

4th Visual Culture Meeting

Repairing the Irreparable

SOPCOM Visual Culture Working Group invites the submission of contributions to the 4th Visual Culture Meeting, *Repairing the Irreparable*, which will take place on June 23rd-24th, 2023, at Teatro Mala Voadora, in Oporto. The meeting aims to contribute to the debate on the controversial and polysemic links between Visual Culture and Reparations, and to serve as theoretical ground for the Reparations Lab that will take place between June 25th and July 6th, with public presentations on July 7th and 8th. The 4th Visual Culture Meeting is articulated with several other initiatives – the Reparation Lab, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's open class (April 18th, Lisbon), the Artivisms Gathering of the project MigraMediaActs (University of Minho) – that aim to broaden and to deepen the debate on reparations in Portugal.

The world as we know it, that world that became a globe, is forged by the crossing of other existences. That is the pain, and this is usually, at the same time, reiterated and then invisibilized and denied. To repair this world would mean to destroy it, which installs a paradox within the praxis of reparation, since such praxis is thought of as a gesture of care, of construction, and not one of destruction.

Fernanda Eugénio to Marta Lança, in *Buala* (January 10th, 2020)

The project of repairing our broken world is a program of “contervisuality”, in that it seeks to grasp the lie of “visuality” and to propose alternatives (Mirzoeff 2011, 2023). Such demand entails awareness of its own conceptual and ethical impossibility since it implies ending the world as we know it so that a new life can emerge (Ferreira da Silva 2022). Awareness of the right to reparation is coeval with colonialism and slavery and has been a demand of the victims of these historical processes ever since (Araujo 2017; Azoulay 2019; Savoy 2022). Faced with the impossibility of repairing the brutality of colonial violence (Mbembe 2020) – the occupation, pillage, ethnocide, uprooting, abductions, rapes, epistemicide, large-scale looting, and extractivism – it becomes necessary to perform its “necrology” (Hicks 2020). To insist on the gesture of reparation towards an “ethics of incommensurability” (Tuck & Yang 2012), vital to the continuous process of healing and care.

All around the world, governments of former colonial powers and their institutions – such as universities and museums – are being pressured to establish reparation policies. These include safeguard the rights of the descendants of dispossessed and enslaved people, apologies for the atrocities of colonialism and the practice of large-scale slavery, the implementation of affirmative policies (for example, racial-ethnic quotas in acceding university and leadership roles within institutions), the revising of historical narratives and, consequently, of curricula (through the inclusion of excluded narratives, historical subjects, and artists), the restitution of looted objects, the decolonization of public space (for example, through the dismantling of racist statues

and the memorialization of victims of Slavery), the forgiveness of odious debts, and the payment of financial compensations.

The discussion about reparation processes is not new, but it has been gaining preponderance worldwide in recent years. In Portugal a few voices have been participating in this global discussion, especially in academia, but also outside of it – in the Parliament, the art world, and in activist circles. With this in mind, SOPCOM Visual Culture Working Group invites paper proposals that contribute to the critical and counter-hegemonic debate on:

- **Repairing through restitution:** on restitutions of stolen objects, acquired under unclear circumstances or within a colonial power dynamic. On the repatriation of human remains. On how to decolonize museums and on "curatorships of discomfort" (Vlachou 2022).

- **Repairing public space:** on the politics of memory in the public space (statues, street names, spaces of power, etc.). On "memory work as reparation" (Sturken 2022).

- **Repairing the historical narrative:** on school curricula, textbooks and their images, the (visual) sources of the historical narrative, and representativeness.

- **Repairing the planet:** on ecology and politics, on extractivism and how to counter it. On forms of "restorative justice", including the one contemplating landscapes, rivers, mountains, and trees.

- **Repairing through art:** on the role of artistic production and cultural practices in these processes (Demos 2020). How these are being addressed and with which outcomes.

- **Reparation policies:** on the effect of apologies, financial compensations, affirmative policies, quotas, and representation. What has and has not been done and what can be done.

- **Other themes** that, articulated or not with the aforementioned ones, may contribute to thinking about Reparations.

Abstracts between 300 and 500 words should be submitted to: grupotrabalhoculturavisual@gmail.com

Important Dates:

Submission of proposals by **May 05, 2023**

Notification of abstract acceptance or refusal - **May 20, 2023**

Registration until **June 10, 2023**

20 Euros students and SOPCOM members

30 Euros professors, PhD researchers, etc.

Scientific Committee:

José Capela (Mala Voadora)
Ricardo Campos (CICS.NOVA)
Rosa Cabecinhas (UMinho)
Teresa Flores (GT-CV e ICNOVA)

Organizing Committee

Ana Cristina Pereira
Inês Beleza Barreiros
Gessica Borges (MigraMediaActs)
Isabel Macedo (MigraMediaActs)
Sofia Freitas (Mala Voadora)

Cited References

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