

Transnational Portuguese Women Artists Conference. 16-18 March 2017

Wadham College, Oxford

Thursday 16 March

Giulia Lamoni (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) Leonor Antunes' "Research Imagination"

In 2010, at the international fair *Art Basel*, Isabella Bortolozzi's gallery presented a small-scale exhibition of artists Leonor Antunes (b. Lisbon, 1972) and Carol Rama (b. Turin, 1918-2015). Staging material and conceptual dialogues between pieces by these two artists, the exhibition resulted from Antunes' encounter with Carol Rama's oeuvre and from her visits to the apartment in Turin where the Italian artist had been living and working for more than sixty years.

Drawing on the complex net of relations activated by this exhibition – and on Carol Rama's mobilization of a "common practice of the objects" in her work –, this intervention will explore the role of transnational and transdisciplinary dialogues in the installation work of Leonor Antunes. More specifically, it will look at the ways in which Antunes' practice challenges notions of research, imagination and the use of historical archives in contemporary artistic production.

Emília Ferreira (Universidade Nova de Lisboa). Mily Possoz: the world as self-representation

Mily Possoz (1888-1968) was a Portuguese painter of Belgian origin. Studying in Paris from a very early age, she joined the symbolist movement. As a female artist in an adverse context such as the symbolist movement [Zarmanian, 2015] she devoted herself to establish her own view of the world as one inhabited by women, a world where men are rare, and women and cats have all the fun. We testimony the girls' daily lives, and we surprise them while they're reading, painting, shopping, strolling or simply daydreaming. It's a girls' world, one where they make the rules.

This particular vision—close to the one we testimony in the French artist Marie Laurencin, with whom Mily Possoz exhibited extensively in Paris, through the 1930s—shows up in her paintings, drawings and engravings.

In spite of the assertiveness of her work, Portuguese critics and art historians kept analyzing her creations as merely decorative, ignoring its context of production, the artist's life and choices and failing to acknowledge the weaving of one of the most resilient and international careers in Portuguese modernism.

In my communication, I will show her work in the light of her biography and propose a new approach to her very personal world. A world she created as self-representation.

Ana Margarida Dias Martins (University of Exeter). Teresa Margarida da Orta (1711-1793): a minor transnational of the Brown Atlantic.

Afro-Brazilian literary studies, as opposed to the Afro-Brazilian musical, culinary and religious fields of study, have yet to offer inventive combinations of voices across national borders to negotiate the diaspora in feminist and transnational terms. "Authentic" literary Afro-Brazilianness has so far been defined with reference to skin colour, place of birth and permanency in Brazil

(Assis Duarte 2005, 2011, Dionísio 2013). Polemic cases such as São Paulo-born, Portugal-based mestiça Teresa Margarida da Orta (1711-1793), author of the first novel ever written in Portuguese, do not feature in studies of (Afro-) Brazilian literature, due to life trajectories that bind them to other countries. This paper will propose a new reading of da Orta as a “minor transnational” (Lionnet and Shih 2005) of the Brown Atlantic (Almeida 2004). Minor transnationalism proposes a transnational perspective that is based on horizontal studies of relationships among minor-peripheral cultures as opposed to the normative vertical relationships between a centre and its peripheral minor cultures. Challenging critics from both sides of the Atlantic who have read da Orta as either Brazilian or Portuguese, this paper will put forward a transnational understanding of her work and mobility. Notions of sovereignty and belonging will be challenged and reconfigured by an understanding of da Orta as a woman who engaged in dialogues between multiple minor spaces.

Hilary Owen (University of Oxford/University of Manchester). Between Two Feminisms: Transnational Gender Politics in Portuguese India

In this paper I will discuss the positioning of late 19th and early 20th century Portuguese Republican and liberal feminist politics as it was propagated in colonial Goa in the context of burgeoning anti-imperial struggle in the neighbouring British Raj. I will ask what type of discursive subject positions and forms of agency Goa’s elite Indo-Portuguese women (specifically Propércia Correia Affonso de Figueiredo and Maria Ermelinda dos Stuarts Gomes) were able to construct within, and between, the competing temporalities of Portuguese and British colonialism and the differing narratives of conquest and liberation, that they implied in the 1920s and 30s. Further to this, I ask what kind of temporality shaped Portuguese colonial experience and representation in this competition, and what this then meant for the different forms of feminist political agency and identity that emerged, given the specific ways in which the “feminine” could be flexibly made to figure temporality as: romantic antiquity, domestic stability, or rationalist marker of social progress, in the service of both colonial and anti-colonial nationalist discourses (Nira Yuval Davis; Kumari Jayawardena)

Chatarina Edfeldt (Dalarna University). Portuguese Women Writers of the Early 20th Century as Transnational Literary and Cultural Mediators.

In 1905, the writer, publicist and cultural figure Ana de Castro Osório sent a copy of her book *As Mulheres Portuguesas* (considered to be the first Portuguese Feminist Manifest) to a friend and colleague in Sweden with this dedication: “provando-lhe a minha admiração e eterna estima e denunciando ao seu espírito os grandes males do meu país”. The friend was Göran Björkman, a highly prominent figure within the Swedish cultural establishment; special advisor on the Romance languages to the Nobel Committee on literature; and a main translator of these languages into Swedish. The correspondence that took place between them (from 1900-1920) reveals a dialogue exchanging ideas on Portuguese literature and culture. This is one example of how a women writer from the early 20th century functioned as a transnational literary mediator promoting Portuguese culture across national borders.

Recent literary studies aspiring to revitalize the research areas of literary history and criticism have made a so-called “transcultural turn”: an attempt to move away from the narrow scope of conceptualizing literature and authors within a national framework, and to view literary production more like a global and transcultural network of cultural exchange. One way of broadening the scope of literary history and production is to investigate and recognize the

importance of cultural and literary mediators in the process of how literature has travelled across borders.

Portuguese women writers of the early 20th century, due to gender politics, encountered obstacles to being recognized in the national canon formation, and this also affected the possibility of their literature being translated into other languages. This paper will revisit the archives to consider the role of these writers as important cultural and literary mediators, with examples from the cultural exchange between Portugal and Sweden. The aim of the paper is twofold: to provide examples of how these women writers - as literary and cultural mediators - contributed to the shaping of Portuguese culture; and also to contribute to a theoretical discussion that, through the lens of gender, broadens the perspective and scope of literary history production in order to achieve inclusiveness.

Anna M. Klobucka, (University of Massachusetts Dartmouth). Mapping Queer Transnational Women of Portuguese Modernism

This paper will bridge two ongoing projects: 1) uncovering and problematizing the multifaceted activity of female poets, artists and intellectuals in early twentieth-century Portugal, which has yet to be reflected in mainstream scholarship on Portuguese modernism; and 2) uncovering and mapping historical evidence of cultural agency by Portuguese women who loved women. Many if not most Portuguese modernist women experienced transnational engagements in their personal and professional lives; many if not most of these women at least flirted with antiheteronormative disidentification, and in some cases deployed their deterritorialized mobility as a condition of possibility for living a lesbian existence. I will seek to include in this necessarily compressed presentation women who worked in various media, such as Virgínia Vitorino and Judith Teixeira (literature), Ofélia Marques and Mily Possoz (visual arts), Virgínia de Castro e Almeida (cinema), and Virgínia Quaresma (journalism), among others. My primary task, however, will be to interrogate the epistemological and theoretical frameworks of representability in which such mapping of queer transnational women of Portuguese modernism can be realized.

Mariana Liz (Universidade de Lisboa). Portuguese women directors on the global stage: the case of Margarida Cardoso

In recent years, Portuguese cinema has become increasingly visible beyond national borders. Filmmakers including Pedro Costa, Miguel Gomes and João Pedro Rodrigues have become household names for film festival, art-house theatres and cinephile audiences. Similarly, Margarida Cardoso, Susana de Sousa Dias and Leonor Teles – the latter the youngest director ever to win a Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, for her short film *Batrachian's Ballad* (2016) – have not only screened their films abroad, but also won major international recognition. Yet, when discussing the growing internationalization of Portuguese cinema, it is their male counterparts that are most cited as examples. What is the place of Portuguese women filmmakers in the contemporary era? How is their work framed in relation to the internationalization of Portuguese culture and film? Starting with a discussion of the global status of contemporary Portuguese film, this paper introduces the women directors mentioned above, and focuses on the case of Margarida Cardoso. In addition to screening her work abroad, Cardoso has been key in the global projection of (Portuguese) film through her work with Docnomads, an international masters programme based in Lisbon, Brussels and Budapest. Brought up in Mozambique, Cardoso has extensively reflected on Portugal's postcolonial status in films including *The Murmuring Coast* (2005) and *Yvone Kane* (2014). This, together with the fact that her films are organized around the female gaze and desire, makes Cardoso a particularly

productive case study of both the transnational character of Portuguese cinema and the ways in which it intersects with issues of gender.

Suzan Bozkurt (University of Manchester). Can Cybercriticism offer a global window on Contemporary Women Writers in Portugal?

This paper explores how in online media women writers' texts transgress the borders of a national criticism that, often steeped in elitist traditional approaches, can only in part appreciate the significance of their literary projects and tends to side-line or misinterpret and misread much of the literary output produced by female authors. A transnational presence of female authorship from Portugal is, on the one hand, enhanced through electronic media in blogs, social media and websites publishing primary and secondary sources on the authors, but also, on the other hand, limited as a global literary project often depends on translation into English and the big global players of the internet economy, such as Google and Wikipedia, filter online knowledge and will 'tailor' information to certain geographical areas. In a first instance the analysis presented in this paper focuses on how online interventions from within Portugal engage with the global arena of online cultural criticism, and whether a transcultural impact can be observed for the authors' texts. Online criticism from other Portuguese-speaking countries will be compared to the global commentaries that texts elicit focusing particularly on the role of translations in the online presence of female writers from Portugal. Looking at a transnational critical approach, a shift in focus can be observed in the global online environment, abolishing the narrow categorizations of national literary metatext, and establishing instead interest communities that are defined by issues and themes rather than a canonical genealogy which only too often favours male writers. But, whether the online medium can offer a truly transnational platform will depend on resolving some of the limitations posed by the new technology and it is for future generations to decide their overall critical impact.

Maria Irene Ramalho (Universidade de Coimbra/University of Wisconsin-Madison). Maria Velho da Costa's Alice

This paper is an inquiry into the novelist's imaginative use of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. I propose to look carefully into Maria Velho da Costa's novels one more time in order to understand how the novelist takes advantage of Carroll's Alice books to structure her fictional narrative and, at the same time, further the anti-fascist ideas that pervade all her work, including her contribution to *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*.

Friday 17 March

Ana Gabriela Macedo (Universidade do Minho). *Interweaving is like knitting*. Paula Rego's 'interior theatre' and the intricate pattern of her emotional and intellectual networking

"The stories go with the picture ... I mean the stories make the picture" (Rego)

"... the only thing I knew was that there was a visual image at the source of all my stories" (Calvino)

"You're standing before a woman, and you're looking for a mere picture!" (Balzac)

In this paper I aim to establish a dialogue amongst different types of narratives, both visual and literary. Italo Calvino's essay on "Visibility" (from *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, 1984); Balzac's tale "Le Chef d'Oeuvre Inconnu" (1831), a powerful and intriguing reflection on the nature of the work of art, the search for aesthetic perfection and the irrepresentability of the sublime, through the allegory of the feminine; Isak Dinesen's "The Blank Page" (1955), a narrative about erasure of identity and silence, and Paula Rego's intricate series of art compositions which she has been fearlessly creating in a constant "interweaving" process with fellow artists and writers, classic and contemporary, Portuguese or British (from Eça de Queirós to Charlotte Brontë, Camilo and McDonagh, Herculano and F. Rojas, Adília Lopes and Jean Rhys,...). Amongst these I will focus on her recent "Balzac and Other Stories" (2012), which enact a powerful gendered commentary on the framings/unframings of History, Art History and Herstory. In all of these visual narratives the resonance of the artist's powerful words, challenging the limits of the "feminine", contained in her representation of the excess and the insurrection of the frontiers of gender: "My pictures are pictures that are done by a woman artist. The stories I tell are the stories that women tell. If art becomes genderless what is it – a neuter? That's no good is it?"

Maria Manuel Lisboa (University of Cambridge). Both Seawater and Blood Taste Salty: Paula Rego's *A Primeira Missa no Brasil*.

Paula Rego's *First Mass in Brazil* (1993) alludes, directly or indirectly, to a number of literary texts, visual works and socio-political problems. Among the first two categories we can include Pero Vaz de Caminha's *Carta*, the key account of the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil, Vítor Meirelles' painting *A Primeira Missa no Brasil* (1861) and José de Alencar's two foundation *Indianista* novels, *Iracema* (1865) and *O Guarani* (1857). The problems addressed in Rego's image recur throughout her work and in this instance, though not in others, are specifically Portuguese and Brazilian. In this specific image, they involve her engagement with the theme of the female body seen as controlled by the joint interests of Patriarchy and Church/State, as played out through tropes of origin and birth (both national and individual).

Rosa Churcher Clarke. *À Flor do Tempo*. (PhD Candidate) "Nem uma coisa nem outra". Nomadic subjectivity in the *crônicas* of Ilse Losa.

"Quando me é posta a pergunta: «sente-se mais portuguesa ou mais alemã?» respondo: «Nem uma coisa nem outra». Como podia sentir-me portuguesa se todos os portugueses vêem em mim a alemã ou a judia alemã? E como me podia sentir alemã se os alemães vêem em mim a portuguesa?" (Losa, *À Flor do Tempo*, 1997).

The last of her texts to be published during her lifetime, *À Flor do Tempo*, brings together 51 of the hundreds of *crônicas* Ilse Losa produced for the Portuguese press throughout the latter half of the 20th century. Despite winning her the APE "Grande Prémio de Crónica" in 1998, the year after publication, Ilse Losa's only collection of *crônicas* has so far been the object of none of the already-limited academic attention its author has received.

Shifting between different geographical landscapes and linguistic contexts, bringing culturally-located figures from (principally) German and Portuguese history into contact with one another, across the course of the collection, as she blends and bends boundaries, Ilse Losa showcases the "nomadic subjectivity" that she might be said to spearhead in Portuguese literature.

As a rare example of successful non-native writing in continental Portuguese literature, Losa uses her linguistic and cultural duality to help her readers to experience a multiplicity of perspectives

and transgression of borders that she herself experienced in a more literal sense having fled her native Germany to Portugal as a refugee in 1934.

Combining a collection-wide analysis of *À Flor do Tempo* with closer textual readings of a few of the *crônicas*, I will examine how Ilse Losa's transnational identity has influenced her writing at a number of levels, imbuing her contribution to Portuguese literature with a "nomadic subjectivity" which encourages a freer and more fluid, inclusive approach to identity

Claire Williams (University of Oxford). Reading Companions: Maria Ondina Braga's Biographies of Women Writers

As a poet and the author of short stories, crônicas, novels and an "autobiografia romanceada", Maria Ondina Braga played an important role as mediator between radically different cultures. In 1980, the same year as her acclaimed short story collection *Estação Morta*, Braga published the book of biographies *Mulheres Escritoras: da biografia no texto ao texto da biografia*. In this little-known volume the author introduces to a Portuguese readership fourteen women who lived and wrote in different countries and centuries, all linked, however, by their "courage" and "inner strength". She begins with a short foreword in which it becomes clear that this book represents a gift, saying "I sought to transmit" the "presence" of the writers, who she calls her "companions through so many lonely hours", to "other companions, as yet unknown" - by which she means her readers (explicitly women readers). In this paper, I intend to analyse *Mulheres Escritoras* in order to understand why Braga chose her fourteen subjects, and how she paints their portraits for a female readership.

Cláudia Pazos Alonso (University of Oxford). Spreading the Word: the "Woman Question" in the periodicals *A Voz Feminina* and *O Progresso* (1868-9)

This paper considers for the first time the progressive Portuguese periodicals *A Voz Feminina* and *O Progresso* (1868-9) from a transnational perspective, with particular reference to contemporary debates about women's suffrage in England as well as the wider emergence of transnational women's networks around that time. It discusses the epistolary contact of the Principal Editor, Francisca Wood, with key radical figures such as Lydia Becker in England, Marie Goegg in Switzerland and André Léo in France, through an analysis of relevant editorials, articles and correspondence received from abroad and published in the pages of the journals. It furthermore casts light on how Francisca Wood and her enlightened husband, William Thorold Wood, invoked the ongoing support of prominent men such as John Stuart Mill for the cause of women's rights. Such a pioneer early feminism in Portugal was particularly remarkable in the 1860s -- a context preceding the socio-political and cultural debates publicly staged in the 1871 Casino Lectures by the 'Geracao de 70'-- which, furthermore, all but sidelined 'the Woman Question'.

Estela Vieira (Indiana University - Bloomington). A Woman Playwright in Nineteenth-Century Portugal? The Dramas of Guiomar Torresão

Despite the important critical attention paid to Portuguese nineteenth-century women writers, most scholars would agree that not enough has been done to integrate their writing into canonical traditions, and too little work attempts to read and elucidate their oeuvres. My current manuscript project is devoted to doing some of this work by analyzing and contextualizing a selection of this feminine, and often times, feminist, literary production arguing that this work ought to be understood as having participated in and contributed to a literary mainstream. This

talk will be part of a chapter that focuses on the prolific journalist, writer, translator, and activist, Guiomar Delfina de Noronha Torresão (1844-1898) as a playwright. Although best known for her journalistic writing and the founding and lifetime directing of the pioneering periodical, *Almanaque das senhoras* (1871-1898), Torresão also authored a number of original plays. In addition, she was a copious translator of primarily theater. She made her publication debut in 1867 with the play, *O século XVIII e o século XIX*. Wrote a number of three-act plays including *Amor de filha*, published in her 1881 collection of mostly critical writings, *No teatro e na sala*, *Educação moderna* (1894), and *Naufração do brigue "Colombo"*, intended for the Brazilian stage—this transnational collaboration was central for Torresão as for many other women writers at the time. Her 1878 one-act comedy, *O fraco da baronesa* was critically edited and republished in 2005. Her plays interrogate women's traditional roles in society, as most of her writing does, and feature female protagonists divided between social and familial duties and their independent thinking. In this talk I will try to demonstrate how Torresão's dramatic writings reflect early feminist concerns, and explore the ways in which drama as a genre of choice coincides with the expansion of women's emancipation and education. Theater served as an intercontinental platform for Torresão to stage her political and aesthetic prerogatives.

Patrícia Oliveira Silva (Universidade de Coimbra & Queen Mary - University of London). Making and Unmaking: Ana Hatherly's *O Mestre* in context

In this paper, I propose to examine Ana Hatherly's *O Mestre* (1963) in relation to contemporary experimental artistic productions or practices occurring in both a national (POEX) and a transnational (Destructivism, Fluxus) context. Specifically, the deconstruction of *bildung* topoi of experiential narratives of maturation and learning and of fictional conventions regarding genre, plot and focalization in Hatherly's text will be shown to reflect the 'deconstruction of the official discourse' and of discourse itself underpinning the contemporary Portuguese experimental poetry movement (PO.EX.), as postulated by Hatherly herself and Ernesto M. M. Castro (Castro, 1995, p. 59). However, I argue that the full scope of Hatherly's reflection on the condition of the (contemporary) artist, which is necessarily self-reflexive as well as epochal, can only be grasped through examination of contemporary transnational artistic movements, namely the 'politically motivated and broadly deconstructive' ethos underpinning the experiential dimension of Fluxus work (Hannah Higgins, Fluxus Experience ('On the Problem of Authenticity' section, p. 58), notably its earliest manifestation through Raphael Montañez Ortiz's Destructivism manifesto (1963), which would develop into the Destructive art movement, which came to fruition in the form of the Destruction in Art Symposia held in London in 1966 and in New York in 1968. Hence, the dialectic of making and unmaking and stylistic devices deployed in *O Mestre* will be examined dialogically in relation to artworks, texts and practices undertaken by Hatherly and contemporary artists practising a destructivist aesthetic in (trans)national contexts.

Saturday 18 March

Maria Luísa Coelho (Oxford University/Universidade do Minho). *O Mapa Cor de Rosa* by Maria Velho da Costa: migration, dis-location and the production of unstable cartographies

Critically regarded as one of the most experimental and radical Portuguese writers to emerge in the second half of the twentieth century, Maria Velho da Costa has produced an oeuvre marked

by a spirit of de-centering and de-territorialisation, be it by creating diverse, if not always contradictory, characters, worlds, realities and dimensions that, nevertheless, coexist and mingle, or by consistently pushing the boundaries of literary genres, exploring the plasticity of language and its dialogue with other artistic means of representation such as music and visual art.

In the 1980s, this construction of literature as a gateway or shuttle is intrinsically connected to the writer's migrant experience, for in this period Velho da Costa spent six years in London as a lecturer at the Portuguese and Brazilian department in King's College (1980-87) and then took a diplomatic post in Cape Verde (1988-91).

In this paper I will discuss the works written by Maria Velho da Costa while she was living and working in London; these were the novel *Lucialima*, published in 1983, and a series of chronicles, initially published in *A Capital* between 1981 and 1982 and then compiled in 1984 in a book entitled *O Mapa Cor de Rosa: Cartas de Londres*. More specifically, I intend to take a closer look at the latter of the two texts in order to argue that rather than offering a map where territories and their boundaries are drawn in permanent ink, it produces an unstable geographic and cultural cartography, through which personal, national and linguistic identities are seen as always in transit.

Carmen Ramos Villar (University of Sheffield). Bridging the Transnational Gap: Katherine Vaz, a Portuguese American Writer

In the new millennium, Katherine Vaz was one of the first Portuguese American writers to break through into both the Portuguese and the North American literary landscapes. Depicting the experience of the Portuguese emigrant in the United States, her work appeals to audiences in both sides of the Atlantic. Her 1997 novel, *Mariana* introduced readers in the United States to the story of Mariana de Alcoforado, the famous Portuguese nun who inspired the *New Portuguese Letters* by the Three Marias. Together with her other works on the emigrant experience, Vaz's reworking of the life of Mariana de Alcoforado introduced her North American readers to the rich cultural and historical Portuguese heritage. The subsequent translations of her works into Portuguese also introduced Portuguese audiences to the emigrant experience of those who had emigrated to the United States. In many ways, Vaz broke ground for subsequent (mostly male) Portuguese American writers to emerge and be taken seriously in both sides of the Atlantic. This paper will analyse Vaz's self-conscious position as a Portuguese American writer will be considered in light of her desire to be seen as a transnational cultural broker.

Maria Lusitano (Portuguese Artist/University of Westminster) Transnational Bodies of Desire

"Transnational Bodies of Desire" is a performative lecture by artist Maria Lusitano Santos in which she revisits her diasporic journey to different countries and cities. By revisiting the spaces she has inhabited she tries to decipher and articulate the inner symbolism of her journeys and their impact on her personal growth. Maria's nations of desire are three: Portugal, the not chosen one, is the home of bare emotions, primal binary instincts, warmth and strong affects. Portugal is the home of expression. Her second home is Sweden, a chosen home. Sweden is read as the home of silent introspection, cold witnessing, psychological maturation and the beginning of an experience of light, expressed in white. London is the last one. It's the city of urban ecstasy, passion, symbolism and the beginning of the journey to alchemical integration.