The Museum and the Landscape: The Educational Proposals of the Douro Museum

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t is generally acknowledged that there is a clear rift between museums and their local communities. Cultural institutions depend on the sociocultural contexts they belong to, which in contemporary times have become increasingly complex and conflictual. In view of this, it is crucial to intensify the reflection and discussion on cultural policies and practices, the role of the public and their participation in the cultural context, as well as alternative relational possibilities. In fact, we are witnessing a paradigm shift in institutional discourses seeking to break down this barrier between institutions and contexts, populations and the public, and to open institutions to a dialogue with the peripheries. This process of rethinking institutional discourses in order to foster the active engagement of the public cumulatively evokes the promotion of policies for equal access to culture through participation, which emerges as a general trend. However, upon close analysis, the practices that have been adopted still carry traces of colonialist processes regarding the conceptualisation, communication and operationalisation of programmes in their relational processes with the participating public. This seems to indicate a lack of openness towards actual, just and democratic involvement of the participants and external partners.

Within this framework it is pertinent to revisit and discuss recent theoretical positions that deal with the ambiguous, paradoxical and somewhat obscure way that cultural institutions have established relationships with their public. Several authors, such as Carmen Mörsch (2009; 2011) and Nora Sternfeld (2012), have questioned and explored paradoxes and tensions about current educational practices in cultural institutions. I also consider it pertinent to incorporate the dissonant movements that have arisen in the face of 'romanticized notions of participation' (Miessen 2010, p. 122) that serve as the basis for participatory events in institutions. Faced with a generalised proposal associated with a condition of simple joining in and consensual dialogue, some authors explore ways of rethinking such proposals as 'conflictual participation' (Miessen 2010, p. 120)—a necessary condition for this meeting place to be a space of possibility for joint creation, to be a 'contact zone' (Clifford 1997). Based on the conceptual approach developed in the first point of the article, whose focus is centred on possibilities of collaborative participation associated with a rethinking of relational museum processes, I will attempt to critically analyse the educational proposals of the Douro Museum (Museu do Douro, Portugal). This analysis includes mapping and revisiting the projects that stand out for their intention to act within the territory and for their alternative approach to joint work with the projects' participants. Common Work Projects, to think and act together, and a shared and shareable desire to question the world are expressions contained in the documents edited by the educational team. These discursive statements indicate a path of shared work processes, and this is the point that I would like to explore in my research. This process was developed from the analytical reading of documents produced by the museum, particularly those developed by the educational team since 2006. The annual programmes and publications were part of this document analysis, in particular the publications referring to the BIOS Project, the BIOS Zine, the annual documentaries, video records and various internal documents. This examination, which is part of an exploratory phase of the research work in the museum, emerges from what is evidenced in the documents studied. It should be noted that such documents naturally reflect an image of what is done.

Conceptualising the museum as a contact zone

useums and cultural institutions are inserted in complex sociocultural spaces that are admittedly increasingly heterogeneous. Thus, it is not possible to keep conceiving cultural production and social relationships by following 'unified community visions' (Clifford 1997, p. 208). The challenge is to politically and critically place the museum in its own context—as a space open to dialogue, debate and collaborative work between different cultures, distinct perceptions and

multiple points of view. This challenge necessarily leads to new ways of considering relationships, within and beyond the institutional context. Following this tendency, Bernadette Lynch (2011; 2016) underlines the incorporation of internal processes of self-analysis and reflexive and collaborative practices with community partners, whom she refers to as 'critical friends' (2016, p. 30). These critical

friends are fundamental in promoting active engagement with civil society. Accordingly, an entire community is involved in constructing new knowledge.

ome theoretical positions focus on the demand to integrate collaborative participation processes as a key for transforming institutions. It is a fact that the principle of collaborative participation has been widely considered. However, it is urgent to reflect on its relational processes and democratic principles, and from there to take a careful look at practices and processes that have generally been operationalised. On the one hand, it appears that the initiative to participate generally arises from institutions themselves in a unidirectional sense, from the centre to the periphery (Lynch 2014; 2016). People are invited to participate in processes where the contents, methodologies and approaches are internally defined by the institutional actors, incorporating their particular way of seeing and questioning the ways of the world. On the other hand, some processes demonstrate the centralisation of institutional power in decision-making and in the control of knowledge production, which often aims at reaching consensus (Lynch 2014). As Bernadette Lynch and Samuel Alberti (2010) point out, '[m]useums could and should be [...] spaces of contestation as well as collaboration, in which participants might bring diverse interpretations of participation, democracy and divergent agendas' (Lynch and Alberti 2010, p. 20). It is therefore necessary to rethink this shared arena as a possible space of conflict, where multiple participants and institutional professionals can discuss and challenge their views and perspectives among themselves.

ccording to Markus Miessen (2010), A'any form of participation is already a form of conflict' (pp. 121-122). As he also points out, however, what we have to a large extent recognised is the mild and light way of dealing with conflict. Talking about forces of conflict does not imply associating them with violent protest or provocation (Miessen 2010, p. 93), but rather with a space of 'friction that emerges on a content and production level' (Miessen 2010, p. 101) where the participant is an active agent in an actual confrontation of differing interests, goals and ideas. That is, the concept of conflict here is considered a 'productive variable' that leads to multiple agencies and discourses which foster real and active involvement that is capable of producing new, 'alternative and unexpected knowledge' (Miessen 2010, pp. 96-101). James Clifford, drawing on Mary Louise Pratt's

insights in Imperial Eyes: Travel and Transculturation (1992, cited in Clifford 1997), brings in the concept of 'contact zone'—the place where individuals who were previously separated by geographical and historical issues now interact and interrelate, generically within asymmetrical power relationships—as a 'space of colonial encounters' (Pratt quoted in Clifford 1997, p. 192). Understanding the museum as a contact zone—a zone of friction between conflicting positions that generate integrated, unexpected knowledge-presupposes that one understands it as a place of complex social interactions where multiple positions and voices collide in a shared space. In this sense, the museum results from a complex social construction (Rodrigo 2016, p. 3).

he study by Carmen Mörsch (2009; 2011) on education in museums and art centres provides a categorisation of discourses and educational functions that allows us to reflect on and look critically at the institutional positions regarding different ways of conceiving public engagement. Mörsch explores four types of discourses: affirmative, reproductive, deconstructive and transformative. The uncritical affirmative approach and the reproductive one are part of unidirectional transmission of knowledge. From the visitor of the affirmative approach, which must necessarily be understood as belonging in the dominant culture (Mörsch 2009), no more is required than a passive attitude of reception. The perspectives based on the democratisation of knowledge, culture and art that stem from the reproductive discourse of experiences of interaction seek to reach audiences who would not visit museums of their own accord (Mörsch 2009), so as to increase their audiences as a way of legitimising these museums (Padró 2004). Even so, the selection of contents, processes and methodologies continues to be associated with an elitist conception, thereby maintaining the separation between the producers and the receivers, who only grasp what is offered to them (Padró 2004).

örsch also incorporates the deconstructive and transformative discourses within a critical approach to education. The deconstructive discourse entails a reflective and critical attitude that questions the institutions and their cultural and education processes. In turn, the institutions' outward drive towards local contexts and the resulting incorporation of contextualised projects that are situated and negotiated, allows the institutions to be transformed and to become agents of social change. This critical approach to education repositions the role of the participants. In fact, it is not only a matter of considering spaces for meeting or consultation, since the producer/ receiver binary is challenged. Thus, 'the educational process is understood as a reciprocal act' (Mörsch 2009, p. 12). It is therefore necessary to consider forms of collective agency where different types of knowledge are confronted and where decision-making is interactive, because it is within this field of action that collaborative processes and participation can actually occur and lead to effective change in the institutions themselves and in their relational policies.

n short, I would like to emphasise the necessity of thinking about relational and participatory processes. The challenge is not only to consider museums as spaces open to the outside or spaces for meeting and consultation but, in a more involved way, as places that allow a flow of intermixed lines of the participants' knowledge and experiences, involving them in the creation of new meanings and actions. I am, therefore, not only referring to a space of consensual dialogue, but to confrontation and discussion about different interests and points of view. It is not simply a matter of entering the game, but of questioning the rules of that game and also participating in the formulation of its rules (Sternfeld 2012).

Within this conceptual framework, in the next section I will explore some educational projects developed in the Douro Museum, in order to understand and initiate a discussion around the educational discourses and relational processes established between the institution—the educational team—and the project participants. Cumulatively, I will attempt to understand which approach has been considered in the field of education in that particular territory.

Educational projects, practices and discourses of the Douro Museum

The Douro Museum was created as a multinuclear structure in the Douro Demarcated Region, a wine-producing region of international repute along the Douro River. The technological, social and economic evolution that result from winemaking, and the deep bond between humans and natural elements have shaped the particular layout of the cultural landscape of the Douro Demarcated Region, which includes the Alto Douro wine region listed in 2001 as a UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Landscape in the category of Living and Evolving Cultural Landscape.

s a territory museum, the Douro AMuseum seeks to collect, identify, document, preserve, disseminate and exhibit the historical and anthropological, spiritual and material sources of the cultural and natural heritage of the Douro region, in particular in connection with the production, promotion and commercialisation of the Douro wines, including port (Law 125/97, 2 December 1997). It was conceived as a means to support research, the dissemination and communication of scientific studies concerning the region, its heritage, the museum and its collections (Law 125/97, 2 December 1997), as well as establish relations of active collaboration with local, regional and international institutions in order to promote knowledge of the region's culture and history and, above all, the communities' involvement (Museu do Douro, n. d.). The museum and its educational team operate in the vast geographical area encompassed by this region, including 21 municipalities (Seara 2014, p. 78) with distinct geographical, demographic, social, cultural and economic characteristics. It is not my intention here to provide a detailed description of the context within which the museum operates, but to understand the territorial framework of this context. which allows us to perceive the educational perspective in these landscapes.

am Landscape is the title of the annual educational programme of the Douro Museum. From the 2016/2017 programme I would like to highlight the courses of action of the educational team:

- (...) the acknowledgement, research and creation of experiential relationships between people and landscapes.
- -(...) The focus is placed upon the creation of hands-on work environments, with a concern for their continuous nature, and activities fostering experience and knowledge are specifically catered for children, young people, adults and senior participants.
- (...) The research addresses concepts such as territory and landscape, body and place, establishing a dialogue and a tension between different modes of expression and discourse. Both landscape and participants are challenged with resort to drama, dance, video, animation, writing and biology, geography, anthropology and literature, landscape design and cinema, engineering and drawing, photography and sound design.
- (...) I am landscape holds a clear and unequivocal willingness, and the invitation to think and act upon education in the differentiated places of the territory.

(Serviço Educativo do Museu do Douro [SEMD] 2016, p. 2. Original English translation).

rom this extract, the museum's educational mission can be identified as the creation of spaces of multisensory exploration and experimentation of the different types of landscapes (visual, tactile, sound, olfactory and taste) in order to promote the participants' knowledge, reflection and interpellation about themselves and the relation they establish with the territory and the world. Educational programmes consider several work methodologies and take into account qualitative processes, namely methodologies of project work, as well as other activities like experimental workshops, artists' residencies and multimodal research in the territory. In fact, the educational proposals stand out, in their diversity, because of the singular way in which they promote research and reflection about the landscapes-and their human and non-human life-of the Douro territory (SEMD 2012; 2013b; 2014; 2015). The documents published by the educational team show a willingness to stimulate the global participation of the sentient body in the terrain of feeling (Abram 2007, p. 61). Non-human entities are recognised, following the proposal of David Abram (2007), as other living realities, a hidden intelligence that can be perceived and experienced with intensity (Abram 2007, p. 18).

n addition, these documents also reflect an interest in multiplying the ways of perceiving landscapes, providing insights into how people live in the territory (SEMD 2014), finding out what one can become in the territory and what can be changed in it (SEMD 2012; 2013a). In this way, they try to dismantle the stereotypical portraits of these landscapes, which are associated with nostalgic references that still prevail. As pointed out by members of the museum, besides the easily recognisable picture-postcard image, the Douro region has other complex layouts-other landscapes (Magalhães and Guimarães n.d., p. 4). It is the search for these other landscapes that has directed the diverse projects and educational activities in the Douro. Next, I will map the projects that form part of the current annual programme, particularly those that involve actions within the territory and joint work with the participants. I aim to describe these projects and critically analyse their dynamics, in order to establish a correspondence with the previous sections of this article.

Douro Museum educational projects

The BIOS Project

he BIOS Project is an annual multidimensional programme that invites participants to get involved in an ongoing project, as well as in multiple pedagogical experiences around a theme previously defined by the educational team.2 The BIOS Project, which is currently in its sixth edition, emerged as a unique way of creating a culture's biography, of recognising it, showing it and analysing it in order to act. The analysis of the 2016-2017 annual programme shows that the BIOS Project is open to all the people of the region with an interest in questioning the ways of the world and of the territory. However, it is the school public (which is joined by a group of seniors) who has been involved in the project in recent years. The work process is structured following distinctive phases:

- preparatory and work sessions with the teachers participating in the project;
- artist residencies and meetings with authors from different areas;
- experimental workshops for teachers, educators and students in the school and in the museum, which can involve the participation of external collaborators.

This process also includes:

- project correspondence: a space for communication between the agents involved in the process, particularly when the team introduces work challenges for the teachers to carry out with their students:
- an annual exhibition;
- the BIOS Zine publication.3

The work sessions with the teachers participating in the project include multiple methodologies and envisage different ways of involving the participants. This is a space for joint work whose morphological structure has been previously defined and programmed by the educational team. Within this context, the annual theme is proposed by the educational team and then discussed with the participants, who also devises the work sessions programme, as are the workshop topics and the integration of external collaborators. However, there are moments of joint reflection, dialogue and discussion. These work sessions include the dissemination of written, audio and audiovisual documentation prepared by the team. This content is then analysed and discussed together with the participating teachers so that they can define their position regarding the approach and exploration of the theme with their students. The teachers also share their personal experiences, the activities and products they have created with their students, as well as the tensions and conflicts that came up. In addition, there have been film sessions, experimental workshops and conferences related to the theme. These are designed by the team or by experts from different fields of knowledge. The workshops attended by the teachers are later held for their students.

Within the BIOS Project methodology, the work sessions with local teachers demonstrate the desire of a group to come together within this space. This is a place for meeting, sharing ideas and experimenting, which is open to critical thinking about the educational process and about everyday things. The educational team here will emerge as an integral part of a group, but still appears in a substantive way as a coordinating element of praxis. The focus of the educational approach might essentially be centred on enhancing awareness and active commitment.

s mentioned above, a further com-Aponent of the project are the BIOS Zine publications, which I will focus on now. The aim of these publications besides documenting the annual project, its goals, methodologies and procedures—is to reflect on and challenge the work methodology that was devised for the project, in order to bring in a new perspective on the educational work. As the educational team observes, the publication is another way of thinking about and acting upon the experience we propose here, a kind of rehearsal for a critical approach (SEMD 2013a, p. 10). The BIOS Zines can be considered as objects that materialise joint processes and propose alternative possibilities for expression. These publications envisage the inclusion of the personal marks of the agents involved in the BIOS work process. They also represent themselves as free spaces for creation, although their design and production is still centred on the educational team itself. As the educational team points out, 'our zine is given to others. Our intention and desire is to include other people whose interests and affinities, to a greater or lesser extent, overlap with the themes and processes we propose' (SEMD 2013a, translated from the Portuguese by the author, p. 87).

Research spaces in the territory

The 2016-2017 annual programme includes other projects that involve research within the territory and the creation of multimodal content about stories and events, people, things and places.

- Histórias na 1ª Pessoa (first person narratives) is a programme that captures on video the narratives told by inhabitants of the Douro region;⁴
- Apeadeiros [way stations] is a project that researches and records the unique sounds of the Douro landscapes, with the participation of external collaborators;⁵
- Arquivos Visuais e Sonoros
 [audiovisual archives] consists of collecting and archiving amateur films in 8 and 16 mm formats about the Douro region and its inhabitants;
- Café central [central café] is a project that is dedicated to village cafés. By means of audio, visual and audiovisual recordings, it aims to establish cafés as spaces between the public and private spheres (SEMD 2016, p. 2).

IOS—Biografias: Municípios Douro e Trás-os-Montes [BIOS— Biographies in the Municipalities of Douro and Trás-os-Montes] is a project resulting from a partnership with Fundação EDP, currently in its third year of development. This project is based on artists' residencies in recreational, cultural or social associations and local schools in 10 municipalities. The goals of this project are to create a collection of biographies of people and their places and promote experimentation in diverse artistic approaches, including animation, sound and performing arts. The educational team here also acts as a mediator between artists and other participants, making available the means and resources for the work process, so that it may become autonomous.

The above examples illustrate research work on the territory and joint creation of a multimodal corpus on the landscapes. It is an alternative way of conceiving educational proposals, which is open to other manners of working within the territorial context. This could also be a way to establish hybrid processes of collaborative work between the people in the territory, the multiple institutional courses and the external collaborators and partners.

o explore the context of educational policies in museums with regard to their relationships with citizens and their involvement in pedagogical processes, I sought to intensify the reflection and questioning on alternative relational possibilities associated with agency processes in the field of museum education and pursued this reflection in an ongoing study of the educational proposals developed in the Douro Museum. The annual educational programme represents specific pedagogical possibilities in which the subjective and the performative converge. This is apparent in the promotion of joint processes for questioning and critical reflection—of the subject, about the surrounding reality and about the world; but also in the research on and in the territory and the joint creation of content and of a collection of materialised landscapes. Priority is given to qualitative work processes where the educational team appears as an integral part of a network of agents who have become involved in the work processes.

Here it is important to mention that the work community that is being created involved several layers of participation, and draws from varied discourses between a receiving zone and a contact zone. To understand how transformative this involvement can be is a legitimate approach. In my view, it can be more, as long as there is more openness for dialogue and real collaboration in a space where all participants see themselves as agents and are open to the confrontation of ideas—a contact zone where the importance of dissent is recognised as a factor in the creation of new knowledge. It is therefore important to explore the different interests and dialogues that reside here, i.e., the approaches and singularities of those involved in the relationships, and the conflicts that reveal their differences.

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Notes

- 1 Programmes and publications available in http://www.museudodouro.pt/educacao/ publicacoes
- 2 See the museum website: http://www. museudodouro.pt/educacao/publicacoes and http://www.museudodouro.pt/educacao/ programas. The first edition of the *Projeto BIOS* [BIOS Project] (2011/2012) was the predecessor of a project that created biographies of human and non-human objects within the Douro territory-a collection developed in multiple media. In this project, people narrated and created videos of curious or notable anecdotes, resulting in the BIOS Film comprised of 51 stories. The Projeto BIOS-Segredos [BIOS-Secrets], which was carried out in 2012-2013 explored the attention paid to 'big small things' and recorded related images, movements and sounds. From 2013 to 2014 BIOS—Cartas [BIOS-Letters] focused on the issues of freedom and landscape: the participants used postcards to share what landscape and freedom mean to them, or objects (or images) that reminded them of landscape and freedom. The Project BIOS-Matéria<=>Ficção [BIOS-Matter<=>Fiction] from 2014 to 2015 explored the matter of things, while the fifth edition of the BIOS - Ficção => Matéria [BIOS -Fiction=>Matter] from 2015 to 2016 explored the landscape as matter that could be converted into fiction and materialised fiction.
- 3 See http://www.ficcaomateria20.16mb.com/ and http://www.museudodouro.pt/educacao/ publicacoes.
- 4 See http://www.museudodouro.pt/educacao/videos.
- 5 See also http://www.museudodouro.pt/educacao/videos.

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