

Photographers

Augusto Cabrita

Nuno Calvet

Gérard Castello-Lopes

Adelino Lyon de Castro

Carlos Alfonso Dias

Luís Cruz-Filipe

Jorge Guerra

Fernando Lemos

Adelino Lyon de Castro

Luís Noronha da Costa

Eduardo Harrington Sena

António Sena da Silva

Varela Pécurto

Victor Palla

1939 – 1969

Portuguese Photography

Emília Tavares

1939 - 1969

The history of Portuguese photography

The end of the 1930s was marked by the outbreak of World War II, which was to reformulate the whole political panorama of Europe. During this period Portugal underwent the confirmation and consolidation of its dictatorship, in the form of its *Estado Novo* (New State), which had been formally established in the 1933 constitution. This regime was to base its actions on the idea of a corporative state, prohibiting its citizens from enjoying certain freedoms and guarantees, such as the right to free association or the existence of any other political parties beyond the one that legitimised the existence of the New State, the *União Nacional* (National Union).

Free elections were abolished and women were denied the right to vote while the state further intervened in all sectors of society, standardising and controlling them, and in labour relations abolishing any rights that workers might have had to join together autonomously in a trade union, replacing these bodies with the creation of *casas do povo* (community and welfare centres for workers) and corporate guilds under the control of the employers. And, at the same time, families were essentially validated on the basis of their Christian moral code of upbringing, a situation that transformed this institution into one of the most important pillars supporting the whole hierarchy of Portuguese society. Within this social structure, the man as both father and husband performed the same tyrannical and controlling role as the head of state, with women being condemned in their roles as mothers and wives to accept total family and social submission to the aims laid down by the top of this hierarchy. In turn, culture was even more subject to the official recognition of the state through the "politics of the spirit" of which

the *Secretariado Nacional de Propaganda* (SPN - National Propaganda Secretariat) established in 1934 was the main organiser, while freedom of the press was curtailed with strict censorship of both texts and pictures.

Once the internal opposition to the regime had been brought under control, the head of state, Oliveira Salazar, decided upon maintaining Portuguese neutrality during World War II, pursuing throughout the conflict a policy of diplomatic ambivalence, choosing to capitalise on possible gains from the conflict on behalf of the nation, despite the regime's declared ideological sympathies especially with Mussolini and the uncontested support at various levels that it gave to Franco during the Spanish Civil War. Despite the distance that Portugal maintained in relation to the figure of Hitler, Nazi propaganda was readily accepted, both under the form of organisational interchanges between the Hitler Youth and the Portuguese Legion and under the form of the organisation of various cultural events.

During the war, Lisbon, the capital, became a place that clearly mirrored this ambiguity with which the country reacted towards the world conflict. Being situated along the main axis of routes between Europe and the American continent, it was the natural focus for all the hopes of the vast majority of refugees that embarked here heading for the United States or South America. Due to the country's Atlantic connections it also became an important supply point, making Lisbon an idyllic spot for many Europeans who saw in the city an oasis of peace in a Europe that had been left devastated by the war.

However, despite this ambivalence in the country's objectives and diplomatic relations, the fact remains that the regime internally strengthened its dictatorial policies and not even the victory of the Allies led to the fall of the regime and its consequent democratisation. At the end of the war, the internal opposition to the regime intensified, coming from various quarters, but above all from many intellectuals and the Communist Party, seeking to take advantage of the European wave of euphoria that had defeated and dismantled both the Italian and German fascist regimes.

Between the end of the 1940s and the end of the 1950s, there were, however, a series of political and cultural initiatives that demonstrated a growing trend of opposition to the regime, the most important of these being the presidential candidacies of General Norton de Matos (1948) and Humberto Delgado (1958), with the latter successfully mobilising an unexpected wave of support that significantly shook the regime and led once again to electoral fraud and the election of the regime's candidate, Admiral Américo Tomás.

Despite the international passiveness and even acceptance of one of the most enduring European dictatorships, a situation that was not unconnected with Portugal's strategic importance within the context of the Cold War (and hence its admittance to membership of NATO), the opposition within the country intensified, leading to a more aggressive stance and intervention on the part of the political police (PIDE), who were responsible for the imprisonment and death of many citizens who expressed their opposition to the regime.

In cultural terms, the regime's propaganda activities became less and less effective and by 1950 the National Propaganda Secretariat had changed its name to the *Secretariado Nacional de Informação* (SNI - National Information Secretariat), given the shift in international political paradigms that were now unfavourable to cultural activities whose contents were so markedly linked to fascism in ideological terms.

Right at the very end of the war, in 1946, a new generation of artists gathered together under the auspices of a political movement of opposition to the regime,



Page of the book *Bairros de Casas Económicas: 1934-1940 - Álbum nº 1 (Cenas da vida familiar e Entre a bandeira e a casa)*, edited by the Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional, 1940.

the *Movimento de Unidade Democrática* (Democratic Unity Movement – MUD), which enjoyed close links with the neo-realist movement and organised the *Exposições Gerais de Artes Plásticas* (General Exhibitions of Visual Arts) until 1956. At that time, the exhibitions formed one of the most ideologically committed artistic activities and rendered the official modern art exhibitions organised by the National Information Secretariat devoid of any meaningful content.

At the same time, at the end of the 1940s, the Portuguese surrealist movement was formed and joined forces with the international recovery of surrealism, ending up playing an important role as an agent of “unrest” among the dictatorially resigned and conformist bourgeois society.

In the course of the following decade, modernity became a feature of a series of scattered and isolated group actions that remained outside the official artistic organisations but which nonetheless were able to use the various clandestine circuits to gain access to international cultural and artistic information. Galleries appeared, such as the Galeria de Março (1953) or Pórtico (1958), committed to encouraging and promoting unofficial Portuguese artists and bringing with them new languages, such as geometric abstractionism, kineticism or neo-plasticism.

In the 1960s the situation of the colonial war led to an intensification of the violence in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. This inevitably gave rise to outside activities designed to express international repudiation of the behaviour of one of the last European colonising nations and persistently weakening the regime’s foundations. In the same period, various student demonstrations broke out, in a kind of May 68 *avant la lettre*, although they were not recognised or supported internationally.

The intensification of the internal opposition, originating from various quarters, ended up enjoying a favourable epilogue in 1968 with the sudden illness that befell Oliveira Salazar and rendered him incapable of governing the country. He was relieved of his office and Marcelo Caetano was named as his successor, representing a more modernising and less totalitarian side to the regime. Salazar’s death in 1970 marked the beginning of the end of one of the most persistent and consolidated dictatorships in post-war Europe and democracy was finally installed in April 1974 through a coup d’état led by the military forces who also wanted to bring an end to the anguish of a colonial war.

In this decade, the intensive work of a series of galleries and the activities of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation were crucial elements in encouraging a new generation of Portuguese artists to exhibit their work, now freed from the constraints of official criteria. It was also through this foundation’s activities and its award of scholarships that Portuguese artists were able to gain an experience and understanding of the international artistic climate, without their freedom of movement being restricted by any of the constraints that had previously been imposed by the dictatorial regime. A climate could therefore be introduced that was more favourable to experimentalism, with the emergence of new typologies, such as visual poetry, photography, installation and film, and this inevitably led to an updated artistic panorama, whose expressiveness and visibility did, however, continue to suffer the vicissitudes of a country that still remained on the periphery and was closed in upon itself.

The examples of Vieira da Silva or Paula Rego were symptomatic of a greater internationalisation of Portuguese artists but also amounted to recognition of how impossible it had been in those years to enjoy full artistic and cultural interchanges inside the country itself, a fact that had led to the exile of many artists and intellectuals.



Album Portugal 1940 – “The workers of all the country come to Lisbon acclaim Salazar.”, pp. 96-97, Lisbon, Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional, Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado, Lisbon.

As far as photography was concerned, it was in the 1950s and 1960s that the most significant dynamics of its production could be observed. The 1940s had remained as a repository for the editorial and exhibitional initiatives of the National Propaganda Secretariat, to which photography had made a valuable contribution with the regular organisation of international exhibitions of photographic art and through the proliferation of illustrated magazines inspired by the American *Life* magazine. The photography undertaken for propaganda purposes became even more intense and focused during the war, so that one could note the establishment and consolidation of identical models of photographic representation with different political objectives.

In the 1950s, the renewal of some paradigms of salon photography could also be noted, through the formation of photography clubs, as well as the importance of photographic expression in the context of artistic movements such as neo-realism and surrealism, or even the national interpretations of the models of international *humanist photography*.

In the following decade, photography definitively expanded its aesthetic territory through conceptual explorations, the incorporation of photography into hybrid artistic discourses and the broader understanding of the importance of the image in postmodern culture.

Analysing the evolution of Portuguese photography between 1939 and 1970 in greater depth, one can see that the use of photographic images for propaganda purposes had been promptly created, in 1934, by the body responsible for the supervision of culture under the regime of the New State, which compiled some of its best pictures at the end of the 1940s. The photographs produced for ideological purposes during the regime of the New State displayed some emblematic structuring qualities, in keeping with other international examples from the same period. Although largely unknown, the ideological photographic production of the dictatorship of the New State had a structured form and followed interna-

tional methodologies even though it obeyed specific criteria that were inherent in the characteristics of the Portuguese regime.

The National Propaganda Secretariat produced hundreds of illustrated publications for propaganda purposes, both in Portugal and abroad, with high standards of graphic quality by calling upon some of the best designers and photographers for this work.

International exhibitions were one of the regime's main targets since they provided a golden opportunity for conveying propaganda about the country, as was the case with the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1937, in which some of the most important and prestigious artists took part in the construction of the Portuguese pavilion, and in which, of course, photography also played an important role with the dazzling large-scale photomontages exhibited in the interior.

Fully aware of the fact that in modern societies the logic of exhibitions was one way of both asserting nationhood and communicating on a potentially worldwide scale, the regime decided, in 1940, to organise the *Exposição do Mundo Português* (Portuguese World Exhibition), held in praise of the country, its history, and the accomplishments of the New State. Launched at the height of World War II, the project clearly highlighted the relational indifference that the regime defended, seeking in this way to enshrine the historical superiority and political vision of its leader, establishing Portugal as a country apart, one that had remained intact and independent throughout the course of history of other nations. An important document of this event is the album *Portugal 1940*, a kind of graphic summary of the most important images produced throughout the 1930s, in a painstaking and high-quality work of photomontage, representing a challenging response at the end of the decade to the regime's inaugural album, *Portugal 1934*, while also demonstrating the constructivist lesson learned from the emblematic example of the magazine entitled *USSR in Construction*.

The album was compiled in accordance with a rigorous objectivity that extrapolated its documentary function when enlarged to its gigantic scale, fulfilling the dual function of emphasising and affording monumentality to the ideological message while also displaying a series of economic, social and educational successes – in short covering all the areas of the government's activities.

Throughout the decade, the National Propaganda Secretariat diversified its publishing activity and it was in this area that some of its most significant works were produced, with the use of photographs for illustrative purposes proving to be a crucial factor.

The commissions for photographic surveys about crucial aspects of the regime's intervention in certain areas, ranging from public works to health, culture and leisure time activities, etc., followed on from one another throughout the 1940s, with the following works being particularly significant: *1934-1940 – Bairros de Casas Económicas* (Social Housing Estates) with photographs by Alvão and San-Payo, and *1932-1947 – 15 anos de Obras Públicas* (15 Years of Public Works) with pictures by various photographers.

At the same time, the National Propaganda Secretariat paid special attention to the association between tourism and propaganda, publishing some illustrated works about the country's landscape and people¹ in multilingual editions while simultaneously working with the *Casas de Portugal*, strategically placed in Paris and New York, on the dissemination of these publications together with a regular cultural programme.

The publication of the magazine *Panorama* (1941) was to become one of the main vehicles for bringing together the many different propaganda aspects of

both the country and the regime, with countless photographers taking part in it on a wide variety of different themes.

In parallel to this, and working in close orchestration with the press, the official propaganda bodies built up the image of the political leader, Oliveira Salazar, in photographic records produced in keeping with each particular political moment. Benefiting from a constant and carefully programmed presence in the main illustrated periodicals, many of the fundamental aspects of his public image were decided upon in the course of the 1940s, based on a strategy of humility, simplicity and a solitary lifestyle – qualities that were considered part of his self-sacrifice in defence of the nation. In countless photographic reports, the image of Salazar is constructed in keeping with the idea of an anti-image, something that contrasted with the exuberant image displayed by other contemporary dictators such as Mussolini or Hitler. This stratagem adopted for the construction of his public image was effective, since his special quality was defined in this way as one of the fundamental elements of his charisma and repeatedly became the subject of an ever more elaborate and highly profuse dissemination.

But it was in the 1950s that Portuguese photography was to take on a significant complexity and dialectical expressiveness. The importance that amateur salon photography had enjoyed in earlier decades was embodied in different forms of organisation and some of the more consistent photographic proposals were to spring from within this context. In fact, the greater dynamism shown by Portuguese amateur salon photography accompanied the international emergence of this movement that was already to be found on various continents.

Although the Portuguese Guild of Photography (*Grémio Português de Fotografia*) continued to prevail as a historical organisation, given its role as an associative body and as the organiser of the National and International Exhibitions of Photographic Art, the emergence of three photography clubs, the *Associação Fotográfica do Porto* (Porto Photographic Association), the *Grupo Câmara* in Coimbra, and the *Foto Clube 6x6* in Lisbon, was to prove decisive in refreshing some of the aesthetic premises of salon photography.

These three photography clubs were to engage in intense activity, developing their own exhibitions and coordinating the participations of salon photographers in kindred international exhibitions. Besides this, specialist magazines were published – disseminating different aspects of their photographic practice, ranging from technical advice to in-depth articles of opinion and criticism.

The analysis and study made of the context of salon photography in this decade has shown itself to be crucial for understanding the movement itself in a more dialectic fashion, making it possible to revise the overly simplistic and retrograde position that has been adopted in relation to the photographic exhibitions that took place under its auspices. The simplistic association between



Page of the book - *Breviário da Pátria para os Portugueses ausentes (Varinas e pescadores de Lisboa)*, 1946, edited by the Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional

¹ Such as, for example, *Portugal: Notes and Images*, published in both English and French.



Varelá Pécurto, *Night Beauties*, 1951, gelatin silver print (chlorobromide process)
30 x 40 cm, Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado, Lisbon.

salon photography and pictorialism was surpassed in this decade, in the case of Portuguese photography, through stylistic approximations to pure photography, to the influences of a certain social realism, as well as to the premises of French-inspired humanistic photography.

Recent studies² have made it possible to discover works and photographers whose range of photographic expression, elaborated within the context of these photography clubs, represented an important example of an assertion of specificity, enabling us to reformulate many of the generalistic ideas that have tended to become associated with the aesthetics of amateur salon photography.

² Tavares, Emília, *Batalha de Sombras: Fotografia Portuguesa dos anos 50 da coleção do Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado*, Câmara Municipal de Vila Franca de Xira, Museu do Neo-Realismo, 2009.

Despite the fact that the persistence of the landscape values associated with naturalist aesthetics was evident in the work of many photographers, such as António Paixão, João Martins or **Adelino Lyon de Castro**, it was found to coexist alongside the abstract and formalistic experimentations of **Varelá Pécurto**, **Eduardo Harrington Sena** or Fernando Tabora, or the closer approaches to realism made by some of the photographers already mentioned, for ideological purposes.

It is important to stress that the immediate cultural, social and political situation faced by the country hindered access to up-to-date information about what was happening in the main international cultural centres, with knowledge of the main aesthetic movements being gained in a somewhat irregular manner and not always at the appropriate time. In such a context, the international exhibitions of photographic art were the only way in which the production of Portuguese photographers was able to circulate, as well as representing their only means of contact with foreign productions.

A model of aesthetic expression associated with low culture, as was the case with the amateurish field of salon photography, thus played an important role in the artistic training and information of Portuguese photographers. Showing that the traditional tendency to form a hierarchy of the arts and their social contexts of production and to value them accordingly meant that certain flows of creativity that were essential for understanding their full range and heterogeneity were kept far removed from critical and historical discourse.

It was also in the context of salon photography that the critical questions linked to the artistic validity of photography were raised. On the one hand, the spectre of the higher value that had always been attached to painting continued to fulfil its canonical function, which some photographers, such as João Martins, used as their basis for understanding the aesthetic validity of photography; others, however, such as Eduardo Harrington Sena, asserted that there was absolute aesthetic equality between photography and all other artistic categories, underlining the universal nature of its expressiveness, even when it is included in a context of low culture, as photographic amateurism certainly was.

Some photographers from the world of salon photography also began to draw closer to the Portuguese neo-realist movement, whose artistic activity was particularly intensive between 1946 and 1956, the period when the General Exhibitions of Visual Arts were held, establishing themselves as the place for expressing one's aesthetic and ethical opposition to the regime of the dictatorship. Although, in the series of the ten exhibitions that were held, photography was only represented at three of them – the 1st (1946), 5th (1950) and 9th (1955) exhibitions – those participating included photojournalists such as **Augusto Cabrita**, the architects Francisco Keil do Amaral, Joaquim Bento d'Almeida, **Victor Palla**, and the salon photographers Adelino Lyon de Castro, Manuel Correia and Frederico Pinheiro Chagas.

In the post-war period, the Portuguese neo-realist and surrealist movements devised a strategy of vehement aesthetic and ethical opposition to the regime of the dictatorship. Photography formed an integral part of both movements, albeit with different strategies and results. Neo-realist theory embraced photography in a somewhat unequal manner: sometimes it saw in photography the capacity to elaborate a discourse that was intelligible to the people, even accepting its naturalistic language, despite its merely formalist origin, and imprinting upon it an ideological purpose; on other occasions, it rejected photography's mechanical vocation of representing reality, comparing it to the form without content of pictorial abstractionism.



Adelino Lyon de Castro, *Lumper*, 1950, gelatin silver print, chlorobromide process, 30 x 40 cm, National Museum of Contemporary Art - Museum Chiado, Lisbon.

In practice, the exhibitions of Portuguese neo-realism included displays of photography in its naturalistic aspects according to the dictates of a lyrical objectivity, pursuing a programmatic line of intelligible art, even though it was not ideologically compromised in its historical origins. In this way, an ideological construction was created about naturalistic photographic formalism, attributing content to form, in a strategy that was intended to politicise the whole artistic act. In turn, photographic realism combined the expressive harshness of photo-reportage with the hyperbolic dramatization of subject-matters, often obtaining a scenographic result.

In Portugal, in the context of the neo-realist movement, the specificity was thus developed of a theoretical basis and a formal polysemic acceptance of

photography, demonstrating the efforts of introducing an interpretation of reality that was decidedly different from the picturesque stereotypes of the fishwife, the fisherman and the rural farm worker that the regime had introduced into its official iconography as symbols of the Portuguese identity.

The hyperbolic and even staged nature of many of the images of the less-favoured classes, in the case of photographers such as Adelino Lyon de Castro, thus imposed an emphatic interpretation of a social condition, seeking out uncommon themes and directing the context of possible representations more towards tramps, women and children.

The theoretical conjuncture of Portuguese neo-realism, which had gradually been forming its own structure since the end of the 1930s, was to become grounded in the reorganisation of the Communist Party in the post-war period, seeking to structure its political base upon this. Aware of the difficulties of educating the people artistically and culturally, when such values were the reflection of an economic and social superiority on the part of the bourgeoisie, Portuguese neo-realism found it necessary to include naturalism and the aesthetic exploration of the landscape in its lexicon, knowing that this was an indispensable asset (because it could be easily interpreted) in the formation of an artistic sensitivity of a social nature.



Fernando Lemos, *Me*, 1949 - 1952, gelatin silver print, 45 x 45 cm, National Museum of Contemporary Art - Museum Chiado, Lisbon.

As far as surrealism was concerned, it fell to one single artist, **Fernando Lemos**, to take responsibility for the exploitation of photography within the movement. In a photographic production that was concentrated between 1949 and 1952 (the artist left the country in exile to Brazil in 1954), the surrealist photographic lexicon of the shapeless, erotic and inorganic served as the motto for a strategy of "social unrest" that sought to attack the cultural, social and political values of the bourgeoisie.

The first exhibition of a vast group of surrealist photographs, together with sculptures and paintings by Fernando Azevedo and Marcelino Vespeira, took place in the heart of the Chiado, the most prestigious area of the Portuguese capital, a symbolic space of cultural traditions, but also the place where Lisbon's chic shops were to be found and where an uncultured and atavistic bourgeoisie liked to exhibit itself socially.

The scandalous nature of the exhibition was most clear and the bourgeois mentality saw in the exhibited works all kinds of direct attacks on targets ranging from law and order to morality. In this way, the purpose of criticising everyday life, to which surrealism had so strategically dedicated itself, was satisfied: the Chiado was captured as a symbolic space, having been cut off from its bourgeois hegemony through the virulence of the exhibition's images. The ideological content of the whole aesthetic operation was fulfilled, with the photographic image acting as the guarantee of a wide-ranging social and moral "unrest" in which experimentalism was not confined only to dreamlike or psychoanalytical results but also reached across a radius of critical intervention about the spatial symbolism of the city and its social hegemonies.

In parallel to this, many of the amateur salon photographers explored abstraction, merging technical purism with the dissection of light and the photographic form, the treatment of surfaces, lines, oppositions and contrasts in a common objective that drew them closer to the language of the German *Fotoform*.

The influence of the French-inspired *humanistic photography* as well as the models of poetic realism developed by the American *Life* magazine and by the emblematic exhibition *The Family of Man* were also particularly important during this period. Another group of amateur photographers (Carlos Calvet, **Carlos Afonso Dias**, **Gérard Castello-Lopes** and **Sena da Silva**), who were not connected with the photography clubs and photographic associations, also aroused an interest and developed a significant production by looking at some of the country's image-based icons such as the seaside town of Nazaré and its popular stereotypes from a less lauda-



Carlos Afonso Dias, *New York*, 1959, gelatin silver, chlorobromide process, 30 x 40 cm, National Museum of Contemporary Art - Museum Chiado, Lisbon



Gérard Castello-Lopes, *Lisbon*, 1957, Collection National Museum of Contemporary Art - Museum Chiado, Lisbon

tory and more critical perspective. They also began a search for urban themes, establishing an aesthetic of the city with the clear influences of the *film noir* and a focus on nocturnal atmospheres or melancholic moments.

In the period of transition from the 1950s to the 1960s, it was the action of the Portuguese architects that led to the undertaking of one of the most important surveys of Portuguese popular architecture³ in which photography played a crucial role, providing an illustration and graphic testimony, not only of the architectural aspects, but also of their social and economic contextualisation, revealing the poverty and insalubrity that was to be found in rural areas in

³ AAV, *Arquitetura Popular em Portugal*, Sindicato Nacional dos Arquitectos, Lisbon, 1961.

many regions of the country. The volume and importance of the photographic documentation gathered together at that time, comprising roughly ten thousand pictures taken by the eighteen architects who participated in the project, went far beyond the survey's original scope as an architectural study so that today it is a subject of renewed interest, now extending to issues related with the nature of documentary studies and their ideological importance.

But the decade was to end with a project for an exhibition and an illustrated book (1958 - 1959), produced by two architects Victor Palla and Costa Martins entitled *Lisboa, cidade triste e alegre* (Lisbon, a Sad and Joyous City) that has recently been considered one of the best photographic books of the 20th century⁴. For three years, the two architects took photographs of the ordinary people of Lisbon in their most varied aspects, later submitting the material they had collected to a process of systematic "cropping", as well as associating the images with poems and prose written by some of the most renowned Portuguese poets and novelists.⁵ Published in instalments in 1959, the book amounted to a summary of some of the most important aspects of international photography throughout the 20th century, especially in the context of the photograph as a document and as a subject matter to be used for reflecting on the mechanisms of representing reality.

In the preface to the book, the photographers themselves talk about the many

4 According Martin Parr and Gerry Badger in the History of Photobook, vol. 1, Phaidon Press, 2004.

5 Included in the book were poems and prose written by Álvaro de Campos, David Mourão-Ferreira, Mário de Sá-Carneiro, Fernando Pessoa, Alexandre O'Neill, Jorge de Sena and José Rodrigues Miguéis, among others.



Victor Palla and Costa Martins, pages of the book *Lisboa, cidade triste e alegre*, authors edition, 1948.



Carlos Afonso Dias, *New York*, 1959, gelatin silver, chlorobromide process, 30 x 40 cm, National Museum of Contemporary Art - Museum Chiado, Lisbon

influences on their work, which came from other areas such as cinema, the mass media or literature, and make references to artists such as Renoir, Dreyer, Weegee, Capa, Penn, Avedon or Bresson, among others. Just as they also declared their faithfulness to a statement of social intervention, when at the time of the creation of their project there was a philosophy that took account of the fact that each of those photographs was destined "to be included in a group [of photographs], recorded, printed and seen by thousands of readers [...], so that the negative is increasingly an intermediate stage."⁶

It is important to stress that during the 1950s Victor Palla had been one of the most active artists in the organisation of the already-mentioned General Exhibitions of Visual Arts, with his aesthetic awareness being profoundly marked by his social and political intervention. In that sense, *Lisboa, cidade triste e alegre* appeared as a dialectics of montage, in which text and image produced multiple meanings about people and were simultaneously directed towards them. Montage is the key concept for understanding the whole work, as well as its philosophy, in which the structures of representation are submitted to a process of re-editing, creating new historical flows that call forth any historically constructed truth about the people of Lisbon.

At the end of a decade in which the photograph as a document had been subjected to a range of highly diversified approaches, while at the same time beginning to invite some extremely violent accusations, *Lisboa, cidade triste e alegre* asserted the complexity of the image and reminded us that reality, as we know it, has been constructed by photography.

But the specific nature of Portuguese photography, as well as the marginal realisations of some of its proposals, remained unknown internationally. This situation was not even remedied with the working visits that many international photographers paid to Portugal, during the 1950s, such as Henri Cartier-Bresson,

6 Palla, Victor and Martins, Costa, *Lisboa, cidade triste e alegre*, (Authors' edition, 1959), p. 56.



Jorge Guerra, From the serie *Os Poucos Poderes*, 1966, gelatin silver print, Fondation / Centre of Modern Art

Jean Dieuzaide, Peter Fink, Thurston Hopkins, Kees Scherer, Cecil Beaton and Édouard Boubat,⁷ who included Portugal in their itineraries and frequently returned to the same picturesque themes as in the past, following the official iconography of the regime. The regime did, in fact, include the work of Jean Dieuzaide in its official archives in 1957 by purchasing a group of negatives that the photographer had produced about Portugal.

This influx of international photographers continued throughout the 1960s with the visits of Irving Penn, Bill Perlmutter, Alma Lavenson, Brett Weston, Leon Levinstein, George Krause, Stanley Kubrick, Sabine Weiss, Ray Metzker and Sid Kerner. These two decades of foreign views of Portugal resulted in the publication of *Portugal* by Jean Dieuzaide (1956), with a text by Yves

Bottineau, and *Portugal* by Neal Slavin (1968), two examples that were published more than a decade apart.

At the same time, Portuguese photojournalism was reinvented in the 1960s with the work of photographers such as **Augusto Cabrita** and Eduardo Gageiro. In that same decade, **Jorge Guerra** began the project of *Lisboa, cidade de sal e pedra* (Lisbon, City of Salt and Stone), a photographic remake of the project by Victor Palla and Costa Martins that would only be published much later, in 1994, under the title of *Mandados Obliquos* (Oblique Mandates), affording photojournalism its own very particular and breakaway proposition. The proposals made by this and a new generation of photojournalists, who in the 1970s also included such photographers as Alfredo Cunha and Carlos Gil, were clearly marked by the freedom that was enjoyed by the press after the revolution of 25 April, 1974. Other photographers like **Nuno Calvet** make a new compromise between the humanist photography and the critical photojournalism. In 1969 he publishes the book *Foto-Grafias*, with poems by Ary dos Santos. The book presents images about the poverty and social problems of the country. The publication was censored by the regime and republished only after the April Revolution in 1974.

The decade of the 1960s presented itself as a new paradigm shift in Portuguese photography, with its expansion and incorporation into artistic discourse in a more multidisciplinary fashion with special emphasis being given to its conceptual exploration, as was the case with Ângelo de Sousa, and with incursions being made into the territories of exploring the perceptions that had meanwhile been formed of the boundaries between painting and photography, in the case of **Luís Cruz-Filipe** or **Luís Noronha da Costa**.

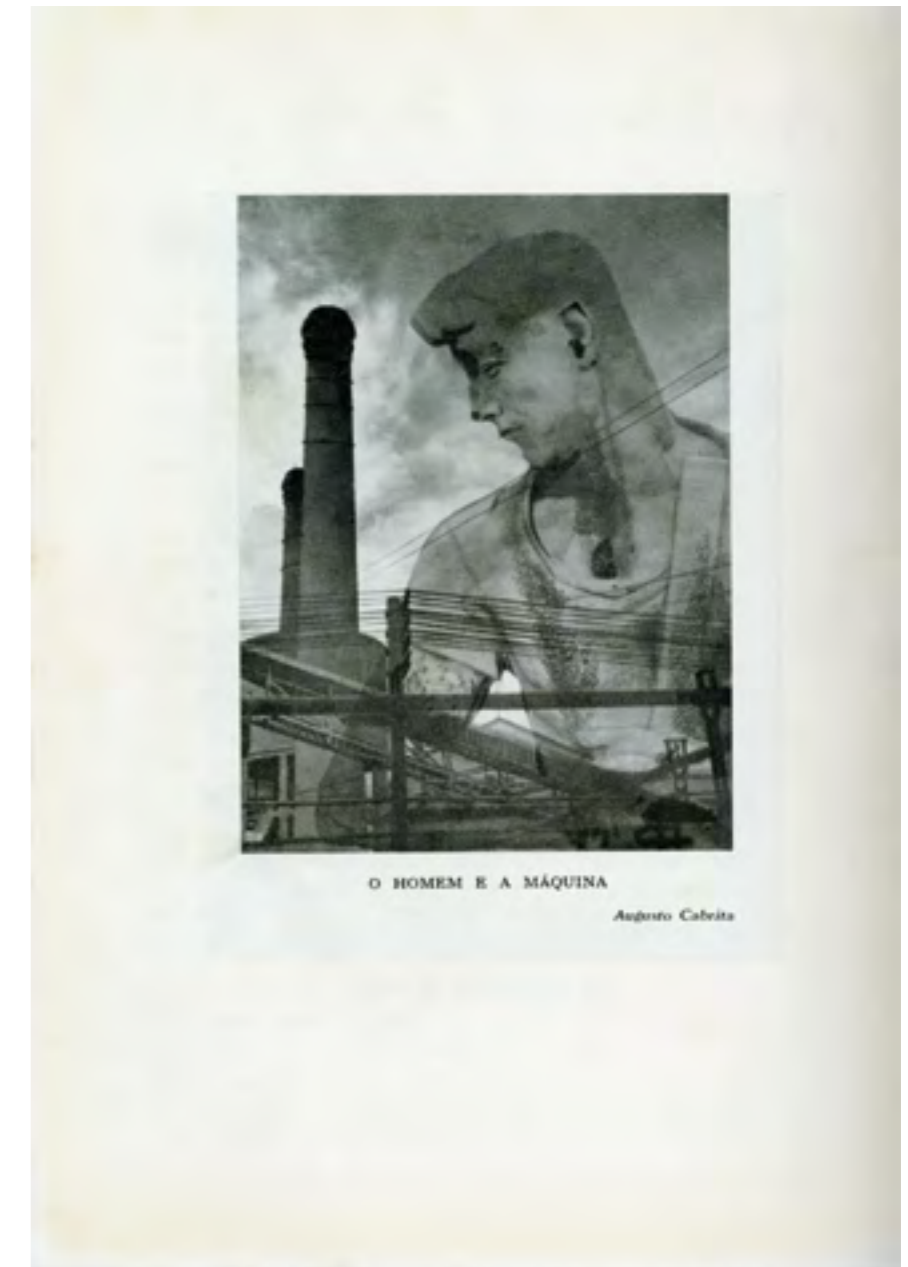
This climate of refreshing Portuguese art and culture gradually spread across the country not only through the influence of the exiles and through the individual or collective activities of galleries and groups of artists, but also as a result of the fundamental role that was played by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Portugal in establishing connections with the outside world.

⁷ For more information about the group of photographers who visited Portugal in the 1950s and subsequent decades, see: Calado, Jorge, *Olhares Estrangeiros – Fotografias de Portugal*, Culturgest, Lisbon, 2005.

In this climate, new understandings and possible pathways were developed for Portuguese photography. Even though these were, at first, somewhat timid and scarce in nature, they were nonetheless decisive in determining what the 1970s would come to mean in terms of a sudden outburst of new practices and new photographers, framed by the context of the democratic revolution that made the 1970s in Portugal a particular and unique moment in its artistic and cultural environment, a time when the photographic was to suffer a complete ontological break with modernity.

Over the course of three decades, Portuguese photographic culture broadened the scope of its ideological usefulness and the corresponding political capital that was made of it reached its highest peak, while in other aspects such as amateur salon photography some of its dynamics were redefined either as an expression of low culture, with interferences in the aesthetic processes of movements such as neo-realism, or as the medium that was responsible for the circulation of multiple photographic languages. At the end of the 1960s, the panorama of Portuguese photography was beginning to prepare the way for its transition from the ambivalences that had characterised it during the previous decade, claiming the recognition of the aesthetic nature of photojournalism, affording due credit to the innovative tradition that the 1930s and 1940s had produced, and ensuring photography's full and complete integration into the artistic concept of post-modernity.

Translated from Portuguese into English by John Elliott



Augusto Cabrita, *Photomontage O Homem e a Máquina* in *Grupo Câmara*, Março - Abril 1955, nº46.

Biographical Notes:

Adelino Lyon de Castro (São Martinho do Porto, 1910 – 1953) was a publisher who together with his brother Francisco Lyon de Castro founded Europa-América, considered one of the most prestigious and important publishing houses in Portugal in the 20th century. He was also the editor of *Jornal Ler*, a magazine that was banned by government censors immediately after his death. He was linked to various sports activities and began as an amateur photographer in the 1940s, taking part in scores of national and international exhibitions. He took part in the photography section of the 5th General Exhibition of Visual Arts (1950), linked to the neo-realist movement. His work is represented in the collection of Museu do Chiado (National Museum of Contemporary Art) in Lisbon.

Adelino Lyon de Castro – O Mundo da Minha Objectiva, Ed. Publicações Europa-América, Mem Martins. Emília Tavares, *Batalha de Sombras: Coleção de Fotografia do Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado*. Ed. Museu do Neo-Realismo, Vila Franca de Xira, 2009.

Gérard Castello-Lopes (Vichy, France, 1925 – 2011) was professionally involved in the cinema world and also was an economist who dedicated himself to amateur photography from 1956 onwards, working in close collaboration with Carlos Afonso Dias. Thereafter he embarked upon what some consider one of the most important artistic careers in terms of Portuguese photography, being

heavily influenced by Henri Cartier-Bresson. He was also a film critic, stage director and assistant film director and a founding member of the Portuguese Film Centre. His photographs were exhibited for the first time in 1982 at Galeria Ether in Lisbon. A retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon, in 2003. His work is represented in various national and international collections and he regularly held both individual and group exhibitions.

Luísa Costa Dias, *Gérard Castello-Lopes: Oui/Non*. Ed. Fundação Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon, 2004. Jorge Calado, *Aparições - A Fotografia de Gérard Castello-Lopes 1956-2006*, BES Arte & Finança, 2011.

Carlos Afonso Dias (Lisbon, 1930 – 2010) has been an engineer, geographer, researcher into fisheries, and draughtsman. From 1953 onwards, he also dedicated himself to amateur photography, after taking a specialist course in cartographic photography in Italy in 1958. Between 1957 and 1958 he embarked on a period of close photographic collaboration and friendship with Gérard Castello-Lopes. In the 1950s he joined the *Movimento de Unidade Democrática* (Democratic Unity Movement – MUD), making drawings for the MUD youth press. From the 1960s onwards he lived and worked in Angola where he undertook various photographic surveys that he would later unfortunately lose as a consequence

of the colonial war. He returned to Portugal in 1981, abandoning photography at that point and only returning to it in 1998.

A retrospective exhibition of his work was held at Galeria Ether in Lisbon in 1989. His work is represented in various collections, including Museu do Chiado (National Museum of Contemporary Art) in Lisbon and the Portuguese Photography Centre.

AAVV, *Carlos Afonso Dias Fotografias*, Ed. Centro Português de Fotografia, Porto, 2001.

Fernando Lemos (Lisbon, 1926) has been a painter, sculptor, designer and poet and began his artistic career with links to the surrealist movement at the beginning of the 1950s when he also dedicated himself to photography in a more consistent fashion, having exhibited some of his work for the first time at Casa Jalco (1952) in Lisbon, together with Marcelino Vespeira and Fernando Azevedo, and in 1953 at an individual exhibition at the Galeria de Março in Lisbon in 1953. His brief but intense and highly significant period of photographic production, between 1946 and 1952, stands as a unique incursion into the realm of surrealism. In 1953 he went into exile in Brazil where he took up residence, dedicating himself to painting, illustration, tapestry and the design of pavilions for cultural events and completely abandoning photography. He took part in various editions of the São Paulo Biennial. A retrospective

exhibition of his work was held at the Modern Art Centre of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon in 1994. His work is represented in various national and international collections and he regularly held individual and group exhibitions.

AAVV, *Fernando Lemos, À Sombra da Luz*. Ed. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 1994.

Eduardo Harrington Sena (Lisbon 1923 – 2007) was an engineer at the former Companhia União Fabril (CUF) and he dedicated himself to amateur photography from the 1940s onwards. As member of the Photography Section of the CUF Sports Group he worked in close conjunction with Vítor Chagas dos Santos on the organisation of the CUF International Exhibition of Photographic Art beginning in 1951. He also edited a photography section in the *Jornal do Barreiro* newspaper between 1954 and 1957 and in the 1960s became editor of that same newspaper. He was one of the founders of the Cine Clube do Barreiro and organised the programme for the film sessions at the Cinema-Ginásio. He belonged to Foto-Clube 6x6, having served on its juries and taken part in hundreds of national and international exhibitions at which he was awarded a variety of different prizes. In 1962 he was awarded the prize for Excellence from the *Fédération Internationale de Photographie* (FIAP). His work is represented in the collection of Museu do Chiado (National Museum of Contemporary Art) in Lisbon.

Emília Tavares, *Batalha de Sombras: Coleção de Fotografia do Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado*. Ed. Museu do Neo-Realismo, Vila Franca de Xira, 2009.

Antonio Martins Sena da Silva (Lisbon, 1926 – 2001) was an architect and designer who also engaged in photography, painting, set design, the technology of decorative painting, and the installation of exhibitions. He began by using photography on a professional basis, working on the documentation of defective parts for diesel engines, but from 1956 onwards his photography took on an artistic form, accompanied by the technical training that he received from António Paixão and Mário Novais. He worked with Mário Novais on the photographic mural decoration for the Portuguese pavilion at the Lausanne Fair in 1957 and in the same year worked on a project for a book of photographs about Lisbon with the sculptor José Cutileiro, which was never published. His photographic work was exhibited for the first time in 1987 at Galeria Ether in Lisbon. A retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Serralves Foundation in Porto in 1990 and his work is represented in various collections.

AAVV, *Sena da Silva, uma retrospectiva*, Ed. Fundação de Serralves, Porto, 1990.

Varela Pécurto (Ervedal, 1925) began as a photographer in Évora at the Nazareth & Freitas studio with Eduardo Nogueira. In 1950 he moved to Coimbra where he worked in the photographic department of the Livraria Atlântida bookshop and later became managing director and partner at the Hilda studio until his retirement. Shortly afterwards he opened his own studio. He was a photojournalist and correspondent for the Rádio Televisão Portuguesa (RTP) television company in the central region of the country for 25 years and a founding member of Grupo Câmara in Coimbra. He took part in scores of national and international competitions from 1949 onwards and in 1954 was awarded the prize for Excellence from the *Fédération Internationale d'Art Photographique* (FIAP). In 2005 he was awarded the medal for Cultural Merit by the Coimbra Municipal Council. Over several decades he worked on an important survey of the national heritage with his photographs being included in various publications. Part of his work can be found in the Photographic Archive of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon and at Museu do Chiado (National Museum of Contemporary Art) in Lisbon.

Emília Tavares, *Batalha de Sombras: Coleção de Fotografia do Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado*, Ed. Museu do Neo-Realismo, Vila Franca de Xira, 2009.

Victor Palla (Lisbon 1922 – 2006) was an architect, graphic designer, painter, ceramist and writer whose cultural activity had many different facets, not only in creative terms, but also in terms of the development and management of different initiatives, ranging from publishing (he founded the paperback collection *Os Livros das Três Abelhas* with José Cardoso Pires in 1949) to the organisation of the General Exhibitions of Visual Arts between 1946 and 1956, of which he was one of the main mentors. He worked in the field of architecture for 25 years in partnership with the architect Bento d'Almeida and together they were responsible for some of the most distinctive works in Portuguese architecture. As a photographer, his partnership with the architect Costa Martins became particularly famous as a result of their project *Lisboa, cidade triste e alegre* (Lisbon, a Sad and Joyous City), which led to an exhibition and publication of a book between 1958 and 1959 that was voted one of the best books of the 20th century in 2001. Besides this, his individual work absorbed, experimented and produced a new language for Portuguese photography. He was awarded the National Photography Prize in 1999 by the Portuguese Photography Centre. His work is represented in various collections, at the Modern Art Centre of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and at the Museu do Chiado (National Museum of Contemporary Art) in Lisbon. A retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon in 1992.

Victor Palla e Costa Martins: Lisboa, cidade triste e alegre. Ed. dos autores, Lisbon, 1959.
AAVV, *Victor Palla*, Ed. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 1992.

Luís Noronha da Costa (Lisbon 1942) is a painter, architect and filmmaker who began working in the mid 1960s using collages and paying particular attention to deconstruction of the photographic image. An important aspect of his photographic production has been the re-appropriation of images and the work that he carried out upon them, exploring the aspects linked with the ontology of the image and its relationship with the history of art and visual perception. The presence in his work of cinematic concepts, such as the idea of the screen, was fundamental in the work that he produced in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1978, he represented Portugal at the Venice Biennial. In 1999, he received the European Painting Prize awarded by the European Parliament and in 2003 he received the AICA Prize. His work is represented in various national and international collections. A retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon in 2003.

Nuno Faria and Miguel Wandschneider, *Noronha da Costa Revisitado (1965-1983)*, Ed. Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon, 2003.

Luís Cruz-Filipe (Lisbon 1934) trained as an engineer but has devoted most of his time to painting since the late 1950s. He has always paid particular attention to the frontier of perception between photography and painting and in many of his works he has explored the formal and visual limits of this historical relationship between the two types of art. His work is represented in various collections. Retrospective exhibitions of his work were held at Culturgest in Lisbon and at the Serralves Foundation in Porto in 1995.

Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, *Cruz Filipe - o teatro dos sentidos*, Ed. Lello & Irmão, Porto, 1994.
AAVV, *Cruz Filipe – paisagens múltiplas*. Ed. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2007.

Augusto Cabrita (Barreiro, 1923 – 1993) has been a photojournalist and filmmaker and began his photographic activity in the 1950s, having also worked as a correspondent for the Portuguese television company and as a still photographer on film sets. In the 1950s he devoted his energies to salon photography, having both taken part in and served on juries of countless photography exhibitions. He became famous as one of the most important Portuguese photojournalists working for various magazines and newspapers. He has received several national and international prizes for photography. Literature: *Augusto Cabrita e Nuno*

Júdice, Um ponto de vista fotográfico, Ed. Geril, 1993.

Jorge Guerra (Lisbon, 1936) began studying photography in the 1960s at the London Film School. In 1967 he embarked on the project of photographing the city of Lisbon in the form of homage to the original project developed by Victor Palla and Costa Martins in the 1950s. This work would only be published ten years later. While doing his compulsory military service in Angola during the colonial war he set about photographing that country. He also made other photographic visits in the 1960s to Mexico and Italy in particular. He later went into exile in Montreal where in conjunction with Denyse Gérin-Lajoie he founded the magazine *OVO* (1974-1988). His work is represented in various national and international collections.

AAVV, *Os Poucos Poderes*. Ed. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 1984.