# Artistic residencies as a platform for advanced research in art: the case of the School of Arts (Porto)

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## Introduction

The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation aims at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Within this programme, the STARTS initiative merges Science, Technology, and the ARTS by promoting the inclusion of artists in research and innovation projects by funding STARTS residencies of artists in technology institutions and of scientists and technologists in studio of artists.

Despite the relatively broad range of articles documenting the potential of artistic residencies as pedagogical tools (Moore, 2018; Engelmann et al, 2018), as a way of creating value from the interaction of art and business (Antal, 2012) or as way to convey/interpret scientific knowledge (Lee et al, 2017), there is still a research gap on how artistic residencies can enhance/support research activities of graduate art students.

## The School of Arts

In 1996, the School of Arts (SoA) was founded in Porto as a community of students, teachers and qualified professionals. The SoA wants to proclaim the presence of art in the various fields of activity and serves as a key element of Portugal's cultural, social and economic development. The Faculty is divided into the following areas: Sound and Image, Arts and Restoration, a Research Center for Science, Technology and Arts (CITAR) and two service centers (CCD and CCR). Its main tasks are the artistic dissemination of knowledge and culture through quality processes and accredited teaching, as well as research and knowledge transfer to the community.

The CCD (Digital Creativity Center), acknowledged as one of the anchor projects from the Creative Industry Cluster in Northern Portugal, is a center of competence and creative excellence with an infrastructure equipped with cutting edge technology in the areas of Digital and Interactive Arts, Computer Music, Sound Design, Audiovisual and Cinematic Arts, Computer Animation. One of the activities CCD integrates and promotes is Artistic Production through residencies.

## Artistic Residencies at the School of Arts

In the last two years, the SoA has been implementing a strategy in artistic training, research and presentation. Complementing the graduate and postgraduate programs, an extensive public program of artistic talks, exhibitions and other activities has been offered to the community.

Artistic Residencies are on the core of this strategy, that currently is in a stage of development and consolidation. One artist was selected in the first year of and three in the second. Each artist proposes an artistic project to be developed and presented in premiere in the SoA. The aim is that the works later enter national and international circulation. The residencies are adapted to the specific needs of each project, but usually they last three months in their research and development phases. The work can take the shape of any audiovisual art form and can be presented in any of the spaces of the CCD. All throughout the process the artists are required to involve the students, the professors and researchers of SoA. This grants the invited artist the possibility to work with concepts and expertise that he doesn't master, and brings new artistic perspectives to the SoA community. On the other hand, the artists are required to present artist talks, organize workshops and/or mentor the artistic projects of the undergraduate and graduate students. These residencies are also an opportunity for partnerships, further developing the artistic relevance and the public recognition of the SoA as an Art Center nationally and internationally. Of the four residencies three were supported: two by the InResidence program, promoted by Porto Municipality, and one by the Gulbenkian Foundation.



Artist talk with the artist Nuno da Luz (right) at CCD Photo: João Pereira

**Early Results**

During the second year, the SoA hosted three artists in artistic residencies: Nuno da Luz (October-December 2019), Jonathan Uliel Saldanha (January-March 2019) and Ana Vaz (April-June 2019).

Nuno da Luz developed an immersive installation representing the surrounding environment of the SoA – the mouth of river Douro. The installation was comprised of the sounds he recorded on location, the sonification of two cymbals with a signal of processed data1 provided by the Hydrographic Institute of the Portuguese Navy, among other elements. The exhibition, titled Poetry as an echological survival was inaugurated on March 7th and preceded by an artist talk where the artist exposed his process and the

collaboration with the HI, represented by the Commander Pires Barroqueiro. A second presentation occurred from 21st to 29th of June, in Vera Cortês Gallery, in Lisbon.

Jonathan Uliel Saldanha premiered his performance-concert Scotoma Cintilante3 with a choir of blind people on April 9th in the SoA. It was later presented in National Theatre of São Carlos, Lisbon, for BoCA biennale. It was a project prone in collaboration with SoA researchers. To face this challenge, he designed a haptic score/sculpture in collaboration with the professor André Perrotta. The composition revolved around a refractory vocal mechanism he developed with the professor Pedro Monteiro (who was also the maestro of the two presentations). On the day of the premiere he also inaugurated the exhibition Dismorfia, documenting the rehearsals with the choir and featuring 3D animations of the process, developed by the professor Ricardo Megre and two students of animation.



Exhibition view of Dismorfia, Jonathan Uliel Saldanha at CCD · Photo: Carlos Lobo

During her residency Ana Vaz worked on the post-production of her first feature-film. As she is still working on the project, the presentation in the SoA is still to be scheduled. Her residency was proficient in interaction with the students. She mentored ten cinema projects, of which two were already presented in international film festivals – Auspício in Curtas Vila do Conde and Casa na Praia in FIDMarseille.

**Conclusion**

Artistic residencies play a central role in the articulation of the wider community and the university. As an advanced platform for Research in Arts, they foster interdisciplinary and provide room for audience engagement. Knowledge and skills are inter-exchanged between the guest artist, the students, the professors and researchers. This strategy is

being applied on an experimental basis and it's being constantly improved. Nevertheless, to achieve, at this early stage, the circulation of the works produced in these artistic residencies and those of the students tutored by the resident artists suggests we are on a fruitful path.

## Notes

[1] The data referred to measurements of the wave length and height and tidal agitation on the bay facing the selected environment.
[2] Documentation of the opening: https://youtu.be/RJoZzkfG92o
[3] Documenting the performance: https://youtu.be/PnAiW-mrUfQ

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