

ART, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

Fabiano Assis da Silva

Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal

Renata Flaiban Zanete

Centro de Estudos Humanísticos, Escola de Letras Artes e Ciências Humanas, Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal

Sumaya Mattar

Escola de Comunicações e Artes, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

The poet Farid Matuk concludes the interview conducted by Amanda Amaral (2025) by stating that “it is too late in the tired history of the Western self to pretend we just sit down and write poems” (p. 10). In this testimony, and through this idea, attention is drawn to the interweaving of art and politics, history and memory, identities and activism. Even when artistic and educational actions take place at the local level, they are always connected to global dynamics: one influences and is simultaneously affected by the other.

The thematic issue “Art, Education and Community” arises from the understanding that art, when integrated into formal and non-formal educational processes, can strengthen bonds, renew a sense of belonging and illuminate more generous ways of living and learning together. These experiences traverse urgent issues of the contemporary world—persistent inequalities, forced displacements, cultural tensions, historical erasures and multiple vulnerabilities—and render art a space of confluence, in which imagination operates as an ethical and political force, expanding possibilities for action and creating possible futures. The call for this thematic issue adopted the perspective of a humanistic, critical and emancipatory education, in contrast to competitive, technicist logics based exclusively on performance metrics.

Across the published articles, recurrent themes emerge from diverse contexts and geopolitical spaces: the preservation of collective and social memory (Bosi, 1994/1987, 2003; Halbwachs, 1950/2006); the need to re-signify places through their historical importance; and the search by voices, bodies and languages for space and representativeness. Epistemological frameworks from the Global South enter into dialogue with concrete problems and case studies that propose rethinking curricula, integrating knowledges and territories, and valuing the protagonism of local identities within the communities in which they are embedded. The contributions also address the concepts of centre and periphery, modes of occupying cities, practices of resistance, women’s participation in the construction of society, migrant identities and proposals for a decolonial education.

The present moment is marked by overlapping crises that permeate all dimensions of life. Social tensions are deepened by inequalities generated through historical processes of colonialism and oppression (Bauman, 2000/2001; Bourdieu, 1982/2021;

Butler, 2004/2019; Davis, 1981/2016; Fanon, 1967/2015, 1952/2017; Foucault, 1975/1999; Gonzalez, 1988; Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2010; Maffesoli, 1996/2010; Mbembe, 2011; Souza, 2021). Environmental conflicts reveal the relationships between humanity and nature, capitalist economies and the sustainability of life on Earth (Castro & Danowski, 2014/2023; Haraway, 2016; Krenak, 2020; Latour, 2014). Recent technologies transform subjectivities and social dynamics (Martins, 2011), raising ethical questions concerning their uses and implications (Castells, 1999/2011; Stiegler, 2004/2018). Added to these are cultural disputes, historical revisions and concerns surrounding alterities and migrations (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 2000, 2003; Mignolo, 2019; Quijano, 2005; Spivak, 2009/2010; Williams, 1987/2015; Xakriabá, 2020). This unequal panorama reverberates within educational spaces, where logics often prevail that compress human experience and weaken coexistence, creativity, autonomy and care (Boal, 2009; Freire, 1968/2019, 1992/2020; hooks, 1994/2013, 2003/2021; Maffesoli, 1979/1984). Within this uncertain scenario, art emerges as a space for breathing and reinvention, capable of restoring joy and hope to everyday life, building bridges between people and territories, broadening perspectives and sustaining gestures of listening, freedom and solidarity (A. Sousa, 2003; Spolin, 1963/2010; Williams, 1980/2011).

The texts brought together in this volume engage with these issues that currently structure essential debates in the arts and education (Comissão Executiva do Plano Nacional das Artes, 2019). They address decolonial perspectives (Walsh, 2009) and counter-colonial approaches (Bispo dos Santos, 2018), discussions on identities and intersectionalities (Crenshaw, 1989), community-based and collaborative artistic practices (Cruz, 2001), as well as experiences involving visual arts, cinema, virtual reality and theatre as modes of inquiry and educational action. Emphasis is placed on the challenges of art education within school territories (Ryngaert, 1977/1981; J. Sousa, 2012), creative and participatory practices in non-formal spaces, inter- and multicultural relations, and artistic and pedagogical activisms oriented towards emancipation. These axes highlight the multiplicity of contemporary approaches in art and education, as well as the richness of experiences that emerge when creation is lived as a shared gesture.

The thematic articles that compose this issue are presented below, each bringing its own delicacy, urgency, and singular way of thinking about the relationships among art, education, and community.

Cátia Cardoso reflects on the concept of participatory artistic literacy, based on an analysis of policies for art within the Portuguese educational and cultural system. The author also examines Portuguese cultural practices using a 2020 survey. Cardoso argues for the crucial role of the school as an institution that promotes encounters between people and art and culture, the concept of cultural democracy, and the importance of the National Arts Plan, developed jointly by the Ministries of Culture and Education since 2019.

Karine Joulie Martins, Luciano Dantas Bugarin and Adriana Mabel Fresquet contribute an article that problematises colonialism in cinema and virtual reality, highlighting how inequalities are perpetuated. The authors' work points to pedagogical practices in which the production and reception of moving images foster the expression of alterities

and social and cultural integration. Representativeness, expressed through the presence of diverse ethnicities and skin colours in moving images, combined with the immersion enabled by accessible virtual devices, creates a sense of community.

The intertwinings of ancestry, life histories, the experience of being an art teacher, and learning with masters of claywork and sewing are addressed in the articles by Mariana de Araujo Alves da Silva and Priscila Akimi Hayashi. Silva, through an essayistic mode of writing, presents interactions and learning processes developed with communities from various parts of Brazil, enabling connections between different geographies, united by hands in clay. Hayashi, in turn, focuses on the family archive and closeness to her grandmother within the domestic space. While looking inward, towards her roots, a broader gaze is also cast on Japanese immigration to Brazil since the late nineteenth century, revealing the difficulties encountered and the bonds formed between Brazilian and Japanese communities.

Issues such as hospital practices, doctor–patient relationships and the education of medical students, viewed through the critical lens of theatre, are explored by the actresses, lecturers and researchers Nádia Hellmeister Morali Barreira and Letícia Rodrigues Frutuoso. The methodology developed by the authors is grounded in reflective pedagogical practices that draw on self-knowledge and de-mechanisation to foster empathy and a more humanised medicine.

A set of four articles foregrounds collectives in action, seeking critical and active intervention in the spaces surrounding or inhabited by communities.

Marcio Santos Lima and Makson Silva Alves focus on a group of architecture students at the Federal University of Sergipe, in north-eastern Brazil, challenging them to engage in an artistic and sensitive occupation through the painting of a mural. The equipment, materials, and techniques employed fostered a sense of group among participants.

From Florianópolis, in the southern Brazilian state of Santa Catarina, Luiza Melo and Tharciana Goulart da Silva articulate the memories of the Monte Serrat community, focusing on women who have assumed leadership roles over time. The Marista Escola Social Lúcia Mayvorne and the Escola de Samba Embaixada Copa Lord have mobilised a sense of community belonging through pedagogical and artistic actions. In a brief historical overview, Melo and Silva revisit the work of the washerwomen who descended to the city centre to collect the elites' dirty laundry, which was washed on the hill. The *Mama África* project enabled young students to recognise and value their origins with affection in their artistic productions, while also promoting interdisciplinarity within the school context.

From the Perus neighbourhood, in the north-western periphery of São Paulo, Adriano Pinheiro and Márcia Aparecida Gobbi present a public school and its surroundings, with particular emphasis on the iconic Portland Cement Factory. Now deactivated, the factory evokes past workers' struggles for rights and remains a living memory of the neighbourhood's characteristic resistance. Pinheiro and Gobbi highlight a series of actions and projects developed by artistic collectives in the region, as well as art classes that extend beyond the school space to sites of local historical significance, using different languages such as photography and theatre.

From the centre of São Paulo, the Ocupação 9 de Julho constitutes the object of investigation in the article by Gabriel Ussami, revealing multiple artistic and political actions carried out between 2018 and 2023 in order to transform the space of housing and coexistence into a site for new relationships, learning processes and exchanges of experience. For the author, the city is a symbolic and pedagogical space that organises ways of life. Ocupação 9 de Julho thus presents alternative forms of meaning-making and urban resistance, grounded in collectivity and in the active participation that creates other forms of relationship beyond the worlds of consumption and capital.

The thematic issue also includes two markedly distinct interviews; nevertheless, both introduce figures that exemplify the interweaving of life, art, pedagogical practice and political thought.

The interview, authored by Amanda Amaral, presents the work and personality of the poet and lecturer Farid Matuk. Amaral positions poetry as an “insurgent epistemology” against symbolic and material violence. Reflecting on decoloniality in poetry, reference is made to Homi Bhabha (1994), emphasising the transitoriness of the fragmented, plurilingual poetic self, which carries traces of its culture of origin alongside losses and reconstructions.

The *Biblioteca 10Padronizada*, from Angola, and its primary mentor, Francisco Mapanda, also known as Dago Nível Intelecto, are introduced in the interview conducted by Tom Stennett. The cover photograph of this issue, by the Angolan photographer Magno Daniel, presents the library through the visual metaphor of bars. *Biblioteca 10Padronizada* provides access to books and reading for anyone interested, in addition to hosting debates and musical performances, within a space that might initially be considered unlikely for such activities, given its location beneath a pedestrian overpass and between a dual carriageway and a railway line. Despite its achievements, *Biblioteca 10Padronizada* is frequently constrained, whether by the lack of regular financial support or by construction works undertaken without prior notice, sometimes overnight, which alter its functioning and configuration entirely. The activist stance of resistance and culture embodied by this library and its founders and managers has served as an example for other initiatives undertaken by various social actors throughout the city of Luanda.

By bringing together these contributions, the thematic issue aims to expand possibilities for action, inspire further initiatives and strengthen practices that recognise the power of communities and their knowledges. It is hoped that each text offers renewed perspectives for reflection and dialogue, and that the examples presented contribute to the imagining of practices that are more sensitive, inclusive, and committed to life in common.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Fabiano Assis da Silva holds a PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of Minho and a master's degree in Communication, Art and Culture from the same institution. He is an actor–musician, researcher and theatre practitioner working in educational contexts. Together with Renata Flaiban Zanete, he co-founded the group Rodamoinho Teatro, which has been active for 24 years, and has performed in China, Italy, France, Portugal and Brazil. His professional activities include providing pedagogical consultancy in Art for the production of educational materials for the publisher FTD-Brasil (2019). He was artist-in-residence at the Agrupamento de Escolas São Bento, in Vizela, from 2020 to 2025, and is a theatre teacher at the Agrupamento de Escolas Alberto Sampaio (2025). He has served as director of the Grupo de Teatro São João Bosco, staging the productions *O Encontro* (2021), *A Escuta* (2022), *Eis a Questão* (2023), *Uma Vontade de Ir* (2024) and *Refúgio* (2025). He was also a member of the Pedagogical Innovation Group Entre Pares (2024/2025) of the Portuguese Ministry of Education. He is currently developing the project *Improviso Teatral* in the University of Minho, in partnership with lecturers from different degree programmes and research centres, and the Idea UMinho Centre has awarded it the Pedagogical Innovation Award.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8597-0572>

Email: fabianosilva@ics.uminho.pt

Address: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade, Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade do Minho, Campus de Gualtar – 4710–057, Braga, Portugal

Renata Flaiban Zanete holds a PhD in Comparative Modernities from the University of Minho and a master's degree in Language and Education from the University of São Paulo. She is an actor, storyteller, writer, theatre director, teacher trainer, artistic and cultural mediator, and a researcher affiliated with the Centre for Humanistic Studies at the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Minho. In 2024, she received the International Mário Quartin Graça Scientific Award for her doctoral thesis from Casa da América Latina, based in Lisbon. Her main research themes and fields of practice include community and participatory theatre, comparative literature, children's and young adult literature, art and education, interculturality, cultural studies, interart studies and gender studies. She co-founded Rodamoinho Teatro with Fabiano Assis da Silva in Brazil in 2001. Among the more than 18 awards received throughout her career, particular distinction

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ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5241-7823>

Email: renaflai@gmail.com

Address: Centro de Estudos Humanísticos da Universidade do Minho, Escola de Letras, Artes e Ciências Humanas, Campus de Gualtar – 4710-057, Braga, Portugal

Sumaya Mattar holds a master's and a PhD in Education from the University of São Paulo. Since 2008, she has been a lecturer at the School of Communications and Arts of the same university, where she teaches, supervises research and develops outreach projects. Her academic and professional trajectory has been shaped at the intersection of Art and Education, encompassing Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Pedagogy, Psychoanalysis and Philosophy. She is a member of the Graduate Programmes in Visual Arts and in Humanities, Rights and Other Legitimacies. She leads the Multidisciplinary Group of Studies and Research in Art and Education (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development), a space for study, reflection and collective creation. Her experience in basic education as a teacher and pedagogical coordinator remains central to teacher education, both at the university level and in the outreach courses she coordinates. Her research and professional interests include art, education, memory, processes of creation and subjectivation, with a focus on teacher education, cartographies, oral history, biographical narratives, anti-racism, identity processes, ceramics, media, processes and artisanal pedagogies. She has organised several publications and is the author of the book *Sobre Arte e Educação: Entre a Oficina Artesanal e a Sala de Aula* (Papyrus). She produced the documentary *Shoko: Expressão do Cosmos*, about the ceramist Shoko Suzuki, her mentor. Her publications are available on the GMEPAE Portal, the USP Open Books Portal, the USP Theses and Dissertations Library, the GMEPAE YouTube Channel and academic platforms.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2711-2059>

Email: sumayamattar@usp.br

Address: Departamento de Artes Plásticas da Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo – Av. Prof. Lúcio Martins Rodrigues, 443, Cidade Universitária – CEP 05508-020, São Paulo, Brasil



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