

TRANSĚUROPA

A FESTIVAL OF ARTS, POLITICS AND CULTURE

PORTO

20 ————— 25 April
2022

DECOLONIZE! DECARBONISE! DEMOCRATIZE!

The official journal of the Transeuropa Festival

Venues

Cooperativa Artística Árvore · Universidade do Porto
Fórum Cultural de Ermesinde · Jardim Botânico
Livraria aberta · Fontainhas · Univ. Lusófona do Porto

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Transeuropa Festival team

In a moment marked by climate catastrophe, inequality, war, and discrimination towards socially minoritized groups, Transeuropa Festival opens spaces to recognise the agency of citizens to take action and redefine the space we occupy in the world. We, at European Alternatives, have worked to open these spaces of exchange and debate for many years and Transeuropa has been our prime way of doing it, in a transnational manner, across Europe in more than 30 cities.

We wanted to bring our Festival to Porto this year, as this city becomes the ideal location to take forward key concepts for us and rethink a new physical and conceptual space in which the relations between Europe and the rest of the world take a different shape. By inviting artists, activists, workers and citizens to Porto, together with local actors, we co-created a programme that relates to the city and its communities; we created a collective space to imagine new narratives and enact political agency.

The 2022 edition of TRANSEUROPA unfolds from three central themes that reflect on the most urgent challenges we are facing today: Decolonize, Decarbonise, Democratize. Our curatorial theme focuses on the combination of scientific and technical knowledge but also on holistic and artistic practices that facilitate the creation of collaborative alliances across our interconnected world. Curated collectively and taking into account a plurality of local and international voices, our programme actively participates in deconstructing spaces of oppression and works in building spaces of freedom and imagination to construct viable and long-term alternatives.

In our process of decolonising the spaces and contexts in

which we operate, there is something powerful about working within the margins and in the peripheries: Peripheries are the places where we can create collectives, relationships, collaborations; construct a transnational consciousness across spaces that are often left out from the mainstream discourses, establish alliances of solidarity creating supportive systems, alliances to disrupt the dominant orders, inventing new narratives. There is something radical about bringing forward safe spaces of mutual care and listening. Spaces where thanks to shared and collective energies, change can happen; spaces where care takes a revolutionary role that can lead to radical change.

When we talk about decarbonising our future, we imagine a world not based on extractivism, short term profits and long term costs. In a moment in which the world is looking at Europe's dependency on fossil fuels, natural gas, and oil, today we must all plan with vision and move towards the common goal of building a more sustainable future. We need to think bigger and further in the future and predict the use of resources that are now disregarded. We need to come together and demand the implementation of new eco-friendly systems. We must ask our governments to find immediate ways not only to replace fossil fuels, but also to create a world where green technology, green fuels and an environmentally-sound lifestyle will not be just an expensive dream or come at the price of exacerbated social inequalities.

The third pillar of this Festival edition is based on the premise that we should never take democracy for granted. Democratic and civic spaces are an extension of civil society, and can serve as a platform for our public, social and political lives. They can be the settings where social and political change can happen. Within this theme of our programme, we are going to cover activities, assemblies of solidarity and public actions where activists and civil society come together to discuss how they are already organising to resist and confront the rise of dangerous antidemocratic tendencies across the globe.

Let's imagine, demand and create together. Let's Decolonize, Decarbonise and Democratize our lives!

Decolonize, Decarbonise, Democratize a transnational Europe

	WEDNESDAY 20	THURSDAY 21	FRIDAY 22	SATURDAY 23
09:00				
09:30				CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY - HOW TO ENSURE THE IMPERATIVE OF UNIVERSAL HOSPITALITY PART II
10:00		TRANSNATIONAL AZULEJO-MAKING WORKSHOP SESSION 1	STUDENTS ASSEMBLY - BEYOND BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE EU	
10:30				
11:00				
11:30				
12:00				
12:30				
13:00				
13:30				
14:00				
14:30			CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY - HOW TO ENSURE THE IMPERATIVE OF UNIVERSAL HOSPITALITY PART I	SHEVEK IYAPO MUSICAL LECTURE / PERFORMANCE
15:00	OPENING TRANSEUROPA FESTIVAL DECOLONIZE! DECARBONIZE! DEMOCRATIZE!			
15:30				
16:00				
16:30				
17:00				
17:30				
18:00	PLATAFORMA UMA - ROOM TO BLOOM EXHIBITIONS VERNISSAGE			
18:30				
19:00				
19:30				
20:00				
20:30				
21:00	VOICES EXHIBITION VERNISSAGE			
21:30				
22:00				
22:30				
23:00				
23:30				
00:00				
			BOOK FAIR — ARTS IN FREEDOM	
		EXHIBITIONS — EDUCATION THROUGH STONE · SEEING THE CITY THROUGH THEIR VOICES ·		
		EXHIBITIONS — HAIR · HENRY AND HIS HAT · ROOM TO BLOOM		
		EXHIBITION — WHAT IS LEFT		
	EXHIBITION — VOICES			

- COOPERATIVA ÁRVORE
- ERMESINDE CULTURAL FORUM
- ESCARPAS DAS FONTAINHAS
- LIVRARIA ABERTA
- UNIVERSITY OF PORTO
- ESPIGA
- LUSÒFONA UNIVERSITY OF PORTO
- BOTANICAL GARDEN
- GARDENS OF PALÁCIO DE CRISTAL

Young Adult Dystopias and Activism: Life Imitates Art

Tânia Cerqueira

Tânia Cerqueira is the Coordinator of Transeuropa Festival. She holds a Master's degree in Anglo-American Studies from the University of Porto and is currently a PhD candidate at the same university. Her thesis's main focus is the relationship between the Gothic tradition and young adult dystopias and explores the contribution of adolescent female characters in these to gender equality and women's empowerment. Her main research interests include young adult fiction, dystopia, monstrosity, Gothic, and posthumanism.

The terrifying worlds featured in young adult (YA) dystopian novels mirror pressing global issues that trouble society. By tackling issues such as extreme violence, environmental disasters, or pandemics that significantly reduce the global population, YA literary dystopias reflect on what needs to change in our world, asking us, as Sarah Hentges claims, to imagine new alternatives and worlds for the marginalized and oppressed.¹

Thus, one must question what can be found in these texts that inspires young readers to negotiate the political world actively. YA dystopias feature small acts of rebellion – might these be learning how to write a single word, almost eating a handful of berries, marking the skin with the symbols of where one came from, or even accepting a pair of gloves. By being emotionally charged, these small acts are the first step to destroy the dominant oppressive systems in these novels, inspiring readers to get involved in socio-political actions. YA dystopian novels teach that no matter how small a dissident act is, it can make a difference. Through this lesson, readers are empowered: they too can perform small actions that transform society. One can claim activism in these dystopian worlds inspires activism in our own.²

1. Life Imitates Art. From the Pages to the Political World

Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010) trilogy has inspired political resistance and activism. Stirred by Panem's fight, young people adopted the revolution symbols of the book and took them to the streets.

In the first book of the series, after Katniss volunteers to save her sister, the crowd touches the three middle fingers of their left hand to their lips and holds it out to her. It is an old gesture in the community, which means gratitude and admiration – goodbye to someone who is loved. Later in the series, the gesture becomes a symbol of the rebellion. This small rebellious act has been transported to the real world,³ becoming a symbol of the uprisings against non-democrat governments.

In 2014, after the coup leaders suspended democracy in Thailand, protestors adopted the three-finger salute, defying the government. Several students were arrested all over Thailand for using this gesture, which is now identified in the country as a symbol of student-lead pro-democracy protests. The government banned the salute – at least in practice because the prohibition did not stop protestors from using it. Last year, the same gesture was used to protest against another military coup, but this time in Myanmar. As in Thailand, the gesture is now officially banned in the country. Across South-East Asia, the three-finger salute has become a symbol of resistance, of solidarity for democracy movements – a symbol so powerful among protestors that authorities found themselves acting and forbidding its use, arresting whoever used it.

However, it is not only this fictional gesture that crosses boundaries between life and fiction. Katniss's iconic speech, after a makeshift hospital is

bombarded, has been adopted in political protests. In the 2019 Hong Kong protests against Beijing and its control over them, "If we burn, you burn with us" was one of the main quotes associated with the protests. It has come to represent the unified spirit by the protests without figureheads, bringing protestors together to fight for a future free from the totalitarianism of Beijing.

2. Imagining a World of Equality, Solidarity, and Empathy

YA dystopian fiction has become a platform for a public conversation about social issues and problems, having the potential to mould teen activists. Through these books, adolescents question the limitations placed upon them. Small rebellious acts, most often than not, make them realize they are capable of speaking out against oppression and incite them to develop socio-political agency, empowering them. By making readers think critically and be conscious of the social injustices surrounding them, YA literary dystopias inspire them to act, go out to the streets, and build a world where equality, solidarity, empathy, and the well-being of every human being matter the most – the end goal of the TRANSEUROPA Festival, whose current edition wishes to open conversations on inequality and discrimination towards socially discriminated groups and to build places of freedom and recognise citizens' agency, and that they can take action and redefine the space we occupy in the world.

We might not see the end goal and how much these young voices will transform the world, but that does not stop the motion to build a better world for everyone, not just a privileged few. Through small acts of rebellion, young readers are inspired to resist. To fight an unjust socio-political system. To build a world in which the odds are in everyone's favour.

Through small acts of rebellion, young readers are inspired to resist and to fight an unjust socio-political system

1. I am in the spectrum of those who believe YA literary dystopias inspire young readers to construct better worlds but at the same time fall short of their goal since communities are marginalized: most societies are whitewashed and heteronormative.

2. It is crucial to stress YA dystopian texts do not force anyone to become politically active but plant the seeds of wanting to build a different world, inspiring real-world change and activism.

3. Scouts have a similar sign, but the three-finger salute as a political act is mainly identified with *The Hunger Games* trilogy.

Shevek Iyapo

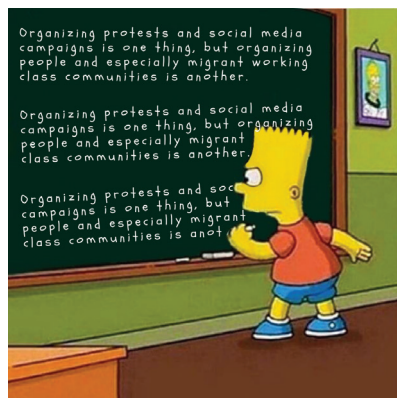
Musical lecture performance from the Academy of Migrant Organizing

Georg Blokus

Georg Blokus manages the projects *Trust Without Borders* and *Workers Without Borders* as well as the *School of Transnational Activism* from European Alternative's Berlin office. His focus is on organizing and training workers, migrants, and their communities to build solidarity and fight for their rights beyond borders.

Since 2007, we at European Alternatives act in the belief that it is time for a transnational renewal of our political visions and institutions, our conception of citizenship, as well as collective organisation and action. Hence, our *School of Transnational Activism* brings together progressive activists, artists and academics to learn how to imagine, demand and enact democracy, equality and culture beyond the nation state - here and now.

Therefore, we create transnational online and offline learning spaces where together we undertake the difficult steps necessary to build communities and movements that are up to the challenges of our time. As more and more activists are becoming aware that the powerlessness we are experiencing is also grounded in the frustrations, the dangers, and the ineffectiveness which come with business-as-usual mobilizing for protests or social media campaigns.



Sharepic created for the *Migrant Organizing Toolbox*

At the same time there are all those usual suspects in civil society and NGOs talking and talking about the need to make

politics and activism more diverse, inclusive, and participatory – without any real consequences to their work and for the people they pretend to engage with. In contrast, the *Academy of Migrant Organizing - Assembling Community Knowledge, Skills & Tools for a Solidary Future* is a special program trying out 'new' strategies and techniques of transformative organizing focusing on working-class communities, as it was and is being successfully practised in many labour unions and social movements around the world.

In its first edition, the program specifically targeted migrant, refugee and BIPOC organizers in Germany, with the goal of starting a joint process of reflection, research and education. The leading question was: How can we lead the discourse about identity and solidarity of and with migrants out of the political dead-end? People like AOC and Bernie Sanders, the Sunrise Movement, Black Lives Matter, and the Democratic Socialists of America in the US have shown that it's possible to change the political landscape of what we think is possible.

But how did they make it? When we look behind the social media surface then we see all the amazing grassroots efforts and sophisticated methods organizers in the US and in other regions of the world learn from organizing pioneers like Marshall Ganz, Becky Bond, Zack Exley, Jane McAlevey, or movement schools like the one of our friends from Momentum Community. These are some of the people we can learn from how to make a real change.

As transformative union and community organizing is not that much established in Europe as it is in the US, for example, we were amazed by the fact that around 50 migrant activists applied for the *Academy of Migrant Organizing* to be part of an expert group learning more about how we could use migrant organizing

methods and techniques to unite for a future of solidarity and together strengthen frontline communities that have been marginalized and whose political struggles have been ignored for far too long. Ironically, we started it on the 60th anniversary of the guest worker agreement between Germany and Turkey and in parallel to the frustrating experience of the *Conference on the Future of Europe* which does not give a strong voice to marginalised communities when it comes to decide on the future of Europe.



Sharepic created for the *Migrant Organizing Toolbox*

From December 2021 to April 2022, the 9 selected fellows of the *Academy of Migrant Organizing* organized an online skill-sharing workshop, an assembly of solidarity in Chemnitz specifically connected to the work of local initiatives for a democratic and diverse society in Saxony, and a community conference in Berlin. All creating spaces for strategic conversations with climate justice movements, labour unions, search & rescue NGOs, refugee movements, antifascist groups, and diaspora communities.

In Porto, two of the fellows of the *Academy of Migrant Organizing*, Berena Yogarajah and Vincent Bababouilabo, together with Vanessa A. Opoku will present a musical lecture performance. *Shevek Iyapo* combines two different perspectives on life in Almanyia (Turkish word for Germany). Berena Yogarajah achieved a milestone in the fight against social and institutional

“
A special program trying out new strategies and techniques of transformative organizing

racism with her initiative *Tatort Porz* and is critically engaged with identity politics, solidarity and utopias.

Her perspective is to come together with the music of a band around the musician Vincent Bababouilabo and visuals created by Vanessa A. Opoku. This band brings the acoustic classical African-American music of the 1960s into the modern age, combines it with pop and soukous elements and its own political and musical understanding in relation to the social and political challenges of the present.

This musical lecture performance will give an artistic insight in the process and outcomes Berena and Vincent have been part of in the *Academy of Migrant Organizing*. On May 1, 2022, we will then finally launch our new Instagram channel, the *Migrant Organizing Toolbox* consisting of educational resources for migrant organizers around Europe reflecting the most urgent strategic and methodological questions on how to practice resilient, rewarding and effective organizing.

! Follow the *Migrant Organizing Toolbox* on:
www.instagram.com/migrantorganizingtoolbox/

! Learn more about the *School of Transnational Activism*:
www.transnationalactivism.eu



Shevek Iyapo: Musical Lecture Performance can be seen at Valongo / Fórum Cultural de Erme-sinde on 23 April at 14.30h.

25th of April: the decolonization we're lacking

Álvaro Vasconcelos

Álvaro Vasconcelos is a researcher at the Centre of 20th Century Interdisciplinary Studies – CEIS20 of the University of Coimbra and coordinator of Forum Demos. He was a visiting professor at the Institute of International Relations at the University of São Paulo (2014-2015). He was Director of the European Union Institute for Security Studies/EUISS (2007-2012) and of the Institute for Strategic and International Studies (IEEI) in Lisbon, from its foundation in 1980 until 2007.

In 1974, only 30% of the countries could be considered “democratic”. In 2016, according to Larry Diamond, American political scientist, the number doubled to 60%.

Since the year 2000, 25 democracies aren't democracies anymore or find themselves struggling. To the democratic wave succeeds a period of democratic recession, a period of autocratization, during which national-populist parties try to deconstruct the liberal democracies and autocratic states like Russia seek to consolidate their power and stop any risk of democratic contamination.

This antidemocratic war is accompanied by a cultural counter-revolution against the big conquests of freedom and equality of the cultural revolution of the long 60s, which culminated on the 25th of April 1974. That was the cultural revolution that deconstructed the ideological fundamentals of colonialism, questioned the patriarchal order and with it the cult of force and sexism, fought for civic and African American rights, inspiring the fight against racism and the colonial exploration in the whole world. As the Mozambican poet Noémia de Sousa wrote in times of full colonial oppression, from Harlem came voices that screamed “Oh Let My People Go”.

The singularity of the Portuguese revolution is having overthrow a dictatorship of 50 years, which survived the fall of fascism in World War II and finished the last colonial empire. We knew then that a people that oppresses other people cannot be free. In large measure we own to the fight of national liberation of the peoples in the colonies our own freedom.

The fighting against dehumanization of the other wasn't finished with the end of colonial oppression. If the 25th of April brought us freedom with social progress and the end of colonial war, it failed in the memory

work over the crime against humanity that was colonialism. No commission was truth was ever created about the crimes committed in an absurd war that killed hundreds of thousands of African and Portuguese young people in the tragic knots the empire weaved, as wrote Pessoa. The Portuguese democracy let persist until this day, assuming it a lot of times, the rhetoric of the civilizing mission of the Portuguese empire and continues idolizing the so called “discoverers”, much of them sellers of slaves. The structural racism exists in Portugal and in it ride the nostalgic of the empire and the salazarist deception of lusotropicalism that proclaimed that there was no racism in the colonies and that the Portuguese were a post-racial people. The 25th of April remains incomplete: we're still lacking the deconstruction of the colonial ideology, essential to the decolonization of mentalities, which became more urgent towards the emergency of ethnonationalism of the far right and its strong entry in the Parliament.

At the same time the emergency in Portugal of strong audible voices of African descendants is an extremely positive novelty and it adds to the cultural, social and political agenda the question of the combat against racism and the lusotropicalist fallacy. This fighting is centred in the struggles of the African descendant communities as part of a vaster civic movement that extends the 60s' cultural revolution for equality and human rights to every discriminated social group, namely to the LGBTQ+ community, the Roma people, the immigrants and refugees.

We thought, in the euphoria of the 90s, that democracy, human rights and peace were unquestionable human conquests. Today, though, we know it's not like that.

The war against democracy today takes more brutal and bloody forms. The invasion

The 25th of April brought us freedom with social progress and the end of colonial war

of Ukraine by Russia reminds us that the threat to democracies and freedom don't always come from within, but also from the outside.

The indignation against the criminal imperial war of Putin in Ukraine is a testimony, in particular in the countries with a tragic colonial history, of a deep history lesson. From the tragic colonial experience, from the learnings of defeat, was born in Portugal and in many European countries the conscience that the wars of conquest are not only illegitimate, but also barbarism. That was what Habermas and Derrida remembered when the European cities flooded, in 2003, with millions of protestors against the war in Iraq.

There is, this year, something new in the way the 25th of April 1974 is being remembered. The democratic fighting doesn't show up as something from the past and many consider the ideals of April are again at risk, being our duty to continue fighting.

In solidarity with Ukraine, in hospitality without any kind of discrimination, that we should take in the refugees, in the fight against racism is the deep conviction that democracy, freedom, equality and the right to a dignified life and in peace are universal values – and that is the most beautiful lesson from that dawn of 25th of April 1974.



Álvaro Vasconcelos will talk at the opening of the Transeuropa Festival on April 21 and at the Debate Decolonizing Borders on April 22. Álvaro Vasconcelos will further participate at the Citizens Assembly in Valongo on April 22 and 23 and at the Homage to Maria Teresa Horta on the 25th April and contribute to the Porto Declaration for Transnational Peace.

*This is the dawn I'd been waiting for
The initial whole and clean day
In which we emerge from night
and silence
And free we live in the substance
of time*

—
Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen
'O Nome das Coisas'

To think about the revolution of the 25th of April 1974 is a necessary exercise, a democratic imperative, in a time that the war against democracy has also struck Portugal and takes, in Ukraine, the brutal form of destruction and death.

It is good to remember that the Portuguese revolution set the beginning of a democratic wave that immediately spread to southern Europe and, later in the 80s, to Latin America and in the 90s to Eastern Europe.

US-plaining is not enough. To the Western left, on your and our mistakes



Antiwar demos have popped up around the world, like this one in London (UK), protesting Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

— Photo Credit: Karollyne Hubert

Volodymyr Artiukh

Volodymyr Artiukh is PhD in Sociology and Social Anthropology; member of the editorial board at Commons: Journal of Social Critique.

Here in the post-Soviet world, we learned a lot from you. By 'we' I mean atomized or loosely organized communist, democratic socialist, left anarchist, feminist scholars, and activists from Kyiv, Lviv, Minsk, Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, and other places that are plunging into the horrors of war and police violence. After our own Marxist tradition underwent sclerotization, degradation, and marginalization, we read commentaries on *Das Kapital* in English. After the Soviet Union collapsed, we relied on your analysis of the American hegemony, neoliberal turn in the forms of capital accumulation, and Western neo-imperialism. We have also been encouraged by the Western social movements from alterglobalism to the anti-war protests, from Occupy to BLM.

We appreciate the way how you tried to theorize our corner of the world. You have correctly pointed out that the US helped undermine the democratic and economically progressive options of post-Soviet transformation in Russia and elsewhere. You are right that the US and Europe have failed to create a security environment that would include Russia and other post-Soviet countries. Our countries have long been in a position of having to adapt, make concessions, agree to humiliating conditions. You have done this with sympathy verging on romanticization, and we have sometimes condoned it.

Amidst Russia's shelling of Kharkiv, however, we see the limits to what we learnt from you. That knowledge was produced under the conditions of the American hegemony, which has reached its limits at Russia's bloody-red lines. The US lost its ability to represent its interests as common interests for Russia and China, it cannot enforce

compliance with military power, and its economic leverage is shrinking. In spite of what many of you claim, Russia is not reacting, adapting, making concessions anymore, it has regained agency and it is able to shape the world around it. Russia's toolkit is different from that of the US, it is not hegemonic, as it relies on brute force rather than on soft power and economy. Nevertheless, brute force is a powerful tool, as you all know from the US behaviour in Latin America, Iraq, Afghanistan and all over the globe. Russia has mimicked the coercive infrastructure of America's imperialism without preserving its hegemonic core.

And yet, this mimicry does not mean dependence. Russia has become an autonomous agent, its actions are determined by its own internal political dynamics, and the consequences of its actions are now contrary to western interests. Russia shapes the world around, imposes its own rules the way the US has been doing, albeit through other means. The sense of derealization that many commentators feel – 'this is not happening with us' – comes from the fact that the Russian warring elites are able to impose their delusions, transform them into the facts on the ground, and make others accept them despite their will. These delusions are no longer determined by the US or Europe, they are not a reaction, they are creation.

Having faced 'the impossible to imagine,' I see how the Western left is doing what it has been doing the best: analysing the American neo-imperialism, the expansion of NATO. It is not enough anymore as it does not explain the world that is emerging from the ruins of Donbas and Kharkiv's main square. The world is not exhaustively described as shaped by or reacting upon the actions of the US. It has gained dynamics of its own, and the US and Europe is in reactive mode in many areas. You explain the distant causes instead of noticing the emergent trends.

Thus, it strikes me how, talking about the dramatic processes in our corner of the world, you reduce them to reaction to the activity of your own government and business elites. We have learnt all about the US and NATO from you, but this knowledge is not so helpful anymore. Maybe the US has drawn the outline of this board game, but now other players move the chips and add their own contours with a red marker. US-centric explanations are outdated. I have been reading everything written and said on the left about last year's escalating conflict between the US, Russia, and Ukraine. Most of it was terribly off, much worse than many mainstream explanations. Its predictive power was nil.

This is not to accuse the Western left of ethnocentrism, this is to point to their limited perspective. Overwhelmed with the fog of war and psychological stress, I cannot offer a better perspective. I would only call for help in grasping the situation in theoretical terms while incorporating insights from

our corner of the world. US-plaining is not helpful to us to the extent that you think it is. We also need an effort to emerge from the ruins of eastern Marxism and the colonization by the Western Marxism. We make mistakes in this way, and you may accuse us of nationalism, idealism, provincialism. Learn from these mistakes: now you are also much more provincial and you face temptations to resort to simplistic Manichaeism.

You face a challenge of reacting to a war that is not waged by your countries. Given all the theoretical impasses I alluded to above, there is no simple way to frame an anti-war message. One thing remains painfully clear: you can help deal with the consequences of the war providing assistance to refugees from Ukraine no matter what skin colour or passport they have. You can also pressurize your government into cancelling Ukraine's foreign debt and providing humanitarian help.

Do not let half-baked political positions substitute an analysis of the situation. The injunction that the main enemy is in your country should not translate into a flawed analysis of the inter-imperialist struggle. At this stage appeals to dismantle NATO or, conversely, accepting anyone there, will not help those who suffer under the bombs in Ukraine, in jails in Russia or Belarus. Sloganeering is harmful as ever. Branding Ukrainians or Russian fascists only makes you part of the problem, not part of the solution. A new autonomous reality emerges around Russia, a reality of destruction and harsh repressions, a reality where a nuclear conflict is not unthinkable anymore. Many of us have missed the tendencies leading to this reality. In the fog of war, we do not see clearly the contours of the new. Neither do, as it seems, the American or European governments.

In this reality we, the post-Soviet left, will have incomparably less organizational, theoretical, and simply vital resources. Without you, we will struggle to survive. Without us, you will be closer to the precipice.

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We stand in solidarity with the people in Ukraine. The debate "Decolonizing Borders" on April 22 at 21.30 at the Fórum Cultural de Esmerinde (Valongo), follows the aim to raise awareness of the struggle of Ukrainians and Russians for democracy and peace. On April 23 at 18.30 at the University of Porto, a group of citizens from various geographies, will draft and debate a Porto declaration for transnational peace.

Racialized housing injustice: The case of environmental racism against Roma from Romania

Enikő Vincze

Enikő Vincze is a professor at Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and a housing justice activist, member of the local group Social housing NOW! that brings together ethnic Romanians, Hungarians and Roma, and public intellectuals from different domains alongside victims of housing injustices. In the past 10 years, she conducted research on the racialization of Roma, processes of ghettoization and territorial segregation, housing politics and racialized unequal urban development.

In both my academic work and activism, I am addressing housing inequalities produced by uneven development, class exploitation, racist oppression and patriarchal domination. When with the housing crisis in Romania, the concept of racialized injustice always stays at the core of my approach. Housing injustice is the product of a political economy that creates laborer classes who cannot afford to pay for the increasing costs of homes on the residential market, while it transforms housing into a financial asset and source for capital accumulation.

In the case of racialized minorities such as Roma in Romania, housing injustice is manifested in extreme forms: impoverished Roma are victims of forced evictions, they are pushed into the ghettoized margins of the localities, they are performing underpaid informal or formal jobs, and, constrained by spatial dislocations and precarious economic conditions, they live in inadequate homes that many times happen to be placed in toxic environments. In these instances of housing injustice, the racialization of Roma ethnicity and of poverty goes hand in hand with the stigmatization of both the territories where poor Roma live and the labor they perform. At the end of the day, these processes justify the criminal stance of environmental racism according to which Roma life does not matter and the infrastructurally underdeveloped or even toxic environment in which they are forced to live becomes their natural world, it fits their supposedly inferior biological disposition or cultural choices.

Broadly speaking, housing injustice in Romania is a result of housing politics that played an important role in the transformation of state socialism and a centralized economy into neoliberal capitalism and market economy. Processes of privatization via the right-to-buy and the retrocession

measures, paralleled by the lack of public investment in public housing or differently put by the prevalence of private housing development, resulted in the over-commodification of housing and in its financialization. The fact that housing became predominantly a commodity and a financial asset, while peoples' right to housing is violated and their social need for housing remains unsatisfied, is deeply related to how urban and housing development serves the interests of capital and not of people, and definitely not of low-income people. The changing political economy of housing leads to persistent housing crises, which includes phenomena such as the increase of housing prices and private rents, the rise of households overburdened by their housing costs and of over-crowded households. But housing crises also create diverse instances of extreme forms of housing dispossession, like forced eviction, homelessness, living in inadequate and unsecure homes, or being forced into housing arrangements in toxic environments disconnected from the rest of the locality.

The Pata Rât neighbourhood in the Rumanian city of Cluj Napoca is an example that cumulates all the dispossessions and deprivations related to poor and unsecure housing, but it is not a singular case in a country that displays all the big inequalities and uneven developments created by late capitalism. The residential areas in Pata Rât have been formed over five decades (the vast majority of them, however, in the last 20 years) under the impact of several structural causes. People who worked in the city did not and still don't have sufficient financial resources to pay for housing costs elsewhere due to the large discrepancy between their low income and housing prices in the real estate market. All this is the consequence of the fact that the Romanian state and the local government do not offer them adequate and affordable social housing in other areas of the city. This case displays the broad spectrum of responsibility of the local public administration for the formation of residential areas near the landfills of toxic waste:

— in relation to the oldest colony (Dallas), formed since the 1970s, whose tenants select garbage on the ramp for the benefit of all the people of Cluj, the authorities practice a policy of indifference, from time to time hidden under the pretext of a passive tolerance;

— in relation to the informal housing area set up on Cantonului Street, the responsibility of the Cluj City Hall is indirect but active, because starting with the second half of the 1990s it evicted and directed to this territory smaller or larger groups of Roma from other areas of the city, accepting the placement of temporary homes by humanitarian organizations or offering them the alternative to build a makeshift home on their own in this territory;

— the responsibility of the local public administration towards the inhabitants of Pata Rât is the most direct and active towards those who live in the modular houses that the town hall built in 2010 with dedication to the Roma near the landfills, so in a toxic industrial area.

All of the above would not have happened if the Romanian state and local authorities had complied with international treaties on ensuring the right to adequate housing for all, as well as banning and preventing evictions. The formed residential areas would not have become permanent if the city government with an annual budget of over 400 million euros would have had the political will to invest in moving the residents of Pata Rât to adequate social housing in the city. The existence of the Pata Rât housing area near the landfills has also become possible due to institutional racism against Roma and poor people, an act that not only inferiorizes, dehumanizes and stigmatizes people, but also endangers their lives. Marginalization and territorial segregation in this case, and in similar cases, means vulnerability to life-threatening diseases and reduces people's life expectancy.

Therefore, among the principles that an adequate housing and environment policy should respect, the following should be necessarily part:

- ensuring access to adequate housing for all in a healthy environment;
- ensuring adequate social housing to all those eligible according to the housing law, and giving priority to the poorest with precarious living conditions, by building a necessary number of public social housing and using a fair allocation system;
- prevention of forced evictions through integrated housing and social measures (social assistance and benefits);
- a ban of the relocation of Roma and other poor or homeless people near toxic platforms (such as landfills, water treatment plants, and industrial sites);
- ensuring that each urban regeneration project has a housing program, because such projects do not only change the built environment but also the social structure of the population. In areas undergoing major urban changes, therefore there is a need to protect the vulnerable victims of these transformations and provide them with suitable housing alternatives.



Eniko Vincze will talk at the event Utopian Green City – Local gardens, global changes on April 22 at 21.30 at the University of Porto.

roomtobloom

Room to bloom: Why we need ecofeminist, postcolonial and decolonial narratives for Europe to change

Marta Cillero and Ségolène Pruvot

Marta Cillero is responsible for communications at European Alternatives. She graduated in Media Studies, Journalism and Communication and has a master degree in Gender Studies. She is the author of research reports about gender violence in Mediterranean countries. She is a member of the executive board and project manager at Chayn Italia, an award-winning organisation based in Italy, Pakistan, India and the UK.

Ségolène Pruvot is a Cultural Director of European Alternatives. Ségolène has developed extensive experience in designing and implementing transnational participative cultural programmes and curated artistic projects in several European countries. Ségolène is a Doctor in Urban Sociology. In the course of her academic career and professional life, she specialised in the exploration of the intersection between arts, the city and social change.

There is something magical about Room to Bloom: when one talks to people about the work we - the Room to Bloom management and curatorial team, its advisors and its artists - are doing with this platform, a spark ignites in the eyes of those who are listening. There is an interest in getting to know more, in being involved, in wondering what direction the group is taking. Room to Bloom is occupying a space that was left vacant and it might well be that there is something revolutionary in bringing together 100 feminist artists from across the world to imagine, co-create and narrate hope and alternatives for our common futures.

Room to Bloom is a new transfeminist and ecofeminist platform that brings together emerging artists to examine and create ecological and postcolonial narratives for Europe and beyond. Room to Bloom recognizes that it is time to contribute to the activation of the peripheries and to navigate against patriarchalism, different types of oppression, exploitation and racism in order to open new spaces for experimentation and to lay the basis for new forms of actions in the art world.

Living up the promises of intersectional feminism into daily practices of art and cultural management is a very ambitious goal. Something that seemed - quite naively - obvious to us when we started the project, the endeavour of bringing together reflections and learning from feminism and post/decolonialism into practice to change cultural and art management, appears - one year down the line - to be not only quite unusual but also quite difficult.

As cultural managers and curators, we are aware that decolonising ourselves and the cultural production sphere is part of the journey towards decolonising the spaces we inhabit.



Room to Bloom session in Palermo with artists, 2021.
— Credits: Maghweb

Applying a postcolonial and decolonial feminist approach involves a reflection about topics such as white privilege, power structures, gender roles, and the importance of putting personal life in the political sphere, that are key topics to address to form new societal and political proposals today. The use of both concepts 'postcolonial' and 'decolonial' is deliberate: by using the two concepts we recognize the ongoing and unresolved debate about overcoming colonial legacy. Talking about postcolonial feminism means recognising that we are still facing and suffering the consequences of the colonies and of European Imperialism; talking about decolonial feminism, puts the intention in the work that needs to be done to deconstruct preconceived ideas, assumptions, behaviours and ways of understanding our roles in this world, arguing that these are multilayered and diverse. We do not understand these two concepts as a single 'theory' of the international but rather a set of orientations to show how to think about feminism and the world we are striving for. Our understanding is that we are not living in a post-colonial world. Ancient and new forms of colonialism are still present, subordinating and exploiting different communities, taking different shapes and oppressing minoritized groups. Colonial domination not only shapes our ideas about race, but also strongly influences how people think about class, culture, gender, and sexuality.

Operating and working with a feminist approach means questioning and rethinking epistemology, ontology, norms and ethics that we have inherited. The exercise of understanding how we are reading roles, bodies and minds - ours and that of others - needs to happen in the spaces and institutions we populate with our works and ideas. In this sense, art institutions should deal and operate with these concepts clearly present in their actions and vision.

In the process of deconstructing and decolonising the spaces and contexts in which we operate, there is something powerful about working within the margins and in the peripheries: Peripheries are the places where we can create collectives, relationships, collaborations; construct a transnational consciousness across spaces that are often left out from the mainstream narrative, establish alliances of solidarity to create a support system, alliances to disrupt the dominant orders, invent and pilot new orders. There is something radical about bringing forward safe spaces of mutual care and listening. Spaces where thanks to the collective energies that are exchanged, change can happen, spaces where care takes a revolutionary role that can lead to radical change.

With the exhibition hosted in the context of Transeuropa Festival in Porto, we want to showcase artists' perspectives to convey the need to shift the rules of power to favor commoning within the art world institutions and to co-create new practices that subvert patriarchalism and racism by offering challenging visions for multiplicity and coexistence. Together, we want to bring forward the message that to resist a system of domination and exploitation, and replace it with actions and narratives of care and nurturing, focusing on recentering the narrative to the margins and restoring the health of nature on this planet, prioritizing care for 'the others'.

On its journey, Room to Bloom wants to apply the true lessons of different feminisms, providing an efficient support network to its artists while deconstructing the Western gaze and being fully conscious and aware of the many complexities brought by intersectionality. We pursue a vision of a Europe that fully takes into account its diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, geography, sexuality, class, abilities, education. It has become unavoidable to provide a framework to understand the different power dynamics and dominations and provide new tools and narratives to resist them and invite new pathways. Room to Bloom wants to continue opening these spaces for a plural, feminist and collective change to happen.



Room to Bloom's exhibition with artworks by Mascha Wysocka and Natalia Ludmila can be seen at the Cooperativa Árvore from 21 - 25 April.

roomtobloom

Into Territory

Natalia Ludmila

Natalia Ludmila was born in Mexico City and grew up in Toronto, Canada. However, she has spent the more significant part of her adult life abroad and finds this tacitly permeates in her work. Perhaps, as a guiding thread in her choice of subject matter or the need to explore specific Themes. A multi-disciplinary artist whose practice shifts between painting, drawing, video, and sound.

Into Territory is a body of work that stems from the ongoing project WrittenSpoken. The project explores the nature of text and how to remodel it into raw material for aesthetic research. This means enacting other modes of reading that activate texts and, perhaps, grant them additional layers of meaning.

In past iterations of the series, I have employed texts from printed and digital news media outlets. In order to question forms of representation and the undercurrents that influence first who articulates the narrative and second how it is constructed, particularly in regards to situations of conflict.

For the Into Territory edition of the project, I've changed the process by this time compiling passages from the influential book *Orientalism* by Edward Said. In his book, the author broke ground on how we examined, thought about, and studied colonialism. As a result, setting the stage for what would become a field of academic research and, perhaps most importantly, a mindset. Thus, we can view an extensive gamut of human activity (past and current) from multiple perspectives. Consequently, from these perspectives emerged critical thinking, re-positioning of thought, and reimagining the state of the world.

Said details in the book how colonialist enterprises created global structures and put a system in motion. The same system favoured (still does) economic growth and gain over other aspects of human activity. By

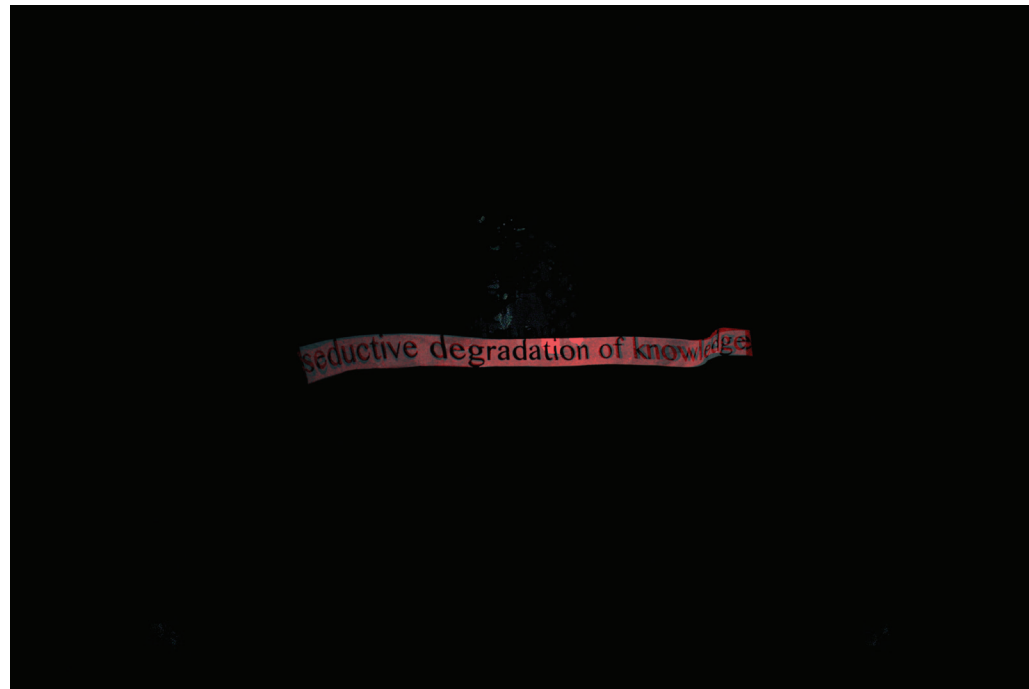


Photo by Natalia Ludmila

establishing a global order geared towards that end. The repercussions of this system remain, and in the global south are yet to be surmounted. The order persists in exerting power and influence over the dynamics of the global south-north relationship.

In enacting an imperial expansionist agenda, a discourse was also formed. Said explains how colonialist enterprises were constantly analysed, charted, and written about. In the perspective of multiple disciplines in the form of treatises, records, briefs, reports, memoirs and diaries. On the one hand, these texts invariably had an explicit or tacit tone that described a western sense of dominance. Therefore in these texts lies the construction and defining notions of the Other. And on the other hand, at their inception, the texts erased the seized regions' human histories, placing them at a fictional beginning of history.

Francis Bacon stated in the late 16th century, "knowledge is power". For Said, this is problematic as he highlights the connection between the writing of the narrative and knowledge production. Said sees in this one-sided holding of the telling

and recording of history—the power to place certain types of knowledge as adequate and select their permanence above all others.

This idea of erasure/continuity of knowledge led me in the process of selecting excerpts from the book. Focusing on texts that clearly outlined an ideology in their listing of perceived superiority. And used for their descriptions of the great and vast unknown the colonist enterprises encountered. Also, I was interested in the fact that some of the cited texts originated from the highly subjective. On the account that some of their authors had not travelled extensively yet were considered authorities on the theme. And what Said refers to as the emergence of an expert, the Orientalist.

It is worth mentioning that at the base of this making and subsequent accumulation of knowledge. Lie lay the ideals of dominance, possession, and expansion that are predominantly male. And can be linked to what Anne McClintock refers to as "a persistent gendering of the imperial unknown" and exemplified in the description of acquired territory as virgin.

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The project explores the nature of text and how to remodel it into raw material for aesthetic research

In the book, Said cites primarily from memoirs, studies, and treaties, written for the most part in the 19th century. For *Into Territory*, I focused on the texts that are specifically excerpts of cites by the author (in essence citing what the author quoted). The charged nature of the texts prompted me with a sense of poignancy. As a result, keeping an accompanying log of citations whilst reading the book—focusing on words and short sentences that could function on their means. Searching for texts that alluded to a narrative but also evoked the imagination.

Furthermore, in this body of work, I also explore notions of nationalism. And how it can be viewed as a succession of colonialism. By investigating the concept of waving flags and searching to depict it in a material and figurative sense. The digital collages in this edition of the project hold a perceptible and almost tangible physicality, prominent in the undulating character of the texts. This represents and is reminiscent of the idea of blind flag-waving nationalism.

Finally, colonialism and nationalism are revealed tacitly in layers, almost as a peeling veneer. Visible and present at times and not so in others permanently built upon the performance of opposites. Both derive from a dichotomous worldview. And hold on to a perpetuated idea of binary difference at their core. Nevertheless, both have a shared thematic beginning, regardless of the difference in objectives. Moreover, colonialism sought to condone its enterprises in that shared beginning, whilst nationalism (wherever and however it may appear) strives to validate atrocious actions.



Room to Bloom's exhibition with artworks by Masha Wysocka and Natalia Ludmila can be seen at the Cooperativa Árvore from 21 - 25 April.

roomtobloom

The Garden of Naturalisation

Masha Wysocka

Masha Wysocka (b.1984) is a visual artist based between Barcelona (Spain) and Brussels (Belgium). Whilst she was born in the USSR, she has lived in various European countries. She holds an MA in photojournalism and documentary photography from the London College of Communication, graduated from the Institute of Political Sciences (Sciences Po Strasbourg) and holds a BA in sociology from University of Strasbourg. She is one of the recipients of the Mead Fellowship awarded by University of the Arts London (2020) and was selected for several artist-in-residence programmes. Her work is part of the art collection at the Museum of the University of Alicante (Spain).

Jardín de Naturalización (The Garden of Naturalisation) is an artistic research on the naturalisation of immigrants in Spain, or how the natural sciences can define a national identity.

People who come from former Spanish colonies represent a significant number of naturalised citizens in Spain. But they are not always considered an integral part of Spanish culture, like tomatoes or potatoes. People with a background of migration are often depicted as 'invasive plants'. I am using photography and research to deconstruct these stereotypes.

In law, naturalisation describes the process of becoming a citizen of another country. It is an assessment of whether a foreigner is integrated into the receiving society, meeting the requirements to be recognised as a citizen with the same rights as native inhabitants.

Naturalisation is also a concept used in the natural sciences, referring to the process of introducing exotic species into a new environment. In nature, naturalisation can occur accidentally, but it is usually a process controlled by humans pursuing the benefits of introducing new species.

Spain has a long tradition of acclimatising exotic species with high commercial value. From colonial times to today, the country has played an essential role in growing fruit and vegetables in Europe. Spain has also become one of the leading 'gardens of naturalisation' for foreigners in the EU.

Between 2010 and 2019, 1,285,656 people acquired Spanish citizenship (according to



Photo by Masha Wysocka

Eurostat). There is little known about these 'new' Spaniards. Some have strong historical links with Spain (e.g. Latino Americans and Moroccans) and others do not (e.g. Eastern Europeans). Unlike France or the UK, Spain has not yet offered them the opportunity to play an important part in public life.

Until recently, Spain was not considered a country of immigration. It has a scarce visual account of people who have moved to the country. I wanted to address this gap through photography, taking portrait photographs of people whose relationship with Spain is based on a personal decision. In addition, I wrote poetic texts that tell interconnected stories of human and plant migration, European colonialism and the natural sciences.

This interdisciplinary project also aims to broaden the definition of Spanish identity, which has been a recurrent element in Spanish photography. However, the search for roots is often limited to folklore, religion or literature.

The project is supported through a Mead Fellowship Award, granted by University of the Arts London.

EXCERPT FROM THE WORK

1. "What are your friends' names?"
2. It was the first question of my test for Spanish citizenship.
3. I started to write my friends' names but realised it was a trap. The Spanish administration did not want to know who my friends were. They wanted to know if my friends were Spanish or not.
4. There is an old saying: "Tell me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are."
5. The names could not always indicate the origin of humans or plants.
6. Take the example of Lantana camara. Its vernacular name in Spanish is banderita española.
7. Dutch navigators brought the plant from Latin America to Europe. The plant subsequently spread through Asia too. Today it is on the list of 100 of the World's Worst Invasive Alien Species.
8. Invasive Alien Species is a new science-fiction film title, isn't it? No, it is a scientific term used by the European Commission.

An artistic research on the naturalisation of immigrants in Spain

9. "As invasive alien species do not respect borders, coordinated action at the European level will be more effective than individual actions at the Member State level."¹

10. Plants, animals and humans have travelled across the continents over centuries. The plants were pioneers in that sense. They managed to reach barely accessible territories and islands before humans.

11. Of course, the seeds of plants have taken advantage of animals and humans to spread more safely. Trade and wars were exceptionally beneficial for them.

12. "In the beginning, there were spices."

13. This is the opening sentence of Stefan Zweig's book *Magellan: Conqueror of the Seas*.

14. Its main character is no less famous than the author himself – Ferdinand Magellan.

15. Portuguese-born Fernão de Magalhães was naturalised as a Spanish subject in 1518. Since then he has been known as Fernando de Magallanes. But in Portugal he has been called a 'traitor' to his homeland for many years.

16. Cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, pepper, ginger and saffron.

17. Europe lacked spices. Food was insipid and flavourless. The Spanish Crown set up a new challenge: to find the first western route to the Spice Islands.

18. The Spanish expedition of 1519–22 was known for achieving the first circumnavigation of the globe in the Age of Discovery.

19. Ferdinand Magellan did not survive the journey. He was killed during the Battle of Mactan in April 1521.

20. *Navigare necesse est, vivere non est necesse.*

1. https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index_en.htm



Room to Bloom's exhibition with artworks by Masha Wysocka and Natalia Ludmila can be seen at the Cooperativa Árvore from 21 - 25 April.

roomtobloom

HAIR



Photo by Plataforma UMA

Joana Magalhães, Mafalda Lencastre, Maria Inês Marques are members of the Plataforma UMA. UMA is a multidisciplinary and undisciplined platform born in 2020 in Porto whose work focuses on researching, creating, and presenting projects that foster horizontal and disheveled collaborations between artists and researchers from different areas, between thought and practices.

A video and sound installation by UMA (Joana Magalhães, Mafalda Lencastre, Maria Inês Marques). With contributions by Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida, Nabil Iqbal and Arminda Nogueira.

The hairlessness of the black hole means that it has a kind of terrible forgetfulness that is unique among all the structures of the universe. But there is something that we still haven't understood here...
Nabil Iqbal

HAIR is a multimedia installation about the combination of two key concepts: resistance and fragility. Devised for the 2022 edition of the Transeuropa Festival, it was born out of the dialogue between the dramaturgical and curatorial axis of UMA's opening season - HOLE 2.0 - and the theme of this year's festival: Decolonize, decarbonize, democratize!

HAIR addresses the contradictory materiality of hair as an incredibly resistant fiber (one single strand of hair can hold up to 3Kg of weight and when we die our hair keeps growing, putting off death and time), and as a fragile and phantasmagoric "thing" once it is severed from a living body. As an immersive video and sound experience, this installation proposes hair as an object that triggers a multiverse of philosophical perspectives and political discourses, including astrophysics theories about the (im)possibility of black holes storing their information in their so-called "hair"; hair as a symbol of both colonial repression and desire; the craft and market rules of wig making; or even hair as the embodiment of personal identity and memory. Although in the Western tradition, shaped by Greek and biblical mythologies, hair is a symbol of resistance = virility and strength (think of Samson's tale), with this piece we want to advance an alternative equation:

Resistance = fragility+decrepitude+phantasmagoria.

Through its dual condition as a living fiber (that grows, stretches and shrinks), and as a dead fiber (that falls, breaks, and eventually rots), hair seems to evoke a form of archive that remains present through its own flaws, traces, and spectralities.

HAIR is an all-around video and sound experience conceived for the main gallery of Cooperativa Árvore, in Porto. Inside a square that hangs in the middle of the room, the spectators are invited to immerse themselves, at once, in a refracted soundscape made up of multiple voices and in a panoramic and hypnotic video, showing hair in all its fragile resistance and spectral presence.

HAIR materializes UMA's ongoing artistic experimentation and research. We believe that transversality and intersectionality between academic and non-academic practices, between artistic and non-artistic expressions are the key to the democratization and decolonization of critical thinking. Horizontal collaborations between people from different nationalities, affiliations, and fields of expertise during the research of a specific theme - in this case, resistance and fragility - was absolutely vital for the artistic process and the devising of *HAIR*. Therefore, as creators of this piece, we summoned the diverse voices of UK-based astrophysicist Nabil Iqbal, who specializes in black holes, Portuguese writer Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida, author of the semi-autobiographical book *That Hair*, and Porto-based hair expert Arminda Nogueira.



Plataforma UMA's exhibition HAIR can be seen at the Cooperativa Árvore from 21 - 25 April.

Isabel Brison

Isabel Brison established herself as a visual artist in Lisbon before moving to Sydney in 2014, where she now works primarily as a web developer. Her exhibitions include *Relatório Incompleto Sobre os Usos do Impossível* (2013) at Next Room, Lisbon and *O Futuro da Vida Urbana em Ruínas* (2012) at Carlos Carvalho Arte Contemporânea Gallery, Lisbon. In 2021 she created the online project *The Adventurous Lives of Lisbon Statues*.

roomtobloom

Henry and his Hat



Drawing by Isabel Brison

There's nothing like a good story. I tend to collect them, and though they don't always show up in my work, the themes that I most often explore - landscape, urban and monumental space, or our futile attempts to control nature through geometry and architecture - wouldn't be half as interesting without the density of history behind them. But sometimes I will deliberately chase a word, a phrase or a story, and incorporate them directly into an artwork.

The piece being presented at this festival came about as a follow-up to the extensive research I did around the public sculptures of Lisbon, the latest materialisation of which is the online series *The Adventurous Lives of Lisbon Statues*. That series goes into the history of a few of the statues that are, or have previously been, on the streets of Lisbon, repositioning them and reflecting on the meaning of their placement. At the time of release of the first episodes, a polemic started in Portugal around the words of a politician who seemed to advocate for the removal of an important monument to the Portuguese "Discoveries" (the maritime and colonial exploits undertaken during the 15th and 16th centuries).

By coincidence, the first episode of my series centred on the very same monument, and the history and design of its surrounding area, the Praça do Império in Belém. Unsurprisingly, this was the episode that got the most attention of the whole series, although it wasn't the most audacious in terms of changes to the monumental landscape.

That stayed in the back of my mind until the invitation came to participate in this festival. When I read the themes, I thought back to that polemic and how much it evinces the range of feelings about Portugal's role as coloniser of several parts of the world, but also about the monument to the Discoveries itself, as a prime example of how the mid-twentieth century Estado Novo dictatorship tried to inspire nationalistic sentiment. And the monument is sentimental: epic, grandiose, and centred on the singular character of Henry the Navigator.

The fact that Henry was purportedly more involved in the logistics and the research that made long-distance travel by sea possible, than in the dodgy history of colonisation itself, means he can still, more or less safely, be considered a hero to this day. That in turn means that not only

the statues made during the dictatorship survive, but new ones are put up from time to time.

I embarked on further research: how many statues to Henry the Navigator exist in outdoor public spaces in Portugal today, and when were they made? A methodical collection returned 17, of which 4 are busts and the remaining full-body representations. (There may be more; these are the ones I found mention of in the available records.) Most of them were created during the dictatorship. I resolved to catalogue them as one would do with botanical specimens.

In the process of collecting this data, I started noticing details about the representations themselves. Henry is most often portrayed with a wide-brimmed hat, but that fashion started in the 20th century. Previous representations dress him up as a warrior, but once the hat appears his clothes become more priest-like. Looking further into when and why this change of image occurred, I found the culprit was an illustration in a book that was discovered in the 19th century, where Henry is indeed wearing the hat and some kind of flowing garment. Doubts have since been raised as to

whether that image is in fact a portrait of Henry the Navigator or of someone else (possibly one of his elder brothers), but we won't go into that here. The fact remains that due to the amount of 20th century portrayals inspired by that image, Henry is now almost universally recognised by his headgear.

The hat itself has an interesting story: it's called a chaperon, and evolved from the deliberate misuse of a mediaeval type of hood in a hat-like manner. Chaperons were popular throughout the middle ages, and particularly fashionable in the Duchy of Burgundy during the rule of Philip the Good, whose third wife was Henry's sister Isabel. Their brother Peter negotiated the wedding, and may have brought back the trend to the Portuguese court.

The other interesting detail regarding the chaperon-bearing statues of Henry is that the chaperon itself is often incorrectly portrayed as a wide-brimmed hat with a piece of cloth attached to it. The fact that the one item that provides instant recognition of an image of Henry is portrayed with no historical accuracy, on top of the possibility that the real Henry never actually wore such a hat (if the portrait in the book is indeed of someone else) points to the arbitrariness of these representations. Formally, they could be anything whatsoever, as long as we all agree they represent Henry.

This was the legacy of our dictatorship: it taught us to recognise particular signs loaded with nationalistic meaning, but the signs are random, two dimensional, devoid of historical significance. They tell us more about the present (the then-present of the Estado Novo regime, and the now-present of our inheritance of their visual language) than about the past. But that's what monuments do: in lieu of helping us remember the actual past, they provide us with ready-made signs loaded with static, a-historical meaning. In this sense, the story of Henry's hat is the story of any propagandistic image.



Isabel Brison's exhibition *Henry and his Hat* can be seen at the Cooperativa Árvore from 21 - 25 April.

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There is a possibility that the real Henry never actually wore such a hat

Marian Lens and Serena Vittorini

Marian Lens is a sociologist and a lesbian activist. She has published numerous articles and given lectures on lesbian, feminist and LGBTQI+ politics and literature. In 2001 she co-founded the RainbowHouse in Brussels, and since 2013 is guiding tours to unveil the past and present local and international history of women and the rainbow communities. She founded and ran the bookshop Artemys in Brussels.

Serena Vittorini is an Italian visual artist based in Belgium. After graduating in Psychology, she developed an interest in visual arts. She graduated in Photography from ISFCI and has a Masters in Advanced Photography from IED. In recent years she has been working on the link between identity and memory, blurring the boundaries between the intimate and the public, reality and fiction.

My main purpose as a sociologist and lesbian activist is keeping LGBTI+ history alive. Guiding special *L-tours* that explore the capital of Europe, makes it possible to highlight the importance of lesbian, gay, trans, and intersex lives in a city like Brussels, and their relationship with other often marginalized social groups in Europe and beyond.

As a teenager in the 1970's, I became an ecologist, a rebel against sexist inequalities, and later a active student fighting against any kind of social and economical injustice. In the early 1980's, I joined the first newly founded Belgian lesbian archives *Les Lesbianaires*.

In the same years, in a pioneer Master thesis on the topic, I analysed the construction of the binary gender system and its basic link to the construction of heterosocial normativity. Since then this analysis of how they were intrinsically inbuilt and are still functioning in our present heterosocial society receives increasingly more echo in younger generations.. Even though we can still face hostility by doing so, more and more social groups want to dig deeper on the topic.

Shortly after, as "selling books is selling ideas", I founded the bookshop Artemys in Brussels. In 1985, it was the first association in Belgium to have explicit lesbian statuts. With 18 years of existence, isse one of the longest lasting feminist bookstores in the world. Preferring a variety of 100 different titles instead of 100 times a single best-seller, the international, trilingual bookshop (English, French and Dutch) bookshop quickly became a 'Place To Go' in order to find diverse and



Photo credits: Artemys

intersectional content. In 2001, Artemys co-founded the *RainbowHouse* in Brussels, which has since hosted and coordinated over sixty diverse LGBTI+ associations.

How important were women and other minoritized groups in the making of queer/alternative/modern Brussels and Europe? Lesbians have always been at the forefront of what is currently called the LGBTI+ movement. In addition to the examples quoted above, the first LGBTI+ association in Belgium, *Centre Culturel de Belgique* (CCB), was created by Suzan Daniel in 1953.

However, much remains to be done: lesbians are often not included in official maps or guides. They are still receiving far less (positive) publicity even though they never 'disappeared.' Quite the contrary! They still face one of the worst, discriminatory and oppressive systems, intended to render them invisible.

How can we create a decolonized, decarbonized, democratized civilization? By becoming heroes. Because every single person, group, or institution can act to enhance the visibility of minoritized persons and groups. Only by learning to listen to every perspective, society can

evolve and enrich its fabric. Privileged groups within their communities can play a significant role in acting against discriminations and oppressions.

That's why it is important to know our history and herstory and pass it to the next generations. We have to pass on the memory of how numerous we were and still are, in order to prevent and break the stereotypes that are putting us down, strengthen our different communities, grant each other knowledge to fight back against discrimination and oppression, and find ways and strategies to change society in a positive way.

Now is the time to come out, be a part of the movement, create our own dreams and reality, and discover spaces to live our lives as equals amongst others.

CURATORIAL NOTE ON WHAT IS LEFT, BY SERENA VITTORINI

I met Marian Lens as I was doing a photo-reportage of her, to highlight her life as a lesbian activist in Belgium. What struck me immediately was the vast archive she has created and accumulated over the years. My reportage focused on this extensive archive - a specific focus that I had already used in previous projects.

What Is Left

The archive is a significant gathering of knowledge and memory as it collects, records, preserves and transmits historical objects and documents for the present and for the future. This collection from the past structures historical memory and prevents the loss of valuable material that ought to be transmitted to future generations.

Also, archive-based art exhibitions allow for a reinterpretation of the past with multiple levels of interpretation, ask questions about reality and fiction, contribute to reinvigorating the link between individual and collective memory, and are thus crucial for understanding the identity of the individual in society. In recent years, in the context of artistic practice, archives have become a fruitful platform of stimuli for contemporary artistic production and theoretical research. Archives are being discovered and digitalised at a faster than ever pace.

New ways of presenting the interactions of the archive are constantly being developed, allowing the realisation of important multimedia and multidisciplinary art installations. Also, the more artists and researchers work in this field, the more we realise that there is a huge amount of objects and images already produced, just waiting to be rediscovered and reinterpreted. That is why we decided to create this installation at the *Livraria aberta* in Porto, composed of a selection of historical documents that Marian Lens kept during her life as a lesbian activist and of her thoughts in a text format.

We will formalise this material in the space of the bookshop through a mind map that will associate the historical documents with the experience of the individual, creating an important parallel that aims to examine the connections between individual and collective memory.

How important were women and other minoritized groups in the making of queer/alternative Brussels and Europe?



Maria Len's exhibition What is Left curated by Serena Vittorini can be seen at the Livraria aberta from 22 - 25 April. Marian Lens and Serena Vittorini will participate in a Meet & Greet at Livraria aberta on April 22 at 19h.

Jéssica Moreira

Jéssica is Project Manager and Main Researcher in the project CD-IEEI in Universidade Lusófona do Porto and Project Coordinator at European Alternatives based in Porto.

The *New Portuguese Letters*, published in 1972 by Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta, and Maria Velho da Costa - better known as "The Three Marias" - and automatically banned by the censorship of the Portuguese dictatorship, became an indispensable landmark of contemporary feminism. The book was immediately translated in Europe and the United States and is one of the most translated Portuguese works.

The process of persecution suffered by the Three Marias raised a wave of indignation and solidarity throughout the world, mimicking the sorority that itself serves as a backdrop to the book. From this pioneering book in history - of women and men; of feminism and patriarchy - a "new era in the literary movement of contemporary neo-feminism" is inaugurated.

Maria Lurdes Pintasilgo, a chemical-industrial engineer and the first and only woman to hold the office of Prime Minister in Portugal, writes the Pre-preface and Preface to the 1980 edition. With this, Maria Lourdes de Pintasilgo, for many the fourth Maria, becomes herself a milestone of Portuguese feminism. What follows are excerpts from the Pre-Preface and Preface.

[PRE-PREFACE]

"Such is the rupture introduced by the New Portuguese Letters that their first approach can only be made in the light of what they are not. They are not a collection of letters, although one recognises in them the style traditionally cultivated by women in literature. They are not a collection of sparse poems, although the whole reality portrayed is converted into poetry. Nor are they a novel, although the lived (or imagined) story of Mariana Alcoforado is their main plot."

"[They are] a new way of saying the human person and their way of being in the world, an essay that is not meant to be philosophical but which touches the roots of being, an unprecedented contribution to social anthropology."

"Hence, the New Portuguese Letters are characterised above all by excess. (...) In this excess (...) lies, after all, the great ambiguity that caused the

In This Act I Am The Four Marias and Women's Freedom

boundaries between eroticism and pornography to be considered surpassed. In the logic of the work itself, as a denunciation of sexist oppression, it would certainly be expected that the man/woman relationship, (...) would be unfolded, dissected, in various modes and moments. But what happens is more than this. Excess happens as a qualifier of everything, even of what is considered everyday in the man/woman relationship. Excess happens in the form of saying everything so closely that one has the impression of hearing at every step: 'in this act I am'."

"The alienation of the body is the zone used preferentially, though not exclusively, by the authors to speak about, at one and the same time, of oppression and revolt, of women's subjection and autonomy."

"The body, as the preferred place of denunciation of women's oppression, exceeds itself in what it represents. It functions as a metaphor for all forms of oppression hidden and not yet overcome."

[PREFACE]

"For the first time in the history of the feminist movement and its literary expression the complicity between women was both subject and object of the whole plot of a book. Therein lies its astonishing originality."

"Until 1971. Until the 3 Marias. Until 3 Portuguese women writers set out to make a book. From then on, the writing-accomplice begins, the process starts (...) of women forming 'collectives' that organise work meetings, write books, publish magazines."

"The woman in the singular refers to a destiny that is always plural. And in this plurality each singular story comes to be recognised. A web that is woven and undone to be woven again."

"[T]he New Portuguese Letters appear featuring

one of the fundamental thesis of contemporary feminism: the 'sorority' of women as a new social formation, the energy of their solidarity as a collective force."

"Fiction is here nothing but the artifice to tell bits of lives that are too tragic, to attenuate the cry that rises from that wheel of the young girls who all of them were and who today they form beyond time. (A cry that tears the calm of certain days and quiet lives - By ignorant? By cowards?)"

"The dialectic between 'the subterranean pulse' and 'the action' expresses the constant back and forth between the expression of the unconscious and social diagnosis. There we find, for the first time expressed, what neo-feminism came to make decisive during the 1970s: the relationship between analytic process and political practice in women's struggle for their identity."

"[The] enclosure is the bars of the scene of each woman's life, at times present in its thick reality, at times only sensed in the shadow they project onto each life and its movements."

"This enclosure unfolds on multiple planes. It is, first of all, a destiny that marks women from the beginning, 'determined from birth to have her life waiting'.

But determined to what? To this alone: to be, in patriarchal societies, the property (not even legitimate property!) of men. It is in the wake of all patriarchal literature that the New Portuguese Letters can say:

"Woman: man's property, his likeness, his land, his inherited latifundia."

"Beyond the law, even when it is not accusatory or does not find fault, there is the appeal to magical forces. Bound, since time immemorial, in the social unconscious, to nature (...)

woman is an integral part of the last strongholds that man has not yet (will it ever?) assimilated to himself. And this justifies the stories of witches told in their brutality: visceral hatreds that find satisfaction only in the fire that destroys the enemy; deaf and spiteful rage against human capacities that are incomprehensible to men, diminished, after all, in their humanity by this identical fury."

"The proclamation of revolt is followed by the great cry of liberation. It is the very nature of love that women call into question."

"Here too the New Portuguese Letters are pioneers. They are part of the great current - which today is immense - of feminist literature in which the relationship between women and writing is one of the great explicit or implicit themes. To the point where feminist literature gives the world a new physiognomy, as if it were an act of conventional love and from it (them) a thousand different ways of living relationships, of structuring societies, of thinking and acting in technology and politics, of seeking the beauty and goodness of things and repeating them copiously, generously, rigorously."

"And as with the New Portuguese Letters, all this writing goes on to embody the fundamental affirmation: women have their own identity (...), they trace in history their fundamental difference."

"The woman exists for herself. She knows herself. Or seeks herself. Or she discovers herself (...). She can speak about her inner world and speak the world itself, no more and no less. She can live the intimacy of the unsaid and the exteriority of acts. She can do poetry and do politics."

"If such a force succeeds in bringing new human qualities to all spheres of social life, it will have reduced the difference that generates oppression to allow the difference that is the affirmation of identity to expand. We will have worked the earth so that the only necessary revolution may sprout from it: that of oppressed consciences that know they are also oppressors and want to be freed from one or the other subjection".



The performance "The right of Maria to be equal to Manuel" will take place in the Grand Hall of the University of Porto on April 25 at 15:30 h.

Paulo Magalhães

Paulo Magalhães is a jurist and researcher at CIJE - University of Porto. He holds a degree in Law, a Masters in Environmental Law and a PhD in Human Ecology. In 2007, he published "The Earth Condominium: From Climate Change to a New Juridic Conception of the Planet". In 2016, he co-edited "SOS Treaty - The Safe Operating Space Treaty: A New Approach to Managing Our Use of the Earth System". He is the Founder and President of the Common Home of Humanity, and researcher at the National Council for Environment and Sustainable Development and the Council for Human Future.

Can a structural problem be solved without intervening in the structure?

The window of opportunity for avoiding dangerous climate change is rapidly closing. A climate emergency is being declared, students are striking and scientists are warning that a planetary tipping point could lie just ahead. Biodiversity is being lost at an accelerating rate, with over a million species at risk of extinction this century.

How is it possible that humanity could knowingly and willingly undermine its own life support system? How can we continue to move towards a disastrous future, even when the warnings are clear and the evidence is mounting?

This requires us to confront long-held legal and economic beliefs that are trapping us in a vicious cycle.

The Earth functions as a single integrated system at planetary level, beyond a mere collection of ecosystems or isolated global processes. This 'natural software' is global and indivisible, and – though intangible as a whole – exists in the real world. A stable climate is a manifestation of a well-functioning Earth System. It represents our most relevant global common, existing both inside and outside all political sovereignties. Why can't we apply the already known structural conditions for successful management of common goods to our most vital global common - A well-functioning- Earth System that corresponds to a Stable Climate?

The well-functioning state of the Earth System was the result of the biochemical work produced by life and constitutes the basis of all wealth creation of our societies. Why is this vital intangible working software produced by biosphere still invisible to our economies?

Climate as a Common Heritage

Building a Common Good without Borders

Is it possible to restore a stable climate without its legal recognition as a truly Global Common – A Common Heritage of Humankind?

The global interconnectivity of the Earth System, our own life support system, is an unquestionable reality which we must acknowledge, respect and preserve. However the current international law order is far from being equipped to handle it in the due manner. Addressing these global-level problems in an isolated, piecemeal and wholly inadequate way – as we have done until today – implies that we will continue ignoring the feedbacks and domino effects that occur within the Earth System.

The climate and biosphere emergencies are the logical outcomes of the unregulated use of the Earth System, a 'tragedy of the commons' at global scale. This is typically the result of a poorly managed common good, often with uncertainties about whom it belongs to and/or to the lack of a legal adequate definition of the good itself.

For international law, the planet is merely a territory of 510 million km², divided between States, where the global commons are the territorial leftovers.

However, what distinguishes this planet from all others, as far as we know, is the outstanding existence of a self-regulated and interdependent system able to support life. Because until recently science was not capable of defining it, and it is not restricted to the traditional global commons but spans

across areas subject to national jurisdiction, this system does not exist yet in the body of international law. It is an intangible 'no man's land', operating in a free-for-all scenario, where there are neither restrictions imposed on resource use, nor compensation for those who ensure its maintenance.

It's now possible to qualitatively define the key processes that underpin the functioning of the Earth System – *the planetary boundaries* – and to quantitatively measure the favourable biogeophysical structure corresponding to a well-functioning Earth System. This is the *safe operating space for humankind*.

Thus, it is now possible to identify the favourable well-functioning state that must be subject to a legal regime, able to organise its sustainable and fair use. Departing from this objective description it is also possible to grant a specific legal status to this well-functioning state. In other words, it is possible to legally separate the Earth System and its biogeophysical global-scale cycles and energy flows, from the physical planet and the space of territorial sovereignties.

From a legal point of view, therefore, we have already fulfilled the necessary technical requirements that could support the qualification of the favourable state of the Earth System as an intangible object of international law which, by being global and indivisible, should belong to all humanity - the Common Heritage of Humankind.

Until now, the legal non-existence of the Earth System in a functioning State System - has resulted in a global

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Effective collective action can only happen if we build the structural conditions from which it can emerge and progress

economic model in which planetary biogeophysical processes are 'invisible and external' to economic processes – despite being vital factors for humankind and indeed for a functioning economy.

By incorporating concepts from modern science in international law, it is possible to build an accounting system where not only the negative impacts that have contributed to the depreciation of this common heritage can be accounted for, but also, the positive impacts (by ecosystems as well by human action) that contribute to its maintenance must be included. The economic visibility of positive impacts in the Earth System could be the opportunity to break the vicious cycle of destruction caused by the paradoxical ideology of pursuing infinite growth in a limited planet, and fostering the evolution of the legal framework for building a sustainable regenerative economy able to produce and renew the core natural services provided by the Earth System. Around this new Common Heritage with no borders, new approaches to cooperation and multilateralism can be grounded and developed.

How to participate?

Effective collective action does not arise solely from emergency appeals. It can only happen if we also build the structural conditions from which it can emerge and progress. On the brink of a global emergency, our daunting challenge is to build these conditions. We have in our hands the necessary knowledge about the Earth System, about law, about economics and the management of the commons to shift the pathway. As a contribution for building this structure we propose a four-step pathway to achieve the needed paradigm shift, in a Declaration for Stockholm+50:

Restoring our common home: Declaration for Stockholm+50

Sign the Declaration here:
www.stockholmdeclaration.org

Join us to build a liveable future!



Paulo will moderate the event Utopian Green City – Local gardens, global changes on April 22 at 21.30 at the Casa Comum at the University of Porto.

Gonçalo Canto Moniz

Gonçalo Canto Moniz is researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and associate professor of the Department of Architecture of the University of Coimbra. He coordinates the European project URBiNAT "Healthy corridor as drivers of social housing neighbourhoods for the co-creation of social, environmental and marketable NBS", with 28 international partners and 7 cities. The research developed in the last years combines inclusive urban regeneration with studies on modern architecture.

Cities are facing several urban challenges today which have social and environmental impacts due to the rapid process of urbanization that expanded the centre and created the suburbs in the 20th century. Outside the historic centres of cities, the public space took on multiple forms and lost its potential to be used and appropriated by citizens. The focus on mobility and on real estate initiatives limited investment in public and green spaces close to citizens and to housing neighbourhoods with which to address social inequalities.

Today, the suburbs are the urban areas which offer the greatest opportunities to cities that want to implement an alternative urban development model that extends across their entire territory and is not limited to the historical centre. Thus, it is important to intervene in housing districts, in industrial areas, on vacant lots, and to extend the valorization of public space to peripheral areas. In other words, there is an opportunity for a physical intervention on open spaces that is reflected in the construction of a public space, with full use, as a stage for human activities, circulation, leisure, community, culture and exchange.

An inclusive urban regeneration aims to promote an inclusive public space situated at the centre of the challenge of *doing* and *living* the city as an open system where diverse values, cultures, religions and ethnicities converge. This open and democratic character needs to be

Creating an inclusive public space through Healthy Corridors



Transmediale Summer Camp in the Forest x Artsformation (2021)

Co-creating solutions with citizens of modern social housing neighbourhoods to activate a healthy corridor

supported by the engagement of different actors, beyond the "usual suspects", to promote a horizontal decision-making process, where all the voices are heard and have the same space. Inclusive urban regeneration aims to achieve a co-governance model.

In this sense, the *healthy corridor concept* and strategy project can find the answers and the solutions, namely the *Nature-Based Solutions* (NBS), in a multiplicity of actors and issues, instead of simply in regulations and other forms of administration or land management. The planner or designer must develop mechanisms that create urban regeneration made "by and with the people", with effective participation mechanisms - sharing and exchanging power, knowledge and experience.

The project URBiNAT (Urban inclusive and innovative Nature) is co-creating nature-based solutions with citizens of modern social housing neighbourhoods to activate a healthy corridor. URBiNAT is a European research and action project that brings together 28 partners from academia (universities and research centres), local municipalities, companies and associations. The project aims to develop an inclusive urban regeneration process to transform the public space of modern social housing neighbourhoods built in the post-war period (1950-1970) in the cities of Porto, Nantes, Sofia, Hoje Taastrup, Brussels, Siena, Nova Gorica and Khorramabad.

The modern planning of the social housing neighbourhoods generated a territory of exclusion, firstly due to the "island effect"

of the housing complexes, planned without an efficient connection to the city's urban network, secondly due to the marginalisation of social groups with low income and high unemployment rates, living in neighbourhoods with high criminality and drug consumption.

The healthy corridor is addressing these challenges in different ways according to the local urban and social contexts, and the local participatory culture. The participatory processes need to be flexible and iterative in order to be adaptable to different cities and neighbourhoods. Based on co-creation methodologies and tools, each city designed a participatory process in order to activate four main stages: co-diagnostic, co-design, co-implementation and co-evaluation. In the first moment, citizens and stakeholders are invited to participate by identifying the needs, perceptions and dreams of their territory. At a second moment, a collaborative design process develops proposals to integrate the healthy corridor strategy in the urban planning. In the third moment, the co-implementation is divided into the construction of the urban project and the development of the immaterial NBS, which need the commitment of the community. Finally, the co-monitoring and co-evaluation collects data to analyse the success of the healthy corridor, in terms of citizens engagement and satisfaction.

On one hand, researchers are rethinking their urban design and architecture methodologies to introduce the dialogue with the different actors within the ideation process and developing critical thinking to the mainstream way of urban planning. On the other hand, citizens and local stakeholders are activating living labs to co-create solutions that address their needs and dreams, in order to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable public space.



Gonçalo Canto Moniz will talk at the event Utopian Green City – Local gardens, global changes on April 22 at 21.30 in the Casa Comum of the University of Porto.

Palermo Climate Declaration: Avoiding Climate Catastrophe

Citizens Take Over Europe

Citizens Take Over Europe is a group of more than 50 civil society organizations, citizens and residents from across Europe, joined in a common effort to promote a forward-looking and citizens-centered European democracy. While our national leaders struggle to find common solutions for the major challenges of our time, from ensuring strong, well-funded and inclusive public services to protecting our planet or guaranteeing fundamental rights across Europe, we take our own responsibility to put citizens and residents at the centre of the conversation about the future of Europe.

We, the Palermo Transnational Assembly¹ – are people coming together following 20 local assemblies in all corners of Europe – acknowledge the mounting impacts climate change has on our lives and the biodiversity on our planet.

The Assemblies of Solidarity is a citizen-led project aiming at connecting people disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 consequences. This project stems from the belief that European democracy should be based on innovative engagement formats, promoting relationships and dialogue between European citizens and residents, through their ability to provide useful input and testimonies that help European decision-makers develop more informed policies.

In total 20 local Assemblies of Solidarity were held by and for citizens, in no less than ten different countries to raise awareness on those three key issues:

- **Democracy and fundamental rights**
- **Well-being and Health**
- **Environment and climate change**

After collecting ideas and demands in those 20 local assemblies, citizens gathered for a first Transnational Assembly in October 2021 to build the Palermo Climate Declaration which strikes the priorities to avoid a climate catastrophe at European

and global level, because nature knows no border.

Living on a safe and healthy planet is a fundamental right for everyone and for future generations. Based on the failures to include and protect marginalized groups and youth from climate consequences, there is a need to rebuild democracy in order to put citizen power of all humans, workers and frontline communities at the core.

We urgently need to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, invest in the development of new technologies and green public infrastructure, preserve the limited resources that we have, and recognize ecocide as a crime against humanity and nature. Policies need to take into account social justice and the rights of nature, be implemented in an urgent manner and reach efficient objectives.

Therefore, the following principles guiding us to solutions should be:

1. Marginalized groups, workers and youth must be included in developing climate policy in a meaningful and effective way.
2. Feminism, antiracism and antidiscrimination are core principles of any climate policy.
3. People and nature should not be treated like resources to be extracted: our people and planet must be prioritized before profit and pollution.
4. No one should be left behind in the ecological transformation, and everyone should have a political voice in it. There is no climate justice without social justice.
5. Democracy, transparency, accountability and responsibility should be the driving forces behind the revolution of our extractive and exploitative economic system.
6. Citizens should be given legally binding ownership over the decision-making processes through citizens assemblies and direct democracy: only the people can lead the rapid and drastic changes that are required in our polluting practices.

7. The polluter must pay for pollution in a way that rapidly ensures the transformation of our economic system away from polluting industries to social and ecological justice and sustainability.

8. The fiscal burden in our societies must be moved from the taxation of labour to the taxation of industries that deplete natural resources.

9. The circular economy must become universal and waste must be reduced to a minimum. Reuse, repair and recycling must be the norm.

10. Awareness raising and political education about climate issues and of democratic processes is a prerequisite to change the status quo. Learning about the respect of the planet should be part of compulsory education in schools.

11. Addressing climate change requires immediate political responses and cannot only be left to individual responsibility. Climate treaties must be binding and countries which do not respect their commitments must face sanctions.

12. Energy, as a common good in public ownership, should be ensured to achieve a globally just and sustainable transition.

13. Water and air are common goods of humanity that must not be privatized and should be legally protected.

14. Respect the knowledge of communities that know how to restore land, revitalize nature and produce food in a sustainable way.

15. Invest in science, research and technology to understand, prevent and address climate change and its effects, and base all policies on the scientific consensus.

16. Climate asylum should be recognized and everyone should have the right to choose their place of home.

17. Europe has a historic responsibility for global warming through industrialization, ecological and human destruction through capitalism and colonialism: Europe must show global leadership whilst

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The people and citizens must now take the political lead and build a better world

promoting cooperation with other parts of the world, acknowledge its historic faults, and ensure reparations.

We all know avoiding a climate catastrophe requires urgent action: the people and citizens must now take the political lead and build a better world, including through currently available and new instruments of participatory and direct democracy – by, with and for the people!

The Conference on the Future of Europe must ensure that the EU acts in accordance with these principles and set a new course towards a democracy, just and sustainable planet.

1. The Palermo Transnational Assembly took place in Palermo in October 2021 in the context of Between Land and Sea festival.



In the scope of the TRANSEUROPA Festival, with representatives from 20 local assemblies and from all age groups, we will hold the second Transnational Assembly of Solidarity (Transnational Assembly on Eco-Social Justice), aiming at building a common vision for defending fundamental rights.

Saturday 23 April

**Part 1: What we can learn from local citizens assemblies?
14 - 17.30 h**

Sunday 24 April

**Part 2: Building up the Porto Declaration on Fundamental rights
9 - 11 h**

**Part 3: Deliberation, vote and launch of the Porto Declaration on Fundamental rights
11 - 13 h**