

KEEP IT SIM- PLE MAKE IT FAST!

AN APPROACH
TO UNDERGROUND
MUSIC SCENES (VOL. 4)
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Keep it Simple, Make it Fast!

An approach to underground music scenes (vol. 4)

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6.4. Contemporary artistic manifestations: Agenda, mapping and territoriality

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A b s t r a c t

The changes that have taken place in the artistic world in Portugal – since the 1980s – are materialize in manifestations that translate, in general terms, the democratization of culture and culturalization of society. These manifestations emerge and break with established logics that result in new forms of creation/mediation/reception/conventions/canonizations. Our research focuses on these manifestations that namely take form of new do-it-yourself logics and work practices, in which artists/creators take over the role of producers/managers; and manifestations in which the position that gatekeepers and the processes to build reputations is central to promote these activities. Based on the analysis of content produced by a set of media (last ten years), it has been designed a territorial agenda of these artistic manifestations, which allows us to understand the incidence of these manifestations in the national territory and the emergence of new hegemonies in the Portuguese “cultural/artistic agenda” and the consequent processes of creation/mediation/reception/canonization.

Keywords: *Alternative artistic manifestations, territory, cultural/artistic/creative agenda.*



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1. Introduction

The changes that have taken place in the artistic world in Portugal – since the 1980s – are materialize in manifestations that translate, in general terms, the democratization of culture, culturalization of society and artistic cosmopolitanism. Initially explained and understood as alternatives and/or underground, these diverse manifestations emerge and break with established logics that result in new forms of creation/mediation/reception/conventions/canonizations (Jürgens, 2016).

This presentation is based on the research process initiated under the PhD program in Sociology. The research project focuses on these complex and reticular manifestations based on pluralism, experimentation, eclecticism and transdisciplinarity. Its symbolic strength derives from the fact that they are new forms of cultural authority (cultural turn, according to Chaney, 1994) that reverse the traditional ones (class/community/tradition).

Based on the analysis of content produced, in the last ten years, by a set of media considered relevant in relation to cultural/artistic production/mediation/dissemination, it has been designed a territorial agenda of these artistic manifestations. Its interpretation allows us to understand, on the one hand, the incidence of these manifestations in the national territory (location/spatial density) and, on the other hand, the emergence of new hegemonies in the Portuguese “cultural and artistic agenda” and the consequent processes of creation/mediation/reception/canonization (See Bennett & Guerra, 2019).

Thus, what we are sharing at the moment is a cartography of dynamics that allows us to construct a preliminary mapping of the artistic manifestations under study.

Our research – *ARTOPIA. Paths, intersections and circumstances of urban artistic manifestations of alternative character in contemporary Portugal* – was planned in five fundamental phases, which seek not only to reflect the regular reflexive/recursive effort of the sociological practice, as they try to allude to the artistic creative process, which justifies precisely their designation: 1. From the Impulse to the Maturation; 2. From Sketch to Materialization; 3. From Rediscovery to Contemplation; 4. From Presentation to Sharing and 5. From Signs to Exhibit.

This presentation follows the logic of this terminology, although adapted to this specific subject.

2. Preliminary impulses of creation: presentation

The manifestations we are studying – which we can point out in the binomial culture vs. popular culture (Santos, 1988) – break with established logics of creation, mediation, reception, conventions and canonizations (Jürgens, 2016). These complex and reticular manifestations could take form of: (i) initiatives that are based on the notion of artistic relational density and agglomeration of stakeholders (Costa, 2002; Fortuna & Leite, 2009; Silva *et al*, 2013); (ii) new do-it-yourself (DIY) logics and work practices, in which artists/creators take over the role of producers/managers; (iii) manifestations in which the role that gatekeepers and the processes to build reputations is central to promote these activities (Silva *et al*, 2013, 2015); (iv) scenes that are inscribed in urban territory, a space of confluence of different worlds of art and culture (Crane *et al*, 2002; Thornton, 2009).

These artistic manifestations represent significant social relational spaces, that is a social subfield (Bourdieu, 1996, 2003; Guerra, 2015) with relevance and increasing densification, where artistic production/diffusion/reception conditions must be understood and interpreted as an artworld (Becker, 1984, 2007) and in a heterogeneous and segmented urban cultural context (Crane, 1992; Crane *et al*, 2002). Although these manifestations have been traversed by distinct organizational genesis, they operate in networks of access control and recognition in the art world and they provide new careers and actors in the national artistic value chain with an organic territorial translation (scenes) (Bennet & Peterson, 2004; Pais, 2010; Straw, 1991). Some of these spaces/scenes provide important cores of conviviality (and sociability/socialization) (Jauss, 1990), whose creative processes and cultural activities can be strongly conditioned by the physical/material attributes of the spaces themselves.

In short, we are dealing with artistic manifestations assumed as forms of social practices/life, in which aesthetic objects play a crucial role as arbiters of relations, meaning and social actions in the daily life of late modernity (Jameson 1991, Zukin 1995).

3. Preludes of maturation: methodology

The map that have been drawn is the result of an extensive content analysis produced, between 2007 and 2017, by a set of media devices considered relevant with respect to cultural/artistic production/mediation/dissemination in Portugal. In the research it was selected news/notes/reports referring to manifestations mentioned as alternatives, independent, informal, underground or those considered in the exploratory process carried out during the investigation by privileged actors/agents of the subfield under study. The selection process has been accurate during the course of the research as manifestations appeared and pointed to disruptive logics (partly evidenced by the content of journalistic information itself). On the other hand, it is important to note that there is a basic condition in the selection process - the unequivocal character of the multidisciplinary of the artistic manifestation to be considered.

It has been selected the follow Portuguese printed media: 1. *Ípsilon* (Weekly supplement on culture/arts of the *Público*)¹⁵³; 2. *Time Out* (Lisbon and Porto)¹⁵⁴; 3. *Revista E* (supplementary on culture and current affairs indexed to the weekly magazine *Expresso*)¹⁵⁵ and *Umbigo Magazine* (art, culture, fashion and lifestyle)¹⁵⁶.

The selection of these media has been based on the following criteria: i) the content scope – it was selected media whose editorial and audience references referring themes such as culture, free time and leisure, art and lifestyle; ii) diversity in relation to the type of periodical - supplement of newspaper or journal of the specialty, and iii) the coverage – it was privileged the national and regional coverage. In the regional dimension, the *Time Out* of Lisbon and Porto was taken as a reference, whose coverage is respectively Lisbon Metropolitan Area and neighboring counties and North/Centre of the country.

It should be noted that this register refers to manifestations considered relevant as a whole (for example, an art festival which in itself results from a condensation of several singular events of multiple arts) and to singular events (such as a concert or an exhibition promoted by one or other the manifestation that operates continuously).

153 *Público* is a Portuguese daily newspaper founded in 1990; it is pioneer concerning to the publication of collectible articles, such as CDs, CD-ROMs and books, among others. *Ípsilon* is *Público*'s arts supplement, published on Friday.

154 Created by Time Out Company (London/New York), *Time Out* magazine is based on several editions, each dedicated to one of the cities in the world. The aim of the magazine is to make readers aware of what they can do in the city, at cultural and leisure level (arts, festivals, gastronomy, itineraries, fun ...). In Portugal the magazine has two editions, dedicated to the metropolitan areas of Lisbon, with *Time Out Lisboa*, and Porto, with *Time Out Porto*. The first one is published since 2007, and it has a weekly periodicity. *Time Out Porto*, with a monthly periodicity, went on the stands for the first time in April 2010.

155 *Expresso* is a weekly Portuguese newspaper, published since 1973. "*Revista E*" - which is part of the newspaper - was launched in 2015 and takes on a broad format, whose contents are essentially devoted to culture, behavior, trends and great works journalism. This magazine is the result of the fusion of previous supplements, namely *Revista* and *Actual* (supplement that included the weekly itinerary of culture and leisure).

156 *Umbigo* is a magazine of art, culture, fashion and lifestyle edited in paper format (quarterly periodical) and online with daily update (since 2013). Born in 2002, this magazine has undergone several transformations, becoming more and more comprehensive; since 2017, it has become a bilingual magazine (Portuguese and English), in order to reinforce the dissemination and promotion of Portuguese art and culture, along with an international art component. Partner of *Sá da Costa* bookstore, the magazine has support from the Portuguese Ministry of Culture, the Lisbon City Council and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

The table below shows us the number and years of registrations that we have considered. Finally, it is important to notice that our main reference for registration is the supplement *Ípsilon* (Público), because of its univocal specialty (the culture) and the qualitative nature of the reports, which goes far beyond the agenda type usually associated with regular newspaper supplements.

Medias	Years	Number
Ípsilon	2007; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017	651
Revista E	2007; 2012; 2017	319
Time Out Lisboa		576
Umbigo		14
Time Out Porto	2012; 2017*	146
		1706

Table 6.4.1 - Years and number of registrations by type of media

The variables of this analysis were: i) the municipality where the manifestation takes place; ii) NUT III¹⁵⁷ (Intermunicipal Communities); iii) the manifestation (designation); iv) the type of event (artistic area) evidenced by the journalistic content.

4. A first sketch: the construction of a cartographic agenda

Of the 849 recorded occurrences, it can be verified that most of them (demonstrations / events) happen in the capital of the country, Lisbon, in the period considered (2007-2017). Porto¹⁵⁸ appears in second place, although the number of registrations is practically 1/6 of those registered in Lisbon, as shown below. Braga is the third municipality in this view – this is explained exclusively by one case/manifestation – *GNRation* (which has been created in 2012 under the European Youth Capital; its main goal is to promote artistic activities in general and to explore digital arts in particular).

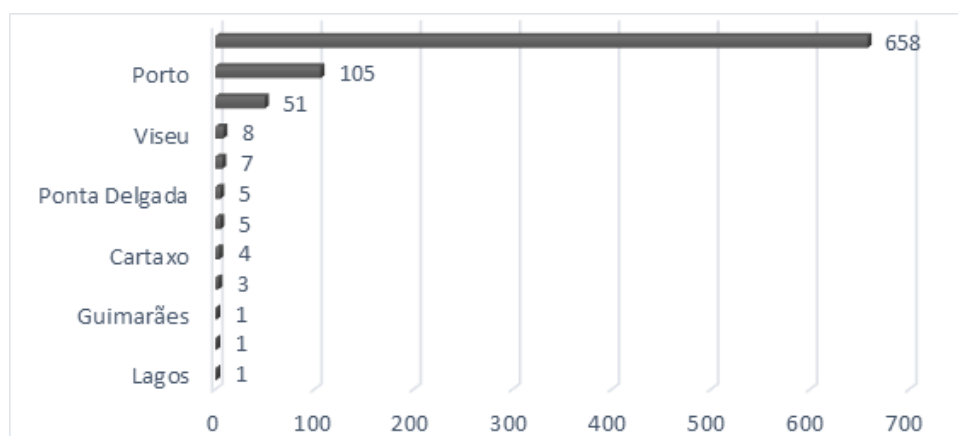


Figure 6.4.1 - Number of occurrences per municipality between 2007 and 2017

¹⁵⁷ Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (European Commission).

¹⁵⁸ Porto is the second most important city at national level.



Figure 6.4.2 - Map of occurrences, by municipality between 2007 and 2017

Following the Figure and the Figure below, we can observe the distribution of occurrences by NUT III, that is, by what we can call “sub-regions” that, in reality, correspond to the intermunicipal entities/communities.

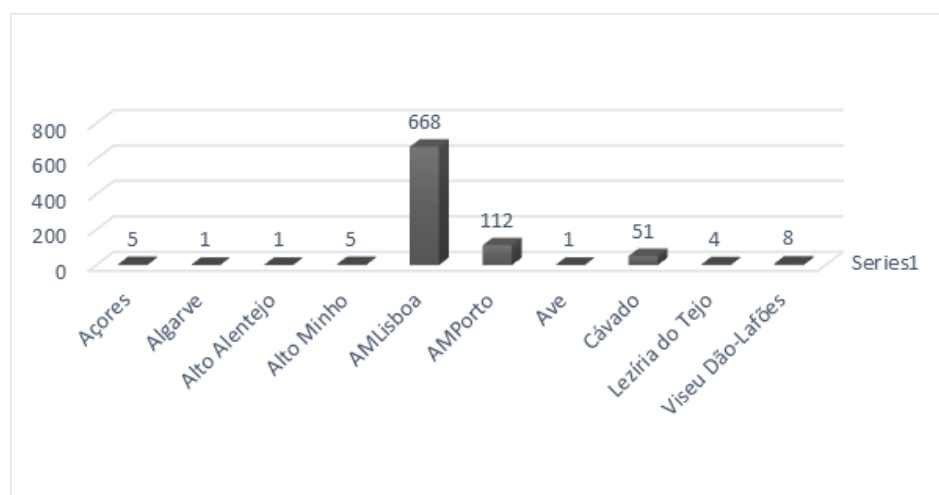


Figure 6.4.3 - Number of occurrences by Intermunicipal Communities (NUT III), between 2007 and 2017



Figure 6.4.4 - Map of occurrences, by Intermunicipal Communities between 2007 and 2017

The Metropolitan Area of Lisbon is the one that stands out in the context of analysis, followed by the Porto counterpart. The highlight of Alto Minho in third place is justified by the case already pointed out in Braga. The city of Viseu, located in the inter-municipal community of Viseu Dão-Lafões (interior centre of Portugal), fully justifies the occurrences registered in this “sub region”, mainly by *Jardins Efêmeros*, a multidisciplinary festival that since 2014, has been consolidated as a major initiative not only in local and regional territory, but also at national level, because of its growing international character; *Jardins Efêmeros* is today a significant element for attracting audiences from all over the country. The perception of these data shows us the structural mark that characterizes the Portuguese sociological reality. We are referring to the macrocephaly, which is proved by the fact that most of occurrences occur in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, in which Lisbon is the municipality with more events. Regarding to the manifestations as a media content/reference, we highlight as main regularity a relevant distinctiveness between them. The following set of graphics show the manifestations presence in the media, by region(s).

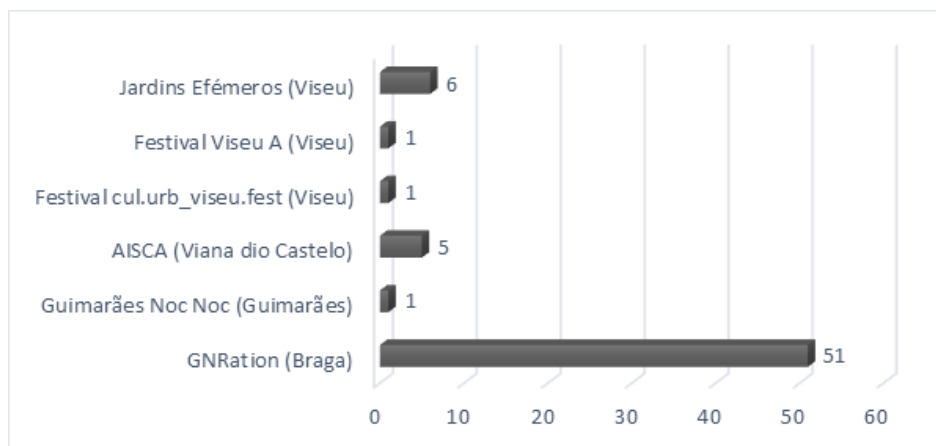


Figure 6.4.5 - Manifestations (number of occurrences) in the North and Centre of Portugal, between 2007 and 2017

In the North region we point out the mentioned case of *GNRation* in Braga. It is a space of relevance (less than a decade of existence) with regard to support to production, mediation and artistic dissemination, especially in music and audiovisual. In Central Portugal, territory where is located cities such as Coimbra, Leiria and Viseu; it is in this one that we find some artistic manifestations which are our study subject. Of these, *Jardins Efêmeros* is the manifestation with greater prominence in the media analyzed, as pointed out previously.

But the hegemony in the North is the municipality of Porto (Figure 6.4.6). This is the second most important socio-economic city in the country, and undoubtedly the one in the North, and it has been known as a tourist attraction. The manifestation that is evidenced in this city is *Maus Hábitos*, a cultural space of the city, with little more than 15 years, that appears as an alternative place in the artistic field of Porto. *Maus Hábitos* has a transdisciplinary nature and it has been launched several artists and promoted many initiatives to support artistic production, mediation and dissemination; it has become in a notorious space in the city's artistic and cultural itinerary.

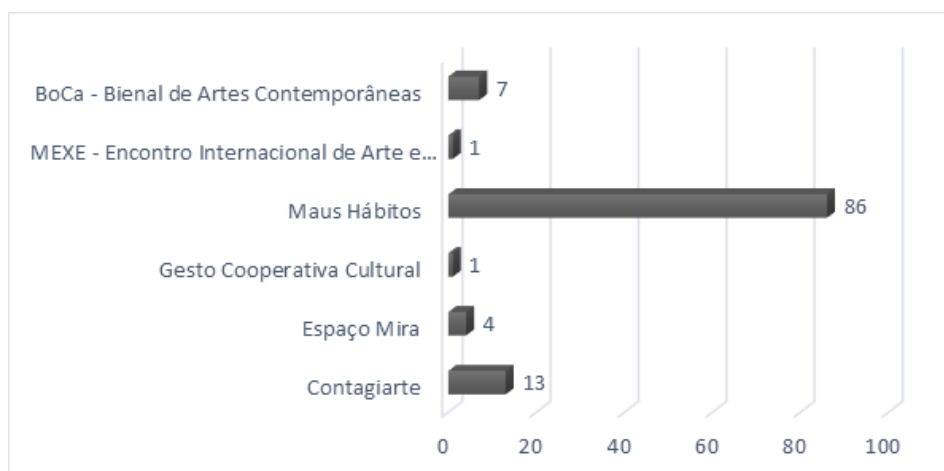


Figure 6.4.6 - Manifestations (number of occurrences) in Porto between 2007 and 2017

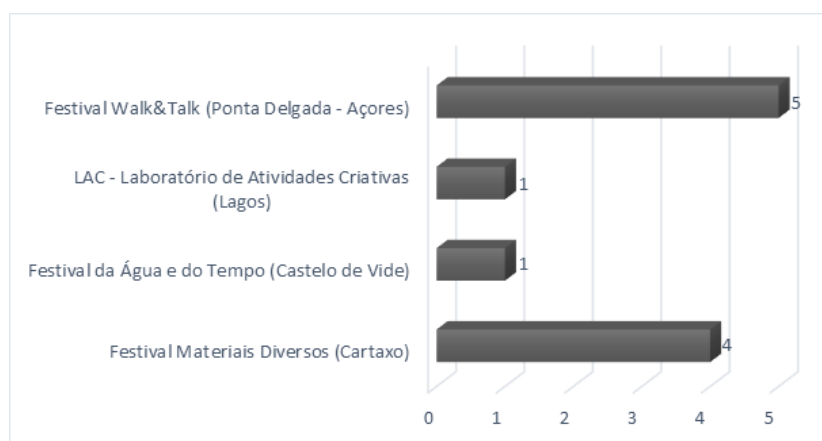


Figure 6.4.7 - Manifestations (number of occurrences) in the Azores, South and Centre-South of Portugal, between 2007 and 2017

In the south of the country (Figure 6.4.7) – specifically in Alentejo and Algarve – *LAC – Laboratório de Artes Criativas* represents the manifestations that are the subject of the research. Its international character is evident in the artistic residences that it promotes – a fundamental aspect in order to bring out national and foreign artists. *LAC* is a non-profit cultural association formed in 1995 by a group of people from a wide range of artistic areas - plastic arts, music, architecture, cinema and others – and its main goal is to promote artistic creation in the region. Another case in the region is *Festival Materiais Diversos*, an initiative promoted by the non-profit cultural association *Materiais Diversos*. Its main objective is to enhance artistic decentralization. Since 2009, this association is dedicated to the performative arts in general, where dance and music stands out; the Festival occurs in three localities of this territory: Cartaxo, Minde and Alcanena. Finally, there is one of the relatively recent but emblematic cases: *Festival Walk & Talk*, in Azores. Founded in 2011, this annual festival, initially dynamized in Ponta Delgada, S. Miguel Island, has been extended to one of the other nine islands of the Archipelago - Terceira Island. The festival is a transdisciplinary artistic platform (visual arts, performing arts, architecture, design, music, and video) that seeks to encourage artistic creation in Azorean territory.

In South, there is a territory that should be taken as primordial. We are referring to Lisbon, the territory with the greatest cultural and artistic dynamics. This fact is not entirely new - indeed, the centrality of Lisbon assumes itself as an indelible structuring mark of the country's sociological design. Portugal is a macro-cephalic country at all levels, and the artistic and the cultural areas are no exception. It was Lisbon that most felt the “winds” of change that preceded the democratic revolution of April 25, 1974 and its consequent collapse of the political dictatorship that lasted more than 40 years. The opening to “contemporaneity”, at the decade of 1970, took place almost exclusively in Lisbon, whose condition as political, economic, demographic and social capital allowed the overture to an international level. It was at this point that we began to point out the transverse emergence and transdisciplinarity of artistic styles, sensed in music, in the plastic arts, in the cinema. It is in this context - and already in a phase of consolidation of the change and, let us say, a cosmopolitan turning point - that in the mid-1980s there emerged artistic and cultural manifestations that broke with the hegemonic tendencies in the

artistic field. It has been started some new means of supporting creation/new creators and innovative and distinctive processes/models of artistic mediation and diffusion (Jürgens, 2016; Guerra, 2018). *Galeria Zé dos Bois - ZDB* is one of these initiatives, which is unequivocally assumed to be the one with the highest number of references in terms of media content considered. *ZDB* is unique in the research subfield, because of its longevity (more than 20 years) and, above all, notoriety in the artistic and cultural sphere, not only in the city of Lisbon, but also in the regional and even national level.

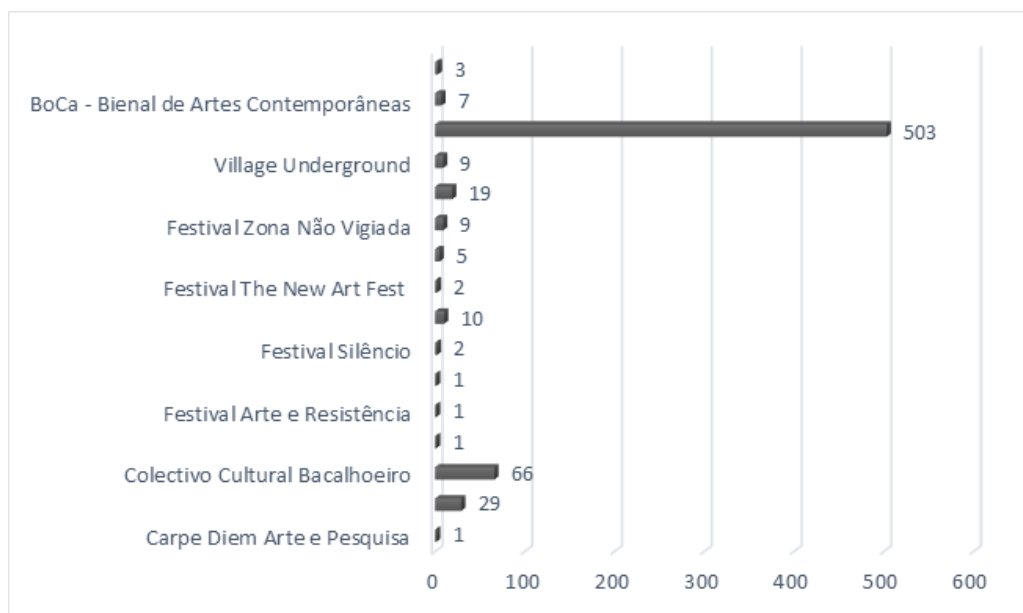


Figure 6.4.8 - Manifestations (number of occurrences) in Lisbon between 2007 and 2017

There are several initiatives in Lisbon and in the adjacent cities. Of these, the most recent is *Festival Iminente*, whose first editions were held in Oeiras (Lisbon's neighbouring city) and which will take place in the city of Lisbon in 2018. *Iminente* appears in 2016 and it is curated by the most recognized nationally and internationally Portuguese street artist Alexandre Farto - *Vhils* and by the artistic platform/gallery *Underdogs*; it is characterized as the materialization of a creative movement that unites several "new" forms of art and it seeks the establishment of dialogues between Portuguese culture and art and other forms of expression and cultures, as a manifestation of avant-garde. A note for *Colectivo Cultural Bacalhoeiro* which stood out, especially in 2012, but disappeared in 2014 because of (low) financial conditions. This specific case is assumed to be paradigmatic in terms of one of the characteristics that can be defined in the subfield we are considering in our investigation, a certain fragility that marks the initiatives; their essential character of independence and autonomy to the economic and political powers can explain this fact. Moreover, it is difficult to find initiatives at this level whose continuity and consolidation do not depend on some support (governmental or sponsorship).

Manifestations	2007	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
AlSCA (Viana do Castelo)		5					
BoCa - Bienal de Artes Contemporâneas (Lisbon/Porto)						7	
Carpe Diem Arte e Pesquisa (Lisbon)						1	
Casa Independente (Lisbon)							29
Colectivo Cultural Bacalhoeiro (Lisbon)	19	47					
Contagiarte (Porto)	1	12					
Espaço Mira (Porto)							4
Espaço SOU (Lisboa)		1					
Festival Arte e Resistência (Lisboa)							1
Festival cul.urb_viseu.fest (Viseu)							1
Festival da Água e do Tempo (Castelo de Vide)							1
Festival Iminente (Oeiras)							3
Festival Materiais Diversos (Cartaxo)		1		2			1
Festival Múltiplo (Lisboa)							1
Festival Silêncio (Lisboa)							2
Festival Temps d'Images (Lisboa)	2	3		1			4
Festival Todos (Lisboa)		2		1			2
Festival Viseu A (Viseu)				1			
Festival Walk&Talk (Ponta Delgada – Azores)				2	1	1	1
Festival Zona Não Viglada (Lisboa)					2		7
GNRation (Btraga)		5		5	6	7	28
Gesto Cooperativa Cultural (Porto)		1					
Guimarães Noc Noc (Guimarães)							1
Jardins Efêmeros (Viseu)					2	2	2
LAC - Laboratório de Atividades Criativas (Lagos)		1					
Maus Hábitos - Porto	14	20	1	4	2		45
MEXE - Encontro Internacional de Arte e Comunidade (Porto)						1	
Underdogs (Lisboa)			1				18
Village Underground (Lisboa)							9
ZDB (Lisboa)	173	119	15	14	17	8	157

Table 6.4.2 - Evolution of the references in the media

The last case, in Lisbon, that we would like to stand out is *Casa Independente*. This is an artistic project of the *Ironia Tropical*, a cultural association which, since 2012, is committed to making the House a multidisciplinary artistic and cultural venue with a varied program of concerts, exhibitions, workshops, art residencies, recitals and other initiatives. Another interesting note concerns to the force and recognition of these artistic and cultural manifestations. In fact, the recognition (measured by the number of references) of the media to these manifestations translate, to a certain extent, the recognition of these in the subfield that they integrate. The table below (Table 2) shows that some of the manifestations remain over time and reinforce their recognition (examples of the ZDB in Lisbon and *Maus Hábitos* in Porto are illustrative); and others “disappear” from the media (they are no longer referenced). Some factors may explain this: first, the disappearance of the manifestations (cease to exist, as the case of *Colectivo Cultural Bacolhoeiro*); second, the changes that are operated in the manifestations itself (communication policy, for example or programming change) and, finally, the hype – a significant element in a fluid subfield as we are dealing with (*Underdogs*, *Village Underground* and *Casa Independente* (all in Lisbon) are paradigmatic).

At last, one of the aspects that we want to point out is the type of events that emerge most within the scope of these manifestations. These artistic manifestations have distinct models – we are looking at, on the one hand, spaces that promote the most varied type of initiatives which are being disseminated by the media (concerts, exhibitions, performances, etc.) and, on the other, specific and dated events such as festivals, which promote the most diversified type of initiatives in a given period of time (and for that they are specifically categorized, as shown in the chart below).

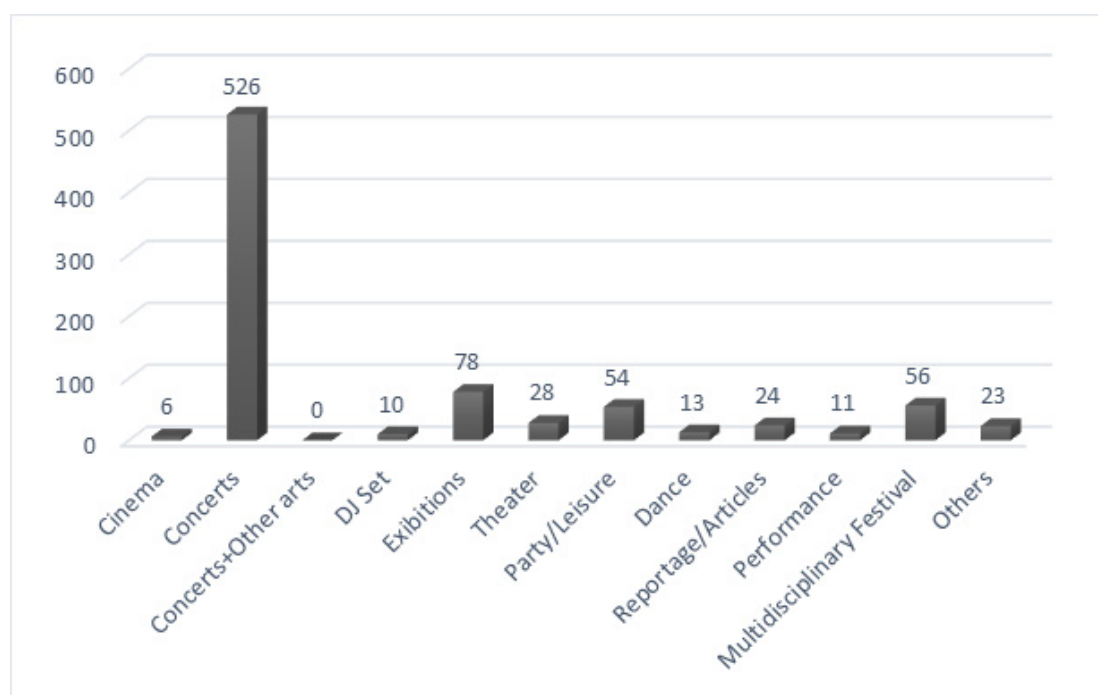


Figure 6.4.9 - Type of events/initiatives promoted by diverse artistic manifestations between 2007 and 2017

As we can see, there is an obvious hegemony of concerts. The promotion of this type of event dominate the set of occurrences. In fact, spaces such as



the *ZDB* (Lisbon) and *Maus Hábitos* (Porto) are, in most cases, referenced in the media about the promotion of a concert. Many of the concerts (more precisely the musicians themselves or bands) are reasons for reporting with some editorial notoriety. One of the issues to be explored in the continuity of the research will undoubtedly be the measurement of the real weight of this type of events in the effective agenda of the demonstrations; that is to say, it will be important to see if we are dealing with an agenda that, in fact, has a more consistent impact on the promotion of concerts, or whether they are the most publicized by both (the promoters and the media initiative).

The mapping that we tried to do allows us to infer a picture of the subfield we are studying, some of the contours of which we will consider in the final breviary we present. This portrait, considered as a dynamic scenario, will serve as a basis for the continuation of the research, namely as a support for the selection of the cases to study in a more profound and intensive way.

5. Towards maturation: elements for reflection

What we are sharing in this presentation is absolutely preliminary, once based on a first and brief analysis of the data and, therefore, merely descriptive. Although we can consider some conclusive aspects. First, there is a (structural) hegemony of Lisbon and Porto in all national territory, although we can point out here and there some relevant events in other territories (for example Viseu, Braga and Azores). This (still shy) dissemination is probably related with territorial cultural policies, based on the valorisation of their territories and their intent in standout at cultural and artistic, but also leisure and tourist level.

In turn, it is possible to notice a hegemony of musical events, although the manifestations are artistically multidisciplinary (e.g. *ZDB* in Lisbon, *Maus Hábitos* in Porto). At last, the gatekeeping effect seems clear. The media agenda is not neutral, and the systematic references are not casual. They result in part from the hype of artistic manifestations and from the tendency towards canonization within this subfield. This aspect is one of those that we intend to explore in the intensive phase of the research; we believe that there are communication strategies of the manifestations to be more visible. In short, we are dealing with a fluid subfield - which does not distinguish it from the totality of contemporary sociological reality - where the eventual ephemerality of existence (as has been seen in some of the cases) is seen through configurations that cross borders, interlace processes, logical and diversified arts – distinctive ways seeking of doing and promoting art and culture. This is what we will try to understand in later phases of research.

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