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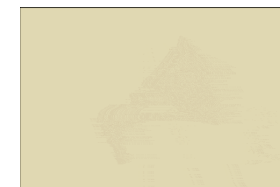
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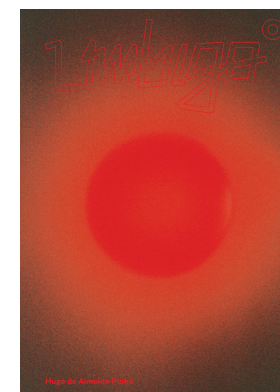
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Alberto Carneiro Alberto Carneiro Art Center 2021-2022 Photography Alberto Carneiro

ART & CULTURE

Alberto Carneiro Art Center: The celebration of contemporary Portuguese art in Santo Tirso

 Mafalda Teixeira

“Art and I do not know for sure who we are, but we are certain that we are part of each other, and this is all we need for life.”

Alberto Carneiro

Inaugurated on November 27 in Santo Tirso, the Alberto Carneiro Art Center (CAAC) has a primary mission to manage the sculptor's collection. It is a venue for the creation, experimentation, preservation, research and dissemination of contemporary art to honour the work of Alberto Carneiro (1937-2017).

The inauguration of the city-initiated cultural project comes six years after the signing of the donation contract that the artist made with the City Council, granting ownership of sixty works, including sculptures and drawings, to create the permanent collection of the Art Center.

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Alberto Carneiro Art Center. It allows the dynamization of the factory site with cultural activities, contributing to a new centrality of the city. The choice of Santo Tirso for the new cultural project is due to the sculptor's strong connection to the municipality. In addition to the countless works exhibited in the city, we must highlight his role in developing ten International Sculpture Symposia which gave rise to the current International Museum of Contemporary Sculpture in Santo Tirso, inaugurated in 1997.

With approximately 1100 m², having a ground floor and a basement, the Alberto Carneiro Art Center has an exhibition area, with permanent and temporary sections, a documentation centre, reception and shop premises, areas for administrative activities and logistic support, as well as storage areas for general deposits. Organised into three nuclei, the exhibition area includes a permanent exhibition composed of works by the sculptor. Covering several artistic media, the inaugural exhibition presents drawings and sculptures in wood, bronze and stone. Visitors can also see works from the series *Sobre as flores do meu jardim* (200-02), displayed on the wall of the exhibition's first nucleus, works on paper between drawing and painting produced by pressing flower petals collected by Alberto Carneiro in his garden, and whose intensity of colour diminishes over time.

Developed based on the rhythms of nature, showing the

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culture, thought and action. It is an artistic practice that reveals the secrets of the earth.

The landscape with the urge to show itself, the intensity and speed of the movements and gestures take shape not only in sculptural works, but also in drawings whose sense of constant tension, strength and transformation attract us and pull us in their direction.

Without a narratorial, chronological or thematic character, the inaugural exhibition of the Alberto Carneiro Art Center has pieces from the sixties – *O Voo do Homem*, (1966) – which share the same space with pieces from the eighties and nineties – *Metáfora das águas ou as naus a haver por mares de antes navegados*, (1993-94). And even works from the 21st century, whose affinities derive from the nature of the works and themes. One of the aims of the Art Center is to value Alberto Carneiro's pioneering work in ecological art. Director Álvaro Moreira recalls this importance in current times, "at a moment when so much is said about ecology and environmental issues, and the positioning and relationship of man with nature, as well as how these two conditions live, it is important to return to the text published in 1971 by the artist *Notas para um manifesto de uma arte ecológica*". In a deep relationship with nature – which Alberto Carneiro maintained from childhood until the end of his life in 2017 – the author states in the manifesto that "ecological art will be a return to the origin of our sources (...) in the absence of an

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[1]. It is to return to the essence and the bond to the earth of Alberto Carneiro's work that is evident when contemplating it, through the understanding of nature from the body and the senses, and through a dialogue between the rural world and the artistic environment, between Nature and Art.

Besides the permanent show, the exhibition area will be a place for dialogue and confrontation of several artistic currents, integrative and inclusive, through temporary exhibitions of contemporary artists associated with Alberto Carneiro's work, fitting in with the sculptor's fundamental artistic values. "The idea is to create a challenge regarding a piece, an idea, a concept, a space based on a bond to Alberto Carneiro's work, to develop a research project, an exhibition project that can be shown at the Centre."

Given its museological importance, the new Alberto Carneiro Art Center will play a key role in developing the region's culture, complementing and stimulating the programming of the International Sculpture Museum. This will increase the city's contemporary art offer and its relationship with nature and public space. Together with the CAAC's opening, the International Museum of Contemporary Sculpture will inaugurate the artist's first solo exhibition in this venue, entitled *A Natureza em Movimento*. The exhibition is based on the artistic estate of Alberto Carneiro owned by the widow and art historian

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of the artist's work. Besides sculpture and installation, the importance of the artist's drawing and performative works in landscape and rural environments that originated the photographic series from the seventies now on display is underlined.

Alberto Carneiro is an advocate of the concept of Ecological Art and Public Art. Therefore, the Alberto Carneiro Art Center wants to promote the Monte Córdova Enhancement Project and the Strategic Program for the Recovery of the Leça River - 2020/2030. When questioned about the creation of projects for the outer area of the Art Center, Álvaro Moreira admits it is something to develop, "in a project that combines other environmental interests, in this case the river Leça, for the recovery and enhancement of the entire river, which in our municipality has its most significant part, including the source in Monte Córdova, the most important environmental area in the municipality of Santo Tirso. The idea is to develop artistic activities, including ephemeral architectures or sculptures, to value spaces and routes, besides emphasizing environmental issues related to the river. This will be a second major project, directly associated with Alberto Carneiro's line of thought. We also have the contribution of the International Museum of Contemporary Sculpture project, of which he was the mentor and whose collection has been growing. It is an ongoing process, developed alongside the city's new

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Besides Alberto Carneiro's works of sculpture and drawing, the collection includes the artist's private library, donated by the family to the municipality, inventoried, treated and made publicly available in partnership with the heirs. It contains around 7500 volumes essential to understand the artist's work and the influences of his conceptual horizon.

To raise the community's awareness of artistic expressions, the Art Center's activity will be enhanced by pedagogical initiatives related to nature, through scientific meetings and educational programmes. The aim is to create new audiences, with a cultural programme that establishes the Alberto Carneiro Art Center as a place for meetings, debates, questionings and experiences.

[1] Carneiro, Alberto. (1991). "Notas para um manifesto de uma arte ecológica" (Dezembro 1968/Feveireiro 1972) *in* Carneiro, Alberto. (1991). *Exposição Antológica*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. p. 62.

FEBRUARY 22, 2022



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