# *Passeio*, passing by, walking by. A platform of urban art and culture

**Maria da Luz Correia, Helena Pires & Pedro Andrade**

## Abstract

*Passeio* (the Portuguese word for walk) is a platform of urban art and culture, conceived within the scope of the University of Minho's Communication and Society Research Centre (CECS). Using a qualitative methodology and an anthropological inspiration, this project looks at urban streets – in terms of architecture, graffiti, music, street theatre and animation, urban sports, handicrafts and traditional commerce, outdoor advertising and window-shopping – and organises its respective images and stories, focusing on the technological connections that extend the layout of these streets and networks. Based on a review of the theoretical paradigms related to visual culture, the city and notions of space and place, in this article the common point of departure for this passeio (walk) is the inspirational figure of the flâneur, as described and analysed by the German philosopher, Walter Benjamin.

## Keywords

City; *flâneur*; space; visual culture

## Resumo

A Passeio é uma plataforma de arte e cultura urbana, concebida no âmbito do Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade (CECS) da Universidade do Minho. Com este projeto, através de uma metodologia qualitativa e de inspiração antropológica, fixamos o nosso olhar nas ruas da cidade – na arquitetura, no *graffiti,* na música, no teatro e na animação de rua, no desporto urbano, no artesanato e no comércio tradicional, na publicidade e no vitrinismo – nas suas imagens, nas suas histórias e nas ligações tecnológicas que prolongam o traçado destas ruas e destas redes. Neste artigo, a partir de uma revisão de paradigmas teóricos relativos à cultura visual, à cidade e às noções de espaço e de lugar, fixamos na figura inspiradora do *flâneur*, tal como esta foi descrita e problematizada pelo filósofo alemão Walter Benjamin, o ponto de partida comum deste *passeio*.

## Palavras-chave

Cidade;  cultura visual; espaço; *flâneur*; espaço

The streets are the apartment of the collective. (...) For the collective, the shiny metal plates of the retail establishments are as valuable a décor, or even more so, as an oil painting hanging in a salon, in the eyes of the bourgeois. Walter Benjamin (1989, p. 441, M3a, 4)

What I sometimes see between two bus stops can be stronger than what I see when I enter an exhibition room. (Maria Teresa Cruz, 1992, p. 52)

*Passeio* (the Portuguese word for walk) is a platform of urban art and culture. This project looks at urban streets – in terms of architecture, graffiti, tag and stencil, music, street theatre and animation, urban sports, handicrafts and traditional commerce, outdoor advertising and window-shopping – in terms of their images, stories, and technological connections, that extend the layout of these streets and networks. Our objective is to contextualise the everyday actions that occur on the city's streets – spanning from the accordion player's dance step, to the pose of the living statue and the street-seller's cry – with the shared memories of the streets' passers-by: the memories of commercial establishments and shops, the life stories of artists and street traders, the testimonies of ethnic and cultural minorities which inhabit the city.

In this article, we will retrace the design process behind this platform, summarise the underlying theoretical decisions and methodological options, and seek to systematise its objectives, based on three action lines: research and training; archiving and dissemination; collaboration and extension. Using concepts of visual culture, city and space, we also provide a survey of the state of the art, which converges in recognition of the paradigm status and inspiring character assumed by Walter Benjamin's *flâneur*, in the present research (Benjamin, 1989, 1940/2000b). Wandering between shopping galleries, shop windows and mirrors, panoramas and wax museums, the *flâneur* recomposes the complex myriad images of the city through his labyrinthine day-to-day journey. The *flâneur* is therefore representative of either our understanding of contemporary visual culture, or our understanding of space and place, both of which are largely indebted to the thinking of the German philosopher, Walter Benjamin. If it is true that contemporary social, cultural and technological inventions complicate the experience of passer-bys who wanders between shopping malls, parks, graffiti and outdoor advertising displays (MUPIs) immersed in the world of their mobile devices and ubiquitous technologies, we believe that the figure of the *passeante (stroller)*, still maintains its epistemological validity, especially in the framework of a platform of urban art and culture[1].

### From the virtual museum of visual arts to the platform of urban art and culture

*Passeio* is a platform for urban art and culture, conceived within the framework of the knowledge bases foreseen in the strategic project for 2015-2020 of the Communication and Society Research Centre of the University of Minho. Based on the proposal to constitute a virtual museum of visual arts, this project, coordinated by Maria da Luz Correia and Helena Pires, began to reposition itself as a platform for urban art and culture, through a dual strategy of *closing* and *opening*.

### From the visual arts to the city

In one sense, we *close* the universe of study, moving from the visual arts in its diverse contexts and heterogeneous expressions, to the visual arts in an urban context,

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[1] See in this regard the work of Julieta Leite (2010) concerning the technological mediations of the contemporary city and, in particular, her metaphor of *ciberflânerie*.

delimiting this vast area of the visual arts within the boundaries of the city, its streets, buildings, crowds and the media that link them together. First and foremost this option involved identification of the centrality of the city with the experience of the contemporary world, recognizing the current urgency of an urban visual culture, whose emergence to a large extent originated from a series of events at the end of the 19th century: the introduction of new means of transport such as the automobile, the emergence of communication media, such as the telegraph and telephone, and the emergence of new forms of entertainment and leisure, such as cinema and advertising.

The frenzy of the cities, and the "shock" identified in Walter Benjamin's famous diagnosis, described by nineteenth-century thinkers, poets and artists, has been intensified in the 21st century through dissemination of digital technology in the most diverse fields of everyday experience. This makes us think about the specificity of the city as an arena of visual, sound, tactile and kinetic stimuli, which today conditions our experience, namely due to its powerful technological equipment (Correia, 2015a; Correia, 2015b)[2]. Indeed, at a time when social links are progressively subject to digital *interfaces*, e.g. the tactile screens of our mobile devices, *Passeio* also aims to question the hybrid nature of our experience of place, which is embodied in daily movement through the city's streets and daily conversations with its inhabitants, and also prolonged in daily browsing of the Internet and uninterrupted dialogue between internet users.

## From the visual arts to culture

In a second sense, we *open* the proposed universe of study, extending the idea of art to the idea of culture, trying to make the *historical* and *political* dimensions of the daily experience of the city prevail over its *aesthetic dimension*. On the one hand, we aim, with this open outlook, to avoid a *modern autonomous conception of art* and the abstract categories and aesthetic dichotomies that legitimise its processes of institutionalisation, clearly demarcating *art* from *non-art*, *high art* from *low art*, *erudite art* from *popular art*, the *original* from the *copy*, or even the *museum* from the *street*. On the other hand, with the emphasis on the historical dimension, we aim to move away from a *diffuse postmodern sensation of art* that tends to disseminate an aesthetic perspective in all domains of experience and instead appreciate the totality of social life as a work of art[3].

Thus, we opt for an understanding of *culture* that links it closely to the fragments and disorders of *experience*, thereby to a certain extent avoiding the risks of totalisation and ordering that José Bragança de Miranda (2007) and Moisés de Lemos Martins (2011) attribute to the current idea of culture. Our understanding is largely indebted to the dual conception of culture proposed by the philosopher Hannah Arendt (1972), or the proposal of a "culture in action" suggested by Antonin Artaud (1964). Both Artaud

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[2] The specificity of the city as a multisensory experience would also oblige us to abdicate the limit of the *visual*, *vision* and *visualities* initially contained in the proposal of a virtual museum of visual arts, and which quickly became a project involving a platform of urban art and culture

[3] We summarise herein the critiques of the autonomy of aesthetic art and the expansionist ambition of the aesthetic device, detailed in Correia (2013, pp. 215-223).

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and Arendt converge in a dialectical understanding of culture, as a conflict between the archive of different forms of knowledge that represent the world and experiences of this world, i.e. as a permanent and irreconcilable confrontation between thought and action, criticism and experimentation, tradition and occurrence – in other words, between space and places, between representation and practice[4].

Avoiding contributing to the danger of the fallacious duality that separates "progressive popular culture" from "repressive erudite art" pinpointed by Mirzoeff (1999, p. 12), we focus on zones of instability, and regions of convergence between these two extremes. The vocation of *Passeio* – part of its assumption of a political position – is to pay special attention and critical reflection to moments in which the anonymous gaze, the small narratives of the ordinary passer-by, and the alternative experiences of the city in his everyday life challenge the specialist's archive and the categories of its institutions, the kaleidoscope of tourism and the repetitive serialisation of *must-see* sites, or even the sphere of the media and the eventual uniformity of its agendas. These moments have been analysed in a vast literature in the framework of the communication sciences, under the terminology of *popular culture* and contemporary *visual culture*. We will re-evaluate these concepts in the second section of this article.

### From the virtual museum to the platform

Finally, repositioning of *Passeio* also required re-adaptation of the scope implicit in the terminology of the "virtual museum" in that which is hereafter suggested by the name, "platform". The idea of "platform" – either due to the aforementioned complicated anchoring in the ideas of city, art and culture, or due to a series of recent technological, social and cultural transformations – is not exhausted by its meaning in the context of computer terminology, and it is no accident that it is now used in the most diverse fields[5]. For this reason, and taking into account the particularities of *Passeio*, platform seemed to be the most suitable and most comprehensive term[6]. As a platform for urban art and culture, *Passeio* has three action lines, which are mutually intertwined and only classified separately due to the need for systematisation: (1) research and training; (2) archive and dissemination; (3) collaboration and extension.

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[4] We summarise herein the conception of culture already developed in Correia (2013, pp. 79-84).

[5] See in this regard, not only the phenomena of fashion, such as the current propagation of "creative platforms" on the web, but also the broad scope of infrastructures such as the Platform for Arts and Creativity in Guimarães.

[6] We could commence with a certain instigating rereading of the metaphorical idea of "platform", in view of the notions of "rhizome", "smooth" or even a "body without organs" introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1980) in Mille Plateaux, but the semantic riches of this term are already evident in any dictionary. For example, Porto Editora's *Dicionário infopédia da Língua Portuguesa com Acordo Ortográfico* [Infopedia-Dictionary of the Portuguese Language with Orthographic Agreement] defines *platforma* as: "*plataforma* pla.ta.for.ma feminine name 1. horizontal structure, more or less elevated / 2. terrace; 3. a platform at the rear of the locomotive, where the driver stands / 4. step on trams, used to embark or disembark / 5. step raised to the height of the stirrup or the floor of the wagons, to make it easier for passengers to embark or disembark, in railway stations / 6. movable disk around a central axis in which locomotives are placed in order to change lines / 7. Military structure made of earth, wood or steel that support artillery firing lines, or any other heavy object / 8. computing base constituted by physical or virtual hardware, the operating system, and by software applications that serve as the basis for the development of new applications / 9. figurative, proposal or conciliatory measure / 10. figurative, set of ideas or proposals that form the basis of a common policy / 11. figurative, popular simulacrum; appearance."

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From the research perspective, *Passeio*, on the one hand, will seek to explore core notions such as the city, experience, space, places and mobility, visual culture, popular culture, subcultures, and minorities, using theoretical paradigms that will be enumerated and succinctly reviewed throughout this article. In terms of its empirical framework, *Passeio* directs its research methods, characterised by a qualitative paradigm, an anthropological inspiration and an emphasis on participatory visual methodologies[7], towards the experience of place, the life experience of the immediate and observation of the close at hand. The project's researchers are subject to the condition that they must remain close to the empirical terrain. For this reason the project has been fundamentally developed until now in Braga and Ponta Delgada, the cities of residence of the project's coordinators. This work of research and production of knowledge in the field of urban art and culture, which will map out related scientific teams and projects, will also be articulated, whenever possible, with pedagogical initiatives and training activities in the field[8].

Directly linked to the research and training objectives, it is also necessary to constitute an archive and plan its respective dissemination. This archive is inspired by various categories, whose definition and problematisation lie beyond the scope of the present article, but which include the *album, collection, calendar, atlas, psycho-geographic map, photo essay, video essay*, among others. We anticipate that *Passeio* will disseminate its archive, in accordance with a model of a *work in progress*, through convergence between scientific publications, the platform's site (a web portal, whose access is already foreseen in the webpage of the Communication and Society Research Centre), in social networks (to which this portal will be linked and which may be social networks more closely associated with the sharing of images of cities, such as *Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Flickr*, among others) and the city streets[9]. An exploratory photographic survey of *Passeio* can be found on a Flickr page, and its successive locations in a collaborative map created using Google's My Maps, that has served as the first device for gathering, archiving and presenting the collected material (Figures 1 and 2).

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[7] Although the methods to which we refer can always be redefined, we can assume that the generality of the methodological tactics implemented and to be implemented are consistent, as we have said, with a qualitative paradigm, with a generalised anthropological inspiration, and with a special emphasis on participatory visual methodologies. Thus, to date, methods such as observation - assisted by photography, audio and video – have been used in documentary research (notably embodied in press clippings, in an effort similar to clipping) interviews (using photographic and audio-visual records), life stories, and finally photo-elicitation, which combines use of photographic images with interviews (Harper, 2002).

[8] This dialogue is already underway via collaboration in Passeio with students of the MSc in Communication, Art and Culture, of the University of Minho, e.g. the researchers Fábio Marques and Pauline Protásio.

[9] Given the importance we attach to crossing the web browser's daily routes with the passer-by's daily routes in the city, it is justified that opening of online communication channels should be complemented by use of outdoor advertising tactics, implemented in the streets of the cities under analysis, and which could have, as a basic example, redirection of the city's passers-by to the *Passeio* portal and the information available there, by affixing a QR code in specific places.
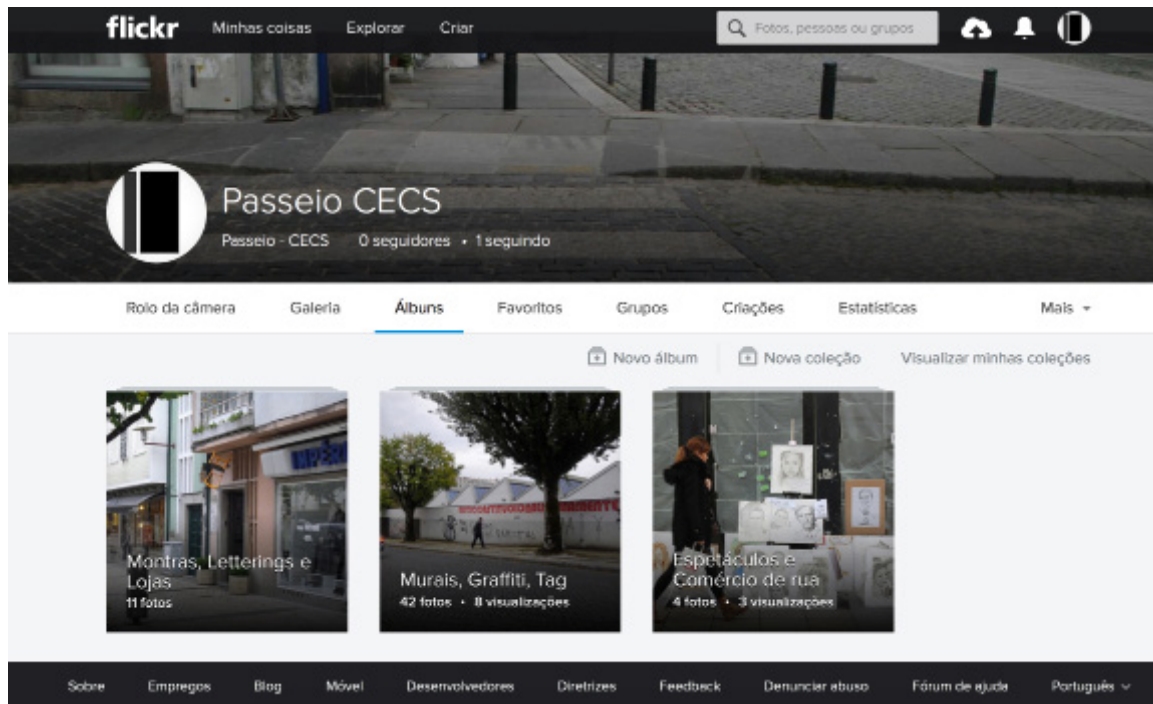
Figure 1: *Passeio*'s Flickr page, with the first collection of photographic images for *Passeio*, organised across the following categories: (1) Storefronts, Lettering and Shops; (2) Murals, Graffiti, Tag; (3) Spectacles and Street Commerce
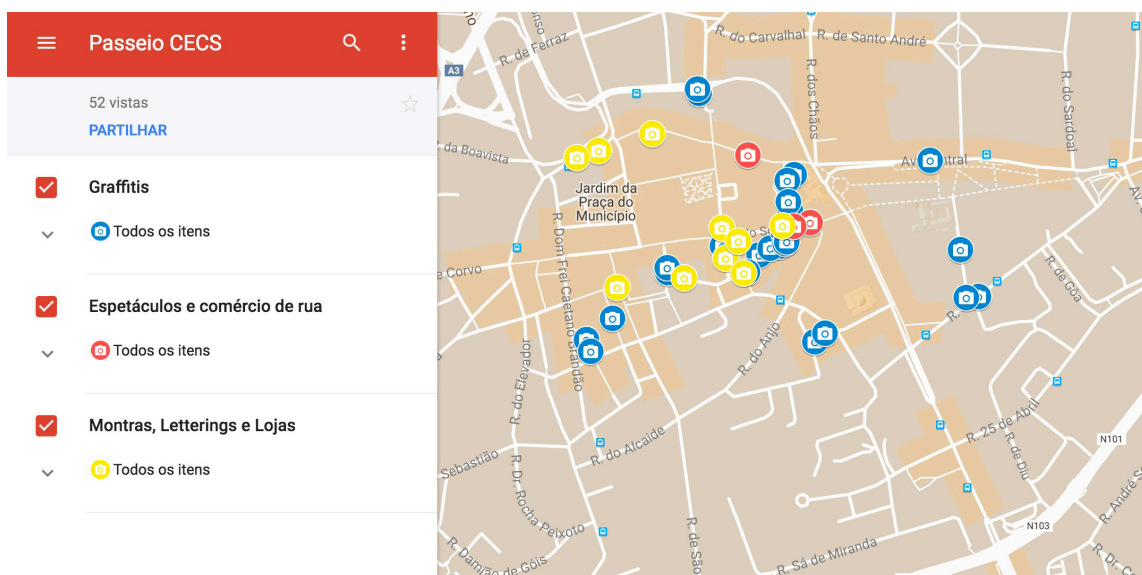


Figure 2: Map created in My Google Maps from *Passeio*'s Flickr page, mapping images collected in Braga between 2016 and 2017 in the form of a route. The initiative was designed and directed by Fábio Marques, student of the Master's degree in Art, Communication and Culture and researcher, who has helped draw up the *Passeio* platform

Finally, together with the research, training, archiving and dissemination initiatives that have been conducted, it is also important to emphasise the platform's collaborative vocation, already implicit in the previous paragraphs. Indeed, the emphasis placed on research and training, the focus on participatory methodologies, and the importance attached to digital technologies and their interactive potential are some of the key aspects

that ensure that the *Passeio* platform is open to a collaborative practise, and is not confined to an absolutely predefined course. This collaborative dimension is reinforced by the close connection with the urban territories involved in the field research, which mean that in addition to its scientific objectives, *Passeio* also has a horizon of cultural and community extension.

## *Passeio*, city and visual culture: frontiers

As the name indicates, *Passeio* is based on this generalised tendency – which began at the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century - to think about the city and the images that inhabit it, reflect on the experience of the passer-by in an urban labyrinth which since then has been complicated by a wide array of different technologies: automobiles, electricity, the telegraph, advertising posters, performances. Urban images, which we will also designate using the broader term of *contemporary visual culture*, are not understood herein in a narrow sense of the term. Instead they form part of the multisensory and psychic experience that constitutes the epiphany of a fragmented urban culture, in which movement, circulation and traffic don't only concern automobiles, crowds or advertising billboards that the everyday passer-by encounters, but also the sensations, imaginary universes and memories and narratives that pervade the city every day[10]. The German philosopher, Walter Benjamin, is one of the main inspirations for this tendency to think about the city and the images that inhabit it, wherein we assume the *passeio* (stroll) as the guiding principle, and which brings the researcher close to the profile of the *flâneur*.

With his famous diagnosis of the loss of the *aura* of the work of art, Walter Benjamin was one of the first thinkers to identify the profound technological, social and cultural rupture that occurred at the end of the 19th century, which he associated in particular with the generalisation of reproduction techniques, such as photography and cinema, and which came to serve as the basis of our present understanding of contemporary visual culture. Contrary to that which is suggested by certain readings of *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*, Walter Benjamin (2012) does not lament an old, decadent and lost *aura*. Instead he identifies this rupture - technological, social and cultural - which stands at the origin of the "mass arts", the "editable arts", the arts that, in his words, would be the "most revolutionary of his time", to which he dedicated much of his work: photography, film and advertising.

The German philosopher was also a pioneer in the epistemological posture adopted in function of this diagnosis. In addition to his appraisal of "anonymous popular art", his detailed description of European cities, in particular in his *Passages*, sustained by a methodological defence of the image[11] and by a political conception of the role of the

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[10] Concerning the relationship of the visual with the senses of movement, touch, smell and hearing, as well as with various psychic disturbances, see the contribution made by J. W. T. Michell (2002).

[11] The methodological valuation of the image in Walter Benjamin is developed above all from the notion of the "dialectical image", specified in the text, *Theoretical Reflections on Knowledge, Theory of Progress*, in which Walter Benjamin proposes to "give dates their physiognomy" (1989, p. 494, N11,2). In this text he explores the role of the image in historical knowledge. Choosing montage as a method, Benjamin aims to view history "in a stereoscopic manner," by showing it, more than by

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historian [12], is one of the most obvious examples. Indeed, Benjamin positively assumed the role of the *flâneur* – this "asphalt botanist" as he called him – in the metropolis of his time – from Berlin, to Paris, to Moscow –, scrupulously wandering between shopping galleries, advertising posters, storefronts and mirrors, toys and automatons, postcards and caricatures, panoramas, dioramas, wax museums and universal exhibitions. The *flâneur*, is a key figure, than, in the definition of the platform, *Passeio*. He is more of a *passeante* (stroller) than a *passante* (passer-by), and is very different from the "stunned" crowd, either due to his idle wandering, or distanced solitude, recomposing the myriad images of the city in his labyrinthine path.

If one should trace the study of the city and its associated iconographic social commerce back to Walter Benjamin, and in a broader sense back to the Frankfurt School, it is essential to recognise the decisive contribution made by other disciplinary traditions. In the field of communication sciences, it is also necessary to mention the fundamental role played by the Chicago School, which chose the city as its sociological laboratory, focusing on cultural and ethnic minorities, marginality and *subcultures*[13], with a methodological programme of ethnographic and anthropological inspiration that, with different pretexts and on several occasions, also paid special attention to the non-verbal component of communication (Park, Burgess & Mckenzie, 1984).

French poststructuralism has made an important contribution, including the work of Roland Barthes. Using an approach that has sometimes been described as the *light semiotics of images*, Roland Barthes addressed topics as diverse as literature, photography, fashion and advertising. In his work, *Mythologies,* he paid homage to the most banal objects of popular culture: the automobile, tour guides, music-hall, strip-tease clubs, cooking magazines (Barthes, 1957)… Also in the framework of French post-structuralism, Michel Foucault has made an important contribution. His introduction of the theory of surveillance (Foucault, 1975) and the proposal of the notion of heterotopia (Foucault, 1984), among countless other contributions, continue to pose key questions in any exercise of reflection about the city and its visual culture.

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saying it, breaking it down and then reassembling it into images (Benjamin, 1989, p. 474, N1, 8). The dialectic image, a central element of the Benjaminian method, is thus defined: "image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. " As if granting autonomous life and movement to images, Walter Benjamin notes that the historical mark of images has nothing to do with the time in which they are chronologically registered, but rather with the moment in which they attain their readability, a kind of critical point in which their truth explodes. Comparing this moment to the interval between sleep and wakefulness, and opening a parallel between the task of the historian and the task of the dream interpreter, Walter Benjamin thus also includes the unconscious, and dreamlike and fantasy elements in history.

[12] For Walter Benjamin, the historian of the contemporary world is a physiognomist of small moments, of the trifles of time, of the remains of history (1989, pp. 476, 477, N1a, 8, N2, 6) which are nonetheless compared with a broader vision of his time. It is certainly because he is an observer of tiny details in the midst of the capitalist crisis of his era, that Benjamin proposes to his contemporaries to "overcome difficulties as best one can, from hand to foot and with little" (Benjamin, 2000a, p. 366) Walter Benjamin suggests that instead of geniuses, celebrities and bosses, the contemporary world belongs to "anonymous" and "unnamed" men, and the history of these persons will contribute to "humanising humanity" (Benjamin, 1991, p. 455, 1940/2000b, p. 225).

[13] On the notion of "subculture", which will certainly be fundamental in demarcating the objects of research and archiving of the *Passeio* platform, and on the important contribution to its study, made by both the Chicago School and the Birmingham School (corresponding to the tradition of Cultural Studies), see in particular the anthology of texts organised by Sarah Thornton and Ken Gelder, entitled *The Subcultures Reader* (Gelder & Thornton, 1997).

Equally significant for the subject of the city and its social commerce of images, is undoubtedly the tradition of Cultural Studies, that has added further complexity to the debate about art and popular culture (Hall, 2003), which through the derivation of *visual culture studies* – an avant-garde disciplinary formation of the 1990s – has exercised a decisive influence on valorisation of an "unstructured" daily visual experience (Mirzoeff, 1999, p. 7), which finds one of its main arenas in the city's streets. Having unleashed the most diverse range of controversies and the most diffuse *antipathies*, notably at the time of the grandiloquent announcement of an *iconic turn* (Bohem, 1994; Didi-Huberman, 2008; Mitchell, 1994), *visual culture studies* have nevertheless had the merit of providing a significant contribution to exploring the question of the role of the image in social life in general, in particular by questioning the relationship between the image and the word, iconography and technology, visual experience and correlative tactile, kinetic, auditory, olfactory and psychic experiences (Mitchell, 2002), or the tension between the strategies of the image producers and the tactics of their consumers (Correia, 2013, pp. 85-89).

Finally, it is also important to consider the sociology of the imaginary, pioneered by thinkers such as the German sociologist Georg Simmel (whose connection to the aforementioned Chicago School of Education is also well known), which was not only guided by rehabilitation of the image as a source of knowledge, but also by an exhaustive work of scientific and poetic reflection about the city and its experience (Simmel 1997, Simmel, 1992). In addition to Simmel's contribution, other key thinkers in this field include Gaston Bachelard and Pierre Sansot (Bachelard, 1995; Sansot, 2004). The fields of anthropology, psychoanalysis and phenomenology are also linked to the sociology of the imaginary. They have contributed not only to the understanding of this unknown terrain of images, dreams and myths, but also to a series of reflections about the city and urban space, and their representations and experience, as summarised in the third section of this article.

In the context of this overview of the state of the art, it should be added that the team coordinating the *Passeio* platform has also worked on the social iconography of day-to-day life and its link to the city. In particular the platform's coordinators are members of the research project, "Illustrated Postcards for a socio-semiotics of the image and imaginary", funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) (PTDC / CCI / 2770/2006), conducted at the Communication and Society Research Centre between 2007 and 2012, coordinated by Moisés de Lemos Martins. The platform's team has questioned contemporary visual culture from different perspectives, in the context of the relationship between the city and its passers-by, including the case of illustrated postcards (Correia, 2013; Martins & Correia, 2015; Martins & Oliveira, 2011; Pires, 2015), the relationship between travel experiences and collection using digital media (Correia, 2015a), recreational photography in vogue in urban centres at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century (Correia, 2015b; Correia, 2016), the role of outdoor advertising in the experience of the passer-by in the contemporary city (Pires, 2007) and finally thinking about public art and the public communication of art (Andrade, 2010, 2011).

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## Passeio, space and places: concepts and paradigms

Next, we will map out some of the theoretical concepts and paradigms that allow us to operationalise different approaches to the social reality of space and places. We intend to discuss the complexity of the nature that characterises the links between the global and the local, i.e. the links between space(s) and places. The clarification of a specific theoretical-epistemological positioning which we intend to adopt for this project is all the more important since it ultimately seeks to defend a certain methodological approach, whose main characteristics are the qualitative paradigm and anthropological inspiration.

At the end of the 19th century and during the first half of the 20th century, texts were published in the framework of French sociology, in particular by Durkheim, Mauss and Halbwachs, that are especially relevant for the discussion of space as a fundamental mental category for Western thought. It is therefore important to consider space in its dual dimension: as material and social reality, on the one hand, and as representation, on the other.

Durkheim (1912) refers to space as "collective representation" or a "product of collective thought," as a way of endowing order (he mentions "coordination") to sensory experience. Since social reality is characterised by its heterogeneity, space can be understood as an operation of the production of shareable common sense. As Durkheim points out, it is the model of social organisation that presides over the spatial organisation model (Durkheim, 1012, p. 17), with correspondence between both models.

Mauss (1904/05) analyses space as a dimension that is determined by social life (economy, religion ...). From this point of view, space is above all a material and dynamic reality[14]. Both contributions – that of Durkheim and Mauss – add further complexity to the concept:

> Morphology (materiality), practices and representations emerge as three dimensions that are mediated by space, but which are independent and not necessarily coincident. From this perspective, space becomes a more complex object, which requires the presence of multiple levels of analysis. (Silvano, 2007, p. 12)

Halbwachs, in 1950, analysed space in terms of its relationship with collective memory. In *La Mémoire Collective*, the author argues that collective memory and space are mutually constituent. How can we talk about memory without talking about how it translates into a specific material organisation? However he admits that the inevitable mutability of this mode of organisation, space (and to memory) are nonetheless associated to stability and permanence.

In Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, the attic or basement of the house are places of memory and experience[15]. We may even venture to say that through the par-

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[14] It may be inferred from this assumption that transformations in the objective plane result in transformations in collective representations.

[15] Consider the following excerpt: "the house does not only live on the basis of a day-to-day existence, in the course of a story,

ticular and detailed description of the morphological-poetic structure of the lived space, Bachelard presents us with an anthropological model that is elucidative of the complex dynamics of empowerment of memory, that is necessarily unfolded in its dual individual and social structure, and is also lived and imagined (Bachelard, 1998).

With Lévi-Strauss (1979), the question that guides some of his anthropological studies is to know what kind of relationship can exist between "spatial configuration" and "social structure". He warns of the complexity of social organisations, which depend on groups and subgroups, since many different representations and morphological models often correspond to the same culture. While rejecting a simplistic view of such a relationship between a model and a given social structure, Levi-Strauss refers to the importance of thinking about unity or social differentiation in its correspondence with social representations of space. In particular, it is worth mentioning his proposal, considering the articulation between the social structure and space, on the one hand, and its connection with *collective identities*, on the other.

Breaking the tie from "space", in the framework of the experience of permanent mobility that characterises "supermodernity"[16], according to Augé (1992), translates into a problem, precisely, of *identity*. Based on the assumption that, from an anthropological perspective, *identity, history* and *relationship* are co-constituted in their connection to building place (understood as a locus of experience and memory, shared by a community), Augé proposes the term "non-places" to identify sites of temporary passage, such as hostels, hotels, hospitals, airports[17] with which individuals, frequently in their status as travellers, do not establish any kind of lasting social bond. In his text, Augé (1992) foresees an eventual hasty and simplistic view of the problem, drawing attention to the importance of thinking about the relationship between space (non-place) and place. Even given the impossibility of place, the individual dreams about other places, at the same time that, we can risk affirming (and thereby extend the author's thinking[18]), he reinvents new possibilities of transforming space, even when only temporarily experienced.

The particular nature of the urban space[19] requires a specific methodological approach. In other words, the construction of knowledge about the culture of a society,

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in the narrative of our own history. By means of dreams, the various places which we inhabit during our lives interpenetrate one another and guard the treasures of bygone days. When, in the new house, the memories of old dwellings return, we are transported to the country of Immovable Childhood, immovable and Immemorial" (Bachelard, 1998, p. 25). This passage may illustrate the relationship between spatialisation and recollection, although it is admitted that the problem of space can be approached using very different approaches, namely as a mental category not always coincident with places as a plane of lived experience.

[16] Augé (1994) defines supermodernity as referring to "three types of excess": excess time (the acceleration of history has turned everything into an event, thus rendering the very eventful nature of the "event" meaningless); excess space (the euphoria of "globalisation" ultimately translates into "shrinking"); excess individualism (collective references, which distinguish different groups to which individuals belong are distinguished, cease to dictate individuals' relations with the world). See Silvano (2007, p. 79).

[17] In his book published after Non-Lieux, entitled Les Sens des Autres, Augé (1994) gives other examples of non-places, among which we can highlight herein, given their media coverage, refugee camps.

[18] In view, in particular, of the publication which followed Non-Lieux, entitled Les Sens des Autres (1994).

[19] It should be noted that in the Passeio project this condition is fundamental.

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of a community or an era, based on its expression in the respective material culture, imperatively requires consideration of the transience of social practices. Simmel (1908) was particularly attentive to mobility, in particular the experience of otherness, incorporated in the figure of the *foreigner*, which finds its most intense expression in cities. In its broader and even metaphorical sense – wherein the "foreigner" ultimately defines the condition of mobility in the urban space – this figure is characterised by an identity-based plurality (a condition common to everyone), in which context it is important to map out the proximities and distances resumed in the figure of the foreigner.

Benjamin (1989), returning to Simmel's line of thinking, also focuses on a methodological and reflexive exercise that seeks to capture the spirit of modernity, through that which at first sight seems to be apparently insignificant, inclusively because of its temporary nature. The figure of the *passeante* (stroller) (instead of the *viajante* (traveler), mentioned by Simmel), inherited from Baudelaire's poetry, represents for Benjamin the solitary and anonymous subject, forgotten in the midst of the crowd, who at the same time is dedicated to observation of the tiniest details, through which culture is materialised.

The relationship between space and contemporary culture is also a privileged object of discussion in Lefebvre, in his well-known work, *La production de l'espace* [The production of space]. In this work Lefebvre defends the autonomisation of space (in relation to mental space and physical space), defining it as being constituted by social practices (i.e. by the interaction between subjects and space).

Foucault, in turn, proposed the notion of the space of placement (*emplacement*) to designate the variety of relations that constitute places: "placement is defined by the neighbourhood relations between points or elements" (Foucault, 1985, p. 5). Such placements, or *emplacements*, unfold in: places of passage – streets, trains; temporary stopping places – cafés, cinemas, beaches; or resting places – the house, bedroom.

It is precisely on the basis of the assumption of the diverse nature of such "placements" (and in particular in view of their mobile nature) that, by criticizing the traditional methodological and epistemological approaches of anthropology and ethnography, Appadurai (1997) proposes the concept of the *frontier* as an expressive spatial figure of the conditions of mobility in the contemporary world (ultimately, a universal condition of the present, and also of the past, which contrasts with the "false" idea of the locals and their respective connection to the place), "not viewed as a line separating stable spaces, but as an intermediate, slippery, porous space "(Silvano, 2007, p. 85). In this perspective, the author is associated to the notion of *ethnoscapes*[20]:

> By '*ethnoscape*', I mean the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest-workers, and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. This is not to say that there are not

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[20] "The suffix – *scape* aims to indicate the fluid character of the landscapes to which they refer, as well as the fact that the relationships that include them are different according to the angle used to look at them" (Silvano, 2007, p. 88).

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anywhere relatively stable communities and networks, of kinship, of friend-
ship, of work and of leisure, as well as of birth, residence and other filiative
forms. (Appadurai, 1997, pp. 33-34)

According to the author, the "mutable worlds" that designate the new conditions of impermanence, lead to deterritorialisation of research and the search for new forms of ethnographic description [21]:

as groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic projects, the ethno in ethnography takes on a slippery, non-localised quality, to which the descriptive practices of anthropology will have to respond. (Appadurai, 1997, p. 48)

After this brief overview of the contributions provided by the different authors - in order to reflect about the implications that a diverse range of expressions of the concepts of space and place may have on the construction of knowledge concerning the relationship between representations, the imaginary universe and social practices - we now aim to clarify some of the *Passeio*'s methodological options. In particular, it's important to clarify how it is possible to operationalise the approach towards social actors in the field, as well as the connections (and disconnections) that position them in relation to multiple morphological and spatial configurations.

Considering Lefebvre's (1986) proposal for three concepts or three moments in a dialectical relationship (perceived, conceived and experienced): social practice, representations of space and spaces of representation:

a) Social practice:

encompasses the production and reproduction of the places and spatial sets that are specific to each social formation. Each member of a society is endowed with a specific (spatial) competency and (spatial) performance (in the meaning that language endows to these terms), which organise their social practices (Silvano, 2007, p. 44);

b) Representation of space:

are linked to the relations of production and the 'order' that they impose. They imply the existence of specific knowledge, signs and codes. In this sense, theory reproduces the generative process of space. If this is taken as a product, then the knowledge we have about them is associated, as far as it is reproduced, to the production process of the space of a specific society (Silvano, 2007, p. 44);

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[21] "Dismantling of the idea of "native", associated to that of place, leads Appadurai to appeal for deterritorialisation of observation and the gaze" (Silvano, 2007, pp. 88-89).

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## c) Spaces of representation:

> for Lefebvre these are associated with everyday and lived experience, to the clandestine and underground side of social life. It is in this regard that the author opens up perspectives for the study of less obvious dimensions. For Lefebvre, space is lived before being perceived - and yet this is absolutely essential, since it allows us to reach a space that is produced and reproduced on the margins of great works and which are therefore excluded from more globalizing theories (Silvano, 2007, p. 44)[22]

*Passeio* is positioned above all in the context of an approach to everyday spaces, in affinity with the spaces of representation and of lived experience mentioned by Lefebvre (1986). There is a general consensus that 'space' is defined as abstraction, associated with extensiveness and measurability (which is not unrelated to cartography and geometry), as opposed to 'place', which is considered to be more concrete and, in particular, as an instance of lived experience[23]. *Passeio*, however, aims to deconstruct such a dialectic, focusing on its incidence in the various interstitial gradations, operated between representations and practices, in both an intensive and shifting manner. From this perspective, space and places are understood in this project as moving coordinates, that allow us, on the one hand, to approach the permanent becoming of the sensorial world and, on the other, the cultural and symbolic frames of reference that influence, while simultaneously being influenced by, the production of space.

Finally, in *Passeio*, we assume the role of the *investigador-passeante* (researcher-stroller), who is especially attentive to street life and the intersection between different morphological-spatial scales, both real and imaginary. In other words, using Benjamin's approach, we try to remain aware to the intersections that exist between near and far, global and local, culture and details of signs and objects, such as architecture, signs, and also everyday experiences, passing conversations and the life stories of inhabitants or anonymous travellers who circulate in the city.

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[22] In order to conceptualise space and possible spaces, Lefebvre uses the term differential space: "that which we actually have, which results from the composition of various different places" (Silvano, 2007, p. 46).

[23] Bragança de Miranda specifically refers to the need to deconstruct a given notion of "space" (2007).

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