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# VISUAL AESTHETIC EDUCATION FOR TEENAGERS IN ECOCOMPATIBILITY WITH THE ENVIRONMENT EMERGENCY AND THEIR PROJECTS AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract: The general objective of this communication is: to raise awareness of a structuring dynamic in Visual Aesthetic Education (VAE), developing adolescents to respond to the continuous emergence of their environment, with others (eco-compatibilization). The specific objectives are: 1.- Identification of projects that are a reference for the innovative and increasingly interventional nature of VAE, which can be considered Cultural Heritage; with validation as a reference, through a VAE Exploratory. 2. Reflection on the implications of 1. for teacher education. The methodologies are: historical survey; and case study of Projects in 3rd Cycle/Secondary schools, mainly/but not exclusively urban, from Évora to Bragança; by fieldwork - and e-mail in pandemic time -; selected from 200+ Files (Records from '50s to the present) of the Art Education Exploratory of the University of Lisbon, which we have developed since PhD Thesis '05. And we reflect on the implications of 1., anchored in relevant concepts. Focus: 1.1. Structuring the VAE in relation to its environment - From the 1950s to the present: Pioneers-VAE ('50-'60); Bauhausian curriculum revision '70; Curriculum Reform '75; Art/Design Option ('77-'92); freedom of expression/ Public Art; transition to project work by students. 1.2. VAE in the contemporary environment: Prior observation of the influence of *Urban Art* on everyday life. Analysis of trends in the contextualized expression of adolescents: A Cultural Heritage. In 2.: Implications of 1. for Curriculum Planning/Evaluation by Teachers. And we will emphasize some of the anchor concepts in the research. Conclusion - We recognize: The formative validity of VAE with growing intervening value for Adolescents, and as a cultural heritage; the need for teachers to reach this dimension in their curriculum planning and evaluation for this area; and the reference value of the Exploratory--VAE, requiring *school-university* interaction.

**Keywords:** Adolescent Work Project, Art Education Exploratory, Cultural Heritage, Teacher Training in Emergence, Visual Aesthetic Education.

## INTRODUCTION

# **OBJECTIVES**

The **general aim of** this communication is to raise awareness of a structuring dynamic in Visual Aesthetic Education (VAE), developing adolescents to respond to the continuous emergence of their environment, *with* others (*eco-compatibilization*).

# **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Identification of Projects that are a reference to the innovative and increasingly interventional nature of the VAE in relation to the environment emergency, and which constitute Cultural Heritage; and, at the same time by making this evident thrh rough Files (existing/in progress), a VAE Exploratory repository validation of this as a *reference for* the evolution of the character/quality of the VAE.
- 2. Reflection on the implications of 1. for Teacher Education.

# **METHODOLOGIES**

We used the following methodologies:

• Historical survey; and case study of Projects in schools of the 3rd Cycle/ Secondary Education, with priority to the common trunk of ALL; mainly/ but not exclusively urban, from Évora to Bragança; by fieldwork - and e-mail in pandemic time -; selected from 200+ Files (from the '50s to the present) of the Exploratory of Artistic Education of the University of Lisbon, which we have developed since Doctoral Thesis '05.

These Files, with a matrix of our authorship - initially filled in by us; and, in a recent half-dozen cases\*, already by the Teacher-Orientators of each Project -, from one to several images, document the resultant and also the process pursued; Theme; Date; Teacher-Orientator; School; Discipline of VAE; Authorship - Name(s), School Year and Age -; Technique; Dimensions; Methodology (possible interdisciplinarity); Resources; Dissemination of experience - local, regional, national and international; and Complementary notes.

\*The first File, however, was written by Querubim Lapa, a Portuguese XX/XXI Century main Painter/Ceramic Artist, on his drawing folder when he was a student at the António Arroio Art School. Another file records a project he directed there.

Some of the Files collected data from the *Didactic* Reports on *Visual Education and Educational Technologies*, which we supervised in the Professionalization-in-Service of the Lisbon District, at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Lisbon, for about 20 years, until '06 (Retirement).

We have continued to search for innovative emerging experiences in VAE south to the north of the country and in Porto Santo-Madeira Archipelago, in the ExplorEAUL Project, an Exploratory that we have installed at CIEBA-FBAUL - and which we disseminate (inter)nationally, in interaction with Schools/Museums and other Cultural Centers/Authorities It is not intended to be a significant sample of what VAE is like in the country, but rather a referential - a reference mark (not a model to be replicated) of what is happening in VAE -. And, on another front, in the process of inventorying around twenty donations, documentation is being collected from Art Education Pioneers. The aim is to share teaching resources, with a computer platform for continuous interaction between experimentation in school projects and university research in VAE.

• **Reflection** on the implications of 1. for initial and continuing teacher education, anchored in relevant concepts.

# STRUCTURING DYNAMICS IN VISUAL AESTHETIC EDUCATION - VAE

# STRUCTURING THE VAE IN RELATION TO ITS ENVIRONMENT: FROM

the 1950s to Contemporary Times (Oliveira, E. 2010)

The sense of this historical approach is the progressive experimentation of the students, by Project based on their motivations and in a growing openness of the school to its environment.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Pioneers-VAE already led students to SEE and draw the city:

Cecília Menano, with her students from the Escolinha de Arte, in the Alcântara valley, since 1949, as seen in the film *Lisboa vista pelas suas crianças* (directed by Leitão de Barros); and Luz Correia, who took them to the Zoo. In 1966, M. M. Calvet de Magalhães, with students from the Francisco de Arruda Preparatory School (10-12 years old), explored the inauguration of the bridge over the Tagus, in the surrounding area, but extended the competition with this theme to the whole country.

## In the 60s:

The Methodologist Professor Alfredo Betâmio de Almeida and myself, we used to take our students of the Liceu Normal Pedro Nunes to draw in the nearby Estrela garden. And we recorded in a File, a large **mural** - a removable painting - for this high school (a Junior Vespeira Project, chosen by the class), under the guidance of Betâmio de Almeida, for the base of the staircase to his drawing room on the second floor (the first window on the far right of the façade, next to the office where Betâmio used to paint).

### In the '70s:

The Bauhausian approach of the curriculum revision envisioned in Lecture 31 (1968) and nationally launched in '70 by the Betâmio Team (which we were part of, with its former trainees - Architects Danilo Sobral, Sílvia and Fernando Sá Dantas and Eugénia Viola; Sculptor Mª Luísa Abelha Quintella; and Drawing Teacher Lacerda Ferreira), explored the aesthetic qualities (balance, tension, movement, rhythm and unity) and the elements of formal organization (punctual, and three-dimensional forms animatable by the 4th dimension - time; lightcolor and texture), in Bauhaus-style exercises, disconnected from the students' motivations.

Responding to the cultural emergency, post-25 April '74 peaceful Revolution, - the Veiga Simão Curriculum Reform of '75, it opens up to a systematic approach by the student to the areas of exploration of human involvement and interiority, with awareness of the ecological problems in the environment.

Since '77-'78, the Art/Design Option in the 9th grade (which has since become compulsory) - which we planned with Architect Danilo Sobral, under the direction of Betâmio - has opened up numerous schools to 15 years of awareness of creative diversity in Design and skills leading to new professions in the environment. We would like to highlight the architects: Leonor Oliveira, for curricular experimentation; Sena da Silva, for a remarkable Support Text for Teachers (from the updating series sent to schools by the Ministry of Education) and the recreation of school space-equipment; and Isabel Cottinelli Telmo, with the 1st Doctoral Thesis useful to Art-Education, in Architecture: Representation of Space by the Child, '86.

Freedom of expression exploded in *Public Art*, and school projects evolved accordingly: from disintegrated *exercises* to *work by project* proposed by the teacher, and from there

to *project of work*, with *students* taking on the whole process: planning and implementation - including evaluation and local/global dissemination. Study visits and intervention in the environment became more pronounced in the '80s and '90s.

Since then, in contemporary times:

- *Eco-trans* school projects are flourishing: disciplinary, cultural, generational, technological, with local-global intervention, as observed below.

In 2018, the University of Lisbon will recognize Arquimedes da Silva Santos as the 1st Doctor Honoris-Causa in the field of an *Education through the Arts* acting with energy in citizenship.

# VAE IN CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT

# Prior observation of the influence of Urban Art on everyday life

Can visual aesthetic intervention in the city provoke awareness and re-creative action?

At the width of Av. da República in Lisbon, we could see, face to face, in front of the Campo Pequeno bullring, the strips in the lower half of Fig. 1:

- IN OUR TRADITIONS NOBODY MAY TOUCH!
- IN TRADITIONS ONE MAY TOU-CH. IT IS CALLED EVOLUTION!
- ABOTITION OF BULLFIGHTS AT ONCE!



Fig. 1. Campo Pequeno. Lisbon. Photos and editing: Elisabete Oliveira. 2022



Fig. 2. Evolution Hotel. Saldanha, Lisbon. Photo: Elisabete Oliveira. 2022.

Publication authorized by Hotel Evolution.

- They democratically expose the conflict of positions on bullfighting in Portugal; and raise awareness - in this case, of the duality: memory/tradition vs. actuality/evolution: passers-by are challenged to consider their vision and action on this issue.

A little further up the road, in Saldanha, the Hotel *Evolution offers* passers-by a position in the duality that can be made conscious beforehand: - The dynamic architecture of Nuno Leónidas and the powerful «hand»

sculpture by Gustavo Fernandes associate the concept of *evolution* with the vision and physical feeling of the notions of strength; and of energy for development and sustenance... (Fig. 2).

There will be socio-aesthetic intervention energy, homage and warning, in the next mural (Fig. 3):



Fig. 3 - Graffiti mural by Vhils at the Hospital de S. João, Porto, during the COVID pandemic. There is a parallel on the opposite side of the entrance.

Photo: Elisabete Oliveira. 19.06.2022

We conclude that the repercussions of Public Art mark everyday life: it even motivates schools, right from childhood, as in the following work, after raising awareness of Bordalo II's work in Portugal (Fig. 4):

(Bordalo II is a Public Art creator of big scale animals, reusing wasted industrial materials on buildings).



Fig. 4. Animal made from waste (cardboard, sticks...) - eco-creation by pupils from the Valbom School pre-primary Group (Porto), about 1.5m long, 2022.

Annual transdisciplinary exhibition, with the local authority and families, at the Júlio Resende Foundation - Lugar do Desenho, Valbom. Co-coordinated by Professor Cristina Pinto. Photo: Elisabete Oliveira.

# INCREASED INTERVENTION OF SCHOOL PROJECTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT/ PUBLIC ART

Focus on projects in the environment: (1) lost; (2) persistent; (3) of marked trans-experience and interaction between the Cultural Center/ Municipality and the Schools; and (4) ephemeral.

### Lost works

Since the 1980s, projects have intensified in and around schools' public spaces. In the 21st century, works in need of restoration have been ignored and even destroyed in the *refurbishment-School* Park, as in the case of Mobile and Stabile sculptures (Fig. 5): They witnessed the pedagogical work of Professor António Júlio - with Public Art sculptures in Almada, and published Sculpture (now deceased) -, from July '85, with student volunteers (ExplorEAUL-File N°. 77).



Fig. 5 - D. Pedro V Secondary School, Lisbon.
1985. Supervisor: Professor António Júlio. Mobile (height: 3m). João Boléu. 17 years old; and Stabile (height: c. 1.25m). Bruno Sousa. 17 years old (who died prematurely from an accident while already working as a teacher-sculptor).

Photos: Elisabete Oliveira, 1985.

# Persistent works

We have selected works, still in the school space, that resist:

• **Inside the school** (Figs. 6, 7 and 8).

The first (*ExplorEAUL-File* N°. 179), was supervised by professor Ricardo Reis, also deceased, when he was about to complete his PhD in VAE in *Public Art*.

He founded *Invisibilidades* - International Journal of the APECV (Expression and Visual Communication Teachers Association) in Portugal, which created a Teachers' Prize named after him and published a book of his research, this October 2024.



Fig. 6. mural-mosaic. 2009. 12-year-old students, Quinta de Marrocos School. Lisbon. Guided by Ricardo Reis and António Marques.

Photos: Ricardo Reis.

In the following case, under the guidance of painter Ma Júlia Lino (whose plastic and poetic work is curated by the Municipality of Barreiro), the school's entry image historically evokes the school's patron, Álvaro Velho, a Portuguese chroniche writter participating in Vasco da Gama's discovery of the maritime route to India (1497-1499): it is a student's project (ExplorEAUL- File No. 104).



Fig. 7. Monument commemorating the patron Álvaro Velho, Basic School 2/3, Lavradio (4.8x3.2m). 1995-96. Irina Tapadinhas Rimilo.14 years old. Guidance: Teacher-painter Maria Júlia Lino. Photo: Elisabete Oliveira.

In the third case, the ceramic panel, created collectively by the students, is already on the border between the school and the street and celebrates a regional cultural heritage that transcends the school: 500 years of tiles in Beja. (*ExplorEAUL-File* in preparation).



Fig.8 Panel designed and assembled by the Painting and Decorating CEF. IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020-2021 - Mário Beirão (2nd Cycle) Basic School. Ceramics course for special students.

Guidance: Prof. Mariana Conduto.

Data and photos: Prof. Augusta Gaspar - APECV, whom we thank. (ExplorEAUL- File in preparation).

NB: In times of the COVIDUS pandemic, masks were worn at the school.

• Out of School (Figs. 9, 10 and 11).

The school work goes out into the environment and the themes and interventions beyond the school are accentuated, respectively:

- Charter of Human Rights. 50th Anniversary of the European Union (In Belém, a panel of tiles was also created by elementary school pupils for the same celebration: Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. (Menezes, M. 2021).
- Celebration of the Life/Work of a Local Heritage Artist Graça Morais, in Bragança. 2015.
- Evoking a regional tradition *Pat-chwork blankets at the window*. Évora; with partnership *ERASMUS*.



Fig. 9. Public Art panel in handmade tiles: Europe in Schools.

Approx. 2.24x2.24m. 2007. Ages: 12-15 (Students in collaboration with Fortuna, Arts & Crafts). Jorge Peixinho Secondary School - Montijo: 1st location: in front of the market. Guidance: Professors Felisbela Salgado and Belmira Pereira. Photo: Elisabete Oliveira. 2007 (ExplorEAUL-File №. 161).





Fig. 10. Murals and Installation & Student of this School Project. Bragança. For the celebration of the work of Contemporary Portuguese Painter Graça Morais and the APECV Congress 27. 2015. Photos: Elisabete Oliveira

(ExplorEAUL-file in preparation).





Fig. 11: Mural by Évora Schools. 2016/2017: tile, recreating the tradition of the patchwork blankets by the window. Supervisor: Professor Patrícia Lucas.

Data and photos: Professor Painter Manuela Frade - to whom we are grateful (ExplorEAULfile in preparation). We also mention the case of the Mértola Secondary School, where the Chapel of St. Sebastian has been restored and is open to tourists, which Prof. Nadia Torres, VAE Ambassador, has integrated into school activities.

# Cases of trans-experience and Cultural Center/Municipality and the Schools interaction

The environment emergency, with the intensification of migration and social communication networks, has given rise to countless interactions between cultures, spaces and resources. Public responses have emerged to facilitate community expression, such as the Street Art Park - the 1st Graffiti and Urban Art Park in the country. Lisbon, Lumiar. June 4, 2019. - A facility that converges with school explorations (...) where anyone can paint freely... (O Guia. 2019).

In the school projects in VAE, responding to this emergency, we see a growing tendency towards trans-living (sharing in diversity), and synergy of partnerships, as in the *Interculturality Planisphere* Project. 2013-2015: Located in the Fróis-Monte da Caparica-Almada Urban Park (multicultural urban area). With an open stage at the back. Guidance: Contemporary Art Center-Casa da Cerca-Almada/ FBAUL; Coord.: Mário Campos, with 68 volunteer tutors, in classrooms.

It collected 2178 tiles, by authors aged between 3 and 78, with decals of objects, glazed at 1000°C. The PI algorithm applied was made available for improvement and creative innovation in new uses.

This is also the case (Fig. 12) with the transarts and trans-generational public fashion and architecture show at the restored historic Convento de S. Francisco in Santarém, an event with 2500 spectators; a project directed by Professor João Malhou (now deceased) in 2013. These students, with the collaboration of

their families, also researched/modeled 17th century houses in Santarém, exhibiting the models in local shop windows. A final project, with the theme «Nude», brought together Drawing, Painting, Design, Dance, Music and Flavors, also at the Convento de S Francisco, with a large community presence.



Fig. 12 - Parade animation. Convento de S. Francisco, Santarém, 2013 - Fashion on paper (from hair to shoes) inspired by the works of 17 architects of 14 nationalities. With 56 students from the 11th and 12th years of Visual Arts, from E. Sec Ginestal Machado, Santarém. Prof-Orientador: João Malhou - Author of the photo. (ExplorEAUL-file in preparation).

There are signs of recognition of the contribution of School Projects to urban development. For example: A decade ago, we visited a ground painting, next to a ruined bridge in Leiria, by students from a secondary school in partnership with Holland; they were trying to make the local Municipality aware of the need to create an *arts promenade* there.

But in 2019, we already read in *Diário* de Leiria: Around 2500 young people were challenged by the Ourém Municipal Assembly (AMO - President João Moura) to present urban art projects for the municipality's cities, towns and villages: Seed that bears fruit?

# Ephemeral works in the urban space

We remember the *Verdinho*, *a* minibus from the North City Lamego, where local schools toured works paying homage to the Portuguese famous Painter Júlio Pomar: Plast&Cine, Lamego, 2013. And we recall an international experience, and another of intervention in a city (*ExplorEAUL* File Nº 164; and in preparation, respectively):





Fig. 13. Route in urban space - UISAP: Spaces andPlaces - Modern Tate Gallery Prize, UK: 2009:With 259 Drawings, 5th and 6th grades, in an old bus. Educational Institute. Tojal-Porto de Mós.

Tutors & Photo: A. Cardoso, A. Sousa, M. Caetano and Rui Leitão.

F.14. Performance. Alves Martins Secondary School, Viseu, with drawing by students aged 16-18. November 2011. Supervisor: Prof. Teresa d' Eça (APECV President and, more recently, of InSEA and WAAE) - to whom we thank the Photo and the Reference that we summarize below:

Topic launched by the local activist association, Adamastor: Violence against women and solidarity with the women of Afghanistan who have been deprived of the right to vote. 8 students volunteered and, in the main square, with the collaboration of artists and passers-by, painted a collective panel - «Without women there is no peace». A week later, the volunteers graffitied the site of the weekly fair, to raise awareness in the city of the importance of the problem.

# IMPLICATIONS OF 1. FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING/ EVALUATION BY TEACHERS. &: SOME ANCHOR CONCEPTS PURSUED IN THIS INVESTIGATION

The teacher will have become aware, in 1. of our approach, about the diversity of the contributions made by VAE projects to the students' response to the ongoing *EMERGEN-CY* of the current *TRANS-CULTURE* context. (Berger, R. 1996): Alert to continuous change, requiring a response to the unpredictable, uncertain and risky; taking into account the interaction of players in diversity... ACTING IN THE URGENCY AND DECIDING IN THE UNCERTAINTY. (Perrenoud, P. 1996).

To guide such projects, in the face of the unpredictable, the teacher will need:

-Keeping an eye on the environment and a sustained general/specific culture, which provides *references*, but without *models* (recipes for success, in conditions that are already outdated), *flexible for SELF-ECO-COMPATIBILIZATION* - (Oliveira, E. 2010): continuous updating of reflectionaction, in the face of emergence.

-LEARNING TO LEARN (Berbaum, J. 1996), with critical capacity for curriculum re-design and the necessary innovation, the teacher will share a LEARNING

SOCIETY (Berbaum, J. 1982), building COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE (Levy, P. 1994). He will need to be open to COMPLEX THINKING (Morin. E., Motta, R., Ciurana, E-R. 2004) - a method of learning in error and uncertainty, integrating dialogue, recursion and hologramaticity; with creativity awakened to integrate the insights of SERENDIPITY - emerging connections - along the way.

-Fostering dimension of his teaching towards an integral *AESTHETICS*: If our operational definition may be useful, this can be considered as: the orientation of energy towards quality\*, when creating form. In the dimensions-functions: material-technological; social-communicative; ontological - organization of life. (Oliveira, E. 2010).

\*Anchoring in *qualia*, character (Peirce, C. 1958).

-When planning didactic units, the teacher will understand that the learning process will involve an evaluation that takes into account personal expression skills, socio-cultural intervention in the environment, interaction with others...

But the life of works begins when they are completed, through sharing, dissemination... Therefore:

- The Professor will understand the value of keeping documents of his projects - and exchanging them in research, with colleagues at the School and with the University - contributing to the qualification of the EEV, its working conditions and its history. This attitude is in line with the *PATRIMONY OF COMMON KNOWLEDGE*, which is beginning to be recognized in the second point of the UNESCO Report (Nóvoa, A. 2021): This Knowledge, denotes the trans-cultural evolution, contribution of schools to Portuguese Culture & urban space, and trans-national.

# Finally:

- The teacher will need to consider his concept of *FREEDOM*: In (Pimenta, E. 2022): understanding and the right to free expression, socially responsible; with attention to the instruments of Artificial Intelligence that operate to replace human thought...

# **CONCLUDING REFLECTION**

### WE WILL RECOGNIZE:

- The formative validity of VAE, with its growing value for the intervention of adolescents, and as a cultural heritage: this area requires the Project of work methodology; and in order to guarantee this for the student, VAE must have viable conditions in terms of time, space, class population and technological resources.
- The need for teachers, to up grade the dimension of their Curricular Planning, Evaluation and Dissemination/Eco-compatibilization of experience, in order to achieve this valence of action-intervention in the environment emergency.
- The referential value of an Exploratory-VAE as in the case of *ExplorEAUL\**, in this article requiring the teacher to draw up documentation of the projects he or she guides, a contribution to referencing the quality/progress of the EEV and to its history; and *school-university* interaction, with mutual appreciation.
- \* Temporarily in the care of the coordinator elisabeteo@netcabo.pt
  - The double relevance of the interventions of the Projects in VAE, recognizing/safeguarding the contemporary artistic-historical heritage; and participating in the national cultural experience by recreating Heritage, in eco-compatibility with public spaces.

• The pertinence and relevance of a movement for the recognition of the Creative School Project - especially the pioneering EEV project - as a National Cultural Heritage (and pro-recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site\*\*).

\*\*On Cultural Heritage and UNESCO positioning: Silva, MC. (2024).

- The need for recognition:
- (1) By the Ministries of Education, Culture and Public Works, in particular - and the Cultural Heritage Institutions -

General Directorate for the Arts, of the schools' collections and their ongoing production: instead of alienating them; and by providing the schools with the resources to enhance them.

(2) By interacting with Urbanization structures and the Architects' Association, of the urgency of valuing/not destroying the artistic school heritage that is pertinent and relevant - for cultural memory or contemporary use -.

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