

PO.EX'70-80

Rui Torres

The Project PO.EX'70-80 - Digital Archive of Portuguese Experimental Literature, with the Ref. PTDC/CLE-LLI/098270/2008, in the scientific Areas of Language and Literature Sciences and Communication and Information Sciences, devoted to studying Portuguese Literature of the twentieth-century; Literature and Databases, Archive and Preservation; Visual, Concrete and Sound Poetry; and Electronic Literature, began on March 2010, with the duration of 36 months, having as the proposing Institutions Fundação Ensino e Cultura Fernando Pessoa (FECFP) and the Centro de Estudos Culturais, da Linguagem e do Comportamento (CECLICO) of Fernando Pessoa University. Funded by FCT/MCTES (PIDDAC) and co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (FEDER) through COMPETE – Programa Operacional Factores de Competitividade (POFC), this project has as its Coordinator Rui Torres, Professor at UFP-Porto.

Summary

The aim of PO.EX'70-80 is to provide continuity to the Project "Portuguese Experimental Poetry - a CD-ROM of Dossiers and Catalogs" (FCT 2005-2008, Ref. POCL/ELT/57686/2004), which studied Portuguese literary experimentalism of the 1960s and created a digital archive with the most relevant magazines, catalogs and publications

of that group of poets (<http://www.po-ex.net/evaluation>). Requests by several agents and recommendations from our consultants have led us to identify the need to extend the reproduction of Portuguese Experimental Poetry into the 1970s and 1980s. This new timeline will allow us to develop the studies and the collections already begun, now including visual and sound poetry, video-poetry, happenings, and cybernetic literature – all of which can be seen as extensions and renovations of literary experimentalism of the previously analyzed period (Ref.04; Ref.05).

Within this framework, we will consider a connection between concrete poetics and digital poetics (Ref.19). The present project, characterized by its openness and free access to resources, will therefore continue the task of preserving a literary legacy which may be at peril.

The following goals should be highlighted:

- to actively contribute to a better knowledge and dissemination of Portuguese poetry of the 20th century;
- to motivate new theoretical propositions and new didactic and research methodologies, by connecting theoretical investigation to the development of a hypermedia archive;

- to contribute to the preservation of literary documents that are fragile and rare;
- to freely distribute and disseminate experimental literary production in schools, universities and cultural institutions, creating the conditions and strategies for the use of new technologies in the production and dissemination of contemporary literature;
- to attain new and diverse audiences, by means of free Internet access to the resources, proposing literary readings by means of electronic media which students can understand and enjoy;
- to encourage the production of electronic literature by offering young writers the required skills and technical conditions for the use of digital tools and platforms in their creative processes.

In order to achieve these goals, we will follow three main courses of action. Each of them involves a series of concrete tasks:

1. Collecting and Theoretical Framing – The history of the relationships between literature and other arts (design, painting, sculpture, performance) will allow us to better understand the experimentalist production of the 1970s and 1980s. Starting from a theoretic and critical awareness of the processes of mediation effected by the intervention of information technologies, it is our aim to propose a taxonomy that allows us to organize, understand and classify the conceptual relationships displayed in the collected texts.
2. Digitalization, Translation and Re-creation – The process of digitizing (audio and visual capture) the Portuguese experimental literature (visual and sound poetry and video-poetry) will be framed by a set of theoretical texts. Therefore we propose the translation of articles and manifestos that can help the public to understand the presented works. However, this digitizing process does not apply to some of the texts we will work with – texts that are dynamic, interactive and/or generative. Therefore, it is necessary to use processes of software emulation, accompanying them with the recovery and historical study of programming software (cybernetic literature) which is unavailable at the moment. Apart from this emulation, which corresponds to a literal archive, we will also invest in processes of digital transformation and re-creation of some of these works, with the use of multimedia and interactivity (Ref.05; Ref.13;Ref 20).
3. Platform and Dissemination – The creation of a digital platform for the dissemination of experimental literature will have to be sufficiently open, relational and comprehensive. The contents will be presented according to previously defined taxonomies and ontologies. The presentation of magazines, catalogs, theoretical texts and manifestos can also be complemented by collections of artists' books, personal web-pages, biographies, bibliographies

and interviews, thus connecting theory with current forms of literary creation.

Lastly, it should be stressed that we aim to start, within the scope of this project, a Laboratory of Digital Writing, coordinated and supervised by team members. In this Laboratory we expect to offer adequate technical conditions for the development of artistic residences of poets and writers with an interest in multimedia and hypermedia digital platforms. The potential of programming languages as specific technologies for literary writing could be explored on a collaborative basis. In this way, we hope to foster the development of internal networks of production and digital literary creativity, documenting and later extending the process and its results, namely by means of an on-line publication platform.

Research Team

- Rui Torres, Ph.D. – Main Researcher

Ph.D:

- Ana Viale Moutinho
- Debora Cristina Santos e Silva
- Eduardo Paz Barroso
- Elsa Simões
- José Manuel Torres
- Manuel Portela
- Maria do Carmo Castelo Branco
- Maria Elisa da Silva Gomes
- Pedro Reis

M.A.:

- Maria do Céu Melro
- Fabiano Correa da Silva

Bachelors:

- João Paulo da Costa Donga

Consultants

Fernando Aguiar published 18 books of poetry and organized anthologies of Portuguese and international Visual Poetry in Portugal, Germany, Spain and Italy. Participated in over 30 International Poetry Festivals and presented poetical interventions internationally.

Jorge Luiz Antonio, Sao Paulo, Brazil, essayist and researcher with important articles about the relation between literature and digital media. He is a well-known and respected curator of new media poetry, thus holding contacts and knowledge about the theme of visual and cybernetic literature.

Pedro Barbosa, founder, at Fernando Pessoa University, of CETIC-Centre of Cyberliterature Studies and, at ESMAE-IPP, of NUCIT-Centre of Cybertheatre Studies. He is the author of *Cyberliterature – Literary Creation and the Computer* (1996) and of two volumes of *The Cybernetic Literature* (1977 and 1978).

Johanna Drucker, Professor in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies

at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is the author of several books, including *SpecLab. Digital Aesthetics and Projects in Speculative Computing* (2009). In addition to her scholarly work, Drucker is internationally known as a book artist and experimental, visual poet. Her work has been exhibited and collected in special collections, in libraries and museums.

Christopher T Funkhouser, Professor of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and the author of *Prehistoric Digital Poetry: An Archaeology of Forms*. Prof. Funkhouser is an internationally recognized scholar in digital literature, having experience with the supervision of projects that involve creative and hypermedia representations of literary texts.