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EDITORIAL

PATRÍCIA CATIVO

Visions of the Future: Iberian Visual Culture After Democracy, 1974–1998 is a collaborative research project examining the role of visual communication in the Iberian Peninsula during its transition to democracy in the final decades of the twentieth century. Anchored in the research units DESIGN ID (Universidade Lusófona, Lisbon) and GREDITS (BAU, Centro Universitario de Artes y Diseño de Barcelona), and operating as a pilot initiative of the Iberian Design Archives network, the project brings together researchers and institutions across Portugal and Spain in the shared conviction that this period's graphic and visual legacy has been incompletely archived and insufficiently understood. Its methodological commitment is to read the design archive not as a fixed historical sequence, but as an open and contested field — one still in transition.

The inaugural conference of *Visions of the Future*, organised by MUDE — Museu do Design in co-organisation with COFAC and with the support of the Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, offered a first occasion to test that commitment collectively. It was, above all, an encounter: a gathering of researchers, practitioners, and institutions who, arriving from different disciplines and national contexts, recognised in one another a common preoccupation. Visual culture as political evidence. The design archive as a site of memory and omission. Democratic transition not as a concluded historical episode, but as an ongoing and unfinished process. The papers collected in this publication are the written trace of that encounter — and of the conversations it made possible.

The contributions span a wide range of objects, methods, and geographies, yet several threads run through them with

insistence. The question of the archive — its borders, its hierarchies, and its silences — opens the dossier with Gonçalo Falcão's provocation: can a military operations report, produced by Captain Salgueiro Maia in the immediate aftermath of the Carnation Revolution of April 25, 1974, belong in a design museum? The question is deliberately disarming, and its implications reach far beyond the specific document. What counts as design history? Who decides? And what is lost when the canon answers too quickly?

The feminist revision that the project identifies as one of its core commitments finds substantial grounding in three contributions. Mariana Almeida and Helena Barbosa approach this revision through the material archive itself: their ongoing cataloguing of the poster collection held by Cooperativa Árvore — a Porto-based cultural cooperative founded in 1963 and a key site of resistance to the Estado Novo — reveals that of 3,583 distinct posters, only around 3% carry recognised female authorship. Their article recovers all identifiable names and focuses on six Portuguese designers and artists whose work, directly linked to the Cooperativa between 1974 and 1998, is contextualised through personal testimonies and archival cross-referencing. The result is both an act of recovery and a methodological demonstration: the feminist revision of design history must proceed through the archive, object by object. Helena Barbosa extends this inquiry in a second contribution, tracing a diachronic history of ten Portuguese women designers who worked across and against the Estado Novo, recovering a continuous and structurally obscured contribution to the visual culture of the period. M. Àngels Fortea turns to Catalonia, where the first professional generation of

women graphic designers — trained at Elisava and Eina under the Franco regime — went on to shape the democratic visual identity of their region and country. That all three authors must work against near-total historiographic absence is, in itself, a finding that the project cannot afford to set aside.

The decolonial dimension of the Iberian transitions — too often bracketed from accounts of democratic modernisation — is addressed with particular ambition by Nyangala Zolho and Arjunraj Shakeela Natarajan, whose speculative, transboundary methodology traces two coastlines linked by Vasco da Gama's arrival in 1498. Their contribution proposes filmmaking as a form of policy design and personal memory as a historical method, insisting that the Iberian transitions cannot be understood as a self-contained European story. Soraya Vasconcelos, Sara Morgado Santos, and Catarina Laranjeiro extend this sensibility through *Fotonovelo*, a collaborative audiovisual work that reclaims a marginalised visual genre — the photonovel — through practice-based research, weaving together archive, performance, and digital interactivity.

Subcultural movements and popular culture are read through two distinct national lenses. Nico Juárez Latimer-Knowles analyses Spanish public television during the transition as a space of symbolic negotiation, tracing the normative pressures encoded in broadcasting identity alongside the disruptive energy of programmes that exceeded them. Dionisio Sánchez-Rubio and Genoveva Carrión Ruiz focus on the *Ruta del Bacalao* and the figure of Quique Company — a designer whose responsible disobedience occupied the murky edges of an underground already in the process of becoming mainstream. Madalena Miranda's study of revolutionary mural films brings these questions into the street and onto the wall, examining how documentary cinema captured a liberated visual culture that has since been partially absorbed, partially erased, by institutional commemoration and urban gentrification.

The dossier closes with J. A. Tulio Filho's comparative visual ethnography of housing protest imagery across fifty years — from 1974 to 2024 — which arrives at an uncomfortable conclusion: the persistence of the same symbols, demands, and visual languages across half a century suggests not a series of isolated crises but a single, continuous failure. Democratic transition, in this light, remains an unfinished project.

This publication would not exist without the generosity of several institutions and individuals. Our deepest gratitude goes to MUDE — Museu do Design, whose hospitality and organisational commitment gave the inaugural conference its intellectual home and made this first collective articulation of the project possible. We thank the Universidade Lusófona for its support in the co-organisation of the event, and BAU, Centro Universitario de Artes y Diseño de Barcelona, for its essential partnership in building the research network that sustains this work. Above all, we thank the authors gathered here — for their contributions, their generosity in dialogue, and their willingness to bring their research into a shared and still-forming conversation.

O papel do MUDE no conhecimento e na partilha das memórias do design

A presente publicação reúne uma seleção de comunicações apresentadas na conferência internacional *Visions of the Future: Cultura Visual Ibérica Depois da Democracia 1974–1998*, realizada no MUDE – Museu do Design em janeiro de 2025. Este encontro, organizado em parceria com a Universidade Lusófona e em colaboração com a rede FilmEU, reflete a identidade do Museu enquanto espaço vivo e dinâmico: um local de exposição, mas também um lugar de criação, troca de ideias, produção e partilha de conhecimento.

A política de incorporação do MUDE intensificou estrategicamente a integração de documentação e materiais de natureza arquivística a partir de 2015, como desenvolvimento natural do propósito de compreender o design para além do objeto, focando-se no processo, no pensamento e na prática projetual em contexto. Ao classificar, digitalizar, preservar, disponibilizar e estudar esboços, correspondência e memórias projetuais, o MUDE assegura que este legado, em lugar de se encerrar na exposição de resultados finais, permaneça como uma herança cultural viva e uma estrutura aberta à reflexão. Esta abordagem reconhece que a memória coletiva é um processo em constante construção; por isso, ao integrar materiais de elevado valor pedagógico, o Museu contribui para a revisão das narrativas históricas, permitindo uma compreensão crítica que projeta novos sentidos para a contemporaneidade.

Sob esta premissa, o arquivo não é um fim em si mesmo, mas o alicerce para um pensamento crítico contemporâneo que se constrói na partilha direta com a comunidade científica, os profissionais da área e o público em geral. Nesse sentido, o próprio edifício do Museu – património arquitetónico de história complexa e fragmentada – é assumido como um “arquivo vivo” que permite debater os mais variados aspetos da nossa história recente. É sob este prisma que iniciámos, no início de 2026, uma colaboração com o programa “Memórias para Todos”, coordenado pela Professora Fernanda Rollo, do HTC – História, Territórios e Comunidades da NOVA FCSH.

MUDE’s role in preserving and sharing design memories

This publication brings together a selection of papers presented at the international conference *Visions of the Future: Iberian Visual Culture After Democracy 1974–1998*, held at MUDE – Museu do Design in January 2025. This event, organized in partnership with Lusófona University and in collaboration with the FilmEU network, reflects the Museum’s identity as a living, dynamic space: a venue for exhibitions, but also a place for creation, the exchange of ideas, production, and the sharing of knowledge.

MUDE’s acquisition policy has strategically intensified the integration of archival documentation and materials since 2015, as a natural extension of the aim to understand design beyond the object, focusing on the process, thought, and design practice within context. By classifying, digitizing, preserving, making available, and studying sketches, correspondence, and design records, MUDE ensures that this legacy, rather than being confined to the exhibition of final results, remains a living cultural heritage and a framework open to reflection. This approach recognizes that collective memory is a process in constant construction; therefore, by integrating materials of high pedagogical value, the Museum contributes to the revision of historical narratives, enabling a critical understanding that projects new meanings for the contemporary world.

Under this premise, the archive is not an end in itself, but rather the foundation for contemporary critical thinking that is built through direct engagement with the scientific community, professionals in the field, and the general public. In this sense, the Museum building itself—an architectural heritage site with a complex and fragmented history—is conceived as a “living archive” that allows for the discussion of the most varied aspects of our recent history. It is from this perspective that, in early 2026, we began a collaboration with the “Memórias para Todos” program, coordinated by Professor Fernanda Rollo of the HTC – History, Territories, and Communities at NOVA FCSH.

No MUDE, a gestão da documentação opera num ambiente de interoperabilidade, onde a articulação entre o Centro de Documentação e Informação e a Conservação de Coleções permite que cada item seja tratado como o testemunho de um pensamento e de uma prática. Embora muitos destes arquivos se encontrem ainda num estado embrionário de estudo, a sua integração e preservação no acervo do MUDE garantem que a “invisibilidade” histórica possa ser revertida através de programas curatoriais, investigações académicas, encontros e simpósios. Este processo foi detalhado nesta conferência pela bibliotecária Conceição Toscano e pela conservadora-restauradora Inês Correia, que salientaram como a preservação se converte num ato simultâneo de salvaguarda e valorização filosófica. Foram igualmente apresentados os desafios metodológicos que estas incorporações colocam e que enfrentamos através de um trabalho colaborativo com investigadores e instituições académicas, integrando cada registo numa narrativa que é, em simultâneo, documental e museológica. Ao transformar o arquivo num ecossistema vivo de investigação, o Museu reafirma o seu compromisso com a produção de saber. Esta abordagem assenta na premissa de que o acesso a tais fontes é essencial para fundamentar um conhecimento integral do passado e uma análise crítica do presente, constituindo-se, assim, como um dos pilares da missão pública do MUDE.

Felicitemos a Universidade Lusófona por esta publicação e todos os investigadores nela envolvidos pelo seu contributo para a historiografia e a crítica do design. Estendemos este reconhecimento à BAU Research (BAU – Centro Universitário de Artes e Design de Barcelona), parceira da Universidade Lusófona na coordenação do projeto-piloto do *Iberian Design Archives*, na certeza de que manteremos uma colaboração ativa em novos debates sobre a cultura material e visual contemporânea.

At MUDE, documentation management operates in an environment of interoperability, where the coordination between the Documentation and Information Center and the Collections Conservation department allows each item to be treated as a testament to a way of thinking and a practice. Although many of these archives are still in an embryonic stage of study, their integration and preservation within the MUDE collection ensure that historical “invisibility” can be reversed through curatorial programs, academic research, meetings, and symposia. This process was detailed at this conference by librarian Conceição Toscano and conservator-restorer Inês Correia, who emphasized how preservation becomes a simultaneous act of safeguarding and philosophical appreciation. The methodological challenges posed by these additions were also presented, challenges we address through collaborative work with researchers and academic institutions, integrating each record into a narrative that is simultaneously documentary and museological. By transforming the archive into a living ecosystem of research, the Museum reaffirms its commitment to the production of knowledge. This approach is based on the premise that access to such sources is essential for establishing a comprehensive understanding of the past and a critical analysis of the present, thus constituting one of the pillars of MUDE’s public mission.

We congratulate Lusófona University on this publication and all the researchers involved in it for their contribution to design historiography and criticism. We extend this recognition to BAU Research (BAU – Barcelona University Center for Arts and Design), a partner of Lusófona University in coordinating the Iberian Design Archives pilot project, confident that we will maintain an active collaboration in new debates on contemporary material and visual culture.

Bárbara Coutinho

Diretora do MUDE – Museu do Design
21 março 2026