



This book is not for sale / Este livro não se destina a venda

ISBN 978-989-53056-0-5



9 789895 505605



Co-Financed



Tilegeist

Azulejos do Porto:
recovered, reinvented
and repurposed



Os Azulejos do Porto / Unexpected Media Lab



ORGANIZAÇÃO / ORGANIZATION

Heitor Alvelos

COORDENAÇÃO / COORDINATION

Heitor Alvelos
Abhishek Chatterjee
Marisa Ferreira
Alba Plaza

COORDENAÇÃO EXECUTIVA / EXECUTIVE COORDINATION

Álvaro Ferreira

TÍTULO / TITLE

TILEGEIST
Azulejos do Porto: recovered, reinvented and repurposed

EDIÇÃO / EDITION

Unexpected Media Lab
© ID+ Instituto de Investigação em Design, Media e Cultura
Universidade do Porto, Faculdade de Belas Artes

DESIGN

Alba Plaza

FOTOGRAFIA / PHOTOGRAPHY

Alba Plaza
Abhishek Chatterjee
Heitor Alvelos

TIRAGEM / PRINT RUN

300

IMPRESSÃO / PRINTED BY

Greca Artes Gráficas

DEPÓSITO LEGAL / LEGAL DEPOSIT

ISBN
978-989-53056-0-5

DATA DE PUBLICAÇÃO / PUBLICATION DATE

1ª edição - 2021

URLS

azulejosporto.pt
gazeteazulejos.com
idmais.org
antiamnesia.fba.up.pt

Este livro foi desenvolvido no âmbito do projeto Anti-Amnésia (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-029022), cofinanciado pelo Programa Operacional Competitividade e Internacionalização (POCI), através do Portugal 2020 e do Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER) e por fundos nacionais através da FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

This book is a result of the project Anti-Amnesia (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-029022), supported by Competitiveness and Internationalisation Operational Programme (POCI), under the PORTUGAL 2020 Partnership Agreement, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and through national funds by the FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

Index

P.06 Tilegeist: between memory, practice and perception

P.10 Wounds in History. moving against the disappearance of tile heritage

P.14 Tiles of Porto

P.36 Azulejos Tilework: Craft, creativity, and heritage preservation

P.42 Azulejos ao LUME

P.62 A cidade troca de pele: contributos do design para a longevidade do património da azulejaria na cidade do Porto

P.74 The Craft of Perception: rescuing draft tiles

P.92 Coda: Perception and Opportunity





Tilegeist: between memory, practice and perception

Heitor Alvelos,
December 2020

This book brings together what might at first sight be two unlikely partners: a small tile-painting workshop and a scientific research project.

Since 2017, Gazete Azulejos has been dedicated to teaching and preserving the art of hand-made tiles, inviting tourists and residents to experience (and experiment with) the craft; simultaneously, it operates as a mobile unit documenting, archiving and disseminating the centuries-old heritage of tile-making in Porto, from its origins as an industrial endeavour all the way to its current state of general abandonment, were it not for the discreet endeavours of dedicated aficionados.

Anti-Amnesia, a research project dedicated to enquiring on (and acting upon) the ways Portuguese crafts and small industries may find viability in a World largely driven by mass production and outsourcing, developed four case studies from 2018 to 2020: a shoe factory, a typography shop, a hand-weaving association, and the aforementioned tile workshop. While we dedicated a book to the overall project, scrutinising these four case studies, we found it essential to produce this second volume focusing on the particular case of Gazete Azulejos. On one hand, because the scale and location of the workshop allowed researchers to maintain a closer contact; but most importantly, because the intrinsic qualities of its craft and its innate openness to exploratory approaches signalled an opportunity for a broader set of pedagogies.

The pedagogical component was a premise throughout Anti-Amnesia: as design researchers, we oppose the idea that the designer lands upon a given context and somehow comes up with a recipe for its viability. We have seen enough unfortunate exercises in rebranding to realise that, first and foremost, the designer needs to be an ethnographer, respectful of the wisdom that already resides in these contexts that are meant to welcome us. This is why, rather than take a prescriptive

approach to these case studies, we accepted from the start that pedagogy had to be reciprocal. In the end, Anti-Amnesia became more about providing visibility to signs of viability in the four case studies, rather than superimpose an action plan based on conceptual models whose universality is likely dubious.

The present book explores this pedagogical motto in three ways, each corresponding to a section: a pedagogy of heritage, where, in cooperation with Gazete Azulejos, we curate a selection of historical tiles whose production has long ceased, and whose reproduction is now possible as a manual, individual endeavour; a pedagogy of craft, where the project researchers themselves have experimented with tile-painting techniques and designs, through both in-person painting sessions and digital prototyping; and a pedagogy of perception, whereby we decided to editorially legitimise a series of tiles that had been previously used as test surfaces, originally devoid of intent beyond the drafting of rough ideas or the calibration of brushstrokes. These tiles were originally collected and glazed by the Gazete team, who had already sensed an aesthetic value despite a complete absence of intent in their making; and this collection of unintended compositions continues to this day.

Each one of the above three approaches obeys to a different logic: with Heritage, we learn of consensual aesthetics as filtered through the slow passing of collective time; with Craft, we learn through making, as mastery is ultimately the embodiment of common knowledge in one's skills; and with Perception, we propose what may be the most radical learning process of the three - learning to see differently, to recognise value and beauty beyond the appropriate canons. And it is in this third pedagogy, we argue, that the key to many of our conundrums as design researchers may reside.

This freedom to ascribe beauty or value potentially anywhere

may sound like a paradox when coupled with craft and heritage: in an age of over-abundant visual stimuli, of instant access to endless digital sources, it is too easy to fall prey to interchangeability, to the habit of consuming visual repertoires without bothering with an understanding of their process and provenance. However, we argue, it is precisely because of this culture of perverse amnesia that a pedagogy of perception needs to be accompanied by an investment in personal skill and wisdom. And this is not just what we found while working with Gazete Azulejos: it is what may elevate design practice to the level of research.

A few words on the book title: we struggled to find an expression that would speak of tiles devoid of a strict and reductive association with the traditional, an expression that would speak of future possibilities without sounding cliché, an expression that would acknowledge the uncertainty of the present times without holding itself hostage. In the end, «Tilegeist», the Zeitgeist of tile-making, seemed just right. A ghostly presence throughout the Centuries, covering the façades of the city while holding within itself the multiple stories behind every single artefact, most of these unbeknownst to us but still there, somehow. And of course, the spectral presence as an intuition, as a possibility: the time of tile-making may be now, or it may even be yet to come. In the end, it's up to us.



Wounds in History. Moving against the disappearance of tile heritage

Alba Plaza and Marisa Ferreira,
January 2021

Anyone who thinks of Portugal will quickly remember its tiled buildings: a powerful image that rests in the memory of millions of people around the World. It might be that, thanks to the visual impact of these small colorful ceramic pieces, many might be reminded of the existence of Portugal.

In order to find the first examples, we have to travel back to the mid-19th Century, where Romantic architecture made it popular to decorate buildings with colorful tiles, thus marking a historical period in Portuguese heritage. Nowadays, almost two centuries later, these tiles are the center point of a vast wealth of photographs uploaded and shared online every day, acting as true ambassadors of the country.

Nevertheless, and contrary to what many people might imagine, these tiles are not being properly safeguarded: only in 2017 a law was passed that partially ensured their protection.

It was mainly for this reason that, in June 2016, we decided to create "Os Azulejos do Porto", a non-profit project aimed at photographing and cataloguing the different tile patterns that cover the façades of the city of Porto. The objective is not only to preserve the façade tiles in order to prevent them from falling into oblivion, but also to raise public awareness so that they are properly protected, by promoting their restoration, preservation and use.

This cataloguing allows us to go around the city in search of new patterns, thus witnessing the daily life of Porto where, more often than we would like to admit, we are first-hand witnesses of the destruction endured by this heritage.

Ironically, one of the factors that has influenced this loss was the 2017 declaration of Porto as the best European tourist destination. This triggered an unprecedented tourist boom, greatly stimulating the search for spaces for tourist

accommodation and real estate investments. Many of the buildings that were abandoned and degraded began to be intervened and remodeled. In some of these reconstruction works, the centenary tiles made in the old (and already disappeared) factories of the area were destroyed. Factories that gave color to the so common gray granite architecture of Porto, responsible for the characteristic beauty that distinguishes the city.

This destruction happens in specific points of the city over a few days, so if you do not live nearby or happen to pass by, you will never know of the former façades: despite being in plain sight, they are flashes of light in the blur of everyday life.

One of the goals of "Os Azulejos do Porto" is precisely to detect these flashes and create the conditions for their worldwide acknowledgment and appreciation; not an easy task for a self-funded project, yet we persist.

For this reason, and in order to ensure the continuity of the project, in 2018 we created "Gazete Azulejos", a tile painting studio where we hold workshops teaching how these tiles were painted - and how they can still be painted in current times. It is our way of keeping a tradition alive, a tradition that, due to new mechanical production methods, seemed destined to disappear, while financing the ever-growing portfolio that stems from our studio.





Tiles of Porto



AP_20190703_192

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
4

FACTORY MARKS
Visible

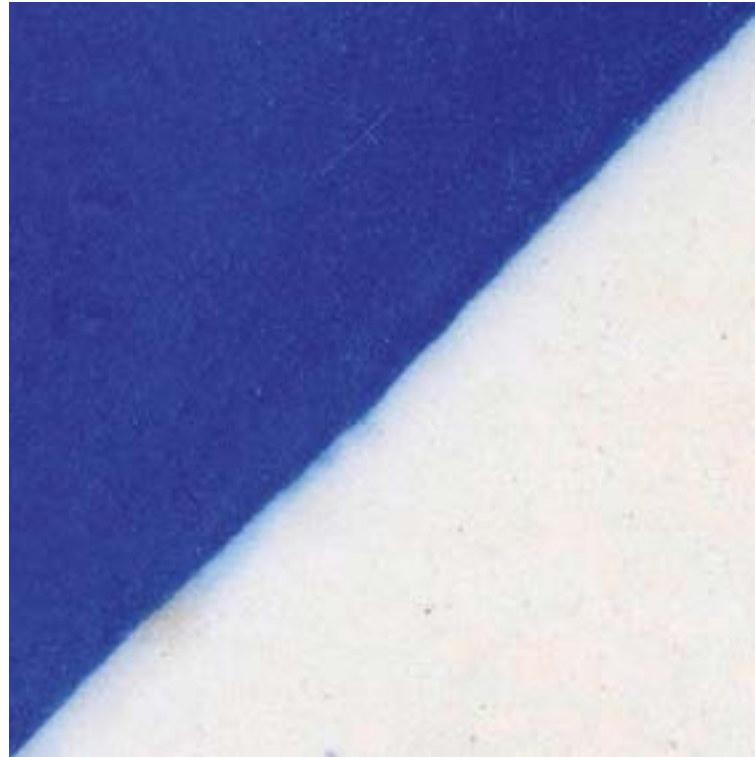
LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua do Cunha 192

DATE OF REGISTRATION
03/07/2019

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Good





AP_20160622_8

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
1

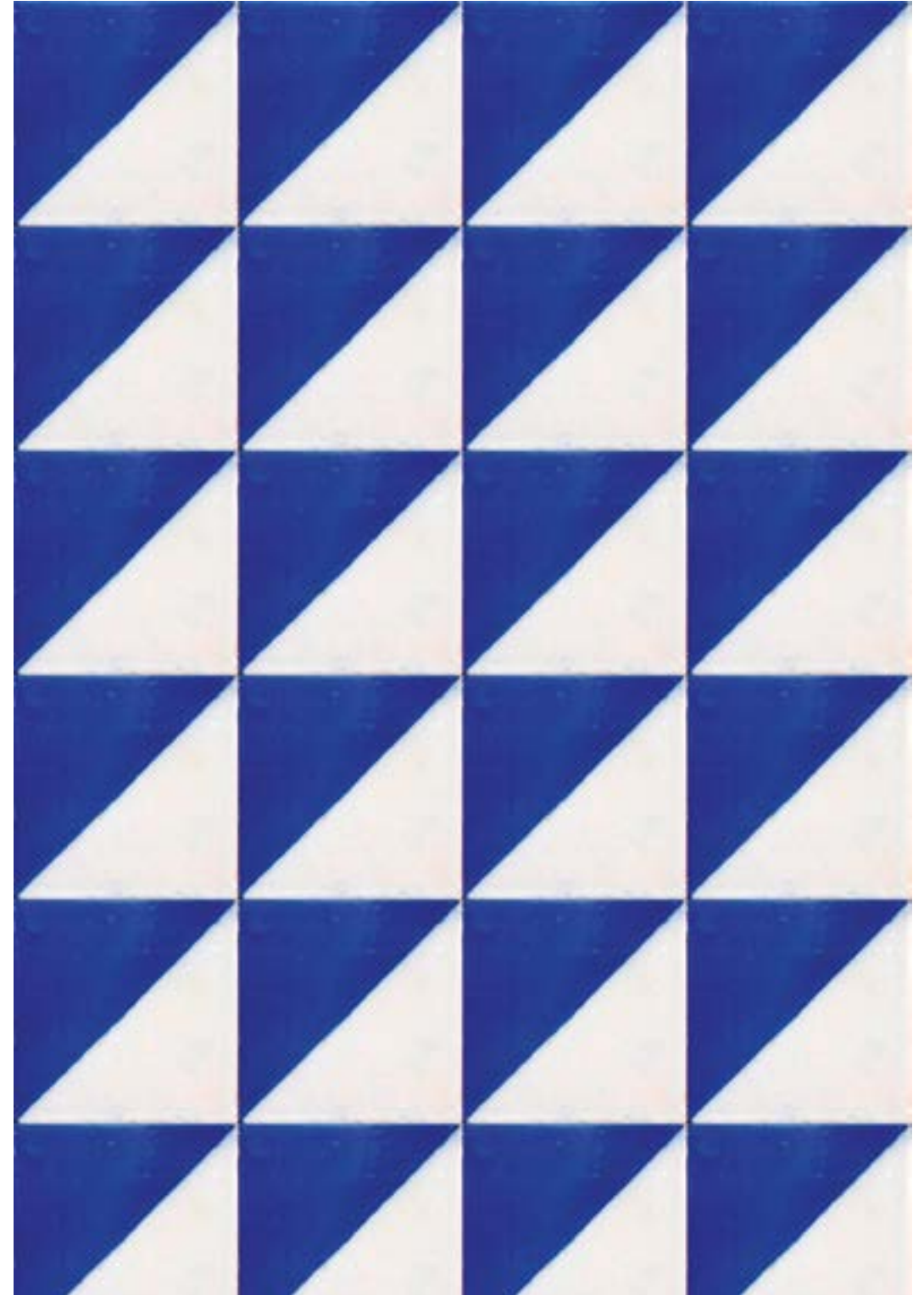
FACTORY MARKS
Not visible

LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua do General Silveira 8

DATE OF REGISTRATION
22/06/2016

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Good





AP_20160709_993

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
5

FACTORY MARKS
Not visible

LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua do Bonjardim 993

DATE OF REGISTRATION
09/07/2016

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Good





AP_20160908_214

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils + hand painted

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
1

FACTORY MARKS
Not visible

LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua Dom Manuel II 214

DATE OF REGISTRATION
08/09/2016

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Barely damaged





AP_20160927_341

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
2

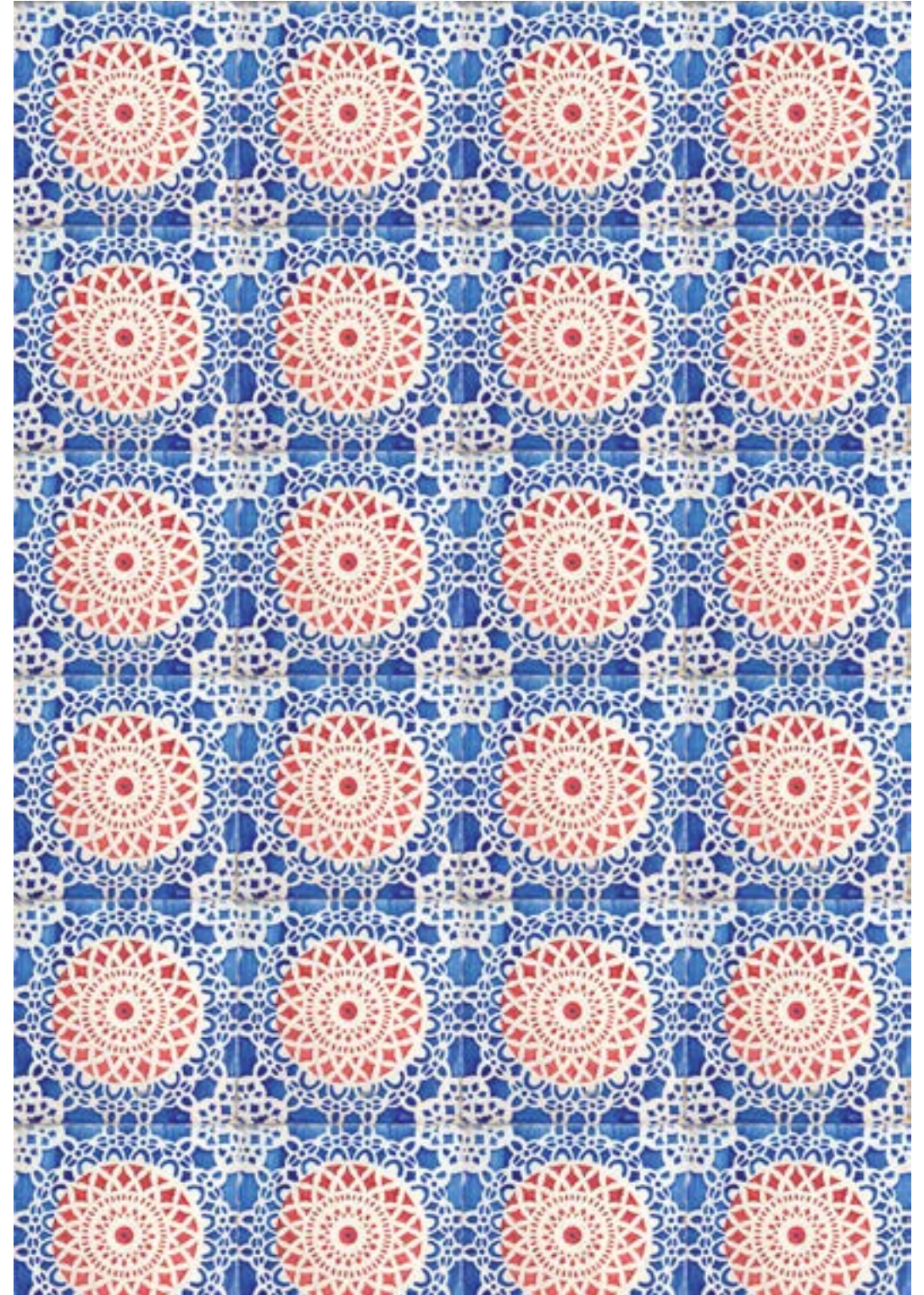
FACTORY MARKS
Visible

LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua João das Regras 341

DATE OF REGISTRATION
27/09/2016

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Partially removed



026



AP_20170731_242

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
3

FACTORY MARKS
Not visible

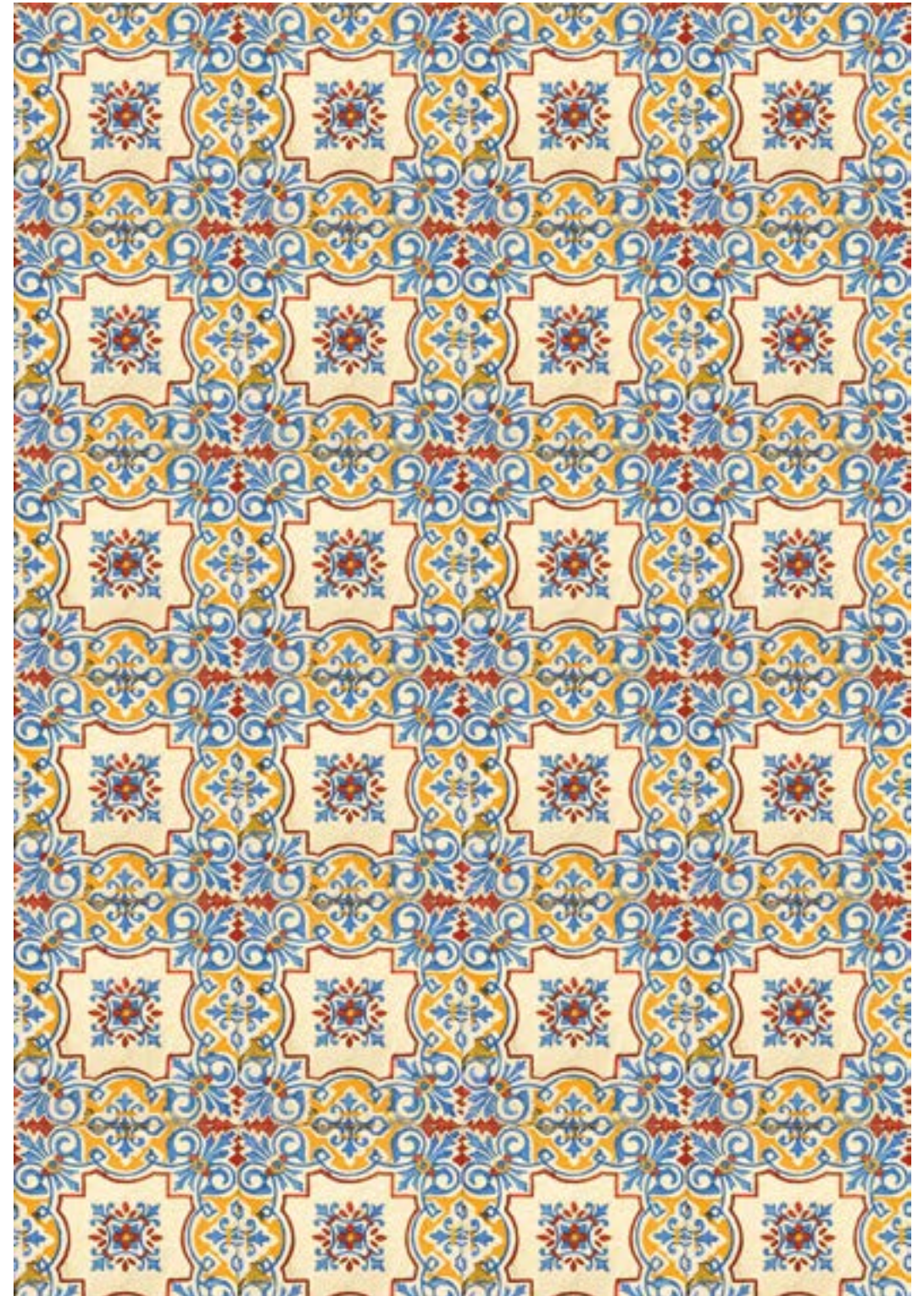
LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Travessa da Senhora da Conceição 242

DATE OF REGISTRATION
31/07/2017

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Damaged

027





AP_20181125_80

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
3

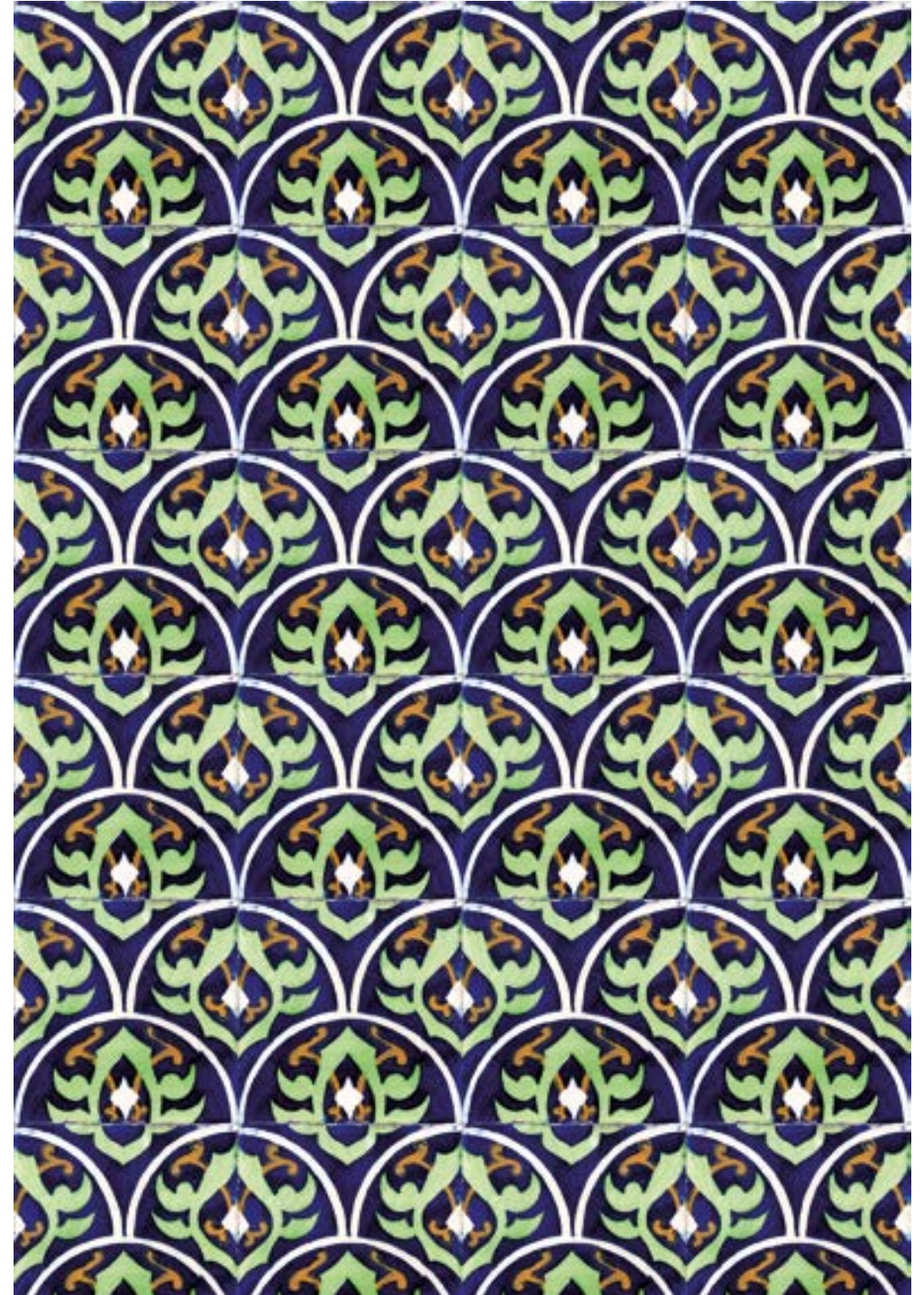
FACTORY MARKS
Not visible

LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua Rodolfo de Araújo 80

DATE OF REGISTRATION
25/11/2018

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Good





AP_20181126_14

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
5

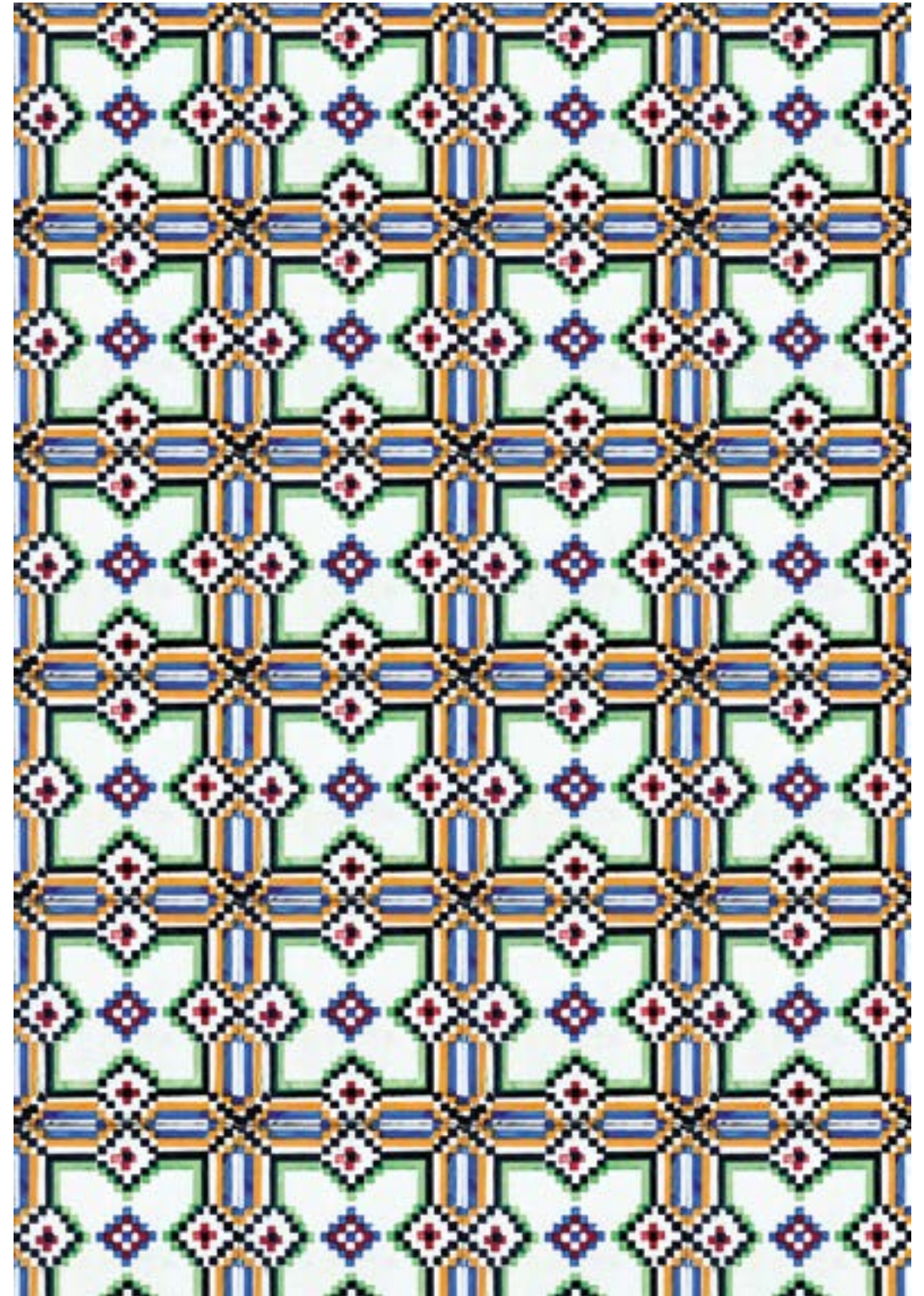
FACTORY MARKS
Not visible

LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua da Regeneração 14

DATE OF REGISTRATION
26/11/2018

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Good





AP_20190528_410

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
1

FACTORY MARKS
Visible

LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua de Santo Ildefonso 410

DATE OF REGISTRATION
28/05/2019

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Removed



034



AP_20201210_59

TYPE
Flat

MATERIAL
Clay

TECHNIQUE
Stencils

CLASS
Pattern

COLORS
2

FACTORY MARKS
Not visible

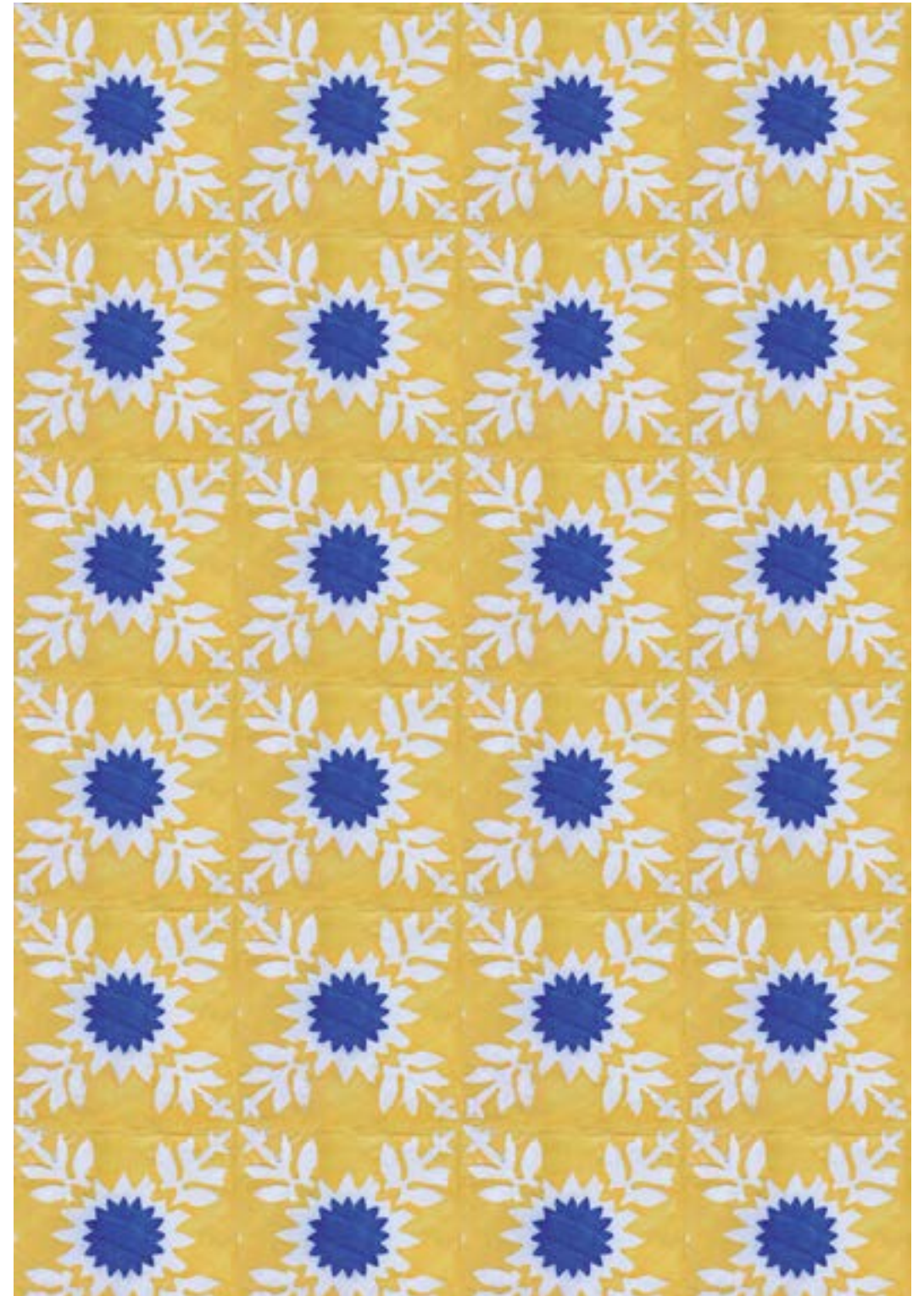
LOCATION
Residential unit

ADDRESS
Rua das Fontainhas 59

DATE OF REGISTRATION
10/12/2020

STATE OF PRESENTATION
Damaged

035





Azulejos

Tilework:

Craft, creativity, and heritage preservation

Heitor Alvelos and Abhishek Chatterjee

Amidst the myriad of interpretations that prevail on the facades of the city's homes and edifices, Porto's Azulejos tiles are also becoming oddly conspicuous in their absence.

Observable from the oblong patches of grey that run along once elaborate veneers, these bald spots on the city's bright and motley integuments resonate with meaning and concern. As Porto expands and accepts newer architectural paradigms, especially in its peripheries, the urban centre is witnessing a curious transformation — Azulejos, the city's long-established cultural archetype, is proceeding from its roots in functionalism towards an ordained identity as a thematic discourse. The same can be seen in the diverse reinterpretations of its iconography, which forms an important element of the visual lexicon that is mainly (but not exclusively) used for selling products and services as 'authentic' to the burgeoning tourism sector. The corresponding territorial move from manual to digital has been accelerating in recent years; however, such progression has come at a discernible cost to cultural and industrial heritage. The stolen tiles from the walls make a striking argument for the enduring value of originality; however, they serve as little more than the last vestiges of an intricate and aesthetically valuable practice.

Contrary to the perfunctory symbolism present in its modern avatars, the making of traditional Azulejos employs a processual approach that is both meticulous and inquisitive, resulting in a multitudinous universe of shapes, sizes, and patterns. The original masters of tile-making in Portugal were known to have taken inspiration from their historical counterparts in Spain, Northern Africa, and the Middle East, in blending math and mysticism by hand to create a visual narrative that was representative of diverse artistic and commemorative contexts. Graphical approaches, accordingly, have varied from tessellated and recursive patterns to murals, and nuances in form have been explored through dimensional

relief using motifs and textures. Simpler monochromatic ‘bevelled’ versions complete the array of possibilities that have been a source of pride and function for Portuguese homeowners for centuries.

From hand-produced to scanned, the Azulejos narrative is a familiar account lined with process and technology advancements, and respective increment in the number of use cases. The transposition of the tiles from interior to exterior, for example, speaks of a meaningful shift in convention pertaining to the practice that may have had roots in practicality, but came into its own as a cultural marker that leaned on artistic taste. Another intriguing aspect of its evolutionary discourse can be gauged from the tiles’ surface embellishment, whose application process has seen various cycles of maturation, including hand-painting, serigraphy, rotary press, and relatively recently, inkjet. In this regard, despite the perceptible technological improvements to scale and finish, modern-day producers are constantly being made aware of the persisting demand for hand-painted tiles whose distinctive aesthetics, wrought with history and human irregularity, present a story that is more meaningful than the sterility of contemporary machined alternatives. Not to be discouraged, some producers have sought to address the situation by resorting to scanning and reprinting old hand-painted pieces, effectively bringing full circle the technique’s aesthetic experience; however, such contrivance also paradoxically works to devalue the making aspect of the craft alongside its associated cultural legacy rather than promoting it.

To assess design’s role towards the continuity of such historically significant but antiquated traditional crafts, project Anti-Amnesia lays emphasis on gaining a greater visibility of emerging strategies that are being employed in response to real-world issues concerning industrial heritage management.

Traditional techniques and practices like Azulejos that exist within particular cultural landscapes inevitably face situations of flux due to the constant shift of socio-economic and sociocultural paradigms. Thus, undertakings that are endogenous and hands-on tend to provide more germane examples of restorative thought and action in such critical matters.

A case in point is ‘Os Azulejos do Porto’, an initiative which the project considers as a relevant subject of study towards comprehending the tradition of tile making in Porto, since it aims to revive and sustain the authenticity factor behind the original craft in absence of a dedicated community of practitioners. This Porto based collective represents one of the few remaining instances of entities that are currently involved in small-scale production of hand-painted tiles, in a city that was once home to several large-scale tile-producing kilns, the last of which ceased to operate in the 1980s.

The initiative’s approach, in this case, features a strategy that seeks to leverage a series of most pressing concerns, such as a surge in tourism, to work in favour of restoring traditional tile-making. The approach is also reflective of the initiative’s vision in terms of heritage management— one which addresses the prevailing cultural amnesia surrounding Azulejos by:

- doing on-ground research on the technical, factual and contextual aspects of the craft to gather evidence for supporting the argument for the craft’s safeguarding and restoration;
- developing a digital open source catalogue of Azulejos designs in the city marking precise street locations, which in terms of archiving, is increasingly gaining importance due to tile theft and the tearing down of older facades in the interest of new construction paradigms. The catalogue

is accessible online and assimilates contributions from the general public;

- incorporating the acquired practical knowledge of the craft towards conducting Azulejos-making workshops. These public sessions are publicized online and have been received with equal enthusiasm by locals and tourists alike. For the tourism sector, in particular, the workshop presents a creative solution to the tile-theft issue, wherein the initiative encourages visitors to make their Azulejos instead of buying stolen pieces as souvenirs from street fairs or antique shops.
- Inviting eminent designers and artists to create Azulejos artworks which are correspondingly presented at exhibitions, thereby advancing Azulejos as an unconventional artistic medium to contemporary creative communities, as well as bringing its historical and cultural significance to their attention.

Additionally, the collective has recently begun to accept vendor orders from building owners to restore façades by producing missing tiles.

As a result of such restorative measures, the initiative represents an intervention scenario which not only promotes active community-based creative engagement with a heritage craft and its associated concerns, but also communicates the undiminished value of a local traditional practice to a global audience. Its three-pronged strategy for cultural reconsideration essentially includes design, documentation, and dissemination: as a methodological approach, this falls in line with Anti-Amnesia's articulations, and can potentially inform ongoing and future community-based heritage management interventions.

The permanent transitioning of industrial and socio-cultural contexts inevitably, and at times profoundly, affects typical

practices such as traditional tilemaking, which in consequence may lose commercial scope, and thus economic viability. However, since these crafts are fundamentally representative of creative human enterprise, their ingrained artistic value becomes enduring, supplemented by historical and cultural significance. Craft based practices have also been known to maintain relevance due to their manual nature which motivates creative interest irrespective of eras; however, interventions such as Os Azulejos do Porto are fundamental to maintaining and improving public knowledge and accessibility to antiquated materials and processes.

Through its association with Os Azulejos do Porto, project Anti-Amnesia thereby recognises how restorative endeavours alongside broader dissemination entailing a communal call to action can contribute to the preserving specialized craft knowledge in artistic/cultural contexts until presented with conducive conditions for revaluation and reinstatement in socio-economic discourses. In its role as an active collaborator, it presents the Azulejos initiative with an additional possibility of engaging with students of design, who are an important part of the creative community and represent the future of making. Such collaboration is not only intended to provide support in terms of auxiliary processes related to research and archiving but also to re-inscribe and repurpose the recovered material, narrative and processual heritage.



Azulejos ao LUME

Investigadores do Unexpected Media Lab

Abhishek Chatterjee

Anselmo Canha

Cláudia Lima

Cristina Ferreira

Daniel Brandão

Eliana Penedos-Santiago

Heitor Alvelos

Júlio Dolbeth

Miguel Januário

Nuno Martins

Rui Monteiro

Rui Vitorino Santos

Susana Barreto

Abhishek Chatterjee



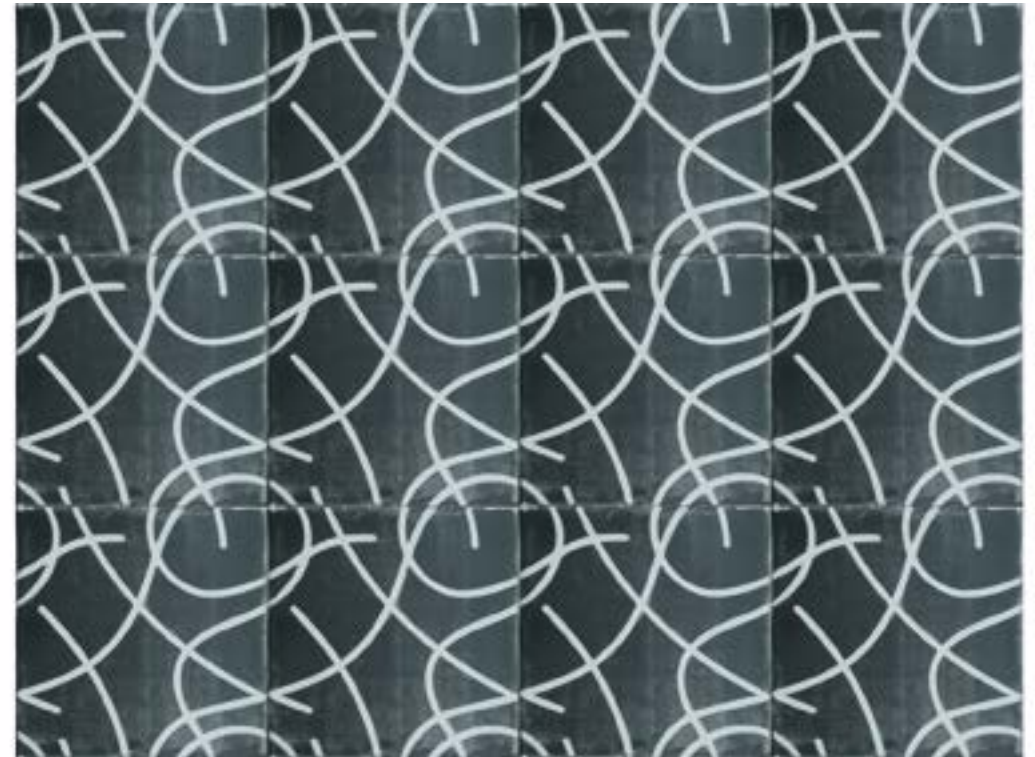
TYPE Flat
MATERIAL Clay
TECHNIQUE Hand painted
CLASS Pattern
COLOR 4



Anselmo Canha



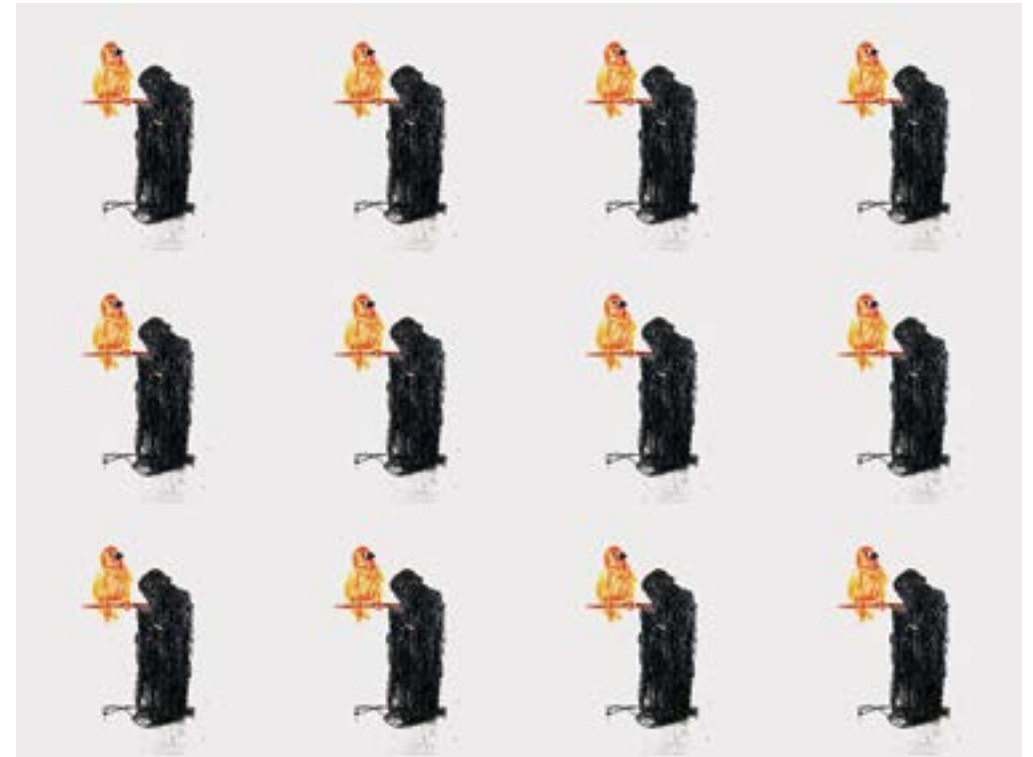
TYPE Flat
MATERIAL Clay
TECHNIQUE Sgraffito
CLASS Pattern
COLORS 1



Cláudia Lima & Antifluffy



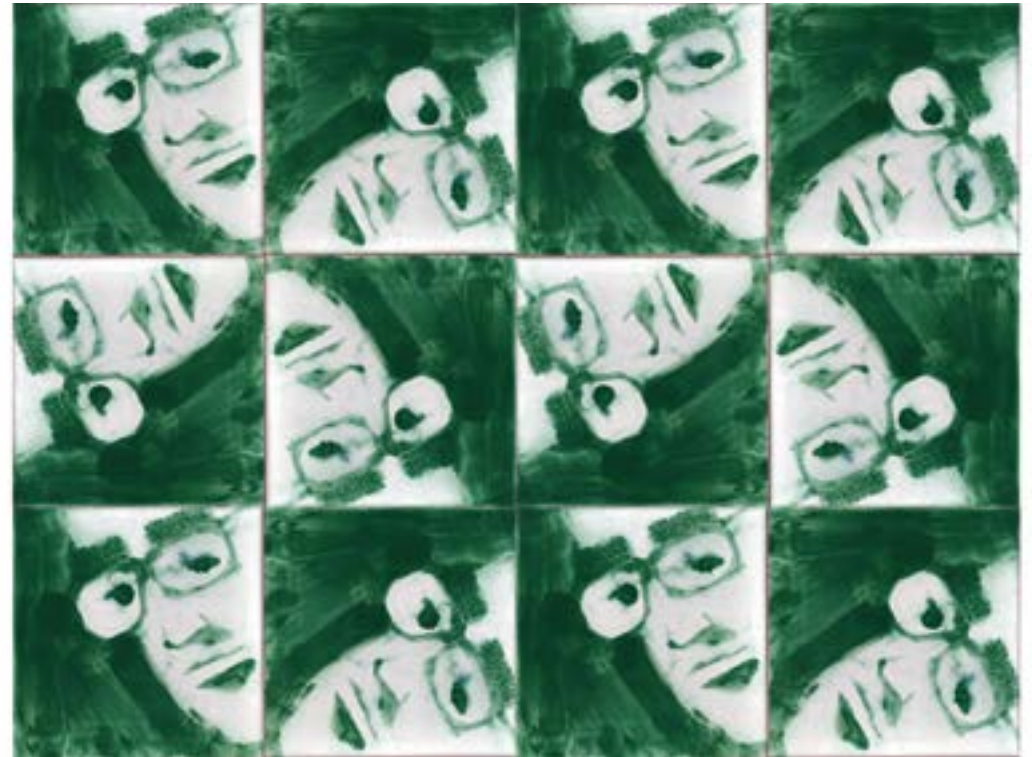
TYPE Flat
MATERIAL Clay
TECHNIQUE Hand painted + digital photography
CLASS Pattern
COLORS 4



Daniel Brandão



TYPE Flat
MATERIAL Clay
TECHNIQUE Hand painted
CLASS Pattern
COLORS 1



Heitor Alvelos



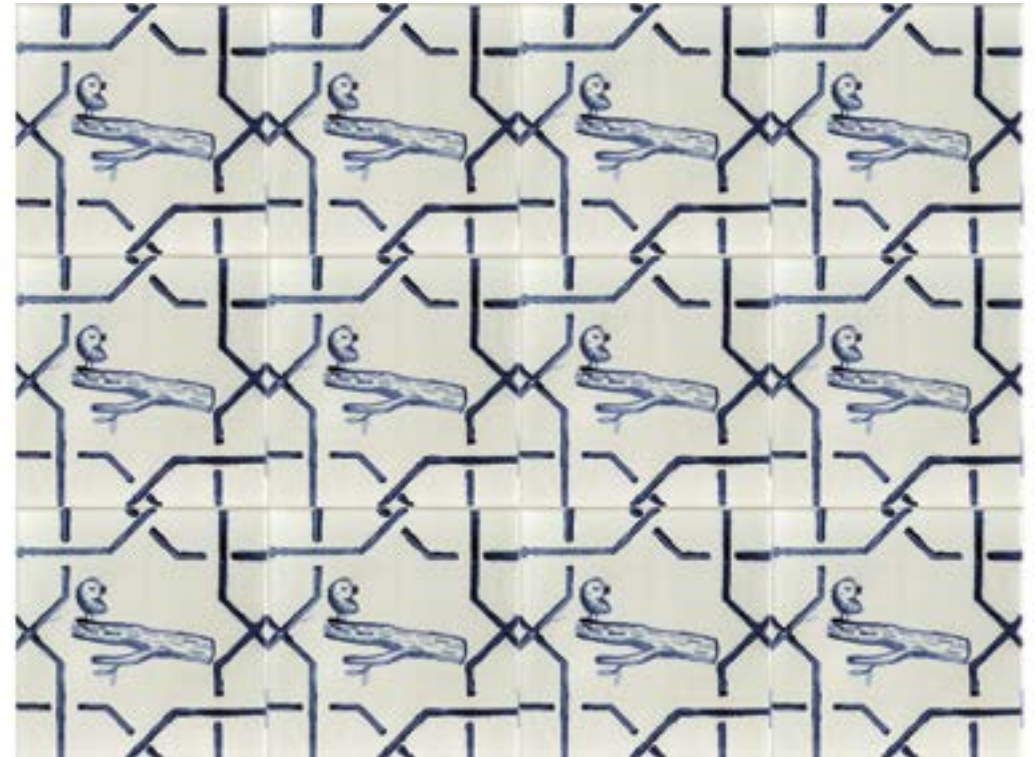
TYPE Flat
MATERIAL Clay
TECHNIQUE Stencils + hand painted
CLASS Pattern
COLORS 4



Júlio Dolbeth



TYPE Flat
MATERIAL Clay
TECHNIQUE Stencils + hand painted
CLASS Pattern
COLORS 1



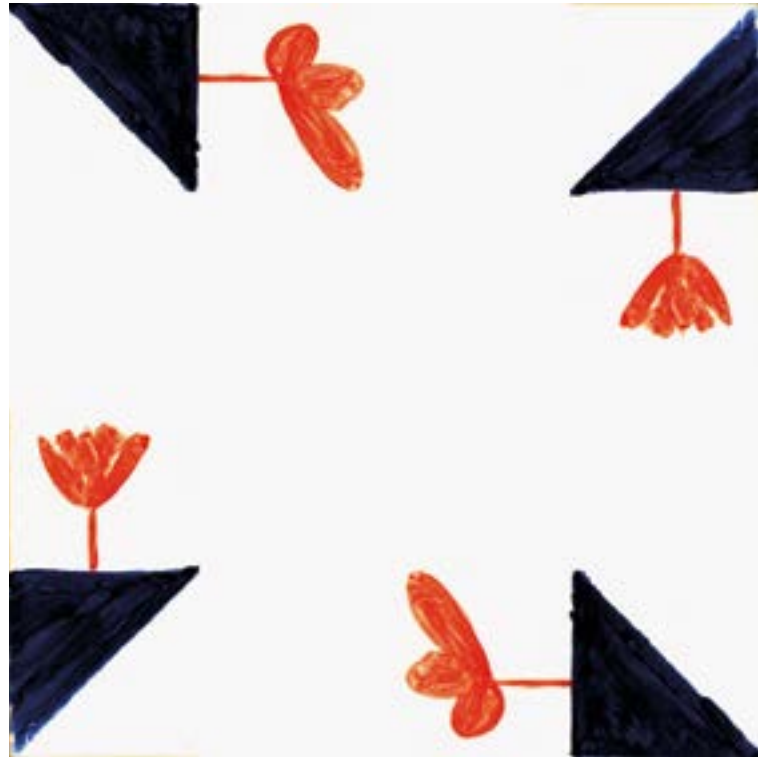
Miguel Januário



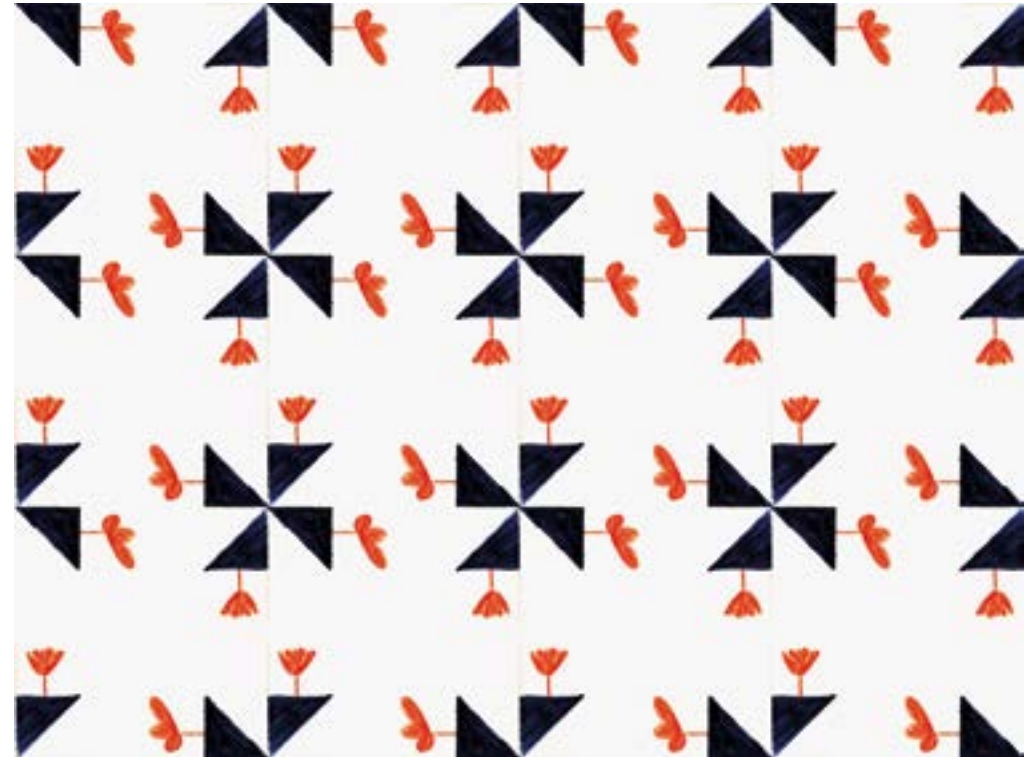
TYPE Flat
MATERIAL Clay
TECHNIQUE Stencils
CLASS Pattern
COLORS 2



Rui Monteiro



TYPE Flat
MATERIAL Clay
TECHNIQUE Stencils + hand painted
CLASS Pattern
COLORS 2



Rui

Vitorino Santos



TYPE Flat
 MATERIAL Clay
 TECHNIQUE Hand painted
 CLASS Pattern
 COLORS 2





A cidade troca de pele: contributos do design para a longevidade do património da azulejaria na cidade do Porto

Heitor Alvelos and Abhishek Chatterjee

1. DA MÃO À DIGITALIZAÇÃO

Por entre a abundância de interpretações que prevalecem nas fachadas das casas e edifícios da cidade, os azulejos do Porto tem vindo a destacar-se, em particular, pela sua ausência.

Estes pontos vazios nas fachadas brilhantes e heterogeneas da cidade, visíveis a partir de oblongos pedaços de cinza que se estendem ao longo de um revestimento outrora elaborado, ecoam sentido e inquietação. À medida que o Porto expande e aceita novos paradigmas arquitectónicos, especialmente nas zonas periféricas, o centro urbano assiste a uma curiosa transformação - o Azulejo, o arquétipo cultural da cidade há muito estabelecido, move-se agora das suas origens no funcionalismo para uma identidade ordenada em torno de um discurso temático. O mesmo se verifica nas diversas reinterpretações da sua iconografia, que constitui um elemento importante do léxico visual, utilizadas para comercializar produtos e serviços como «autênticos» em grande parte, mas não exclusivamente, para o crescente turismo. A conseqüente transição, ainda que progressiva, do manual para o digital sofreu uma acentuada aceleração nos últimos anos, resultando num custo significativo para o património cultural e industrial. Os azulejos roubados das paredes são um argumento flagrante do valor perene da originalidade, contudo, constituem pouco mais do que os últimos vestígios de uma bela e sofisticada prática.

Contrariamente ao simbolismo superficial presente nos seus avatares modernos, o fabrico de azulejos autênticos emprega uma abordagem simultaneamente meticulosa e indutiva, resultando num inúmero universo de formas, tamanhos e padrões. Os mestres pioneiros da azulejaria em Portugal eram conhecidos por se inspirarem nos seus homólogos históricos em Espanha, Norte de África e Médio Oriente, que misturavam manualmente a matemática e o

misticismo com o objetivo de criar uma narrativa visual representativa de diversos contextos comemorativos e artísticos. Por conseguinte, as abordagens gráficas, têm variado da recorrente aplicação de padrões geométricos a murais, e as nuances da forma têm sido exploradas sob a forma de relevo em substituição de temas e texturas. As versões monocromáticas «biseladas» mais simples completam a série de possibilidades que constitui há séculos, uma fonte de orgulho e desempenho para os proprietários.

Da mão à digitalização, a narrativa dos azulejos é composta por histórias comuns combinadas com avanços tecnológicos e processuais, a par da inevitável progressão das diferentes formas de uso e aplicação. A passagem dos azulejos do interior para o exterior, revela, por exemplo, uma mudança significativa de uma convenção possivelmente iniciada com base na prática mas concretizada como um padrão cultural assente numa sensibilidade estética. Outro aspecto curioso deste percurso evolutivo pode ser encontrado no desenho da superfície dos azulejos, cujo processo de aplicação tem conhecido vários ciclos de maturação, incluindo pintura manual, serigrafia, prensa rotativa e, mais recentemente, jacto de tinta. Neste sentido, apesar das evidentes melhorias tecnológicas ao nível da escala e do acabamento, os fabricantes da actualidade são permanentemente sensibilizados para a constante procura de azulejos pintados à mão, cuja estética singular, forjada com a história e o erro humano, apresenta uma narrativa que contrasta fortemente com a esterilidade das alternativas digitais modernas. Para responder às expectativas, alguns produtores procuraram resolver a situação recorrendo à digitalização e reimpressão digital de peças antigas pintadas à mão, devolvendo a técnica à sua origem, contudo tais artifícios ao invés de promover, desvalorizaram o artesanato e o seu associado legado cultural.



Figura 1: Coleção de Azulejos pintados a mão, partidos, recolhidos num edifício em construção no Porto

2. PROJETO ANTI-AMNESIA: INVESTIGAÇÃO EM DESIGN COMO MEIO DE REVITALIZAÇÃO CONJUNTURAL.

O projeto Anti-Amnésia, um processo de mediação na investigação em design, baseia-se na evidência crescente de que as culturas tradicionais de fabrico em pequena escala no Norte e Centro de Portugal estão a enfrentar sérios desafios de viabilidade. (Gomes, 2016; de Almeida and Chatterjee, 2016; Albino 2017) na sequência de novas realidades globais comerciais e industriais. Neste sentido, identifica o artesanato

de Azulejos como um caso inscrito na referida avaliação e, por conseguinte, propõe meios para a construção de uma base probatória que pode potenciar a sua apreciação e reativação cultural.

A orientação do projeto no sentido de revigorar as indústrias artesanais nativas é a resposta construtiva à uniformidade da globalização atual induzida pela produção em massa. Esta questão é oportuna e premente, e está entre as preocupações culturais mais relevantes debatidas em projetos de investigação europeus e internacionais, filosofias e práticas de design (Clarke, 2011; Manzini, 2015; Verganti, 2015; Morrison, 2017), e apresenta exemplos concretos na atualidade portuguesa através de exemplos como os Azulejos.

O projeto entende que a riqueza do conhecimento tradicional, presente na cultura material e nas narrativas sociais de tais indústrias, está em risco de perda permanente. A sua intervenção consiste na recuperação e no restauro das identidades, tradições e sistemas de conhecimento relacionados: uma estratégia de mediação baseada na síntese de vários planos de acção complementares que envolvem etnografia, arquivo, design de produto e comunicação e estratégias contemporâneas de comunicação e negócios.

O enquadramento metodológico adotado é sustentado por métodos de investigação etnográfica, reconhecidos e acreditados das ciências sociais (Pink, 2007; Rose, 2011), que se revelam altamente eficazes quando aplicados em articulação com métodos de design (de Almeida, 2012). O projeto assenta na investigação colaborativa em design, doutoral e pós-doutoral, previamente desenvolvida com as indústrias tradicionais nas respectivas regiões (de Almeida & Chatterjee, 2016), e incorpora a experiência, os métodos e os resultados relevantes previamente alcançados.

A linha correspondente de intervenção assenta na premissa de que uma abordagem centrada no design e na identidade pode assumir um papel decisivo na recuperação digna dos referidos contextos de produção, nomeadamente:

- Resgatando materiais, documentos, testemunhos e factos históricos que de outra forma poderiam perder-se ou ser esquecidos;
- Reconhecendo os processos e protagonistas destas indústrias e ofícios como património por si só;
- Comunicando os valores simbólicos e históricos intrínsecos a esses contextos, e defendendo sua distinta singularidade nos dias de hoje;
- Desenvolvendo experiências com a hibridação de materiais e estéticas dos vários contextos de análise, a fim de obter novos produtos e perspectivas de mercado e promover uma rede colaborativa orientada ao apoio mútuo e à inovação.

Adicionalmente, a pesquisa conduzida pelo projeto contempla uma reversão contínua dos seus resultados em múltiplos contextos de apropriação sociocultural conexas por meio de um ciclo «construir-medir-aprender», uma extensão significativa do qual é alcançada através da contribuição curricular de estudantes de design. Os estudantes envolvem-se diretamente com os temas e objetivos do projeto através de uma série de oficinas específicas e tarefas curriculares, incluindo etnografia visual com as comunidades praticantes; apoiar ações multidisciplinares relacionadas com a recuperação e reabilitação de materiais únicos; construir e alimentar os diversos acessos on-line à investigação; e apoiar a divulgação pública dos resultados em rádios comunitárias.

Neste sentido, o projeto possibilita a criação de condições para a aplicação de uma abordagem metodológica que complementa o enfoque tradicional do Design. O minucioso compromisso contextual com os estudos de caso visa proporcionar acesso direto ao conhecimento

tácito, para análise e arquivamento, presente nos ambientes industriais tradicionais. Do mesmo modo, o projeto apresenta um particular interesse na preservação do conhecimento tácito por detrás da produção de azulejos, juntamente com a documentação de ferramentas de produção e de cultura material relacionada que fazem parte integrante da memória coletiva do ofício. O projecto entende que o estudo sistematizado e a inscrição histórica do artesanato, nesta geolocalização particular, são ainda limitados e suas histórias e narrativas complementares estão ainda por revelar. Consequentemente, o projeto resgata e cruza essas histórias no seu programa de produção científica e artística, incluindo protótipos, publicações, exposições e eventos, disseminação online e comunicação via rádio.

Em suma, é pertinente salientar que o projeto se distancia categoricamente dos exercícios comerciais contemporâneos que aplicam modelos de re-branding a produtos tradicionais, de forma indiscriminada. Pelo contrário, propõe ajudar as indústrias e os artesãos em crise na construção de uma identidade e autonomia, incentivando os atuais profissionais a definir as suas próprias narrativas, parâmetros de comunicação e meios de auto-realização, inscrevendo em simultâneo as suas perspectivas singulares nas esferas pública e académica, e promovendo o seu legado junto dos potenciais e futuros criadores.

1. OS AZULEJOS DO PORTO, UM ESTUDO DE CASO

Com o objetivo de avaliar o papel do design na continuidade do artesanato tradicional (historicamente significativo, mas ainda assim antiquado), o projeto Anti-Amnésia dá especial ênfase à obtenção de uma maior visibilidade das estratégias emergentes, empregues com o intuito de dar resposta às questões do mundo real sobre a gestão do património

industrial. As técnicas e práticas tradicionais, presentes em determinados contextos culturais, enfrentam, inevitavelmente, flutuações devido à constante mudança de paradigmas socioeconómicos e socioculturais. Por conseguinte, os empreendimentos endógenos e manuais tendem a fornecer exemplos de reformas mais relevantes em situações de risco.



Figura 2: Oficina de Azulejos a decorrer

Um exemplo disso é ‘Os Azulejos do Porto’, uma iniciativa que o projecto entende como sendo um tema de estudo relevante para a valorização da tradição da azulejaria no Porto, uma vez que visa revitalizar e perpetuar a autenticidade do artesanato original na ausência de uma comunidade de profissionais dedicada. Por conseguinte, a iniciativa do Porto representa o único exemplo actual de envolvimento institucional na produção de azulejos pintados à mão, numa cidade que albergou em tempos diversos fornos dedicados à produção de azulejos, o último dos quais deixou de funcionar na década de 1980.



Figura 3: Lista compilada das fábricas de Azulejos encerradas. @Instalação da “Os Azulejos do Porto”

A iniciativa propõe uma estratégia de entrada múltipla que explora uma série de preocupações mais prementes, como o aumento do turismo, para atuar em defesa da recuperação de formas tradicionais de produção de azulejos. Esta visão reflete-se também na oferta de um programa adequado de gestão do património em questão - um programa que aborda a amnésia cultural prevalecente em torno dos azulejos:

- Desenvolver estudos de campo por forma a abranger a informação técnica, factual e de enquadramento como factor de sustentação na defesa da conservação e recuperação do artesanato.
- Desenvolver um catálogo digital, de acesso livre, que disponibiliza desenhos de azulejos distribuídos pela cidade

do Porto. Esta informação será apresentada juntamente com a sua localização o que, em termos de arquivo, tem vindo a adquirir uma crescente importância devido ao roubo de azulejos e à demolição de fachadas antigas, em prol de novos paradigmas de construção. O catálogo é acessível online e integra contribuições do público em geral.

- Integrar os conhecimentos práticos adquiridos na realização de oficinas de azulejaria. Estas sessões públicas são divulgadas online e têm sido recebidas com igual entusiasmo tanto pelos locais como pelos turistas. Para o sector do turismo em particular, a oficina apresenta uma solução criativa para a problemática do roubo de azulejos, uma vez que esta incentiva os visitantes a produzirem os seus próprios azulejos ao invés de comprarem peças roubadas como souvenirs em feiras de rua ou antiquários.
- Convidar designers e artistas conceituados para a criação de obras de arte sob a forma de azulejo, para mostra em exposições, oferecendo um suporte artístico não convencional às comunidades criativas contemporâneas com um alerta simultâneo para o seu valor histórico e cultural.

Em virtude destas medidas de reabilitação, ‘Os Azulejos do Porto’ apresenta um quadro de intervenção que não só promove o compromisso criativo com um ofício tradicional, e com as inquietações inerentes, como também veicula o valor inestimável de uma prática tradicional local a um público global. A sua estratégia de requalificação cultural comporta essencialmente três vertentes, concepção, documentação e divulgação: metodologicamente, esta inscreve-se na linha de orientação do projeto Anti-Amnésia, manifestando potencial interesse relacionado ou paralelo na gestão do património bem como na orientação de intervenções futuras ou em curso.



Figura 4: “Print screen” de um catálogo de azulejos online compilado por “Os Azulejos do Porto”

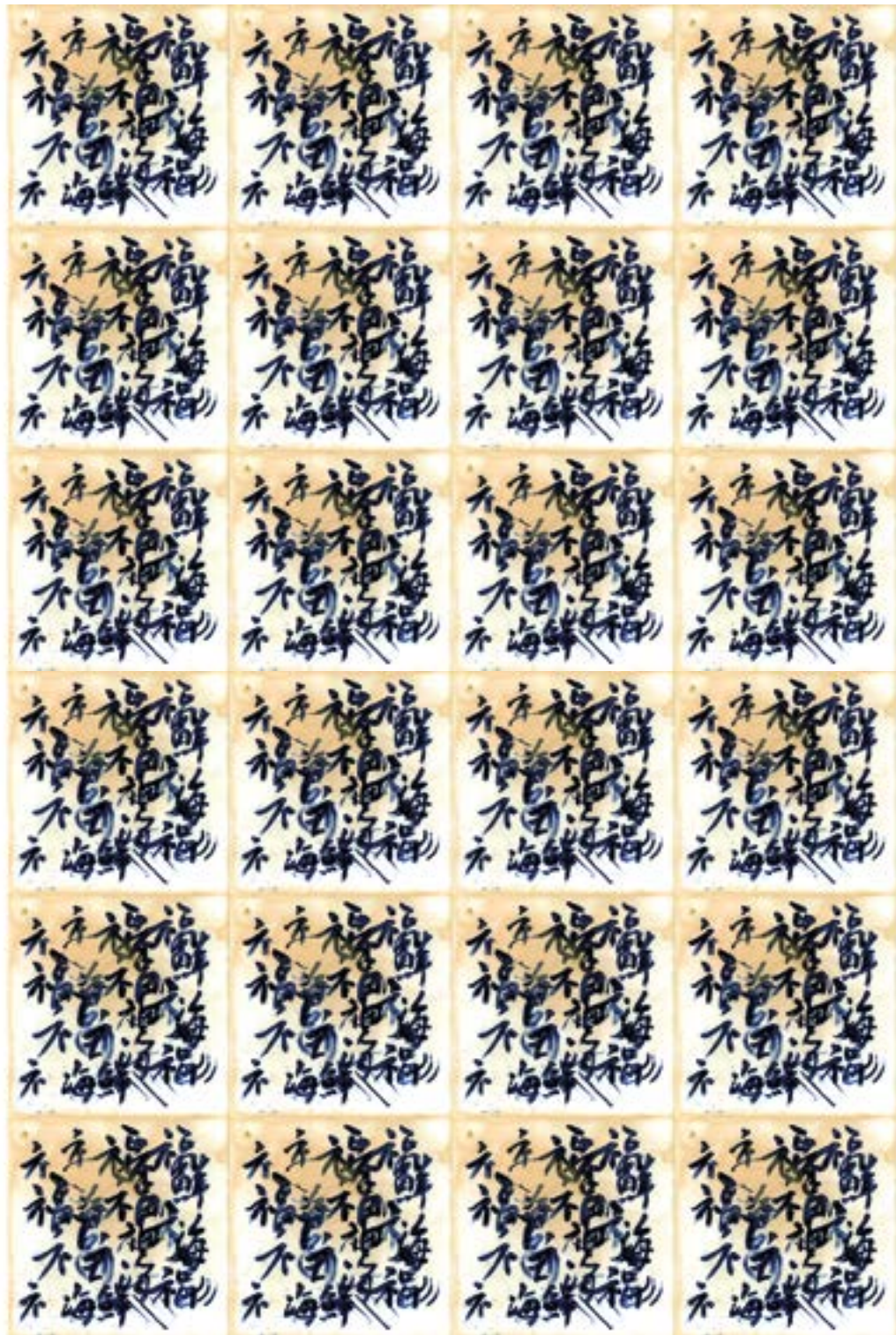
A permanente transição dos contextos industriais e socioculturais afecta inevitavelmente, e por vezes em grande medida, práticas tradicionais como os azulejos, que podem, consequentemente, perder alcance comercial e, como tal, viabilidade económica. No entanto, uma vez que estes ofícios representam fundamentalmente a iniciativa criativa, o seu imbuído valor artístico torna-se permanente.

Por meio da sua associação com ‘Os Azulejos do Porto’, o projecto Anti-Amnésia reconhece o empenho na reabilitação e a profunda divulgação exigida pelo apelo à intervenção, podem contribuir para a perpetuação do conhecimento especializado num contexto estritamente cultural, até que se criem as condições favoráveis à sua reinserção nos discursos socioeconómicos. No seu papel de colaborador ativo, o projeto Anti-Amnésia apresenta esta iniciativa com a possibilidade adicional de interagir com os estudantes da área do design, não só apoiando processos auxiliares relacionados com a investigação e o arquivo, mas também no sentido de reinscrever e reorientar o património material, narrativo e processual, resgatado.





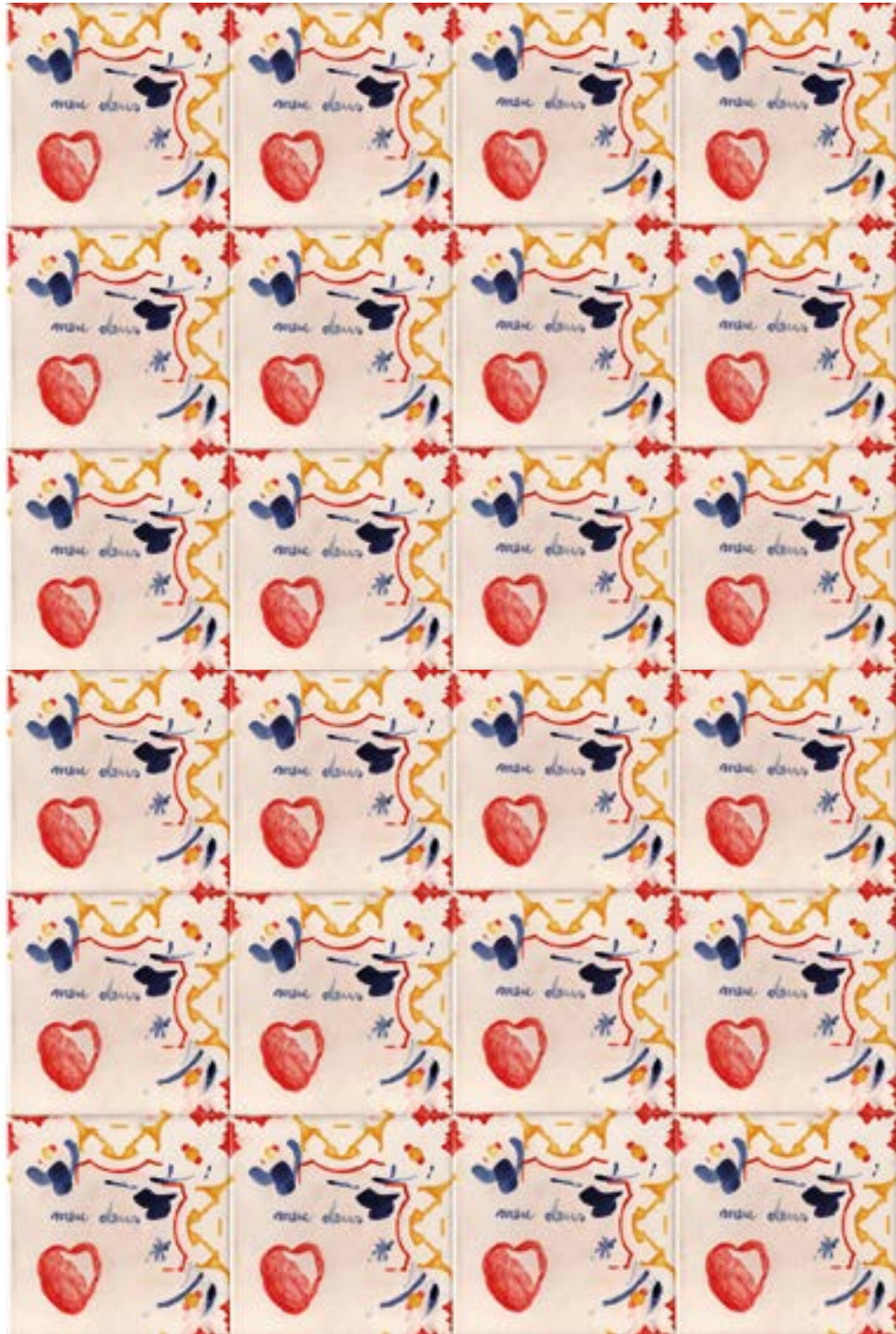
**The Craft of
Perception:
rescuing
draft tiles**



Exp. 0296



Exp. 0348



Exp. 0539



Exp. 0376



Exp. 0766



Exp. 0049



Exp. 0516



Exp. 0045



Coda: Perception and Opportunity

Heitor Alvelos,
January 2021

The day was April 2, 2019. The researchers at LUME had booked an exploratory meeting with the team of Gazete Azulejos, in order to map out possibilities for a collaborative study. By coincidence, the Gazete team arrived having just witnessed the renovation works at a particular building: the builders were ridding the façade of its tiles, unceremoniously placing the bulk at the adjacent dumpster.

And thus our plan for a meeting was superseded by the urgency of a rescue mission: all present immediately drove to the building's location, and enacted an instant tile rescue mission from said dumpster. No tile had survived unscathed: these century-old, manually painted tiles had all been broken into pieces. Still, archeology is archeology.

As we loaded the rescued tiles into IKEA bags, the builders observed us with a semblance of perplexity and disapproval... as if wondering whether they had just gotten rid of something valuable, as if wondering whether we had the right to take ownership of what they had just discarded.

Part of the rescue missions rehearsed in the present publication entails these tangible situations: attention to the surroundings provides opportunities whose urgency suddenly takes precedence over strategy.

These tile fragments are now safely in possession of Gazete Azulejos, still fully able to offer the means for a pattern reconstruction. And as fragments, no longer whole, they are able to embody the paradox of a heritage that seems oblivious to its own value, unless alerted through the recognition of opportunities and corresponding swift action. As researchers, this is our duty as well.

