

TERESA VEIGA FURTADO



DIGITÁLIAS

Women's Collective: Multimedia Art,
Gender and Participation





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Teresa Veiga Furtado

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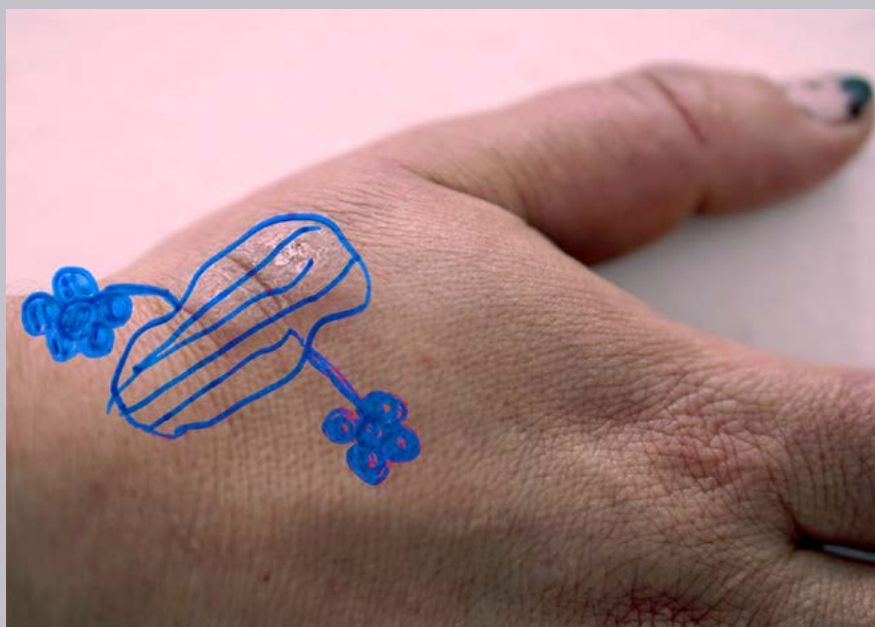
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PREFACE

I've been to WAR

I've been to WAR. Sobbing with every heartbeat, non-existent at any time.

WAR with weapons, always hand in hand with terrorism at home, equally LETHAL.

*Not knowing when the TORMENT of FEAR will end, if we wake up and are attacked with guns,
bombs or simply with painful words and physical force.*

Desecration of body and mind. Expectations of a better day that sometimes never comes.

The right to have a home is denied, destroyed by screams, despair, suffering and violence.

Terrorism in all its possible and existing forms.

Children are denied the right to simply be children, moving to a new world and denying death and abuse.

Deep sadness at the loss of identity, living beings without names.

MEN have the right to total power over women.

Women who only have the sole right to oxygen until it is taken away from them.

But everything comes to an end one day!

Survivors are formed through courage, and I'm proud to be one of them!

Rebuilding a life is the way forward.

With strength and determination, all of you will be ME!

BEING A WOMAN / 8TH MARCH

Artist of the Digitálias Collective, 2022

A MINHA CICATRIZ

ASSEMELHA-SE A UMA CONSTELAÇÃO
CUJO NOME É "DORADO=DOURADA"
DESSA CICATRIZ NASCE UMA HISTÓRIA
CONTADA ANO APO'S ANO, INTENSAMENTE
COMO A LUZ DAS ESTRELAS E COM O MESMO
PERCURSO DE VIDA. ASSIM COMO AS
ESTRELAS A HISTÓRIA DA MINHA
CICATRIZ, NASCEU, VIVE DIARIAMENTE
NO MEU CORPO E MENTE, E POR FIM
MORRE COMIGO!!!

My scar resembles a constellation whose name is «Dorado=Dourada». From this scar is born a story told year after year, as intensely as the light of the stars and with the same life path. Just like the stars, the story of my scar was born, lives daily in my body and mind, and finally dies with me!!!

Scars

From my scar a cloud was born.

My scar was made on the way.

It was an accident.

*From my scar sprouted yellow flowers, scars of growth,
bouncy childhood coloured with faded watercolours.*

*My scars remain in the minds of those who
have them and tell their stories in silence.*

*We've all literally been a black sheep,
not because of the colour of their skin, but because of the scars and baggage they've acquired,
the weight of wool is minimal compared to the weight of ignorance and lack of knowledge.*

Love was born in my scar.

*My scar is my pride.
My scar is the living memory of my limit and the limit of others.*

Artists of the Digitálias Collective, 2022

Digitálias – a collective of women for art and feminist activism

Digitálias is a collective of women for art and feminist activism, and that's how we want to be known and recognised. An initiative of the Associação Ser Mulher, Évora, which provides support and assistance to victims of domestic violence, but also promotes women's rights and the dissemination of their causes through art, this informal group, which has been collaborating since 2018, was formed as an artistic collective in 2021. A group in which women, under the guidance and with the great enthusiasm of the artist Teresa Veiga Furtado, a researcher at the Centre for Art History and Artistic Research (CHAIA/UÉ) and a lecturer at the Department of Visual Arts and Design at the School of Arts of the University of Évora (DAVD/EA/UÉ), set out to learn digital art. It is known that digital illiteracy is much higher and more significant among women, and is a factor that contributes to their social exclusion.

As we know, discrimination against women persists and many gender stereotypes are maintained. For example, a girl should play with dolls and have a pink room, she shouldn't scream, she shouldn't sit with her legs open, women shouldn't have ambitions, they shouldn't want to be leaders and they should be submissive in various spheres, even in the family, where they are so often subordinated despite being the ones who contribute most to household chores and care, accumulating double and triple working hours. You can't change mentalities by decree, but you can denounce these limitations that are still so commonplace. In the multimedia art labs held, which resulted in a set of works that can be viewed at www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt and on instagram at [digitaliascoletivomulheres](https://www.instagram.com/digitaliascoletivomulheres), you can see part of the creative processes and work done by the women, their digital treatment, the texts and expressions of each and every one of them.

Inspiration also comes from other artists, such as the artist and professor Nela Milic from the London College of Communication at the University of the Arts London (LCC/UAL). This artist of Serbian origin challenged each woman to take a photograph of a scar and, based on her impression, draw a picture of it and then give it three-dimensionality with plasticine, launching a reflection on what scars are for each of us. Or the challenge that arose among the women in the laboratories to create «Vitruvians», reinterpreting Leonardo da Vinci's figure of the ideal man of Vitruvius, to illustrate the renaissance maxim of

man as the measure of all things, in which women show themselves to the extent of their sorority and their ability to multitask. In the course of the laboratories, we can't fail to highlight the discovery of new artists, such as Ana who recounted her experience of war shortly after the invasion of Ukraine began. And her war was intimate, her invader was the man she loved, and she felt the aggressions like unexpected bombs, in a constant terrorism of intimacy, of which she feels a survivor. The Digitálias works have already been exhibited at the Évora Public Library, at the Inatel Foundation's Barrocal Palace in Évora and at the Malagueira and Horta das Figueiras Parish Union. Other workshops have already been started and opened to the «city» and the «parishes», as happened at the UÉ space at the São João Fair, in order to continue the «Digitálias» endeavours with new works and more artists.

Ana Beatriz Cardoso

She has a degree in Law, a post-graduate degree in Children's and Young People's Rights, a specialisation in Gender Equality and training as a Victim Support Technician. Since 2005 she has been a member of various organisations whose activities are aimed at promoting equality between men and women, defending and promoting women's human rights and combating domestic violence, having participated in various studies in these areas and provided legal support to victims of domestic violence. Since 2016, she has been President of ASM – Associação Ser Mulher, a women's association that promotes women's rights and is particularly dedicated to combating men's violence against women and girls.

Social Art and the Digital as a research area

To understand art as a mode of thought or knowledge is to extend it to all forms of human activity, including social and political ones. As this is the conceptual starting point for its scientific activity, CHAIA – the Centre for Art History and Artistic Research at the University of Évora has been developing a thematic line of research dedicated to social and participatory art, which cuts across the scientific areas and research groups that make it up and which includes the multimedia art project Digitálias, coordinated by Teresa Veiga Furtado and carried out in partnership with Associação Ser Mulher and Évora Town Council.

As a research project, Digitálias is in line with the objectives of the European Research Policy Agenda 2022-2024 by contributing to the fight against gender-based violence, promoting equality and inclusion, dealing with the challenges of the digital transition and bringing science closer to citizens. It achieves this by implementing co-creative and participatory work methodologies in the field of multimedia art that aim to have three levels of social impact: the digital empowerment of the women involved in the project, equipping them with basic computer skills that facilitate their professional and social inclusion; the strengthening of their self-esteem through self-awareness of their cognitive, creative and communication skills; raising awareness of the social scourge of gender-based violence through exhibitions and artistic interventions that disseminate the participatory and co-creative artistic work carried out within the framework of the project.

With regard to CHAIA's mission, Digitálias responds to two of its cross-cutting thematic lines and to all of its areas of action. With regard to the cross-cutting thematic lines, it combines Artistic and Design Practices with Arts, Communities and Identities. As for the areas of action, interdisciplinary and applied research is evident in the articulation of art with the digital and its social purpose; training in the holding of multimedia art workshops; cooperation in the collaboration with ASM – Associação Ser Mulher and Évora Town Council; dissemination, in the organisation of exhibitions and public artistic events to publicise the artistic work carried out in the workshops; and the transfer of knowledge or extension to the community in the collaborative artistic work carried out outside the academic community, with a social and political objective, with a focus on the region where the research unit is located, the Alentejo.

Paulo Simões Rodrigues

Associate Professor at the History Department of the School of Social Sciences of the University of Évora Director of CHAIA – Centre for Art History and Artistic Research, of IIFA – Institute for Research and Advanced Training, of the University of Évora.

Digitálias – A collaborative assemblage, from pixel to cross-stitch embroidery. Because technology has no sex or gender.

The artistic collective Digitálias, created and guided by Associação Ser Mulher and Teresa Veiga Furtado, reminds us of Ruangrupa, a group of artists and curators from Indonesia who were responsible for the 15th contemporary art exhibition, Documenta 2022, in Kassel, Germany. Ruangrupa used the word *lumbung*, an Indonesian word that refers to a rice barn, as a concept that triggers an entire collaborative artistic practice of which a value system is built in which the accumulation of capital from harvests/creations is governed collectively. In favour of the common good, Digitálias creates a whole interdisciplinary system for accumulating digital images and objects in which artistic harvests are transformed into creations produced by a community and then stored on a website¹. This living archive serves as a future resource that others can use to create their artefacts and can be shared and distributed according to jointly determined criteria for the common good.

Based on a process of collective artistic work centred on valuing the community as a place of creation and knowledge production, countless jointly created works are generated that are kept through a variety of living and documentary records that take us back to different perspectives in order to preserve hybrid memories. These memories, records of communities at certain historical moments, can be made up of images, texts, movements, interactions, sounds, among other possibilities. Digitálias suggests that the idea of the stable object, so dear to modern and postmodern sensibilities, is giving way in contemporary times to artistic works in constant transformation and circulation, works that multiply and regenerate in channels of equivalent mutant objects. In order to survive, these works are always open to new contexts of creation, production and dissemination, new laboratories or workshops, new face-to-face or online exhibitions. Thus, in this fluid process of dissemination, they move from discrete objects that contaminate walls and staircases to objects distributed in digital networks and, in order for this to happen, conservators, curators, technicians and artists are called upon to interact with each other to give shape to increasingly complex projects. Through digital culture, we are witnessing a

¹ Digital Basket: multimedia laboratories for gender equality, available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/index.html> (accessed at 22.11.2023).

paradigm shift in which what was considered by modern artistic aesthetics, i.e. the unique, singular and authentic object, no longer applies and, as a result, we are faced with a different artistic order which is based on the circulation, dissemination and constant creation of partial objects. It is in this complex process of changing aesthetic paradigms that the Digitálias project operates, blurring the boundaries between analogue and digital, and converging in a reflection on contemporary feminisms.

On the one hand, Digitálias emphasises a working process to the detriment of the production of authorial objects, and on the other, it combats the current model of neoliberal monetary speculation practices that still dominate contemporary art markets. In this context, ideas, stories, images, videos and other shareable resources are accumulated in order to dismantle patriarchal, capitalist and colonialist systems, among others. Through a feminism of convergence that integrates the traditional and the digital, a space for reflection is opened up that gives rise to imagination and the construction of shared collective resources, paving the way for sustainable cultural practices and the development of tools that allow us to think about other forms of artistic work that go beyond current models. Art meets multiple social and political activisms in order to understand local environments and thus identify possible resources that generate actions and spaces for change. Like the Ruangrupa collective mentioned above, Digitálias also works on the public form through a strategy of opening up to human society, imagining and rebuilding relationships that artistic institutions should establish with their communities. The digital tools used are mixed with traditional ones, from pixel to cross-stitch and from printmaking to the assimilation of working methodologies from the moving image, video and the internet.

In the first phase, laboratories/workshops are held involving people who have been discriminated against, students and public organisations that host these initiatives. The actions in which Digitálias' experiences are proposed can be events mediated by international artists such as the artist Nela Milic, who, in partnership with Digitálias, has created digital cartographies of the human body as if it were a sort of garden. In other cases, such as the *Herstory* lab, feminism is used to reflect on identities and censorship in patriarchal language, in which history is always told from the perspective of the man as the universal subject. In one of the labs, visual forms are being worked on, integrating pixel and cross-stitch, a popular form of embroidery associated with the feminine, thus drawing attention to themes related to gender stereotypes and divergent sexualities in contemporary culture. In another laboratory,

short video performances will be held to mark 25 November, «International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women». These events, «granaries» of ideas triggered in collaboration, involve, among others, victims of domestic violence, bachelor's, master's and doctoral students in order to raise awareness and reflection around issues that are still little debated in Portuguese society.

These collaborative events, full of ideas from multiple people, are finally stored and organised in html code visual boards, available online at the *Digital Basket: multimedia laboratories for gender equality* website, as an anonymous repository that makes us think about how the memory of shared spaces helps us to consider future possibilities. With the contribution of artistic research, we are led to think about what place we want to inhabit in the future, knowing that men and women «have similar abilities to cook a stew, dust, change a nappy, programme on a computer, run a company, fly an aeroplane, in short... to be whatever they want to be» (Digital Basket: multimedia labs for gender equality), (quote available online from the third laboratory of the Digitálias project, entitled «To be whatever we want to be» and on the theme of the achievements of Portuguese women following the revolution of 25 April 1974, which ended a 41-year dictatorship).

In 2022, two of Europe's biggest contemporary art events, the aforementioned Kassel Documenta and the Venice Biennale, opened up their strategies to the visions of curators from other latitudes and/or genders, in an economy of solidarity, attention and empathy. Documenta Kassel was curated for the first time by a collective of artists from Asia². This year the Venice Biennale, after 127 years of history, curated by Italian Cecilia Alemani, presented an exhibition in which women dominated the event, highlighting neglected cases while investigating themes such as gender plasticity and ambivalence³. The Digitálias project is therefore part of an area of contemporary artistic creation and production aligned with what is anticipated as the designs for a more sustainable future in terms of inclusion, which integrates those who have been systematically relegated to the margins.

2 More information here: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/market/ruangrupa-picked-as-artistic-director-of-documenta-15-11953/> (accessed at 22.11.2023).

3 More information here: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/venice-biennale-2022-women-artists-maura-reilly-1234618777/> (accessed at 22.11.2023).

Patrícia Gouveia

Associate Professor (*Dr. Habil.*) at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon. Researcher at ITI/LARSyS. Co-curator of the «Playmode» exhibition in Portugal (MAAT: Lisbon) and Brazil (CCBB: Belo-Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Brasília).

INTRODUCTION

The doctoral thesis *Net Art and Gender Equality: Co-creation with women from shelters*, in Fine Arts, specialisation in multimedia art, defended at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon (FBAUL), which gave rise to this book, was carried out under the scientific supervision of Professor Patrícia Gouveia and Professor Manuel Lisboa, from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of the New University of Lisbon. This book, entitled *Digitálias - Women's Collective: Multimedia Art, Gender and Participation*, is made up of the second part of the thesis dedicated to the co-creative laboratories carried out as part of the research.

The main aim of this exploratory research was to analyse how the community artistic practice of net art can play a social role as a tool for empowerment, self-esteem and identity, using an action methodology (*action research*) arts-based (*arts-based research*) through the creation, production and dissemination of practical artistic projects (*project-based research*), and with women from shelters who are victims of domestic violence as a case study. This research was based on a long journey characterised by experimental projects under the name *Gender in Art* at CHAIA – Centre for Art History and Artistic Research at the University of Évora.

This research took the form of an empirically based case study, which focuses on women in shelters who are victims of domestic violence. The participants in the project were selected with the collaboration of the Associação Ser Mulher (ASM), based in Évora, and constitute a case study. ASM is a non-profit organisation set up in 2016, which was created to continue the support and shelter provided to victims of domestic violence in the city of Évora, which had been run since 1995 by the Lar de Santa Helena – Irmãs Adoradoras, which opened the first shelter in Portugal. ASM is an ETAV, i.e. a territorialised technical structure providing care, monitoring and specialised social, psychological and legal support to victims of domestic and gender-based violence in the municipalities of the Évora district, which, through cooperation protocols, are its partners.

Domestic violence against women is a reality in Portugal, with a shocking number of femicides in recent years. According to the Domestic Violence Portal of the Commission for Gender Equality (CIG), there

have been a total of 24 femicides in the context of intimate and family relationships in our country in 2023 (CIG, 2023). Most of these abusive acts take place in private, intimate and family relationships, and they are mainly carried out by partners and ex-partners and are based on social inequality and gender stereotypes.

Audiovisual media in general and digital platforms in particular, such as the Internet, social networks, mobile phone apps and digital technologies, have become increasingly ubiquitous in Western societies since the 1990s, greatly influencing the way people live and think about the world and conceive of themselves and others. In today's societies, the digital still image and, above all, the digital moving image are increasingly vehicles for ideas, values and ideologies, to the detriment of textual language. The reach of an online film, post or petition on social networks is far more extensive than the opportunities available in the analogue world where, for example, advertising posters are limited to geographical locations and fixed, pre-established physical dimensions. Similarly, digital platforms enable us to communicate with people on the other side of the world, allowing us to follow what's happening there in real time.

Since the Internet emerged in the mid-1990s and has been a mass medium for the last decade, with enormous potential that has since been exploited by artists, we consider it to be an ideal space for the creation and dissemination of projects with women from shelters, the case study of this research. The participatory artistic practice developed in this project is centred on the creative processes rather than the final artistic object, and is heir to artists such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles, George Maciunas and Joseph Beuys who have linked art(s) to new political, social and democratic dimensions, relationships and meanings, an art that can represent us collectively. With regard to the term «participatory», Gabriella Giannachi, a performance and new media researcher, states that:

The term «participatory» is highly contested, whether it is used in the context of theatre, art and performance, or politics, architecture, science and economics. Etymologically speaking, to participate simply means to take part in something. But, interestingly, the contested element of this term is not so much the morpheme «part», but rather «cip», the weakened form of «cap-» from *capere* (OED 2003), also at the root of the term *capable*, which in Latin means to «capture, seize, take», «take on», but also to «take in, understand». Thus, what is contested in the term «participatory» is not so much the fact that the term implies taking part in something, but rather that it somehow suggests the gaining of a capability or, perhaps even

more importantly, the act of taking something in. To participate therefore means to take part in something, but also to understand, to gain knowledge and, possibly, to become aware of this process (Giannachi, 2002, p. 14).

With regard to the inscription of participatory art in art history, curator Tom Finkelpearl argues that:

Across the globe, throughout recorded history people have participated in the creation of art — from traditional music and dance to community festivals to mural arts. And the emergence of participatory art as a distinctive field has antecedents at least through the modernist period, as many scholars have argued. For example, recent books on the topic have traced these origins through the European and Latin American avant-gardes (Bishop, 2012), in the context of the participatory politics of feminism and the civil rights movement since the 1960s (Finkelpearl, 2013), in a global context (Kester, 2011) and in relation to twentieth-century performance and theater innovations (Jackson, 2011), (Finkelpearl, 2014).

Throughout this research, net art projects were carried out in co-creative laboratories with women from shelters, with the aim of consolidating their self-esteem and promoting their self-sufficiency, capacity for change and social reintegration. It is worth emphasising that we are not arguing that participatory artistic practice is a solution to a problem as complex as domestic violence, nor that it can directly change the material conditions of the participants' lives, but we do believe that it can be one of the contributions to solving it. François Matarasso, a collaborator of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and author of reflections on the subject of participatory art, argues that:

Mental health, drug addiction, domestic violence and loneliness are complex social challenges and participatory art has proved to be a safe territory to address them. The potential of art in human development is being channelled into supporting the growth of individuals and community groups and promoting social inclusion. Its ability to empower vulnerable and marginalised people also offers political visibility to complex and sensitive problems (Cruz, 2019, p. 11).

This research sought to fill a gap in the field of knowledge by systematising models and methodologies centred on the creation of projects that take advantage of net art as a tool to prevent and combat violence against women. The central question of this theoretical-practical research is to analyse:

- What is the social function of net art as a tool to contribute to the empowerment, self-esteem and identity of women in shelters?

The following secondary questions arise around this central question:

- Over the course of the training period, will the behaviour of the women in the shelters become more and more evident, reflecting the assimilation and understanding of technological and artistic content that empowers and enables them?

- Is it possible through net art to contribute to combating domestic violence against women, towards a society that is more egalitarian, and therefore more sustainable, by promoting a change in the gender paradigms of women in shelters?

- From the last decade of the 20th century to the present day, how has net art highlighted social concerns, particularly in relation to gender equality??

For the development of this project we crossed net art with participatory art, in a clear and intentional methodology using inter- and transdisciplinarity.

The concept of gender is central to our project and is understood as the sociocultural construction of the various possible ways of being a person, which in turn takes on multiple expressions and is not just reduced to sexual characteristics. Its various manifestations, including gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, gender roles, personality characteristics, as well as personal competences and interests, are constructed continuously and incessantly throughout life.

LGBTQI+ theories have brought to the fore the idea of gender fluidity, in other words, we are not just men or women, between these categories there are countless possibilities for non-binary gender identities. Judith Butler advocated that gender is performative and that each person endlessly explores its plasticity through learning and incorporation, but also through the refusal and rejection of a set of norms, values and moral attributes that are frequently evaluated, negotiated and remembered from a social point of view by both individual agents and institutions (Butler, 1990).

Feminist theories have highlighted gender inequalities, especially between men and women. Gender inequalities refer to the differences in status, power and prestige between women and men in various contexts, and there is no society in which men do not have more wealth, status and influence than women in various aspects of social life. Much remains to be achieved with regard to gender equality and the resulting power asymmetries in the various spheres of social life and in all parts of the world.

Another concept close to our hearts is «Herstory». This English term was coined by feminism to designate the theorisation and documentation of women's experience, life and language. The ironic use of the term in English arose from the realisation of the mismatch between language and the reality to which it alludes, particularly with regard to the omission of the role played by women as social agents in history. The term is also intended to draw attention to the censorship that exists in patriarchal language itself by emphasising the use of the masculine as a generic – «His-story».

This process of renaming implies recognising the conditioning to which both women and men are subject, in terms of the language they use and the very images they construct of reality. The aim of feminist historians is twofold: on the one hand, they want to give women a place in History and, on the other, to give History back to women (Macedo, 2005, p. 96).

The aim of this artistic research project is:

1 – To produce knowledge, models and methodologies on the use of net art as a tool to prevent and combat violence against women, presented in ebook format, which can be used by different institutions dedicated to preventing and combating these types of violence against women and girls.

2 – To promote the skills of women in shelters related to their personal empowerment, social inclusion and participation in digital society, while at the same time helping to change their attitudes and behaviour in relation to internalised gender stereotypes.

3 – To inform, sensitise and make society aware of the social problem of violence against women by making available net art projects that are easy to access and have great dissemination potential, as they include a playful aspect that facilitates people's involvement, in a Virtual Art Archive, hosted on a public UÉ server.

The main results of this research are:

i – An online digital platform entitled «Digital Basket: multimedia labs for gender equality» for computer and mobile phone, which consists of a virtual archive that integrates the creative net art projects carried out by the participants, while also serving as a way of publicising the results of the project and a space for reflection on the phenomenon of domestic violence through net art.

ii – Travelling exhibitions in national and international institutions with the collection of the virtual archive consisting, initially, of the Internet projects designed and produced by the women's group and the records of this production process.

Both the digital platform and the travelling exhibition are a resource for institutions that promote gender equality, such as shelters, educational institutions and civil society organisations that want to develop an artistic project of a social nature and intervention in the specific field of violence against women.

As far as the literature review is concerned, since the 1970s, artists and collectives in the field of visual arts have sought, through their artistic projects, to make visible the mechanisms of gender inequality and violence against women. These have been analysed in publications by authors such as Lovejoy & Vesna (2020), Marcoci (2011), Murteira & Rodrigues (2015), Spero (2010), Storr (2008), Posner (2002), Princenthal (2019), and Sichel & Villaplana (2005). Furthermore, this topic has been the subject of my own research in various publications (Furtado, 2014, 2016, 2018).

Among the artists mentioned the following stand out: Adriana Varejão, Alice Geirinhas, Ana Mendieta, Ana Vidigal, Barbara Kruger, Gloria Bornstein, Joyce J. Scott, Graça Moraes, Helena Almeida, Jenny Holzer, Kara Walker, Leslie Labowitz, Margaret Harrison, Margarida Cardoso, Mónica Mayer, Naima Ramos-Chapman, Nancy Angelo, Nan Goldin, Nalini Malani, Nancy Spero, Paula Rego, Pilar Albarracín, Priscila Rezende, Regina Jose Galindo, Richard Misrach, Sanja Ivekovic, Sue Coe, Sue Williams, Suzanne Lacy, Teresa Margolles, Tracey Rose, Valie Export and Yoko Ono.

One of the main results of this research into the relationship between social art and gender is a virtual art archive on a UÉ server, accessible to the public via the Internet, to host the net art projects carried out by the women of the shelters.

In Portugal, the Estado Novo (New State) dictatorial regime (1933-1974) contributed greatly to the

naturalisation of values of tolerance in relation to punishments inflicted by the head of the family on women and children, as well as gender stereotypes that diminish everything that concerns women, which have since been produced and reproduced in an intergenerational way.

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, equality between men and women is recognised as a principle of citizenship and is included in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic of 1976, in its current wording (articles 9, al. d) and h), 13º, 47º, n.º 2, 50º, n.º 1, 58º, n.º 2, al. b), 73º, n.º 2, 74º, n.º 1, 76º, n.º 1, 81º, al. b) and e), 93º, n.º 1, al. c), 104º, n.º 3, 109º). In the Vienna Declaration of 25 June 1993, which resulted from the World Conference on Human Rights organised by the United Nations and held in Vienna, Austria in 1993, it is stated that «Gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation, in particular those resulting from cultural prejudices and international trafficking, are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be eliminated» (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, artº18, 1993).

Violence against women is seen as one of the manifestations of the unequal power relations between men and women throughout history, based on domination and discrimination against women. For this reason, violence against women has been considered from a cultural point of view to be a normal, traditional and legitimised behaviour in the relationship between spouses that has its origins in the social construction of the genders. Nevertheless, we believe that this gender inequality, founded on a neoliberal heteropatriarchal epistemological era that established differences between masculinity and femininity, heterosexuality and homosexuality, white and non-white, civilised and uncivilised, and which divided the social world according to different degrees of power, is now collapsing from an ecological and political point of view.

Today, there is a growing awareness of stereotyped and prejudiced conceptions of gender as the fundamental basis and structural origin of gender inequalities between people, as well as gender-based violence, especially against women, girls and LGBTQI+ people, and the enormous dimension that all this has in the construction and social normalisation of the devaluation of the feminine. Among the seventeen goals set out in the UN's 2030 Agenda, the fifth concerns the need to achieve gender equality and the urgency of empowering all women and girls in this context. The research project proposed here therefore meets the objectives of the United Nations, namely point five of the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, and the *National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimi-*

nation - Portugal + Igual (ENIND). Violence takes place especially in private, intimate and family relationships, and is mostly carried out by partners and ex-partners and is based on gender inequality and stereotypes. Worldwide, according to a study by UN Women, the section of the United Nations (UN) dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment, in 2021 alone around 81,100 women were murdered, more than half of whom, 45,000 (55.48%), were killed by intimate partners or other family members. Furthermore, this organisation considers gender-based violence to be a pandemic, pointing out that more than 5 women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own family (UN Women, pp. 5-7, 2022).

Gender-based violence is a particular pattern of violence that expands and reactualises without pause as male power is increasingly threatened. Men continue to dominate in most social spheres and are generally much more violent towards women than women are towards men, and this violence is particularly directed towards the control and continued subordination of women. This violence can occur in all social and cultural spaces, being constructed both in the sphere of everyday interactions and in wider social contexts at an institutional level (Lisboa, 2006).

We consider this research project to be relevant because it relates to the objectives defined by the regulations of national and international institutions such as:

- *The Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*, which is part of the *National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030, Portugal + Igual*;
- *The National Skills Strategy* and the *Digital Transition Action Plan* (2020);
- *Axis I - Citizenship, of Évora's Social Development Plan*, namely *The Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men* (PAIMH) and *The Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*. (PAVMVD) (2022);
- SDG.5 for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and SDG.10 for the reduction of inequalities (ONU), and;
- UNESCO's *Strategy for Gender Equality in and through Education 2019-2025*.

With regard to the research stages and methodologies, in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the laboratory work process was divided into three main stages.

As a first stage, the contents of the laboratories were planned, with the indirect aim of applying them in the future as a model for similar projects, to be used by various institutions as part of education for citizenship, gender equality and sustainability.

In a second stage, Co-creative Laboratories were held with the women from the shelters, where projects were produced for a virtual art archive, with the aim of empowering the participants and making them digitally literate by promoting awareness of the gender stereotypes and gender inequality still prevalent in Western societies. The methodology was that of participatory, collaborative, inclusive art and active, empathetic listening to people. This method is characterised by being: participatory, cooperative, collaborative, inclusive and integrative.

In a third stage, the results achieved in the previous phases were disseminated and publicised:

- In the virtual archive and the social media linked to it, such as Instagram.
- In travelling exhibitions and their catalogues, which are part of the different project materials. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that net art projects can be experienced both online, on the web, and offline in museums, galleries, community spaces, associations, etc..

These image archives, in digital and analogue format, are relevant for the qualitative assessment of their behaviour and attitudes towards gender issues, i.e. for evaluating the impact of the laboratories' activities on the way the participating women act and think.

This book presents the second part of the research carried out, divided into three chapters dedicated to the co-creative workshops with the women from the shelter.

Chapter 1, *Projectual methodology, ethical foundations, team and partnerships*, describes the methodology used, the team and the partnerships.

The first sub-chapter, *Projectual Methodology*, looks at how knowledge is built in a horizontal, non-hierarchical way, giving voice to individual forms of expression as well as collective ones, within the scope of the co-creative laboratories. The methodology adopted is cooperative, collaborative, dialogical, inclusive, integrative, active and empathetic listening to people, and a vehicle for egalitarian and intersectional values with regard to gender. This methodology served to give visibility to the problems of women who suffer domestic violence, contributing to their empowerment, autonomy, inclusion and active participation as Subjects in society.

In the second sub-chapter, *Emotional dynamics of women victims of domestic violence*, we try to understand why the women in the shelter were physically and, above all, emotionally exhausted, where fear, anger, guilt and shame dominated. At the present time, the feminine still inhabits a place of subalternity and is a reservoir of hatred, evil, castration and devaluation, being plagued by the phenomenon of feminicide, when women have already won the right to vote, occupied the public labour market and demanded recognition of their desire and sexuality. We will analyse it in the same way, since domestic violence is a social problem that has its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition, a more primitive historical time, in order to find the founding and structural traces of this inequality that still persist today, with greater or lesser visibility and vigour, in Western cultures.

The third subchapter, *Selection of the participants and ethical grounds*, describes how the selection was carried out, in particular according to their willingness to participate in the laboratories, bearing in mind that they are in a situation in their lives where there has been an abrupt break with the violence they have suffered, and are very fragile from an emotional point of view, with no clear prospects as to how they will be able to rebuild their lives. At the same time, the ethical issues related to involving people as case studies are addressed and, in this context, the entire conduct of this research was subject to procedures based on the Declaration of Helsinki (World Health Organisation, 2001). In general terms, these procedures sought to preserve secrecy and confidentiality, so as not to stigmatise the group of women studied and cause them harm, such as failing to protect their image, invading their privacy and violating their confidentiality.

The fourth sub-chapter, *Team and Partnerships*, is dedicated to describing the organisations and institutions that supported us throughout this research project.

Chapter 2, *Co-creative net art labs to combat domestic violence*, analyses each of the labs carried out with the Digitálias collective in eight subchapters..

The first subchapter, *Digitálias: artistic women collective fighting gender-based violence*, describes the Digitálias collective created as part of the co-creative multimedia art workshops we have been organising since 2018, aimed at women who are victims of intimate partner violence in a shelter and ASM technicians. The idea of creating an artistic collective of women arose from the need not to be able to identify the authors of the works for security reasons and, likewise, from the collective characteristics of the work itself, carried out in co-creation. In this sense, this project is heir to the artists of the 1970s, who wanted to

maximise their experiences for the benefit of the blossoming of a collective consciousness in the feminist groups to which they belonged, such as «The Feminist Art Workers» (USA, 1976) and «The Waitresses» (USA, 1978), «Guerrilla Girls» (USA, 1986), or nowadays the collectives «Mujeres Creando» (Bolivia, 1990), «Mujeres Publicas» (Argentina, 2003) and «Las Tesis» (Chile, 2019), among many others.

The second subchapter, *Lab 001 / HerStories*, describes how in this lab we asked the participants to write unconstrained texts related to their life experiences. These texts were digitally integrated into the silhouettes of their own profiles. The women's responses took the form of counter-narratives to the dominant discourses. In the labs, we considered it essential to build an epistemic memory of the participants' narratives through art, in their capacity as women victims of intimate partner violence, thus preserving their experiences and life stories for the future. We also explored alternative ways of working with the participants to produce knowledge about their lives that would draw attention to their experiences of inequality and stigma in a patriarchal society whose mechanisms for excluding women are often invisible and subtle.

The third subchapter, *Lab 002 / From cross-stitch to pixel*, analyses the way in which the theme of gender inequality was worked on throughout the lab by writing aphorisms and slogans about violence against women. Likewise, we sought to establish a relationship between cross-stitch, a popular form of embroidery that has always been associated with the feminine, and the pixel. In this session, we were inspired by the artists Susan Kare (EUA, 1954) and Barbara Kruger (EUA, 1945).

In the fourth subchapter, *Lab 003 / Pixel art against domestic violence*, we reflect on how women in this lab realised short performances, which were filmed by master's students, based on a text inspired by the iconic poster by the American artist Keith Haring (1958–1990), titled *Ignorance = Fear* (EUA, 1989) created by the artist in the 1980s, in the context of homophobia resulting from the global crisis caused by Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and the inadequate responses of the American government.

The resulting video was used by the Évora Town Council (CME) to mark 25 November, «International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women». During the workshops, since the body plays a fundamental role in experiences of violence, performative expression served to promote bodily communication of the participants' personal experiences and struggles for survival, which often produced in them feelings of loneliness, isolation, fear and despair, anger, anguish and shame, but also hope, joy and satisfaction, transforming these personal experiences into a shared experience in a collective context.

The fifth subchapter, *Lab 01 / Things at home belong to all of us*, describes this lab, the premise of which was to encourage the community not to keep quiet about acts of violence that they may encounter in their daily lives, such as when they witness domestic violence, and to report these cases to the authorities. The aim was to convey the message that looking after the well-being of all people is a collective obligation of the community. The home is the most dangerous social space in today's life because of the domestic violence that can happen within the family, such as rape within marriage. There was once, and still is today, but to a lesser extent, a social legitimisation of violence between spouses in the home, unlike in other public spaces where the rule is that violence between individuals is forbidden.

The sixth sub-chapter, *Lab 03 / To be whatever we want to be*, analyses the artistic work carried out within the framework of this laboratory, namely the performances inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's drawing *L'Uomo vitruviano*, Italy 1490, and the achievements of women on 25 April 1974, which put an end to 41 years of Salazar dictatorship, which contributed greatly to their formation as Subjects. Before this dictatorship, the public sphere was seen as masculine and the private sphere as feminine, both being hierarchical and dominated by men, based on women's weakness and fragility. Only a few years before 25 April 1974, the differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate filiation was abolished, women were allowed to vote in the National Assembly and the requirement for a husband's permission for a woman to leave the country was removed.

The seventh subchapter, *Lab 04 / Mapping the body as a sort of garden*, describes how the artist Nela Milic proposed, together with the Digitálias collective, to create digital cartographies of the body during a series of co-creative workshops. During this laboratory, the women chose which scars on their bodies they would like to see photographed, and the photographs were then printed. Later, drawings and plasticine sculptures were placed over the photographs and poetic phrases inspired by the scars were written. In this laboratory, the participants' life stories conferred them and returned them a position in official history, a place from which they are constantly removed and dispossessed of a place of speech. The women used different symbolic languages and recorded their experiences as unique and individual life narratives.

The eighth subchapter, *Lab 06 / Steps to Equality*, deals with the laboratory that was carried out in response to the challenge from the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) for all municipalities in the country to mark «Municipal Day for Equality», which takes place on 24 October. Through an urban art intervention entitled «Steps to Equality», they were asked to highlight the inequality that still exists

between women and men. The aim of this action was to inform and mobilise residents to combat various forms of discrimination. As part of this challenge, an artistic project was created for the steps of the Évora Town Hall.

Chapter 3, *Dissemination and publicising of the Digitálias collective*, analyses, in three subchapters, how we disseminated our project.

In the first subchapter, *M.ARS Virtual Women Art Museum: Digitálias experimental website*, is mentioned as at the beginning of this research project, a virtual art museum was implemented with museologist Aida Rechená, entitled *M.ARS – Virtual Women Art Museum*, online, to receive, as they were realised, the multimedia materials produced, i.e. the net art projects created by the women from the shelters, the video and photographic records of the laboratories and the publications in electronic format of the project.

The second subchapter, entitled *Digital Basket: Multimedia labs for gender equality*, centres on the *Digital Basket* website, a digital platform that was created after the M.ARS web archive. As we set out on the project's home page *Digital Basket*, this website was created to host the work of the Digitálias collective, as well as the work carried out as part of a wider multimedia art project centred on gender equality.

In the third subchapter, *Exhibitions, participatory laboratories and publications*, the forms of online and offline dissemination of this research are listed.

Finally, it's important to mention that this research is the result of an effort to contribute, in academic terms, with original knowledge, but also in terms of citizenship, for the implementation of guidelines that call for action by institutions and the community, for the improvement of cultural intervention policies, which will lead to a greater capacity for prevention, protection and empowerment of women victims of domestic violence. We advocate that everyone is responsible for social inequalities and that artistic research is also a way of acting for social transformation.

CHAPTER 1 | Projectual methodology, ethical foundation, team and partnerships.

1.1. Projectual methodology.

In the present, the idea of identity, place and community are reconfigured without interruption through communication technologies that redefine time, space, private and public, and transform the public forum into a space without a fixed place. Collaboration, collectives and interdisciplinary cross-contamination and exchange are ubiquitous in the network society. With regard to this issue, Christiane Paul states that «The power structure of media, anti-racism, gender-activism, and support of underrepresented communities are among the issues that have continually been addressed by cooperatives of artists and activists» (2015, p. 260).

Our design methodology is heir to artists such as Leslie Labowitz (USA, 1946) who, in the context of public art, created community performances centred on violence against women and used art to serve as a means of collective expression for large groups of people, motivating them towards social change. Her working methodology consisted, in particular, of:

(...) collaboration with a political organization; use of the skilled artist as director/organizer; a focus on issues of current concern; use of the language of the audience addressed; and economic accessibility of materials. (...) the use of media techniques (Lacy, 1995, p. 250).

As part of this research's participatory community practice, we used an action-research intervention methodology that aims to bring about social change and that adapts continuously and flexibly to the needs of the co-creating participants, with a regular and periodic critical reading and evaluation of the project's partial results. It is, in fact, an ongoing artistic project, of a procedural nature, in which the path to be travelled is regularly conceived and recreated using a working method specific to community art. This method is characterised by being: participatory, cooperative, collaborative, inclusive, integrative, and listening actively and empathetically to people.

The importance of empathetic listening is defended by Suzi Gablik, who argues that:

Empathic listening makes room for the Other and decentralizes the ego-self. Giving each person a voice is what builds community and makes art socially responsive. Interaction becomes the medium of expression, an empathic way of seeing through another's eyes (...) Art that is rooted in a «listening» self, that cultivates the intertwining of self and Other, suggests a flow-through experience which is not delimited by the self but extends into the community through modes of reciprocal empathy (Gablik, 1995, p. 82).

The aesthetic expression of these community artistic practices is connective and a vehicle for humanist and gender-equal values. Knowledge is built horizontally, based on common goals rather than hierarchies, contributing to co-operation between all, valuing both individual and collective forms of expression, giving them visibility and a public voice.

The objectives and processes are established between all the agents involved in a non-hierarchical and dialogical way, in other words, between equals. A commitment to the interests of the community, with the aim of empowering them and creating tools and models to be used in the fight against gender inequality. It also values, empowers and gives visibility to the problems of women who suffer domestic violence, contributing to their autonomy and fostering their inclusion and full participation in society.

Throughout the workshops, projects are developed that are intended to be a vehicle for values, attitudes and principles, new thought processes and reasoning that are opposed to violence, promoting healthy and non-violent relationships. Through transmedia projects produced between all the participants, in a collaborative environment and the sharing of knowledge and skills. In today's Western societies, where the mass media and commerce are omnipresent, with the Internet being one of the main technologies at the service of commercial interests, which constantly sends out one-way messages to its consumers, we intend with this project to create an interactive and participatory space that produces citizenship values. It is also worth mentioning that this project aims to contribute to informing, sensitising and helping to prevent gender-based violence among young people and in the community in general.

The works produced are integrated into a virtual art archive and at the same time aim to empower the public with digital literacy by promoting awareness of the gender stereotypes and gender inequality

still prevalent in Western societies. The aim is for these digital platforms to contribute to the fight against gender inequality, as well as to contribute to media literacy and the use of digital technologies. The net art produced as part of this research is used to convey values of equality linked to universal human rights, developing values, attitudes and principles, new thought processes and reasoning about gender identity and sexuality, which are opposed to violence and promote healthy, non-violent relationships.

Furthermore, we believe that gender laboratories in art are debtors and heirs to the feminist community art practices of the 1970s. With regard to the genealogy of community art, the book *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (1995), coordinated by the artist Suzanne Lacy, is fundamental to understanding its history. According to Lacy, in the 1970s, women's issues were on the agenda and the feminist art movement was demanding women's rights through an activist artistic practice based on the motto «What's personal is political», having established a set of militant and active strategies, as well as aesthetic criteria for their art.

The representation of women's personal and intimate identity issues in art was a political strategy to combat gender inequality (Lacy, 1995, p. 27). This refrain, enshrined as the rallying cry of the Second Wave of feminism, reflects the concept that personal experience can be analysed in political terms and recognises the fact that male power is exercised and reinforced through personal institutions such as marriage, child-rearing and sexual practices.

In the 1970s, feminist artists and thinkers were concerned with issues relating to the effectiveness of transmitting their message to a wide audience from different backgrounds, classes and ethnicities. To this end, they adopted collaborative processes that valued the relational aspects of art and the clarification of the public with regard to the meaning of these new artistic practices. In addition, they considered it necessary to evaluate the impact of the works on transforming and changing the mentality of the people involved in the creation and of the public (Lacy, 1995, p. 27).

For the feminist author Suzi Gablik, «Art that is rooted in a "listening" self rather than in a disembodied eye challenges the isolationist thinking of our culture because it focuses not so much on individuals but on the way they interact» (Gablik, 1992, p. 4). This thinker advocates a connective aesthetic that is achieved by artists who use art to increase their relationship with the community. This type of aesthetic seeks the interconnection of artists with others, fully realising themselves not through monologues, but through dialogue, open conversation and attentive listening to others. This new paradigm is no longer based on the

self-affirmation of the Self, but on the search for integration and also, very often, on the interest in giving excluded groups the opportunity to speak unmediated about their own experiences (Gablik, 1992, p. 4).

We believe that participatory and collaborative artistic practice can provide experiences that orientate towards the present and the future, being a place for learning fundamental content, valuing human relationships and promoting experimentation, reflection and aesthetic experience. We believe that knowledge of the language of art and literacy in digital technologies is currently fundamental, both for understanding the world around us and for being able to intervene in it in a sustainable way that respects the values of equality, democracy and social justice.

The artistic practice of net art, in the context of the co-creative labs, sought to give women greater digital literacy and free them from negative gender stereotypes in the emotional field. Throughout the workshops, themes were analysed and debated such as: the ideal model of woman according to the primacy of patriarchal ideology; conceptions of couples, often associated with the idea that children and women are the property of their father and husband; conceptions of love and the ideal of romantic love and lifelong marriage; sexualisation of work in the home; the traditional role of women as carers in the home; models, values and asymmetrical gender roles that family members, friends and colleagues pressure women to integrate, with continuity and persistence.

In the labs, we tried to create co-creative practices that would be liberating, giving rise to artistic expressions that would relieve the participants on an emotional level. We also investigated how artistic practice could help them to reflect and think critically, to find new ways of interpreting gender-based violence, both at the level of their personal history, the one that fell on them, and at a systemic social level, of a collective nature.

We hypothesised that artistic practice could be a social tool that contributes to the emotional empowerment of these women, helping them to deconstruct social emotions and gender models and stereotypes as factors in maintaining violent intimate relationships, which condition their actions and contribute to the production, reproduction and perpetuation of gender violence and violent marital relationships. The production of artistic content for and on the Internet by women is seen as a way of empowering them and democratising a space of power where, as a general rule, content is broadcast that does not give a voice to marginalised people.

It's also worth mentioning that this project was not intended to be modelled on relational art, which had the book *Relational Aesthetics* (1998), by Nicholas Bourriaud, its great systematisation. Douglas Gordon, Gonzalez-Foerster, Liam Gillick, Pierre Huyghe ou Rirkrit Tiravanija e Philip Parreno, are some of the artists who, since the 1990s, have developed an artistic practice based on relational art. This refusal, on our part, is linked to the argument put forward by Claire Bishop, according to whom:

Bourriaud describes as «relational» work that takes as its theoretical horizon «the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space». But despite Bourriaud's emphasis on human relations and their social context, the artists he supports independently of his arguments are less interested in human relations than in the «relational» understood as the relations between space, temporality, fiction and design. As such, Bourriaud is frequently criticised for «aestheticising relations». In contrast, the projects that form the focus here are less interested in a relational aesthetic than in the creative rewards of collaborative activity. Such contemporary work forms a marked shift away from «relational» art of the 1990s, and is part of a historical trajectory of socially-oriented practice—from Dada excursions to Situationist *dérives*, collaboratively-produced Happenings and Actions, and a host of appropriated pseudo-institutions such as offices, restaurants, hotels, tours and discussions (Bishop, 2006, p. 178).

Although participatory art practices received little attention in art history during the modernist period, the remarkable revival of such strategies since the present century has resulted in growing historical interest. As Bishop argues with regard to the identification of this type of art: «This expanded field of engaged practices has various names: socially-engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based, or collaborative art» (Bishop, *idem*, *ibidem*).

Throughout the workshops, emphasis was placed on the role of women as agents of change and authors of their own lives, capable of forms of self-determination, empowerment, fulfilment and emancipation, as well as their representation of themselves, despite the discriminatory and cruel circumstances and the mechanisms of inferiorisation, subordination and suppression to which they have been subjected.

The aim was to contribute to the development of the participants as Subjects, as open, explicit and active subjectivities. With regard to the visibility and role of women in history, Anita Sarkeesian argues that:

We're finding it quite tiring that rather than being celebrated as heroes, leaders, and innovators, women are often depicted—and treated—as secondary characters in history. They may be love interests, damsels in distress, sassy best friends, mothers, mistresses, or martyrs—but they rarely exist as anything except footnotes to the stories of the men whose lives and achievements we're told actually matter (...). When they were told that women should aspire to be submissive and good, they decided instead to be defiant and great (Sarkeesian, 2018, Cap. s.I.).

The artistic research presented here is the result of fieldwork carried out during the net art co-creative laboratories with victims of violence by their husbands, partners or boyfriends. In methodological terms, this fieldwork is conceived from a qualitative perspective, in particular through artistic practices aimed at a community.

These laboratories, for the production of interactive net art projects, were aimed at digital training and literacy, as well as empowerment, by promoting awareness of gender inequalities and stereotypes. The methodology was that of participatory art, including a theoretical component to learn about works by artists who work on gender issues, a practical component to learn how to use digital technologies, as well as a creative component based on the experiences and realities of each woman.

The results took the form of transmedia projects expressive of the feelings and experiences of the women's group, serving to feed the contents of the digital art archive and the physical exhibitions. They also constituted significant content to be analysed with a view to producing artistic knowledge and disseminating it in academic circles.

During the labs, laptops were used on which software was installed to learn the basics of photomontage, video editing, audio editing and the creation of web pages and content. Throughout the sessions, we used a video projector and screen to project multimedia content, external discs to store the work produced, headphones and printers to test images and print content.

The general objectives pursued with the co-creative net art labs are as follows:

i) Promote the inclusion of women in shelters through digital literacy by providing them with accredited training¹ and basic skills in the area of digital technologies, which could contribute to their social integration into the labour market;

ii) Raising women's awareness, through the symbolic language of art, of the mechanisms by which gender-based violence operates, acting at the level of shared mentalities and social representations, in order to eliminate the naturalisation of violence within families by men, as the main precursors and perpetrators;

iii) Designing with women, through artistic practice, new places and possibilities of being for the feminine and masculine that we inhabit today, through images and representations that contribute to changing models of thought, without repeating the clichés, norms and traditional social hierarchies that diminish women;

iv) Create research models and methodologies that can be used by various academic institutions, as well as social solidarity institutions, among others, in the fight against gender inequality, and active policies to respect difference and promote equality, promoting a culture orientated towards equality, equity and diversity, and;

v) Raising awareness in society through net art projects on the website «Digital Basket» and in travelling exhibitions, to stereotyped and harmful conceptions of gender as a fundamental basis for structural inequalities between women and men, as well as a source of gender-based violence.

¹ With regard to accredited training, we would like to highlight the course created by the author as part of the DAVD/EA/UE training offer, titled «Introduction to Multimedia Technology from the User's Perspective», which aims to provide ordinary people with basic knowledge about creating, editing, exporting and putting digital images online, by learning basic multimedia artistic concepts and techniques. The basic function of communication, which characterises, expresses and determines art in general, is highlighted here through its relationship with digital multimedia technology with concerns for citizenship and sustainability.

1.2. Emotional dynamics of women victims of domestic violence.

Women in shelters are often physically exhausted, but above all emotionally exhausted, which has led them to decide to leave their aggressor. As a result, they are lost from a thinking point of view, adopting a posture of enormous emotional and reactive fragility, in which fear, anger, guilt and shame still prevail, without yet having a reflective awareness of themselves. They are often in a state of emotional alienation, characterised by sadness, despair, low self-esteem and suppression of individual identity.

It should also be noted that women who are victims of domestic violence face emotional barriers and difficulties that prevent them from understanding violence as the result of systemic gender inequality. People's ability to recognise their emotions is limited, and analysing the transformation of the emotional framework over the course of the laboratories made it possible to understand the impact of the net art practice on the women's psychosocial framework.

Today, the feminine continues to occupy a place of subalternity and is the repository of hatred, castration, evil, the non-phallic and the devalued. This oppression of women by men is historical and leads to a difference in the way the two treat each other, which is reflected in the difference in salaries, tasks and social positions, and in the relationship with their bodies and sexualities. This position was forged in a misogynistic culture, the genesis of which took place three millennia ago, based on symbolic violence that cultivates hatred for women, who are seen as the embodiment of evil and the tempting voices of the devil in many religious discourses. An example of this is the biblical figure of Eve, an accomplice of the serpent and temptress of Adam, who is lost because of her, according to the Judeo-Christian myth that blames women for the evils and suffering of humanity, or before that, in Classical Antiquity, the myth of Pandora, narrated by Hesiod, the first mortal woman in Greek mythology, who similarly does not respect the divine prohibition and her curiosity is the cause of all the evils among men. Throughout the historical narratives, women seduce, excite and provoke male sexual desire, having the power to decide whether this desire will be refused and frustrated or, alternatively, accepted and satisfied. Therefore, women are the generators and symbols of the male's lack of control, and deserve to be punished if they provoke his bewilderment and frustrate his impulses and desires (Furtado, 2014).

Christianity, in its early centuries, through the writings of St Paul, Tertullian and Augustine, decreed that

pleasure was a sin and carnal desires should be repressed. In this way, men's frustration at a possible female refusal was cancelled out, while their desire for tempting women was repressed. This conception of women led to the invention of the female figure of Mary, the ultimate representative of the ideal of motherhood, a purification and purgation of the figure of Eve responsible for the original sin, the paradigmatic figure of the sinful woman. Mary is nothing more than the other face of Eve, an ideal that was created over the course of two thousand years by the Catholic Church, which purified Eve's body of the female sexuality and desire associated with original sin. The ideal of motherhood was the great instrument for repressing women's sexuality and desire, whose bodies were only meant to contribute to reproduction, and the traditional family was the place where these values proliferated and women were controlled (Furtado, 2014).

Another consequence of this idea of women as a strange and evil being was the witch-hunt, which between the 15th and 18th centuries put around sixty thousand women to death. This feminicide took place during the genesis of modernity, the Renaissance in art, Enlightenment thinking, the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), a world that was beginning to become urban and literate, moving away from a mythical and religious logic, from a geocentric cosmogony, in which the Earth was the centre of the Universe, to heliocentrism, and seeking a scientific understanding of the workings of nature and society based on reason. At this key moment in Western history, women were beginning to cultivate themselves, through reading and writing, to build their own thinking that was autonomous from that of men, holding some social and political power in the courts, and for this reason European society resorted to the motif of witchcraft to annihilate the more autonomous and free women.

The same is true today, when women have won the right to vote, occupied the public labour market and demanded recognition of their desire and sexuality, but are plagued by the phenomenon of feminicide, sexual violation and systemic violence against women and girls, considered by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, executive director of UN Women and deputy secretary general of the United Nations, to be an invisible and silent pandemic (ONU, 2020).

Hatred of women's desire and sexuality and the autonomy of their thinking had its origins millennia ago, and has become a structuring element of common sense, leading to the persecution of women and their classification as physically and mentally inferior to men. In many religious beliefs, women are considered to be temptresses of man's desire and representatives of the devil and evil that led to humanity's expulsion from paradise.

This devaluation of the feminine has been reinforced and reiterated throughout history by eminent thinkers who have condemned women to the status of inferior beings. From Plato to St Augustine and Kant, from mythology to fairy tales and cinema, narratives proliferate that shape the personal and collective imagination, where women are prescribed possibilities of a subordinate existence and occupy places of devaluation in the social world. And this gender violence, which is repeated and strengthened every day, continues to be inscribed in an invisible symbolic way in all femicides, but takes on a real and visible form when they occur.

Femicide continues to occur with profuse regularity and insistence on a global level, cutting across all societies and cultures. In other words, there is a continuous making of gender violence that is based on the performativity of individual, collective and institutional actions, and which is present in both the private and public spheres, in every gesture and word of abuse against women. Furthermore, the phenomenon of gender-based violence is too often reduced by the media, particularly mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television and the Internet, to a status restricted to the personal and domestic dimension of individuals, obliterating the structural social causes.

Gender-based violence is structural and crosses all spheres, micro and macro-social, from the private to the public sphere, through values that legitimise male domination, misogyny, contempt for minorities, competitiveness and triumph over others as the main objective. Women very often reveal, experience and live through emotions based on patriarchal logics which, however, are not evident to them, making them an easy target for manipulation, domination and control. And sometimes their emotions are externalised through paralinguistic expressions, indicating shame or embarrassment through body posture, gestures or the facial expression of lowering the head or covering the mouth or eyes. However, we believe that with the help of artistic practices focused on the reflexive deconstruction of emotions, we can contribute to self-reflexivity, subjectivisation and self-awareness.

The women who go to the shelters are in situations of extreme violence, whether physical, psychological or sexual, and real danger of death, having experienced an abrupt break with the violent relationship and starting a new life that sometimes means a break with their entire life up to that point, a break with their children, family, friends and profession. The situation faced by victims is characterised by instability, as it is a transitional phase to a new period in their lives, and the future situation is also unknown and a source of uncertainty and instability.

These women develop a very emotional and reactive attitude, in which fear, apprehension, guilt, embarrassment and shame prevail, and for this reason they face barriers and difficulties that prevent them from understanding domestic violence from a rational point of view. These social emotions often trap women in the violent relationship. As Dalila Cerejo says, «Since these are social emotions, they are also inscribed in the identity of all individuals through models, values and gender identity, which in turn place men and women in different social positions» (Cerejo, 2014, p. 2).

Women incorporate social emotions and their gender identity from childhood, based on values, norms, models and expectations conveyed by institutions, organisations, groups and social agents such as family, school, friends and work colleagues.

This is why people guide and condition their emotions and actions according to values, models and current gender roles that they assimilate and incorporate and which are present in all the macro-structures and interactions of everyday social and cultural life. Emotions are firmly linked to certain social gender roles, to the extent that society assigns different experiences, ways of feeling and showing emotions to males and females. Social emotions guide the actions, experiences, perceptions and expectations of women victims, they precede their object of affection, the intimate relationship with the aggressor.

The social emotions associated with women, such as shame, guilt, embarrassment and the fear of being judged by others, play an important role in maintaining gender models and stereotypes, forming part of a cultural heritage that inhibits women's revolt, denunciation and transformative and liberating action, contributing to the maintenance of violent marital relations and a position of inferiority and a feeling of subalternity in relation to men.

Very often, women who are victims of violence hope that their aggressors will change as a result of social pressure exerted on them to put up with the violence and not report it, so as not to be accused of failing to fulfil their role as wives or partners. Patriarchal society is structured around stereotypical ways of being a man and a woman, where a woman, by becoming a wife or partner, assumes the synonym of being a man's sexual property. The assimilation of gender archetypes is so deep, strong and naturalised that it deprives women of the ability to question some of the practices committed against them, the acts of which may be lost in the victims' own perception of them as violence, but are instead accepted as natural, habitual and commonplace behaviour.

The naturalisation of physical violence in the family, i.e. the social representations of certain acts of violence as normal, such as corporal punishment of children, leads to the devaluation of the injuries suffered by women in this context. Similarly, even today in Portugal, ensuring the permanence, continuity and solidity of the couple is a traditional social value that is often undisputed by both men and women, which means that, when faced with situations of marital violence, the dominant reaction of women is one of conformism, sadness, silence and a sense of fatalism towards the violence – situations that help prevent a separation from taking place – rather than reporting it and asking for help from victim support institutions. In scenarios of extreme violence and danger of death, women often choose to stay in the relationship and minimise the injuries they have suffered. As a result, many women incorporate a patriarchal view of the world into their lives, which results, for example, in them feeling guilty and responsible for the violence their aggressors inflict on them. As such, women should not be considered accomplices in their own domination, since they are often unaware of the circumstances and mechanisms of subjugation they are victims of, and are placed in a position of subalternity and non-Subject in the social and symbolic realm.

Through co-creative artistic practices, we are interested in understanding which emotions are maintained and which are transformed over the course of the co-creative net art labs, in the sense of a rejection of models that keep them imprisoned in the role of woman, wife or partner in a patriarchal social order. This social order naturalises and legitimises the symbolic power of male domination and violence against women as something acceptable and normal. Likewise, the aim is to understand women's conceptions of gender in terms of the sexual division of tasks, labour and affections, according to the dominant gender models in families.

During the workshops, the aim was to help dismantle the psychosocial emotional frameworks intertwined with gender roles and stereotypes that devalue and subordinate the feminine to the masculine, and which are intergenerational. Likewise, the aim was to help overcome the psychological traumas associated with feelings of annulment and emotional alienation that women often experience and which produce an inability to act.

1.3. Selection of participants and ethical foundations.

The participants were selected according to their willingness to take part in the labs. We knew from the outset that this fieldwork was of a delicate nature, since the women's entry into the shelters, while corresponding to a situation in their lives in which there is an abrupt break with the violence they have suffered, is also a period in which they are emotionally very fragile, with no clear prospects as to how they will be able to rebuild their lives. With this in mind, we worked together with the shelter technicians to ensure that the women felt emotionally protected and safe.

In order to ensure the safety of victims who cannot be identified, their names and any other data that might allow them to be recognised were withheld, and the laboratories were planned and coordinated with the utmost care by the team. As this project involved ethical issues related to the involvement of people as a case study, i.e. the women of the ASM - Associação Ser Mulher shelter in Évora, it was subject to procedures based on the *Declaration of Helsinki* (World Health Organization, 2001).

These procedures sought, in general terms, to maintain the secrecy and confidentiality of the information obtained so as not to bring stigmas to the group of women studied, and unnecessary actions that could cause harm, such as failure to protect their image, invasion of their privacy and violation of their confidentiality. We argue that procedures such as guaranteeing confidentiality and privacy, showing respect for the research subjects, do not in any way affect the development of the project which aims, above all, to obtain models and methodologies that can be replicated. Similarly, we believe that the interests of people, the case study of our research, should always take precedence over the benefits of science and society.

The following procedures were therefore adopted:

- i) A partnership agreement between the University of Évora and ASM - Associação Ser Mulher, in Évora, which manages the Casa do Abrigo where the women are housed;
- ii) Oral declaration of confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and protection of image and non-stigmatisation;
- iii) Reference that the data obtained is confidential and used only within the framework of the study in question;

iv) Guarantee that they are not subjected to physical, moral, psychological or any other kind of offence or damage;

v) Mention of possible discomforts and risks, as well as the expected benefits;

vi) Women are free to refuse to participate or withdraw their consent at any stage of the research;

vii) Explanation and oral clarification, throughout the research process, of all actions that directly or indirectly involve the Women, in a clear and precise manner, favouring their autonomous decision about their participation.

Throughout the project, all employees were informed of the need to:

a) Being aware of and sensitive to the participants' feelings throughout the research process;

b) To minimise the possibility of breaching the confidentiality of the data by being careful when storing it, so that no harm comes to the participants, and by being alert to the publication of possible data that could breach their confidentiality and privacy;

c) Be aware of the need for ethical care, accepting the indications of the researchers in charge regarding behaviours to improve ethical practices;

d) Not to adopt unnecessary practices that could bring risks of psychological, moral and social harm to the Women, such as revealing confidential information, publishing an article that indicates the location and name of the Shelter or their names, the use of their photographic and video images, without taking the necessary precautions, avoiding the revelation of their face or identity;

e) Seek the development of research in the form of publications, insofar as the results can make contributions to other researchers in particular, and to knowledge in general.

1.4. Team and Partnerships.

This artistic research project has been developed and mostly supported by CHAIA – Centre for Art History and Artistic Research, an organic unit of IIFA – Institute for Research and Advanced Training of the University of Évora. The research is part of a wider project by the author and researcher Aida Rechená, entitled *Gender in Art* – Ref.^a CHAIA-UID/EAT/00112/2013/2016/AVD/GA, in the scientific area of Multimedia Art, Plastic Arts, Social Museology and Gender Studies.

The Associação Ser Mulher (ASM) in Évora was fundamental to the development of this artistic research. ASM provides care for victims of domestic violence in the form of social support, legal support and psychological support for a period of six months, which can be extended, as well as assistance to external users in seven of the fourteen municipalities in the Évora district. Victims can be accompanied by their children, who can even be adult children with some kind of disability. The professionals at Associação Ser Mulher, in particular the lawyer Dr Ana Beatriz Cardoso, the association's director, and the social psychologists Dr Ana Russo, Dr Ana Simões, Dr Helena Barahona, Dr Maura Melo and Dr Margarida Bonito, collaborated actively and committedly in the project.

With regard to the initiatives we have developed, it is essential to highlight the support of Évora Town Council, particularly the youth sector, coordinated by Dr Maria Luísa Policarpo. Among this support, it is worth highlighting the collaboration of Dr Ana Cardoso, Dr Helena Ferro, Dr Teresa Carona and Dr Fátima Cabecinha, who, within the scope of the *Plan for Equality and Non-Discrimination - Weaving Networks for Equality* (PMIND), supported some of the activities of this research. Exhibitions by the Digitálias collective were also hosted by the União das Freguesias de Malagueira e Horta das Figueiras, the Évora Public Library, the Inatel Foundation and the Foundation Eugénio de Almeida Foundation Art and Culture Centre in Évora.

Bachelor's and Master's students from the Department of Visual Arts and Design of the School of Arts of the University of Évora were also involved in some of the laboratories of this research, as part of the Curricular Units of the Bachelor's Degree in Visual Arts and Multimedia, and the Master's Degree in Artistic Practices in Visual Arts. Finally, we would like to highlight the financial support of the Social Design Institute of the University of the Arts London (UAL) and the Interactive Technologies Institute of the Laboratory for Robotics and Engineering Systems (ITI-LARSyS).

CHAPTER 2 | Co-creative net art labs to combat domestic violence.

2.1. Digitálias: artistic women collective fighting gender violence.

Sometimes I want to make a rose and I can't, and now with my eyes closed I've managed to do it. (...) I liked it a lot because you forget your problems a little with your drawings, with your imagination. (...) I liked it a lot; it's all new to me, I've never done these things and I'd like to keep going (Women Artists from Shelter Houses, 2018/19).

Most important to me are the many invisible communities whose courage, presence and persistence have inspired my work over the years, those who suffer forms of discrimination, violence and injustice (Lacy, 1995, p. 16).

Since 2018, we have been organising co-creative multimedia art and net art workshops with Associação Ser Mulher, aimed at women who are victims of intimate partner violence and who are in a shelter house, as well as ASM technicians. As far as the history of shelters is concerned, they were created in the 1970s in the UK, USA, Germany, Austria, Norway and Finland to provide an urgent response to the high-risk situations in which women who were victims of domestic violence found themselves, guaranteeing their safety, empowering them in terms of their psychological well-being and helping them to rebuild a life project. In Portugal, only the *First National Plan against Domestic Violence*, in 1999, led to the creation of a public network of shelters, which had been idealised since the mid-1990s.

As part of this research, between 2021 and 2022, over the course of several months, digital art training was provided to women from the shelter and ASM technicians, accredited by the University of Évora, in the context of co-creative laboratories.

The idea of creating an artistic collective of women arose from the need to not be able to identify the authors of the works for security reasons and, in addition, from the collective characteristics of the work itself, which is carried out in co-creation. Thus, this project is heir to the artists of the 1970s, who wanted to maximise their experiences for the benefit of the flourishing of a collective consciousness in the feminist groups to which they belonged and, although their work started from the personal and individual realm, they wanted to represent the group, the collective. Since then, collectives such as «The Feminist Art Workers» (USA, 1976), «The Waitresses» (USA, 1978), «Guerrilla Girls» (USA, 1986), or nowadays the collectives «Mujeres Creando» (Bolivia, 1990), «Mujeres Publicas» (Argentina, 2003) and «Las Tesis» (Chile, 2019), among many others, were created.

What's more, today there is still an epistemic aesthetic rejection in the art world of any artistic production that isn't led by people who weren't trained in the Eurocentric and sexist academies of fine arts, in other words, any artistic production that doesn't bear the stamp of Western curatorship and academia is devalued.

For this reason, the values and methodologies developed in the collective laboratories of this research oppose this epistemological fraud, which often allows the Western art world, through an aesthetic based on neoliberal values, to exclude collective artistic initiatives or those of a popular and artisanal nature from the field of art. With regard to the present day, Paul Preciado argues that:

We are living in a counter-revolutionary moment. We are immersed in a heteropatriarchal, colonial and neo-nationalist reform that aims to undo the achievements of long processes of labour, sexual and anti-colonial emancipation over the last few centuries. As Félix Guattari announced in 1978, breathing has become as difficult as conspiring. If behind the glitter of the silver of Potosí was hidden the exterminating labour of the colonial mine in the 16th century, behind the glitter of the canvases today are hidden the most extreme forms of neo-colonial, technological and subjective domination. The dark age of the pixel could even be the last, if we don't manage to invent new forms of balance between the worlds of carbon and silicon, and new forms of dialogue between the subjective, machinic, organic, immaterial and mineral entities of the planet (Preciado, 2018, p. 5).

Since the 1970s, many feminist theorists have deeply criticised the traditional philosophy of art, arguing that the very concept of art used by philosophers was based on paradigms that excluded women. In the 18th century, the various forms of art were unified in what was known as the «fine arts», based on ideas of beauty, aesthetics and imitation, which excluded practical crafts based on *tekhnē*, which had previously been categorised as belonging to the same category as poetry and painting. Insofar as a large part of the creative work carried out by women was conceived in a domestic context, since they were denied throughout history the means and economic and social contexts necessary to carry out their creative work, in particular public visibility and learning the canons in force in the academic context, this 18th century categorisation of art rejected women's creative work as art, thus omitting many women from the history of art.

It should also be noted that the «art for art's sake» paradigm in force, which founded art on intrinsic properties disconnected from the other dimensions of life and its social context, led many feminist artists and thinkers to advocate that: the social context in which art was produced was essential to understanding and evaluating it; it was important to take into account perspectives of gender, class, race, among others; the spectator is not a generic and ideal spectator, and therefore differently situated people experience art differently, and finally; that artistic objects are in effect about some subject, expressing a meaning and point of view about something, on the part of those who created them. Continuing in a similar vein, it has been pointed out that the Western aesthetic of art itself was conceived by specific individuals belonging to a certain race, social class and gender, i.e. mostly by white, heterosexual, upper-class men. As a result, collectives, handicrafts and popular culture do not rise to the realm of «art», a sphere that is highly hierarchical and colonised by the neoliberal gaze, which turns art into merchandise and cultural capital.

It should also be noted that, during our research, we felt it was important for this excluded knowledge to enter the academies themselves, not only through theory but also through practice, and for this reason Digitálias carried out co-creative collaborations within the academy, in particular with students on the master's programme in artistic practices in the visual arts.

The associative form in contemporary societies is often the result of the neoliberal system's aggressions and disempowerment of people. Collectives often arise from the need to bring together the action of a group with a certain objective, but equally from the pleasure of doing it together. The creative actions of collectives shake up the system, even if they do so in a fragile, timid and punctual way, working

against the individualistic logics of globalised neoliberalism. They encourage socialising with the Other, who is different from us, and stimulate the desire to participate, listen, speak and be a Subject. Collective artistic activities are experienced and shared in a communal way, based on a flexible, non-hierarchical, horizontal structure that rejects the traditional roles of teacher as holder of knowledge versus student as recipient of teachings.

The new emerging artistic collectives, based on networks and co-operation circuits, are not governed by a mercantile logic and are constituted as projects that elaborate from various multidisciplinary perspectives that often seek to reflect on contemporary aesthetic-political problems. The Digitálias collective does not have a fixed line-up in terms of participants, but rather a central nucleus, made up of the author and the ASM technicians, around which different participants from the Shelter House and the community come together, according to each one's ability to attend the workshops on a given date.

The name Digitálias, inspired by the word «digital», comes from the idea of using multimedia computer technology to empower girls and women in the community, in this specific case women who are victims of intimate partner violence. Training and skills in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) seek to reverse the downward trend in their participation in digital society, and their consequent impoverishment and subalternisation.

We also believe that the artistic practices developed within the scope of the co-creative laboratories of the Digitálias collective can be considered activist, insofar as they defend a cause, specifically the fight against violence against women and gender equality, seeking social transformation anchored in the emancipation of women, and in ethical and aesthetic points of view and attitudes allied to intersectional feminist movements challenging neoliberal policies that take away women's rights.

With regard to the Digitálias artistic collective, it should also be pointed out that it is currently not easy for this type of collective to be accepted by the art world if it wants to align itself with the premises of artistic value defined by art history and the art market, such as the notions of authorship, quality, originality and style, which are still very present in the European artistic context.

For this reason, we are aware of the difficulties of acceptance and validation by the art world of what we call participatory art, with regard to issues associated with the aesthetic experience and authorship of this type of art. Added to this difficulty in the art world's acceptance of collectively-authored artworks and

participatory art is the fact that the Digitálias collective is made up mostly of women whose invisibility and subalternisation in the art world is historical. It should also be noted that most of the participants come from disadvantaged social classes, some of whom are immigrants and have «non-white skin colour», which makes them an easy target for racist behaviour in Portuguese society, and most have never had contact with fine art practices. Furthermore, it is important to remember that the traditional canons of art that exclude participatory art are legitimised above all in art academies, but are also available to a wider public in exhibitions, galleries, museums, art history publications and artists' monographs, and are sold at prices accessible to the general public.

Nowadays, there is a change in canons regarding art in general, which is leading to greater acceptance of participatory art. Regarding the acceptance of participatory art practices, methodologies and aesthetic criteria by the Western art world, Tom Finkelpearl states that:

In the visual arts, authorship has important implications, perhaps most obviously in the economic sphere. A painting has only a fraction of the value it would otherwise possess if it fails to be authenticated as a Cézanne or a Rembrandt. There are art historical implications as well. Critics are used to writing about a body of work by an artist. Audiences are interested in who a work is "by". So, making art through participation and ascribing authorship to a group – especially a group of nonprofessional artists – has created difficult issues of authorship and interpretation. Artists and critics invested in this art form often contend that a social and aesthetic value exists in creating a participatory process that moves away from the individualistic model to a more socially horizontal structure. They sometimes argue as well that non-artists have perceptions, local knowledge, professional expertise, or visual ideas that are unique and unattainable without their participation. (...) Over the last decade, it has become commonplace to understand participatory moments as art. Art can now be a meal, a free school, an immigrant services community center, a dance party, or a collectively designed park (Finkelpearl, 2014, s.l.).

As far as the Digitálias logo is concerned, we came up with the idea during one of the workshops in which the women and their children filmed themselves dancing, as part of our strategy of valuing and em-

powering them. These performative scenes of bodily expression sought to give women survivors and their children what they are so often denied in society – the chance to express themselves freely and spontaneously. The cameras were made available to all those present, placed on a tripod in a small indoor garden, where there was no shortage of food and a music system.

During all the workshops, it's also worth mentioning that we always tried to provide the participants with a cheerful, pleasant and festive atmosphere, because we know that the unequal structure of relations between men and women also affects the way in which they have access to pleasure and leisure. In fact, women, who for centuries have been left with the responsibility of looking after the house and children, still have the task of looking after the house, the children, the men, themselves and their work outside the home, in an endless circle. In this respect, as Inês Brasão argues:

We know that official history has made women subjects without a history. It has made women subjects with no desire to speak, to express themselves, to enjoy themselves, to join parties or causes. It has made them professionals of desire, material of desire, but not subjects of desire. It has made women subjects without the right to desire to do nothing. Notice how the discourse on leisure is above all a pleasure thought of as masculine (Brasão, 2019, p. 12).

During the sessions, the cameras, placed on tripods, were manipulated taking into account the light, the framing and the notion of inside and outside the field. This resulted in a series of short videos, which were then transferred to the computer and worked on together in photo and video applications. High-contrast techniques were applied to all the images, so that the participants were transformed into silhouettes so that they could not be identified. Next, we chose the colours of the figures and the background, deciding on violet and orange, each of which could be applied, according to the aesthetic needs of the occasion, sometimes to the background and sometimes to the figure.

The font we chose to use to write the collective's name, called *LoRes*, has an aesthetic linked to bitmaps that incorporates pixels into its structure and therefore works well at both large and very small sizes. Without delicate details, this font is associated with the ubiquitous computer technology in everything around us. As information is increasingly stored, accessed and displayed in digital format, on-screen reading has become the ultimate method of visualising the vast majority of our information. Today, pixels, the minimum unit of

Images

<<Digitálias: artistic women collective fighting gender-based violence>>









2.2. Lab 001 / HerStories.

As the main objective of this laboratory, we considered the idea of building an epistemic memory, through art, of the minorities made up of women victims of violence in an intimate context to be essential. To this end, we sought to give a voice to women as Subjects of experiences and life stories that were brought to the labs and that needed to be valued. In fact, we believe that everyone should be allowed to speak, and to produce knowledge that is recognised as such. With regard to the phenomenon of domestic violence, for Phil Barker, a journalist in the field of cultural studies, at the present time:

Women are using their own stories of domestic violence to show the world what's actually going on behind the slammed doors. They are telling their stories to help other women understand they're not alone and that it's not their fault, and to present them with an alternative reality. It's disturbingly easy to find powerful stories of women's experiences of domestic violence, simply because there are so many. Stories engage us at every level: our emotions, values and imaginations. Narrative connects us with our deepest motivations, and is still the most effective tool for creating change. A funny tweet, an entrancing book, an engaging corporate presentation and a blockbuster movie are all, simply, great stories. Stories show us that we're part of one community (Barker, 2019, p. 56).

Based on the premise that listening to the other is a key element of research aimed at justice and social change, as opposed to a neoliberal society in which informing and moulding the other is a central premise, during this laboratory we asked the participants to write texts related to their life experiences. These texts were digitally integrated into the silhouettes of their own profiles and took the form of counter-narratives to dominant discourses.

It's important to note that in the course of the workshops, trying to give the participants a voice and listen to them didn't mean that we had the expectation that they would all have to speak, since we believe that everyone also has the right to silence. The participants' responses were very diverse: some brief and fragmented, others complex and extensive. We stress that this project explores alternative ways of working

with marginalised people to produce knowledge about their lives that draws the public's attention to their lived experience of inequality or stigma, seeking to contribute to positive social transformations. The aim of the co-creative workshops was to help give women victims of domestic violence a place in History and, on the other hand, to give History back to women.

The word «history» derives from the Greek word *historia*, which means enquiry, the act of seeking knowledge, as well as the knowledge that results from this questioning. «Herstory» is the English word created by feminism to signify the documentation, reflection and production of knowledge about women's narratives and life experiences, in response to the perceived urgency of recording their speech, their discourse that had previously been silenced in the different areas of knowledge. The ironic play on words in this English term stems from the realisation of this erasure of the role played by women as social agents in History. The term is also intended to denounce the censorship that exists in the language itself, which is patriarchal in nature, highlighting the use of the masculine as generic – «His-story», just as the word man is synonymous with humanity (Macedo *apud* Furtado, 2014).

During the second wave of the feminist movement, women were dissatisfied with the male narratives that controlled and presided over the course of the narration of historical events. The historical amnesia surrounding women's stories necessitated the coining of the term «Herstory», which was used with both seriousness and irony. American thinker and activist Robin Morgan is considered to be one of the first to use this term in her book, *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* (1970). It was second-wave feminism, stemming from the women's liberation movement in the 1970s, that questioned and challenged the ways in which knowledge was produced, mainly from a male perspective, with the aim of drawing attention to the ways in which women's experiences were excluded and existing gender inequalities were maintained.

Today, women's demands seem to make little sense given their achievements, such as the right to vote, free contraception, equal opportunities in the labour market and in education. However, according to Filipa Lowndes Vicente, when it comes to women's contemporary artistic practice:

(...) this is not necessarily a linear story – from a past where women were not part of an artistic culture, to a present, our present, where this is no longer an issue. So neither is

the past made up only of absences and limits to women's artistic practice, nor is the present of the Western world, supposedly the most egalitarian, exempt from numerous obstacles to women's full participation in the artistic and cultural world and their recognition. One of the main differences is that until the beginning of the 20th century, these barriers were objective, nameable, written and legalised, but since then they have become invisible due to more subjective, unconscious, unwritten and often unspoken factors (Vicente, 2011, p. 24).

We would therefore point out that, at the centre of the feminist movement of the 1970s, women became aware of the need to reclaim control over themselves, as they were dominated by cultural and structural gender inequality, particularly with regard to their sexuality and their reproductive role, which did not allow them, in particular, to self-determine and create themselves freely and widely as Subjects. Women began to speak, reflect and act together in a wide variety of social spaces, from the streets to academia, valuing their lived experiences and inscribing the stories of their lives into the social fabric. This process came about in a dialogical way, a reflective dialogue with themselves and with other women. The women's discussions about their experiences allowed them to develop a sense of collective social self-consciousness that generated new ways of seeing that were also used to reinterpret their past experiences (Furtado, 2014).

Regimes of inequality are based not only on the social forces of gender, but often intersect, as we argued earlier, through the concept of intersectionality, with inequalities of class, race and ethnicity, among others, forming a complex web of oppressions, issues dear to feminism from the mid-1980s onwards, particularly black feminism, which corresponds to what is now considered the third feminist wave. The analyses of their thinkers were fundamental to the development of intersectionality theories, which criticised the dominant feminist analyses of the second wave for mainly reflecting the concerns of white, middle-class women. In this context, it is important to highlight the thinkers Angela Davis, bell hooks, Chandra Mohanty, Cheryl Clarke, Chimamanda Adichie, Gayatri Spivak, Gloria Anzaldua, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Lélia Gonzalez, Ochy Curiel, Patricia Collins, Sueli Carneiro and Yuderkis Minoso, among many others.

The term intersectionality, mentioned earlier, advocates that the different systems of power, when interconnected, have a profound impact on minorities who are marginalised in society, such as women, transgender women, black women and others. According to these black feminists, it was necessary to take

into account the multiple disadvantages that shape the experiences of non-white women beyond those of gender, such as class and ethnicity, among others. Furthermore, black feminism rejected the idea that all women experience the same type of domination, arguing that, in this respect, each woman had a unique personal biography and that identities are multiple and changeable. Postmodernity brought ambiguity, relativity, fragmentation, specificity and discontinuity to the binary and stable paradigms of modernity.

During the workshops, an intersectional perspective was valued, and it is important to note that many of the women were immigrants and from disadvantaged economic classes, which is why a process of dialogue and relational interaction between the participants was valued. This desire to create in a collective context opposes the growing individualism promoted by neoliberalism.

Images

<<**Lab 001/HerStories**>>

<http://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/lab001.html>

JÁ ESTIVE
NÁ GUERRA.
SOBRESSALTO a
cada BATIMENTO
CARDIACO,
inexistente a
qualquer momento.

JÁ ESTIVE
NÁ GUERRA SOBRESSALTO
a cada BATIMENTO CARDIACO,
inexistente a qualquer momento.
GUERRA com ARMAS, sempre de mão
dada com TERRORISMO em CASA,
Igualmente LETAL. Sem saber quando irá
acabar o TORMENTO do MEDO, se
acordamos e somos AGREDIDAS com ARMAS,
BOMBAS ou simplesmente com PALAVRAS
DOLOROSAS e FORÇA FÍSICA. PROFANAÇÃO do
CORPO e MENTE. EXPECTATIVA de um dia
melhor que por vezes nunca chega. É NEGADO o
DIREITO de termos uma CASA, DESTRUÍDA
por GRITOS, DESESPERO, SOFRIMENTO,
VIOLENCIA. TERRORISMO em todas as suas
formas possíveis e existentes. É NEGADO o
DIREITO de CRIANÇAS serem SIMPLES
CRIANÇAS, deslocando-se para um NOVO
MUNDO, enganando a MORTE e os MAUS
TRATOS. TRISTEZA PROFUNDA por PERDA
DE IDENTIDADE, seres vivos SEM NOME. O
HOMEM tem o DIREITO ao PODER TOTAL sobre
as MULHERES. MULHERES essas que só têm o
DIREITO ÚNICO ao OXIGÊNIO até lhe ser retirado.
Mas tudo um dia acaba! Através da CORAGEM formam-se
SOBREVIVENTES, ORGULHOSAMENTE SOU UMA
DELAS! RECONSTRUÇÃO de uma vida é o caminho a
seguir. Com FORÇA e DETERMINAÇÃO todas VOCÊS
SERÃO EU! SER MULHER / 8 DE MARÇO 2022

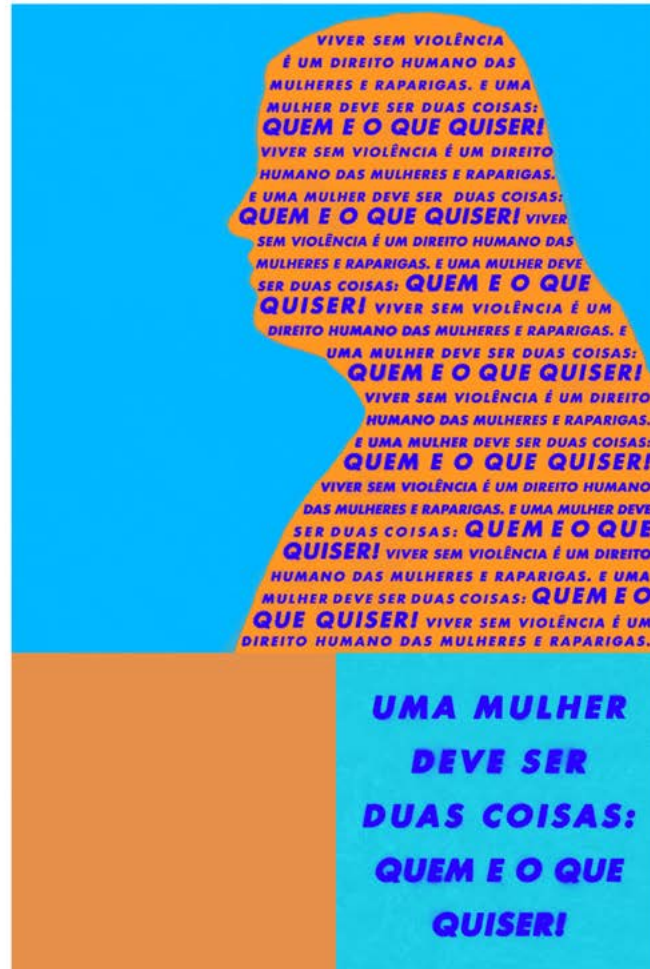
DOR!
MEDO! PRISÃO! **PAVOR!**
TERROR! INSEGURANÇA!
SUSTO! MEDO DE PERDER A VIDA!
MEDO DE SER TOCADA! **DOR!** **MEDO!** **PRISÃO!**
PAVOR! **TERROR!** INSEGURANÇA!
SUSTO! MEDO DE PERDER A VIDA!
MEDO DE SER TOCADA!
DOR! MEDO! PRISÃO! **PAVOR!** **TERROR!**
INSEGURANÇA! **SUSTO!**
MEDO DE PERDER A VIDA! MEDO DE SER
TOCADA! DOR! MEDO! PRISÃO!
PAVOR! **TERROR!**
INSEGURANÇA! **SUSTO!** MEDO DE PERDER
A VIDA! MEDO DE SER TOCADA!
DOR! **MEDO!** **PRISÃO!**
PAVOR! INSEGURANÇA!
SUSTO! MEDO DE PERDER A VIDA!
MEDO DE SER TOCADA!
DOR! MEDO! PRISÃO! **PAVOR!**
TERROR! INSEGURANÇA! **SUSTO!**
MEDO DE PERDER A VIDA!
MEDO DE SER TOCADA! DOR! MEDO!
PRISÃO! **PAVOR!** **TERROR!**

**MEDO DE
PERDER A
VIDA! MEDO
DE SER
TOCADA!**

**SER FELIZ É SER
AMADA
RESPEITADA
ELOGIADA**

**VIVER SEM
VIOLÊNCIA É
UM DIREITO
HUMANO
DAS
MULHERES E
RAPARIGAS**

A black and white photograph of a group of people, mostly men, standing in a line. They are wearing dark clothing, and some are wearing hats. The background is a wall with a repeating pattern of the word 'MARCO' in a stylized font.



DESESPERO

MEDO

RAIVA

ANGÚSTIA

DESESPERO MEDO RAIVA

VONTADE DE MORRER DOR NUMA

PRISÃO ANGÚSTIA DESESPERO

MEDO RAIVA VONTADE DE

MORRER DOR NUMA PRISÃO

ANGÚSTIA DESESPERO MEDO

RAIVA VONTADE DE

MORRER DOR NUMA PRISÃO

ANGÚSTIA DESESPERO

MEDO RAIVA VONTADE DE MORRER

DOR NUMA PRISÃO ANGÚSTIA

DESESPERO MEDO RAIVA

VONTADE DE MORRER DOR

NUMA PRISÃO ANGÚSTIA

DESESPERO MEDO RAIVA

VONTADE DE MORRER

DOR NUMA PRISÃO

ANGÚSTIA DESESPERO

MEDO RAIVA VONTADE DE

MORRER DOR NUMA PRISÃO

ANGÚSTIA DESESPERO MEDO RAIVA

VONTADE DE MORRER DOR NUMA

PRISÃO ANGÚSTIA DESESPERO MEDO RAIVA

VONTADE DE MORRER DOR

NUMA PRISÃO

ANGÚSTIA DESESPERO MEDO

RAIVA VONTADE DE MORRER

DOR NUMA PRISÃO

ANGÚSTIA DESESPERO MEDO



É TEMPO DE PARTILHAR AS TAREFAS DOMÉSTICAS E OS CUIDADOS

É TEMPO DE COMBATER TODAS AS FORMAS DE VIOLÊNCIA CONTRA AS MULHERES E RAPARIGAS, É TEMPO DE PARTILHAR AS TAREFAS DOMÉSTICAS E OS CUIDADOS, É TEMPO DE DIMINUIR AS DESIGUALDADES ENTRE MULHERES E HOMENS, É TEMPO DE GARANTIR EFETIVAS OPORTUNIDADES ÀS MULHERES E DE COMBATER AS DESIGUALDADES QUE AS AFETAM DESPROPORCIONALMENTE. É TEMPO DE COMBATER TODAS AS FORMAS DE VIOLÊNCIA CONTRA AS MULHERES E RAPARIGAS, É TEMPO DE PARTILHAR AS TAREFAS DOMÉSTICAS E OS CUIDADOS, É TEMPO DE DIMINUIR AS DESIGUALDADES ENTRE MULHERES E HOMENS, É TEMPO DE GARANTIR EFETIVAS OPORTUNIDADES ÀS MULHERES E DE COMBATER AS DESIGUALDADES QUE AS AFETAM DESPROPORCIONALMENTE. É TEMPO DE COMBATER TODAS AS FORMAS DE VIOLÊNCIA CONTRA AS MULHERES E RAPARIGAS, É TEMPO DE PARTILHAR AS TAREFAS DOMÉSTICAS E OS CUIDADOS, É TEMPO DE DIMINUIR AS DESIGUALDADES ENTRE MULHERES E HOMENS, É TEMPO DE GARANTIR EFETIVAS OPORTUNIDADES ÀS MULHERES E DE COMBATER AS DESIGUALDADES QUE AS AFETAM DESPROPORCIONALMENTE.

Sempre a ter de servir,
de estar disponível, de aceitar, de
estar calada, sossegada, não ter ideias,
não pensar e quietinha e sossegada. Não,
não, nada do que penso ou digo pode estar
bem, nem está, sempre os gajos a opinar, sabem
tudo, sacrasantos da porra. E as porradas, as
críticas. Não, não se fala na guerra da Ucrânia, mas
depois ahhh, afinal temos de consensualizar... Ainda?
Ainda? E não se justifica a dia da mulher? Não me
lixem.... A opressão machista, destes homens cheios de si
mesmos, que se alimentam a si mesmos, que comem
juntos na mesma malga, não importa qual seja a
malga, a poder é masculino. Posso falar e dizer em
qualquer sítio, mas desde que eles não
estejam. E sempre a ter de servir, cuidar, as
responsabilidades parentais, ah... pois,
só do mulher, só a mãe é que pore, só
a mãe se pede tudo... Estão deprimidos,
então mãe? Não estão bem de saúde, então
mãe? Não têm bons resultados, então mãe? E
arrumar a casa, então mulher? E eles, quando
querem, como querem, e tão eternamente cansados.
Eu gostava de não gostar de ir aos supermercados,
nem de fazer tanta coisa. Parece que não existo. É tudo
em função do que se faz em serviço. Abdicar. Abdicar. E
todos os dedos apontados, das outras mulheres, dos homens
TODOS, TODOS, se é família porque são da família, se não
é porque somos um alvo a abater. Não, ninguém nos quer,
ninguém nos quer. Somos menos do que as cotas, somos
instrumentos, em lado a lado. Sem voz, sem voz. E há
igualdade? Qual quê? E as taques, e as bocas e as
insinuações... Era gritar e queimar isto tudo. Não há angústia, há
todos os dias dia, a toda a hora, a chegar a casa, a chegar ao
trabalho, a chegar a uma reunião política, são há vidas, SÓ DEVERES.

**Sempre a ter de
servir, de estar
disponível, de
aceitar, de estar
calada, sossegada,
não ter ideias, não
pensar e quietinha e
sossegada.**

**A MAIORIA DAS
VÍTIMAS DE
VIOLÊNCIA
DOMÉSTICA E
SEXUAL SÃO
MULHERES E
RAPARIGAS**

A MAIORIA
DAS VÍTIMAS DE VIOLÊNCIA
DOMÉSTICA E SEXUAL SÃO MULHERES E
RAPARIGAS, PORQUE AS MULHERES GANHAM EM MÉDIA
MENOS 17% DO QUE OS HOMENS, ESTÃO MENOS REPRESENTADAS
NOS ÓRGÃOS DO PODER, TÊM MENOS OPORTUNIDADES DE
PROGRESSÃO NA CARREIRA E AINDA SÃO ELAS QUE ASSEGURAM A
MAIOR PARTE DOS CUIDADOS COM AS CRIANÇAS, JOVENS, PESSOAS
MAIS VELHAS OU COM DEFICIÊNCIA. A MAIORIA DAS VÍTIMAS DE
VIOLÊNCIA DOMÉSTICA E SEXUAL SÃO MULHERES E RAPARIGAS, PORQUE
AS MULHERES GANHAM EM MÉDIA MENOS 17% DO QUE OS HOMENS,
ESTÃO MENOS REPRESENTADAS NOS ÓRGÃOS DO PODER, TÊM MENOS
OPORTUNIDADES DE PROGRESSÃO NA CARREIRA E AINDA SÃO ELAS
QUE ASSEGURAM A MAIOR PARTE DOS CUIDADOS COM AS
CRIANÇAS, JOVENS, PESSOAS MAIS VELHAS OU COM
DEFICIÊNCIA. A MAIORIA DAS VÍTIMAS DE VIOLÊNCIA
DOMÉSTICA E SEXUAL SÃO MULHERES E RAPARIGAS, PORQUE
AS MULHERES GANHAM EM MÉDIA MENOS 17% DO QUE OS
HOMENS, ESTÃO MENOS REPRESENTADAS NOS ÓRGÃOS DO
PODER, TÊM MENOS OPORTUNIDADES DE PROGRESSÃO NA
CARREIRA E AINDA SÃO ELAS QUE ASSEGURAM A MAIOR PARTE DOS
CUIDADOS COM AS CRIANÇAS, JOVENS, PESSOAS MAIS VELHAS OU COM
DEFICIÊNCIA. A MAIORIA DAS VÍTIMAS DE VIOLÊNCIA DOMÉSTICA E
SEXUAL SÃO MULHERES E RAPARIGAS, PORQUE AS MULHERES GANHAM EM MÉDIA
MENOS 17% DO QUE OS HOMENS, ESTÃO MENOS REPRESENTADAS
NOS ÓRGÃOS DO PODER, TÊM MENOS OPORTUNIDADES DE PROGRESSÃO NA
CARREIRA E AINDA SÃO ELAS QUE ASSEGURAM A MAIOR PARTE DOS
CUIDADOS COM AS CRIANÇAS, JOVENS, PESSOAS MAIS VELHAS OU COM
DEFICIÊNCIA. A MAIORIA DAS VÍTIMAS DE VIOLÊNCIA DOMÉSTICA E SEXUAL
SÃO MULHERES E RAPARIGAS, PORQUE AS MULHERES GANHAM EM MÉDIA
NA CARREIRA E AINDA SÃO ELAS QUE ASSEGURAM A MAIOR PARTE DOS CUIDADOS

Excerpts of participants' texts at <<Lab 001 / HerStories>>.

p. 70 –I've been to WAR. Sobbing with every heartbeat, non-existent at any time. WAR with weapons, always hand in hand with terrorism at home, equally LETHAL. Not knowing when the TORMENT of FEAR will end, if we wake up and are attacked with guns, bombs or simply with painful words and physical force. Desecration of body and mind. The expectation of a better day that sometimes never comes. The right to have a home is denied, destroyed by screams, despair, suffering and violence. Terrorism in all its possible and existing forms. Children are denied the right to be simple children, travelling to a new world, cheating death and abuse. Deep sadness at the loss of identity, living beings without a name. MEN have the right to total power over women. Women who have the sole right to oxygen until it is taken away. But everything comes to an end one day! Through courage, survivors are formed, and I'm proud to be one of them! rebuilding a life is the way forward. With strength and determination, all of you will be ME! BEING A WOMAN / 8TH MARCH 2022

FEAR OF LOSING MY LIFE! FEAR OF BEING TOUCHED! PAIN! FEAR! imprisonment! dread! terror! insecurity! FEAR!

p. 71 – TO BE HAPPY IS TO BE LOVED RESPECTED PRAISED. living without violence is a human right for women and girls.

being a woman on women's day it is still important to celebrate this date, because the equality enshrined in law between women and men has not yet been achieved. Because the majority of victims of domestic and sexual violence are women and girls, because women earn on average 17 per cent less than men, are less represented in bodies of power, have fewer opportunities for career progression and are still the ones who provide most of the care for children, young people, older people or people with disabilities. It's time to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, it's time to share household chores and care, it's time to reduce inequalities between women and men, it's time to guarantee effective opportunities for women and to combat the inequalities that disproportionately affect them. that's why, and lest we forget, it's women's day! living without violence is a human right for women and girls. and a woman should be two things: whoever and whatever she wants to be! #associaçãosermulher #ETAV #RAP-being a child, BEING YOUNG

p. 72 – living without violence is a human right for women and girls. and a woman must be two things: whoever and whatever she wants! living without violence is a human right for women and girls. and a woman must be two things: whoever and whatever she wants!

p. 73 – Anguish Despair Fear Anger Willingness to die Pain in a prison

p. 74 TIME HAS THE POWER TO DECIDE everything, be it the TIME TO FORGIVE, the TIME TO CHANGE, the TIME TO LISTEN to those who have never wanted to hear a single word from us, or even to HELP those who have never extended a hand in our aid. Time to GROW!!! And when our time comes, we'll realise that it's TIME TO LIVE THE PRESENT, TO FIGHT THE PAST in order to create a victorious FUTURE with TIME FOR US!

Always CONSCIOUS that nothing is DESTROYED, everything is TRANSFORMED!!!

Our MIND works like a simple mug! If it's too full, we can't put anything else in it or change its contents. To do this, we have to throw out what is too much and is neither HEALTHY nor PRODUCTIVE for us. Removing the BAD MEMORIES from our minds is the first step. Accepting CHANGE can be the second, to reach the third... our HAPPINESS! Always CONSCIOUS that nothing is DESTROYED, everything is TRANSFORMED!!! we can't put anything else inside, or alter its contents. To do this, we have to throw out what is too much and is neither HEALTHY nor PRODUCTIVE for us. Removing the BAD MEMORIES from our minds is the first step. Accepting CHANGE can be the second, to reach the third... our HAPPINESS! Always CONSCIOUS that nothing is DESTROYED, everything is TRANSFORMED!!! p. 75 – it's time to share household chores and care. It's time to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, it's time to share domestic tasks and care, it's time to reduce inequalities between women and men, it's time to guarantee effective opportunities for women and to combat inequalities that disproportionately affect them.

p. 76 – Always having to serve, to be available, to accept, to be quiet, to have no ideas, to not think and to be still and quiet. No, no, nothing I think or say can be right, nor is it, always the guys giving their opinions, they know everything, sacrosanct as fuck. And the beatings, the criticisms. No, we don't talk about the war in Ukraine, but then ahhh, we have to reach a consensus after all... Still? Still? And isn't women's day justified? Don't fuck with me.... Male chauvinist oppression, these men who are full of themselves, who feed themselves, who eat together in the same bag, no matter what the bag is, the power is male. I can speak and say anywhere, but as long as they're not there. And always having to serve, take care of, parental responsibilities, ah... well, only the woman, only the mother stops, only the mother is asked for everything...

So you're depressed, Mum? Not in good health, mum? Not doing well, Mum? What about tidying the house, woman? And they, when they want, how they want, and so eternally tired. I wish I didn't like going to supermarkets or doing so much. I don't seem to exist. It's all about what you do on the job. Abdicate. Abdicate. And all the finger-pointing, from other women, from men ALL, ALL, if it's family because they're family, if it's not because we're a target to be shot at. No, nobody wants us, nobody wants us. We are less than quotas, we are instruments, everywhere. Voiceless, voiceless. And there's equality? What the hell! And the touches, and the mouths and the insinuations... I'd scream and burn it all down. There's no anguish, there's all this every day, all the time, coming home, coming to work, coming to a political meeting, there are no lives, ONLY DUTIES

The majority of victims of domestic and sexual violence are women and girls, because women earn an average of 17 per cent less than men, are less represented in bodies of power, have fewer opportunities for career progression and are still the ones who provide most of the care for children, young people, older people or people with disabilities.

p. 77 – Women should like themselves as women. Women should love themselves. Self-love. To be happy, to be loved.

2.3. Lab 002 / From cross-stitch to pixel.

WOMAN IS NOT AN OBJECT TO BE USED.

OR A CARPET TO BE WALKED ON.

WOMAN WAS BORN TO BE LOVED AND RESPECTED.

IN LOVE ONLY THE HEART BEATS.

YOUR BODY IS NOT A BOXING RING.

(Digitálias, 2020).

During this laboratory, the theme of gender inequality was worked on by writing aphorisms and slogans about violence against women, with the aim of establishing a relationship between cross-stitch, a popular form of embroidery that has always been associated with the feminine, and the pixel.

It's worth noting that throughout all the workshops we've endeavoured to create spaces for experimentation and self-knowledge, encouraging the exercise and development of the participants' artistic and expressive skills. In this session, we were inspired by the artists Susan Kare and Barbara Kruger. Regarding the bitmapped aesthetic, which results from digital images formed by a rectangular grid of pixels, as Susan Kare, the pioneering designer of pixel art who created many of the icons for the Apple Macintosh computer interface between 1983 and 1986, says: «Bitmap graphics are like mosaics and cross-stitch and other pseudo-digital art forms» (Kare apud Pang, 2001), and similarly, Kare says «I used to say that if you like cross-stitch, you'll love bitmap design! Because they're actually analogous» (Kare apud Campbell, 2018). The artist Barbara Kruger served as an example in this workshop, in particular for the creation of simple and effective phrases in her message against gender violence.

Participants were also presented with phrases promoting and empowering women, sometimes with a sense of humour, such as: »Women need a man like a fish needs a bicycle« (Rohr, 2019, p. 20).

Each of the participants wrote sentences of empowerment, self-reflection and criticism of gender violence, and then read their sentences aloud. At the end of the reading, a collective debate took place about the meaning of the phrases and their empowering power.

This process was felt by the participants to be enjoyable and opened up a space for a rich dialogue in which voices were heard in a mutual and fruitful way. The importance of sharing experiences when working with victims of domestic violence is emphasised by the authors Margarida Martins, Petra Viegas and Rita Mimoso, from the Association of Women Against Violence (ASMCV):

When working with survivors of domestic violence, it is important to deal with the many social issues surrounding the violence, rather than focusing solely on the victim's personal difficulties. Group work helps develop this social approach. It is a safe space that enables bonds to be forged that will allow women to talk about what is often felt to be an inexpressible experience: an experience that was previously lived as personal, when shared, takes on a public and political form. In the long term, domestic violence destroys self-esteem, social skills and family intimacy, damages children's growth, reduces parenting skills and creates intense feelings of shame, guilt, isolation and loneliness. In contrast to violence, support groups reduce isolation and allow social bonds to be established. Sharing life stories helps to combat feelings of shame and guilt; women can find help there and learn strategies, for example, while at the same time learning how to deal with their traumatised children, thus reducing their feelings of inadequacy (Martins, Viegas & Mimoso, 2008, p. 13).

Attitudes, assumptions and prejudices towards women have been programmed into us through our culture, language and history for millennia, and cultural stereotypes are very powerful in the way they are inscribed in all our actions and thoughts.

It is particularly significant for us in the laboratories to give women a voice, since they are often not heard in the political forum and public spaces of our culture.

With regard to the silencing of women, the classicist historian Mary Beard states that:

I wanted to work out how I would explain to her [her mother] – as much as to myself, as well as to the millions of other women who still share some of the same frustrations – just how deeply embedded in Western culture are the mechanisms that silence women, that refuse to take them seriously, and that sever them (sometimes quite literally, as we shall see) from the centres of power. This is one place where the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans can help to throw light on our own. When it comes to silencing women, Western culture has had thousands of years of practice (Beard, 2020, p. 13).

There is also a historical mistrust of women victims that spans time and culture, which has meant that, despite countless public debates and government actions to combat domestic violence and abusive relationships in the context of intimacy, and some advances in the law, women are still victims of heavy aggression, both in the social sphere and in the legal field. This reproduction and naturalisation of aggression against women who suffer gender-based violence means that they are often classified as crazy, pretending, out of control, emotional, ugly, old, unloved and idiotic in many social forums, which contributes to accentuating their low self-esteem.

What's more, they are often encouraged to keep quiet and forget about the violence they have suffered, which is a mechanism of abuse that results from the fact that women are the scapegoats in many cultures. This systematic devaluation, which is naturalised and internalised by people in a deep and unconscious way, is regularly repeated in and between the lines of social discourse, often in a veiled and sophisticated way that is constantly renewed and reconfigured. This phenomenon happens in particular in the media and in the justice system, where the behaviour of the victim woman is often criticised, for example when she is asked why she didn't run away and report her attacker immediately, and where the body marks that prove her resistance to the attacker are located.

The idea that it is the woman's fault and that she made a mistake and provoked the aggressor, being crazy, dull and jealous, and for this reason deserved to be attacked, is in the unconscious matrix of many women who suffer abusive relationships, and is a melody that they repeat to themselves endlessly. Reflection on the masculinity that led to the violence is still little debated and questioned in society, and there are few

incentives for men to change their behaviour and advocate a change in the dominant masculinity paradigm. This attitude is mainly due to the fact that the spheres of power are still very masculinised, dominated by men.

During this workshop, we tried to reflect together on these places of oppression and submission. Each of the participants wrote the empowerment phrases on the computer, using the «Home Sweet Home» typeface, which reproduces the cross-stitch, and a colour of their choice for each phrase. Their words were then presented in large typographic letters, in digital compositions with edited images as a background, from photographs of quadrilê fabric, a type of cotton fabric with a checkered weave used for cross-stitch embroidery, and photographs of talagaça, a thick fabric with spaced threads used for embroidery.

Regarding the evaluation of the work by the participants themselves, during the workshops they often questioned the quality of the work and had a very negative sense of their own creative possibilities. We came across a lack of confidence and self-esteem on the part of these women, who often belong to disadvantaged working classes, and an empathetic conversation was needed to get them to continue taking part. For this reason, a conversation was always held beforehand to encourage them to have the confidence to experiment with different techniques, both digital and analogue, and to express themselves through visual language, and thus take on the role of research artists. However, special care was always taken not to put pressure on those who felt unable to take part in the activities.

A variety of visual arts and multimedia techniques were used in the labs, and although the participants' fluency and mastery of visual language during the initial phases of each lab was more timid, they soon improved as the sessions progressed. Providing the participants with space and freedom was very important, particularly for some of the women who only really began to get involved when they felt they could express themselves freely and that the aim was not to create perfect objects according to any predefined, universal aesthetic moulds.

In the context of co-creative artistic practices with people from the community who are not professionalised in the arts, in order to promote social change, we often come across questions about the validity of the objects resulting from artistic processes. This is due to the fact that even today it is often argued in the art world, which is very averse to recognising community practices as artistic, that if works of art are produced for social reasons, and result from a collaboration between artists and non-professional audiences in the arts, then they cannot have the status of art. Aesthetic judgements have always involved

elitist criteria and, for this reason, many artists consider that participatory practice cannot be adopted in the production of art. What's more, the Western art world is highly hierarchical and few artists manage to rise to a stable, well-paid economic position.

The 1790 *Critique of the Faculty of Judgement*, a work that Immanuel Kant divided into two parts, the «Critique of Aesthetic Judgement» and the «Critique of Teleological Judgement», was fundamental for European aesthetics and its influence is still easily discernible in today's criticism and art history, albeit in a diluted and popularised way. The opposition between form and matter is evident throughout that work and Kant distinguishes between sensory and contemplative pleasures. The pleasure experienced in beauty itself, despite being immediate, involves a reflection on the object that distances it from purely sensory pleasures such as drinking or eating. Aesthetic pleasure is more refined than physical forms of pleasure, in that it involves the higher faculty of contemplation. Kantian Enlightenment aesthetics advocates that works of art are autonomous and should be understood and appreciated by means of a disinterested aesthetic judgement, which presupposes a generic and ideal spectator with no interest in the existence of the object or in possessing it, passively allowing their sensations to be inscribed by the disinterested aesthetic experience (Furtado, 2014).

This model of conceiving art was similarly adopted in the 1960s by influential modernist critics such as Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, who argued that the aesthetic attributes intrinsic to art objects could only be perceived by the sensibilities and keen eyes of art connoisseurs such as collectors, critics and curators. Readings associated with the social dynamics of social class and gender, among other variables, were to be rejected. They were the ones chosen to determine all universal aesthetic principles and the meaning of works of art. This paradigm establishes a single, authoritative interpretive perspective that hierarchises and polarises the fine arts in relation to community arts, crafts and popular culture. The art object incorporates a transcendental and elevated meaning, with the artist's intentions gaining theological and transcendental significance (Furtado, 2014).

Simone de Beauvoir's critique in her 1949 book *The Second Sex*, when she distinguishes between the concepts of transcendence and immanence, is along these lines. The author uses «immanence» to describe the historical domain attributed to women: a closed realm where women are interior, passive, static and immersed in themselves. The realm of «transcendence», on the other hand, designates the opposite male lot: active, creative, productive, powerful, extending into the external universe. Beauvoir argued that gender

is an attribute of identity originated by the need for subjects to guarantee their subjectivity through the imposition of self-defined roles to which other subjects must conform. A subject becomes a «man» by having access to the privilege of being able to determine their subjectivity and roles – elevating themselves to transcendence – or they become a «woman» by renouncing their subjectivity and submitting to certain roles – thus reducing themselves to immanence, permanence or immutability («the eternal feminine»). Men lose their embodiment and gain transcendence and subjectivity, while women lose their subjectivity and are confined to immanence and an amplified body, thus being overcorporalised (Furtado, 2014).

In the same way, beauty and good taste become a form of cultural capital that the institution of education is responsible for teaching and, for this reason, disadvantaged classes who don't have access to the education system and its codes are excluded from aesthetic enjoyment. Throughout this project, it is considered that the canons of the art world are not universal, but shaped by social and historical processes, and that aesthetic enjoyment is knowledge that adds a lot of meaning to our lives and should not be exclusive to a privileged few.

It is argued that there is an aesthetic experience and wisdom that results from the personal and community experiences lived in the laboratories, which can contribute to happiness and well-being in the lives of the participants. We therefore argue that in contexts of social, emotional and physical vulnerability, as is often the case in co-creative practices with marginalised groups, the aesthetic experience is above all dialogical, resulting from the interaction and connection between all the participants.

Images

<<**Lab 002/From cross-stitch to pixel**>>

<http://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/lab002.html>

A MULHER PRECISA
DE UM HOMEM COMO
UMA PESSOA
PRECISA DE FOME

NO AMOR
SÓ O CORAÇÃO
É QUE BATE

CADA VEZ MAIS, MULHERES
INDEPENDENTES E LIVRES.

A IGUALDADE DAS MULHERES É NÃO
SEREM DISCRIMINADAS, A SOCIEDADE
DEVE MUDAR.

A MULHER TEM QUE SER FORTE,
LEVANTAR-SE E SEGUIR EM FRENTE.

DEUS NO CÉU E AS
MULHERES NA TERRA

NÃO SEI DE QUE RELIGIÃO TU ÉS MAS
NA MINHA DEUS ESTÁ NO CÉU

O TEU CORPO NÃO É UM RINGUE DE
BOXE

QUEM AMA
NÃO MALTRATA

A MULHER PRECISA DE UM HOMEM
COMO UM GATO PRECISA DE UMA
PISCINA

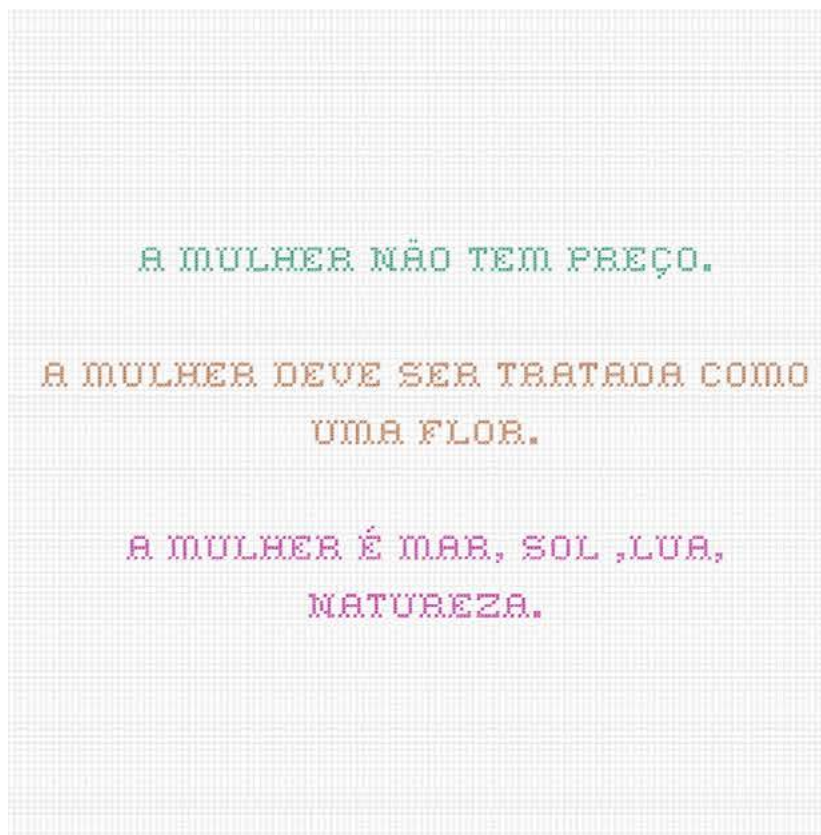
UMA MULHER PRECISA DE UM HOMEM
COMO UMA PESSOA PRECISA DE FOME

DE MIM TERÁS O QUE TU ME DÁS

O AMOR NASCE DOS PEQUENOS
DETALHES E MORRE PELA FALTA DELES

MULHER NAO É OBJETO PARA SER
USADA E NEM TAPETE PARA SER
PISADA. MULHER NASCEU PARA SER
AMADA E RESPEITADA

A MULHER PRECISA
DE UM HOMEM COMO
UM GATO PRECISA
DE UMA PISCINA



BATER, BATE O RELÓGIO HORAS E NÃO
SÃO TODAS CERTAS.

MULHERES UNIDAS, JAMAIS SERÃO
VENCIDAS.

O HOMEM QUE DIZ
QUE O LUGAR DA MULHER
É NA COZINHA,
É PORQUE NÃO SABE
O QUE FAZER
COM ELA NA CAMA

UMA MULHER
PRECISA DE UM HOMEM
COMO DE UMA
DOR DE DENTES

À FRENTE DE UM
HOMEM ESTÁ UMA
GRANDE MULHER

À FRENTE DE UM HOMEM ESTÁ UMA
GRANDE MULHER

UMA MULHER PRECISA DE UM HOMEM
COMO UMA DOR DE DENTES

QUEM AMA NÃO MALTRATA

O HOMEM QUE DIZ QUE O LUGAR DA
MULHER É NA COZINHA,É PORQUE NÃO
SABE O QUE FAZER COM ELA NA CAMA.

DEUS NO CÉU E AS MULHERES NA
TERRA.

NO AMOR SÓ O CORAÇÃO É QUE BATE.

° Por de trás de um sorriso existe um insentido.

As dimensões do corpo de uma mulher é só para apreciar e não para abusar.

Um Amor correspondido sem mil desejos sorridentes.

Um dia a Sania a vida ~~acabou~~ seguir.

Mais vale gordinha localizada do que estúpida Generalizada.

~~Re~~

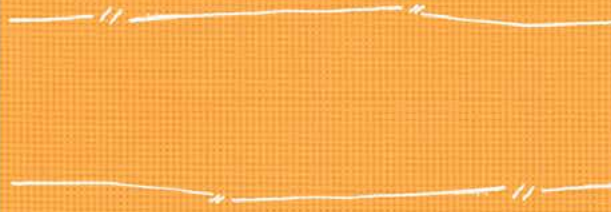
cada vez as mulheres mais
independentes e livres

Q A Igualdade das mulheres ~~com~~
é não serem discriminadas
mudança da
sociedade

A Mulher tem de ser forte
e levantar-se e seguir em frente

~~o~~

~~e~~



+ Pais, o que é ser machão?

* É ser forte e aguentar com tudo.

+ Então quando eu crescer quero ser machão como a mãe.

- O homem que diz que o lugar da mulher é na cozinha é porque não sabe o que fazer com ela na cama.

Deus no céu e as mulheres na terra.

- No amor só o coração é que vale.

→ Lute como uma mulher.

- Seja uma mulher que levanta outras mulheres.

- Eu não vim da sua costela, você que veio do meu útero.

"Uma mulher precisa de um homem, como um peixe precisa de uma bicicleta."

Seu Solteiro é ótimo. Ridículo é você viver um relacionamento
frustrado só para mostrar que é feliz sem ser.

Rir até a barriga doer, a única dor que merecemos sentir;

Ter vergonha das minhas falhas Deus conhece meu coração.

Momentos bons e ruins fazem parte da vida... A diferença
é que um passa e o outro ensina.

Um olhar pode dizer o que milhões de palavras não dizem.

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"Uma mulher precisa de um homem como um
faca precisa de uma lâmina."

— " — "

O homem que diz que o lugar da mulher é "na
cozinha" é porque não sabe o que fazer com ela na
cama.

— " — "

Mulher precisa de um homem como um gato precisa
da farsinha."

— " — "

O teu corpo não é um ringue de boxe.

— " — "

— " — "

Quem ama eu não bate.

— " — "

— " — "

O cão é o melhor amigo do homem, mas
também pode ser o protetor da mulher."

— " — "

A vida fica mais bonita, quando encontramos
alguém que nos faça bem.

De mim, terás o que tu me dás.

O amor nasce dos pequenos detalhes e morre pela
falta deles!

Mulher não é objeto para ser usada e nem
tapete para ser pisada. Mulher nasce para
ser amada e respeitada.

A mulher pode ser mãe e pai.

uma mulher precisa de um homem,
como uma galinha precisa de roer!

Mulher não são o sexo fraco, nem o homem é o mais forte.
Não se bate numa mulher, nem com uma ~~pele~~.

Preciso tanto de um homem, como preciso de um relógio
oracioso.

UMA MULHER PRECISA DE UM HOMEM
COMO O GATO PRECISA DE UMA PISCINA.

— // —

UMA MULHER PRECISA DE UM HOMEM
COMO UMA PASSARILHA PRECISA DE PASSARILHOS.

— // —

O TEM CORPO NÃO É UM RINGUE DE BOXE

— // —

PODEM AMAR NÃO AMAR

— // —

TO NÃO ES MEU TÓRAX PORQUE EU SOU UMA PASSARILHA

— // —

EU NÃO SOU TUA ESCRITORA EM CHUVA MAS ~~EU~~ ^{EU} TUA
MULHER QUE PRECISA DE AMOR, E CALABRO.

— // —



3

— // —

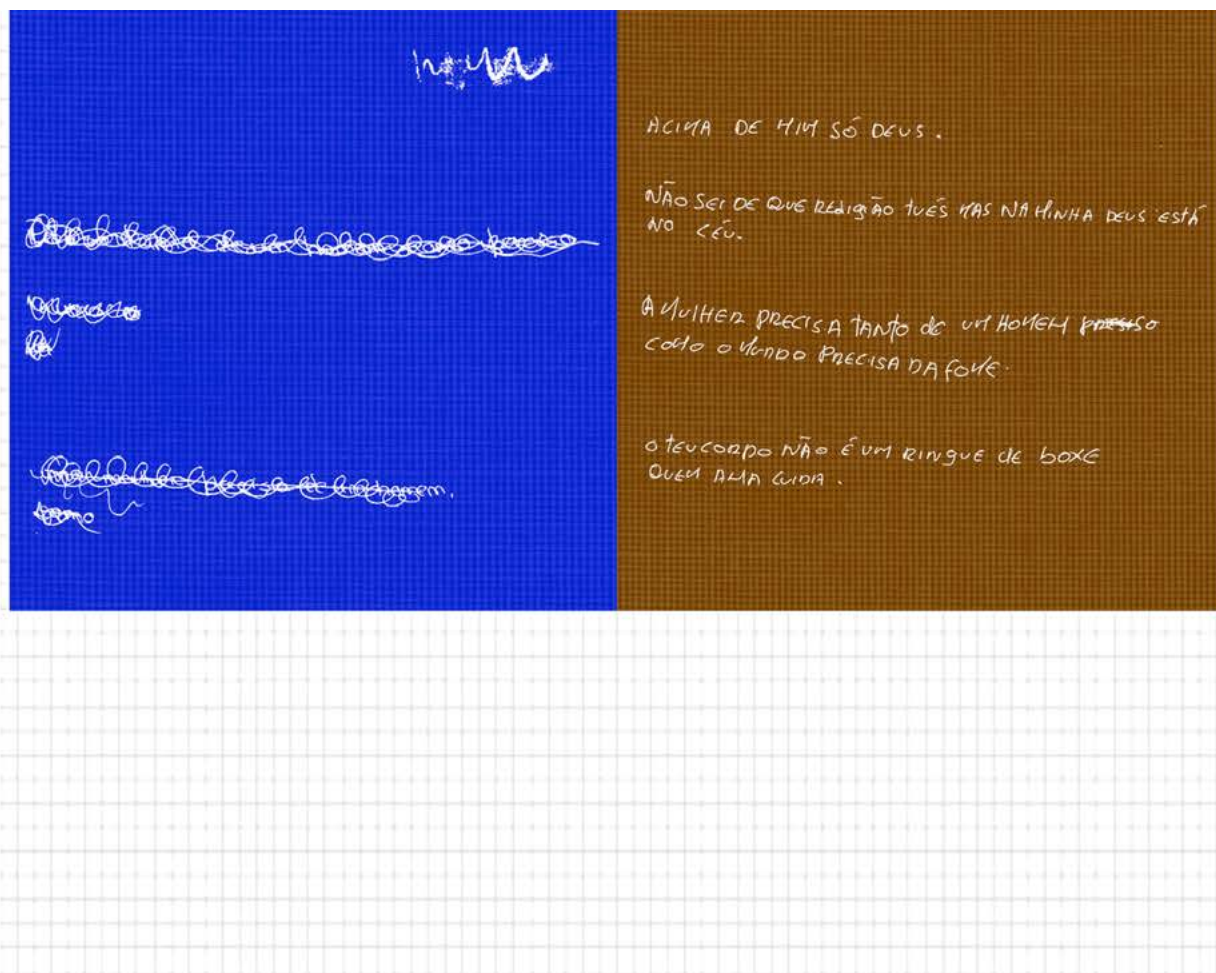


UMA MULHER PRECISA DE UM HOMEM COMO UM PEIXE
PRECISA DE UMA BICICLETA

A FRENTE DE UM HOMEM ESTÁ UMA GRANDE MULHER

UMA MULHER PRECISA DE UM HOMEM COMO UMA DOR DE DENTES

QUEM AMA NÃO MALTRATA



"Quanto mais me bebes, mais eu gosto de ti."
Bateste tanto, que o mais gostoso é estar longe de ti!

Bate, bate o relógio horas, não são todas as horas.
Homem que bate não é homem, é coraçãode.

Mulheres unidas, sempre serão vencidas!

Não preciso de um homem para estar bem, a
minha própria companhia é suficientemente boa!



Excerpts of participants' texts at <<Lab 002/From cross-stitch to pixel>>.

p. 88 – A WOMAN NEEDS A MAN LIKE A PERSON NEEDS HUNGER. IN LOVE ONLY THE HEART BEATS

p. 89 – MORE AND MORE WOMEN ARE INDEPENDENT AND FREE. WOMEN'S EQUALITY MEANS NOT BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, SOCIETY MUST CHANGE. WOMEN MUST BE STRONG, STAND UP AND MOVE FORWARD. GOD IN HEAVEN AND WOMEN ON EARTH. I DON'T KNOW WHAT RELIGION YOU ARE, BUT IN MINE GOD IS IN HEAVEN. YOUR BODY IS NOT A BOXING RING.

p. 90 – THOSE WHO LOVE DON'T MISTREAT. A WOMAN NEEDS A MAN LIKE A CAT NEEDS A SWIMMING POOL. A WOMAN NEEDS A MAN LIKE A PERSON NEEDS HUNGER.

p. 91 – YOU'LL GET FROM ME WHAT YOU GIVE ME. LOVE IS BORN OF SMALL DETAILS AND DIES FOR THE LACK OF THEM. A WOMAN IS NOT AN OBJECT TO BE USED OR A CARPET TO BE WALKED ON. A WOMAN WAS BORN TO BE LOVED AND RESPECTED.

p. 92 – A WOMAN NEEDS A MAN LIKE A CAT NEEDS A SWIMMING POOL.

p. 93 – WOMEN ARE PRICELESS. WOMEN SHOULD BE TREATED LIKE FLOWERS. WOMAN IS SEA, SUN, MOON, NATURE.

p. 94 – THE CLOCKS TICK TOCK, TICK TOCK AND THEY'RE NOT ALL RIGHT. WOMEN UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED. THE MAN WHO SAYS A WOMAN BELONGS IN THE KITCHEN IS BECAUSE HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HER IN BED. A WOMAN NEEDS A MAN LIKE A TOOTHACHE.

p. 95 – IN FRONT OF A MAN IS A GREAT WOMAN. A WOMAN NEEDS A MAN LIKE A TOOTHACHE. THOSE WHO LOVE DON'T MISTREAT. THE MAN WHO SAYS A WOMAN BELONGS IN THE KITCHEN DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HER IN BED. GOD IN HEAVEN AND WOMEN ON EARTH. IN LOVE ONLY THE HEART BEATS.

p. 96 – Behind a smile there is an incentive. The lines of a woman's body are to be appreciated, not abused. A committed love without a thousand smiling wishes. One day smiling and life moving on. Localised fat is better than generalised stupidity.

p. 97 – Women are increasingly independent and free. Women's equality means not being discriminated against in the face of changes in society. Women tend to stand up strong and move forward.

p. 98 – The man who says a woman belongs in the kitchen is because he doesn't know what to do with her in bed. God in heaven and women on earth. In love only the heart beats. Fight like a woman. Be a woman who lifts up other women. I didn't come from your rib, you came from my womb. So what does it mean to be macho? It's being strong and putting up with everything. So when I grow up I want to be macho like Mum. A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.

p. 99 – Being single is great. It's ridiculous to live in a frustrated relationship just to show that you're happy without being single. Laugh until your stomach hurts, the only pain we deserve to feel. Regardless of my faults, God knows my heart. Good and bad moments are part of life... The difference is that one marks and the other teaches. One look can say what a million words couldn't.

p. 100 – A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle. The man who says a woman belongs in the kitchen is because he doesn't know what to do with her in bed. A woman needs a man like a cat needs a swimming pool. Your body is not a boxing ring. Those who love don't beat. Dogs are a man's best friend, but they can also be a woman's protector. Life is more beautiful when we find someone who does us good. For me, you'll get what you give me. Love is born from small details and dies for lack of them! A woman is not an object to be used or a carpet to be walked on. A woman was born to be loved and respected. Women can be mothers and fathers.

p. 101 – A woman needs a man like a chicken needs to fly! Women are not the weaker sex, nor are men stronger. You can't hit a woman with a flower. I need a man as much as I need a broken watch..

p. 102 – A woman needs a man like a cat needs a swimming pool. A woman needs a man like a person needs to starve. Your body is not a boxing ring. Those who love don't hurt. You don't own me because I'm a person. I'm not your slave or servant, but your Woman who needs love and affection. A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle. In front of a man is a great woman. A woman needs a man like a toothache. Those who love don't mistreat.

p. 103 – Only God is above me. I don't know what religion you are, but in mine God is in heaven. A woman needs a man as much as the world needs hunger. Your body is not a boxing ring. Those who love take care.

p. 104 – The more you hit me, the more I like you. You beat me so much that my favourite thing is to be away from you. Beating, beating the clock and they're not all right. A man who hits isn't a man, he's a coward. Women united will never be defeated! I don't need a man to be well, my own company is good enough!

2.4. Lab 003 / Pixel art against domestic violence.

PIXELART AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

DON'T SHUT UP!

REPORT IT!

TO IGNORE = PAIN (WOMAN WITH HANDS OVER HER EYES)

TO SHUT UP = SUFFERING (WOMAN WITH HANDS OVER MOUTH)

TO SILENCE = DEATH (WOMAN WITH HANDS ON HER EARS)

TO DENOUNCE = LIFE (WOMAN JUMPING)

FIGHTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

IT'S EVERYONE'S DUTY

Text of the *Pixelart against domestic violence* video, Digital Basket [website], 2020

In this lab, women made short performances, based on the text mentioned above, in the video studio of the School of Arts, at the UÉ College of Leões, to create a video to mark 25 November, the «International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women». The script was inspired by the iconic poster by American artist Keith Haring (1958-1990), entitled *Ignorance = Fear* (USA, 1989), created in the 1980s in the context of homophobia resulting from the global crisis caused by AIDS and the inadequate responses of the American government.

The participants' performances were filmed by the students on the Master's course in Artistic Practices in Visual Arts, and later digitally processed to form part of the final video.

Since the body plays a central role in experiences of violence and performance has a high capacity to induce bodily communication, the participants were asked to realise short performances that translated the basic text of the video. The women responded to this request with gestures that revealed a deep bodily awareness of the impact that violence had had on them. This awareness, which was transmitted through their performances, allowed us to access a layer of non-verbal information from the women survivors. Each woman's individual experiences were made visible through these bodily expressions.

During this session, the women shared their personal struggles for survival, which often involved feelings of loneliness, isolation, fear and despair. Although emotions are above all individual and intimate, the realisation of the performances helped transform them into a collective and intersubjective experience. Through the performances, an atmosphere of affective solidarity was created between the women who, despite coming from very different backgrounds and circumstances, found common ground through the shared performative practices about their experiences as survivors of domestic violence.

Fear, sadness and anger make up a triad of affections considered negative by our culture, even though they are three primary reactions of any animal, especially higher primates, without which they cannot survive. However, of this triad, fear and sadness are forbidden to men, as expressed in the phrase 'A man doesn't cry'; and anger is a feeling considered manly and permitted to men. The feeling of anger is emphasised in the most diverse narratives that have structured Western thought since Classical Antiquity, such as the anger of Achilles that is at the root of the Trojan War in Homer's Iliad, which dates back to the 8th century BC. In that pre-modern era, the world was organised according to a patriarchal logic that generated divisions and two universes: the masculine subjugating the feminine in sexuality, speech and work.

From that era we inherited that on the masculine side there is power, intelligence, virility, courage and the affection of anger, and on the feminine side there is passivity, ignorance, gentleness, submission and the affections of fear, guilt and sadness. Feeling, crying and doubting are emotions that should be available to everyone and are at the heart of them, of men and women. They remind us of the fragility of life and helplessness, and for this reason they make us reflect on how manly masculinity is in crisis and is a collective myth and fantasy shared unconsciously by everyone.

Nowadays, the patriarchal model is no longer able to sustain itself and domestic violence is a pheno-

menon that can be interpreted as a reaction by men to women's weariness of this model, because they no longer want to go along with the myth of powerful, courageous and invincible masculinity that subordinates and represses them.

People belonging to minorities, i.e. a group that finds itself in a position of subalternisation within society, not in terms of their numerical representation, but rather their location in a hierarchy of power, are very often prevented from taking part in democratic cultural life on an equal footing, facing various types of barriers, such as poverty, stigma and lack of access to health and education. Culture is essential for the formation of identity, wealth creation and community. With regard to the importance of participatory art in the context of changing art paradigms, François Matarasso argues that:

New information and communication technology have brought the means of cultural production, distribution and criticism within the hands of more and more people, but it has also given immense power to a few IT and media corporations. It is debatable whether European society is more diverse today than it was a century ago, but it is unquestionable that once marginalised voices, including those of women, deaf and disabled people, ethnic minorities and LGBTI people, are better heard than they were and that they are changing and democratising ideas about art. This matters because the growth of participatory art – its normalisation – is above all the consequence of the gradual healing of the split in the Western idea of art that opened up during the Enlightenment. Although not everyone, on either side, sees it, the differences between Purists and Democrats are ceasing to matter. The question is no longer «Is it art?» but «Is it good?» (Matarasso, 2019, p. 189).

In the course of this laboratory, the participants put on body performances in which they were able to express their experiences of violence on a bodily and emotional level, through emotions such as anger, fear, anguish, shame, but also hope, joy and satisfaction, sharing these experiences with each other. Thus, it is argued that one of the added values of this artistic research project is, strictly speaking, its dimension of expression and emotional empowerment.

This collaborative research process gives all the participants the opportunity not only to broaden their critical awareness and express themselves through non-verbal forms, regardless of their linguistic

or literary skills, but also to establish genuine interrelationships with each other. Some of the participants had no previous experience of using artistic techniques, nor had they attended any art workshops. Thus, knowledge was built on experiences of the emotions, affections, senses, bodies and imagination, as well as the intellect.

We believe that this method of artistic research is inclusive, providing knowledge that may not be achieved through conventional research methods. The aim is to respond to the pressing need for artistic research practices that challenge hegemonic scientific methodologies. For this reason, we explore alternative methodologies for producing knowledge through co-creative processes with marginalised people, knowledge that draws attention to the lived experience of inequality and stigma of women who have experienced domestic violence and which we believe can be used to contribute to positive social change. It should be noted that the participatory and dialogical forms of the labs are fundamental to the methodology advocated and to research into the role of art as a tool for mobilising and raising political awareness and social cohesion, reinforcing the participants' involvement and belonging to a community.

We advocate a set of transmedia research methods that use digital, visual, multimedia, performing and humanistic arts to collect, analyse and disseminate knowledge and data, in order to make research accessible both inside and outside academia. The transdisciplinarity present in the labs involves storytelling, visual poetry, video, photography, photomontage, collage, performance, among many others, an artistic research practice that takes into account above all the creative and imaginative power of the participants.

This means that, although it is a methodology that embraces individuality, metaphor, affection and emotion, it nevertheless seeks to relate these elements to the broader social dynamics that produce them, drawing on the critical theory of feminisms and postmodernisms, which are relevant to understanding these co-creative practices whose ultimate goal is to promote social justice.

In addition, we used collaborations between academic researchers and non-academic actors, always placing the participants at the centre of knowledge creation. To this end, students from the DAVD/EA/UÉ master's programme in artistic practices in the visual arts were invited to take part, helping with the filming and video editing process. The videos were edited using an application to create 2D animations for video games in the style of pixel art, so that the participants could not be recognised. And it is undoubtedly because we believe that it is possible to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women, as well

as the discussion of LGBTI+ rights within the framework of critical and inclusive artistic practices in fine arts academies, that we have been developing, on an occasional, regular and persistent basis, for several years now, a series of actions in classrooms, integrated into the curricula, always with the aim of highlighting the role that fine arts can and should play in promoting human rights.

It is also important to mention that the behaviour of the students during the above-mentioned sessions became increasingly clear and defined, reflecting their assimilation and understanding of the content. We believe that university provides experiences that orientate students towards the present and the future, being a place where fundamental arts content is learnt, human relationships and critical thinking are promoted. The role of the academy as a centre of citizenship, culture and encounter, a place where democratic coexistence is exercised, where students' interest in more democratic and efficient management is awakened, disseminating a culture of peace and solidarity, fostering the development of citizenship attitudes and humanitarian values.

The video resulting from this laboratory was part of campaigns to mark 25 November, «International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women», carried out by Évora Town Hall, both online and offline, in exhibitions and projections in public spaces, which sought to shape the community's perception of domestic violence and everyone's responsibility to combat it.

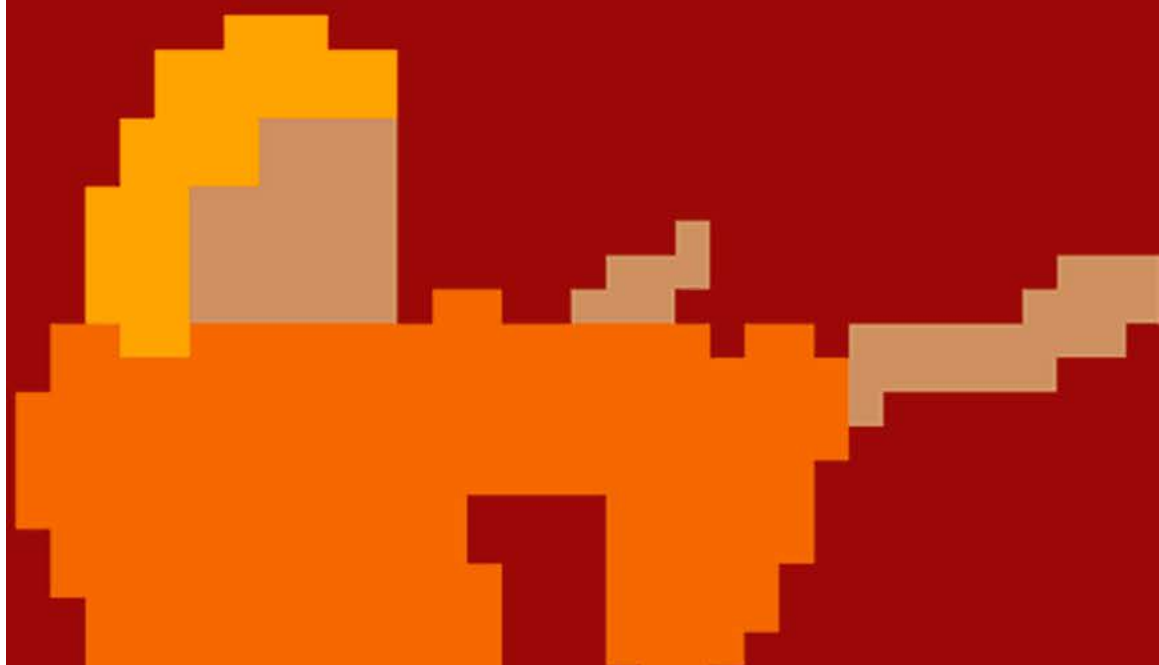
Images

<<Lab 003/ Pixel art against domestic violence>>

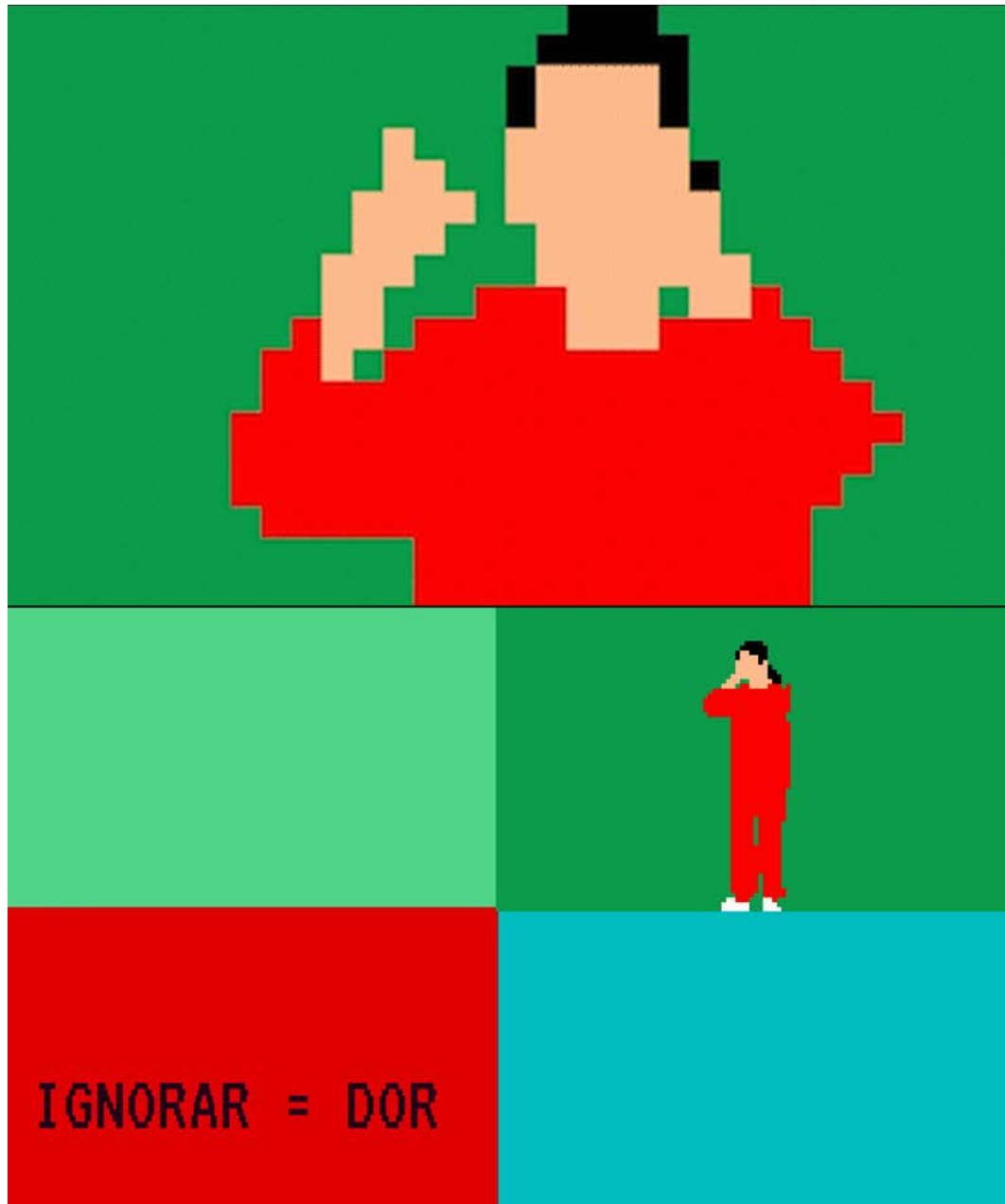
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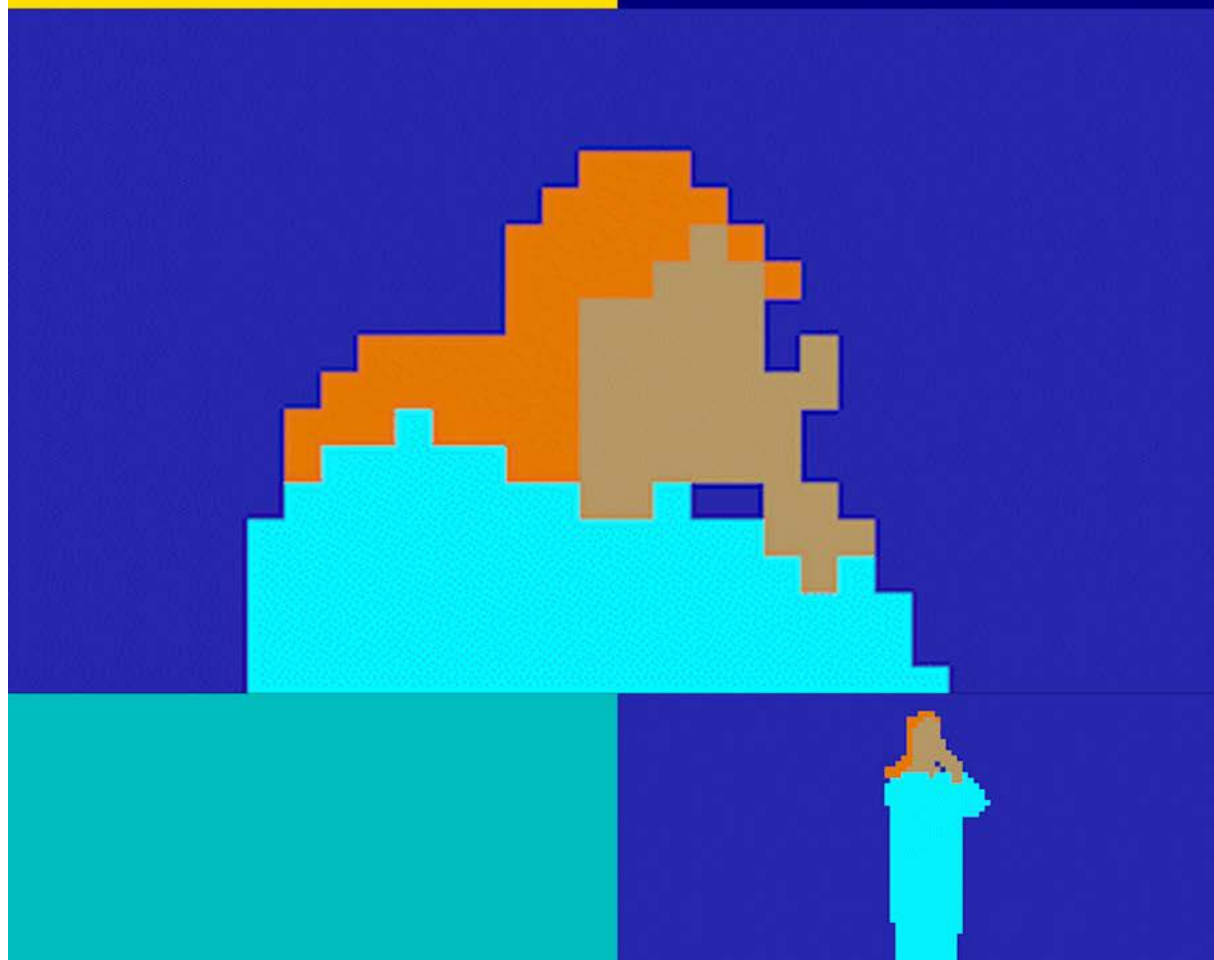
PIXELARTE CONTRA
A VIOLÊNCIA DOMÉSTICA

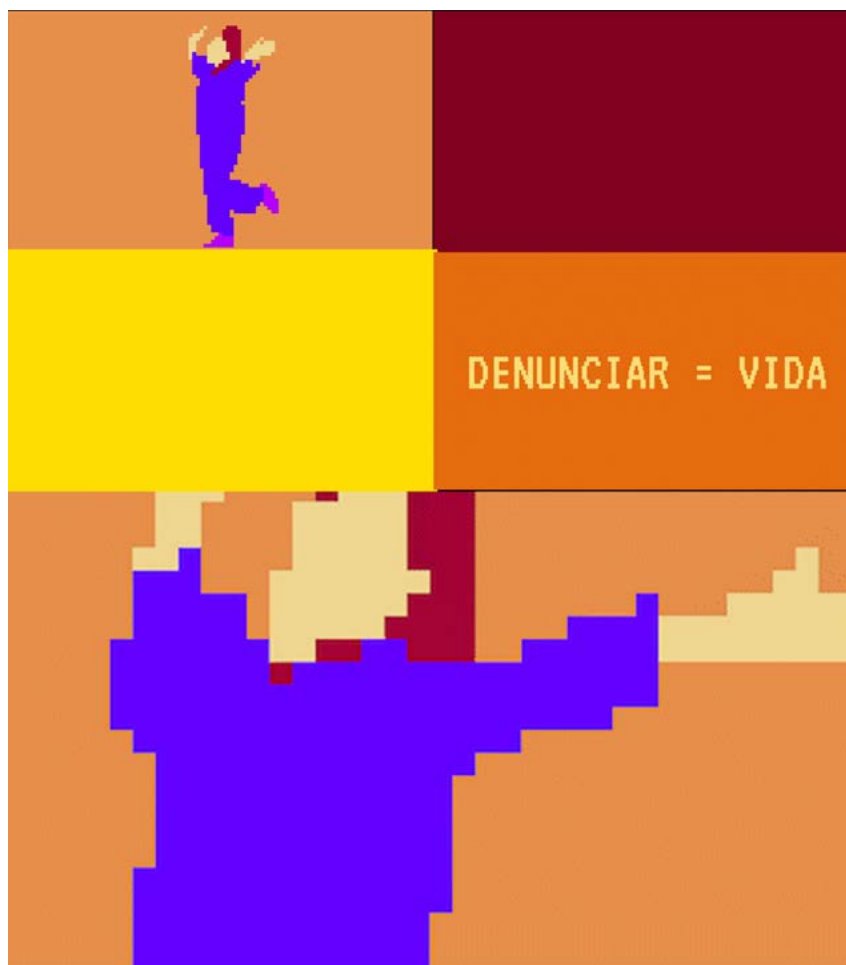






CALAR = SOFRIMENTO







SILENCIAR = MORTE





2.5. Lab 01 / Things at home belong to all of us.

This workshop was held under the motto «Things at home belong to all of us», and its premise was to encourage the community not to keep quiet about acts of violence that they may come across in their daily lives, such as when they witness domestic violence, and to report these cases to the authorities. The aim was to convey the message that looking after the wellbeing of all people is a collective obligation of the community.

According to the «Report of the Observatory of Murdered Women» (OMA) of the União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta (UMAR, 2022), the home, as well as continuing to be a place of imbalance in the sharing of domestic labour between men and women, is also the scene of many sexual crimes. Most cases of sexual offences in Portugal take place in the home, over a long period of time, the average time being more than three years. The perpetrators are often people close to the victim, not sporadic events carried out by strangers. For this reason, the home continues to be a dangerous place for many Portuguese women and girls. It is crucial to note that of the 22 femicides that took place between 1 January and 15 November 2022, all the crimes were committed in an intimate setting by male aggressors. And in 12 of the cases there was previous violence, which was known to neighbours, family and friends, but only in 7 of these cases was there a previous report to the authorities (UMAR, 2022). In this context, it is important to refer to the notion of global obligations proposed by Judith Butler:

The idea of global obligations that serve all inhabitants of the world, human and animal, is about as far from the neoliberal consecration of individualism as it could be, and yet it is regularly dismissed as naive. So I am summoning my courage to expose my naiveté, my fantasy – my counter-fantasy, if you will. Some people ask, in more or less incredulous tones: «How can you believe in global obligations? That is surely naive». But, when I ask if they want to live in a world where no one argues for global obligations, they usually say no. I argue that only by avowing this interdependency does it become possible to formulate global obligations, including obligations toward migrants; toward the Roma; those who live in precarious situations, or indeed, those who are subject to occupation and war; those who are subject

to institutional and systemic racism; the indigenous whose murder and disappearance never surface fully in the public record; women who are subject to domestic and public violence, and harassment in the workplace; and gender nonconforming people who are exposed to bodily harm, including incarceration and death. I want to suggest, as well, that a new idea of equality can only emerge from a more fully imagined interdependency, an imagining that unfolds in practices and institutions, in new forms of civic and political life (Butler, 2020, p. 42).

Bearing in mind these profound social inequalities mentioned by Butler, we wanted this research to be situated in the field of artistic activism, i.e. seeking effective transformation through the practice of art. This practice was based on processes of co-creation aimed at contributing to social innovation and sustainability, challenging existing power structures and connecting marginalised communities with those in power. The aim of this research was also to challenge the negative narratives about women who are victims of domestic violence, exploring issues of subjectivisation and knowledge-sharing relationships in collaborative contexts. At the same time, it sought to alert the community to the need to combat the gender stereotypes that lead to domestic violence, and the devastating effect of women internalising these paradigms of inequality. It is regrettable that there is still too much social blaming of victims and devaluation of the aggressors' behaviour, justifying it by reasons such as men's sexual desire or excessive jealousy of love.

As part of this laboratory, a partnership was established with the Youth and Sports Division of Évora Town Hall to celebrate 25 November, «International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women». As part of this, Dr Ana Beatriz Cardoso, president of ASM, gave a presentation on violence against women and held a debate with the students of Multimedia I, a curricular unit I teach, and the students made posters and animations of the objects in gif format. After the class, an installation and projection was made on the side wall of the church of Santo Antão, from the Praça do Giraldo Gallery in Évora, with the students interacting with passers-by who showed curiosity at the projected images and poster installation.

We believe that the education system today often lacks a connection to ethics and the basic values and rights of humans and non-humans. Instead, students are encouraged to succeed in obtaining wealth, social status and therefore to compete and be individualistic. These practical neoliberal principles dehumanise people, turning them into mere instruments for the needs of the market, instead of supporting them in building ethical values for the common good.

Committed to a critical and liberating pedagogy, and to building a fairer society, feminist thinker bell hooks (USA, 1952-2021) argues that:

Engaged pedagogy produces self-directed learners, teachers, and students who are able to participate fully in the production of ideas. As teachers, our role is to take our students on the adventure of critical thinking. Learning and talking together, we break with the notion that our experience of gaining knowledge is private, individualistic, and competitive (hooks, 2020 [2010], p. 80).

As part of this workshop with the women of the Digitálias collective, the participants were encouraged to use a varied collection of household objects to create compositions that evoked and made sense of the domestic violence they had been subjected to, on a table first prepared for the purpose, with a white background.

The participants photographed the compositions and then the resulting images were imported into the computers, with the white backgrounds removed and replaced with flat colours. At the end of the lab, we realised that the compositions of the objects had a great visual impact due to the crudeness and immediacy of the message regarding violence, constituting powerful metaphors for their experiences of domestic violence and being an experience that shakes and challenges those who look at them. Furthermore, the resulting compositions call us to make readings that cannot be simplistic and disinterested in the face of the violence they symbolise.

The home is the most dangerous social space in today's life, due to the domestic violence that can happen within the family, such as rape within marriage. There was once, and still is today, but to a lesser extent, a social legitimisation of violence between spouses in the home, unlike in other public spaces, where the rule is to prohibit violence between individuals.

Industrialisation separated the place of consumption from the place of production of goods, in other words, it separated home from work, and domestic work became invisible, unlike work in the public sphere, which was identified as real work, in that it was paid and made a real contribution to the functioning of society.

As far as the domestic space is concerned, for Virginia Woolf:

For women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force, which has, indeed, so overcharged the capacity of bricks and mortar that it must needs harness itself to pens and brushes and business and politics (Woolf, 2022, [1929], p. 98).

Similarly, as Patricia Mayayo points out with regard to Louise Bourgeois' drawings centred on the theme of the house:

The ambivalent nature that the domestic space has, and has always had in the history of women: if, on the one hand, it is the place par excellence of female sociability, the starting point of a network of women's knowledge, the scene of the pleasures of motherhood; on the other hand, it is a space of seclusion, a symbol of the expulsion of women from public affairs, an image of their secular identification with an exclusive role of nurturing and reproduction (Mayayo, 2002, p. 17).

Since the 1950s, changes in the world of work, such as the integration of women into the paid labour force and the achievement of their economic independence, have brought considerable transformations to gender roles in the family, which pitted the «breadwinner» man against the «housewife» woman, leading to a renegotiation of the more equal distribution of domestic tasks between the couple, such as looking after the children and making decisions about managing the family budget and expenses.

Nonetheless, in the present day, although men contribute more to these tasks than in the past, especially those of the younger generations, and gender slogans are gradually dissolving, women continue to be responsible for most of the labour involved in keeping the house and looking after the children.

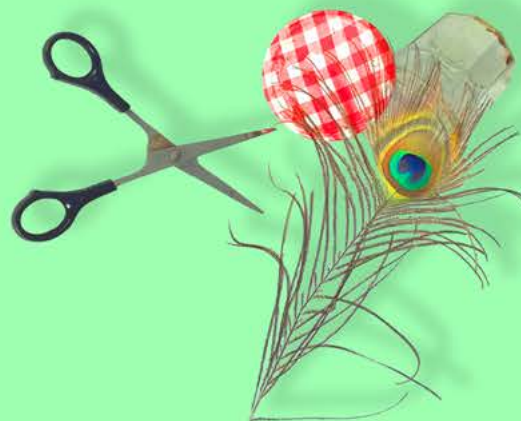
Since modern times, women have been assigned a place in the home and have been asked to adjust to the role of mothers. However, in the present day, this paradigm is no longer upheld by the majority of women, who find the traditional 'woman, home, motherhood' equation too limiting.

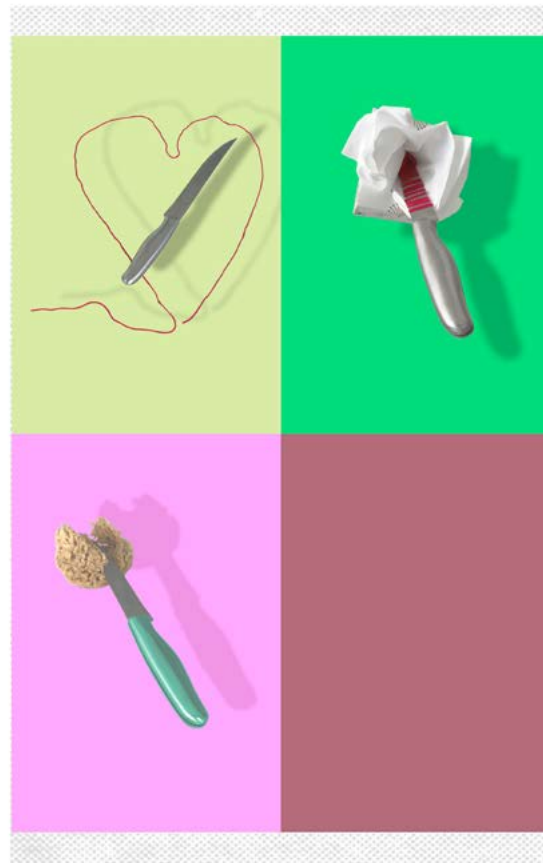
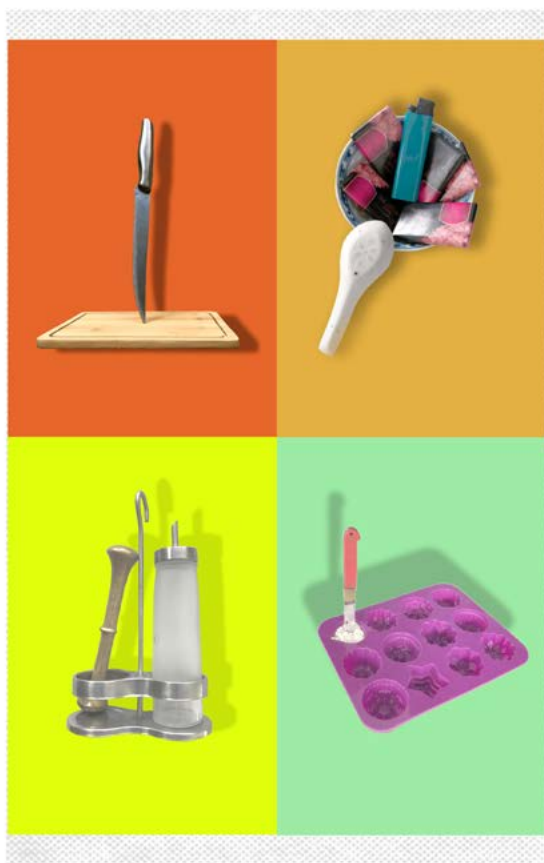
This concept of the domestic fairy woman is a collective patriarchal legacy that seeks to control and occupy women's subjective domain, prescribing instructions for how they should live their lives. As such, people develop as women and men in accordance with social expectations, in a dialectic of one with the other and, for this reason, it is urgent to give new meanings to these conceptions, and allow the feminine to represent itself from within, far from the hierarchical dichotomy that associates the masculine with a superior normative position, and the feminine with a subordinate place derived from that same norm.

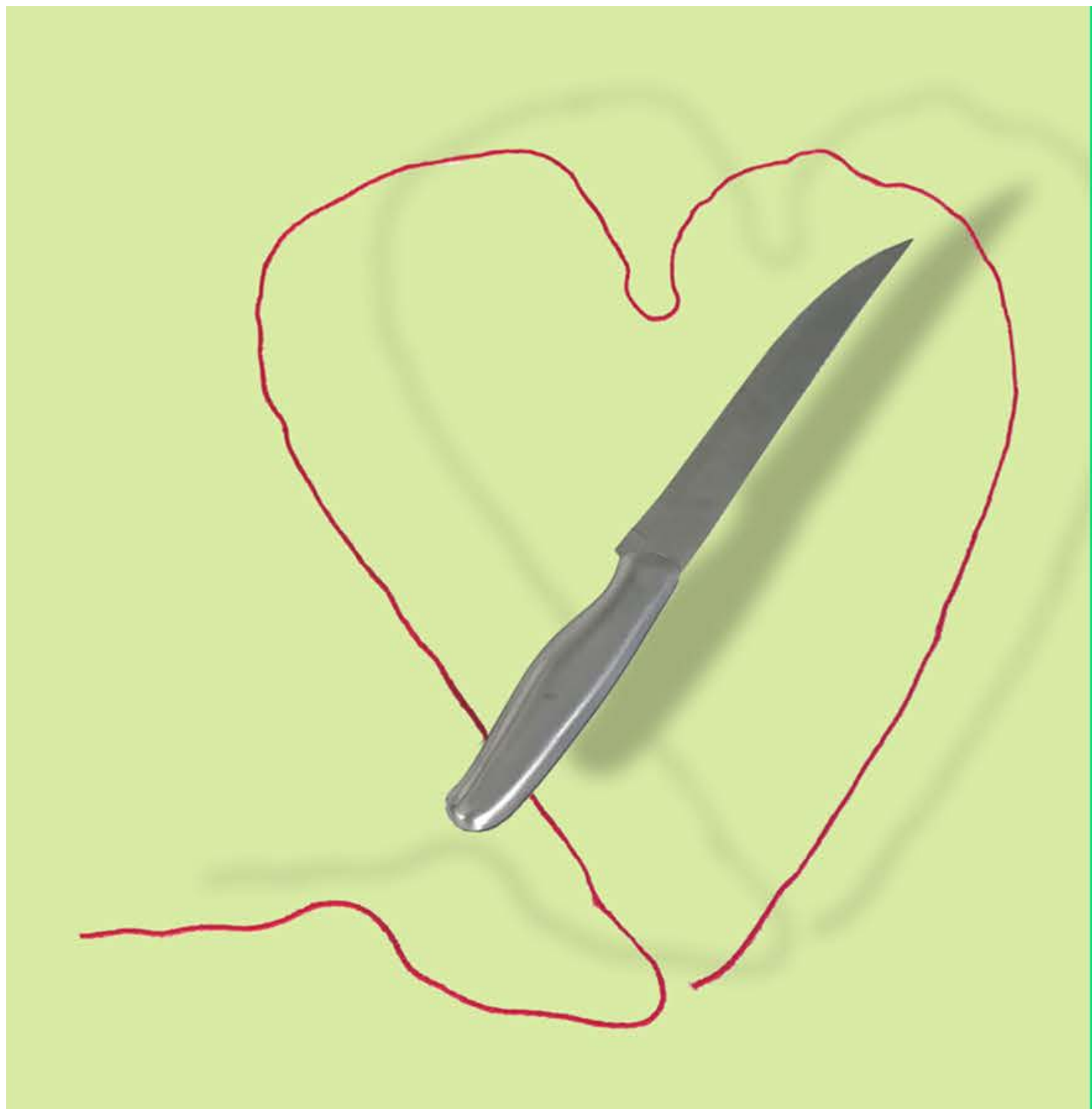
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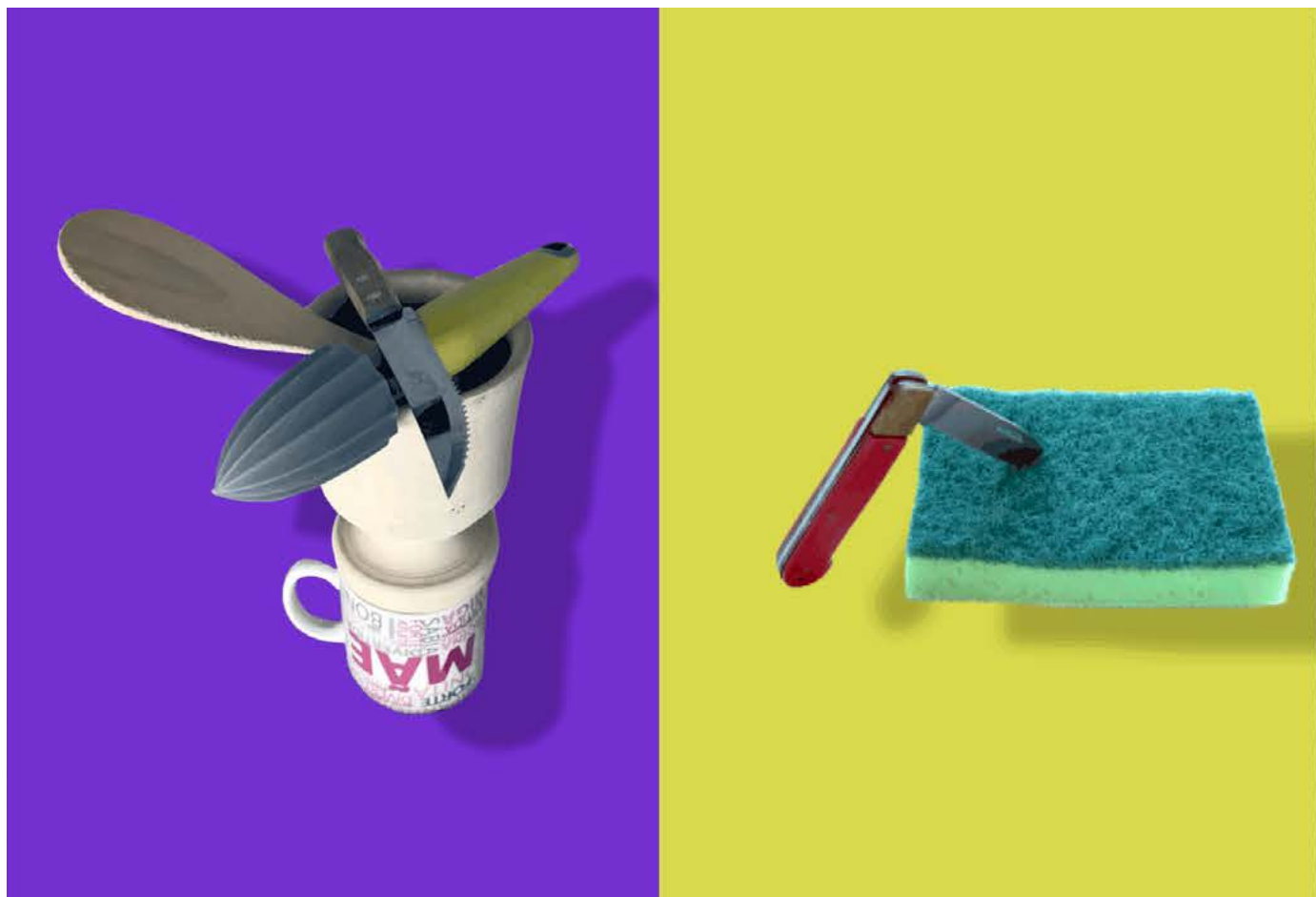
<<**Lab 01/Things at home belong to all of us**>>

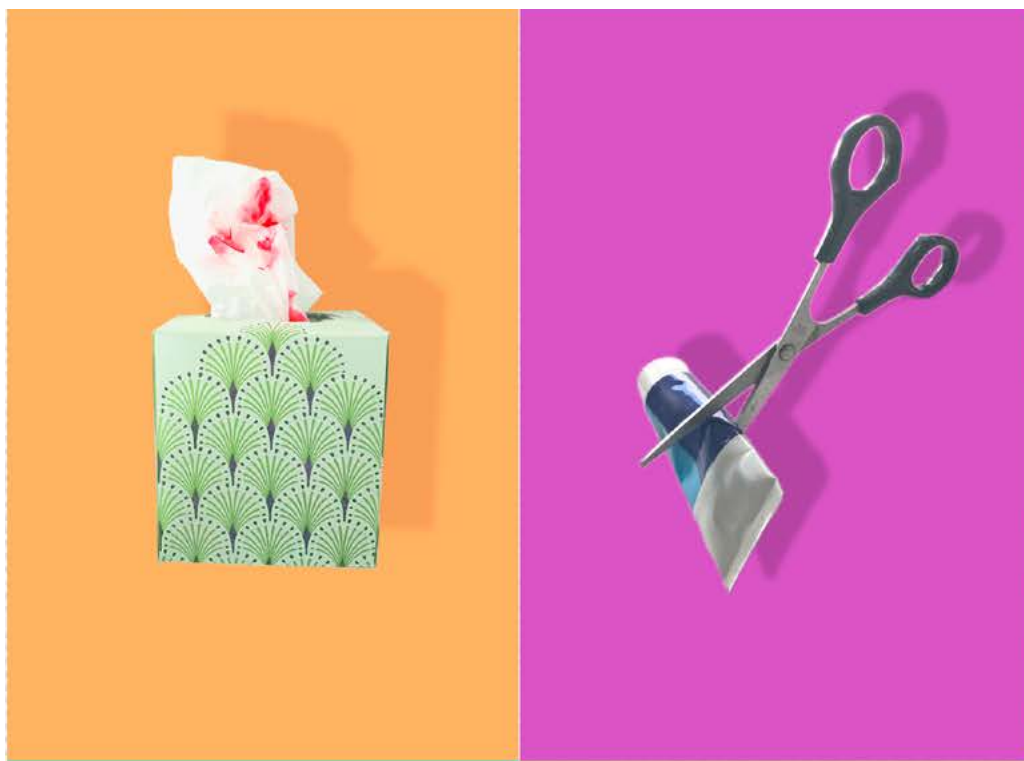
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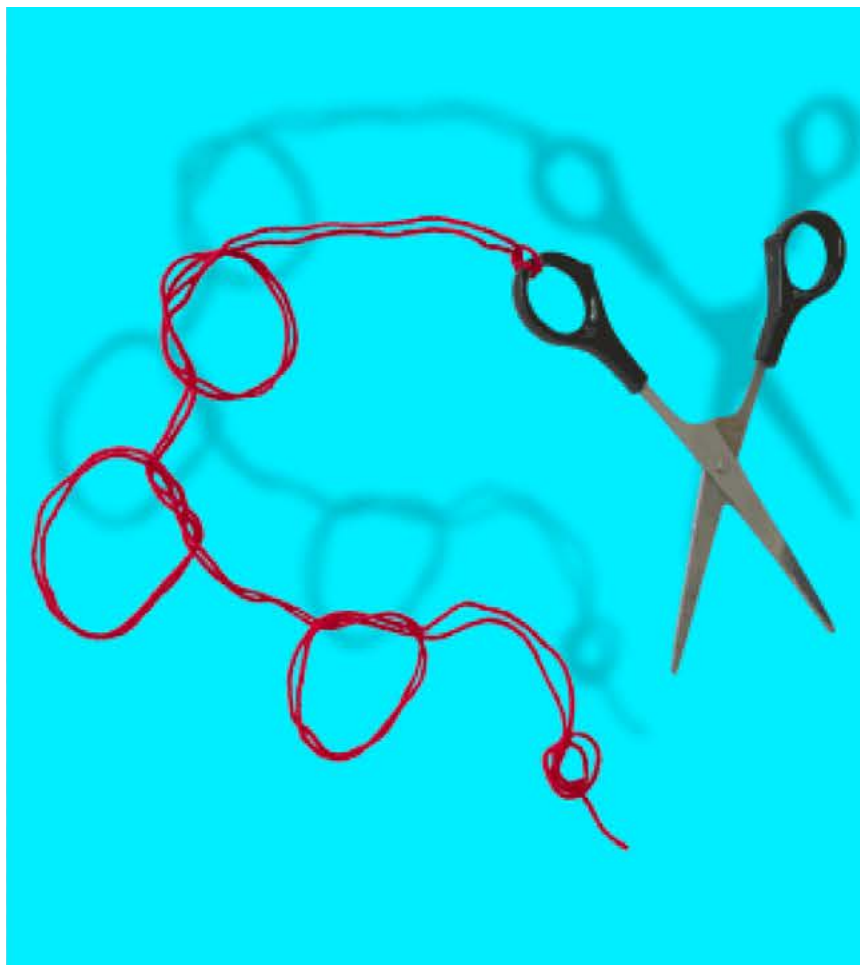












2.6. Lab 03 / To be whatever we want to be.

Throughout history, women have become adept at taking charge of men's private lives so that they can rule the public space. But little by little this has been changing and if there is one thing that should be common sense, it is that all people, regardless of their gender, have similar abilities to cook a stew, dust, change a nappy, programme on a computer, run a company, fly an aeroplane, in short, to be whatever they want to be (Digital Basket, 2021).

This short text, published on the «Digital Basket» website, was the basis for reflection at the «To be whatever we want to be» workshop. The construction of women as Subjects cannot take place in a context of male domination, insofar as the creation of any true Subject, for both women and men, requires independence and liberation from the domination of others, in the context of a culture in which freedom prevails. The individualisation movement, which gives impetus to women's subjectivation, is based on the construction of an individual experience, linking all aspects of their lives, public and private. The Subject manifests her freedom and rights against the obsession with power, profit and identity, i.e. selfish individualism in which one looks only at oneself and is separated from the true forms of subjectivisation and individuation, which are themselves collective movements. However, subjectivation is threatened unceasingly by forces that are actually overwhelming, authoritarian and coercive, such as financial markets, religions, communitarianisms that isolate and segregate certain groups of people and, finally, selfish individualisms, reduced to consumer choices and individual well-being (Furtado, 2014).

At present, there are still setbacks and obstacles to the achievements of the feminist movement, which are expressed in particular in the continued demeaning of women's bodies, which they continue to see as mere commodities, in the violence to which they are subjected, and in the subjugation of their lives to political, social and economic spheres that are entirely dominated by men. This re-emergence of a hierarchisation of society pushes women back into traditional positions, which they continue to refuse to occupy (Furtado, 2014).

The issue of gender inequalities and how they influence the way women live their lives, raised by the feminist movements in the 1960s, continues to be important and recurrent today, maintaining a promi-

ment place in our co-creative labs. In the course of the labs, if, on the one hand, artistic practices seek to denounce the patriarchal exploitation and subjugation that women are forced into in general, not having the right to control their lives so that they can freely form their identities and self-determine in all social spheres, from work to sexuality, on the other hand, these practices propose the creation of new representations of themselves, giving them the opportunity to create themselves as Subjects. Too often, media discourses represent women victims of domestic violence as fragile, vulnerable and oppressed, but during the workshops, the participants were mainly interested in creating an image of themselves that was very different from this. In our conversations and through their artistic expressions, the women often positioned themselves as strong, active and powerful women who were trying to find a safe place in society, for their families and for themselves.

In the «To be whatever we want to be» laboratory, the participants put on performances inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's drawing *L'Uomo vitruviano*, Italy, 1490, and the achievements of women on 25 April 1974, which put an end to forty-one years of Salazar dictatorship, which contributed considerably to their formation as Subjects.

With regard to the social context in which the drawing *L'Uomo vitruviano* was created, at the end of the 15th century the Italian Renaissance discourse was in force. It proposed an organicist model using man's body as a way of creating harmony between culture and nature, establishing a feeling of closeness and understanding with the non-human, thus leaving the domain of a mythical and religious transcendental logic and creating the scientific paradigm. This model was represented in the well-known drawing *L'Uomo vitruviano*, which shows a male figure with arms and legs stretched out, inscribed in a square and a circle, touching the four corners of the universe. With this imagery drawn, the male body, fantasised as a pure form, was chosen as the model for the perfect geometric shapes of the circle and the square.

In making this drawing, the artist was inspired by the work *De Architectura* by the Roman architect Marco Vitruvius Pollio, c. 40 BC, in which cosmic order and the potential for perfection are represented through an ideal and rational male body, i.e. the white man, with Vitruvian architecture as the scale of his proportions. In the drawing, the head is the element that stands out in the composition in relation to the other body parts, exalting reason. This ideal body, conceived as masculine and absolute through immaculate geometric rigour, is thus freed from the subject's organic and sensory contingencies, which were attributed to the feminine.

In fact, we often choose to use a one-dimensional ruler, that is a phallic one, with its univocal scale to situate the diversity of beings, bodies and organs. In this design, the masculine signifies culture, logos, order and geometry, as opposed to the invisible feminine, which symbolises nature, matter, transience and variability.

Despite this persistent attempt to establish the male body as an ideal, from the 1970s onwards there were several women artists who managed to break through and question these regulatory discourses, as can be seen in the work of German artist VALIE EXPORT, who implicitly criticises this ideal of the male body as the measure of the cosmos, in her series of performative photographs *Körperkonfiguration*, Germany, 1982, in which she situates and inscribes her body within the city, architecture, culture and history (Furtado, 2014). Nowadays, attempts are still being made to delegitimise women's speech and the freedom of their bodies to occupy a place and be present in all social spaces in different, sometimes very subtle ways. This means that the fight for equality between all people has not yet been won.

The performances carried out by the participants in this laboratory, inspired by this drawing, sought to create choreographed bodies that could be inscribed in the geometric shapes of Leonardo da Vinci's drawing. Therefore, the participants and their children photographed and filmed themselves in body positions similar to that of the *Vitruvian man*, i.e. with their legs and arms open against a wall. The images were then digitally edited and superimposed on the drawing. Carnations were placed at the bottom of the image to allude to the 25th of April 1974, which put an end to the long dictatorship of Salazar's Estado Novo (New State) and the obvious domination of women. Thus, a process of symbolic inscription of the feminine was carried out in a drawing that glorifies the masculine and reproduces the canons of patriarchal society.

Before 25 April 1974, the public sphere was seen as masculine and the private sphere as feminine, and both were hierarchical and dominated by men, based on women's weakness and fragility. The exclusion of women was declared or implicit in numerous areas of public life, such as the Armed Forces and the government of the Republic, and they were denied rights such as the right to vote and to be elected and appointed. In terms of labour, women were not allowed to pursue professions such as the judiciary, a career in the Public Ministry, diplomacy, leadership positions in local administration and even, for a long time, university professorships. Similarly, marriage was not permitted in professions such as primary school teachers, telephone operators, nurses and hostesses, as they required full-time dedication, which was incompatible with the role required of married women.

As far as intimate family life was concerned, it was regulated by the state and the husband's role was to represent it, giving him the power to decide on matters such as voting and power over his wife and children. The Estado Novo created the practical and ideological conditions for women to return to the home and focus on the family and domestic work. However, there were almost no women in working-class circles who were solely domestic, almost all of whom worked outside the home in the same way, as labourers, farm workers, saleswomen or maids. And although in order to be seen as «honourable» women they didn't have to be confined to the home, nor were they obliged to get married, marriage was seen as a way for women to be fulfilled and the paradigm of the feminine was based on heterosexual relationships as the norm.

In the context of a restrictive understanding of the body, women's sexuality was regulated to be passive and obedient and, when married, to satisfy their husbands and fulfil their role as mothers. Male sexuality, on the other hand, was built on ideas of competition, emphasising predatory and promiscuous behaviour inside and outside of marriage. Thus, husbands who killed their wives in flagrante adultery were granted almost impunity. Only a few years before 25 April 1974, the differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate filiation was abolished, women were allowed to vote in the National Assembly and the requirement for a husband's permission for a woman to leave the country was removed. Under this regime, which repressed essential rights and freedoms, women functioned as a commodity exchanged between men, existing only within the patriarchal discourse, so that, in this sense, women were spoken for, women did not speak. In the field of habits, which were outlined in detail as being moderate and mild, in order to authorise the perpetuation of violations of human rights, it can be seen that they were based on the principle that women had a duty of decorum, modesty and decency.

Today, as male power is increasingly threatened, women are very often and intensely subjected to acts of violence of various kinds – physical, psychological, sexual, socio-cultural – and men, who generally continue to control all social fields, both privately and publicly, are more violent towards women, seeking their domination and subordination.

In 1979, CEDAW – the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women – was ratified at the United Nations and is still considered today to be the magna carta of women's and girls' rights. The Convention was achieved after lengthy negotiations, as many felt that a specific tool for women's human rights was not necessary, as it would lead to a distancing from more urgent and serious issues, such as the fight against poverty. In 2021, 187 countries ratified CEDAW, but the entire discussion

process revealed that the human rights of women and girls are still not consensual, and their violation is often hidden and undervalued. It is often claimed that these violations are not a question of gender, but of justice and equality, including in the countless cases of domestic violence, whose statistics show that the vast majority of aggressors are men and the victims are women. However, the attempt to avoid labelling this violence as mostly male continues to prevail.

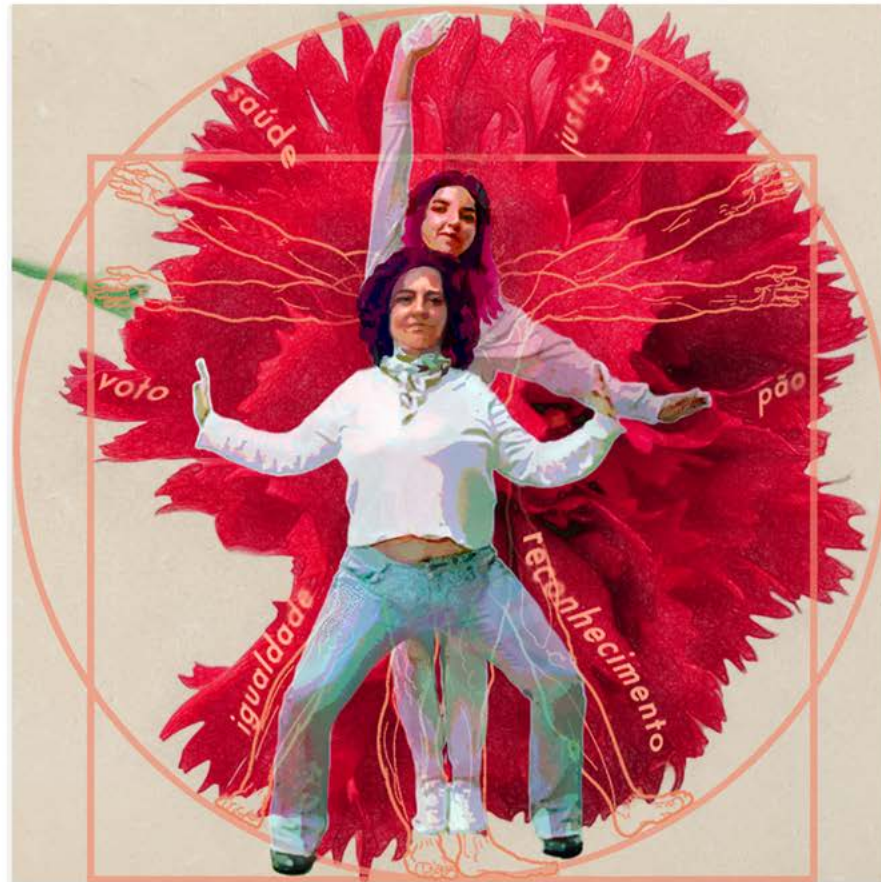
In 1993, the UN human rights conference in Vienna, under pressure from a global alliance of women, including many feminist activists, ratified the *Vienna Declaration*, which considered women's rights to be human rights and, therefore, violence against women to be understood as a violation of these rights. At the same time, the delegates issued a recommendation to encourage governments at a global level to strengthen their justice systems' response to women's rights. In 1995, the UN directives were renewed and promoted by the Beijing Platform for Action, conceived and signed by the governments of the UN member states, with violence against women declared to be one of the main barriers to achieving gender equality.

It should also be noted that the European Union considers gender-based violence to be a public health issue and a violation of fundamental rights, preventing equality between women and men. In order to promote this equality, it has adopted initiatives such as funding NGOs, helping to disseminate feminist projects, Women's Rights and Gender Equality Commissions and proposing a set of initiatives to combat violence against women. Nonetheless, both the UN and the EU have been criticised by feminist organisations, which declare the existence of gender inequalities in these institutions.

Images

<<**Lab 03/To be whatever we want to be**>>

<https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/lab03.html>











2.7. Lab 04 / Mapping the body as a sort of garden.

In the course of this laboratory, the artist Nela Milic proposed, together with the Digitálias collective, to create digital cartographies of the body during a series of co-creative workshops. The workshops took place at the Évora Public Library, the Giraldo Gallery and the «Arts Corner», a space of the School of Arts of the University of Évora, at the St John's Fair. Nela Milic is an artist and academic who works with media and the arts at the same time. She makes particular use of the fusion of text and image, and creates installations, archives and publications. The artist has always been interested in the intersection of time and space, which has led her to many multimedia and artistic projects dealing with narrative, digital repositories, the city and participation. She was a lecturer at the London College of Communication, one of the teaching institutions of the University of the Arts, London, and currently teaches at the School of Art, Design and Performance at Buckinghamshire New University. In her email exchange with Digitálias, the artist writes the following:

I'm interested in talking to the women about Nan Goldin's work and suggesting that they map their body so that it becomes a fantastic faculty – for example, if it has a haematoma, it becomes a butterfly that can be transported and displayed – and I also have my own work to show them on this subject. In this way, the participants map out their bodies as if they were a sort of garden (...) (Milic, 2022).

In this laboratory, the participants' life stories gave them and bring them back a place in the official narratives that systematically remove and dispossess them of a place to speak. The women used different symbolic languages, such as photography, words and drawings, to record their experiences as unique and individual life spaces. As such, the participants were seen as survivors and heroines of an unequal battle, based on gender and perpetuating domestic violence.

The status of victim of domestic violence is often used as a form of subjective destitution, denying women the right to feel not only fragile and victimised, but also strong and victorious. In order to be credible as victims, female survivors of domestic violence have to display a set of typical behaviours and fit into a

stereotypical victim role, i.e. be out of control, emotional and fragile. This type of reasoning and mentality, which demonstrates a profound lack of knowledge of intimate partner violence, often applies to confident and assertive women who report their aggressors in cases of rape, domestic violence or harassment. The basic rationale is that a confident woman has no reason to stay with an abusive partner. For this reason, the processes of internalisation of patriarchal models inscribed in all women, including the victims themselves, are not recognised, which often leads them, in the context of domestic violence, to consider themselves guilty of the aggression and, for this reason, not to run away from the aggressor.

There is therefore an urgent need to reconsider and question the paradigms incorporated by all of us, which define dichotomous pairs of masculinity and femininity, in other words, heroism and villainess, normality and abnormality, courage and cowardice, visibility and invisibility, speech and silencing, a set of cultural oppositions that we have internalised for millennia. Today's heroes are always part of a discourse that is defined above all by values such as valour, determination and physical strength, anchored in an imaginary of masculinity, represented as extraordinary in contrast to the ordinary person.

The places designed and expected for men, of explorers, pathfinders who go out in their rafts, ships or caravels and who act, fight and build, whose paradigmatic representative is Ulysses, as opposed to the places designed for women, which force women to remain cloistered and quiet in the position of wives and mothers, represented by Penelope, no longer make sense. We therefore need to reconsider and question the paradigms we have all incorporated, which define dichotomous pairs of male and female, in other words, heroism and villainess, normality and abnormality, courage and cowardice, visibility and invisibility, speech and silencing, a set of cultural oppositions that we have internalised for millennia. Today's heroes are always part of a discourse that is defined above all by values such as valour, determination and physical strength, anchored in an imaginary of masculinity, represented as extraordinary in contrast to the ordinary person.

During this workshop, the women chose which scars on their bodies they would like to see photographed, and the photographs were then printed. Later, drawings and plasticine sculptures were inscribed on the photographs, and poetic phrases inspired by the scars were written. The emphasis of this set of workshops was on aesthetic experiences and the social bonds established between all the participants, which created a space where creativity, dialogue and communication took place. The images produced by the participants sought to represent the memories of violence and transform them into something positive, if they felt that way.

The artistic practices carried out were centred on processes rather than objects, seeking to catalyse transformations and also to provoke, disturb and make the community in general reflect on the mechanisms of domestic violence.

In this way, what Claire Bishop advocates seems pertinent to us:

The most compelling contemporary art does not surrender itself to exemplary gestures, but uses participation to articulate a contradictory pull between autonomy and social intervention; moreover, it reflects on this antinomy both in the structure of the work and in the conditions of its reception. It is to this art – however uncomfortable, exploitative, or confusing it may first appear – that we must turn for an alternative to the well-intentioned homilies that today pass for critical discourse on social collaboration. These homilies unwittingly push us back towards a platonic regime where art is valued for its truthfulness and educational efficacy – not for inviting us to confront the more complicated considerations of our predicament (Bishop, 2006, p. 183).

This research project, anchored in a participatory and collaborative artistic practice, aims to provide opportunities to expand critical awareness, promote social interrelationships and a deeper understanding between the participants. This understanding is built on emotional and affective experiences, the senses, bodies, imagination, reason and emotion, which translate the living of aggression, cruelty and violence, but also of encounter, sharing and friendship.

Male violence against women and girls germinates, grows and is perpetuated in a social environment in which this violence is trivialised, takes on dimension and is legitimised in a social context that promotes a toxic and hostile masculinity, combined with the permanent scrutiny of women, conveyed above all by the mass media, which takes away their voice, their desire and the possibility of expressing their dissatisfaction. This is also why systemic violence against women is interrupted when different voices and bodies tell their stories.

Recording their memories is a way for women to deal with the trauma of collective forgetting and erasure of their life stories, which have no place or recognition in social life. Insofar as domestic violence occurs when one partner seeks to control or subjugate the other through emotional abuse, physical

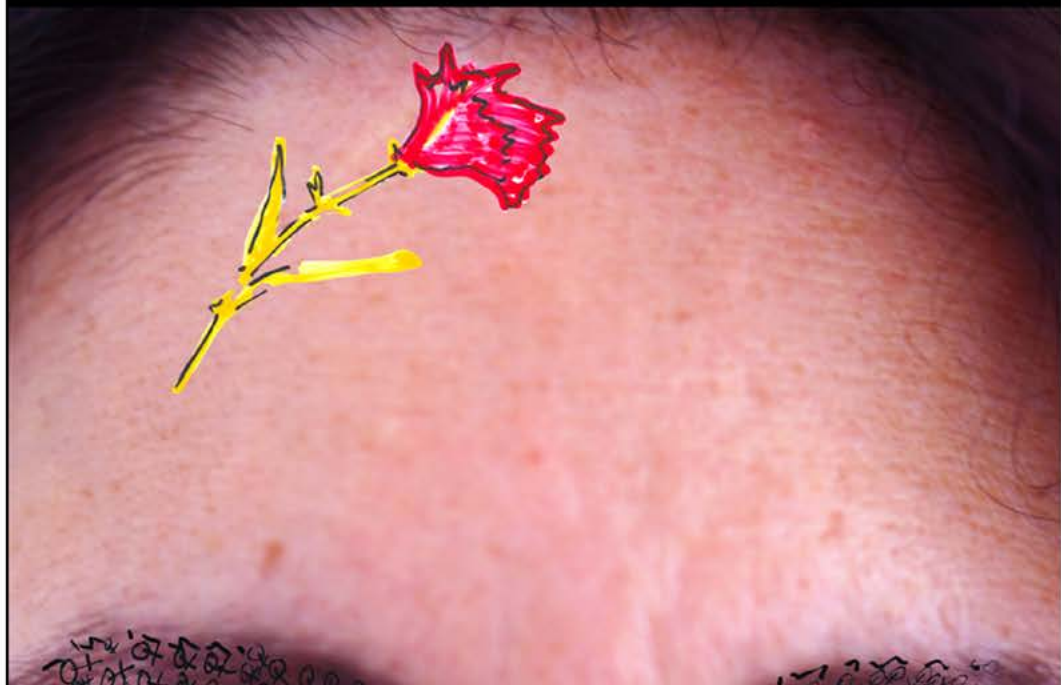
aggression, sexual aggression, verbal abuse, financial abuse, psychological abuse, estrangement from family and friends, or being prevented from practising a particular religion, the scars may not only be visible on the skin, but also in the mind, caused by psychological violence.

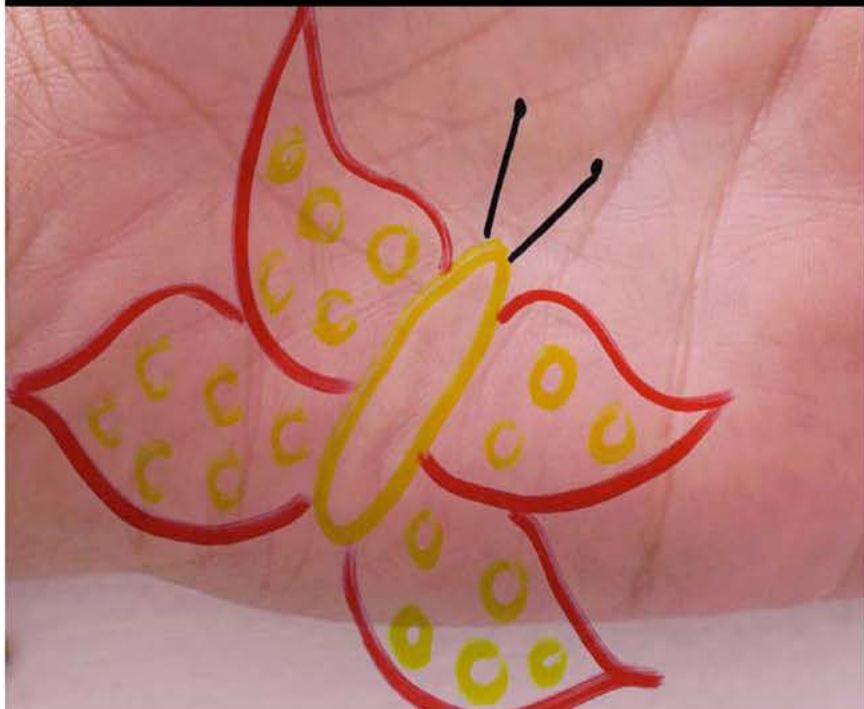
It should be noted that all the artistic work developed in the laboratories took place in the context of a dialogical conversation that was intended to be above all collaborative, not primarily aimed at producing commercial objects, but at sharing multiple experiences and knowledge.

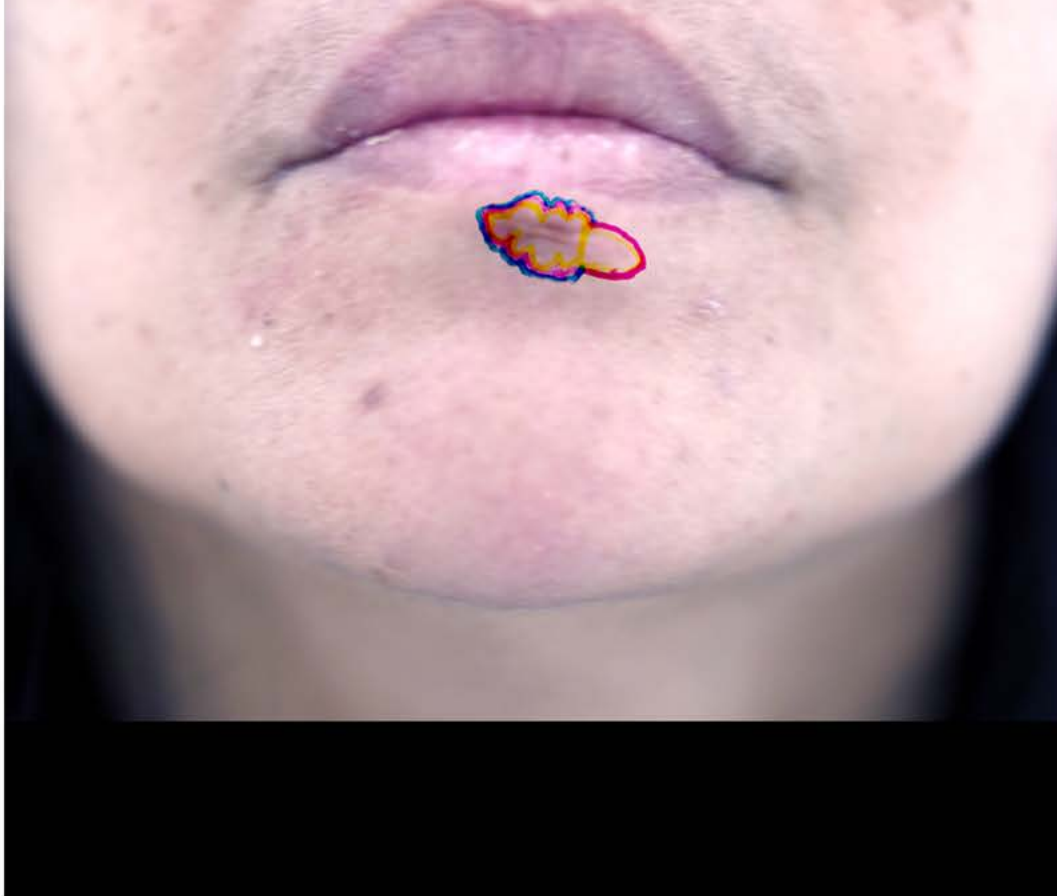
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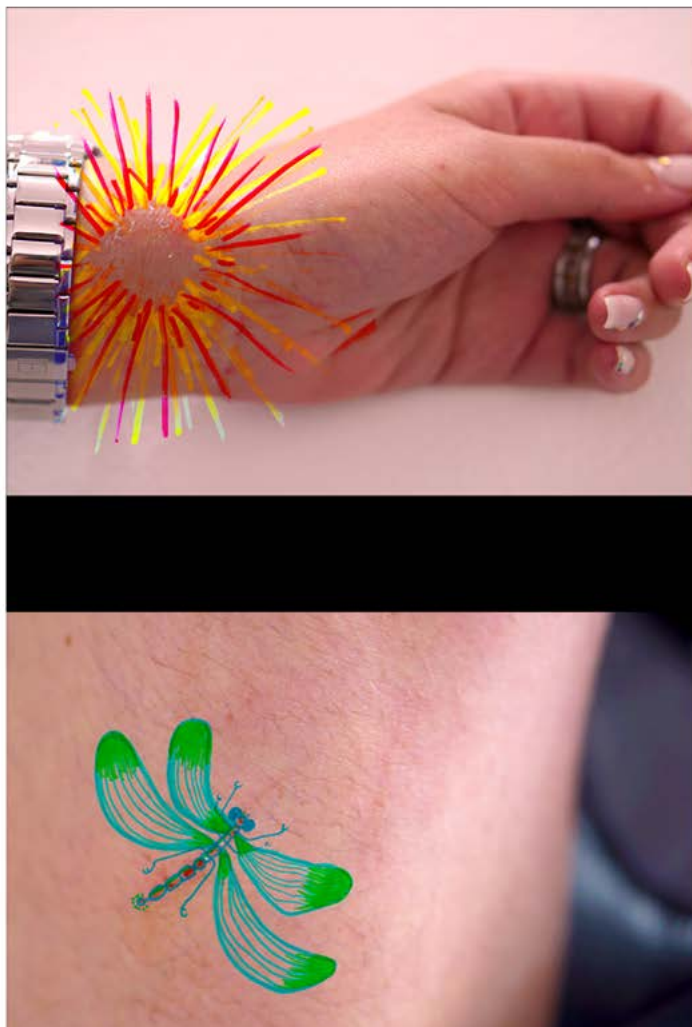
<<**Lab 04 / Mapping the body as a sort of garden**>>

<https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/lab04.html>

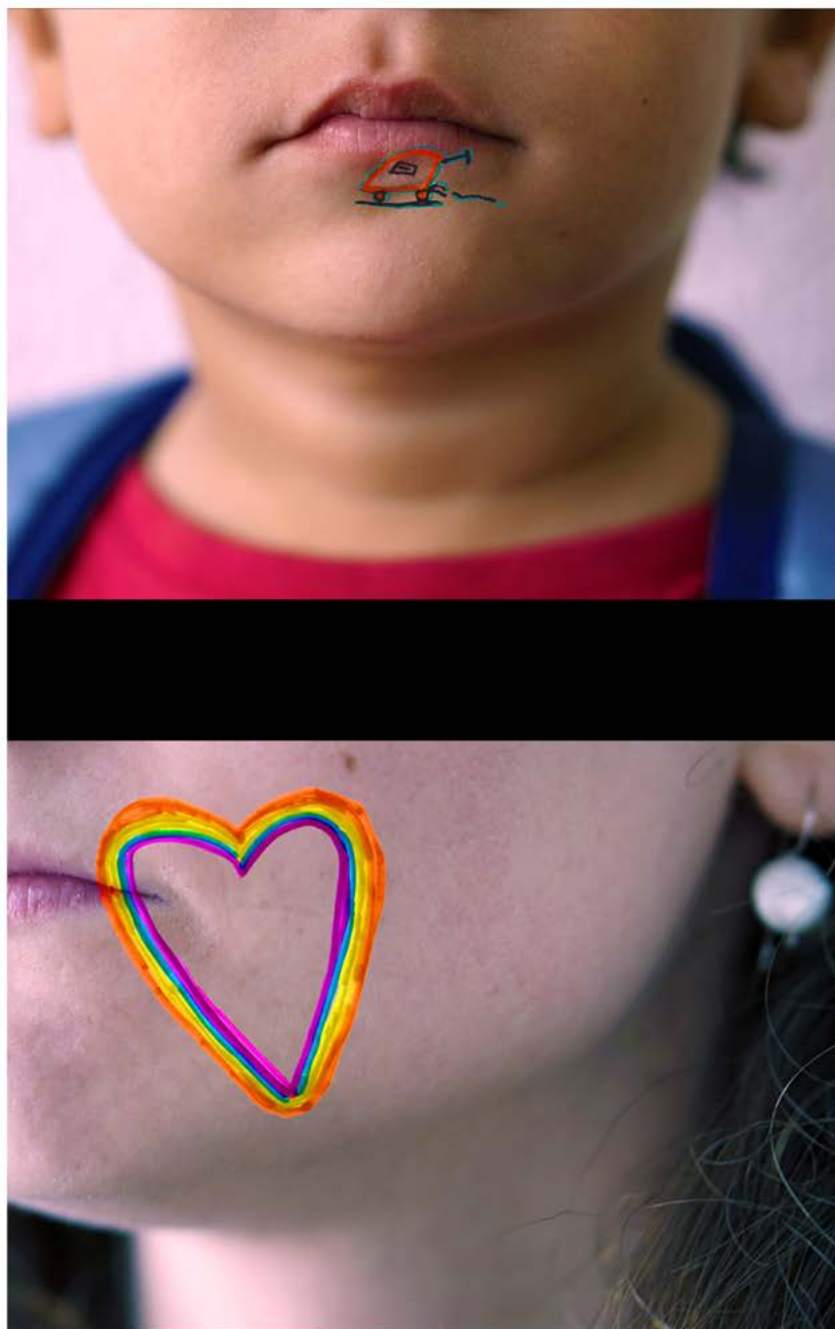


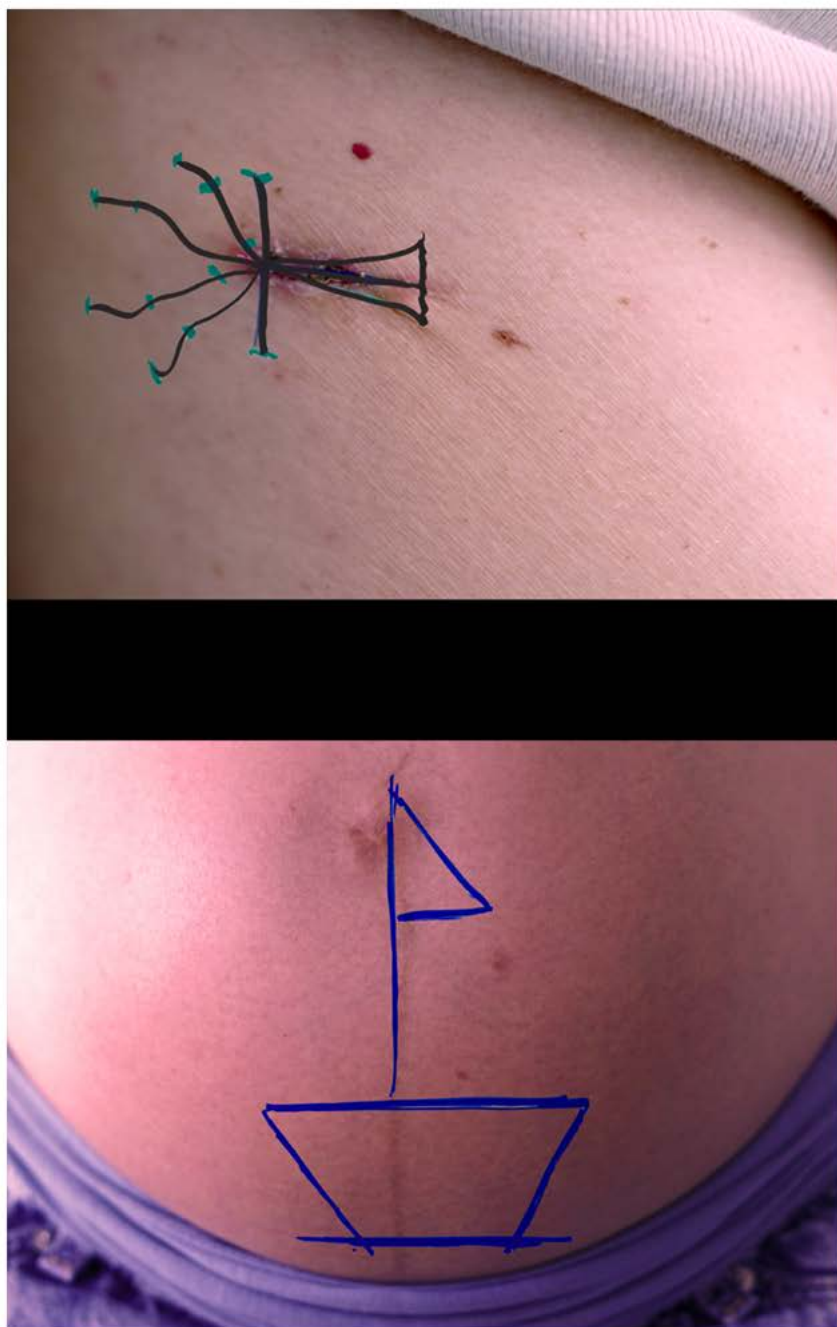


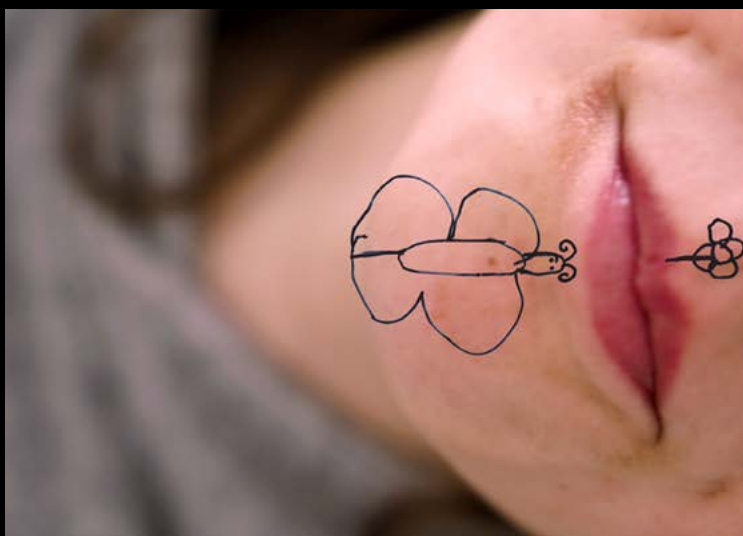






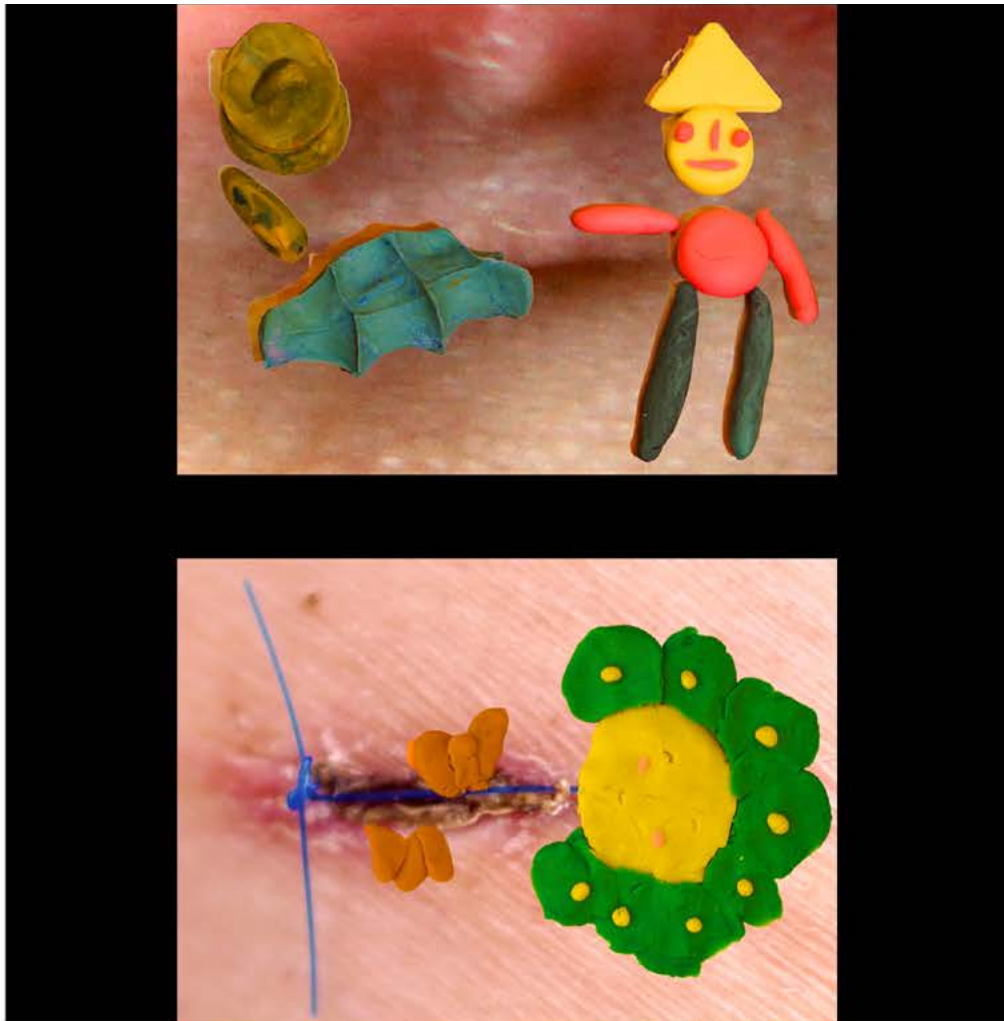


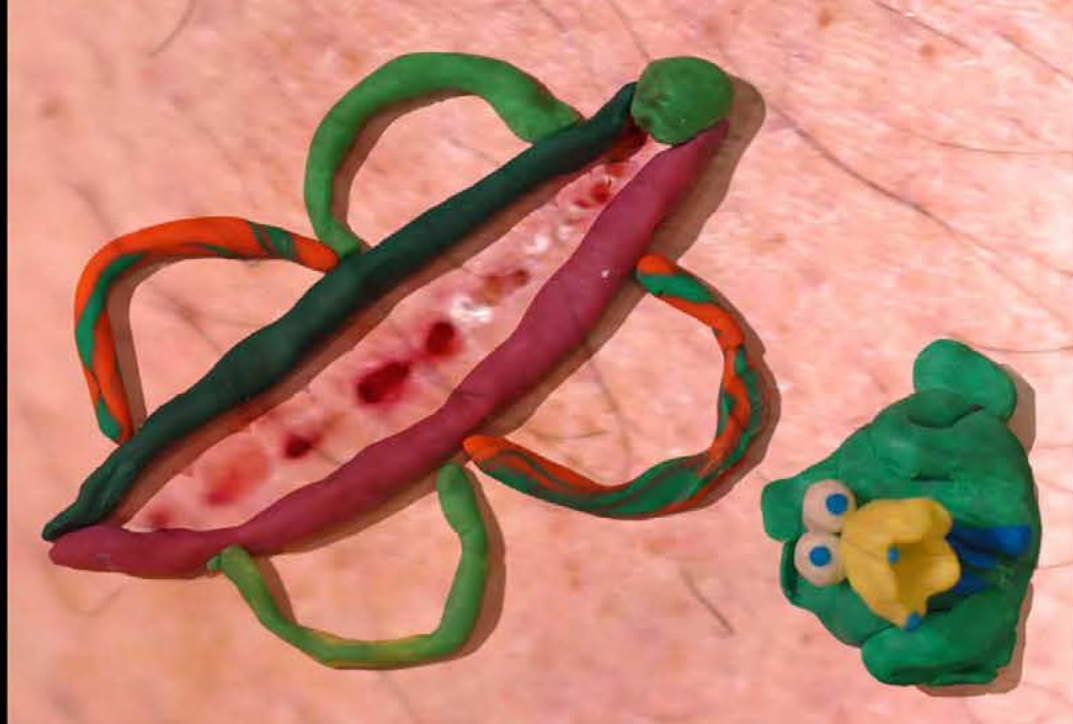






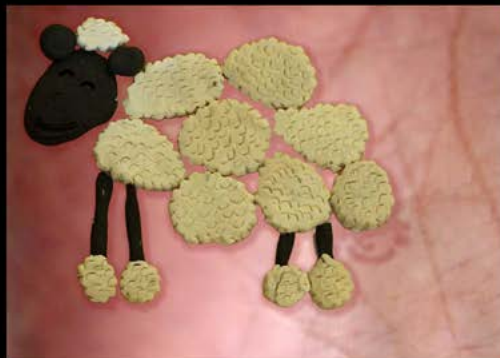












My scar is my pride.

My scar is the living memory of
my limit and the limit of others.

From my scar a cloud was born.

It was an accident.

*We were all once literally a black sheep,
not because of the colour of our skin
but because of the scars and baggage
we acquired.*

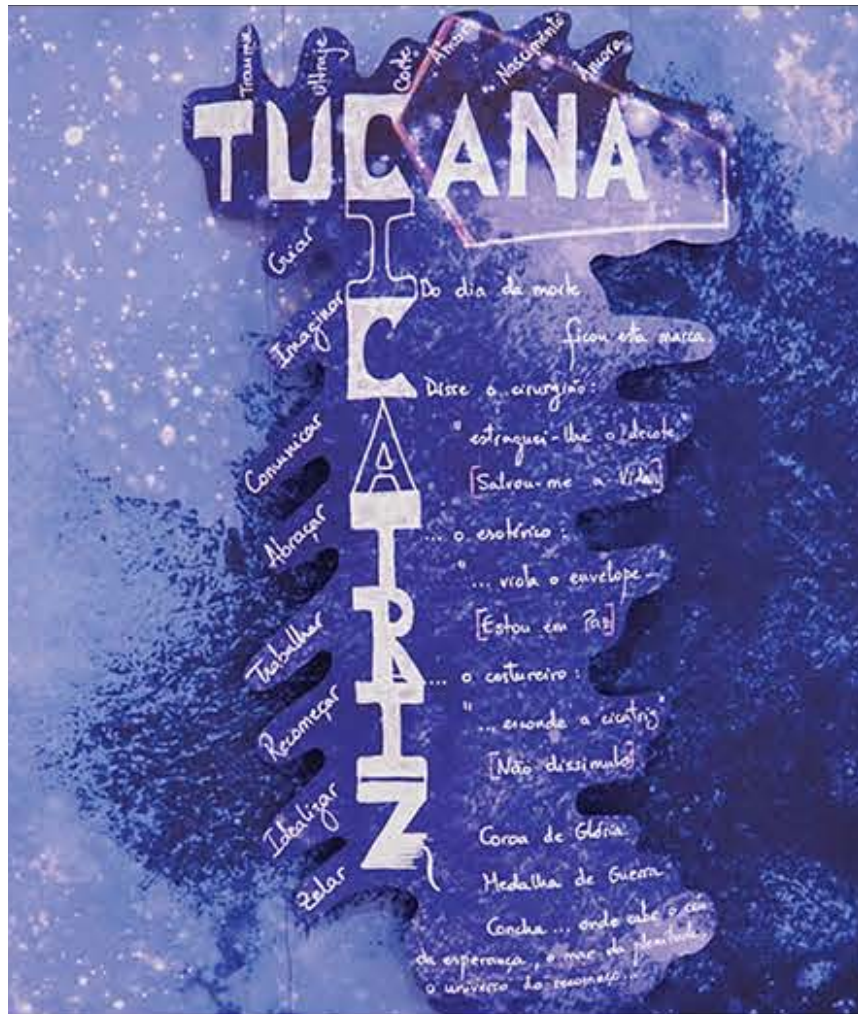
In my scar love was born.

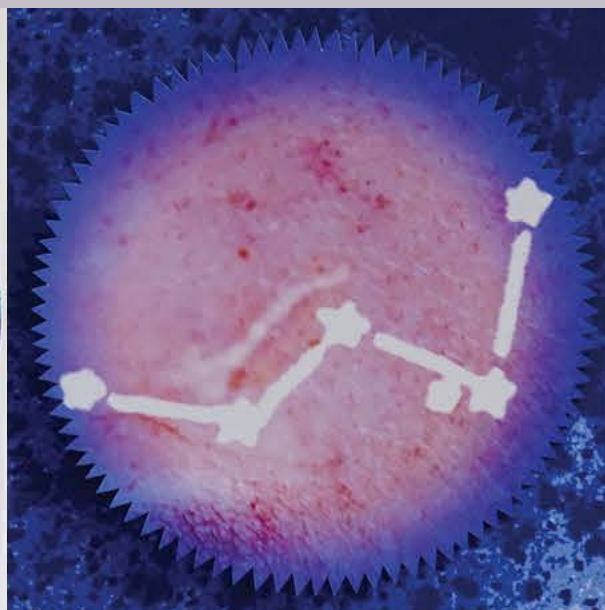
My scars tell their stories in silence.

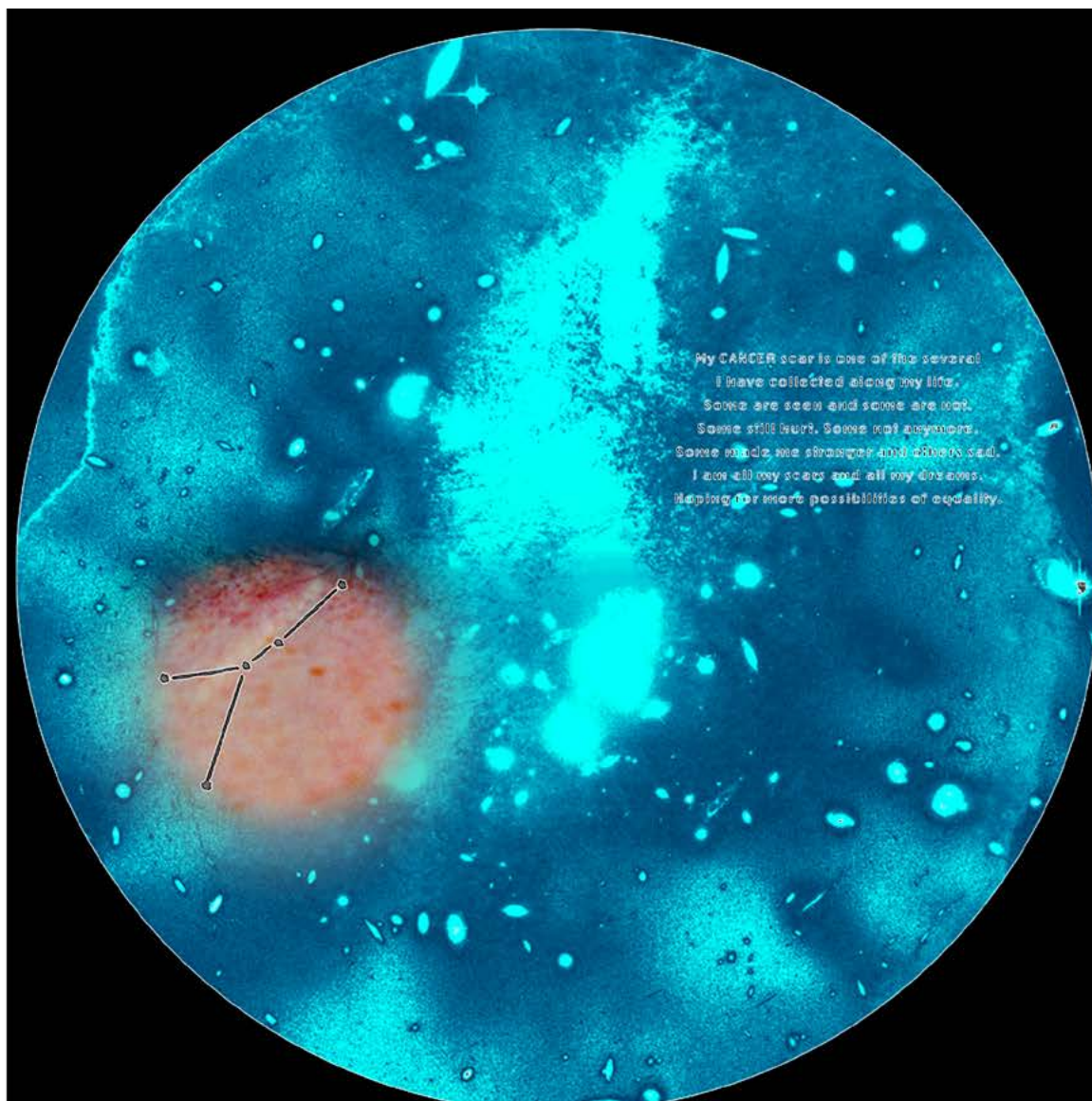
My scars remain in the minds of
those who have them.

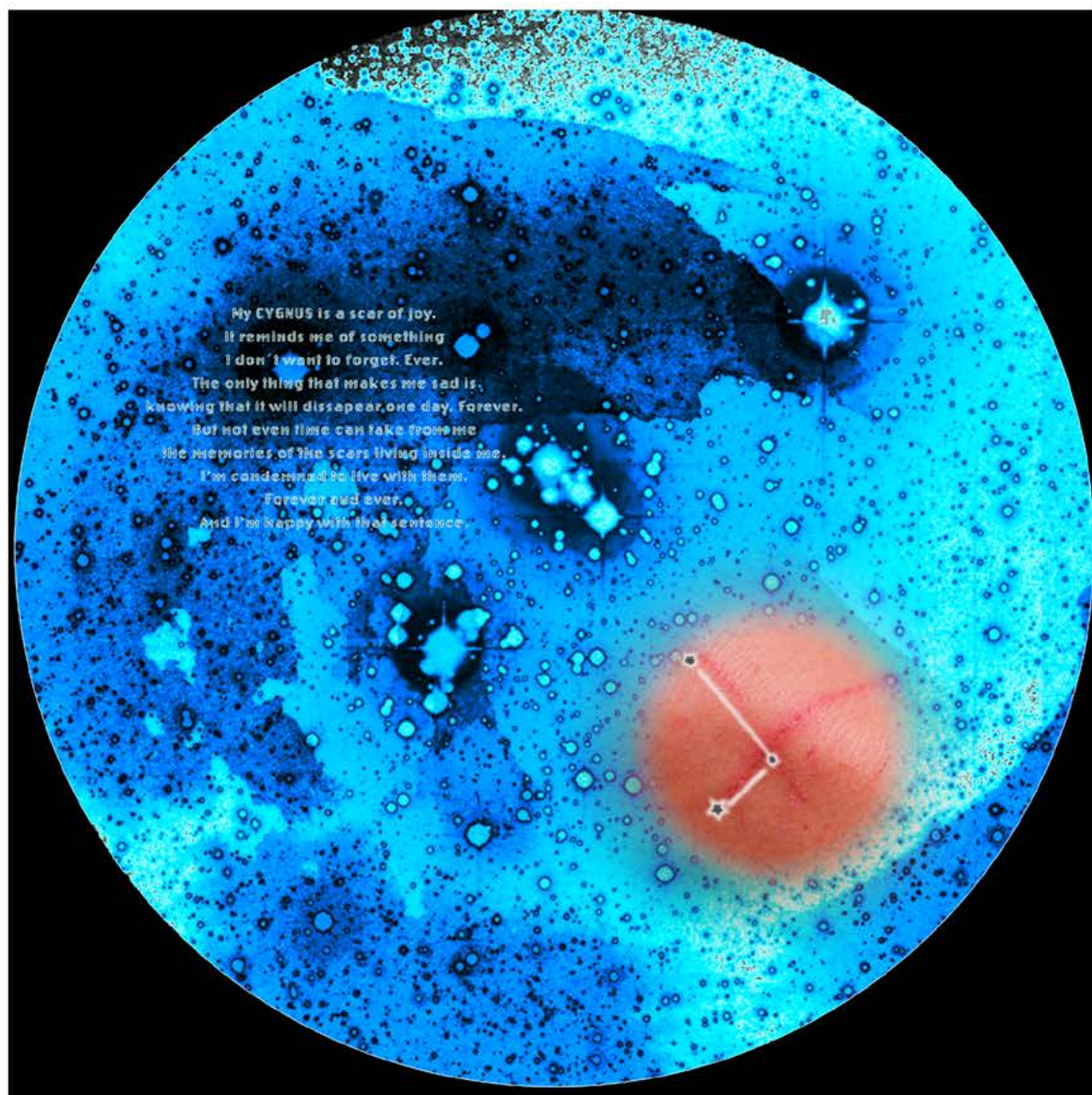
The weight of the wool of a black
sheep is minimal compared to the
weight of ignorance and disregard.

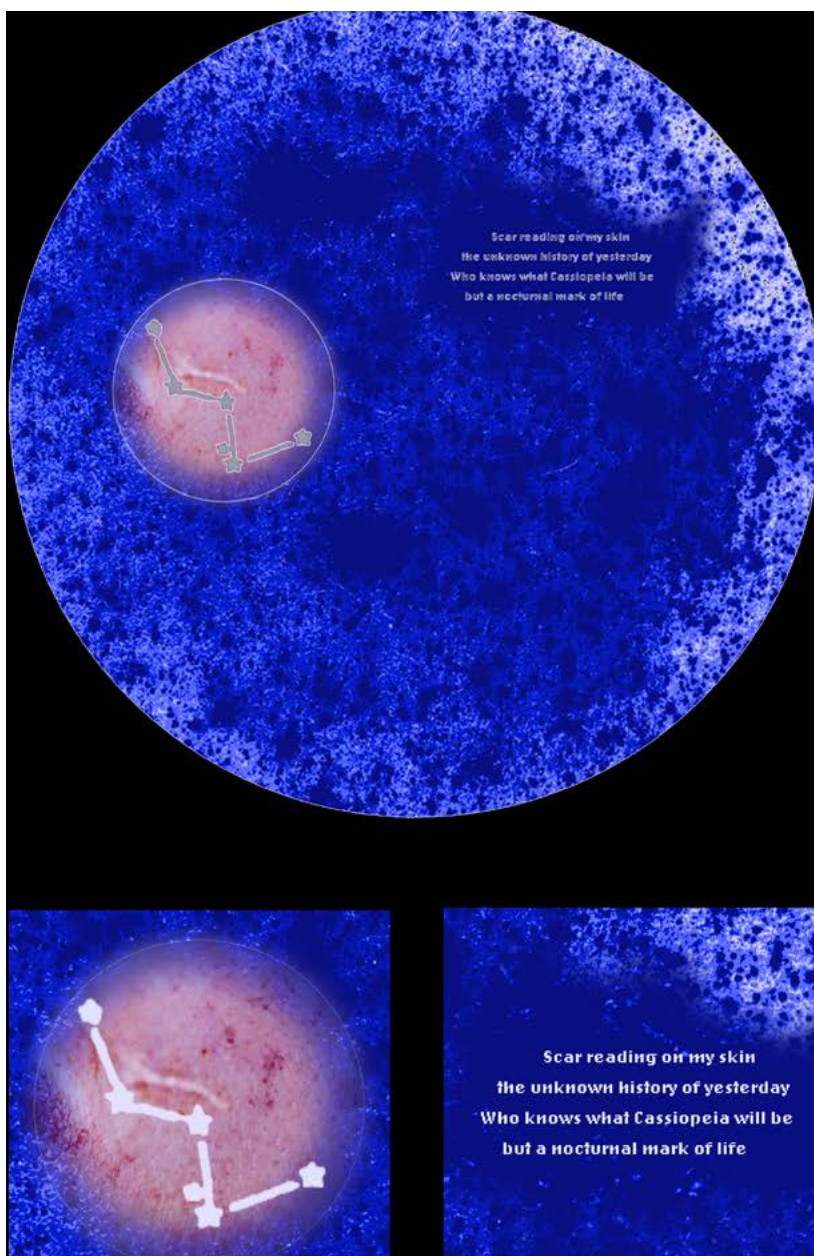
From my scar flourished growing soars,
bouncy childhood coloured with erased
watercolours.

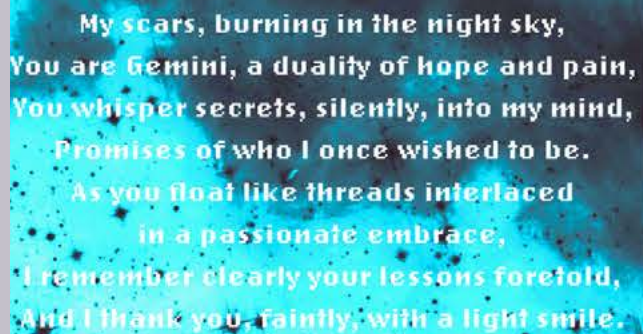




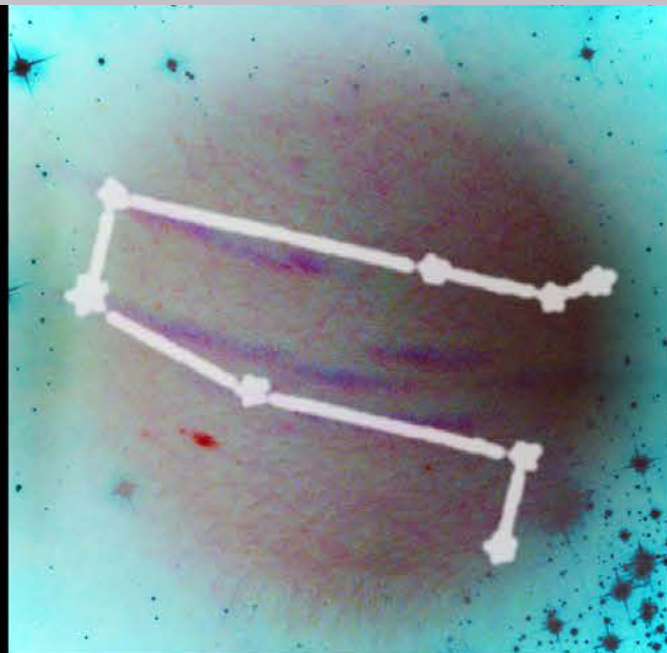








My scars, burning in the night sky,
You are Gemini, a duality of hope and pain,
You whisper secrets, silently, into my mind,
Promises of who I once wished to be.
As you float like threads interlaced
in a passionate embrace,
I remember clearly your lessons foretold,
And I thank you, faintly, with a light smile.



2.8. Lab 06 / Steps to equality.

The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) launched the challenge for all municipalities in the country to mark the «Municipal Day for Equality», which takes place on 24 October, through an urban art intervention entitled Steps to Equality, which informed people about the inequalities that still exist between women and men. The aim of this action was to mobilise residents to combat various forms of discrimination. As part of this challenge, Dr Teresa Carona, from the Education and Social Intervention Division of Évora Municipal Council (DEIS-CME), against the backdrop of the Municipal Plan for Equality and Non-Discrimination (PMIND-CME), invited the team of researchers from «Digital Basket» and the Digitálias collective to take part in the event and jointly create an artistic project for the Évora City Council staircase.

The PMIND, according to the CME, has a time horizon of 4 years (2022-2025) and is transversal in nature, framing the issue of gender equality and non-discrimination from a strategic and operational point of view, in line with the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 – «Portugal + Igual» (ENIND) and with national plans. These plans include the Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men, the Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and the Action Plan for Combating Discrimination on the grounds of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression. It is a malleable plan that is subject to modifications deemed useful by the public, in order to respond to demands that arise during its realisation and evaluation, bringing together intervention guidelines and pointing out real actions on the internal and external fronts, i.e.:

(...) for its employees and its residents, towards the progressive realisation of a fair, inclusive and egalitarian society, whose promotion of equality and non-discrimination between all citizens is based on concerted action between the municipality, relevant entities and the population. It is a Plan of and for Évora (CME-PMIND, 2022).

The resulting installation consisted of 25 phrases and their illustrations, inscribed on the steps of the City Council building in Évora, and was realised as part of digital design workshops for the Digitálias collective, undergraduate and master's students from DAVD/EA/UÉ, and students from the Design classes

of Professors Maria João Vilela Machado and Leonor Serpa Branco, from the Gabriel Pereira Secondary School (ESGP) in Évora. The phrases were written on the basis of Évora council statistics on inequalities in working life, in the home and domestic violence, and texts and reflections by public thinkers and personalities that were easy to read and could alert us to the problem of gender inequality.

The sentences selected were as follows:

Évora City Council employees: senior posts: ♀ 36,4%: ♂ 63,6% [CME/2021]

Évora City Council employees: difficulties of ♀ reconciling professional/personal/family life: main causes – family care and illness [CME/2021]

Évora City Council employees: 1863 hours dedicated to protecting parenthood: ♀ 73,6%: ♂ 26,4% [CME/2021]

Évora City Council employees: 689 hours dedicated to family care: ♀ 70%: ♂ 30% [CME/2021]

Municipality of Évora: school sport participation: ♀ 43,2%: ♂ 56,8% [CME/2018-20]

Municipality of Évora: federated sport participation: ♀ 15%: ♂ 85% [CME/2018-20]

Municipality of Évora: ♀ employed in companies: 8294 in 2016: 9132 in 2018 [Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation/2021]

Municipality of Évora: ♀ companies: 319 in 2016: 314 in 2018 [Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation/2021]

Domestic violence: victims: ♀ 124: ♂ 13: aggressors: ♀ 14: ♂ 126 [C.D.PSP Évora/2018]

Domestic violence: whistleblowers: victims 89.5%: relatives/neighbours 9.3%: entities/institutions 3.6%: anonymous 3.6% [C.D.PSP Évora/2018]

Education, training, science: students in the education system: ♀ 49,7%: ♂ 50,3% [CIG/2021]

Labour and unemployment. Wages: ♀ 1086,6€: ♂ 1307,7€: differential 17,1% [CIG/2021]

Power/decision-making: presidency executive bodies/local authority: 1st degree leaders: ♀ 26,4% / ♂ 73,6% [CIG/2021]

Reconciling professional/personal/family life: parental leave: ♀ 93,9 %: ♂ 43,8% [CIG/2021]

LGBTI+: same-sex marriage: ♀ with ♀ -209: ♂ with ♂ - 236 [CIG/2021]

Gender-based violence: profile: ♀ 75% victims: ♂ 81,4% denounced [CIG/2021]

The majority of the 3.9 billion people who don't have access to the internet are ♀ [ONU/2021]

1 in 3 ♀ experience physical or sexual violence, especially by an intimate partner [ONU/2021]

«Virtue can only flourish among equals» Mary Wollstonecraft, 1790

«I ploughed, I planted, I stored, and no man passed me by. And I'm not a woman?» Sojourner Truth, 1851

«Both men and women must have the freedom to feel sensitive. Both men and women should have the freedom to feel strong» Emma Watson, 2014

«Your gender shouldn't create any difficulties in the choices you make» Malala Yousafzai, 2015

«We'd be much happier, freer to be who we really are, if we didn't have the weight of gender expectations on us» Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2014

«Look at your salary. Ask how much women are being paid, and say: If she's not paid the same as the men, I won't do it» Benedict Cumberbatch, 2018

«Men and women are still not equal anywhere in the world, and that's a fact. Just look at who owns the money, who the billionaires are, who has the power, who the heads of state are» Greta Thunberg, 2019

«There can be no climate justice without gender equality» Vanessa Nakate, 2022

After selecting the phrases, sixty PVC rulers were cut out in different fluorescent flat colours, namely pink, orange, yellow and green. The phrases were then printed in black Lo-res font on a laser cutting machine and glued onto the rulers, which were then placed on the steps' riser of the three flights of stairs in the Évora Town Hall. After the illustrative drawings of the phrases were made by the secondary school students from the Gabriel Pereira School, DAVD/EA/UÉ and the Digitálias collective, they were digitised and printed on translucent self-adhesive film. Finally, all the participants were invited to stick their illustrations on the municipal staircase.

Working with schools was based on the idea, present throughout the research project, of the importance of breaking not only with the manifestations of violence, but also with its causes. For this reason, since schools are one of the social spaces where people learn what it means to be a man and a woman, and what gender roles and stereotypes are, it became necessary to take the issue of gender inequality to these places. Although we know that this learning begins long before we enter school, we are put out into the world as a boy or a girl as soon as our parents know what sex we are, often when we are still in our mothers' wombs, and they name and classify us with the first label that always accompanies us, the male or female gender. This distinctive sign is associated with implicit or express rules, constructed in the social forum and generating differentiated roles. In all cultures, these roles place us in a narrow, hierarchical binary system, which is not based on a rich reality without limiting determinations, and which has consequences for people's lives. These normative and obligatory codes, which are learnt by everyone, by replacing diversity with a hierarchical binarism, end up contributing to the pay gap between men and women, gender-based violence and the mental health problems associated with it.

For this reason, for Phil Barker:

Domestic violence, suicide, alienation, isolation, depression, rage, drug and alcohol abuse, relationship breakdowns and terrible loneliness all flow directly from the deeply damaging ideal expressed in these three tiny words, be a man. Don't show weakness. Don't express any emotion – apart from anger. Don't cry. Don't be soft. Don't be empathetic. Don't be a pussy. Don't be gay. Don't be «feminine». Don't ask for help. Dominate every interaction. Be a firefighter, a pilot, a sportsman, a leader of industry, a boss, a stoic provider (Barker, 2019, p. 10).

By the way, it's worth mentioning that the students on the master's programme in artistic practices in the visual arts at DAVD/EA/UÉ have taken to the project with enthusiasm, interest and dedication.

At the same time, a workshop was held with the Digitálias collective to illustrate these two phrases:

Évora Town Hall Council employees: senior positions: ♀ 36,4%: ♂ 63,6% [CME/2021];

Domestic violence: victims: ♀ 124: ♂ 13: aggressors: ♀ 14: ♂ 126 [C.D.PSP Évora/2018].

Images

<<**Lab 06/Steps to equality**>>

<https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/lab06.html>





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CHAPTER 3 | Dissemination and publicising of the Digitálias collective.

3.1. M.ARS Virtual Women Art Museum: Digitálias experimental website.

At the start of this research project, a virtual art museum was set up with museologist Aida Rechená, entitled «M.ARS – Virtual Women Art Museum», online, to accommodate the multimedia materials produced as they were realised, namely the net art projects created by the women from the shelters, the video and photographic records of the laboratories and the project's publications in electronic format.

The website «M.ARS – Virtual Women Art Museum» had as its main objectives:

- i) Publicising the project and the net art works produced;
- ii) Creation of a collaborative online platform, and;
- iii) Creation of a virtual museum within the framework of social museology.

The website «M.ARS» used the working methodology and organisation that social museology proposes for museums: mission, vocation, constitution of a collection, exhibitions, educational projects, production of knowledge, dissemination and social intervention. The contents of the virtual museum would form part of the temporary exhibition, the themes of which will be defined below. With the acronym «M.ARS», that matched the letter «m» for Museum and the word «ars» which means art in Latin, we sought to deconstruct and appropriate the patriarchal commonplace which states that «men are from Mars and women are from Venus». The idea was to create a museum that would operate in the field of participatory and multimedia art, social museology and gender studies, highlighting the role of women in art.

This museum was not intended to be a static museological model for the mere dissemination of artistic content, but an interactive museological platform for artistic production online and in real time. The

projects should take the form of interactive websites that function in different playful interfaces and invite users to interact, such as a grid of images and texts that changes as the user moves the mouse over the images, revealing underlying images as a result, and pop-ups or texts that trigger multiple meanings and readings. These non-linear transmedia narratives could be experienced and played online, on the World Wide Web, by one or several users, or offline in installations, museums, galleries, community spaces, associations, among others.

It should be noted that in order to make the fight against gender-based violence more effective, users could participate in the construction of some of the projects, for example by suggesting phrases or images that would then be incorporated into the web narratives. We were interested in using the playful, hyper-textual and interactive dimension of net art in order to alert society to the problem of gender violence and contribute to changing discriminatory attitudes and behaviour.

We were inspired to create the logo and aesthetics of the website by the artist and designer Susan Kare (USA, 1954), a pioneer of pixelart, who created many of the icons for the Apple Macintosh computer interface between 1983 and 1986. We also wanted this museum to function as an archive, in the way that Gabriella Giannachi understands it, that is, as a:

(...) process or lab (where archive is a verb) and draw attention to the growing significance of the user of the archive who more and more often is nowadays also its creator. (...) By choosing to define the archive as an apparatus, I therefore suggest that the archive cannot be read in isolation, but rather that it is relational, that it directly affects our behaviors, actions and thoughts, and that it forms an intrinsic part of our economy. I also suggest that we design the archive as the apparatus we want to be produced by. This explains why the archive, more than other form of collection, has evolved in parallel with changing attitudes toward culture, philosophy, politics, and society, and also why there is a direct link between the archive and our *oikos* (home), and the system we use to administer our home, that is our economy. (...) the archive acts as a system of enunciation (Foucault 2011, 129), operating as a presencing tool, where presence, the present, and identity are generated and transmitted (Giannachi, 2016, p. xv and 53).

The archive «!W.A.R. – Women, Art, Revolution», 2001, by Lynn Hershman Leeson, an artist who has been researching the body as a place for constructing identity through technology since the 1970s, was also the inspiration for our project. This transmedia archive is made up of elements collected by the artist over a long period of time, and includes, in particular, a digital database that was used to produce a film, an installation, a blog, a bibliographic resource, and two Internet archives on feminist artists who worked in the USA between the 1960s and the present, and whose works have been excluded from the art world's main collections. According to Giannachi, we can say that the archive «!W.A.R. – Women, Art, Revolution» works as a «apparatus» in this context, adopting the form of enunciation created by French author Michel Foucault in 1977. In this context, users of the archive are encouraged not only to learn about the revolutionary past of feminist art, but also to create innovative relationships between past, present and future (Giannachi, 2016, p. 35).

However, it is important to note that while the apparatus of knowledge-power (*dispositif*) was used by Foucault to refer to the different mechanisms of an institution – administrative, architectural, knowledge structures – that serve to maintain the exercise of power within the social sphere, and which are reconfigured in each era, Giannachi defines the archive as a device capable of producing creative, original and liberating knowledge and practices.

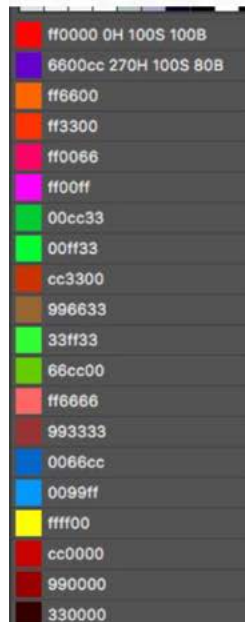
By creating the virtual art archive «M.ARS» we wanted to help develop processes and techniques for a more polyphonic view of women and a more inclusive participation that would also build a more equal and sustainable historical narrative. Our aim was also to create a participatory museum that would constitute an innovative, open and democratic cultural heritage, where more voices and opinions on women's history would be represented. We were also aware of the risk of this being a large online archive for the production and preservation of this cultural heritage, the organisation of which would present us with major challenges, so that artistic and social values would be incorporated in a way that did not reproduce and extend established power structures.

After this first attempt at creating an interactive archive, we thought it would be more effective to publicise the Digitálias project within the framework of a web archive more focused on the area of multimedia, transmedia and social art, particularly focused on gender equality. It was in this context that the «Digital Basket» website was created.

Images

<<**M.ARS/Virtual Art Museum:**
experimental website>>

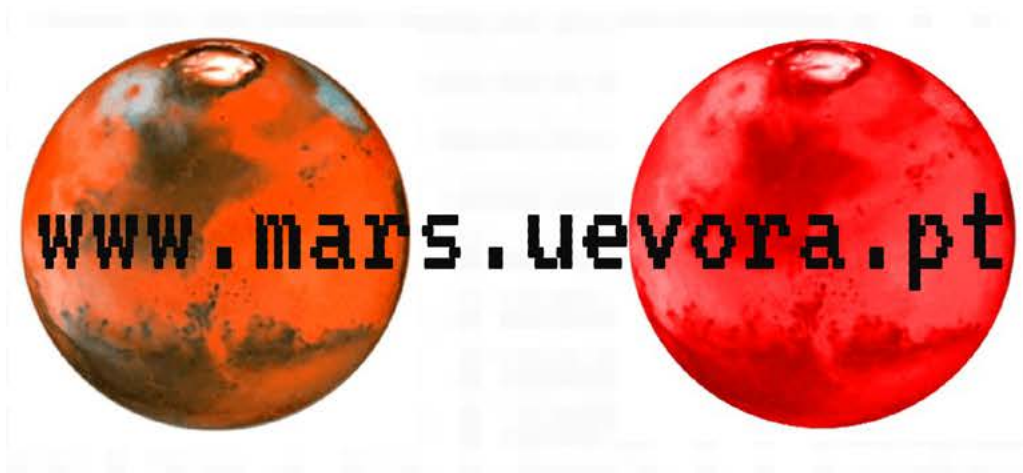
<https://www.mars.uevora.pt/html>



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M.ARTE
MUSEU VIRTUAL MULHERES NA ARTE

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M.AARS

VIRTUAL WOMEN ART MUSEUM

3.2. Digital Basket: Multimedia labs for gender equality.

The «Digital Basket» website, in the form of an interactive digital archive, was created after the experimental «M.ARS - Virtual Women Art Museum» archive described above. This new website was created to host the work of the Digitálias collective, as well as the work carried out as part of a wider multimedia art project centred on gender equality. As we explained on the main page of «Digital Basket», the website was based on being one:

– Participatory art research project carried out to promote gender equality on the Internet, from an inclusive and intersectional perspective, in accordance with the directives of the «Action Plan for the Digital Transition», «INCoDe.2030 Programme of the Government of Portugal», and «Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025 of the European Parliament», through the following actions:

1. Collective co-creation of multimedia art and net art, using basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools, centred on gender equality issues, disseminated on this website and in a travelling exhibition.;

2. Empowering girls and women in the community with ICT skills in order to reverse the downward trend in their participation in digital society and their consequent impoverishment and subalternisation. This project is part of the *Gender in Art* research project – [2016-] – Ref.CHAIA-UID/EAT/00112/2013/2016/AVD/GA – by Teresa Veiga Furtado and Aida Rechená (Furtado, 2022 [*website*]).

On the home page, you can also read the following information about the Digitálias collective:

A feminist artistic collective made up of women from Associação Ser Mulher, Évora, guided by Teresa Veiga Furtado as part of her PhD in Multimedia Art, Net Art and Gender

Equality at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon (FBAUL) and an art-based research project at CHAIA – Centre for Art History and Artistic Research at UÉ. Through co-creative and participatory artistic methodologies, the aim is to empower women and girls with digital tools, contributing to their affirmation as Subjects, empowerment and social inclusion, while at the same time raising community awareness of the social scourge of gender-based violence. The main aim of the research project is to analyse how net art, through co-creative and participatory methodologies, can play a social role as an empowerment tool, promoting the self-esteem and identity of victims of domestic violence. The results of this ongoing project are travelling exhibitions, publications and an educational guide to be shared with institutions focused on combating gender-based violence. The collective's work is shared on this website and on the social network *digitaliascoletivomulheres* [Instagram] (Furtado, 2022 [*website*]).

Today, people are immersed in a digital age where engineering, technology, artificial intelligence maths algorithms, work platforms, online commerce and access to knowledge are increasingly mediated by screens. Screens are at the centre of their lives, from the micro to the macro, from the personal home to the public workplace. The great digital transformation is still underway, and the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown measures have imposed new models of interaction and accelerated the speed of this process even further. These new models of acting, being, living and feeling are not neutral when it comes to different social inequalities, such as gender. At present, men are still associated with prestigious jobs and higher salaries, and precarious labour is associated with women.

With regard to the Internet, it is important to emphasise that more than half of the world's women are unable to use it (Berners-Lee apud Sample, 2020). The high price of the Internet, the lack of equipment and skills to use it and the precariousness and feminisation of immaterial, poorly paid work associated with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) very often means that women do not occupy positions of power as producers and beneficiaries of the profits generated on the Internet. Today, women are once again isolated in domestic spaces, a place that has always been assigned to them throughout history, through feminised and precarious teleworking, which once again turns private spaces into a prison, this time a digital one for women. Women are mainly represented at the lower levels of technological production chains, carrying out repetitive actions mediated by machines, but their presence is scarce in the leadership of IT industries, among those who mould technology, i.e. CEOs, computer engineers and scientists.

With regard to the systematic exclusion of women from history, according to Inês Brasão:

It is impossible to tell the story of women without mentioning how they have been deprived of their ability to think, create, produce and innovate. What's worse, women's creative ingenuity in a wide variety of areas has remained in the shadows of official history. The digital revolution is one of them. The name we bring up here is that of Ada Lovelace. Of noble descent, Ada was the daughter of Lord Byron, the same poet who was enchanted by the town of Sintra. Her mother encouraged her passion for maths as a strong «antidote» to poetry and other romantic tendencies. To Lovelace's inventiveness we owe the first steps in programming, and the computer language «ADA» was thus baptised in recognition of the person who wrote the first algorithm to be processed on a machine (Brasão, 2019, p. 82).

In fact, the digital revolution of the 1990s owes a great deal to the work of a pioneering English woman, Ada Lovelace (UK, 1815-1852), who went down in history for writing the first algorithm to be processed by a machine. In this context, we can consider her the first female programmer in history. However, even today the digital space is not an equal space in terms of gender, among other things. Women are very under-represented in all these areas of digitalisation and should be protagonists in their creation, for the well-being and sustainability of societies. Digitalisation should benefit men and women equally and not contribute to widening gaps in the field of gender inequality. There can be no gender equality if there is no equal access to digital infrastructures such as social networks, online services and e-commerce web platforms. Digital technologies are an important economic driver and to break down this gap, actions and initiatives are needed, particularly in the area of education, to accelerate the participation and interest of women and girls in this important area. Science and technology topics should be promoted in education, using female scientists and artists as role models for girls. Many girls, from pre-school to university age, feel less able than boys to take up careers in engineering and science, which have prestige and status. The problem lies in the roles and models we have created for women, which are reproduced in the discourses and practices of parents, teachers, colleagues and the mass media.

Since the 1960s, feminist art has adopted creative methodologies based on producing representations that emancipate women and reveal the burlesque and irony of the patriarchal system. Cyberfeminism in the

1990s claimed that the Internet was characterised by enabling horizontal relationships between people, as opposed to the hierarchical pyramidal powers of society in general, in which a few people exercise power over many. It is regrettable, however, that the digital area is still a place created by men thinking above all of their own interests, profits and benefits.

Although recent data shows that girls are increasingly finishing secondary school with higher averages than boys and are therefore better placed to choose courses that have a higher employability rate and, in principle, give them access to better paid jobs, the facts actually show the opposite. According to data from the General Directorate of Education and Science Statistics, the percentage of women enrolling on courses traditionally considered to be technical, particularly in the areas of Physics, Informatics and Computer Engineering or Mechanical Engineering, continues to be much lower than that of men (DGEEC, 2021). Thus, for example, the most recent data, for the 2020/2021 academic year, published in June 2021 and based on the figures provided in the «Enrolments by sex» table: at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Porto, of the students enrolled on the Physics course in the 1st cycle, 74.60 per cent are men; of the students enrolled on the Geospatial Engineering course in the 1st cycle, 78.38 per cent are men; and of the students enrolled on the Computer Science course in the 1st cycle, 84.43 per cent are men; at the Instituto Superior Técnico in Lisbon, 84.62% of the students enrolled in the Telecommunications and Informatics Engineering course in the 1st cycle are men; 85.59% of the students enrolled in the Electronics Engineering course in the 1st cycle are men; and 86.82% of the students enrolled in the Informatics and Computer Engineering course in the 1st cycle are men (DGEEC, 2021).

Since women must be agents of change, contributing to social construction as creators, explorers and researchers, there is an urgent need to continue working to ensure that their attendance at technical courses and their future practice of the profession is seen as normal and legitimate. There is an urgent need to provide women and girls with basic knowledge of multimedia technologies, but at the same time to question, reflect on and debate the models, values and behaviours that continue to subordinate women to men. What is needed is an integral, interdisciplinary and horizontal vision that includes the humanities, sciences and arts, and that reflects on the type of technology and world we want, that is humanised and truly recognises and seeks gender equality and equity, multiculturalism and pluralism of knowledge. Women represent half of the world's population and if they are excluded from the digital area, societies and economies, the banking sector and the investment sector will not advance.

Today, the importance of training and education in STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics – is increasingly recognised for the development and sustainable economic growth of today's global societies. The arts mobilise creative and imaginative skills that stimulate critical, creative and innovative thinking and action, which are key aspects of the jobs of the future. Training young people in STEAM areas seeks to encourage them to continue their studies in scientific-technological courses, which require a mathematical basis and skills of analysis and abstraction. There is a link between engineering and creativity and this interdisciplinary intersection in school curricula should be made from a very early age in pre-school, which should be continued throughout school, and can help to deconstruct the symbolic weight of masculinity associated with engineering and attract more girls to this area. It is essential that public policies invest in STEAM training that helps women to take up digital jobs and participate in and be responsible for conceptualising and building the societies of today and tomorrow. With this orientation, incomes and the occupation of positions of prominence and power will be able to reach more equitable levels between men and women.

In the course of the co-creative laboratories, the basic function of communication that characterises, expresses and determines art in general is highlighted here, through its interdisciplinary intersection with multimedia digital technology and with citizenship and sustainability issues in the context of gender equality.

It is essential to empower women in the field of digital technologies and to occupy the Internet, a place traditionally considered masculine, through education and the transmission of thought models that do not repeat the clichés, norms and traditional patriarchal social hierarchies that diminish women and exclude them from active participation in social construction. It is essential to integrate female images and models of emancipation and empowerment into content, narratives and educational books. Narratives are one of the most effective ways of conveying new paradigms that place women, such as scientists Ada Lovelace and Marie Curie, at the centre of the story, so that girls feel that building the world is also their responsibility. We believe that we have a social duty to create conditions so that girls don't think that jobs related to technology and science are out of their reach. It is essential to change the imaginary, integrating references of women into the narratives conveyed in educational content, images from advertising, series, films, books, video games, toys and digital mass media, among many others, that encourage girls to take an interest in science, maths, the arts and digital professions.

Social narratives continue to divide the world in two, as, for example, in toys aimed at boys, where there is a great diversity of models for these individuals to draw inspiration from and think about possibilities for living their lives. Many of these possibilities are based on the connection with technology and demonstrate how the manipulation of simulations, processes and machines can be vital for the future. In contrast to these challenging technological professional worlds, girls are offered models that are not very diverse and that continue to repeat very stereotyped ideas that encourage them to become reified in adopting conservative professional roles that often take advantage of bodily and sexual exploitation. Caring for others is often presented as the only viable alternative for women. Unpaid care of the home and family continues to fall to them, and there is still a widespread mentality that this is women's work. As a result, women often have little time to improve their digital, communication and information skills. The public policies of the welfare state, in combination with those of the private sector, should be geared towards education and innovation that promote equality by stimulating women's participation.

The digital forum, like all other social sectors, is not neutral, but very masculinised, and it is urgent that women be included in leadership processes in technological creation and production. Likewise, the occupation of management positions and the creation of e-commerce is extremely important so that women can sell their products and become entrepreneurs. The pandemic and precariousness have affected those who were already in a situation of greater labour vulnerability.

In the territory of the Internet and the technology industry, we are witnessing the production of power and violence, based on a vertical hierarchical structure that constantly naturalises and trivialises heteronormative power narratives. In this territory, horizontal relationships between people do not circulate in a rhizomatic and equitable way. Technologies are not neutral, but rather rigidly regulated at an ideological and cultural level, just like women's identities and bodies, which are connoted as tender, sweet and submissive, or, conversely, as malevolent, corrupt and insubordinate.

With regard to the use of technology by women, Braidotti argues that:

The most effective strategy remains for women to use technology in order to disengage our collective imagination from the phallus and its accessory values: money, exclusion and domination, nationalism, iconic femininity and systematic violence (Braidotti, 1996).

Similarly, Zafra, using Braidotti's concept of nomadism, argues that one way of subverting the gendered and hierarchical body according to patriarchal norms in the technological forum is to experiment with new discourses that constitute the virtual body. With regard to Internet use, Zafra warns that:

(..) this anti-essentialist approach would be key in linking the materiality of sexual difference to the body on the Internet. A nomadic nature of identities could then be an effective way to free ourselves from the blind eye. It would undoubtedly be a creative exercise, through which we could use the eyes of others by making use of fluid, immaterial, detachable, nomadic bodies (Zafra, 2005, p. 321).

Following a similar line of thought, our main aim was for the co-creative net art practices developed in the labs to contribute to making the invisible symbolic script of gender violence visible, and to publicise and subvert these mechanisms. In this way, we sought to provide a perception of reality through the eyes of women survivors of domestic violence and not through the patriarchal gaze that is widespread on the Internet.

We argue that it is essential and urgent to bring women into these technological domains and have them contribute to the work of idealising, leading and using digital technologies and the Internet, occupying these forums where we currently find power being exercised. Only in this way will it be possible to transform the very structure of power and render obsolete the symbolic violence present on the Internet, which resorts to a primary Manichean binarism, a basic duality founded on irreconcilable opposites, in which the masculine is in the place of good, privilege, strength, power and potency, and the feminine in the place of evil, weakness, worthlessness and subalternity. This dichotomy makes the Internet fertile ground for the manufacture, reception and distribution of stereotypes, symbolic violence and patriarchal mechanisms that produce the social dimension of gender, which traditional capitalist systems are so keen to preserve and on which their survival depends.

Images

<<**Digital Basket/Multimedia Labs for Gender Equality**>>

<https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/>





LABORATÓRIOS MULTIMÉDIA PELA IGUALDADE DE GÉNERO

WWW.CABAZDIGITAL.UEVORA.PT



MÁXIMAS PELO COLECTIVO DIGITALIAS-ASM / SLOGANS BY DIGITALIAS-ASM COLLECTIVE

***Diz não à violência, denuncia !
Say no to violence, report it !***

***Não confundam amor com violência !
Do not confuse love with violence !***

***Querem acabar com a violência...
They want to stop violence...***

***A violência é o último refúgio do Incompetente.
Violence is the last refuge of the Incompetent.***

***Os pingos da chuva fazem um buraco na pedra.
The raindrops make a hole in the stone.***

***A violência é um animal Incontrolável.
Violence is an uncontrollable animal.***





LAB 000 / O MEU CORAÇÃO SALTA / MY HEART LEAPS – artista convidada/guest artist: Jane Gilmor

LAB 001 / HISTÓRIAS DELAS / HERSTORIES

LAB 002 / DO PONTO CRUZ AO PIXEL / FROM CROSS-STITCH TO PIXEL

LAB 003 / PIXELARTE CONTRA A VIOLÊNCIA DOMÉSTICA /PIXELART AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

LAB 01 / COISAS LÁ DE CASA SÃO DE TOD@S NÓS / HOME THINGS BELONG TO @LL OF US

LAB 03 / SERMOS O QUE QUISERMOS SER / TO BE WHATEVER WE WANT TO BE

LAB 04 / MAPEANDO O CORPO COMO UMA ESPÉCIE DE JARDIM / MAPPING THE BODY LIKE THE GARDEN OF A SORT – artista convidada/guest artist: Nela Milic

LAB 05 / VIAS DE TRÂNSITO PELA IGUALDADE DE GÊNERO / TRANSIT ROADS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

LAB 06 / DEGRAUS PARA A IGUALDADE / STEPS TO EQUALITY

LAB 07 / NA ESCOLA SÓ O CORAÇÃO É QUE BATE / AT SCHOOL ONLY THE HEART BEATS

RECURSOS DE APOIO / SUPPORT RESOURCES

ARTE-FACTOS / ART-FACTS

EXPOSIÇÕES / EXHIBITIONS

CATÁLOGOS / CATALOGUES

CABAZ DIGITAL / DIGITAL BASKET

3.3. Exhibitions, participatory laboratories and publications.

According to Ceci Moss, contemporary art practice is taking on new forms:

(...) as the internet drifts far beyond the screen and filters into every aspect of our lives with this process accelerated by advances such as faster bandwidth, smartphones, and social media. Contemporary internet art is no longer determined solely by its existence online; rather, contemporary artists are making more art *about* informational culture using various methods of both online and offline means, which results in a type of expanded internet art. For artworks that volley between networked data les and physical materials, the internet is not seen as the sole platform for the production of a work but instead as a crucial nexus around which to re-search, assemble, transmit, and present data, both online and offline (Moss, 2019, p. 9).

With regard to publicising and disseminating the work of the Digitálias collective, exhibitions, laboratories and installations that were held in different spaces in the city of Évora, we highlight:

– *Digitálias. Exhibition by the Digitálias collective*, Espaço Atrium do Centro de Arte e Cultura, Eugénio de Almeida Foundation, 05.11.2024-16.02.2025. Available at <https://www.instagram.com/digitaliascoletivo-mulheres>

– *Degraus para a Igualdade: Steps to Equality*, Évora Town Hall Council Chambers, 17.10-13.12.2022. Available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/lab06/escadaria.html>

– *Digitálias, um futuro pela paz: a future for peace*, Évora Town Hall Council Chambers, 24.11-13.12.2022. Available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/expofsj.html>

– *Digitálias+Nela Milic: From bright scars to night stars*, Feira de São João 2022, 23.06-03.07.2022. Available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/expofsj.html>

– *Digitálias02*. Exhibition by the Digitálias collective, Horta das Figueiras and Malagueira Parish Council

Exhibition Room, July 2022.

– *The 1920s: new plasticities*, Digitálias collective participated at the group exhibition held as part of the UÉ International Anthropology Congress, Temporary Exhibitions' Room of the Évora Public Library, 06-21.09.2022.

– *Digitálias01: Arte, Género, Participação*, Salão Nobre, Barrocal Palace, Inatel Foundation, 14.05-02.9.2022. Available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/exposicoes.html>

– *Digitálias+Nela Milic: Mapping the body like the garden of a sort*, Temporary Exhibitions' Room, Évora Public Library, 14.05-02.9.2022. Available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/exposicoes.html>.

With regard to co-creative labs open to the community, we highlight:

– Lab *Digitálias+Nela Milic: from bright scars to night stars*, of visual poetry, photomontage and cut-outs. UÉ Pavilion at St John's Fair, 01-03.07.2022. Available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/expofsj.html>

– Lab *Digitálias+Nela Milic: Mapping the body like the garden of a sort*, plasticine modelling on photographs of scars. Évora Public Library, 07.05.2022. Available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/expobpe.html>

– Video co-creation lab with Digitálias and master's degree students – Pedro Dias, Daniela Alvarinho e Miguel Gonçalves –, as part of the 25th of Nov, «International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women», 11.2020. Available at <https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/lab003animacoes.html>

With regard to publications, we highlight:

Furtado, T. V. (2024). *Digital Basket: Multimedia Labs for Gender Equality web art archive*. ISEA2024 EVERYWHEN - International Symposium on Eletronic Art, Brisbane, Austrália, 21-29.06.2024. (Theme: Everywhen; sub-tema: Speculative Practices). Available at <https://airdrive.eventsair.com>

Furtado, T. V. (2023). *Digitálias: a Women Art Collective in the Fight Against Gender Violence Through Co-*

-*Creative Net Art*. Journal of Science and Technology of the Arts. Thematic Issue: Arts and Gaming, Convergent Feminism and Speculative Futures, 15(2), 44-63. Available at <https://doi.org/10.34632/jsta.2023.15723>

Rechena, A. & Furtado, T. V. (2023). *Museus e Género. Da Teoria à Prática*. In Judite Primo, Jean Baptista, Tony Boita e Mário Moutinho (Eds.), *Sociomuseologia: Corpos Geradores, Género e Identidade* (pp. 27-40). Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares em Educação e Desenvolvimento (CeIED), Departamento de Museologia-Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Catedra UNESCO / Educação Cidadania e Diversidade Cultural. Available at https://doi.org/10.36572/csm.2021.book_6

Furtado, T. V. & Rechena, A. (2021). *MIRAGE - The social function of artistic practice as a tool for empowerment. Creative net art projects with women in shelters*. In Lopes, Maria Manuela; Bastos, Paulo Bernardino; Araújo, António; Olivero, Lucas Fabian; Fernandes-Marcos, Adérito (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Digital and Interactive Arts* (pp. 333-342). New York: ACM - Association for Computing Machinery. [ISBN: 978-1-4503-8420-9]. Available at https://dspace.uevora.pt/rdpc/bitstream/10174/30815/1/FurtadoTeresa_RechenaAida_Mirage_Artech2021.pdf

Furtado, T. V. & Rechena, A. (2020). *Género na Arte: Laboratórios de Arte Comunitária para Empoderamento de Mulheres em Casas de Abrigo*. In Hugo Cruz, Isabel Bezelga, e Ramon Aguiar (Eds.), *A Busca Do Comum – Práticas Artísticas Para Outros Futuros Possíveis*. Porto: i2ADS - Instituto de Investigação em Arte, Design e Sociedade da Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto. [ISBN: 978-989-54417-9-2]. Available at <https://i2ads.up.pt/blog/publications/a-busca-do-comum-praticas-artisticas-para-outros-futuros-possiveis>

With regard to communications at conferences, we highlight:

Furtado, T. V. & Rechena, A. (2021). *MIRAGE - The social function of artistic practice as a tool for empowerment. Creative net art projects with Women in Shelters*. Online communication presented at Artech2021, Hybrid praxis – art, sustainability, technology. 10th international conference on digital and interactive arts. Conference 13.10.2021.

Furtado, T. V. & Rechena, A. (2021). *Laboratório Cocriativo Do Ponto-Cruz ao Pixel e Pixel Art contra a violência doméstica com mulheres das Casas de Abrigo*. Online communication presented at EIRPAC – IV

Encontro Internacional de Reflexão Sobre Práticas Artísticas Comunitárias – Práticas artísticas e o risco no contemporâneo, 23.09.2021. Organization: CHAIA/UÉ, et al..

Digitálias project has also been the subject of critical texts and publications:

- Foundation Eugénio de Almeida (2024). *Digitálias*, 05.11.2024. Available at <https://www.fea.pt/agenda/detalhes/digitalias>
- Plataforma Portuguesa para os Direitos das Mulheres (2025). *Digitálias*. Available at <https://plataformamulheres.org.pt/evento/digitalias-exposicao/>
- University of Évora Media News (2025), *Exposição Digitálias apresenta temáticas de Violência Doméstica e Igualdade de Género em Évora*, 13.02.2025. Available at <https://www.uevora.pt/ue-media/noticias?item=42585>
- Gouveia, P. (2022). *DIGITÁLIAS. Uma assemblagem colaborativa, do pixel ao bordado em ponto cruz. Porque a tecnologia não tem sexo nem género*. Available at https://www.academia.edu/97340842/Digitalias_Pixel_Ponto_Cruz_23112022_final
- Rodrigues, P. S. (2022). *A Arte Social e o Digital como área de investigação*.
- Cardoso, A. B. (2022). *CONVITE - INAUGURAÇÃO EXPOSIÇÃO. DIGITÁLIAS - UM FUTURO PELA PAZ*. 24-11-2022, Câmara Municipal de Évora, 18H00.
- Pardal, M. (2022). *Freguesias da Malagueira e Horta das Figueiras acolhem exposição "Digitálias"* In Diário do Sul. Available at <https://diariodosul.pt/2022/07/07/freguesias-da-malagueira-e-horta-das-figueiras-acolhem-exposicao-digitalias/?cn-reloaded=1>
- *DIGITÁLIAS – Um futuro pela paz: A future for peace* nos Paços do Concelho de Évora. Available at <https://www.cm-evora.pt/exposicao-digitalias-um-futuro-pela-paz-a-future-for-peace-nos-pacos-do-concelho-de-evora>

Images

<<**Exhibitions by the Digitálias collective**>>

<https://www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/exposicoes.html>



DIGITÁLIAS01

arte : gênero : participação
art : gender : participation

14.05-01.06.2022 abertura: 16h00 sábado 14.05.2022 / opening: saturday 16h00 14.05.2022 /
Salão Nobre da Fundação Inatel, Piso 2, Palácio do Barrocal, R. Serpa Pinto 6, Évora / 2ª-6ª, 9h00-18h00

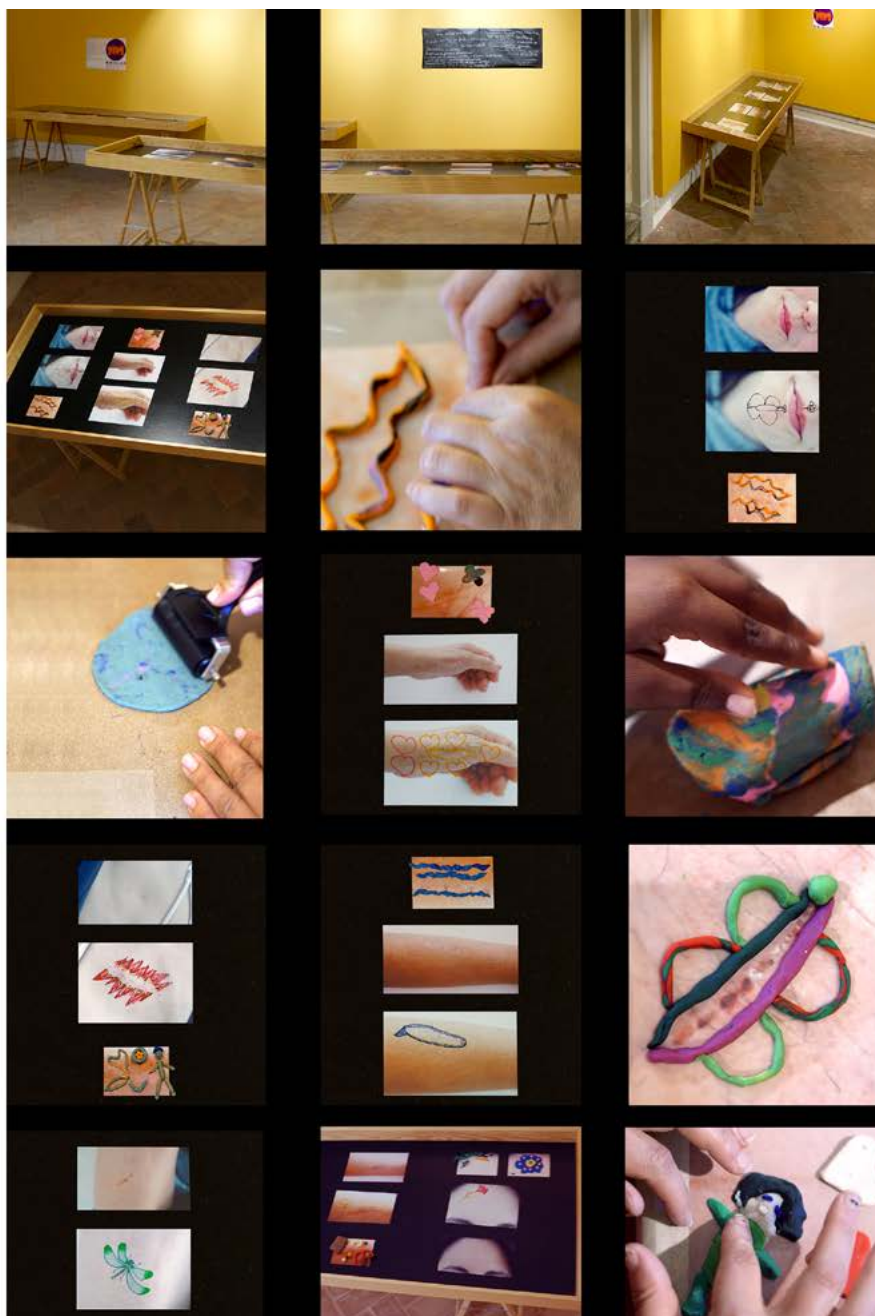




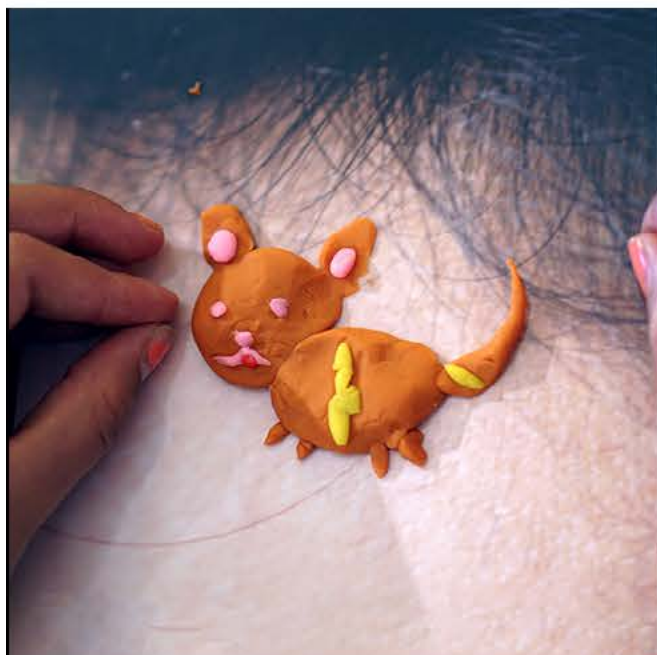


DIGITÁLIAS+NELA MILIC

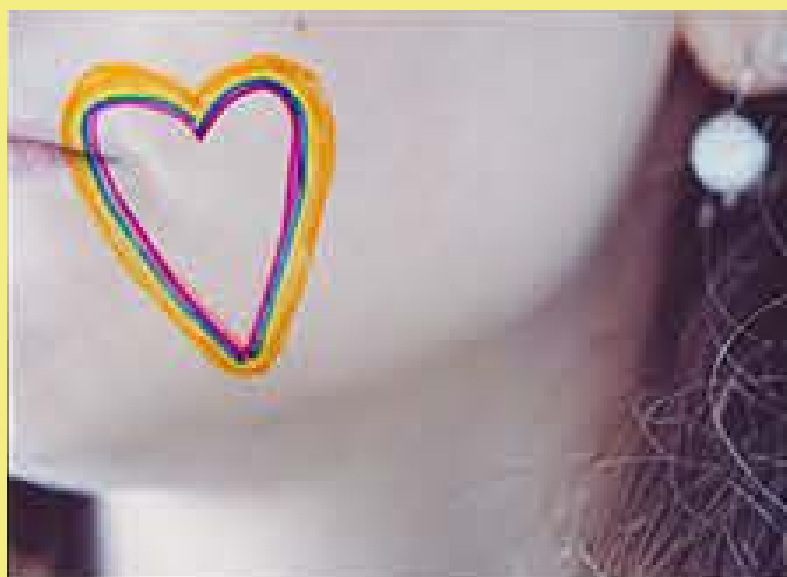
MAPEAR O CORPO COMO UMA ESPÉCIE DE JARDIM / MAPPING THE BODY LIKE THE GARDEN OF A SORT











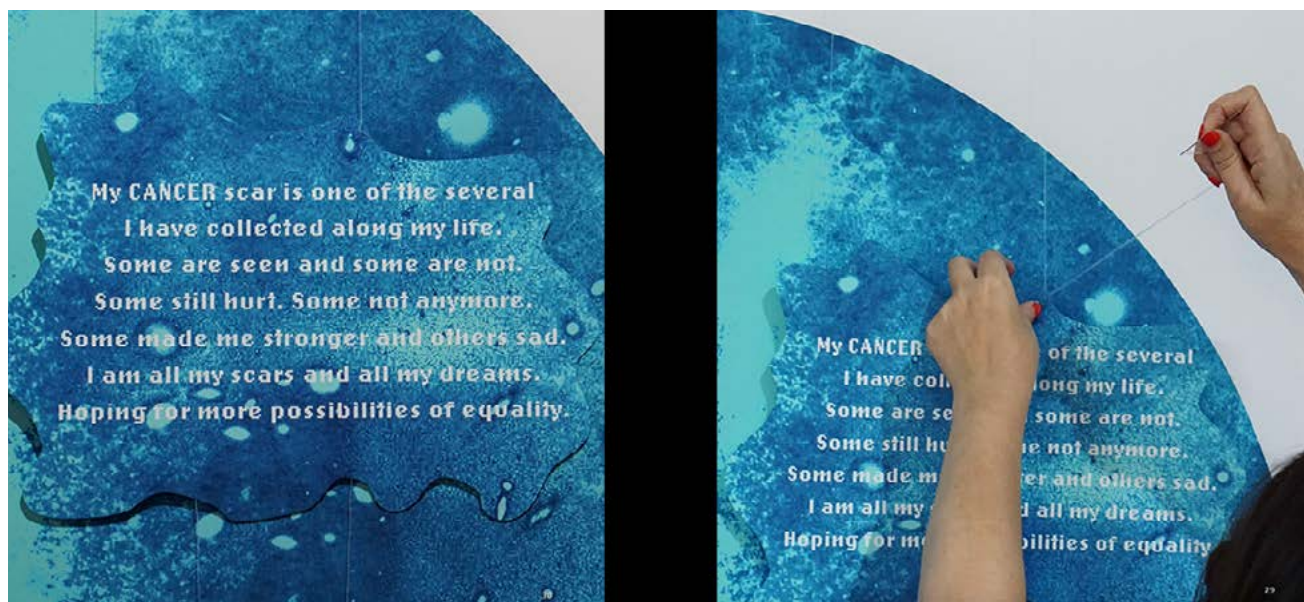


DIGITÁLIAS+NELA MILIC
from bright scars to night stars
art*gender*participation
feira de são joão 2022 workshop

01-03.07.2022*18-22H
DAVD-EA*ESPAÇO UÉ
WWW.CABAZDIGITAL.UEVORA.PT







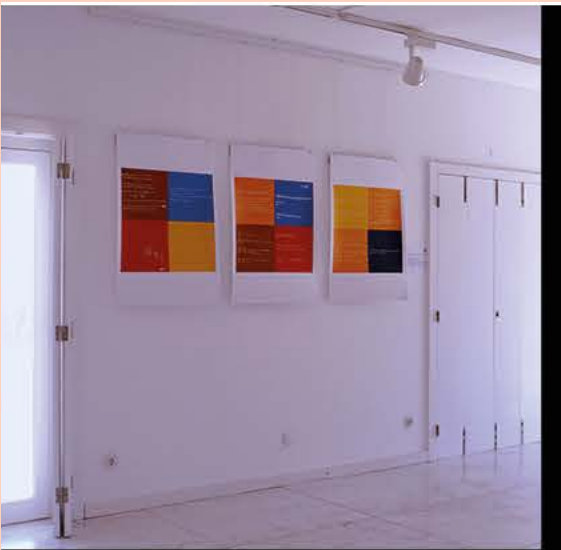


DIGITÁLIA 01

arte : género : participação
art : gender : participation

EXPOSIÇÃO / EXHIBITION 21.06-01.07.2022

Junta de Freguesia de Malagueira, Praça Zeca Afonso 15, 7000-706, Évora / 2ª-6ª, 09h00-16h00
Junta de Freguesia Horta das Figueiras, Praceta Natália Correia 6, 7005-260, Évora / 2ª-6ª, 09h00-16h00





DIGITÁLIAS

um futuro pela paz: a future for peace

abertura / opening : 18h00, 24.11.2022, 5ª feira / Thursday
Câmara Municipal de Évora, Praça do Sertório, 7004-506 Évora
horário: 2ª-6ª feira / schedule: Mon-Fri, 9h-18h00 até / until 13.12.2022







DA MINHA CICATRIZ
BROTARÃO
FLORES AMARELAS
CICATRIZES DE
CRESCIMENTO
INFÂNCIA SALTITANTE
COLORIDA COM
AGUARELAS APAGADAS.



AS MINHAS CICATRIZES
PERMANECEREM NA MENTE
DE QUEM AS TEM
E CONTAM AS SUAS
HISTÓRIAS
EM SILÊNCIO.

DA MINHA
CICATRIZ
NASCEU
UMA NOVA



A MINHA CICATRIZ
FOI FEITA
A CAMINHO.
FOI UM ACIDENTE.

NA MINHA
CICATRIZ
NASCEU
O AMOR.

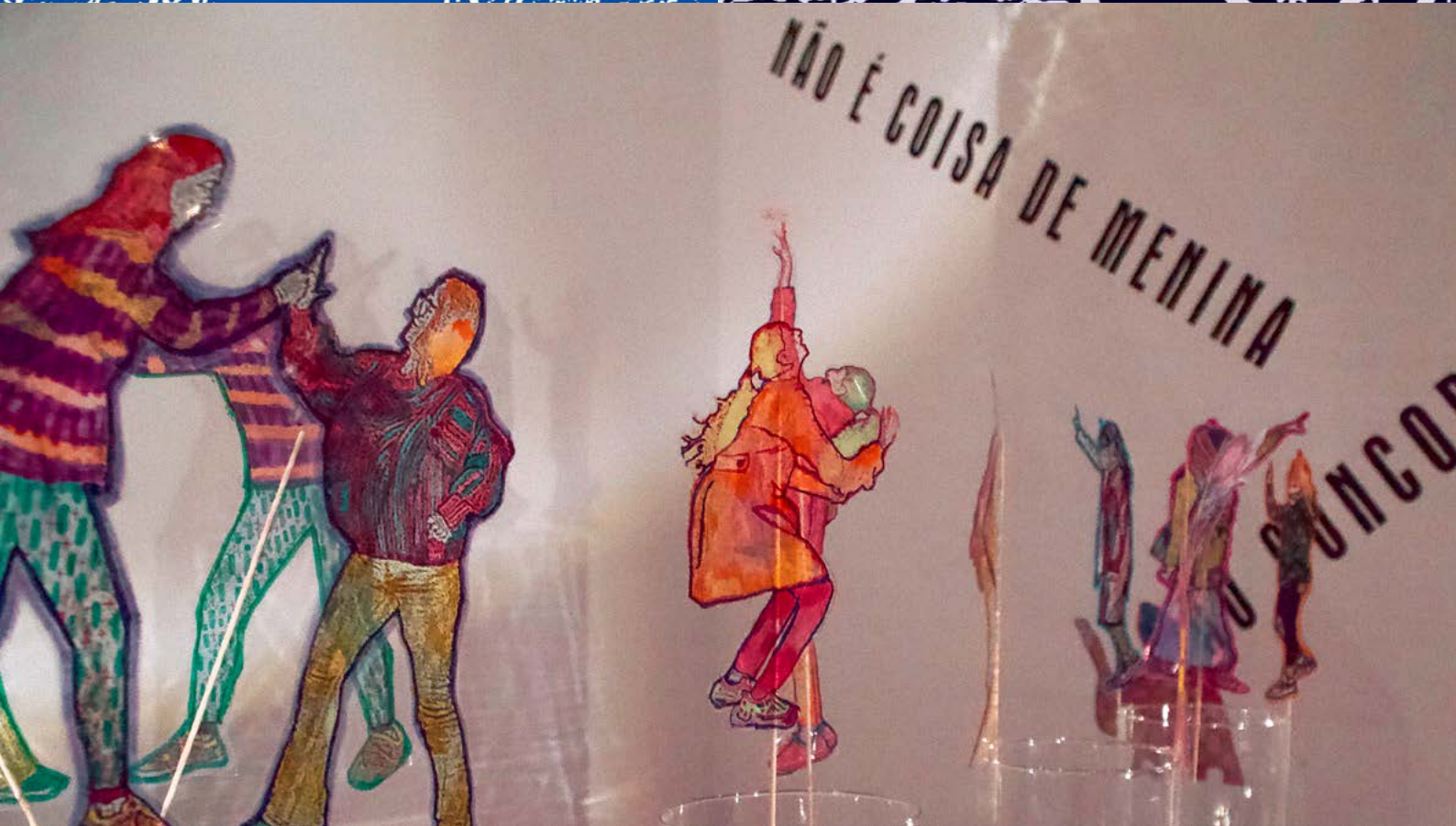


A MINHA CICATRIZ
É A MEMÓRIA VIVA
DO MEU LIMITE E
O LIMITE DOS OUTROS.

TODAS NÓS JÁ
LITERALMENTE
UMA OVELHA
NÃO POR A COR
MAS SEM PELAS
E BAGAGENS
O PESO DA L
COMPARADO
DA IGNO
DESCON



MINHA
CICATRIZ
MEU
NO.



CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this exploratory research, which takes advantage of an action methodology (*action research*) arts-based (*arts-based research*) through the creation, production and dissemination of practical artistic projects (*project-based research*), we worked in co-creative labs with women from shelters and came to some conclusions. With the aim of a final order, we will systematise here the final considerations associated with the central theme of our research or emerging from this theme, and which contribute to explaining it, referring in particular to how the community artistic practice of net art can have a social function as a tool for empowerment, self-esteem and identity for women in shelters who are victims of domestic violence.

Violence against women is a serious social problem with systemic economic, political and cultural dimensions, resulting from gender inequality and the power relations it generates. It's a phenomenon that cuts across all societies, rich and poor, inscribed in culture, in the symbolic realm, incorporated by all people and, for this reason, police and legal interventions are not enough. In this context, this research is situated in the field of artistic activism, insofar as we intend to contribute to the empowerment of women in shelters and also to raising community awareness of the phenomenon of domestic violence and the gender stereotypes on which it is based. Gender-based violence against women and girls germinates and exponentiates in a social space where it is trivialised and legitimised by a toxic and hostile masculinity, being promoted and disseminated above all by the online and offline mass media. Within this context, systemic violence against women is interrupted when the voices of women in shelters tell their stories, dealing with the trauma of forgetting and the erasure of their experiences, which have no place or recognition in the social space.

At the present time, the feminine still inhabits a place of subalternity and is a reservoir of hatred, evil, castration and devaluation, being plagued by the phenomenon of feminicide, when women have already won the right to vote, occupied the public labour market and demanded recognition of their desire and sexuality. This subordination of women by men is historical and has as a real consequence the difference in salaries, tasks and social positions, in the public and private spheres, as well as a unique understanding of their bodies and sexualities. The genesis of this culture took place three millennia ago, based on symbolic violence that develops hatred for women, who are seen as the personification of evil and the tempting voice

of the devil. Examples of this are the biblical figure of Eve in the Judeo-Christian myth, Pandora in Greek mythology, and the male models associated with heroism, courage and celebration and the female models associated with vileness, cowardice and stigma, with this devaluation of the feminine being reinforced and reiterated in the most diverse areas of our culture.

The women who took part in the workshops sometimes showed physical and, above all, emotional exhaustion, which led them to decide to abandon their aggressor. They often found themselves at a loss when it came to thinking and self-reflective understanding, embracing postures of great emotional and reactive instability, in which fear, anger, guilt and shame, sadness, discouragement, low self-esteem and the cancellation of their individual identity as Subjects ruled. Media discourse regularly portrays women victims of domestic violence as fragile, vulnerable and oppressed. During the workshops, we observed that the participants were very keen to create a different image. During the conversations, but also through the artistic expressions, the women often positioned themselves as being strong, active and powerful, and interested in finding a safe place in society for their families and themselves. It is also important to note that we always tried to see the participants as survivors and heroines of an unequal battle, anchored in a gender dimension that generates the scourge of domestic violence.

With regard to the projectual methodology of the laboratories, we adopted the premise that knowledge and know-how are built in a horizontal, non-hierarchical way, and we used cooperative, collaborative, dialogical, inclusive, integrative artistic practices, active and empathetic listening to people, and egalitarian and intersectional values with regard to gender. This methodology served to give visibility to the problems of the participating women who have suffered domestic violence, contributing to their empowerment, autonomy, inclusion and active participation as Subjects in society. These research methods are characterised, in particular, by being transdisciplinary, crossing digital, visual and performing arts and using storytelling, visual poetry, video, photography, photomontage, collage and performance. Throughout the research, we used interdisciplinary collaborations between the participants and academic researchers and students, always placing the participants at the centre of knowledge creation. In addition, the paradigm of the modernist autonomous artistic object was rejected and emphasis was placed on work processes and transmedia objects that are mutable and shareable, created in laboratories and disseminated in physical and online exhibitions, in traditional spaces but equally alternative and shared by the community.

In the course of the laboratories, we considered it essential, through art, to build an epistemic memory

of the minorities made up of women victims of intimate partner violence, preserving the experiences and life stories brought by the women. This means that we took as our premise that listening to the other is a key element of research aimed at justice and social change in a neoliberal society, where informing and moulding the other is a central premise. Similarly, we explored alternative ways of working with the participants to produce knowledge about their lives that would draw attention to their experiences of inequality and stigma in a patriarchal society whose mechanisms for excluding women are often invisible and subtle. In the co-creative laboratories, we created a space for experimentation and the production of knowledge, self-reflection, but also for active and empathetic listening to the narratives, with this sharing of life stories helping to combat feelings of shame and guilt and to rethink together these places of oppression and submission attributed to women. Even today, there is a social mistrust of women victims that spans time and culture, which means that despite countless public debates and government actions to combat domestic violence and abusive relationships in intimate settings, and advances in the law, women continue to be victims of a lack of recognition of their condition in the legal field and in the media. All too often, victims are blamed for not fleeing and denouncing their aggressors or for not having physical marks to show that they resisted them. Our society is in need of a deep reflection on the masculinity that causes violence and the cultural and artistic field can, in our opinion, contribute to this social change.

Throughout the workshops, since the body plays a fundamental role in experiences of violence, performative expression served to promote the bodily communication of the participants' personal experiences and struggles for survival, which often involved feeling loneliness, isolation, fear, despair, anger, anguish and shame, but also hope, joy and satisfaction, transforming these life experiences into a collective and shared experimentation.

For these reasons, we believe that one of the added values of this artistic research project was, in particular, the emotional empowerment of the participants, offering them the opportunity to broaden their self-critical understanding and express themselves through non-verbal forms. At the same time, social relationships of sharing were fostered between all the participants, it being irrelevant that most of them had no previous experience of fine art practice. As a result, artistic knowledge was produced from experiences in the field of the body, emotions, affections, senses, as well as the intellect, based on alternative research methodologies to the traditional ones, participatory and co-creative artistic research, knowledge that we believe cannot be achieved through conventional methods. These artistic methodologies, in addition to

strengthening the participants' sense of belonging to the community, draw the community's attention to the lived experience of inequality and stigma of domestic violence survivors, thus contributing to social cohesion and positive social change.

In order to deepen the analysis that was carried out, given that the education system often lacks a connection to ethics and the elementary values and rights of humans and non-humans, we invited secondary school and university students to actively participate in some of the laboratories, to produce critical thinking and social collaborative artistic practices. We believe that working with schools is fundamental, since these are places where gender-specific roles and stereotypes are learnt, and that these learnt models contribute to the asymmetry of lives between men and women in all social fields, and are the basis of domestic violence. We believe that it is urgent to put an end not only to the manifestations of violence, but also to its causes, by changing the cultural beliefs, values and paradigms of children and young people. The artistic practice of net art in the context of the co-creative labs sought to give women greater digital literacy and free them from negative gender stereotypes at the level of their emotions. Throughout the workshops, topics were analysed and debated such as the ideal model of woman according to the primacy of patriarchal ideology, conceptions of the couple, often associated with the idea that children and women are the property of their father and husband, notions of love and the ideal of romantic love and lifelong marriage, the sexualisation of work in the home, and the traditional role of women as carers in the home. These are the models, values and asymmetrical social roles that family members, friends and colleagues iterate and persistently pressure women to integrate as gender positions.

It's worth noting that the emphasis of the labs was on creating artistic practices resulting from transmedia creation, but also on establishing social ties, dialogue and communication between the participants, not with the aim of creating unique and authorial objects, but to share multiple experiences and knowledge, in opposition and contrast to a neoliberal society, which places aesthetic experiences at the service, more often than not, of commercial interests. In the labs we wanted the co-creative practices to be liberating and relieve the participants on an emotional level, promoting critical reflection on gender-based violence, both on the level of each individual's story and on a collective and structural level. During each session, the women related their psychological traumas through images and texts that revealed feelings that sought to overcome their annulment and emotional alienation, revealing a capacity for action in the way they criticised the violence they had been exposed to.

All the participants were encouraged to evaluate the artwork they had made during the labs and, likewise, to have the confidence to experiment with different techniques and tools, both digital and analogue, and to take on the role of research artists. At the same time, we tried not to put pressure on participants who felt unable to carry out the activities, stressing that the primary aim of the labs was not to create perfect objects according to any predefined and universal aesthetic moulds. We argue that the canons of the art world are not universal, but framed by cultural, social and historical processes, and that there is an aesthetic experience and knowledge resulting from individual and community experience, which contributes to happiness and well-being in life. Aesthetic experience is always dialogical, resulting from the interaction between the self, culture and others, which are inseparable interconnected elements. As far as the weaknesses of this research are concerned, we think it would have been possible to achieve more consistent and lasting results if we had had access to a space dedicated exclusively to the workshops in the city, so that whenever they were available, the participants could practise the knowledge they had acquired in the workshops. This participatory and co-creative art workshop should have been open every day and located close to the shelter, so that the participants could have travelled there without difficulty. In addition, it would have been useful to have scholarship researchers, master's and doctoral students, who could collaborate as monitors in the workshops, helping to systematise and consolidate the lessons learned.

Finally, we believe that attending the workshops helped the participants to deconstruct the psycho-social emotional frameworks associated with intergenerational, binary and asymmetrical gender roles and stereotypes, which valorise the masculine to the detriment of the feminine. Participating women's conceptions of gender in terms of the sexual division of tasks, labour and affections have also undergone transformations towards empowerment and self-awareness as Subjects. Through co-creative artistic practices, throughout the sessions of each of the laboratories, the participants' emotions were transformed towards a rejection of models that sustain them as prisoners of the role of woman, wife or partner, and that legitimise the symbolic power of male domination and violence exercised against them as something natural. We therefore believe that our project has contributed to a social change in the gender paradigms of women in shelters, towards a more egalitarian and therefore more sustainable society. To this end, this research could perhaps serve as a model and contribution to the design of future collaborative artistic laboratories, both by artists and by institutions working to combat social scourges, particularly those that are the result of gender inequality, from an inclusive and intersectional perspective.

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BIOGRAPHY

Teresa Veiga Furtado

Born in 1967, she lives and works in Lisbon and Évora. She is an artist and Associate Professor (*Dr. Habil.*) at the Department of Visual Arts and Design at the School of the Arts of the University of Évora (DAVD/EA/UÉUÉ), an integrated member of the Centre for Art History and Artistic Research (CHAIA/UÉ) and collaborator member of the Interactive Technologies Institute of the Laboratory for Robotics and Engineering Systems (ITI-LARSyS), of the Instituto Superior Técnico of the University of Lisbon (IST-UL), as well as an associate member of the Centre for Research and Studies in Fine Arts of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon (CIEBA-FBAUL).

Her research areas are Multimedia Art, Net Art, Gender Studies, and Social and Participatory Art. In 2023, she completed her PhD thesis in Fine Arts-Art, specialising in Multimedia Art, at FBAUL, entitled *Net art and gender equality: co-creation with women from shelters*. In 2014 she finalised her doctoral thesis in Sociology at NOVA FCSH, entitled *Women's Video Art: Our Bodies, Ourselves*. In 1998 she finished the Master Degree Course in Printmaking at the Royal College of Art, London. In 1992 she graduated in Painting from FBAUL.

Since 2008 she has been involved in curating and organising international conferences such as *Act Out: Performative Video by Nordic Women Artists*, UÉ. She has also curated exhibitions such as *Video and Gender*, as part of the cycle «Gender Trouble» at the Maria Matos Theatre, Lisbon, 2012, e *Gender in Art*, with Aida Rechená, at MNAC-CHIADO, 2017-18, which was awarded the *APOM-Portuguese Museology Association Award 2018* and the *Rainbow Prize for Equality in Culture, 2017*, by the Association IILGA Portugal Association – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Intervention. Since 2018 she has been organising collaborative art workshops and is a member of the Digitálias artistic women collective of ASM – Associação Ser Mulher, Évora.

@digitaliascoletivomulheres

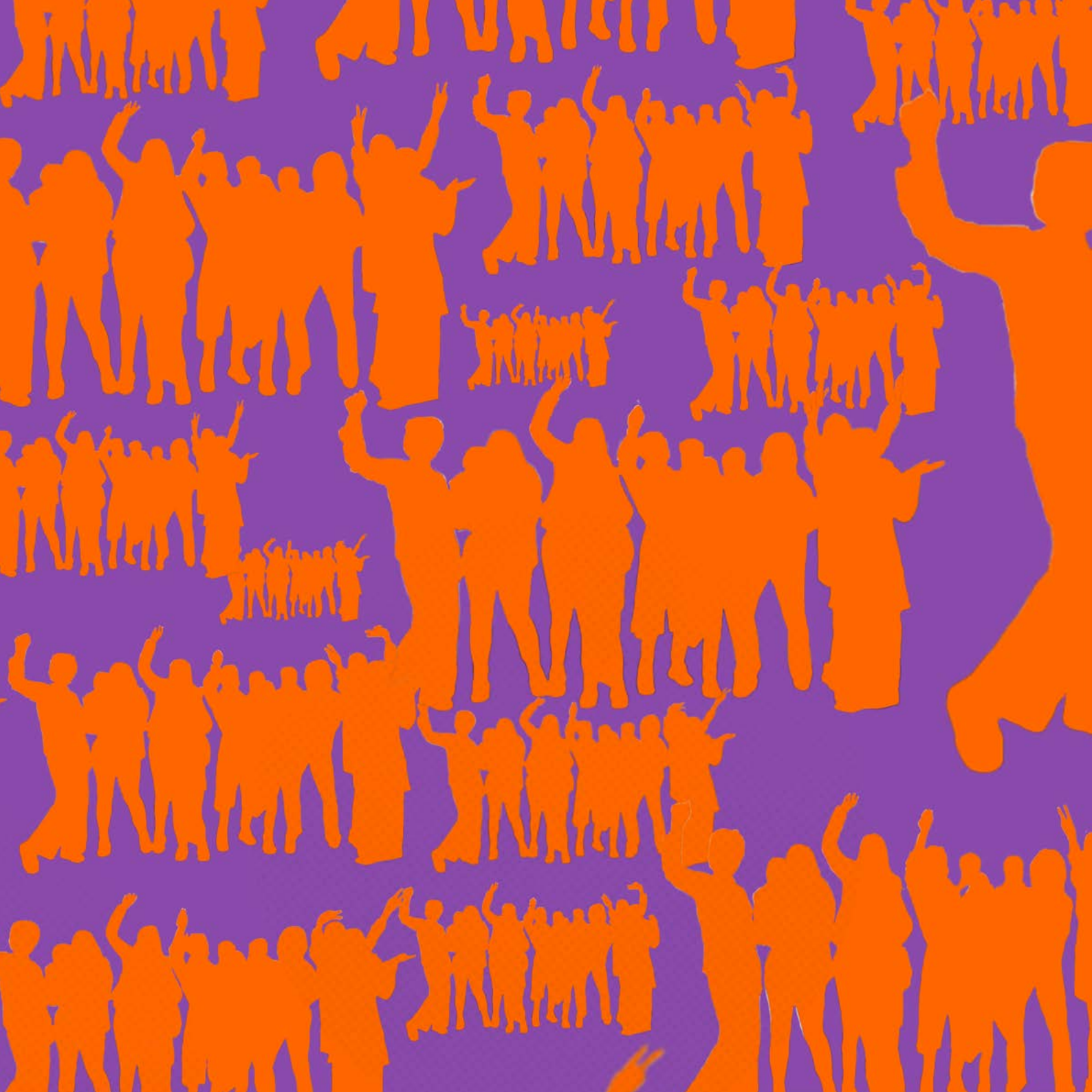


DIGITAL BASKET

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www.cabazdigital.uevora.pt/index.html





This book is the result of an exploratory artistic research in the scientific field of multimedia art, the central aim of which was to analyse how the community artistic practice of net art can play a social role as a tool for the empowerment, self-esteem and identity of women survivors of domestic violence, using an action methodology (*action research*) arts-based (*arts-based research*) through the creation, production and dissemination of practical artistic projects (*project-based research*). This research aims to contribute to the creation of models and methodologies that can be used by academic institutions, as well as social solidarity organisations, in the fight against gender inequality and the creation of active policies to respect difference and promote equality.

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This collective is made up of women survivors of domestic violence who have been supported by ASM-Associação Ser Mulher, based in Évora and by the ASM team, and has as its main organiser Teresa Veiga Furtado, artist, CHAIA /UÉ - Centre for Art History and Artistic Research of the University of Évora researcher and associate professor (*Dr. Habil.*) at UÉ. The laboratories carried out resulted in a series of publications and co-created works of art that have been hosted by institutions such as Évora Town Hall, Évora Municipal Library, Foundation Eugénio de Almeida, Inatel Foundation and Laboratories and Research Centres such as the UAL SDI – Social Design Institute of the University of the Arts London, In2Past – Associate Laboratory for Research and Innovation in Heritage, Arts, Sustainability and Territory, ITI-LARSyS/IST-UL – Interactive Technologies Institute of the Laboratory for Robotics and Engineering Systems of the Lisbon Technical University of the University of Lisbon, and CIEBA/FBAUL, Centre for Research and Studies in Fine Arts of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon.

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During the co-creative laboratories, digital and transmedia arts are used to develop works based on emotion, imagination and reason, which enable participants and their children to experience aggression, cruelty and violence, but also encounter, sharing and friendship, raising their critical awareness and promoting social interrelationships and equality between women and men. It is advocated a set of participatory, co-creative and empathetic listening artistic practices, in which knowledge is built horizontally, non-hierarchically, in a sustainable way and respecting the values of equality, democracy and social justice. This research was based on a long journey characterised by experimental projects under the name *Gender in Art*, at CHAIA/UÉ, and as a case study the works developed in artistic laboratories by the Digitálias artistic women collective.

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