

Salão Olímpico

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Case Study

Over a two-year period (2003 to 2005), the billiards room of the *Salão Olímpico* [Olympic Salon] café at no.257, Rua Miguel Bombarda, in Oporto, became the centre of an alternative project dedicated to the fine arts.

The idea for this project was launched by five people – Carla Filipe, Eduardo Matos, Isabel Ribeiro, Renato Ferrão and Rui Ribeiro (most of whom were artists from the College of Fine Arts of the University of Oporto) – who aimed to produce periodic visual arts exhibitions and other events, such as video and performance showcases.

This article aims to analyse the project's main characteristics and the ideas that served at the basis of organisation of the *Salão Olímpico*. It begins by emphasising the intentions that were expressed in the project's first presentation text.

The initial text outlined the organisers' intention to create a space dedicated to the visual arts following an informal and independent model of intervention, resulting from this initiative, together with the actions of the artists themselves.

The Salão Olímpico is an informal and independent Fine Arts project managed by artists, most of whom graduated from the College of Fine Arts of the University of Oporto.

This project was distinguished by the intervention principles of this group of artists, with a *modus operandi* that differed from the norms and habits which have been institutionalised by the entities normally responsible for implementing projects in the field of cultural production.

In this context, the artists aimed to build a project whose management of exhibitions, together with the definition of the artistic and exhibition proposals to be presented, was not founded on the parameters that are normally associated to the exhibition and reception of artistic phenomena. Each artist's sphere of action thus moved from the pole of artistic production and creation to presentation and exhibition of artistic phenomena. In other words, in parallel to individual artistic practise, the artist assumes his role as organiser of a project dedicated to the divulgation of artistic proposals, by becoming an exhibitions organiser. His field of activity thus began to be

defined by the polyvalent nature of functions, which are normally assumed by other agents within the artistic community. The artist's intervention consists in delineating production strategies; management of the space; definition and design of an exhibition programme; choice of a team of participants and co-workers in the organisation of each initiative; collaboration in mounting the items on display; in the management of a dialogue between all intervening parties; in assuming responsibility for the production and design of information material, and also the respective divulgation in the public arena.

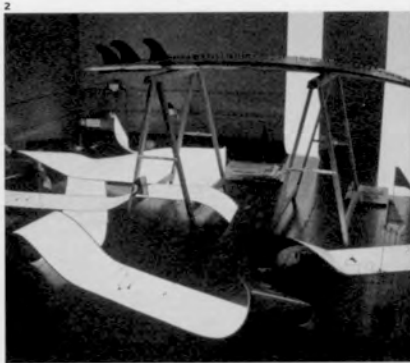
Naturally, this situation alters the traditional relationships within the artistic tradition, in which functions are clearly defined. Here, there is no longer a clear frontier between some activities and competencies: the artist – foregoing the institutional support and mediation factor exercised by the conventional institutions and agents responsible for the exhibition and circulation of artistic works – associates his activity to the organization of exhibition projects and management of cultural spaces that may constitute an alternative and parallel channel for the divulgation of artistic proposals.

This approach emphasises the principle of autonomy of artists in relation to external interferences or the established and normative vision that prevails in the area of cultural production, on the basis of which the value of art works and the reputation of artists are determined within the cultural community by specialists – museum curators, exhibition curators, art critics and art centre directors, requiring the passage via an obligatory itinerary. Artists are usually invited to exhibit their work in galleries by specialists, thus inserting themselves within the sphere of the art market, based on a selection process that defines the value of works and establishes a hierarchy of artists' reputations.

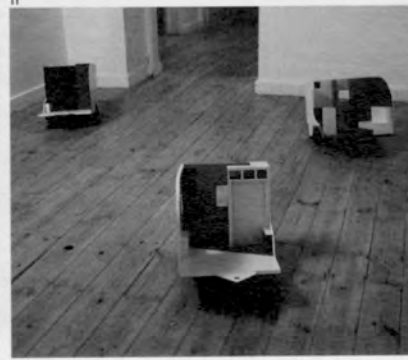
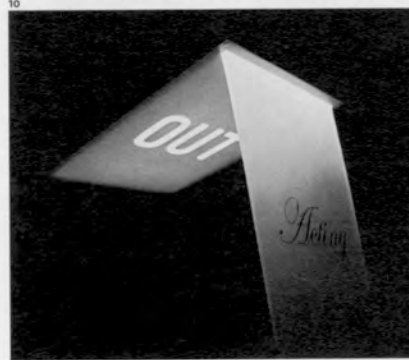
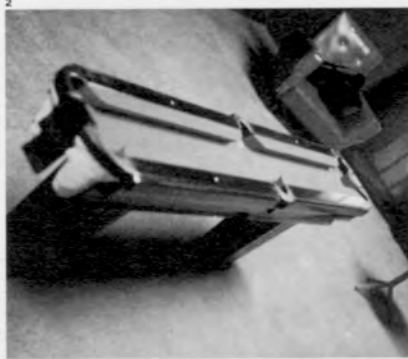
In contrast to this situation, the *Salão Olímpico's* proposal required an intervention by artists, that should operate more actively in other sectors of the artistic universe, in order to foster and consolidate the absolute freedom of creators to decide when to exhibit their works and, on the other hand, in an attempt to ensure growing openness and stimulation within artistic reception and production channels.

Having achieved greater independence in relation to the more closed circle of the established system of museums and the art market, the project aimed to build a space managed by artists, via dynamic work collectives based on participation, collaboration and meetings that would enable and trigger the existence of an initiative and programme reflecting an informal *modus operandi*. The working method of the *Salão Olímpico* was not based on institutional initiatives, normative procedures, external circumstances and formalities, but rather on a collective will that was independent of the formalisation and mediation processes that predominate within the world of art.

The Salão Olímpico defines itself as a meeting place for ideas and proposals for solutions, both aesthetic and plastic, where collaboration is expected.



- 1 PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA / Carla Filipe / Porto / 2004
- 2 Artmosferas / Paulo Mendes / Porto / 2001
- 3 Quartel – Arte Trabalho Revolução – 2.ª Edição / colectivo O.S.G.A. / Porto / 2004
- 4 PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA / Ana Ulisses / Porto / 2005
- 5 Projecto Wasser-Bassin / António Leal / Porto / 2006
- 6 ZOINA / “Jogo da Macaca” / Porto / 2004
- 7 Projecto Apêndice / Manuel Santos Maia / Porto / 2006
- 8 Caldeira 213 / Intervenção Caldeira 231 “desAUTORIZado” / Porto / 2000
- 9 Quartel – Arte Trabalho Revolução – 2.ª Edição / Vista geral do Salão Olímpico / Porto / 2004
- 10 Maus Hábitos / “PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA apresenta” / Porto / 2005
- 11 Maus Hábitos / João Marçal e Nuno Ramalho / Porto / 2005
- 12 Quartel – Arte Trabalho Revolução – 2.ª Edição / Orgasmo Carlos / Porto / 2004



1 PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA, Espaço 555, C.L.A.P. / Exposição colectiva / Porto / 2006

2 Caldeira 213 / "desAUTORIZado", Emanuel Matos / Porto / 2000

3 ZOINA / "Alquimias dos Pensamentos das Artes" / Coimbra / 2000

4 Quartel - Arte Trabalho Revolução - 2.ª Edição / Le Partisin / Porto / 2004

5 CAPC / (A)CASOS (&)MATERIAIS (projecto de Paulo Mendes) / João Fonte Santa / Coimbra / 98-99

6 PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA / Miguel Carneiro e Marco Mendes / Porto / 2005

7 PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA / Pedro Lima / Porto / 2004

8 Colectivo Imperial / Porto / 2004

9 Penthouse / (org. Virose) / João Pedro Vale / Porto / 2005

10 Mad Woman in the Attic / António Leal / Porto / 2005

11 ZDB / "O homem invisível" / Renato Ferrão / Lisboa / 2004

12 Mad Woman in the Attic / Amélia Alexandre / Porto / 2005

Emphasis should also be drawn to the intention to forego management by curators or a mediation body, whose intentions could hamper or impose a discursive line on the basis of a position that is alien to the artist' autonomy of action.

We propose a parallel path in order to implement a set of interventions that do not fall within the framework of an affirmation plan of curatorship nor any other discursive vehicles that lie outside the action of the artists themselves.

An implicit element of the proposal to constitute a parallel path of action within the artistic community was the objective to launch a decentralising operation whose contribution would be to define a new cartography of places dedicated to divulgation activities beyond the strict world of the art institutions and traditional channels of circulation, production and diffusion of the practise and discourse of artistic culture. There is not exactly a critical position or an attitude of opposition in relation to the logic and modes of functioning of institutional actions. Nonetheless, the definition of this cartography (that currently includes many other spaces) is integrated within the line of the designated phenomenon of independent or alternative spaces. This phenomenon offers a displacement movement that establishes a frontier between two fields – the institutional and alternative – and a division between a inner and a outer domains of artistic activities. Historically, this phenomenon arises in response to the closed circuit of galleries and institutions, and characterizes itself by the appropriation of public and private spaces – uninhabited houses, factories, abandoned commercial sites – whose occupation breached the normal dividing line between the autonomous space of art and the external world (the rest of the reality). In relation to the *Salão Olímpico*, this goal is also patent when the organisers affirm:

Our objective is nonetheless to reflect these interventions in terms of their uniqueness and by the registration of a work in a daily life that exists in contamination of such artistic activity.

According to these premises, the project's goals also arose from a desire to grant a relevant role to the notion of the urban surrounding of this commercial space, converting it into a space for experimentation where the dynamics of the works of art would be set into motion focused on interaction processes within the city's social and physical domains. The unique aspects of the *Salão Olímpico* were assumed, and this space, that is highly distinct from the neutral area that we normally associate to a "white cube" gallery, enabled creators to strive towards integrating this physical and social space into the context of daily life, of effective proximity and interaction with the public space.

In contrast with the neutrality and universality of the traditional geometrically perfect "white cube" architectural project associated to the usual art galleries, protected and isolated from the outside world, real life and the chaos of the contemporary world, the *Salão Olímpico* proposed integration and involvement within the living world and daily environment through the choice of unique, heterogeneous locations with very specific characteristics, that are distinct from the geometrically perfect, fresh, clean, protected and exclusive places of cultural and social prestige that are normally associated to the museum system and art market.

Notes on independent action / The alternative phenomenon

While a few years ago it was easy to ignore the importance of the alternative movement, it is now impossible to overlook its role. One of the most significant changes that we've seen in the artistic panorama over recent years was actually provoked by the consolidation of the alternative movement. Multiple spaces and initiatives currently exist within the context of the artistic community. This situation is a decisive and undeniable factor in the definition of a new spatial universe, that exercises a parallel and alternative function in the divulgation of contemporary art. The influence and role that this phenomenon has acquired – which not only encompasses independent spaces, but also associations, artists' collectives, exhibitions and the activity of artists-curators – has made it an essential reference.

The locations that have hosted artists' works since the 1990s, include the following: *Zé dos Bois* (1994, Lisbon), *Art Attack* (1996, Caldas da Rainha), *W.C. CONTAINER* (1999–2001, Oporto), *Caldeira 213* (1999, Oporto), *PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA* (2001, Oporto), *IN.TRANSIT* (2002, Oporto), *Salão Olímpico* (2003, Oporto), *Mad Woman in The Attic* (2005, Oporto), *Projecto Apêndice* (2006, Oporto) and *a Sala* (2006, Oporto).

Emphasis should also be placed on the emergence and development of artistic groups, together with the creation of projects of collective authorship, that pay testimony to this phenomenon: the *ZOiNA* collective (discussion group and feminist artistic invention, 1999), the *alíngua* fanzine and collective (1999), *Satélite Internacional* and the *Ateliers Mentol* collective (2003), and also the curatorship projects organised by artists of the 1990s generation, who promoted debate on the role of mediation channels and agents.

In light of their repercussions on the cultural and artistic community, it is important to highlight the artistic and curatorial activities of Paulo Mendes, Alexandre Estrela, Miguel Soares, João Fonte Santa and also the unique training initiative *Autores em Movimento*, co-ordinated by Pedro Cabral Santo, José Guerra, Paulo Carmona and Tiago Batista, that steadfastly rejected the notion of a collective, group or organised movement in order to define an alternative intervention. The initiative defined its action lines as follows:

Autores em Movimento represents all those authors that currently form part or have formed part of the projects in question. They achieved this status by assuming their participation in an independent manner, together with all its inherent risks, including the project, assembly process and production of their own interventions. (X-Rated Catalogue)

... It invites the research into the legitimisation authorities that determine the emergence of artistic discourses (placing an emphasis on the current ones). Either in order to perceive, with greater clarity and knowledge, the mechanisms whereby Truth is installed and the subsequent adhesions, denials or vast array of intermediary positions; or in order – when the aforementioned adhesions are not achieved in full – to foster the conquest of alternative spaces and the presentation of artistic proposals that match this alternative movement. (Jetlag Catalogue)

Another equally important factor is the fact that these events took place in alternative spaces outside the normal circuits of artistic divulgation. (X-Rated Catalogue)

In effect, the locations used for implementation and presentation of their proposals were rarely institutional spaces. Although, some of these exhibitions were held in the Rectory of the University of Lisbon, the National Society of Fine Arts, the Estufa Fria [Greenhouse], the Deer Room of the National Natural History Museum, the Circle of Fine Arts in Coimbra, the Quadrum gallery and the Graça Fonseca gallery.

Elements for discussion

If use of alternative structures that were counterposed to the system's traditional institutions was converted into the main working methods in the 1990s, the critical foundations of these interventions are not unique features of the contemporary era. We cannot offer a systematic perspective of this situation, but in the context of this article we demonstrate several aspects that may help to clarify and understand its nature.

Firstly, there are many moments in the history of art in which new generations of artists developed a critical attitude in relation to the most distinguished institutions of artistic and cultural life – the Academies, Fine Arts schools, museums and private collections – and challenged the artistic system because they didn't find a recognition that enabled the emergence of suitable spaces for their presentation.

From its birth at the end of the 19th century, modern and contemporary art has been associated to the creation of non-official and non-institutional salons, managed by collectives of artists in order to exhibit their works, thus side-stepping the traditional selection and mediation processes.¹ For example, Courbet and Manet organised their own salons in the Universal Exhibition of 1867, and the Impressionists also assembled in privately-owned spaces (in 1874 they exhibited their works in the atelier of the photographer Nadar). It is possible to identify a bi-polarity based on the different situation of academic artists – who forged their careers as senior public officials and could benefit from financial pensions provided by the Academy, exhibit their works in the Academy's annual salon and receive recognition through the attribution of honorary prizes and medals – and the one of independent artists – whose career trajectories (based on the principles of autonomy and independence of action) placed them in opposition to the authority of the Academy and its norms, and also against the external economic and political powers that laid beyond their field of action.

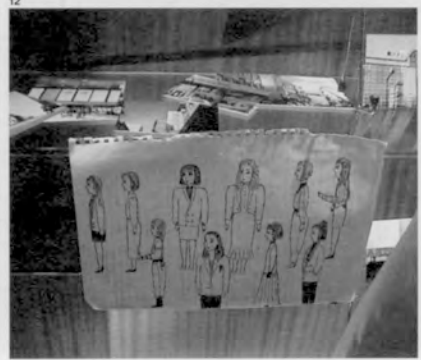
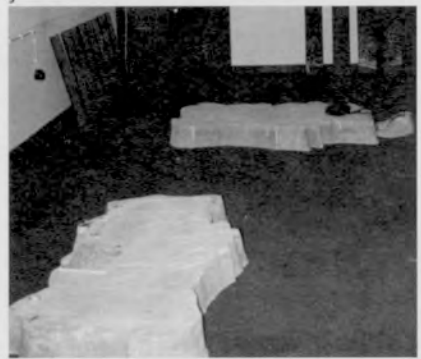
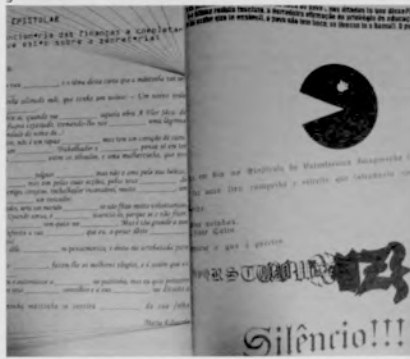
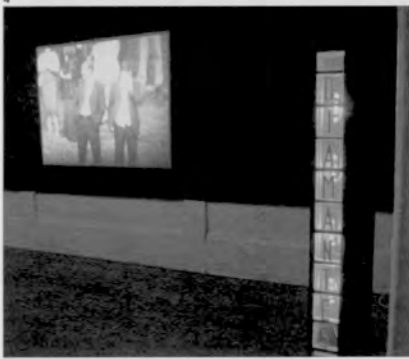
One only has to observe the theoretical production that underlaid artistic practises in the 20th century in order to discern an explicit criticism of museum spaces. In manifestos and other texts, museums – characterised as power and decision-making institutions – are the main target of derisory attacks.² The futurist manifestos made an appeal for the destruction of museums,³ Russian



- 1 Oficina 201 / "a dizer" / Porto / 2004
- 2 Caldeira 213 / Vista geral da exposição "Nómadas" / Porto / 2000
- 3 "Tivesse ainda tempo" (org. José Maia) / Amélia Alexandre e Mafalda Santos / Sintra / 2001
- 4 Os membros fundadores do PÉSSEGOspráSEMANA / Arlindo Silva / Porto / 2005
- 5 inter+disciplinar+idades / "representa; acção!" / Mafalda Santos / Braga / 2000
- 6 Plano XXI / "Portuguese Contemporary Art, Cinema & Music" / João Tabarra / Glasgow / 2000
- 7 Paços da Cultura / "That will bring us together" (org. José Maia) / Nuno Ramalho / Guarda / 2001
- 8 PÉSSEGOspráSEMANA / "Pág. 133 - Livros de artista" (cartaz) / Porto / 2002
- 9 Maus Hábitos / Feira de fanzines A Mula / Porto / 2006
- 10 a Sala / Dandy / Porto / 2006
- 11 INTERNATIONALE KUNSTHALLE - mobile / Porto / 2004
- 12 PÉSSEGOspráSEMANA / Mafalda Santos / Porto / 2004



- 1 La Balancette #2 / Carlos Barros / Porto / 2003
- 2 Ateliers Mentol / Festa / Porto / 2003
- 3 Penthouse / (org. Virose) / Cristina Mateus / Porto / 2005
- 4 Projecto fig. – Nova Delux / "In-box" / Cristina Regadas e Manuel Santos Maia / Porto / 2002
- 5 PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA / João Marçal / Porto / 2005
- 6 Artmoferas / Eduardo Matos / Porto / 2002
- 7 Caldeira 213 / "(+de) 20 grupos e episódios do Porto do séc. XX" / Galeria do Palácio / Porto / 2001
- 8 Ateliers Mentol / Acção/Mural – Rua Nova da Alfândega / Porto / 2004
- 9 Projecto Apêndice / Isabel Ribeiro / Porto / 2006
- 10 Colectivo Imperial / Porto / 2004
- 11 Caldeira 213 / "Nómadas" / grupo de mulheres Zapatistas, México / Porto / 2000
- 12 Francesinhas, Mentiras e Vídeo / Mostra de vídeo pelos PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA / V.N. de Gaia / 2002



- 1 "Four rooms, a kitchen and a view" / Cristina Mateus / Porto / 2000
- 2 PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA / André Sousa e Mauro Cerqueira / Porto / 2006
- 3 Projecto Apêndice / Susana Chiocca / Porto / 2006
- 4 IN.TRANSIT (projecto de Paulo Mendes) / Eduardo Matos / Porto / 2003
- 5 PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA / "Pág. 133 - Livros de artista" / A. Preto e J.S. Cardoso / Porto / 2002
- 6 URBANLAB.bienal maia. 2001 (concepção e comissariado Paulo Mendes) / Vistas gerais
- 7 Quartel - Arte Trabalho Revolução - 2.ª Edição / Ateliers Mentoi / Porto / 2004
- 8 PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA / "Mónitor" / Aida Castro / Jonathan Saldanha / Maria Mire / Porto / 2006
- 9 JUP / "hoje antes de 25 de Abril..." (org. inter-disciplinar+idades) / Porto / 1999
- 10 CAPC / ZAPPING ECSTASY (projecto de Paulo Mendes) / Fernando Ribeiro / Coimbra / 96
- 11 Caldeira 213 / "Hangar: Discursos desviados" / Kai Takeda / Porto / 2001
- 12 La Balancette #2 / Carla Filipe / Porto / 2003

artists dreamt about museums managed by artists⁴ and the Dadaists nurtured a deep sense of distrust in relation to any institution that defended traditional values. In the tradition of permanent rupture with artistic management practises, these documents established the origin and foundations of critical perspectives of artists in relation to what they viewed as the instrumentalisation of art by the very artistic community.

In the 1960s, various forms of public manifestations against museums were set into motion, such as the actions of Henry Flynt and Jack Smith – who, in the framework of the actions of the Fluxus group, organised a protest in 1963 in front of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, requesting the demolition of art museums.⁵ The museums were under suspicion of association with elitist art, recognized alone by the privileged class – which, in turn imposed on them its own interests.

Although this irreverent outlook towards museums is a recurrent and, we might say, typical characteristic of modern art, it gained fresh meaning in the 1960s. This was due to the May 1968 events. The students movements against the imperialistic logic of the Algerian and Vietnam wars revealed symptoms of a deeper discontent. A genuine revolt against all forms of authority broke out, and lack of respect for accepted norms became *de rigueur*.

In the cultural field, demands for a critical vision progressively increased. In the case of museums, many people found unacceptable that such institutions should maintain an autistic behaviour in relation to the events that were shaking society to its very foundations and which restricted art to its aesthetic relevance. In the framework of valorisation of a left-wing cultural policy, the principle was advocated that museums should open their doors to the world by promoting a socially-committed creation and should never manage their activities in accordance with elitist demands – fostering in this way the position of complete autonomy of art. The direct consequences of this discontent were, for example, the initiatives organised by the “Art Workers Coalition”,⁶ a group of artists that, at the end of the 1960s, made a series of demands to the museums: reforms, more rights for artists and ethnic and cultural minorities, and assumption of a position against the Vietnam War.

Artists also considered that the various types of pressure exercised by these structures at each step of their career were unbearable. The relationship between museums and the art market was a reality, and there was a growing number of concessions that artists had to make to economic interests. In the opinion of these artists, the monetary criteria that underlay the evaluation of their works impeded their freedom of creation and experimental investigation.

This generation also found the excessive authority of these institutions to be incomprehensible and considered their power to attribute historical relevance to a certain number of works to be ambiguous. Which selection criteria presided over their policy of representation? Was the authority of museums compatible with the values of contemporary society and the democratic spirit that had presided over the public expansion of museums in the modern era?

From the 1960s and 1970s onwards, artists intensified their critical intervention in the artistic panorama, developing modes of production that were incompatible with museum spaces and manifesting their interest in developing artistic practises beyond the domains that they considered to be adverse to more innovative, contemporary art. Their type of production became incompatible with the principles of academic teaching and deliberately attempted to reach new audiences and new channels of artistic reception. Many artistic manifestations were characterised by recourse to more procedural and experimental interventions and projects – e.g. performance, land art, body art – often through choice of alternative locations for artistic events, such as natural or public spaces, beyond the traditional boundaries of four walls.

We can also add other artists to these references that, in the framework of the term “institutional criticism”, worked in terms of divulgation of the material and social conditions of artistic production and reception – e.g. Daniel Buren, Marcel Broodthaers, Richard Serra, Hans Häacke, Cindy Sherman, Sherrie Levine, Louise Lawler, and others.

In Portugal, the national artistic panorama of 1910 was marked by the *Exposição Livre* of 1911, organised by Manuel Bentes, an artist who had left the Lisbon Academy in 1905 and, together with seven other painters living in Paris, aimed to “flee from teaching dogmas, the impositions of master painters and, whenever possible, the influence of schools”.⁷ In the 1920s, the *Cinco Independentes* exhibition was organised (SNBA, 1923) displaying works by Dórdio Gomes, Alfredo Miguéis, Henrique Franco, Francisco Franco and Diogo de Macedo. The 1930s were marked by the organisation of the *I Salão dos Independentes* (SNBA, 1930) and by the creation of the first private gallery, “UP”, founded by the artist António Pedro in 1932.⁸ In 1940, António Pedro also organised an exhibition with Dacosta in Repe, a furniture shop in the Chiado zone of Lisbon.

The first edition of the *Exposição Livre* was held in the 1940s (Oporto Fine Arts School, 1943), organised by a group of Fine Arts students, including Fernando Lanhas and Nadir Afonso.⁹ The text signed by the organisers explains why the title was chosen and the intentions underlying their actions:

*Choice of this title – Exposição Livre – is no mere accident. It signifies an open door towards all currents, a tribune open to a wide array of trends in the fine arts, with no specific aesthetic commitment.*¹⁰

At the end of the 1940s, we can highlight various exhibitions organised by the surrealist movement(s) that lay beyond the framework and spaces of more institutional art. The first surrealist exhibition, organised by the Surrealist Group of Lisbon,¹¹ was held in 1949, in a former atelier of António Pedro and António Dacosta in the Travessa da Trindade. In 1952, the exhibition *Azevedo, Lemos, Vespeira* was held in Casa Jalco, a furniture and upholstery shop. The *Os Surrealistas* group¹² organised the *I Exposição* in 1949, and held the second edition in 1950 in the *Livraria Bibliófila* bookshop.

Discussion of liberalisation of the artistic panorama through the influence of the artists' contribution to organisation of collective exhibitions also leads us to refer to the initiatives led by the artist and art critic Ernesto de Sousa in the 1960s and 1970s. Amongst all the artistic mani-

festations in which he was involved, emphasis should be drawn to the exhibition *Alternativa Zero – Tendências Polémicas da Arte Portuguesa Contemporânea*. According to Ernesto de Sousa, this Exhibition arose (...) as a response to the profound need to terminate the former dual isolation, combating the 'salon' formula (and its false democratic appearances) by a critical perspective and a fully assumed responsibility.¹³

In effect, the alternative movement constantly focused the growing polyvalence, flexibility and versatility of the roles performed by artists, who progressively extended their work to a larger field of activities. Raymond Moulin emphasises that artists embraced theoretical activity and began to contribute, as with art theorists, to written production.¹⁴ In the same vein, Laurence Corbel explains in his article *Quelle critique pour l'art contemporain? Du discours sur l'art au discours de l'art*,¹⁵ the manner in which artists incorporated the critical discourse, above all in terms of the referential framework of conceptual art, integrating it together with theoretical discussion within their works, thus claiming for themselves the role that was traditionally conceded to the discursive and analytic function of the art critic.

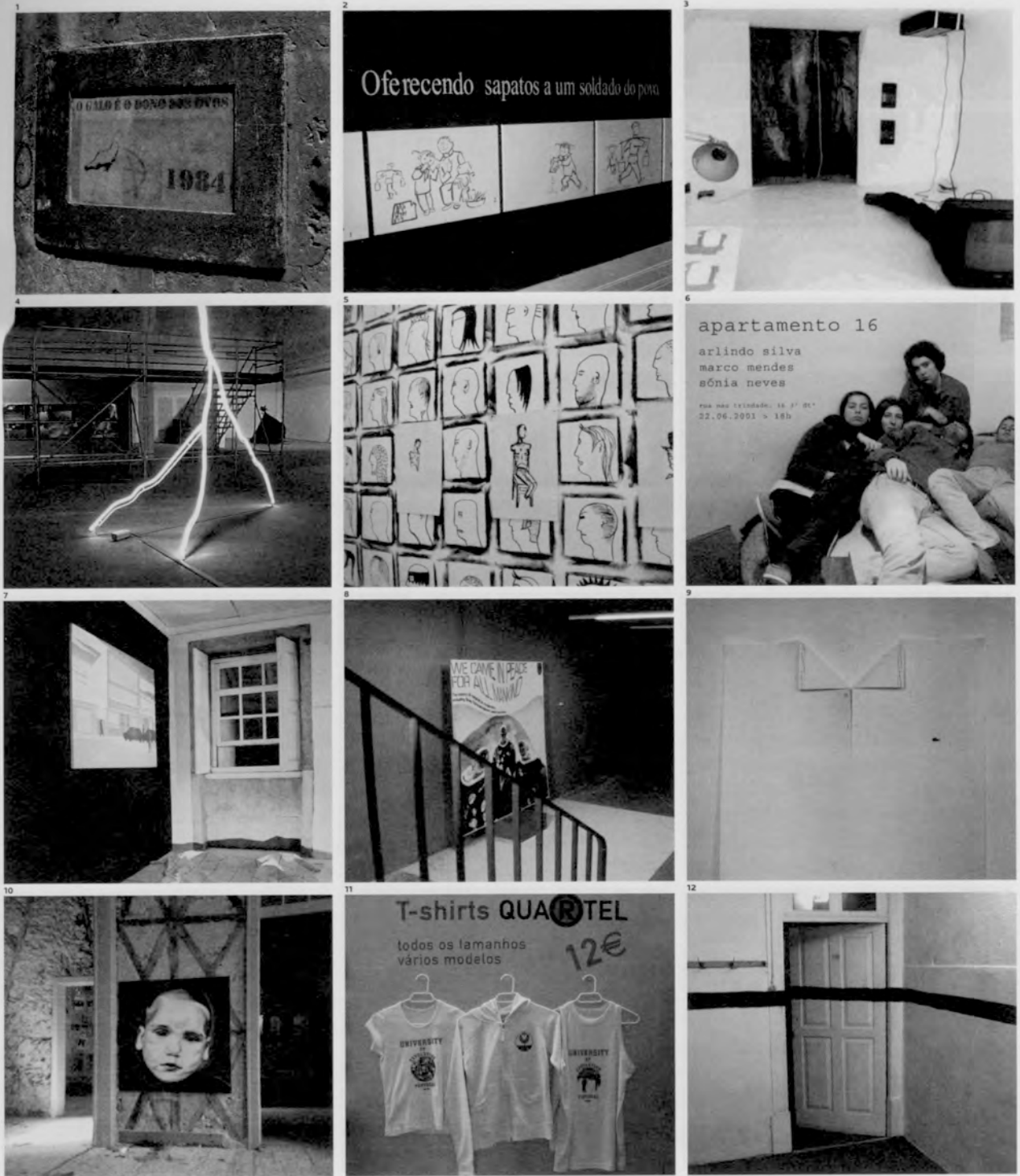
Pierre Bourdieu, in his analysis of the field of cultural production, demonstrates the fluidity of functions between the different agents of the artistic community, emphasising the importance of the context in which the art work is born – which he affirms to be a collective product. In other words, the work does not depend on the artist, the material creator of the object, but rather on a set of persons committed to the cultural field. In his perspective, the producers of art works are not only the artists themselves, but also critics, collectors, curators and all persons who participate in the production of the value of the artist and of the art context. The artist, curator, professor, administrator of art centres, art historian are all agents committed to cultural production and valorisation of a cultural product.

In relation to this debate, we would also like to refer to the article *From The Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique*,¹⁶ by Andrea Fraser, who questioned the idea that artists associated to "institutional criticism" could produce an artistic practise in opposition to the art institution. From Fraser's perspective, the term "institution" may be dislocated from the specific field of art to the wider field of social activity, wherein this wider framework delivers a perspective in which inner/outer frontiers become more complex. In this context, the art institution includes the places where art is exhibited – i.e., not only museums and galleries but also collectors' houses, public spaces, art production sites, studios, ateliers, offices and locations where discourses are produced (magazines, catalogues). In addition, Fraser defends the idea that the art institution should never be positioned outside art and the artists whose activity is subject to its intervention, given that the artists' recognition and existence can only be achieved via the irreducible status of the art institution.

The different arguments under discussion help us to reflect – under the aegis of the dynamic of oppositions and intercessions – on the current foundations of criticisms of the logic and behavioural models of institutional structures and on the possibility of the existence of a parallel



- 1 Maus Hábitos / "Enxoval" (org. ZOINA) / Isabel Carvalho e Carla Cruz / Porto / 2003
- 2 PêSSEGOpráSEMANA / Daniel Schürer / Porto / 2002
- 3 Galerias Arco e Trem / "a Sul..." (org. inter+disciplinar+idades) / Nuno Ramalho / Faro / 1999
- 4 Centro Cultural Emmerico Nunes / "penso voltar" (org. José Maia) / Armélia Alexandre / Sines / 2002
- 5 PêSSEGOpráSEMANA / Paulo Mendes / Porto / 2006
- 6 ZDB / "I like it here can I stay?" (org. José Maia) / Alexandre Osório e Susana Chiozza / Lisboa / 2002
- 7 PêSSEGOpráSEMANA / Carla Cruz e Suzanne van Rossenberg / Porto / 2005
- 8 Caldeira 213 / Encontros em torno de Ernesto de Sousa / org. de João Sousa Cardoso / Porto / 2000
- 9 WC Container (projecto de Paulo Mendes) / Pedro Tudela / Porto / 2004
- 10 Laboratório das Artes / Miguel Carneiro / Porto / 2005
- 11 PêSSEGOpráSEMANA / Artindo Silva e Sónia Neves / Porto / 2005
- 12 Quartel - Arte Trabalho Revolução - 2.ª edição / Manuel Santos Maia / Porto / 2004



1 Quartel – Arte Trabalho Revolução – 2.ª edição / Catarina Carneiro de Sousa / Porto / 2004

2 Quartel – Arte Trabalho Revolução – 2.ª edição / Alice Geirinhas / Porto / 2004

3 Atmosferas / Vitor Lago e Silva / Porto / 2001

4 Terminal (Plano 21) “EM FRACTURA” / Nuno Ramalho e Renato Ferrão / Oeiras / 2005

5 Projecto Wasser-Bassin / Mauro Cerqueira / Porto / 2006

6 Apartamento 16 / Arlindo Silva, Marco Mendes e Sónia Neves / Porto / 2001

7 PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA / Eduardo Matos / Porto / 2004

8 Caldeira 213 / “North by Northwest” Carlos Roque / Porto / 2001

9 PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA / João Marçal / Porto / 2006

10 To Drunk To Fuck / Pedro Amaral / Lisboa / 2002

11 Quartel – Arte Trabalho Revolução – 2.ª edição / Rita Castro Neves / Porto / 2004

12 PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA / Susana Chiocca / Porto / 2005



- 1 Ateliers Mentol / (cartaz da abertura dos ateliers) / Porto / 2003
 2 Travessa de Cedofeita / Acção Caldeira 213 / Porto / 2000/01
 3 Quartel - Arte Trabalho Revolução - 2.ª Edição / Arlindo Silva e Sónia Neves / Porto / 2004
 4 Projecto Apêndice / José Almeida Pereira / Porto / 2006
 5 Artmosferas / "Flash contact" / Manuel Santos Mala / Acção performativa / Porto / 2001
 6 PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA / Colectivo CLAP / Porto / 2004
 7 Projecto Apêndice / Alice Geirinhas / Porto / 2006
 8 CAPC / ZAPPING ECSTASY (projecto de Paulo Mendes) / António Olaio / Coimbra / 1996
 9 Ateliers Mentol / Leilão no PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA / Porto / 2005
 10 Caldeira 213 / Vista geral de "desAUTORIZADO 2" / Porto / 2001
 11 PÉSSEGOpráSEMANA / "Pág. 133 - Livros de artista" / Arlindo Silva e Sónia Neves / Porto / 2002
 12 ZOINA / Fanzine "A Rata" / Porto / 2000



- 1 Laboratório das Artes / Rita Castro Neves / Guimarães / 2005
- 2 WC Container (projecto de Paulo Mendes) / Fernando Brito e Inês Pais / Porto / 2004
- 3 Maus Hábitos / "Ask me why, and I'll die" (org. José Maia) / Catarina Felgueiras / Porto / 2002
- 4 Caldeira 213 / "desAUTORIZADO" / Catarina Carneiro de Sousa / Porto / 2000
- 5 Penthouse / (org. Virose) / Miguel Leal / Porto / 2005
- 6 Sala de Espera / António Sousa / Guimarães / 2006
- 7 a Sala / Manuel Santos Maia / Porto / 2006
- 8 Umdiapositivoparavocê / Nuno Ramalho / Porto / 2000
- 9 PÊSSEGOpráSEMANA / Alexandre Osório / Porto / 2005
- 10 Projecto Apêndice / (cartaz) Isabel Carvalho / Porto / 2006
- 11 Paço da Cultura / "That will bring us together" (org. José Maia) / Aglaize Damasceno / Guarda / 2001
- 12 Caldeira 213 / "(+de) 20 grupos e episódios do Porto no séc. XX", Galeria do Palácio / Porto / 2001

circuit that is independent of traditional channels of visibility and access to art works, such as museums and galleries. It is therefore legitimate to believe the following: the existence of these spaces should not be understood as an impulse of exteriority, of simple negation of the activity developed by galleries and museums. Instead, such spaces foster dynamics and intentions related to the creation of suitable locations for cultural intervention that, due to their unique aspects, raise challenges for traditional channels of visibility, developing a context that is suitable for the end of a homogeneous cultural policy and which favours the emergence of more flexible and decentralised exhibition platforms, which continue to cover a heterogeneous variety of choices and specific situations, that assert themselves over the dominant aesthetic tendency.

Further notes on the Salão Olímpico

In relation to the *Salão Olímpico*, this was undoubtedly a space that focused on the divulgation of the latest generation of artists and of a significant number of creators. The first exhibition, organised in March 2003, followed a regular programming of events, including exhibitions, performances, conversations and shared discussions drew a significant number of participants, including Alexandre Costa, Alexandre Osório, Alice Geirinhas, Amélia Alexandre, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Ângelo Ferreira de Sousa, António Caramelo, António Lago, António Leal, António Preto, Bruno Fonseca, Carla Cruz, Carla Filipe, Catarina Felgueiras, Cristina Regadas, Domingos Loureiro, Eduardo Matos, Fernanda Oliveira, Fernando Brito, Fernando José Pereira, Fernando Ribeiro, Gustavo Sumpta, Isabel Carvalho, Isabel Ribeiro, Israel Pimenta, Joana Mateus, João Girão, João Marrucho, João Fonte Santa, João Marçal, João Sousa Cardoso, Luís Ribeiro, Manuela Campos, Manuel Santos Maia, Marco Mendes, Mariana Costa Miguel Cabral, Miguel Carneiro, Nuno Alexandre Ferreira, Nuno Ramalho, Paulo Mendes, Pedro Amaral, Pedro Barateiro, Renato Ferrão, Ruben Azevedo, Rute Pimenta, Sónia Neves, Susana Chiocca and Victor Lago e Silva.

In addition to the divulgation of the latest generations of artists, the *Salão Olímpico* also fostered artistic creation, encouraging the production of new works, specifically designed and developed for its exhibition projects.

The *Salão Olímpico* also presented a vast array of proposals that could not find exhibition spaces in either museums or private galleries. Without the commercial logic of the art market and the pressure of economic interests, the *Salão Olímpico* constituted a space that was adapted to current cultural production needs, whose organisational structure made it possible to launch management models that differed from the rigid and inflexible functioning of existing institutions – often unsuitable for the presentation of less well-known works or the *in situ* production of new works or installations. For example, the number of performing arts exhibitions held in the *Salão Olímpico* and the attention paid to this area of artistic creation was highly significant, which forsake presentation of “artistic objects” and whose informality and immateriality still continue to determine their lack of legitimacy within gallery and museum spaces. This fact is apparent in the presentation text of *Quando um minuto se arrasta* – one of the various performance exhibitions held in this space.

“The performance exhibition entitled Quando um minuto se arrasta, currently presented by the Salão Olímpico, aims to establish visibility for creations in the area of the performing arts, enabling their implementation and discussion, and which itself reveals an emerging body of work in current Portuguese artistic production and also the diversity of artists who come from a wide range of artistic areas, working in this area.”

Various manifestations and activities were also highlighted, that enabled the experience of dialogue and the interconnection of theoretical approaches and artistic practises, contributing towards the discussion and reflection of contemporary phenomena and reality. Over the course of the Salão Olímpico's existence, many initiatives were developed in which the various intervening parties were able to discuss the featured exhibitions and other topics proposed for debate. This took place with the launch of the first experimental edition of the Olímpico magazine, an A5 format publication that aimed to launch a discussion arena on the state of the arts in Portugal, chronicle new exhibitions held and divulge visual projects by different authors together with conversations organised by José Maia, that resulted in other open, multidisciplinary and informal interventions. In these initiatives, as José Maia himself stated, *the topics or subjects to be approached were motivated or proposed by guests who came from various areas and shared their experiences, visions, opinions and enabled us to (re)think, analyse and question the subjects on display. These moments aim to catalyse energies and should also be mobilising, constructive moments.*

For all the reasons stated above, we may affirm that if we speak about the Salão Olímpico we must talk about the artists, exhibitions, performances and conversations held in an unusual context, but above all, about the freedom of initiative granted to the artists within a protected zone of creativity and reflection where artistic manifestations could be presented together with a dynamic series of events that encouraged participative and communitary reunions.

In the context of the increasingly commercial orientation of the art world, it is once again important to emphasise the Salão Olímpico's contribution to the affirmation of a plural outlook on contemporary artistic creation and the implementation of projects without repercussions on the art market or immediate profitability, whose commitment fell primarily within the framework of free creativity, cultural action and social transformation/intervention of the artistic universe.

NOTES

1 / See Nathalie Heinich, *Le Triple jeu de l'art contemporain. Sociologie des arts plastiques*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1998, p. 265.

2 / See Kynaston McShine, *The Museum as Muse Artists Reflect*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1999, p. 11.

3 / I'm referring to paragraph 10 of Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto, of February 20, 1909 – "We want to demolish museums and libraries, academies of all nature (...)". See "Futurist Manifesto" [of February 20, 1919] in Aurora Fornoni Bernardini, *O Futurismo Italiano. Manifestos*, São Paulo, Editora Perspectiva, 1980, p. 34.

4 / See Kynaston McShine, *op. cit.*

5 / See Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art*, London, Phaidon, 1998, p. 5.

6 / See Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Oxford and Cambridge, Blackwell, 1992, p. 901.

7 / See José-Augusto França, *O Modernismo na Arte Portuguesa*, Lisbon, Institute of Portuguese Language and Culture, 1979 (1.ª ed. 1983), p. 10.

8 / António Pedro and Dr. António Júlio Castro Fernandes, following the Typography activity in the Travessa of André Valente, created a bookshop and art gallery in the Rua Serpa Pinto n.os 28 and 30, in the Chiado zone. See Fernando Guedes, *Estudos sobre Artes Plásticas. Os anos 40 em Portugal e outros estudos*, Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1984, pp. 24 and 25.

9 / A second edition, in 1944, took place in the Oporto Commercial Atheneum – Group of Fine Arts Students. The driving force was Fernando Lanhas. The third edition, held in 1944 in Coliseu of Oporto, subsequently travelled to Coimbra, Leiria and Lisbon, via an itinerary circuit. See Fernando Guedes, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

10 / Cited from Fernando Guedes, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

11 / Group formed in 1947. It included the artists Fernando Azevedo, Mário Cesariny, António Domingues, José-Augusto França, Alexandre O'Neill, António Pedro, João Moniz Pereira and Marcelino Vespeira.

12 / Group formed in 1948, dissolved in 1949. Included the artists Artur Cruzeiro Seixas, Mário Cesariny, Mário Henrique Leiria, António Maria Lisboa, Henrique Risques Pereira, Fernando Alves dos Santos, Pedro Oom, Carlos Eurico da Costa, Fernando José Francisco.

13 / See Ernesto de Sousa, *Alternativa Zero – Tendências Polémicas na Arte Portuguesa Contemporânea*, Lisbon, Secretary of State for Culture, 1977, s.p. The exhibition took place in the National Gallery of Modern Art.

14 / Raymond Moulin, *L'Artiste, l'institution et le marché*, Paris, Flammarion, 1992, p. 212.

15 / Laurence Corbel, in the article "Quelle critique pour l'art contemporain? Du discours sur l'art au discours de l'art", *Parpaings*, n.º 25, July-August-September 2001, pp. 22–23.

16 / Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique", *Artforum*, September 2005, pp. 278–283.