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ABSTRACT

Traditional coastal communities are recognized for inspiring artistic representations, justifying the interest in analysing the role of art in the image production that is related to them. In this paper we aim to understand the interference of photography in the production of maritime memories, with focus on the Portuguese town of Nazaré. This picturesque fishing village attracted many Portuguese and foreign artists, who contributed not only to the visual representation of this community but also to the construction of a national identity by conveying a poetic image that linked the homeland to the daily struggle with the sea. We propose to reflect upon the photographic appeal that Nazaré represented in the first half of the 20th century by examining the thematic focus of these pictures, the balance between their aesthetic value and their iconographic and documentary parts, and the practices that have changed, but continue to determine the maritime identity of Nazaré.

KEYWORDS

Photography, fishing communities, Nazaré, memory

PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEMORIES FROM THE SEA IN NAZARÉ

ART, DOCUMENTATION AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

Traditional coastal communities are recognized for inspiring artistic representations, justifying the interest in analysing the role of art in the image production that is related to them, and which is often limited to laudatory or historicist views.

First of all, we have to clarify the relationship between Portugal and the sea, an affinity that is closely linked to the national heritage status, since its understanding includes both “past-memory” and “future project”.

The sea is one of the most strongly engraved images that the Portuguese people have used to construct their identity as a nation (Peralta 2008, 78), upon which a series of defining discourses have been drawn up – from the greatness of the overseas explorations to a nostalgic feeling of loss and decay (Garrido 2009, 5), or from an “epic and glorious sea” to the commonly shared memories of fishing and other related activities.

Although this “memory built on fetish” in no way resembles the reality of fishing experiences, we must recognize the undeniable perception of the sea as part of the “Portuguese national heritage” (Peralta 2008, 77–82).

However, this heritage needs to be “activated” to exist; it is a social construction which produces a particular identity through the selection, interpretation and exhibition of events, places, expressions and rituals that are recognized by the community (Thiesse 1999, Hobsbawm 2005). Since the criteria for such triage change over time, the past ends up being a product of the present that organizes it (Connerton 1993). Nevertheless, this notion of heritage, which retains an “idealized version of a culture”, brings great richness to the notion of the sea “as a national identity discourse” and as “pure memorial” (Peralta 2008, 82), and justifies the aim to understand how this speech has been constructed. For this “activation” we here consider, among other possibilities, the role of art, including photography as an artistic object *versus* its documentary status.

THE SEA AS AN INSPIRATION TO ART

The way the sea has served as creative inspiration shows the “umbilical relationship” (Pereira 1998) that man established with it and which manifests itself in terms such as “seafood”, “seaway”, “sea menace”, “sublime sea”, “sea meditation” or “sea leisure”. We must examine how this connection and its strong visual component have been translated into the national artistic repertoire.

The introduction of fishing practices and the often humble people who carry them out is a relatively recent phenomenon in the fine arts in general and, in particular, in Portuguese arts (which concern us here). The sea itself, as individualized plastic element, only belatedly received the honours of being a main element in the pictorial composition.

It is mainly from the mid-19th century onwards that painters and sculptors, followed by photographers, made their way to the coast, giving greater attention to the landscape and daily life captured outdoors, which also reflects a new and closer relationship that man, for therapeutic reasons or leisure, developed with the sea.

This movement to the coast led to the discovery of an “exotic” world by the bourgeois and aristocratic elites, a perception that significantly changed the landscape and the economy of local communities, bringing with it new social habits and a taste for the pictorial representation of these spaces and the moments of leisure and summer holiday associated to them.

The fishing scenes (and rarely the scenes from the bathing season), captured from the fishing communities between Setúbal and Póvoa de Varzim for the more bourgeois circles of Sintra and Cascais, began to emerge with full autonomy on canvases and in sketchbooks of Portuguese artists, a fact that corresponds to the greater attention that was paid to landscape and folk customs by the late-romantic and naturalist generation, influenced by European tendencies, especially from France.

After the second and third decades of the 20th century, the representations of the sea and the fishermen generally reflected more social and humanistic concerns, although we have to conclude that Portuguese artists chose to paint the sea with realism, rather than convey their inner impressions (Garrido 2008), thus satisfying the taste of the bourgeois society who gifted themselves with pictorial representations of a peaceful relationship between man and sea. This elegy of the fishing people was easily transformed into an element of the heroic vision of the New State (*Estado Novo*) and its nationalist discourse on popular culture, becoming a more effective means of propaganda than it had been under the First Republic, especially when applied by the Secretariat of National Propaganda (*Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional*) and the National Secretariat of Information (*Secretariado Nacional de Informação*), under the direction of António Ferro (Melo 2001).

THE SEA OF NAZARÉ IN THE VISUAL ARTS

In this study on Portuguese artistic creation inspired by the sea and, above all, by local fishing communities, we seek to demonstrate the interference of pictorial and photographic figurations in the production of maritime memories, exemplified through the paradigmatic case of the Portuguese town of Nazaré. “Nazaré is the sea. The immense, eternal sea which is carried in the hearts of all Portuguese”, proclaimed the photographer Artur Pastor (1958, 39). In this traditional village, an economy based on fishing and the exploitation of resources provided by the sea created a “culture of maritime vocation”, assimilated by the community and recognized, on national and international level, for its almost idyllic permanence in the industrialized post-war Europe of the mid-20th century.

This picturesque fishing village – “the Artists-Haven”¹ – attracted Portuguese and foreign artists alike, who enormously contributed not only to the visual representation of this community but also to the construction of national identity by conveying a poetic image that linked the homeland to the daily struggle with the sea.

As emphasized by James Elkins, “there is no such thing as just looking” (cit. in Martins 2011, 88); the images have to do with ways of seeing; they are more like *screens* that interpose themselves between men and the world (Vilém Flusser, cit. in Martins 2011, 88), suggesting and inspiring perception models that can form the basis of collective phenomena, such as nation-building or the construction of a collective imaginary.

This reflection is essential to our understanding of how the “Nazaré identity paradigm” has been generated, which is indeed very visual; an identity that is rooted in the vision of a “Nazaré of the fishermen” and its folklorization, especially since the 1930s (but whose roots we have already met in the previous two decades; Leal 2000, Carepa 2002). The artists, consciously or unconsciously, participated in the production, dissemination or conservation of its outlines, reproducing a standard based on the faces of fishermen, dressed in long johns and chequered shirts, and their wives, wrapped in black cloaks or wearing the colourful outfit of several skirts; standing in individual pose, looking at the viewer, or in group, occupied with the entrance or exit of boats, patching the nets and fishing gear or preparing fish and related primary activities – in a unique space, the beach bounded by the promontory.

Joining the intellectuals who wrote about Nazaré from the early 1900s onwards, such as Raul Brandão, Afonso Lopes Vieira, Bernardo Santareno, Branquinho da Fonseca, Miguel Torga and Alves Redol, numerous painters (and some sculptors) gave shape to a significant production – now spread over museums (especially art museums) and private collections – which helped to underline the singularity of Nazaré’s fishermen. Naturalist, modernist and neorealist artists (Thomaz de Mello (Tom), Lino António, Almada Negreiros, Stuart Carvalhais, Abel Manta, Guilherme Filipe, Eduardo Malta, Lázaro Lozano, Júlio Pomar, Abílio Mattos e Silva, among the most cited) chose Nazaré and its landscape and boats as subject matter, but especially the people and customs of a community that lives forever related to a certain group of symbols, very much fed by a tourist demand that almost assigns them the task of substantiating the overall relation of the Portuguese man with the sea. In 1958, António Lopes Ribeiro pointed out that “(...) Nazaré gave images and pictures, stories and cases, that really helped to shape this ‘imagery’ of Portugal that today runs the world and makes the World start coming here” (Mello 1958, 9).

With regard to films that focus on the village and its sea, we can draw attention to the documentaries *Nazaré. Beach of Fishermen* (*Nazaré. Praia de Pescadores*, 1929) and *Maria do Mar* (1930) by Leitão de Barros – the latter a film that marks the history of the Seventh Art at

¹ J. Barry Greene in a tourist leaflet published by the Comissão de Iniciativa da Nazaré in 1936.

national and even European level – and *Nazaré* (1952) by Manuel Alves Guimarães, with a screenplay written by Alves Redol.

Apart from painting, the image of Nazaré is also closely linked to its multiplied version in photography, which assumes to be an unambiguous device, based on the “myth that the camera never lies”. The photograph is relatively widespread thanks to its reproducibility, thus facilitating the replication of memory and the democratization of the village’s image when compared with other arts, such as painting, which is more elitist and tied to the aura of a unique work (Sontag 1986, 134) .

In this communication we propose to think about the photographic appeal that Nazaré generated in the first half of the 20th century, by examining the thematic focus of these photographs, making a balance between their aesthetic value (as artistic objects) and their documentary significance. This latter dimension of photography – although it may not have been the main motivation of the authors in the first place – adds a substantial wealth of information on places and people, but more significantly still on socio-economic activities and know-how concerning fisheries and the close relationship of this community with the sea.

In the mid-20th century, Nazaré attracts many famous international photographers who bring about a qualitative leap compared to the earlier photographic works. In the 1950s, Nazaré is an obligatory stop for tourists and photographers. These years correspond to a period in which Portugal was “discovered photographically” by foreigners, which was also the time when photography contributed to reshape the post-war discourse on national identities. Simultaneously, they correspond to the golden age of humanist photography, particularly in France, and to the second wave of the photographically illustrated press, both in Europe and in the USA.

The faces, marked by hard labour and life by the seaside, become symbols of an entire community (Barthes 1980); the black clothes of widows, the typicality of artisanal fishing practices and folk custom, which were already disappearing in the industrialized post-war Europe; all these images – created by artists such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Stanley Kubrick, Federico Patellani, Jean Deuzaide, Bill Perlmutter, or Edouard Boubat, among many others – are reproduced in magazines, galleries, archives or museums all over the world. Imbued with a timeless beauty, these photographs continue to evoke strong emotions, either through their angle of vision, or in terms of intimate charge and community characterization.

Rather than unveil what Nazaré meant in the work of these photographers, it is important to assess their pictures from Nazaré with regard to the international history of photography and to the portrait that they offered not only of this fishing village, but of Portugal as a whole.

Susana Martins (2011, 9) investigated the role of photography as a crucial agent in spreading the national narratives that intricately defined the so-called Portuguese identity, as it was internationally perceived in the

late 1950s. Focusing on particular and contrasting cases – an exceptional book (Franz Villier 1957) and an official exhibition (Brussels Universal and International Exhibition, 1958) –, she explored how national contents are frequently constructed by means of photographic storytelling and how photography, in its apparent neutrality, constitutes a privileged media to operate in the spheres of ideology and identity. She gave special attention to visual narrativity and to the photographic essay form, in their intersections with the fields of tourism, travel, politics, exhibition display and visual communication.

In her research, Susana Martins (2011, 128) identified the strategies of visual aesthetics used in the pictures of Nazaré as a clear illustration of the mythical time. “Nazaré embodied the perfect example of a location chosen by the Portuguese Offices of Information to convey an idea of Portugueseness”.

With regard to national creators, Nazaré also inspired the work of several photographers (Gérard Castello-Lopes, Denis Salgado, Pécurto Varela, Carlos Afonso Dias, Eduardo Gageiro, Artur Pastor and many others). In this survey, we also must not ignore the local photographer Álvaro Laborinho (1879–1970), whose negatives are kept in the Museum of Nazaré (Museu Dr. Joaquim Manso – Museu da Nazaré), and who left us an almost daily record of the fishing activities and the life at the beach of Nazaé in the first half of the 20th century (Laborinho, David and Nabais 2002).

Laborinho, who was born in Nazaré as the son of a fisherman, owned a textile and towels shop. He had several passions, including photography, considering himself an “amateur photographer”. Not much is known of his life and background. He was the representative for Kodak in Nazaré, subscribed several photography magazines and exchanged letters with other photographers, attended photography salons in Lisbon and used his store window to exhibit his photographs. Awarded with several prizes in exhibitions and competitions, he created the first photographic leaflet in Nazaré with the cover title “Souvenir of Nazaré, the Best Beach of Portugal” (“Lembrança da Nazaré, a Melhor Praia de Portugal”).

Thanks to these images that, at the time, immediately circulated as postcards and appeared in tourist books, José Carepa (2002, 32) recognized Laborinho as “one of the most important founders of Nazaré’s identity-producing symbology”, based on the visual impact of his work.

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC DISCOURSE

Due to its technical nature, the photographic image acquires the “value of a real world image” which is very difficult to contradict, since it conceals its interpretative nature. This ambiguity is inherent to the “genetic framework” of photography: being it an artistic object or a document, it is accepted as “being of truth value”.

Certainly, the image is not the real thing, but it is at least its perfect *analogon* (Barthes 2008); and it is precisely through this “analogue

perfection” that common sense defines the picture. Put simply, the photograph is seen as a re-presentation of nature itself, as an unmediated copy of the real world (Sekula 1982, 86).

Roland Barthes (2008; Martins 2011, 87) refers to the denotative function of the photograph, but also distinguishes a second level of invested, culturally determined meaning: the level of connotation. Considering the photography as a “mechanical analogy of the real”, normally that division would not be applied to photography. This one would be exclusively composed of a “denoted” message and leaves no place for the development of a second-order message (Barthes 1978, 18). The power of this folklore of pure denotation is considerable. It elevates the photograph to the legal status of document and testimonial. It generates a mythic aura of neutrality around the image, the myth of photographic truth (Sekula 1982, 86). Now, this status of “pure denotation” of photography (its “objectivity”) is somehow misleading, because, in fact, the photographic message is also connoted. Any meaningful encounter with a photograph must necessarily occur at the level of connotation. “Pictures provide evidence, not only of what is there, but also of what someone sees” (Sontag 1986, 84).

The photographic paradox will then appear in the coexistence of two messages: one with no code (which would be the photographic analogy), and another with code (which would be the “art”, or the rhetoric of photography). The connotation code is neither “natural” nor “artificial”, but historical, or if we prefer, “cultural” (Barthes 2008, 270). The photographic reading is therefore always contextual, exposing the photograph’s claim to a past moment and its entanglement in the present moment of viewing. This is what Barthes calls the “polysemic character of the photographic image”; in other words, the photograph, by itself, can only present the *possibility* of meaning. Only through its placement within particular discourse systems can a photograph yield specific semantic outcomes. Any given photograph is conceivably open to appropriation by a range of “texts”, each new discourse situation generating its own set of messages (Martins 2011, 91).

It is impossible to conceive of a photograph in a “free state”, unattached to a system of validation and support, that is, to a discourse. As Allan Sekula (1982, 84–85) points out in his famous paper, “The meaning of a photograph (...) is inevitably subject to cultural definition” and is context-determined. The task is to define and critically engage with what we might call the “photographic discourse” (Sekula 1982, 84). A discourse can be defined as an arena of information exchange, that is, a system of relations between parties engaged in communicative activity.

A photograph is not an image of facts, but rather an image of a set of concepts. Photography is able to depict something about the real world, but at the same time it means something more, something in the domain of text and discourse. According to Susana Martins (2011, 22), photographs seem to be representations of the world, while they are in fact powerful visual representations of texts.

Victor Burgin (1982, 143) underlines that “work in semiotics showed that there is no ‘language’ of photography, no single signifying system (...) upon which all photographs depend (...); there is, rather, a heterogeneous complex of codes upon which photography may draw. Each photograph signifies on the basis of a plurality of these codes”.

In short, Sekula (1982, 108) considers that “all photographic communication seems to take place within the conditions of a kind of binary folklore. That is, there is a ‘symbolist’ folk-myth and a ‘realist’ folk-myth. The misleading but popular form of this opposition is ‘art photography’ vs ‘documentary photography’. Every photograph tends, at any given moment of reading in any given context, towards one of these two poles of meaning. The oppositions between these two poles are as follows: photographer as seer vs photographer as witness, photography as expression vs photography as reportage, theories of imagination (and inner truth) vs theories of empirical truth, affective value vs informative value, and finally, metaphoric signification vs metonymic signification.”

ÁLVARO LABORINHO – CREATING THE NAZARÉ PHOTOGRAPHIC PARADIGM



Figure 1 – Álvaro Laborinho, “Women on the beach, gutting the fish”, 1915. MDJM inv. 1483 Fot.

Since its invention, photography has been seen as a privileged medium for representing everyday life, with an impact never achieved by any other pictorial figurations, due to its nature as an apparent portrait of reality, combined with the ease of its reproduction. But this assumption, that there is an image “itself”, comes up against the recognized polysemic character of the photographic image. After all, photography weaves a story, through the selectivity of focus, and creates “visual disdain” (Martins 2008: 36), keeping from everyday life just what “is worth” to be kept, what we want to remain from each day. Therefore, photography is not a qualified means of documentation when it comes to daily life, because it documents, above all, the mentality of the photographer and of those who use his product. The only way to turn photography into a “mirror” is to look beyond the mirror, that is, to understand photography in order to be able to understand the society that is proposed and imagined through photography (Martins 2008, 46, 51).

We now invite you to look at the picture by Álvaro Laborinho, *Women on the beach, gutting the fish*, 1915 (Figure 1). Four women are at the beach, with the sea and the promontory as background. One of them is standing, the others sitting, looking at the observer, knowing that they are being photographed and suspending their action of gutting the fish, washing it with sea water and preparing it for sale or for later drying. Notice the various types of recipients for fish and that each of the women is wearing different clothes, showing a rather great diversity in costume, from headscarf to hat and black cape (which was to become famous in the following decades).

The photograph has a particular “point of view” and a “frame” that defines what is to be seen. To Victor Burgin (1982, 146), “it is the position of point-of-view, occupied in fact by the camera, which is bestowed

upon the spectator. To the point-of-view, the system of representations adds the frame (...), and through the agency of the frame the world is organized into a coherence which it actually lacks, (...) a succession of 'decisive moments'. The structure of representation – point-of-view and frame – is intimately implicated in the reproduction of ideology (the 'frame of mind' of our 'point-of-view')."

This photograph is part of a large set of glass (13×18 or 9×13) or film negatives, dated mainly between 1906 and 1934, which can be grouped into the following themes: fishing and boats, fishing and related activities; bathing at the beach; popular and religious festivals; daily life events and official events; landscape (rarely the sea itself; when it is represented, these are the few pictures where we feel higher aesthetic care with regard to the changes of light); and the intimate and family nucleus.

Laborinho's images represent a valuable source of information on the village of Nazaré during the first half of the 20th century, although they have not been produced with the purpose of ethnographic study, a purpose that we can see, for example, in the photographs by Rocha Peixoto, who used photography as a support for his writings, thus attributing them an essential value as documental support (Martins 2009). Nor are they like the photographs taken by Alves Redol, author of the book *Uma Fenda na Muralha* (1959, a story that takes place in Nazaré), who can be considered a photographer who collected documental evidence to support his research on the reality of the communities that fed his neorealist literary work (Santos 2011: 99).

Although he had been surrounded by people linked to the world of images, Álvaro Laborinho did not dedicate himself to photography as a deliberate creative project. As Ana David (2002, 40) noted, "Laborinho was a man who was aware of his surroundings, who felt the importance of images (...). But he was not a studio photographer, nor had he pretensions to be an artist."

Above all, Laborinho was an educated and well-connected man, interested in this new process of registering the reality, with easy access to the equipment and materials he applied to support his quest, which was to witness the events and the economic and social life he observed every day. However, we should clarify that this almost daily record, continuously produced for about 30 years, also spoke of his curiosity towards the "other". He was an outside "observer" of the reality shared by fishermen and ordinary folk, eternalizing it through his lens and, early on, realizing its potential in terms of tourism by turning it into postcards, at a time when photographs were becoming of use to the emerging business of tourism and its need for appealing advertisements.

This is the contradiction of photography; it infuses the trivial image with a multiplicity of readings (Martins 2008,50). The photographer shoots with the intention to remove the commonplace from its commonplace. Together with the others, the selected picture (Fig. 1) serves as an example; it is not a mere fragmented imagery, but it recounts a series of



Figure 2 – Postcard “Nazareth – Fish Market”. Álvaro Laborinho cliché. MDJM inv. 634 Doc.

stories and proposes a “memory of dilacerations, of ruptures (...). The memory of losses.” That is why, even today (and more than ever, before the new challenges brought about by mass tourism and modernity), these pictures are so meaningful for the Nazaré community.

To Vilém Flusser (2002, 74) what matters is the medium (the channel); the photographer takes the picture depending on the channel. Álvaro Laborinho used many of the above mentioned images on postcards and in the first touristic guides advertising Nazaré as a bathing beach. Clearly, we see his pictures entering the fields of tourism and local promotion, losing their eventual denotative aura of neutrality. The selected photographs are above all those which show the natural beauty of the place, with the sea as a constant element, with moments of fishing, already perceived as an artisanal practice, and with cheerfully working people and their rituals and traditional costumes (we already detect the beginning of “staging”, with examples of men and women wearing festive costumes, but placed into a context of work, especially in photographs taken after the 1920s) (Figure 2).

We can talk of the “usage of memory” when a museum has the power to preserve for the future the past and present representation of the community. As an entity with responsibility for the patrimonialization of the sea, the Museum of Nazaré, who keeps this photographic collection, is part of a current debate on the redefinition of Nazaré’s identity. Today, and in syntony with other traditional maritime centres, Nazaré forges new forms of relations with the sea, besides fisheries, under an increasingly ecological perspective and related to scientific research, sports and tourism.



Figure 3 – Postcard “Preparing the fish for drying”. Álvaro Laborinho cliché MDJM inv. 1784 Fot.

This understanding of photography as a documental source is vital for the inventory of collective practices that have already disappeared or that are facing rapid changes under the burden of modernity, constituting an endangered intangible heritage. Photos like Álvaro Laborinho’s *Preparing the fish for drying* (Figure 3) testify to the evolution of traditional processes such as drying the fish², which continues to be practiced daily on the beach of Nazaré – according to archaic methods, in terms of hygiene and exposure –, a surviving familial economy based on the work of women. Beyond its original purpose of saving the surplus fish, it ended up creating singular gastronomic habits. With growing tourism, this practice is at risk of suffering rapid change, since it is streamlined to fit the touristic offer and to correspond to a planned image which ultimately undermine its authenticity. It is the duty of the Museum of Nazaré, as an “authorized memory space” (Guillaume 2003), to uncover the “creation” and “manipulation” of these “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm 2005), but above all to understand why they are so necessary in changing societies, such as the traditional fishing communities of the Portuguese coast. In this endeavour, photography has an important role to play.

In 1957, on her official visit to Portugal, Queen Elizabeth II was presented with a photo album entirely dedicated to Nazaré, whose pictures were taken by the Portuguese photographer Artur Pastor. The selected photos

² The “drying the fish” is still held daily by a group of Nazareen women, at the “estindarte” (a drying rack), located on the beach. Traditionally, it provided the livelihood of families for the times when the fish was scarce. After gutted and salted, the fish is “spread” in “paneiros” (rectangular trays with nets), where it remains for some hours or about two to three days.

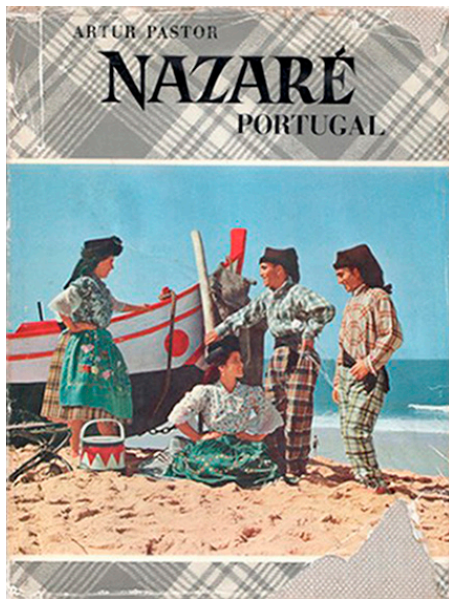


Figure 4 – Cover of the photobook *Nazaré* (1958) by Artur Pastor.

were then published in 1958 under the title *Nazaré*. In this publication, the photographs are accompanied by poetic captions which redirect the eye through what photography itself, by its very nature, already is: an interpretation (Sontag 1986, 71). The sea, the humanity of people (the fisherman – “the eternal fighter”, the woman – “intensely photogenic”, children and old men), the fishing activity (boats and fishing gear), the shipwrecks, the traditional customs (festivals, dances and songs), the landscape and its panorama, the legends of Nazaré and the sea-bathing season, all these are the subjects photographed by Artur Pastor and described in the original text (in Portuguese, French and English), interspersed with faces enlarged to the size of a page. The enthusiasm in conducting these activities suggests spontaneity and the portrait of a moment that the photograph “has frozen”. But Vilém Flusser reminds us that the images often “have the appearance of copies (and are confused with them), but structurally speaking, are in reality projects” (V. Flusser, cit. in Martins 2011, 87). Above all, we find a close attention to the human figure in Artur Pastor’s photographs, integrated into scenographic frames and showing postures that, in many cases, may have been previously arranged by the photographer; here, we find all the basic elements that help to construct the visual paradigm – the rhythm and imposing effect of the ship’s prows, the defiant manner of old men, the harsh beauty of women, the traditional costumes, and the harmonious interaction between men and women at work, occupying the space of the beach, separated from any circumstances, “reduced to types, to archetypal figures, to nobodies that embody a legendary time” (Martins 2011, 128) (Figure 4).

Artur Pastor’s photographs exemplify how photography is part of everyday staging (Martins 2008, 46); people are photographed representing themselves in society and representing to society. So widespread thanks to that album, the photos are organized according to a certain selection, inscribed into a larger programme that ultimately determines the result of this book, as well as of other similar publications. The scope of these publications is international; the translation of their texts into French and English make them accessible to foreigners, who, especially in the 1950s, will join all kinds of curious people, brought in by the growing tourist trade of the country and attracted by a promotional campaign that combines the beauty of the landscapes with the “untouched state” of a rural Portugal, by the sea.

In a museological context, the photographs by Artur Pastor³ allow for many different uses: from supporting the textual description and the exemplification of traditional work processes to the visual arts, thanks to their aesthetic qualities of composition and light; but they are also a means to make visitors think about how these discourses about Nazaré and its fishing community were designed, integrated and expanded.

As Susana Martins (2011, 129) points out, the reason why the visual representations of Nazaré were so cherished was the twofold political intention they frequently served: they not only aesthetically legiti-

³ The originals belong to the Municipal Archive of Lisbon (Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa).

mized the undeveloped state of the country, but also represented the connection to the glorious past of the Age of the Discoveries. These fishermen were visually appropriated as a national fiction: they were the living proof of the Portuguese maritime fate, inheritors of the famous navigators and their glorious past.

In this group of tourist and travel publications, Susana Martins (2011, 130) identifies an edition that “positively refuses” this bond with historical narrative: Franz Villier’s book on Portugal (Villier and Marker 1957). In a picture taken by Papon, *Pêcheur de Nazaré*, we indeed can see a fisherman in the foreground, but he is far from being part of a mythological time. “Looking beyond the mirror” and seeking the elements out of the photograph *punctum* (Martins 2008, 51), we also see a car, people from another social level, and no glimpse of the sea, which usually integrates the photos from Nazaré. Either in the texts or in the selected photographs, there is a clear concern with the social and cultural situation of the Portuguese people.

Among Portuguese authors who showed the same social concern, let us remember the photograph of an old woman hauling the fishing net with effort, filling the entire frame, which earned Eduardo Gageiro a reprimand and detention by the political police (PIDE) in 1962.

However, as David Santos (2011, 105–106) recalls, even the images of social denounce, produced in the context of opposition to the Portuguese dictatorship, are essentially linked to a naturalistic view of the photographic act, which, since the mid-19th century, influenced several generations of photography-loving people, what may have limited its political and social impact.

IN CONCLUSION

We tried to demonstrate the link between the artistic value of photography and its informative value with regard to practices and manifestations that meanwhile have disappeared or changed, but which continue to determine the Nazaré maritime identity.

If we easily accept that a painting is offering a subjective representation of a chosen theme, in relation to photography this decoding is less easily accepted because photography is frequently reduced to being a “window on the world”. In the early 20th century, Álvaro Laborinho was one of the original creators of the Nazaré visual paradigm, which then would be greatly developed in the mid-century, either with clearly propagandistic or touristic concerns (as revealed in Artur Pastor’s photographs), or more aesthetic concerns (the work of many authors who are part of the international history of photography). These images provide information for the study of these maritime communities, based on the “denotative message” of photography and its documentary nature. However, the context in which these images are read, and the discourse that they allow to create, reveal a multiplicity of meanings, which also helps to understand how a particular identifying image of Nazaré was

created, an image on which the community still lives on, despite the new forms of engagement with the sea, which includes surfing, summer entertainments or mass tourism... But in the end, what remains is the wish for authenticity, supported by the memories of the past. And the photographs, in their connotative function, are quite helpful for this purpose.

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