
Ribatejo

Rio Maior

Vila da Marmeleira

Assentiz

Ribeira de São João

São João da Ribeira



João
Seguro

Samina
Alecrim

Desejos Urbanos
(Priscilla Ballarin)

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Rio Maior

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**João
Seguro**

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(Priscilla Ballarin)



Imagine we visit all the locations included in the edp foundation Public Art programme and paint all the walls white, take apart the installations in their spaces, erase the works of art created in countless towns across the country. What effect would this have on these people's lives?

Edp foundation Public Art is a map comprised of a set of works of art created in public spaces, in small towns located in various Portuguese regions. A programme designed by the edp foundation to bring rural communities into closer contact with art, while also provoking reflection on its role in society.

Traffic lights transformed into traditional figures like the woman with a headscarf? Two intertwined tree roots with arms and legs? A windmill on top of a donkey? A man on a ladder catching stars? "Beautiful" works that are "good for the town", as the people from these communities say, without going to great lengths to extrapolate meaning beyond the signifiers that are presented to them. It is at this ground zero, at this starting point, that lies the urgency of the edp foundation Public Art programme.

Edp foundation Public Art introduces a contemporary idea of visual culture through a concerted contact with populations. For many, the concept of art is still associated with a notion of handicrafts or an idea of truth-art, where the artistic object assumes the role of replicating reality, in a mimetic embellishment of it, as explains the visual artist Xana, a member of the 1980s art movement 'Homeoestética' and one of the artists in the edp foundation Public Art project that left their mark in locations across the Algarve.

In each region, associations and artists were challenged to present proposals for public interventions, ranging from painting and sculpture to video and/or sound installation. The artists set out across the country with two premises. The first was not to play the role of educator, but rather facilitator. To place tools at the populations' disposal for them to discover how the whole process of artistic creation develops, from brainstorming to defining themes, to the use of techniques and the actual creation, to the result. And the second was to demystify art as an elitist and inaccessible practise. Art has, at its premise, a political matrix: to give freedom, to provide a path and a choice.

Local institutions were involved to define which public spaces were available, as well as which equipment from the EDP Distribuição network—the edp foundation's corporate partner in this project—would be subject to intervention. And, in each location, the population was invited to participate in community meetings. The townspeople met the artists and introduced themselves. They suggested themes for the works, told stories and explained their traditions, talked about their main economic activities and prominent personalities.

The artists had the task of internalising the suggestions and integrating the proposed themes into their work and composition. Models of the "soon-to-be-art" were made and then presented to the population.



PP 4 & 5: *Unfitted (detail)*, Samina & Alecrim, Assentiz, 2016. — P7: Guided tour, 2016.

Days of work followed, of making art. In the community, curiosity and closeness to the artists grew. Did they need anything? Water? Something to eat? Breaks were taken in the street's café, hanging out with the locals.

Edp foundation Public Art is this converging point where artistic intention meets social intention. It is a programme that drives a sense of belonging, which endures, regardless of the paint starting to chip, of the rain falling and making the colours fade. In this sense, there is a dual sense of belonging. This artistic heritage belongs to the people, to the community. Which is why we have created, in each region, tours with local guides, which are also a link, a connection between the populations and those who visit them. And rather than feeling isolated from the world, it makes them feel part of a notion of contemporaneity that experiences visual culture at an astonishing speed. If on the one hand art bonds, bonds a town's identity, on the other hand it flows, it allows new uses and approaches.

Minho

Braga
Crespos e Pousada
Padim da Graça
Merelim (São Paio)
Panoias e
Parada de Tibães
Palmeira

Trás-os-Montes

Alfândega da Fé
Torre de Moncorvo
Miranda do Douro
Mogadouro

Ribatejo

Rio Maior
Vila da Marmeleira
Assentiz
São João da Ribeira
Ribeira de São João

Alto Alentejo

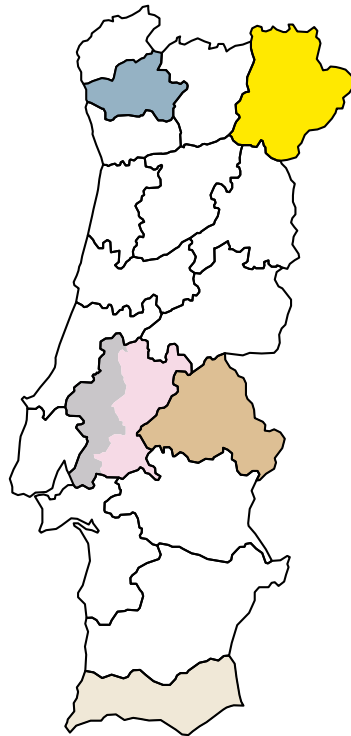
Campo Maior
Degolados
Ouguela

Médio Tejo

Vila Nova da Barquinha
Atalaia
Praia do Ribatejo
Tancos

Algarve

Vila do Bispo
Barão de São João
Mexilhoeira Grande
Figueira
S. Bartolomeu de Messines
Alte
Alportel



Flores (Flowers) (detail), Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarín), Assentiz, 2016.



Vila da Marmeleira

- ① CÉU ESTRELADO (STARRY SKY), Priscilla Ballarin, Desejos Urbanos
- ② UNTITLED, Alecrim
- ③ UNTITLED, Samina

Assentiz

- ④ FLORES (FLOWERS), Priscilla Ballarin, Desejos Urbanos
- ⑤ UNTITLED, Samina & Alecrim

Ribeira de São João

- ⑥ UNTITLED, João Seguro
- ⑦ CASA (HOME), Priscilla Ballarin, Desejos Urbanos
- ⑧ UNTITLED, Alecrim

São João da Ribeira

- ⑨ MAR (SEA), Priscilla Ballarin, Desejos Urbanos
- ⑩ PACHAMAMA, Alecrim
- ⑪ BIBLIOTHECA ACEPHALICA (ACEPHALIC LIBRARY), João Seguro

img © Marta Poppe, 2016.



Ribatejo UniArt

Partner:

Produções Fixe

Facebook:

ProjetoUniArt

Rio Maior

Locations:

Vila da Marmeleira
Assentiz
São João da Ribeira
Ribeira de São João

It's four in the afternoon and the ritual is the same as in the mid-morning break. On the small patio of the Tijuca establishment, the central café in Largo da República in the town of Vila da Marmeleira, Rio Maior, dona Maria de Lurdes and dona Heliete are sitting, as though they've always been there. It's tea time, on a sunny afternoon, and Ana Rita Camará and Jo Claeys join them, with their 5-year-old daughter. Her name is Lara and she eats a pastry, with plenty of cream smearing her fingers, her face and her father's bald head. The pace in this town in the district of Santarém is

marked by this cadence of brief routines that help organise the days.

Ana Rita Camará and Jo Claeys established Produções Fixe six years ago, a company that aims to drive job creation on a local level, through training initiatives that address issues like citizenship, social inclusion, financial literacy and conflict management. "We're a small firm interested in social profit", explains Jo Claeys. They are the partner company of the project Edp foundation Public Art in Rio Maior, which was given



the name UniArt.

One week of training provided to 30 participants organised by Produções Fixe can involve more than 80 locations and help fight the isolation these small towns are subjected to. Ana Rita and Jo's work is based on this culture of proximity to people, of knowing their needs and empowering them professionally and socially.

During the mid-morning break, Joana Martins, 24 years, looking for employment, was on the patio having a coffee. With her father, she helped



Samina, Assentiz, 2016.

assemble the scaffold for the intervention by Alecrim on the side wall of the Grupo de Danças e Cantares de São João da Ribeira (Folk dance & song group) headquarters. "Working with artists is new for us", tells Ana Rita Camará. "But the integration process is our specialty. We held a total of six meetings." UniArt spans across four locations in two town councils: the Marmeleira & Assentiz Joint Townships and São João da Ribeira & Ribeira de São João Joint Townships. In the first three meetings, which took place at the end of September 2016, the artists introduced themselves and collected local stories.



Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarin), Assentiz, 2016.

Samina & Alecrim with EDP Distribuição technicians, Assentiz, 2016.

In the other three, in mid-October, they presented their intervention proposals. "The first meetings were very well attended", continues Ana Rita. "The second not so much." The arrival of a SIC tv reporting team helped attendance in the first meetings. "It's funny to see how important that still is to people."

"Priscilla Ballarin chose Ruy Belo", a poet born in São João da Ribeira, tells Ana Varela, a UniArt enthusiast. "Alecrim worked with the four elements, water, earth, fire and air. João Seguro wanted to address the issue of popular revolt associated with the Ribatejo region, namely in Torre Bela [an estate occupied by a people's

assembly during the post-25 April revolutionary period]. But the meeting participants didn't approve. And Samina portrayed people." Ana Varela is a retired flight attendant, she was a volunteer for the Liga Portuguesa Contra o Cancro (Portuguese League Against



Cancer) and is currently vice-president of the Centro Social Paroquial de São João Batista (community centre), in

São João da Ribeira. "I accompanied the project since the beginning, first with curiosity and then with great enthusiasm. Anything that brings culture – which may or may not be understood – to the populations, to people who are not used to having anything, and comes from the major centres, is always beneficial", argues Ana Varela, who is also one of the UniArt route tour guides. "She was so excited she even took a photo of one of the interventions to print on a canvas and hang on the back wall in the latest edition of Tasquinhas de Rio Maior", adds Ana Rita Camará, referring to the intervention by Priscilla Ballarin on the bus stop on Estrada Nacional 114,



Flores (Flowers) (detail), Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarin), Assentiz, 2016.

Relationship w/ the community, Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarin), Assentiz, 2016.



Untitled (detail), Samina & Alecrim, Assentiz, 2016.



Guided tour, Cabeça Gorda, 2016.

in Ribeira de São João.

“Rita proposed the project to us, we joined right away and helped with the necessary measures”, reveals Amélia Simão, mayor of Marmeleira & Assentiz Joint Townships. “We were apprehensive, because it was something new in a rural environment.” But she says that people embraced it immediately,



without any fear that it would be an intrusion. “Vila da Marmeleira has very pretty architecture. And none of what was done jeopardised that architecture. On the contrary, it even enhanced it”, she says. “The people really like the bus stops

by Priscilla [Ballarin], but they love the mural beside the cemetery. It brings them peace”, states Amélia Simão about the intervention on the EDP Distribuição secondary substation at Rua do Campo da Bola, in Assentiz.

“When, on behalf of Produções Fixe, Rita presented the project to me, my first reaction was «go ahead», states Leandro Jorge, mayor of the São João da Ribeira & Ribeira de São João Joint Townships. “At the mention of urban art, I thought of graffiti and I didn’t want that for the council, because I think it wouldn’t work”, he continues. “Personally, I still don’t understand if people realise the importance of what was done here. These are indeed excellent works.” Leandro Jorge also says that he has heard comments about the perishability

of the pieces like “that’s art”. “With rain and sun, the works became more interesting, they acquired a different colour”, he adds.

Júlia Sousa, owner of the café Tijuca, says she regrets that the intervention by Alecrim on a certain wall on Rua Afonso Costa, in Marmeleira, was produced in that location, “it’s very hidden”. She says that, when she does her “holy rounds”, as she calls the drive she takes with her husband around town after they close the café to check for any “suspicious vehicles”, she always goes by that road and looks at that work of art.



Relationship w/ the community, Samina & Alecrim, Assentiz, 2016.

Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarin), Assentiz, 2016.

João Seguro (1979)



Studied painting at University of Lisbon's Faculty of Fine Arts (FBAUL- Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa) followed by a Master's in Visual Arts in London, at the Chelsea College of Arts. Is currently completing his PhD at FBAUL, a theoretical-practical project that combines his artistic work with a dissertation on the role of formalism in visual arts in the 20th century – and how that movement was able to survive until the present day, despite being a dated and criticised practise.

Samina (1989)



Lives between Portugal and Brazil. Has had contact with drawing and painting since an early age and entered the world of street art at the age of 14, where he discovered the stencilling technique. Completed a degree, and later a Master's, in Architecture, the field that taught him the relevance of geometry in artistic creation. Since 2010, he has participated in various projects, among which Tour Paris 13 (Paris, France) and ARTURb (Algarve, Portugal), also participating in festivals like St+Art (Delhi, India), MURALIZA (Cascais, Portugal) and EXTRA WOOL (Covilhã, Portugal), among others.

Alecrim (1983)



A graphic designer, he produced his first mural a year and a half ago. Until that time, his journey in urban and visual arts had been rooted in studio work – painting, silkscreen printing, T-shirts, block printing (technique like engraving, without wood). He spent three months in India (where this technique is widespread) and, when he returned, felt the need to apply it to larger media. He draws his inspiration from nature, developing it with geometric motifs, textures and patterns.

Priscilla Ballarin (1978) Desejos Urbanos



Priscilla Ballarin is from São Paulo, Brazil, and has been living in Lisbon for the past year. The other member of the collective Desejos Urbanos (Urban Desires) (2012), which she is a part of, is Eliza Freire (1980), who is still based in São Paulo. The collective, which has performed in various cities in Brazil and Europe, works with visual poetry through urban interventions, addressing simple concepts, small and delicate, through the affective relationship of the spectator with the urban space. Priscilla Ballarin is a Graphic Design technician and has a degree in Visual Arts from Universidade de São Paulo, she was design director at the production company Prompt Filmes between 2006 and 2014, also founding and participating as artist-teacher of the workshop Amar.é.linha since 2010.

Visita guiada, foto do coletivo, São João da Ribeira, 2016.



① Céu Estrelado

Starry Sky

Author:
Priscilla Ballarin,
Desejos Urbanos

This is a place where many kids meet early in the morning. It's in the shelter that they all wait for the bus that will take them to school. And it's in the shelter that Priscilla Ballarin, for Desejos Urbanos, gave them a sky. The whole interior of the bus stop on Avenida José Pereira Caldas is painted an intense blue, dotted with small white stars, that are barely visible. In the centre, the wall behind the cement bench reads "Este céu passará e então/teu riso descerá dos montes pelos rios/ até desaguar no nosso coração. Ruy Belo" (This sky will pass and then/ your laughter will flow down the hills through the rivers/until draining into our heart).

The poet was born in São João da Ribeira, and this was the theme Priscilla Ballarin chose for her interventions on the bus stops in Marmeleira, Assentiz, São João da Ribeira and Ribeira de São João, based on

conversations she had with the populations during the meetings. On the right side of the poem, two boys are depicted reaching up to the sky, drawing the small stars with chalk, evoking the Little Prince, by Saint-Exupéry.

"When we visited the four towns, we were presented with walls, façades, gables. And I don't necessarily work with large format pieces", tells Priscilla Ballarin. "Since the idea was to propose a route, I thought: what public space is used by the residents? How do they move around the four towns?" And that's how the bus stop concept came up.

"My work is myself and Eliza Freire, we both make up Desejos Urbanos (Urban Desires). Our work is to go out on the street and propose a new view of a certain place", explains the artist. "We propose an affective relationship between bystanders and space." Regarding the bus stops, each one has a library, a cabinet hanging on one of the inside walls, containing books that can be taken home. "Marmeleira has one of the largest libraries on the Iberian Peninsula, the Pacheco Pereira library. His wife participated in the first meeting and mentioned that there is an urban library project in Lisbon, where people leave a book on a park bench for someone else to take and read." The books

inside the library-cabinets in the bus stops were selected by the population.

As for Ruy Belo, she only heard about the poet when she attended the first UniArt meeting. "I had a month to familiarise myself with him. Now I have a project that addresses that", tells Priscilla. "Several of his poems relate to Brazil, he quotes Oscar Niemeyer [Brazilian architect], he liked Chico Buarque [musician], he even used his records in the classes he taught in Madrid." Ten days after the first meeting, there was a day dedicated to Ruy Belo's poetry at the Festival Literário Folio (literary festival), in Óbidos. Priscilla went there, saw a documentary on the poet, met a Brazilian researcher and was introduced to his widow.

The poem featured on this bus stop in Marmeleira was chosen by Pacheco Pereira's wife, Teresa. As a backdrop, a sky, like we said in the beginning of the text. "It's a sky that flows from inside, it originates in the bus stop and spills onto the ground. We chose this for Marmeleira because many kids use the bus stop."



Céu Estrelado (Starry Sky),
Desejos Urbanos
(Priscilla Ballarin),
Vila da Marmeleira, 2016.

TOWN Council:
VILA DA MARMELEIRA
Marmeleira & Assentiz
Joint Townships

Location:
Av. José Pereira
Caldas

GPS:
Latitude 39.263294
Longitude -8.834406



Céu Estrelado (Starry Sky) (Detail), Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarin), Vila da Marmeleira, 2016.

I liked everything, both in Marmeleira and the outskirts. I went to all the inaugurations.

Claudino Gomes, 72 years, retired.

2

Untitled

Author:
Alecrim

“There was a situation where I remember being asked why I only used black and white, if I was a sad person.” Alecrim mentions this episode with one of the participants in the meetings where the artists and population introduced themselves to explain that, by wanting to emphasise the shapes in his work, colour would be a distraction. And that no, he was not a sad person. Alecrim also explains that some people came with preconceived ideas about what they wanted to be addressed in the UniArt – edp foundation Public Art artistic interventions: ox carts, local personalities, the poet Ruy Belo, the lady called Maria who gave the land to make the football pitch.

Alecrim ended up using the four elements as a theme – air, earth, fire and water – and the location for each one was chosen at random. “I based myself on the unification of the four towns, hence the four elements. There’s a connection between man and earth, with nature. I thought it made sense

to unify, I wanted the four towns to be interconnected”, he states. “The people were very receptive. One of the biggest difficulties wasn’t being well-received, it was finding walls.”



In Marmeleira, for the wall located on Rua Afonso Costa, Alecrim worked with fire as a subject. “The centre expands, fire is an element with great force. When you burn something, what is reborn from there is reborn with great force. It represents all of the other elements because it contains the rebirth of life within itself.” The centre of the drawing is a square vertex, with smaller squares inside, that draw us towards an eye, an oracle. And the remaining graphic elements of the intervention expand from there – to the left and right. They are all in black, against the backdrop of the white wall, which was faded and Alecrim did not want repainted for his intervention. Shaped like arrows, to the left and right, like an ambiguous road sign that leaves us the freedom to choose opposite paths, in some,

the paint was replaced by sisal ropes. The use of ropes symbolises the representation of roots. “This was the first piece where I used rope in my work. The idea of ropes came from a piece I made in the studio, with real roots”, tells Alecrim. “In hydrology [a technique to grow roots in water], when you remove the plant from the water, the roots are very clean, and you can mould them to create graphic shapes. I began by wondering how I could use that on the wall, and thought of ropes.”



Trained in Graphic Design, Alecrim said he applied that field to the methodology of distributing the graphic weight on a wall. “What graphic design gave me was methodology, composition, the redistribution of the graphic weight on a wall, the use or absence of colour.” Alecrim says he is pressured often. “Are you going to use rope? How long will it last?” To which he answers that nothing lasts forever, and ageing is beautiful to watch. “The Chinese have a saying about this: «Old is gold.»”

Untitled, Alecrim,
Vila da Marmeleira, 2016.

Untitled, Alecrim, guided tour,
Vila da Marmeleira, 2016.

Untitled (detail), Alecrim, Vila da Marmeleira, 2016.

TOWN Council:
VILA DA MARMELEIRA
Marmeleira & Assentiz
Joint Townships

Location:
Rua Afonso Costa

GPS:
Latitude 39.261834
Longitude -8.835210



I’ve seen all the works, I like them all. I even assembled the scaffold for one of them, with my father. But my favourite is the one by Alecrim here in Vila da Marmeleira. It’s the most criticised because of the location, but it’s the one I like most.

Joana Martins, 24 years, seeking employment.

3

Untitled

Author:
Samina

"In my case, the ideas didn't really arise from conversations we had with the population. The conversations were more to introduce our work and understand what those places meant to those people", begins by explaining Samina. The solo intervention by the artist trained in Architecture for the UniArt segment of edp foundation Public Art, was produced on the side wall of the EDP Distribuição secondary substation that faces the picnic park in Vila da Marmeleira. On the other side of the street, at the top, there's the church, beside a lookout point. From the picnic park, there's a stunning view that stretches across the fields. "I ended up being highly influenced by the places where I was going to develop the proposals."

On the wall of the EDP Distribuição secondary substation, the face of a woman is painted, with a scarf on her head, gazing across and losing herself in the wonder of nature unfolding before her. "Portraying faces. My work involves that to some degree.

I'm interested in portraying people's physical and emotional expressions", explains Samina. When he researched who he could paint, he first approached a man from town who refused to be portrayed. "He thought he wasn't worthy of such a tribute and I didn't want to force the issue. I started looking for other types of expressions. Instead of a tribute, I started looking for the expression that represented that place", continues Samina. "Fortunately, I found the image that suited the site really well. She is looking towards the horizon, it's a person from a rural setting, she worked in the fields her whole life."

He searched for images online, he often researches the work of photographers he knows, other times he does random searches and then tries to discover where the photos come from. "In this case, it's hard to explain how I found it, I remember looking for a long time. Some images led to others."

The gaze of the old woman, who worked in the fields her whole life, has symbolic value. "It's also looking forward, moving on with life. What Marmeleira is, what Marmeleira is going to be", projects Samina. "The fact that people showed up at the meetings and cared about what was being done there, made the

painting work really well. And during the whole painting process, I feel very attracted. In cities, there's interaction, but it's faster and more dynamic, because there are so many stimuli around. In an intervention like this, the contact is more affective."



Because of the rain, the work had to be executed quickly. The technique used is stencilling, drawing the portrait on top of the photograph. "I work with two layers of stencils, one white, for the light, another black, for the shadow. Then, I print the drawing to scale, on A0 sheets." For this work on the secondary substation of the picnic park in Marmeleira, he took 22 A0, 11 for the layer of white paint and another 11 for the black. It's four metres of wall with the face of a woman gazing at the horizon, where each wrinkle on her skin has many stories to tell.



TOWN Council:
VILA DA MARMELEIRA
Marmeleira & Assentiz
Joint Townships

Location:
Parque das merendas
ao lavadouro,
Rua António José
de Almeida

GPS:
Latitude 39.264197
Longitude -8.835304



Untitled, Samina, Vila da Marmeleira, 2016.

I like it, it looks nice. It's the face of an old woman, she's known around here. We used to call her Ereira. She used to roast chestnuts and pumpkin seeds and sell them over there in the market.

Maria de Lurdes da Silva, 84 years, retired.

4

Flores

Flowers

Author:

Priscilla Ballarin,
Desejos Urbanos

O valor do vento (The value of wind). This is the title of the poem by Ruy Belo that Priscilla Ballarin chose to depict the theme she selected for the intervention on the bus stop in Assentiz: flowers. The inside of the bus stop is yellowish-green, luminous, and the wall behind the bench people can sit on as they wait for the bus features a large baby-pink sphere, with a little girl drawn inside. She points upwards, with smiling cheeks. We follow her gaze and reach a sea of flowers hanging from the ceiling, some yellow, others red, others pink and others still, blue.

"It was a risky process", explains Priscilla Ballarin. "I figured out how to fasten the flowers, I had never done it before." The flowers were made by Priscilla's mother-in-law and the artist used tape, paper and three types of glue to secure the flowers to the cement. "During the process, we had various options, like using chicken wire or drilling in the ceiling.

We ended up gluing them. The chicken wire would be visible and wasn't the best option aesthetically."

Beside the big pink sphere with the girl, which occupies the full height of the wall, there's a yellow sphere, smaller, with a little bird inside. The bird's eyes are closed, as though it's enjoying listening to the recital – by someone we don't see – of the poem written on the wall: "O vento é o melhor veículo que conheço/só ele traz o perfume das flores, só ele traz/a música que jaz à beira-mar em agosto" (The wind is the best vehicle I know/ it is the only one to carry flowers' perfume, to carry/the song that lays on the seashore in August).



"The idea of flowers and spring came from a square close by. It's a central square where there are many flowers, well-tended. It didn't seem like it was used much", states Priscilla Ballarin.

On the right wall, there is the cabinet with books inside, the space's small library, where anyone can choose a book and take it to read. Among them, a Snoopy book in English, You've

Come a Long Way, Snoopy, by Charles Schulz. On top of the wooden cabinet, on the top right corner, is the sculpture of a bird. It was sent from São Paulo by Eliza Freire, who joins Priscilla Ballarin in the Desejos Urbanos collective.

"The idea was to provide a space for immersion. We go in and enter another world", states the artist regarding the concept involved in her four interventions on bus stops. While she was working on the Assentiz piece, one lady took her a cake, another one loaned her a broom, and a boy who lived on the bus stop's street kept her company until the end of the day. And it was really curious: he wanted to know what it was to be an artist, if you had to study.

The outside of this bus stop's side walls is textured, the pink surface decorated with a kind of white frame. The street, Rua do Arneiro, is bordered by houses whose architecture is predominantly from the 1980s, some restoring the traditional Portuguese style. The silence completes the solemnity of the pace of life in this village.



Flores (Flowers),
Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla
Ballarin), Assentiz, 2016.

Flores (Flowers) (detail),
Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla
Ballarin), Assentiz, 2016.

TOWN Council:
ASSENTIZ
Marmeleira & Assentiz
Joint Townships

Location:
Rua do Arneiro

GPS:
Latitude 39.256511
Longitude -8.861536



Flores (Flowers), Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarin), Assentiz, 2016.

It looks much better now. It has another image. People stop whenever they pass by. Instead of being grey, it has an image, it has books for us to read. It looks nice.

Ana Sousa, 22 years, student.

5

Untitled

Authors:

Samina & Alecrim

“On my part, the process was once again to understand that place”, says Samina about the intervention he co-created with Alecrim on the EDP Distribuição secondary substation at Rua do Campo da Bola, in Assentiz. “The secondary substation is beside a cemetery. The only thing around there is the cemetery and, further ahead, some houses.” It’s a place of passage. “When I spoke to Nuno, he was working on the four elements. And he had more or less determined that Assentiz would have the element air. Which made sense, given the proximity to the cemetery. In fact, the wall is always referred to as the cemetery wall.”

Samina mentions that the idea of a cemetery usually carries a negative connotation, because of loved ones who have departed. “It doesn’t bring good memories”, continues Samina. “But it can be a place to live in the memory of someone who was a part of our life, it can become a much more positive memory than usual.

Air, lightness, made sense there.”

This was the first work Alecrim produced in partnership. “It was fantastic. The timing was pretty tight, we started at eleven, finished at eight at night. They had to assemble and disassemble the scaffolding to turn the substation back on”, tells Alecrim. “It was exceptional because neither I nor Samina were sure we would be able to finish the piece. We had lunch in five minutes, we were still finishing the work with parts of the scaffold being taken down.”



The section worked by Samina is two faces, the same person replicated twice – with the eyes closed. Like the face of the woman portrayed at Marmeleira’s picnic park, these faces are also mapped by life, wrinkles and wrinkles running along each centimetre of that face, reflected twice. The faces are painted in black and white, the geometric

motifs created by Alecrim, which spread across the substation’s side wall, as well. “Samina will tell you that the face’s closed eyes represent and convey calm. Me, I say my composition of triangles represents the meanings of life, of the various directions life can take”, reveals Alecrim.

If we stand against the wall on an afternoon when the sun is high and we look up, at the faces, these are reduced to a mountain range seen from above, such is the intensity of the light that shines on the design. “For me, it had to be a person with their eyes closed”, states Samina. “I looked for an expression – from the outset, I had a very clear idea in my mind – of someone who looked like they were meditating. And I wanted it to be ambiguous.”

One of the strong traits in the portrait of the faces worked by Samina is the gaze, which urges a deeper connection with those who look at his work. “I didn’t want that connection to be so direct, I wanted it to be something more spiritual, like the person was communicating spiritually with someone or remembering something. The idea was to somewhat demystify that burden. Instead of mourning what was lost, it’s about recovering memory.”

TOWN Council:
ASSENTIZ
Marmeleira & Assentiz
Joint Townships

Location:
Rua do Campo da
Bola

GPS:
Latitude 39.252276
Longitude -8.863622



Untitled, Samina & Alecrim, Assentiz, 2016.

People love the intervention at the cemetery. They say that, when they go to the cemetery, it gives them a sense of serenity.

Amélia Simão, 57 years, mayor of Marmeleira & Assentiz Joint Townships.

6

Untitled

Author:

João Seguro

Thirteen kilometres from Marmeleira along the Assentiz road, there's a place called Manique do Intendente. This is where Torre Bela is located, an estate occupied by a group of workers during the 25 April revolution, to be managed as a co-operative. At the time, a documentary was even made by the German filmmaker Thomas Harlan and, in 2012, a second film called *Linha Vermelha* (Red Line), was made by José Filipe Costa. João Seguro believes this story about the agricultural self-management attempt is still very much alive in these Ribatejo lands. "It's curious. Ribatejo is one of the most conservative places and it's also where, during the PREC [Processo Revolucionário em Curso; post-25 April Ongoing Revolutionary Process], the most revolutionary events took place", tells the artist. "You can feel you're in a world where there were a series of crossroads that never came to be."

The five spheres – one yellow, a black one that is barely visible,

one green, one red and another dark blue – painted on the wall of a set of buildings – which were once a community centre and are now a ruin – are a stylisation of the preferred medium used to communicate during the political turmoil in the post-25 April era and 1980s: the mural, with a pamphlet nature. "This is precisely why the piece with the spheres emerged: how can I produce an intervention on a wall, without digressing from what is close to my work, but without compromising the connection



to this place's political past?", asks João Seguro. "If you travel through Ribatejo, you find many more murals – both left and right wing – from the 1970s and 1980s. This was a community centre, but the participants didn't get along and it ended up being abandoned." João Seguro says that people still feel a certain fondness for the centre, for what was accomplished in that space.

"I decided to create a political symbol on that wall", located in the village of Cabeça Gorda.

"A few years from now, the symbol will have faded. Like this space, which came to an end." The five spheres are like a mark, a memory of what took place. "It's a silent protest, since it doesn't resort to words as a political message", adds João Seguro. "I can't imagine art that doesn't raise awareness."



Today, the community centre presents its own solemnity due to its condition as a ruin. The space has a single-storey building on the left side and another on the right and, in between, there's a vast plot of land, arid, acting as a central square. The space is accessed through a gate, which has some rugged cement arches serving as hosts.

The colours of the spheres, whose paint has started to peel in small flakes, like provocations, are becoming faded, victims of the weather conditions which, because they are all dark shades, heavy, make those circles contrast even further. As if tension was natural, inherent, to things.

Untitled, João Seguro, guided tour, Cabeça Gorda, 2016.

TOWN Council:
RIBEIRA DE S. JOÃO
S. João da Ribeira &
Ribeira de S. João Joint
Townships

Location:
Rua 1º Dezembro,
Cabeça Gorda

GPS:
Latitude 39.280895
Longitude -8.863128



Untitled, João Seguro, Cabeça Gorda, 2016.

I saw them as I passed by. I think it looks good. It draws the attention of people passing by.

Armando Ferreira, 56 years, F&B business owner.

7

Casa

Home

Author:
Priscilla Ballarin,
Desejos Urbanos

We're on the other side of the road, on Estrada Nacional 114, and it's like a window. A window looking inside a house. The house's interior is red and there's a woman with her back to us hanging a cloth on a line, at head level. Also hanging on that line, there are a spoon and fork, a jug, a ladle, a pot holder and a small house. Next to it, a close-up of a poem that goes: "Só as casas explicam que exista/uma palavra como intimidade/ sem as casas não haveria ruas/ as ruas onde passamos pelos outros/mas passamos principalmente por nós." (Only homes explain that there is/a word like intimacy/without homes there would be no streets/ the streets where we pass others/but especially ourselves) Signed: Ruy Belo. As the poem states, it's as though we're looking at ourselves in the mirror and opened a window to ambiguity: of those who see and those who are seen, the inside and the outside. "São João da Ribeira was where Ruy Belo was

born. We went to visit the house, which is closed and in need of renovations. One of the ideas was to produce a collective intervention on the building, but it ended up not going ahead", states Priscilla Ballarin. "The story of the house stayed in my head. It's on an uneven plot. Since I couldn't work on the house, I worked on the idea of the house. This bus stop talks about being inside and outside, of seeing the streets from the windows. There are only homes because there are streets."

The drawing of the woman hanging the cloth was made by the other artist in the Desejos Urbanos duo, who lives in São Paulo. Eliza Freire made the drawing, sent it to Priscilla, who printed it a glued it on. There are also some mirrors applied to the wall, to accentuate the idea of reflection and window. Priscilla chose reddish-orange because it's a warm colour, which we associate with the idea of home. On the bus stop's floor, decal motifs were applied, in orange and blue shades like in hydraulic tiles, to reinforce the concept of Portuguese houses.

On the inside lateral wall, on the right, there is also a small cabinet that acts as a library for the bus stop users – to take a book while they wait for the bus that takes them into the city, to Rio Maior, or to take and read at home. Among these, are the books *Os 4 Ases* and *Rali Olímpico*.



Inside the cabinet, on the top left corner, a small ceramic jug was glued, which came from São Paulo, sent by Eliza. The arrival of these small objects, which also feature on the other bus stops, was a way to build a bridge between the two countries and shorten the distance between the two artists' work. It was a way for Eliza Freire to be present during the process.

Ana Varela, a local philanthropist who is also vice-chairman of the Centro Social Paroquial de São João Batista (community centre), in São João da Ribeira, liked the image of this intervention so much that she took photos of the drawing and had it printed on canvas. The purpose? To use as a decorative element in *Tasquinhas 2017*, an annual food festival organised in Rio Maior. "I fell completely in love with this intervention and this project. We connected immediately", states Ana Varela. "This project must be disseminated."



TOWN Council:
RIBEIRA DE S. JOÃO
S. João da Ribeira &
Ribeira de S. João Joint
Townships

Location:
Estrada Nacional 114,
17

GPS:
Latitude 39.284955
Longitude -8.888903



Casa (Home), Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarin), Ribeira de São João, 2016.

They are, indeed, excellent works. Personally, I really, really like the interventions on the bus stops.

Leandro Jorge, 33 years, mayor of S. João da Ribeira & Ribeira de S. João Joint Townships.

8

Untitled

Author:
Alecrim

Next to it, there's a fountain with a pulley to draw water up to the surface. It's there to remind us that water is a precious commodity, that it wasn't always at the end of a tap, and that in the past, people had to go to a fountain or well and carry it home in jugs. That is the tribute Alecrim pays to the element water – he portrayed the Earth's four elements for UniArt – in his intervention at Largo Luís Calado Vicente, placing a clay jug directly beside the fountain, in Ribeira de São João.



“The idea of the jug came to me because I wanted to go out of my comfort zone, of painting murals”, tells Alecrim. “I thought of the jug. These days they're often used as decoration, but they

were once used to store food products and water. Using smaller jugs, the women would take water to the men in the fields, they were called *aguadeiras*”, he explains. “That's exactly the connection, the way water was carried in the past. On the other hand, about 60 percent of our body is water. Water is crucial to life.”

The square is silent, the characters that live beyond the fountain and the intervention by Alecrim are trees, spaced out, and there are some park benches. On the left, there is the Centro Cívico de Ribeira de São João (civic centre). There's an impressive willow at the other end of the square. “I didn't know Ribeira de São João or the other three towns, Marmeleira, Assentiz and São João da Ribeira”, explains Alecrim. “I'm from the Ribatejo region, I'm from Alverca. It's not such a deep rural environment, but I have great regard for those agricultural areas. I really like them. I like the connection to the land, to the fact that these are regions where a sense of calm prevails and people are very friendly.”

The jug, which narrows at the base, is encased in a metallic structure and shaped like a rocket, fastened at the axis before being launched into space.

Here the colours are also black and white, a common trait in Alecrim's work. The bottom is painted black, with white leaves super-imposed, which suggest the stencilling technique, used often by the artist. The upper two thirds of the jug are painted white and adorned with black geometric figures. “I don't know how to explain the geometry, these lines come from patterns I developed. I use diamond shapes a lot, it's the idea of expansion. Like when you throw a stone into a puddle and watch the ripples form.”



Seen from a distance, the jug looks like a figure that moves, like the robot R2-D2 from the Star Wars saga. The black base, the top white part and the geometric motifs, dress it and give it a humanised expression, and the legs of the metallic structure that support it only need some wheels to wander around the cobblestone square. Without going too far.

Untitled, Alecrim, guided tour, Ribeira de São João, 2016.

Untitled, Alecrim, Ribeira de São João, 2016.

TOWN Council:
RIBEIRA DE S. JOÃO
S. João da Ribeira &
Ribeira de S. João Joint
Townships

Location:
Largo Luís Calado
Vicente

GPS:
Latitude 39.287450
Longitude -8.886443



I think it's nice. It attracts the attention of people passing by. A few days ago, I went to Marmeleira and it looks nice there too.

Armando Ferreira, 56 years, F&B business owner.

9

Mar

Sea

Author:

Priscilla Ballarin,
Desejos Urbanos

Someone had stuck a pamphlet inside the bus shelter where Priscilla Ballarin intervened on behalf of Desejos Urbanos in São João da Ribeira. And public art is also that – adding, deforming, removing. Giving and taking, giving the works with new layers of interpretation. Therefore, it was also inherent in this artwork's existence that Jo Claeys, from Produções Fixe – the company that organised UniArt –, would remove the pamphlet, carefully in order not to leave traces of paper. The marks of the edges stayed. On the corner between the shelter's wall and the ceiling, there's a snail, that looks like it's nested there.

Like the bus stop at Vila da Marmeleira, the shelter in São João da Ribeira is also painted blue, but a lighter blue, sea blue. "During this process, I discovered that Ruy Belo had a very strong connection to the sea", tells Priscilla Ballarin. "He would dive in and spend a long time in the ocean.

He liked going to the beach and spending hours looking at the sea. He had a very close relationship with the sea." The local poet, Ruy Belo, was represented on every bus stop with interventions by Desejos Urbanos through the selection of a different poem for each site. This shelter says: "Na minha juventude antes de ter saído/ da casa de meus pais disposto a viajar/eu conhecia já o re-bentar do mar/ das páginas dos livros que já tinha lido" (In my youth before I left/my parents' home to travel/I already knew the breaking sea/the pages of the books I'd read).



Seen from a distance, with Estrada Nacional 114 passing in front, we realise the sea is painted in a dancing shape, a large wave is being enjoyed by a boy who is diving, with goggles and a snorkel. On top of the wave, a small paper boat is drawn. There are also little fish, made of papier-mâché, under a small cabinet on the side wall, which were sent from São Paulo by the other artist in Desejos Urbanos, Eliza Freire. "The diving child is associated with our work. Children are a way to

establish a more delicate relationship with space. We're artist-teachers, we illustrate children's books, we give many children's courses and workshops."

Spilling from the bus stop's bench onto the floor, there is a set of words chosen by Priscilla Ballarin, like a large alphabet soup, which are associated with the sea universe: maré (tide), espuma (foam), imensidão (immensity), gota (drop), peixe (fish), rochedo (rock), embarcações (boats), afundar (sink), ir (go), frio (cold).

The small cabinet on the right side wall, made of wood and also painted blue, is another small public library, where people can take – but also bring – the books found inside. The idea of exchanging and sharing a greater good like art is a common thread in every shelter with an intervention by Desejos Urbanos. On the spine of the side wall, another poem can be read, but this time written by a lovesick teenager: "The king of/ my life the/beautiful boy./ forever you in my heart.../ Love you boy". And so the work is complete.



TOWN Council:

S. JOÃO DA RIBEIRA
S. João da Ribeira &
Ribeira de S. João Joint
Townships

Location:

Estrada Nacional 114,
83A

GPS:

Latitude 39.279670
Longitude -8.845806

Mar (Sea), Desejos Urbanos (Priscilla Ballarin), São João da Ribeira, 2016.

I like it. It's something different. I live in Santarém, and there isn't much of this there. It brightens things up, it makes a big difference in the bus stops.

Cláudia Ferreira, 27 years, waitress.

10

Pachamama

Author:
Alecrim

From the Kichwa language *pacha*, which means universe, time and place, and *mama*, mother, Pachamama is the supreme goddess of the Andes. "It symbolises Mother Earth. Around the world, all cultures have this figure of Mother Nature", explains Alecrim.

In the studio, Alecrim had used the hydrology technique [growing plants in water] to manipulate the shapes of roots that, having only been in contact with water, are clean and easy to mould. The use of ropes in the UniArt interventions, specifically on this side wall of the Grupo de Danças e Cantares de São João da Ribeira (folk group) headquarters and in Vila da Marmeleira, arose from that experience. He made an adaptation of the concept using sisal rope. The chords are fastened with hooks, screwed into wall plugs.

The element of the universe portrayed here is, obviously, earth. A set of squares, enclosed inside each other like matryoshka dolls,

with the vertex pointing up, is created from the intertwined sisal ropes, fastened to the wall. That group of squares acts as a vessel here, to outline: inside there is a countless number of leaves, black, that drip, one by one, from the lower vertex of the squares. As though it were a simple act of freedom, like from a dropper, one by one the leaves release themselves from the enclosure.

From a distance, it can have another effect. And, considering that the Grupo de Danças e Cantares de São João da Ribeira headquarters was once a primary school, it couldn't be more fitting: it looks like a kite; a stylised kite, but a kite.



Whichever interpretation it evokes, this intervention by Alecrim always conveys the idea of movement, and this is a building that houses a folk song and dance group. The land that belongs to the property is delineated by bars. The land is arid and the weeds, dry, are a prelude to the hot summer felt in these inland regions – and they have the same colour as the sisal ropes,

creating a direct connection from the wall to the earth.

For his work, Alecrim draws great inspiration from nature, and his training in Graphic Design gives it a minimalist and geometric character, in terms of patterns and textures. The use of black and white, as neutral tones that emphasise the shapes, accentuate the more primitive and elementary side Alecrim wants to lend his works.



Pachamama, Alecrim, guided tour, São João da Ribeira, 2016.

Pachamama (detail), Alecrim, São João da Ribeira, 2016.

Observing the work head on, from the outside of the fence, high, metallic, painted dark green, there's a tree that interrupts the observer's field of view – a mediator, impressive, between the work and the observer of the work. The tree is almost as high as the building; it is pruned to the extent that the branches of the three-part trunk make it look like a small head and two long arms, open. This figure can embrace any person in the way their mind and beliefs allow: a divinity – Pachamama, Christ – materialised in nature, nature humanised in an earthly figure.

TOWN Council:
S. JOÃO DA RIBEIRA
S. João da Ribeira &
Ribeira de S. João Joint
Townships

Location:
Grupo de Danças e
Cantares de S. João
da Ribeira (folk group)
Former primary school

GPS:
Latitude 39.281133
Longitude -8.851558



Pachamama, Alecrim, São João da Ribeira, 2016.

We wish we had the money to paint the rest of the walls. If we think of the leaves as olive tree leaves, it relates to our group.

Alfredo Oliveira, 50 years, Grupo de Danças e Cantares de S. João da Ribeira (folk group).

11

Bibliotheca Acephalica

Acephalic Library

Author:
João Seguro

There's a detail that makes the essence of the work Bibliotheca Acephalica (Acephalic Library), by João Seguro, magnificent, located at the Centro Social Paroquial de São João Batista community centre in São João da Ribeira. Actually, it's the detail of an action. When Ana Rita Camará approached the piece, her impulse, mechanical, was to start straightening the shelves of the work which, over time, started to tilt. These are shelves that, as part of a structure named library, are tilting – the books, if placed on them, don't stand. They fall.

"I wanted a library in the public space which had another character", explains João Seguro. The structure, seen from above, forms a cross, as though two sets of shelves intercepted and, from the meeting point, much is expected but nothing emerges. During the inauguration,

the shelves – the open ones, because there are others that are closed, inaccessible – were filled with books. "It's a cross, yes. There's one side with an open space to place books and there's another with a closed space", adds João Seguro. "Ribatejo has that atmosphere of extreme cultural manifestations. I was interested in both sides of the same coin."

In 2006, João Seguro taught classes at Instituto Politécnico de Tomar. And he chose to drive along the national route, whose landscape he finds beautiful. "It's been 20 or 30 years since anything has happened there. You see huge abandoned factories. In the 1980s, industry declined", he describes. "You pass places that Alves Redol described in the book Barranco de Cegos. Houses built on stilts. The lower part would flood in the winter and, in the summer, was used to store grain. The social analysis of Ribatejo is still all that, although it had the chance to be other things, but it wasn't."

João Seguro was interested in working with a material that had that ambiguous character; in this case, semi-definite. "I made the library with wood used for formwork, to fill with concrete." The entire production of the "acephalic library" was done locally, in order to drive the region's industry.

"The idea behind using this material is to emphasise the work's ephemeral character. And it's an object with an almost animal design, with precepts from IKEA-type assembly. It interests me that, if the community doesn't use the piece, it'll end up falling apart."

The wood used for the piece is rustic, it's a temporary material – in the case of formwork, it is to be filled with concrete or cement during the construction of a building or structure. After serving its purpose, the wood is "destroyed", to use the term by João Seguro. "My work always has a political nature, although people may not see it", he states. "It's not obvious, otherwise it would be pamphleteering. But I think that being political is a contingency of the artistic practise."

When the sun is intense and shines on that wood, the yellow gains a special tone. The yellow looks the colour of gold. At the inauguration, political books were placed on the shelves. They were removed because of the winter, but we're thinking of putting them back this summer.



TOWN Council:
S. JOÃO DA RIBEIRA
S. João da Ribeira &
Ribeira de S. João Joint
Townships

Location:
Centro Social Paroquial
de S. João Batista

GPS:
Latitude 39.282529
Longitude -8.851816



Bibliotheca Acephalica (Acephalic Library), João Seguro, São João da Ribeira, 2016.

At the inauguration, political books were placed on the shelves. They were removed because of the winter, but we're thinking of putting them back this summer.

Ana Varela, 64 years, vice-chairman Centro Social Paroquial de São João Batista (community centre).

edp foundation Public Art

**Route RIBATEJO
Project UNIART**

**Curator edp foundation Public Art:
João Pinharanda**

**Coordinator edp foundation Public Art:
Sandra Santos**

**Communication edp foundation Public Art:
Bárbara Vaz Pereira**

**Texts:
Cláudia Marques Santos**

**Photography:
Marta Poppe
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Cláudia Baeta & Paula Dona**

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To Priscilla Ballarin, João Seguro, Alecrim and Samina for their determination, daring and art.



“Through this programme, the edp foundation helps bring rural communities into closer contact with art, while also provoking reflection on its role in society. Furthermore, it has additional merit: to reconcile within a single programme the edp foundation’s two key fields of intervention: social innovation and culture. This is a project that mobilises artists and rural communities in an innovative dialogue that will result in an unexpected public art route and a source of pride for all parties involved.”

Miguel Coutinho

Managing director and CEO of edp foundation

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