art?

PF: We visit artists' studios a lot. We try to be in touch with the environment without any prejudice. Often, as a result of these visits to artists' studios and because of our very intense cultural habits, we are aware of what is going on in the world and what is going on in the art world. Our work stems precisely from this hyper-specialization that I, Sara Matos, and other people who work with us have. It's a constant procedure to keep an eye on all the exhibitions that are taking place. Take care not to repeat exhibitions that are taking place in other institutions. We liaise with the institutions in a very informal way. There isn't an agreement between institutions to discuss these things, but we are aware of each other's programming. And we'll respond to emails and proposals according to what's going on in the world and what we think it's important to do at that moment.

TL: Do you consider it a responsibility of public institutions to give visibility to queer artists, people belonging to marginalized groups, or artists whose access to exhibition spaces is more difficult?

PF: Yes, of course. I think you have to act without any kind of prejudice. We have to be aware of what's going on in the world. We can't discriminate against anyone on any grounds. Constitutionally, we can't, and we don't want to. Our space has been open to everyone, to everything.

TL: Is this an attention that has existed since the beginning of the Municipal Galleries or has it been an awareness that has been consolidated over time?

PF: I wasn't working in the Municipal Galleries at the time; they had a different organization. I think that from the moment they became part of EGEAC (Empresa de Gestão de Equipamentos e Animação Cultural), there was a centralization of programming by the director of the galleries, João Mourão. Since 2017, when I started working at the galleries, the programming has always been done by the director. I believe that João Mourão already had this policy of opening up the spaces to society. At that time, I imagine that resources were even more limited, but they were always very open spaces. I remember artists, for example, proposing projects to the Municipal Galleries, and these projects were shown. Actively, the artists set themselves the task of putting on an exhibition. For example, Pedro Gomes and Vasco Araújo, among many others, held exhibitions in this way.

TL: How is inclusion and diversity guaranteed in the Municipal Galleries?

PF: As well as being open to society, receiving proposals, making studio visits, and being aware of what's going on in the world, there are other things that have to do with inclusion at the moment: physical inclusion and intellectual accessibility. In other words, we make sure that everyone can physically access that space and that they can understand what is being shown. Today, we have guided tours in Portuguese sign language aimed at a very specific community. Models of the various buildings are being built for people who are blind or have reduced visibility. We are also making an effort to ensure that the catalogs and all the information displayed in the exhibitions have a design that allows people with reduced visibility to read. We have a children's room sheet made by our mediators. These texts

actually decrypt those speeches that are more difficult to understand, which is very interesting work carried out by our team. Therefore, a whole lot of work is being done to ensure that the Municipal Galleries are open to everyone. In other words, they are a public facility and have to be for everyone, one way or another. We also have days when we organize visits for neuro-diverse groups. I think that this attention has been built up because society itself is putting positive pressure on us nowadays. There are a number of institutions that have been doing very militant work with museums and facilities and I think the openness has been total, precisely to ensure that this work is continued.

TL: In 2018, you had the exhibition "My Favorite Things" by João Gabriel, and last year, you had the exhibition "Artifício" by Odete. The texts that accompany these exhibitions are very informative about the content of the works by these artists who, albeit in different ways, pass through the queer imaginary. The question is: Do you feel that other galleries and institutions are open to including texts that deal with queer content?

PF: Sara and I curated and wrote the text for João Gabriel's exhibition. So, I've never thought of limiting myself in the way I express myself about things. I have the attitude of talking about everything, and I think people have to talk about everything. In Odete's case, we had Marta Esperidião, who would never create an atmosphere of censorship in the face of what she wanted to say. So that would never happen on our part. On the part of the other institutions, I don't think it does. In the contacts I've had with other institutions, in the texts I've written (for books or catalogs), no one has ever censored me. So, I have no experience of censorship. Of course, I have seen situations of censorship happening in Portuguese art, namely with João Pedro Vale in the exhibition "P-Town." At the time, under the direction of João Mourão, the municipal galleries opened a space to host the exhibition. There was also the case of the censorship of the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition at the Serralves Museum. But apart from these cases, I can't remember anything else.

TL: As Municipal Galleries are a state organism, do you feel any political pressure in the programming?

PF: We never have. I never felt it we even felt a vote of confidence. So when they called me back, I felt a vote of confidence about the schedule. We never had any kind of pressure or indication or guidance. We've always been free and recognized our path, especially Sara Matos. But, in fact, we never felt any pressure whatsoever on our work. Things have always

been done with great rigor, quality, I would even say academic quality, and so on. So we are very well defended in that respect.

TL: Na tua perspectiva, a responsabilidade social difere entre as instituições públicas e as galerias privadas?

PF: I think that commercial galleries and public galleries have to be governed by the same moral conduct, so to speak. I don't think a private gallery can censor an artist either; it shouldn't censor an artist. I think there should be this rigor, but the objective of a commercial gallery is commercial. They should do the programming they have to do according to their commercial objectives, which exist. We benefit from commercial galleries because commercial galleries have incredible exhibitions. When I worked at Filomena Soares Gallery 20-something years ago, I remember that there was a period in the gallery when I had exhibitions that were almost better than what was going on in public galleries or museums. I mean, at the time, we exhibited Allan Sekula, Renée Green, Ghada Amer, Shirin Neshat, and other international names. International curators were working with the gallery: Rosa Martínez Jurgen Bock. So there were gallerists in Portugal who were starting to work with queer artists, for example, João Pedro Vale, Vasco Araújo, Ana Jotta, and Pedro Casqueiro, they were all working at Filomena Soares Gallery. It's a gallery that had great social relevance at the time, fundamental to the art market in Portugal. There's a text I wrote for the Público newspaper that is relevant to this question. It's a 2011 article called "O champanhe da 111 é melhor" (111's champagne is better), which gave a sort of history of the galleries at that time. But it's out of date because nowadays there are so many different galleries.

Returning to the question of commercial galleries having a social responsibility. They do, but not as much as public institutions because this is public money, and these issues have to be part of their mission. But commercial galleries are also part of a social context, and so on. They have a responsibility towards the artists themselves and the survival of these artists. They do have a social responsibility, but there needs to be greater differentiation because their objective is different.

TL: Do you feel that there are private galleries in Portugal that are partners in the social demands of feminists or the LGBTQ+ community?

PF: Normally, the fact that there are galleries where women play an important role (e.g. Cristina Guerra Gallery, Filomena Soares Gallery, Presença Gallery, among others), can be indicative of how these galleries subscribe to this theme. There are galleries that have already developed projects in which these issues have been listed in some way. I can't tell which ones, I've never had a conversation with gallerists to find out if they actually have this on the agenda as a central concern of their programming. I've seen feminist projects, such as Helena Almeida's exhibition at the Filomena Soares Gallery. There are projects that have this marking of women's bodies and women's presence in these spaces. Ana Cristina Cachola has collaborated with many galleries and has developed this practice, with a feminist discourse in some commercial galleries. Ana Vidigal, for example, has had exhibitions in commercial galleries with this feminist marking. It always stems from the work of the artists themselves. They are present in the programming that takes place. I don't think I've ever seen a gallery state on its website that it is feminist, but these projects exist and have been shown.

TL: From the point of view of a private gallery, do you think that having to respond to the logic of the market and the need to build up a sales history can be an obstacle to diversity in the sector?

PF: I don't think so. I was working at the Filomena Soares Gallery doing communication and production for the exhibitions, and I even wrote a text about Nancy Spero. I think it was my first published text in 2003. Nancy Spero is a feminist artist who deals with women's bodies and the representation of women's bodies in the history of art. I never felt that this was an impediment, on the contrary, it was even a matter of emphasis at the time. But I'm talking about an experience I had 22 years ago. Nowadays, people talk more about these things. I was just starting my career, so I can't make a legitimate judgment from that point of view. I don't remember that being an obstacle to sales.

TL: Do you think it's possible to talk about an increase in artists dealing with openly 'queer' themes entering exhibition spaces?

PF: Yes, I think so. There is an increase in this presence, although I think there has always been this presence. Even if it's often residual, I think it was there. Nowadays, it's constant.

Any museum today has gay, lesbian, transsexual, and transgender artists in its program. And these are issues that are raised and articulated openly.

TL: Do you think there is a trend towards greater diversity in the sector?

PF: Yes, I think so. The last Venice Biennale, for example, was a huge diversity of things, people, and backgrounds. It has many different sensibilities. There are biennials today where the queer presence is structural, strong, assumed, and impactful. I also remember biennials, for example, where things that seem almost irrelevant to us today were highly relevant. For example, I remember the 2005 Venice Biennale, commissioned by Rosa Martínez and María de Corral. The piece that opened the arsenal, if I'm not mistaken, was Joana Vasconcelos' tampon lamp. I was living in Italy at the time, and I remember that it had a huge impact on the Italian press, it was shocking. Nowadays, no one would be shocked by a lamp made out of tampons. Things change very quickly. I'm not at all pessimistic, nor do I have dire visions of the current context. I think the current context presents challenges... political challenges, even with the emergence of a series of structures that are legitimized but which are structures with very violent discourses. But despite everything, I also remember what society was like in 2000 and the 1990s and what it was like to be gay, for example, in the 1990s, which was completely different from what it is like to be gay today. Even on the scale of LGBT events and the Pride march, there were very few of us in the past. Today, on the scale, it's an exciting thing. I think the State and the Constitution offer things that they didn't in the 1990s. Until 1982, homosexuality was criminalized. I think that for people who are born today or who are in their teens, especially in the last ten years, the difference is abysmal. Seeing other people in the street was something I didn't see. I didn't see boyfriends in the street; I didn't see anyone coming out about their sexuality. It's a relatively new thing. Even in institutions, I imagine.

TL: Even in terms of trans artists represented in institutions, something similar happens. Emerging trans artists didn't see trans artists working with institutions.

PF: Yes, you can draw a parallel. I don't even remember trans people exhibiting ten years ago. Nowadays, there are facilities, such as the Teatro do Bairro Alto, which open up the possibilities for these people in the performing arts to present their work. And so it also

allows them to survive doing what they want to do. 20 or 30 years ago, I can't imagine that this would have been possible. I guess, but it's an impression.

TL: Do you think there is a greater 'queer' cultural offer in Portugal?

PF: Yes, first of all, with Queer Lisboa: Festival Internacional de Cinema Queer, which was extremely important. Not least because it presented cinematographic proposals that almost touched on contemporary art and what we work on. I think it was a great show and a chance for many people to meet around that theme, which was educational and pedagogical for all the other institutions. So I think it opened a lot of doors there. It gets people to participate and get involved. There was a time when they even ran parallel exhibition programs, inviting curators, trying to bridge the gap with contemporary art. I think João Laia also worked on some of these projects and is now organizing a very important exhibition at the Municipal Gallery of Oporto with a group of queer artists.

Almost all the institutions I know have had exhibitions along these lines. The Chiado Museum had a major exhibition on gender. It was very important, won an award and everything, which is quite rare. Casa da Cerca has also hosted queer projects with Luís Lázaro Matos, among others. All these institutions today have somehow welcomed 'queer' projects. But yes, I think it's an issue that has been present. The Gulbenkian has also exhibited Vasco Araújo and João Penalva many times. At Culturgest, there was an incredible exhibition [*Tell It To My Heart*, 2013] from the collection of Julie Ault, a curator friend of Félix González-Torres. The collection is filled with these wonderful names. I think there has been a continuous presentation, not exclusive, but continuous, of queer artists and queer issues.

B.9

Interview with Cristina Guerra (CG)

Lisbon, July 26th , 2024

44 minutes

TL: In my dissertation, I argue that contemporary art galleries should not be a neutral space for exhibiting works, but that they can play an active role by discovering and promoting artists and creating exhibitions that enrich the cultural and artistic environment. Do you agree with this statement?

CG: I agree. For me, a gallery has a cultural role and not just a commercial one, which is something our government leaders don't usually understand. So I think a gallery has a very important role in the country's culture, promoting the artists it works with. I've been working with artists for over 20 years. And so you have to create a market for these artists. At first, it's very easy because the artist appears; it's relatively cheap, and your collectors buy it. The gallery's collectors buy. But you have to keep working with the artist so that you create more of an audience so that they buy his work. And so, over 20 or 30 years, this is a very big and very expensive job. I've done fairs where 60 square meters cost 100,000 euros. And I had artists whose works cost 3,500 euros, and I went with them. So, I always made a loss, and I still do today. It's very difficult.

TL: In addition to the commercial role, was the cultural role something you were aware of from the beginning of Galeria Cristina Guerra?

CG: Since the moment I worked with artists on a long-term basis. Because for me, artists are a journey. An artist is good today and sometimes goes down and then comes back up. You have to believe in what the artist does. So I often say that an artist's first collector is the gallerist. They're the first of all because they're investing. I mean, every time you have an exhibition in a gallery with an artist, you're paying for the space and the people who work there. I have a great complicity with the artists I work with, they teach me a lot and I teach them as well. It's a kind of boat in which I'm at the helm, but we're all rowing in the same direction. And even then it's difficult, Portugal is a difficult country.

TL: Cristina is currently representing João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira. Can you tell us a little about how you started working together?

CG: I've known João Pedro Vale for many years, and then Nuno Alexandre came along. And we've always had a good relationship because they're incredible. When I work with an artist, I know exactly how much work has to be done. In other words, it's a huge investment. So There's always the work of the gallery and the work of the artists. For a long time, they wanted to come and work with me, and I told them it wasn't the right time yet because I already had several Portuguese artists. Furthermore, since I opened the gallery in 2001, there have been several moments of crisis: the fall of the Twin Towers, the 2008 crisis, COVID-19, and the war. I jokingly call it *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and we need stability to sell artists' work. So it's much more difficult. In the meantime, they were working with the Filomena Soares gallery and left. I don't work with artists who are already represented by galleries; I don't pick them up. And when João and Nuno no longer had a gallery, I decided to do an exhibition with them, still without an agreement. Things went well, and after a year and a half, I started working with them. I really like them because they work on difficult subjects with incredible irony and dignity. For example, this story about them getting married in Serralves raised a lot of controversy, but I was relaxed. They do everything very well. They're people with such dignity, they're incredible. I have a very good relationship with them, and I believe in them as artists.

TL: What was the public's reaction to the exhibition: *A Mão na Coisa, A Coisa na Boca, A Boca na Coisa, A Coisa na Mão* (2018)? Which corresponds to the first exhibition you had together.

CG: It was good. I'm a person who's a bit out of the box; I do things that are different from the usual. And if I do an exhibition, it's because I think I should and because I believe in its value. And the exhibition was very well done. They are very well-trained people, and so the exhibition worked extremely well. The public embraced it, and it sold well. It was incredible.

TL: Do you think that the fact that galleries have to respond to the logic of the market and the need to build up a track record of sales can be an obstacle to inclusivity and diversity in the sector? Particularly when it comes to works that are considered more difficult to sell, due to the themes or materials used.

CG: That's not the problem. I like Minimalism and Conceptualism, and it is a type of art that people have to understand and study a bit about what they're looking at. I work more with people and collectors who are into art and who know about things. So it's relatively easy. Only if they like the work will they buy it, but they're very used to seeing it and understanding it. The materials have no influence. What does influence them is whether they're badly made, because the prices are high. When it's a new artist There's an excuse, but when it comes to artists with long careers, that can't happen. As long as that artist's work is consistent and well-structured, it will sell or be accepted. Selling is different from acceptance because to sell it depends on the sizes, among other things. The artist has to manage the work. The gallery is a commercial space but they won't stop exhibiting a work because it's difficult to sell, it's important to show the artist's work. This will make critics and museums look at the artist differently. I'm not really interested in doing commercial exhibitions. Of course, within the artist's oeuvre, some things are easier to sell, more domestic works. But I like to hold good exhibitions.

TL: So Cristina tries to reconcile the two dimensions?

CG: I have to reconcile the two. Exhibitions have to be good and have an impact. If you're only conditioned by the commercial side, I doubt you'll get anywhere. Artists have to work on what they want, think about an exhibition, and make it happen. But you have to be aware that large works are more difficult to sell, and that doesn't mean they can't be done. But then I have to have smaller works in my collection to show and sell. Not just to survive as a gallery owner but because it's also essential to sell. Because when you sell, you promote the artist.
TL: How do you articulate the discourse of the most controversial or obscene works with the most conservative collectors?

CG: I don't even explain. When people arrive here, they have a room sheet where everything is explained. So, people who are already inside understand. And if they're not in the know... to this day, no one has ever said that I was completely crazy. The title of the current exhibition was supposed to be called "Fuck Fuck Fuck", and a client told me that he didn't think I was so ordinary. We ended up choosing another title, but it was what I felt like.

TL: When representing these artists, who speak so openly about non-heteronormative sexuality in their work, were you afraid of the market's reaction?

CG: No, I don’t. We're all human. And so all I care about is that people are well-educated, honest, and culturally interesting. People should do what they like and what makes them happy. I think that when people normally come to a gallery, they accept what is on display because it was my choice too. And so the important thing for me is that the work is structured and well thought out. I think art helps us become more human, which is fantastic.

TL: Do you think it’s possible to talk about an increase in artists dealing with openly queer themes entering exhibition spaces?

CG: Maybe there is, because before there was, but it wasn’t talked about. Nowadays, things are much more natural than they were back then. What really matters is that the art is good, it doesn't matter if it was made by a homosexual, man, or woman. But their work can’t be excluded or included because of that. Returning to the question, I think that more queer artists are entering exhibition spaces because they weren't out before. And I don’t think that's a problem in contemporary art today. However, when it comes to homosexual artists, their works generally talk about different things. Or they talk about the same thing in a different way. But that can’t invalidate the work as long as it’s well-structured and good.

TL: Do you think that private galleries in Portugal can play an important role in a more inclusive and diverse sector?

CG: A contemporary art gallery has to be inclusive. In my opinion, it doesn't make sense for a contemporary art gallery not to be completely inclusive nowadays. For me, if I’m interested in the artist's work, then I have to get to know the artist to understand how they think. And I think that, at the moment, there is complete acceptance of queer people. For me, at least, the art world is inclusive. Galleries have to create their audience because There’s an audience for everything. The contemporary world is diverse, a world of inclusion. A contemporary art gallery is a gallery that lives in today's world and today's world must be inclusive. As a result of working with João Pedro Vale and Nuno Alexandre Ferreira, I realized many things that I had overlooked. For example, in the performance they did at Rialto6, they transported me to a different world that I wasn’t aware of. It feels like I've been punched in the stomach, in other

words, I've been taught a lesson and I’m grateful for that. I’m interested in understanding the artist's work and learning from it.

TL: What recommendations can be made to promote inclusivity in the art market sector?

CG: It has to be shown; art has to be seen. Life is all about learning, and we have to understand others. That's why art is very important; it helps us understand things and be better. I have to admit that there are great difficulties for people who are different from the majority.