Politics and Practices of visual propaganda in Portuguese Estado Novo. An Introduction

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Mass print media, such as newspapers and illustrated magazines, created mass audiences at the beginning of the twentieth century, offering fertile ground for governments wishing to mobilise entire societies for war or to disseminate information or propaganda to large groups of people in relatively short spaces of time. In the 1920s and 1930s, these printed means were joined, for political propaganda purposes, by cinema, photography and radio, which were especially exploited in the new authoritarian regimes of the Soviet Union, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

Political propaganda aims to indoctrinate audiences, to persuade them to act in certain ways, to adopt behaviours that would then spread generally through proselytising and imitation. One of the most important resources for sensitising audiences is visual propaganda. It was assumed that the "people" would react positively to images and so adhere more easily to the desired aims of propaganda. But if the circulation of images was crucial for achieving these objectives, the continual reframing of visual production across varied and interrelated contexts was equally so. Visual propaganda raises vital questions of identity and historical memory. Through images propaganda may build in elements that increase the credibility and liveliness of messages, making them more convincing, even commonsensical.

This thematic dossier tackles the Portuguese "Estado Novo" (New State) through the analysis of the regime's visual propaganda, specifically its printed and public images. Like other authoritarian regimes, the Portuguese "Estado Novo" was convinced that images, being intelligible and persuasive to wide audiences, were vital to achieve its objectives: the reinterpretation of history

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to fix a certain articulation between past and present. A key figure was António Ferro, a former futurist and companion of the modernists associated with the literary magazine *Orpheu* (1915), who did not hide his admiration for a political and cultural solution like that of fascist Italy. He was appointed by Salazar in 1933 as head of the influential Secretariat of National Propaganda (SPN) to implement his "Politics of the Spirit". From the creation of the SPN until Ferro's dismissal in 1949, visual propaganda played a decisive role as vehicle for the Salazar regime as part of an extensive cultural policy programme covering the visual arts, theatre, cinema and literature.

In fact, Portuguese artists adapted international models, assembling images and texts with the aim of transforming them into ideological messages and narratives that were tested and disseminated through the edition of books, albums, luxury editions, posters, maps, leaflets, postcards, documentaries, illustrated magazines, and other formats of visual media. The texts that accompany these images encourage particular ways of seeing. If it is important to analyse images in relation to the written word, it is also fundamental to investigate these public images in exhibitions, films, photographs, ceremonies and performances according to the different purposes which they were expected to achieve. Painters, graphic artists, photographers, filmmakers and ethnographers selected and reinterpreted the images and sought to control their reception.

The three articles address the public impact of these images, exploring their reproduction across graphic illustrations, printed photography, film and expanded exhibition practices for propaganda purposes in the context of Salazar's dictatorship.

The texts presented here cover the regime's most politicized time from the 1930s to the 1940s. Grounded in the complex political history of this period, several analyses demonstrate the ways in which images were understood, used, imposed, circulated, and spread in various media, taking advantage of the emotional responses of a Catholic population to such imagery.

Overall, this thematic dossier gives special emphasis to the way in which formulations of national identity were defined and distributed through systems of images. Though several important studies have touched upon issues of propaganda during the Estado Novo, they do not focus on visual propaganda, or have approached the subject through very specific disciplinary and methodological lenses. Our dossier has a more comprehensive scope and covers a wide range of contexts and disciplines. Each contribution takes a case study related to visual propaganda and provides the reader with a thorough analysis based on comparative close readings.

Jesús Ramé López and Caterina Cucinotta in "The material of political propaganda in Helena Roque Gameiro's costume design: "As Pupilas do Senhor Reitor" (1935) *filmic costume drama*" analyses this film by the filmmaker José Leitão de Barros as part of a series of films by him that linked the rural world to political propaganda promoting a certain ideal of Portugal.

Their comparative analysis of the film shows how the exaltation of rural life in this Portuguese "costumes drama" runs parallel to German and Spanish cases. As a paradigmatic example of the use of propaganda through cinema, the authors concentrate on the triangular relationship of themes, style, and tone. The authors place special emphasis on the wardrobe created by the film's costume designer Helena Roque Gameiro, an essential contribution to the *mise-en-scène* of cinematic ruralism. In the film, reality is aestheticised. Gestures, speeches and sets induce the spectator to believe that what he or she is seeing is real and true. This is a type of cinema of the 1930s and 1940s in which costumes indicate the presence of a specific ideology underlined by moving images, frames and stylistic elements.

Patrícia Ferraz de Matos in "Female landscapes: the presence of women in the photographs and images of the Portuguese colonial exhibitions" reflects on the presence of colonized women in photographs and other representations such as drawings, posters, postcards, exhibition catalogues, newspapers and magazines which were disseminated in the context of the Portuguese colonial expositions and in exhibition spaces conceived with a colonial component.

These exhibitions sought to showcase Portugal's progress in the spheres of land, rail and sea transport, but also roads, communications, trade, industry, arts, architecture, culture, and the most recent advances in science and medicine. These exhibitions were also places where the logic of colonial models was staged, showing a clear relationship between colonial domination and gender representation. Matos analyses the content associated with several exhibitions between 1931 and 1940, such as the *International Colonial Exhibition of Paris* (1931), the *Lisbon Industrial Exhibition* (1932), the *Portuguese Colonial Exhibition* in Oporto (1934), the *Portuguese World Exhibition* in Lisbon (1940), and the miniature park *Portugal of the Little Ones* (Portugal dos Pequenitos) in Coimbra (1940). She gives particular attention to the contexts in which women appear and the way in which they are represented — as active beings (performing tasks), as contemplative beings (as in natural landscapes) or as objects of sexual desire, revealing the context of power (legislative, administrative, male and colonial) in which the images and the representations were produced.

Filomena Serra's "Political Spectacle, Folklorist Practices, Visual Representations, and Print Media at the *1940 Portuguese World Exhibition*",

takes the imagery of the Regional Centre and examines the visual propaganda and its relationship with the album *Life and Art of the Portuguese People* (Vida e Arte do Povo Português) (1940). This was a planned publication on ethnography produced for the 1940 Celebrations by the regime's propaganda organisation for culture, the National Propaganda Secretariat (SPN).

With the Estado Novo, folkloric practices were institutionalised. By acquiring the standing of a matter of state, it created a hyper-valorisation of popular culture as a language for affirming national identity. Serra explores the way how popular art was transformed into spectacle through the "living groups" in Regional Centre with their wardrobe and domestic objects. And also focuses on how drawings and photography understood this form of ideological indoctrination and aestheticisation of reality. Specifically, this imagery fostered the idea of Portugal as a peaceful, rural country at a time when Europe was at war. She discusses in particular on how the traditional media of coloured illustrations by the painter Paulo Ferreira and the "new medium" of Mário Novais printed photography engage in a tense dialogue and harmonise in the national history narrative of *The Life and Art of the Portuguese People*. In sum, she emphasises also the dialogue and the interconnection between the two propaganda devices – the Regional Centre and the album – and what the role did they play as visual propaganda.

As these articles substantiate, images in print and on public display are crucial for understanding the Portuguese national myths, imaginaries, collective attitudes and emotions, perceptions, and ways of looking under the Estado Novo and how the dictatorship sought actively to shape and foster these.