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ARTICLE

# "DIALECTICAL CONTEMPORANEITY" AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTO ART PROJECTS REFLECTING ON HISTORICAL CARTOGRAPHY THROUGH PERSONAL NARRATIVES

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Didi-Huberman has highlighted the essential distinction between an archive and an atlas by analyzing Warburg's *Mnemosyne*, a collection of 79 image panels, in its final form. To the author, Warburg's *Bilderatlas* is a restless and perpetually unfinished construction, functioning as both an open-ended montage and an endless re-assembly of images.<sup>1</sup> The panels contain unconventional juxtapositions, bringing together images from different times, statuses, and contexts. According to Didi-Huberman, *Mnemosyne* embodies the concept of an atlas, not of an archive, as he sees archives to be lacking the freedom that *Mnemosyne* permits. In an atlas, the connections between elements are intentionally broken, whereas in archives, elements are organized in a way that suppresses their idiosyncrasies forcing them to operate within a unifying structure. Didi-Huberman argues that the greatest contribution of Warburg's *Bilderatlas* was its dismantling of a linear narrative in Art History, compelling a reassessment of History as a constructed form of ideological power.

## CLAIRE BISHOP'S PROPOSAL OF DIALECTICAL CONTEMPORANEITY

The historian Claire Bishop has argued that historical and museum collections are fruitful testing grounds for contemporary thinking, where art practice can enrich public debates around historic hegemonic narratives.<sup>2</sup> Bishop argued the need for museums to break from their "status of presentism"; in essence calling attention to the role of the museum as a public forum for critical thinking. Hereby artists can contribute by retelling History and revisiting marginal or repressed narratives within the archives, which she calls the "archives of the commons". Bishop's examples draw from cases such as the Van Abbemuseum, the Museo Nacional de Reina Sofía and the MSUM Ljubljana. According to her:

"These institutions elaborate a dialectical contemporaneity both as a museological practice and an art-historical method."<sup>3</sup>

By allowing artists to interpret collections with their subjective and anachronistic visions, museums would display "institutional transparency". The kind of exhibitions in which artists are capable of creating are what she describes as expanded historical contextualization.

"Culture becomes a primary means for visualizing alternatives; rather than thinking of the museum collection as a storehouse of treasures, it can be reimagined as an archive of the commons."<sup>4</sup>

One of the main assertions proposed in Didi-Huberman's analysis<sup>5</sup> stresses how History is built on top of anachronistic changes. To him, History, as a discipline, should be open to multiple views, like how he interpreted Warburg's contribution, drawing also from what Walter Benjamin theorized under the name of the "dialectical image."<sup>6</sup>

## HISTORICAL CASE STUDY FOR RESEARCH-BASED ART

Bishop's proposal of "dialectic contemporaneity" makes an important contribution to understanding historical collections and contemporary art, yet academics are lacking an accompanying methodology for structuring approaches. If we are to consider "dialectic contemporaneity" as a mission in different contexts, such as research in art, much could be tested and revised. Considering the framework of research in art, and within my own practice, I understood it would be an important criterion to work within my own institution's archives, namely the University of Porto, to pursue Bishop's proposal of the "dialectic contemporaneity."

The University of Porto is an amalgamation composed of several institutions and faculties spread across the historic city of Porto, which were founded at the beginning of the 19th century, that has continued to evolve in its 150 years of operation. In 1762, the Nautical School (Aula Náutica) was created to

train and educate citizens in order to allow them to travel the oceans and seas for business voyages, which were of major economic importance for Portugal. In this period of time, several maps, books, and scientific instruments were acquired for educational purposes.<sup>7</sup> Opening 17 years later, Drawing lessons (Aula de Desenho e Debuxo, 1779) followed thereafter in the development of the schools in Porto. The two succeeding schools, the Academia Real da Marinha e Comércio (1803) and the Academia Politécnica (1837) furthered the education of Porto's population, ultimately leading to the establishment of the University of Porto.

The collection of the University of Porto is immense, and is often presented within the framework of the history of science. By following Bishop's "dialectical contemporaneity", my proposal of research allowed me to think about the University's collection in a fresh perspective. My research criterion was to contextualize the objects of interest to traditional printmaking,<sup>8</sup> which is my main practice and because primary sources for historical archives are often preserved in the form of prints, e.g. books or graphic works. I've selected scientific works produced in the 19th century, as I believe it would broaden the understanding of how printmaking was instrumental to ascertain power, prompting economic growth and scientific discoveries, a hallmark of European powers in the 19th century.

In this paper I will not delve into the systematic research I have developed around printing cartography.<sup>9</sup> Instead, I will be focusing on how the selection of a case study of two historic globes [Figure 1] led to the making of the two art installations [Figure 5]. For the most part, I will draw from Didi-Huberman's conceptualization of the ATLAS. Didi-Huberman has published a very comprehensive analysis of the origin of the word coming from the Greek mythological titan. However, the word ATLAS can have several meanings. It can refer to the cartographic image of the world, referring to the compilation of maps in books and in contemporary visual culture, it can refer to a compilation of images.

## ATLAS, THE TITAN

In mythology, Atlas was the titan punished by Zeus to hold the weight of the skies on his shoulders.<sup>10</sup> Later associations with the Atlas as the holder of the terrestrial globe developed, which did not belong to the original myth.<sup>11</sup> The figure of Atlas is mostly associated with a proliferation of knowledge, as Didi-Huberman explains it as "consecrated" as the father of astronomy, geography and also philosophy. The ATLAS as the form of a sphere brings the "power of knowing everything" but also the idea of "tragic knowledge, a knowledge through contact and pain,"<sup>12</sup> as carrying all of the knowledge of the world is a heavy burden.

"To endure thus reveals the power of the bearer, but also the suffering to which they are subjected under the weight they carry. Enduring is an act of courage and strength, but also of resignation, of oppressed strength: (...) "<sup>13</sup>



The power of attempting to know everything was how Didi-Huberman metaphorically presented Aby Warburg in his written work. Such a strong analogy allowed me to think of two historical Globes of the University of Porto [Figure 1] with the same regard, transcending the obvious and most linguistic notion of the cartographic atlas. The cartographic notion of an atlas is turned into a complex metaphor following Didi-Huberman's analysis. It encapsulates both the gesture of holding as a punishment, and holding as a strength.

"The second panel of Aby Warburg consists of a series of images of globes. The figure of the atlas is associated with tragedy ('all cultures display their own monsters') and with knowledge ('through which all cultures explain, redeem, or demonstrate these monsters in the realm of thought')."<sup>14</sup>



Figure 1

[top left] Addison Globes. Terrestrial and Celestial. Collection: University of Porto. MHNC-UP. 135 x 112 x 112 cm. Photograph by: Ana Carolina Ventura. (Coleção do Fundo Antigo da Universidade do Porto).

[top right] Illustration taken from book: *Elements of Map Projection* (1931) published by Charles H. Deetz and Oscar S. Adams US Coast and Geodetic Survey. p. 28.

[bottom] David Lopes, installation of *Atlas of War*. Exhibition "in situ — ex situ". (Organized by Pure Print Archeology, i2ADS/FBAUP), 2023. Porto

Images courtesy of the author.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ARTWORKS – PERSONAL AND HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

I took the opportunity to work with the University's historic globes to reflect upon personal narratives. I consider the work *The Atlas of War (or To carry the world on its back)*, 2023, to be about my father, who was born in 1949, and is currently 76 years old. *The Atlas of poverty (or The collection of rags)* is about my grandmother, who passed away in 2022, at the age of 100. One can fairly question how one approaches a historic object in such a personal manner? The late curator, Okwui Enwezor, has shown how artists have frequently approached collective archives in personal ways, and he frames it as a necessary task to bring archives into a different light, that is, away from institutional pressures and hegemonic narratives.

"(...) the archival form can become a temporal mechanism for enacting historical events, (...) A vehicle for reconstituting history as self-conscious fiction."<sup>15</sup>

The collective archive presents itself as a way to reflect upon personal issues through something external. Doing such, it shows that archives are truly open to society; anyone should and could create dialogue with the "archive of the commons". Moreover, personal experiences with art don't necessarily mean people will find a close link between the artist and its making. I believe that artworks are expected to surpass their original context and make connections between people; isolated experiences make for collective experiences through art, and, such has been the way art connects with the world.

As explained before, and according to Didi-Huberman, deconstructing an archive into an atlas is proposing a repurposing of these structures, breaking apart their unifying principles. Following his differentiation, one implicitly understands that Didi-Huberman is arguing in favour of the archive becoming an atlas. His preference for the atlas as a format stems from the understanding that the archive upholds hegemonic power structures that need to be dismantled. Therefore, the two art pieces I developed take the measurements of the globes in order to flat those without using mathematical calculations. [Figure 1]. At some point, Didi-Huberman also refers to the Atlas as a mine,<sup>16</sup> an idea he constructs by following what Benjamin argued under the name of "the dialectical image". Such an abstract concept, for which Benjamin had many names, including that of "the lightning," opens History in a rapid moment, also described as a "seizure". In such a line of reasoning, one could argue that to turn an archive into an atlas entails performing an act of violence. Such perception has led to the creation of a personal project I call *The Atlas of War*.

## THE ATLAS OF WAR (OR TO CARRY THE WORLD ON YOUR BACK)

My father holds a small collection of photographs taken in Africa during the Portuguese Colonial War (1961-1974). Only recently, I have realized how much his

stories from the time he served as a soldier, encroached on my family's collective memory. One photograph in particular caught my attention for this project. It's a bomb explosion, covering most of the composition with black smoke. Upon a closer look, one can see the back of two soldiers holding fire.

One of the greatest challenges artist-researchers face while working with archives is to determine which aspects of an archive are appropriate to appropriate. Naturally, I have sought permission from my father to take his photographs, but I remain conscious of the delicate balance between his personal experience and the collective memory of war, a reality he alone cannot grant me access to. War, felt by both sides, and in which Portugal as a country played a critical role, holds control over entire populations and jeopardizes the life of many individuals.

Whilst exploring my father's personal narrative, I took a chance to trace a digital route using GoogleMaps between Campanhã, Porto (Portugal), where he lived, and Mueda, (Mozambique), where he was sent to. The path drawn by today's technology was made through land and served well as a symbolic gesture that demonstrated that the world has changed a lot since my father was in his 20s. The digital route would take 94 days of walking and 158 hours by car.<sup>17</sup> It would be surreal to think of it as a journey one could take up alone, but would still serve to explore the idea of desperation I believe my father would have felt. Screenshots from such an arduous path made it into the final art objects [Figure 5].

I then captured aerial views of Africa, the city of Mueda, and the current population of the city, which were placed in the mix between the urban environment of Bonfim, on Rua Pinto Bessa (Porto). By juxtaposing images of Porto and Mueda, captured from GoogleMaps or GoogleStreetview, I aim to enhance their dialectic tension. These spaces are not similar, but they are part of the mental archive of soldiers such as my father. At the same time, using pictures of our times proposes the same dialectic intensity by stressing how life keeps its motion after a war.

In the art world, digital geography has been explored by many artists and researchers, since nowadays, most people have access to satellite pictures of the world, including mapped roads, businesses, museums, etc. However, from a Eurocentric perspective, one can say that only in the past century with digital technology have maps become somewhat democratized.<sup>18</sup> The reality is that maps used to be privileged assets, often associated with those who ruled. Going back to the 19th century one begins to understand how map-making—drawing from survey and publishing through printing,—was gatekept by powerful people: kings, rulers, emperors, and military. Moreover, the connections between war and cartography should be made apparent; map-making, map-publishing and cartography have always been a form of declaring a country's power over others; having a mapped territory implicitly meant you owned the territory. The rise of scientific cartography during this period was linked to European imperialism, where mapping Africa became a crucial tool for asserting territorial control.<sup>19</sup>

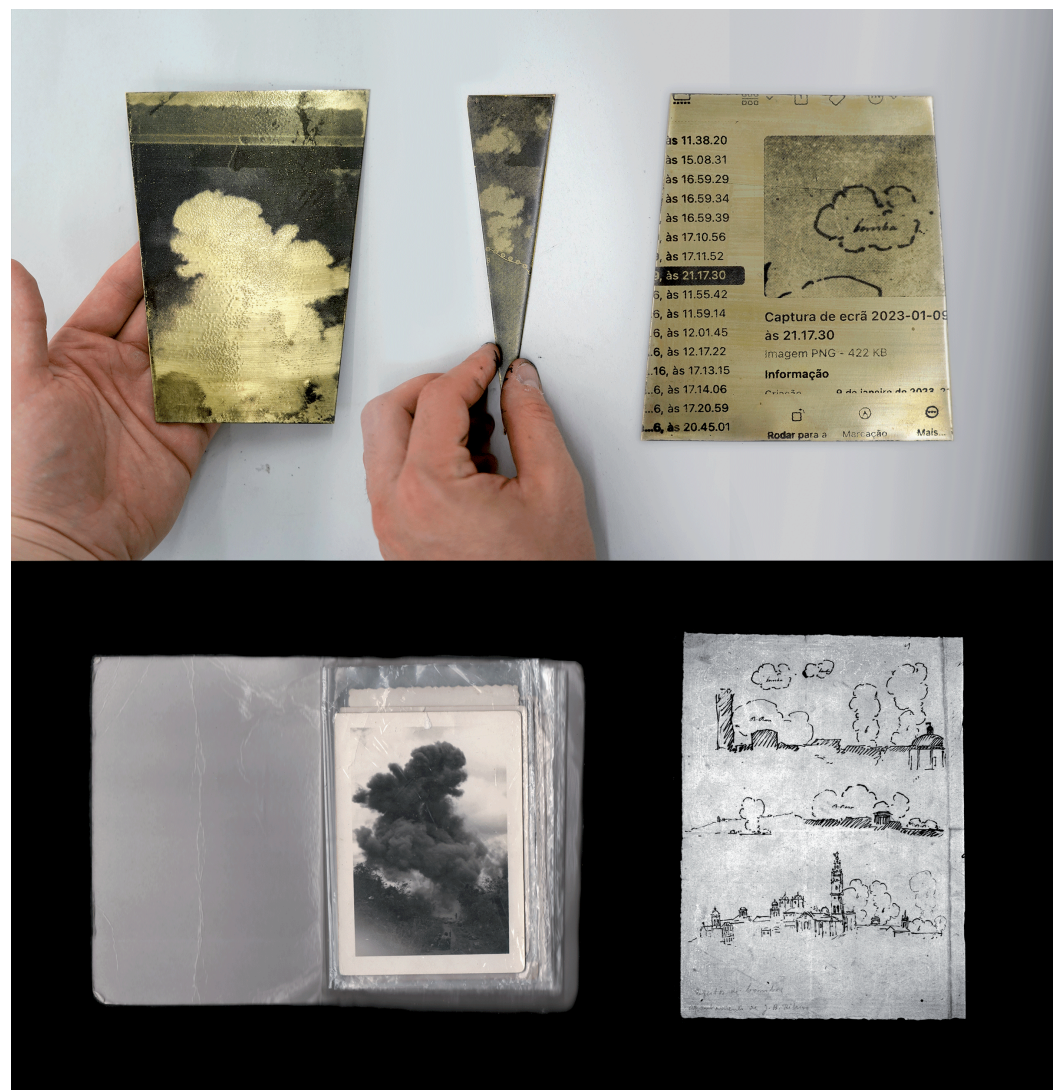
Speaking of printed maps for example, historian Jerry Brotton pinpointed lithography as a major contribution to the development of imperialistic cartography.



<sup>20</sup> Historian Nancy Princenthal<sup>21</sup> has argued that maps express an implicit violence, something that can be reinforced by John Harley as well,<sup>22</sup> since he often talks about maps in his texts as metonymy for the idea of weapons.<sup>23</sup>

"(...) one could see how a pencil line on a map could determine the life and death of millions of individuals."<sup>24</sup>

Such reasoning made me aware of my own place in the city of Porto, and it occurred to me to look for parallel traces of war in 19th century Porto. At the beginning of the century, Portugal was occupied by the Civil War of Portugal (1832-1834); a dispute for the throne between two brothers, Dom Pedro I and Dom Miguel I. This historic episode became known as the Siege of Porto (*Cerco do Porto*). During my research in the Archives of the city of Porto, I came across a drawing by João Baptista Ribeiro<sup>25</sup> (1790-1868), where one can see landmarks of the city, the Clérigos Tower and *Serra do Pilar*. Take notice of the way Ribeiro captioned the sky: the distinctive lines are drawn to indicate where the city was being bombed [Figure 2]. The caption reads "bomba" (bomb), making us aware of true violence in the drawn scene.<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 2**

[top] Set of three polygons from the globe installation.

[bottom left] My father's (Nelson Pinto Lopes) war album opening photograph. Anonymous author.

[bottom right] Impact of bombs: drawing by J. B. Ribeiro (Efeitos de bombas: apontamento de J. B. Ribeiro). PT-CMP-AM/PRI/FGD/F.NV:FG.M:7:253. Image credits: Archive of the City of Hall of Porto (AHMP).

It was difficult not to compare my father's photograph of a bomb from the Portuguese Colonial War and the drawing made by Ribeiro. For this reason, in the *Atlas of War (or To Carry the World on Its Back)*, I reproduced pictures of clouds which were digital inverted to be presented as negative motifs, underlining the duality of bomb/cloud, or a false sense of peace, that can be both translated when one is seeing images of war. Looking at my father's younger pictures allowed for a sense of revisiting the impact of war on a person. My father was 20 years old when he was called to fight in Mozambique, leaving Campanhã, Porto, for a period of 18 months. Humans often forget to regard people who fought in war as those who were forced to play a part in something outside of their control. The writer Hannah Arendt said something impactful on this matter:

"As far as human experience is concerned, death indicates an extreme of loneliness and impotence. But faced collectively and in action, death changes its countenance; now nothing seems more likely to intensify our vitality than its proximity."<sup>27</sup>

For Arendt, political organizations or studies on politics rarely mention the persuasive power of 'collective death' as a form of shared violence.

(... ) It is the equality of fear resulting from the equal ability to kill possessed by everyone that persuades men in the state of nature to bind themselves into a commonwealth."<sup>28</sup>

Soldiers, like many citizens on both sides of war, can be seen as ATLAS, likewise the figure of the titan, they sacrifice their individuality to endure a collective mission, a doctrine really, that dying in war is to die for a collective cause. The preservation of such doctrine feels really like one of the most effective forms of control in History.

In 2022, during the Christmas holidays, I had the chance to look at old archives from the Portuguese national television network, RTP. In between 1971 and 1972, the RTP station sent reporters to Portuguese African colonies, giving soldiers and military personnel the opportunity to greet their families and wish them 'happy holidays'. Some of the men who were broadcasted did not return at all. My father and I went through hours of footage until we finally arrived at a three second clip of him. I cannot fully describe the experience. First, there was a sense of duplication, a mirror to another version of myself [Figure 3]. Then, a different version of my father as a young adult, a naive expression in his face and body language. But his voice recorded from 1971 Mozambique was the most striking of it all. I was a 29-year-old man, listening to a 22-year-old version of my father speaking across a 50-year gap.<sup>29</sup>

## THE ATLAS OF POVERTY (OR THE COLLECTION OF RAGS)

I have discussed the atlas as an idea of the archive, which needs to break under the use of violence, and with it, I have been drawing parallels between the war and cartography. Yet there is another layer brought by Didi-Huberman, that is, to

**Figure 3.**  
Nelson Pinto Lopes reproduced on metal plates. David Lopes, 2023, *The Atlas of War (or To Carry the world on your back)*. See the video archives of RTP, Mensagens de Natal - Moçambique 1971. (00:09:41) <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/mensagens-de-natal-mocambique-1971-4/>

Image reproduced with permission.



understand the atlas of images, as the atlas of knowledge, as a collection of debris, which collapses into the figure of the “rag picker.”

“The ragpicker is the most provocative figure of human misery. “Ragtag” <Lumpenproletariat> in a double sense: clothed in rags and occupied with rags. “Here we have a man whose job it is to pick up the day’s rubbish in the capital. He collects and catalogues everything that the great city has cast off, everything it has lost, and discarded, and broken. He goes through the archives of debauchery, and the jumbled array of refuse. He makes a selection, an intelligent choice; like a miser hoarding treasure, he collects the garbage that will become objects of utility or pleasure when refurbished by Industrial magic.”<sup>30</sup>

In Paris, the ragpickers would collect, at night, what others considered waste, in order to sell during the day; such figures also existed in Portugal.<sup>31</sup> Today, there are rag pickers in a modern form; the trope of a homeless person pushing a shopping cart. Walter Benjamin referred to the rag pickers as “Lumpensammler”: “lumpen” meaning rag (borrowed from Marx’s *lumpenproletariat*), and “sammler” meaning collector. The process of gathering discarded items, driven by poverty, contrasts with the archive, which is built by tradition and organized by power structures, yet comes closer to the idea of the ATLAS, as it is less organized and structured. The act of collecting serves as the connection between poverty and the atlas of images, but notice how it still prevails the idea of carrying something by obligation.

“The beggar and the wanderer can themselves be the titans who carry the weight of the world, ignorant of the burden that has been placed upon their shoulders.”<sup>32</sup>

“(…) it is now up to our modern Atlas to reflect the exuberance of the world captured from the perspective of poverty.”<sup>33</sup>

It's important to address that the "dialectical image", as deconstruction of History as progress, was rooted also in what Walter Benjamin saw for the proletariat in his time. Benjamin based his ideas on Marxism, and much of these ideas about capitalism and technological progress had preceded him in the 19th century and paved the way for how he perceived progress as something negative. His concerns were mostly on the side of those who were oppressed by the economic system.

"The new conception of labor amounts to the exploitation of nature, which with naive complacency is contrasted with the exploitation of the proletariat."<sup>34</sup>

The carriers of the burdens of poverty are seen as well in the figure of the titan by Didi-Huberman. The metaphor of the globe holder works equally to describe those oppressed by society, economic systems, and by power structures. Didi-Huberman explains that Walter Benjamin proposed a response, which should "offer a sample of historical chaos" by examining the remnants and debris of the past. Further Didi-Huberman argues that Benjamin valued photography and cinema, not primarily to discuss the concept of 'aura', but because these media represent the modern Atlas, offering a way to understand the world through the lens of poverty.<sup>35</sup>

With this approach, I've transformed the historical globe into a personal narrative, weaving in my grandmother's story. After her passing, my grandmother's bureaucratic documents became orphaned; no ritual of use was expected to continue. Handling her archive allowed me to generate new images. When the contact with the departed person is made through the contact with the used object, touching what was touched becomes a powerful action. Some of the images I developed for the atlas of poverty begin with such a premise. State documents, her citizen cards, professional certifications, or receipts of bills paid all address my grandparents' life [Figure 4]. While touching what was touched had an invisible sense to it, there is also the literal sense of my grandparent's fingerprints in these documents. From sculptural molds, Didi-Huberman argued that the term *empreinte* can, as Miranda Stewart proposed in her translation, also mean 'impression.'<sup>36</sup> Didi-Huberman's powerful interpretation of the word *imago* and its close connection to the word *empreinte*, was also a way to deconstruct history of art.<sup>37</sup> According to the philosopher, the understanding of an image did not always present itself as a surface, but it evolved from a sculpture's meaning.<sup>38</sup>

Parallely, I have also driven the creation of other images by visiting the addresses that could be found in my grandmother's documents. The narrative component was my grandmother's mapping for her work sites, ultimately trying to establish an empathic connection to her days working typical jobs of lower class families, of those living in Porto in the beginning of the 20th century. My grandmother was a *distribuidora*<sup>39</sup> of bread. [Figure 4] meaning she was the person to carry bread to others and distribute it in different areas of the city during the early morning hours. Bread itself became a symbol for this project [Figure 4, second row], as it became relevant to visually discuss the relation between hunger and the



lack of financial means. Visiting my grandmother's work sites, in the city of Porto, felt like an opportunity to see the city through her eyes, and also to attempt to bring her story to the public. Some of the addresses are not there anymore, while others have been expanded or transformed. One of them had a curious 'tile panel' depicting a girl with a scythe at Rua Costa Cabral 759, Porto. The picture alludes to the business which once existed there and for which my grandmother worked. The smiling girl holding the scythe conveys a different message to the economic struggles that grandmother endured [Figure 4, third row].

Such wasn't her unique experience in Portugal during the first two decades of the 20th century, as many people were lower class workers and lived in poverty. She was born in 1922, amidst the aftermath of World War I and lived as a young adult during World War II. Up until she was 53 years old, she lived under the dictatorial regime of Portugal, which would only fall on April 25th 1974,<sup>40</sup> when she was already a fully grown adult woman.

Like many people of her generation, my grandmother was illiterate. According to a study when she was 8 years old, in 1930 Portugal, 33% of children were illiterate. The numbers would grow up to 97% of literate children only by the end of the century. When she was 18 years old, still 56% were literate.<sup>41</sup>

Only much later in her life did she learn how to sign her name; my mother told me she had to out of necessity to keep her job. Learning how to write your name, for someone who doesn't know how to read, is like memorizing how to draw a flower or the sun. Scholars of the discipline of drawing understand the difference between knowing how to see the world, and learning how to replicate a stereotypical model of a drawing. Seeing my grandmother's signature felt as if looking at a child's drawing. Her first name 'Maria' was one of the most common names in Portugal and in one of her citizen cards you can see the name appearing double on top of each other [Figure 4, first row of image, right end]. The card makes evident her illiteracy, but the signature is a gesture of persistence, hardship, and arm wrestling with life. Not knowing how to sign one's name is still a reminder of the weight of class struggle. I have looked at this as an opportunity to make a stamp of her signature as a poetic gesture and artistic piece. [Figure 4, top row] The pictures which appear reproduced on the geometric trapezes, forming the atlas of the projected globe, blend all of these narratives together.

Many artists have explored geography or cartographic images for personal purposes. I wanted to take the opportunity as well, to imagine which cartographic metaphors could convey the feeling of dwelling on grief.

"The abstraction, crucial to the development of cartography, seems to have been a product of the creative imagination."<sup>42</sup>

Stephen Hall analyzed maps as objects capable of contributing to cognitive development, meaning that maps enhance and require mental exercises.<sup>43</sup> Adding emotional reasoning or meaning to cartography is to attach abstract thinking to



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what is already an abstraction of space. I wondered what it would be like to follow a path back to a person that has passed away?

In the final years of her life, my grandmother lost her mobility. She shared with the family that she had made a religious promise years ago that she hadn't fulfilled. With her days feeling shorter, she made us promise that we'd take her to *Serra do Marão*, north of Portugal, where a small chapel can be found [Figure 4, bottom row]. My grandmother passed away in September 2022 before we could arrange the trip to *Serra do Marão*. One of our last family trips was to bring flowers to this chapel, fulfilling the promise she had left.

The trip became a method, as well, to create images; mixing feelings of grief, and sentences she said to me in the previous year. [Figure 4, bottom row]. As we were heading to *Serra do Marão*, I remembered Didi-Huberman's analysis of the ATLAS, and how in mythology there is a story in which the titan is turned into a mountain.<sup>44</sup> Remembering my grandmother, in the scenario of visiting a mountain, felt similar in that regard. Imagining a person as a mountain felt fitting when thinking about my grandmother, like a mountain, high and strong, holding up skies so they fall upon us.

## CONCLUSION

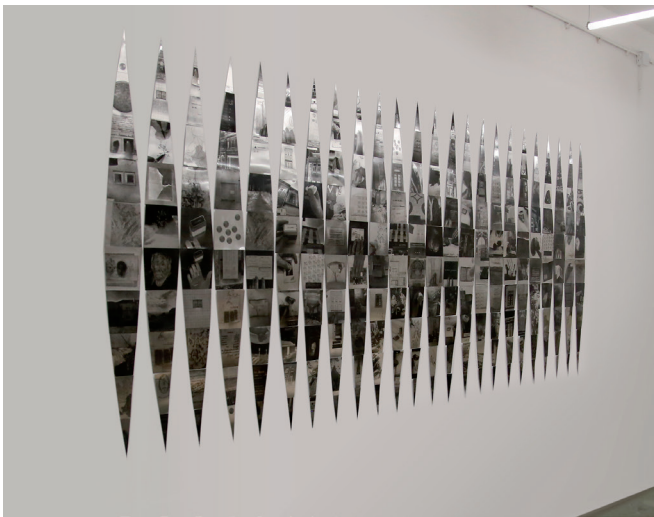
The two metal installations are mostly personal projects, but they address very concrete historical objects which are on permanent exhibit at the *Reitoria da Universidade do Porto*. Within my research-based art projects in printmaking, my research group Pure Print Archeology and I have organized an exhibition where these personal projects were presented next to the objects they are based on.<sup>45</sup>

The room itself, where the objects are displayed, *Biblioteca do Fundo Antigo*,<sup>46</sup> presented interesting challenges for contemporary art. One is reflected on the physical traits of the space; it is a non-conventional museum gallery room, with dimmed lights in order to protect the historical objects. The space is fully controlled by the archive and its archivists. As Derrida would have put it, we are exhibiting at the "arkheion", the domicile, the physical address of the archive.

"(...) the meaning of "archive," it's only meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded."<sup>47</sup>

Over the last few decades, the concept of the archive became widely discussed, and theoretical approaches, principles, goals, and concerns have resulted in many publications and exhibitions.<sup>48</sup> My contribution is, perhaps, one more to add to previous examples. I believe there is still much to explore in how contemporary art engages with History through archives. Short-term art residencies often constrain the depth of artistic research and development for exhibitions. In contrast, research-based art projects allow for long-term reflection and experimentation,





fostering deeper engagement with historical narratives. In Portugal, we certainly have access to many historical collections, which are either difficult or problematic to tackle in today's public perception. Blessed or cursed, following Claire Bishop's proposal, there is a chance to help museological contexts, collections, or archives to build meaningful and fresh perspectives.

The two installations of the globes' projections of metal reflect much of the tension that artists can make visible when thinking of contemporary art and historical collections.

"Could the museum (...) be a space for performance and thus contribute to exploring more contemporary facets of identities and help in the discovery of feelings of belonging (...)"<sup>49</sup>

**Figure 5.**

David Lopes's installations based on the Addison Globes, in the collection of the University of Porto.

[left] *The Atlas of Poverty (or The collection of rags)*, greasy ink printed on aluminum plates by papyrography. 150 x 340 cm

[right] *The Atlas of War (or To Carry the World on Your Back)*, J J Rodrigues's photoetching emulsion with ink on brass plates. 150 x 340 cm.

Images courtesy of the author.

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1 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Atlas ou a gaia ciência inquieta / Olho da história*, (KKYM, 2013), 16-20.

2 Claire Bishop, *Radical Museology: Or, What's 'contemporary' in Museums of Contemporary Art?*. (Koenig Books, 2013), 19.

3 Ibid., 27.

4 Ibid., 56.

5 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Diante do Tempo - História da Arte e Anacronismo das Imagens*. (Orfeu Negro, 2017).

6 The dialectical image was never published as text but most of Benjamin's notes and ideas have been published in the work "On the Concept of History", and "Thesis on the Philosophy of History". Such texts seem to have been originally written in parallel with another text about Eduard Fuchs, which have been published. See: Walter Benjamin's "Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und der Historiker" which first appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 6 (1937), 346-380.

7 José M. Araújo, Luis M. Bernardo, and Marisa Monteiro. *250 anos da Criação da Aula Náutica*. (PUniversidade doPorto Press. 2020).

8 Practicing traditional printmaking today can be simplified to woodcut, intaglio, lithography, photogravure and screen printing techniques. At the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto, the research group Pure Print Archeology has broadened its scope by researching other derivatives and rich alternatives of technical protocols. (Pure Print Archeology, i2ADS).

9 The following articles delve into the topic of how printed cartography of the 19th century can be researched from a contemporary printmaker/artist's perspective:

Lopes, David, & Machado, G. (2023). The use of 19th-century Cartography Printing Processes in Contemporary Printmaking. *IMPACT Printmaking Journal*, (1), 24. (Conference Proceedings). <https://doi.org/10.54632/22.7.IMPJ2>. <https://impact-journal-cfpr.uwe.ac.uk/index.php/impact/article/view/84/70>; Lopes, David, & Machado, G.

(2024). "Photomechanical crossroads - Comparing 19th-Century Chromocupography and Charles Eckstein's method from a Printmaker's Perspective." *Revelar: Revista De Estudos Da Fotografia E Imagem*, 7. <https://ojs.letras.up.pt/index.php/RL/article/view/14503>;

Lopes, David, & Machado, G. (2024). "Artistically expressing the oppressed — Framing Contemporary Printmaking and for its technological past." *WhatIf'23. Hypothesis Historia Periodical*. Vol. 4 No.1 (2024). [https://doi.org/10.34626/2184-9978/2024\\_vol4\\_n1\\_1092](https://doi.org/10.34626/2184-9978/2024_vol4_n1_1092)

10 Hesiod. *Theogony, Works And Days, Testimonia*. (Harvard University Press, 2018), 45.

11 In the original myth, Atlas was sentenced to carry Uranus, the Greek personification of the sky. Atlas representations of the titan holding a celestial globe may have contributed to a misconception of it being a terrestrial globe. Contemporary imagination has representation for both figures.

12 Didi-Huberman. *Atlas ou a gaia ciência inquieta*. 2013, 80-81.

13 Ibid., 76. Translated by the author, from the Portuguese edition.

14 Ibid., 74.

15 Okwui Enwezor. *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*. (International Center of Photography, 2008), 36.

- 16 Didi-Huberman. *Atlas ou a gaia ciência inquieta*, 14.
- 17 Explore such unthinkable path through the following URL: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/cVnGXdjWN2pqBAdQ8>.
- 18 There is an interesting text by Jerry Brotton against the idea that digital maps democratized the knowledge of territory. Chapter: Information: Google Earth, 2012. In: *The History of the World in 12 Maps* by Jerry Brotton (2012), published by Penguin Books. (For the Portuguese edition: Brotton, J. (2019). *História do Mundo em 12 Mapas* (J. Araújo, Trans.). Edições 70.
- 19 Jerry Brotton, *História do Mundo em 12 Mapas*. (Edições 70, 2019).
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Enwezor, 2008, 15.
- 22 Brian Harley, *Mapas, saber e poder*. «Le pouvoir des cartes et la cartographie». *Confins*, 5 (2009).
- 23 John Hartley explored the use of photography as medium for propaganda in 1992 in his book "The Politics of Pictures: the creation of the public in the age of popular media". In 2022, the Portuguese academic Leonor Sá published her book "Polícias, ladrões e outras revelações", tackling how the Portuguese authorities used photography to as form to document criminals based on their appearance. Just in 2025, photographers Lewis Brush wrote a small essay for the magazine FRIEZE about the photographic archives making similar remarks about the how photography empowered the imperialism.
- 24 Harley. "Mapas, saber e poder.", 2009. paragraph 16. Translation by the author. "E, no século XX, com a divisão da Índia, efetuada pela Grã-Bretanha em 1947, pôde-se ver como um traço de lápis sobre um mapa podia determinar a vida e a morte de milhões de indivíduos."
- 25 João Baptista Ribeiro was an artist (painter, draughtsman, and printmaker). He was one of the first Drawing teachers of the Academia Politécnica do Porto (today the University of Porto). He is responsible for the creation of Museu Portuense (today Museu Soares dos Reis).
- 26 See the full picture online on the following URL: <https://gisaweb.cm-porto.pt/units-of-description/documents/300223/?q=ribeiro+cerco+do+porto>
- 27 Hannah Arendt, *On violence*. (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), 68.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 I have made a similar explanation of the work in another publication. See: Lopes, David; Machado, G. "Artistically expressing the oppressed."
- 30 Walter Benjamin, *O anjo da história*. (Assírio & Alvim, 2010), 249-250.
- 31 See: *Ilustração do Trapeiro, Album de Costumes Portuguezes*. 1888. Lisboa. [https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=oqlaAAAAYAAJ&pg=GBS.PP12&hl=pt\\_PT](https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=oqlaAAAAYAAJ&pg=GBS.PP12&hl=pt_PT)
- 32 Didi-Huberman, *Atlas ou a gaia ciência inquieta*, 148. Translated by the author: "O mendigo e o errante podem eles mesmos ser os titãs que carregam o peso do mundo, ignorantes do fardo que lhes foi colocado nas costas."
- 33 Ibid., 149.
- 34 Walter Benjamin, *O anjo da história*, 259.
- 35 Didi-Huberman, *Atlas ou a gaia ciência inquieta*, 150-151.
- 36 Ruth Pelzer-Montada (Ed.) *Perspectives on Contemporary Printmaking: Critical Writing Since 1986*. (Manchester University Press, 2018), 184.
- 37 Didi-Huberman, *Diante do Tempo*.
- 38 Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Remontagens do tempo sofrido: o olho da história*, 2. (KKYM, 2019), 127.
- 39 Distribuidora is a Portuguese term for the person who distributed the bread to others.
- 40 You can read more about the Portuguese Revolution of 1974 in Alex Fernandes' book published in 2024 "The Carnation Revolution The Day Portugal's Dictatorship Fell", published by Oneworld Publications.

- 41 António Candeias, Eduarda Simões, "Alfabetização e escola em Portugal no século XX: Censos Nacionais e estudos de caso." *Análise Psicológica*, 1999, 163-194.
- 42 Ronald Rees, "Historical Links between Cartography and Art." *Geographical Review*. (1980), 69.
- 43 Katharine A. Harmon, *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination (Imagined Maps Around the World, Collection of Artists Maps)*. (Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 19.
- 44 See the etching from the 17th century by Johann Wilhelm Baur, German (1607 - 1641). "Atlas Is Turned into a Mountain by the Sight of Medusa's Head". Etching. plate: 13.1 x 20.8 cm (5 3/16 x 8 3/16 in.). Harvard Museum. Object Number. S11.39.3. [18] Pure Print Archeology is coordinated by the Printmaking Professor Graciela Machado (i2ADS/FBAUP) at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto. Currently a interest group, Pure Print Archeology foundation started with a project called Pure Print (2013-2019). <https://i2ads.up.pt/en/projetos/pure-print/>
- 45 Pedra Papel Guerra — Arqueologia da Litografia em Portugal. [10/12/24 — 21/02/25]. Presented at the Biblioteca do Fundo Antigo (Old Fund Library) at Reitoria da Universidade do Porto. Organized by Pure Print Archeology. Curated by Graciela Machado, David Lopes and João Carlos Garcia. <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/3146097/3225446>.
- 46 For more information follow the URL: [https://sigarra.up.pt/fcup/pt/web\\_base.gera\\_pagina?p\\_pagina=\\*fundo%20antigo](https://sigarra.up.pt/fcup/pt/web_base.gera_pagina?p_pagina=*fundo%20antigo)
- 47 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. (University of Chicago Press, 1996), 20.
- 48 Translation by the author from the portuguese original text: Pôde o museu "(...) ser um espaço de performance e assim contribuir para explorar facetas mais contemporâneas das identidades e ajudar à descoberta de sentimentos de pertença, (...)" Ana Carvalho, *Museus e diversidade cultural: da representação aos públicos* (Caleidoscópio, 2016), 121.
- 49 Ibid., 12. Only in literature written in English, it is possible to list several publications about the archive since the 1990s, starting with Shelton, Anthony. (1990) *In the Lair of the Monkey: Notes Towards a Postmodern Museography*. In *Objects of Knowledge*, ed. Susan Pearce, 78-102. London: Athlone Press. / Shelton, Anthony. (2001) *Unsettling the Meaning: Critical Museology, Art and Anthropological Discourse*. In *Academic Anthropology and the Museum: Back to the Future*, ed. Mary Bouquet, 142-61. New York: Berghahn Books. / Steedman, C. (2002). *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. / Spieker, S. (2008). *The Big Archive: Art From Bureaucracy*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. / Blocker, Jane (2015). *Becoming Past: History in Contemporary Art*. University of Minnesota Press. / Brookes, Barbara & Dunk, James. (2020). *Knowledge Making: Historians, Archives and Bureaucracy*. / Callahan, Sara (2022). *Archive: Understanding the Archival Turn in Contemporary*. / Camlot, Jason; Langford, Martha & Linda M. Morra. (2023). *Collection Thinking: Within and Without Libraries, Archives and Museums*. / Lowry, James. (2023). *Disputed Archival Heritage*. Copyright 2023. / Ngoepe, Mpho & Bhebehe, Sindiso. (2024). *Indigenous Archives in Postcolonial Contexts: Recalling the Past in Africa*. / Breakell, Sue & Russell, Wendy (2024). *The Materiality of the Archive: Creative Practice in Context*.