

Art In The Schools Of The Community Of Conceição Das Crioulas

A large part of European schools, particularly in the countries of weaker economies, are today limited by the utilitarianism that neoliberal pressures wield over the school curricula. This pressure assumes an unacceptable proportion within the field of arts education, freezes developed practices into meaningless routines, commodiously accepts the stagnation of standardised procedures and comforts itself with the pretension of futile innovations of disoriented approaches towards contemporary art.

Standing on European grounds and the area of arts education's practices, which don't isolate themselves from an inscription within the reigning political structure's apparatus of reproduction, we've developed our 'collective of action and investigation', a motion of displacement from ourselves, daring that uneasiness, towards Southern latitudes, where different ways of living the educational and integrating the art in the mutual becoming.

Sixteen years of direct contact with a Quilombola Community has allowed us, in the field of action research, to recognise a new vitality and to make a difference in their schools. It's estimated that there are about six thousand Quilombola Communities in Brazil, originally constituted by black people who've resisted and resist to slavery and its consequences. The Quilombo of Conceição das Crioulas is populated by around four thousand people, located at the Sertão of Pernambuco, a semi-deserted area in Northeastern Brazil. Since its origins, it expanded to an area of approximately seventeen thousand hectares, next to the Indian Reserve of Atikum, and today it mobilizes in the struggle for the restitution of lands that were taken away from them by the region's rich farmers.

A community that knew how to make out of the education the main instrument of the construction of its identity, the strengthening of its dignity and the fighting for the land and for a better living for its population, Conceição has been apart from the history where naturalised practices of arts education were built on. By welcoming a group of teachers and art students, dislocated from Portugal, it partook in the challenge of integrating arts education in its schools' daily life, experimenting in them other possibilities of artistic practices.

The commenced movement has already spawned many events and investigation, being the centre of the research four Ph.D. thesis and six master thesis, three of which by teachers of the community, corresponding to a particular study on the political discernment of school leaderships and the importance of teaching, particularly in arts education, embedded in the community's development.

We present, in this European Encounter, a video in which a group of teachers from Conceição das Crioulas analyses, in a round-table, the Quilombola School Education, and reflects upon the way arts education has been integrated in their schools. The video is presented has the drive for a debate about the experience and the difficulty of creating similar situations in Europe, where there is a need for the displacement of schools from the communities in which they're integrated.