REDE

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Design
Schools
Meeting

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**The organising committee of REDE#02
thanks all the guests for their presence**

Guest speakers
Christina Melander, Danish Design Center
Fernando Rocha, Vice-presidente CM Matosinhos
Isabel Monteiro, BA Glass
Pedro Martins Pereira, LARUS

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Methodological note
The construction of this document is based on the testimonies of the participants and speakers of REDE#02, which took place at the Polytechnic Institute Cávado and Ave (IPCA), Barcelos, on 31 October. A verbatim transcription and a content analysis of the various sessions were carried out, following Grounded Theory principles (Charmaz, 2014) and supported by Nvivo11 software.

INTRODUCTION

The REDE#02 event was composed of two parts: the first aimed to revisit some of the questions posed at the first meeting of design schools, particularly emphasizing the relationship between schools and companies. The second part of the event focused on the presentation of the project "DesignOBS: For a Design Observatory in Portugal", and on the exhibition and discussion of some results obtained, namely on the topic of PhDs undertaken in Design in Portugal. Each of these sessions was followed by a discussion with representatives of the companies BA Glass and Larus, with representatives from invited schools; the director of the Danish Design Center and the Danish Design Award, Christina Melander, and Fernando Rocha, vice-president of the Matosinhos City Hall.

In the morning, Isabel Monteiro, representative of BA Glass, a multinational glass company, discussed the role of design in the company and its support for identification of needs, product differentiation, innovation, differentiation, innovation, and improvement of the customer experience. On the other hand, Pedro Martins, founder of LARUS, a company dedicated to the design, manufacture and commercialization of urban furniture, presented numerous challenges associated with its work within the public sector, particularly public tenders' evaluation criteria and selection of proposals, raising fundamental ethical issues for professionals and companies in the area. Fernando Rocha, vice-president of Matosinhos City Hall discussed the relationship between the City Hall and the schools, in particular with ESAD (School of Arts and Design of Matosinhos); emphasizing the strong investment of the municipality in the discipline through multiple exhibitions in the city. Finally, Christina Melander, presented the case of the Danish Design Center, underlining the continuous

effort to work together with companies, collecting successful stories, with impact in multiple sectors, to better communicate the value of design in the economic fabric.

Beyond the topic of the meeting (relationship between schools and companies) the discussion revisited important and timeless issues discussed in REDE#01 and covered others, related to:

1. Design and ethics
2. Research in/for design
3. Design competencies
4. Strategic vision for design and culture

The afternoon session focused first on the presentation of the project DesignOBS For a Design Observatory in Portugal: Models, Instruments, Representation and Strategies, supported by the Lisbon regional support program (LISBOA 2020) and the competitiveness and internationalization operational program (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-032445), within the partnership PORTUGAL 2020, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology. Besides the mission, objectives and expected results of the project, the main results of an analytical study related to doctorates in design in Portugal were also discussed, demonstrating how the use of numerical information can better inform the definition of strategies for design and the development of public policies.

The discussion that occurred a posteriori was important to gather feedback from participants regarding the study and the observation model. The content analysis of the discussion resulted in four points: proposals for future studies for DesignOBS, organizational structure, expectations regarding the observatory's function, and observation model.

Danish Design Center: a vision for the portuguese observatory
Christina Melander started by presenting the Danish Design Center (DDC) and its mission. Created in 1978, the DDC leverages the use of design in the business fabric, promotes the professionalisation of the design industry and documents, spreads and feeds the Danish design brand, in Denmark and abroad. Its action is located in the intersection between business, industry, design profession, education, research centres and the public institutions. It plays a role which, in the Portuguese context, is assigned to several entities actuating in a dismantled way, resulting into a weakening of the value and the impact of design in the economy and the social fabric. The evaluation of the value of design was, precisely, one of the focuses of Melander's communication, having presented some cases of companies and several studies and related methodologies. Among them,

"The Design Ladder", which evaluates in four steps the way design is more or less included in production, work processes and corporate strategy. This is a tool developed by DDC in 2001 which has been applied, not only in Denmark, but also in several European countries. This is an instrument which can easily serve the purpose of collecting data, systematise information and develop strategic research about the Portuguese design ecosystem which makes possible and sustains relevant decisions on corporate, institutional or public policy decisions. Identifying the relevant sources and types of information is one of the biggest difficulties, involving the creation of networks – such as the Schools of Design Reunion – or direct contacts with CEOs from companies, designers, teachers and students.

Being Denmark the first country in the world having a policy for design, anchored in the Ministry of Economy, quickly was able to implement this tool in its ecosystem which, in its turn, has been consolidating itself, as more actors are involved. This model of "design ecosystem" was originally developed by Anna Whicher (2017), (2012) and maps the fields of industry; promotion; institutions; consumers/users; education; funding and, at last, policy and regulation of design.

Melander still outlined the importance of an institution such as the DDC to serve as an interface among all these agents and areas. Not having any similar entity in Portugal, how can this relationship be created? There is no doubt that the first step will be the one of mapping of who the agents are and their location, so that in a second moment, and starting from models such as the one presented here, our Portuguese Design ecosystem will be designed.

Finally, challenges and opportunities for design in the next 5 to 10 years were approached. In that future, although there are so many uncertainties, there is also the assurance that the approach must consider a user-centred, multidisciplinary, holistic and future-oriented vision.

PROTOTYPES PERSPECTIVE

BALANCE AND

1. Design and ethics
1.1. Ethics in schools

i) Promoting the integration of design in the territory(ies).

The plurality of design status quo in territory raises important questions concerning the strategies used for the promotion of the subject in the socioeconomic fabric. For the interior regions and islands were mentioned internships, projects with companies or the solicitation of projects for pro bono work, for example, with non-profit-making organisations, as mechanisms of demonstration of the value of design to companies. In that context, the collaborations proved to be a good mechanism to communicate design and create employment for the graduates in the interior regions and islands in particular.

In more peripheral geographies, where there is no Design culture yet, or even of R&D in many companies and organisations, it is fundamental that schools assume a pedagogical role of agents of change. These must try to create opportunities so that the evolution is from the unawareness of Design to its integration, not only in problem solving, but in a strategic way.

ii) Role of the Higher Education Institutions and their relation with the companies and institutions.

The discussion approached the nature of the projects and briefings provided by companies and institutions. Being the role of schools to train students to their profession and to research, this one cannot subvert its mission, replacing trained labour force in the area, transforming a potentially symbiotic association into an asymmetric relationship, in which the Higher Education Institution can overlap itself to the labour market, without having an effective pedagogical gain – already addressed question in REDE#01 (Borges et al., 2017)

1.2. Intellectual property protection

i) The authorship in design.

We can see that, in general, the contests for gathering ideas or projects of design and the design awards are shortly scrutinised. Not only the ethical nature of the proposals, but also the types of reward and the questions of intellectual property (individual or collective) should be more discussed inside the designers' community and schools, whom many times are the vehicle for dissemination of these contests and awards. If, on the one side, these proposals are excellent ways of promoting 1) the design (with impact on the communication of its potential near society and companies; 2) the future or current professionals (who see their portfolios valued), on the other side they may be tools for exploring abusively the work of designers, teachers and students. That happens when they associate themselves to lacking ethics initiatives, legitimating a culture of delivering design services at low-cost or at no cost, competing, once again, with the market of professionals and studios, diminishing the subject. This is the subject which must be more and more discussed, within the schools themselves, educating the current and future actors of this scenario for the adoption of a code of conduct and good practice, which may eventually become common and shared among schools, companies and institutions.

ii) The processes between companies and public institutions.

The weight of the legal institutional systems and public tender procedures does not follow the quickness of the transformation of markets with which companies shape themselves, complicating the development of a competitive economy, based on design and the building of identity.

If, on the one side, we must walk towards a total transparency in the application of public funding, on the other hand the legal contracting current model is incompatible with a qualified work, rewarded in an adequate way and adjusted to the reality of the market. The price cannot be the prevailing criterion, in a contest. More efficient, clear and democratic processes which stimulate the creative, innovative and future-oriented work are required.

2. Research in design

i) Taxonomy/categorisation of the research in design and development of an agenda.

In a moment in which research in design started to be an intrinsic part of the academic activity, resulting into a considerable volume of thesis and dissertations published in the most diverse repositories, in a certain way invisible, there is a need to turn accessible all this activity of scientific production, monitoring it, categorizing it and making it available, not only to the scientific population, but also to the community. This exercise will allow to identify the most explored themes, in which period and the

priorities for research in design, in Portugal. It will be useful to support this systematisation into existing frameworks such as the ones from Frayling (1993), Lawson & Dorst (2009), Cross (1982), among others, in order to identify the action areas, the methodologies and approaches, the types of contributions and mapping the research already accomplished, in a national perspective, but relating it with the international panorama.

ii) Impact/relevance of Master's degrees and doctorates in business context

It was discussed the possibility of the role of the Higher Education Institutions, within the complex systems, of being a space for creative experimentation and not of implementation of closed projects for companies, depending on an immediate profit or the resolution of pre-set problems. What is proposed is, on the contrary, the stimulus to research, through a holistic vision of the action context, identifying new proposals, creating added value, which may bring benefit for both players, students and companies. For the students, there is a contact with a not simulated reality, with problems and real impacts, but where there must always be place for the mistake, more than a focus on the performance. For the companies, especially the ones without a culture of innovation or the infrastructure to contain a R&D lab, it is an opportunity to envision the potential of the introduction of design in business processes and strategies.

At the Master's degrees level, even due to the existence of a bigger dissemination in the territory of institutions providing that offer, there is already a very rooted culture of relation with the business context, being even, in some cases, the main contact channel between Higher Education Institutions and companies.

Another more specific reality which has slowly been happening in the context of the postgraduate training is the one of the doctorates or of advanced research in corporate context. They are long periods in which highly qualified individuals find themselves developing a study/project which brings a set of new and complex ideas within an external organisation to the academia. But if, on the one side, it can narrow the contact between design and companies, clarifying and applying some of the research which, many times, does not come out from the academic circuits, on the other side, there is a set of challenges, from the intellectual property issues to the feasibility of the proposals (once they are essentially speculative) or difficult to implement due to legal or funding processual issues. That is to say, it is urgent to find ways of turning these research dynamics in a corporate context more agile, more common, less bureaucratic and, simultaneously, recognised and equally valued in the academic context, such as the traditional doctorates.

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Nina Costa

Fernando Rocha

Rui Costa

Paula Tavares

Vasco Branco

Christina Melander

Isabel Monteiro

iii) Evaluations for the academic career versus teaching mission.
The need for reviewing the criteria from the evaluation systems of scientific production, the teaching performance and the funding of projects and research units is a priority, already debated at REDE#01. These must be flexible and wide, considering the specificities, programmes, impacts of the research activities in the design ecosystem itself as a whole and not from the models inherited from the social sciences.

Whether through doctorates or masters, with applied research in the corporate context, or through research projects where there is a relationship with community, it is important that also this type of activity in a non-academic scenario is not left out according to a more theoretical research, which is more easily translated into quantifiable results within the existing evaluation frameworks.

3. Design competencies

i) Demonstrating the value of design.
The evidence of the need to invest in the communication and demonstration of the potential impact of design on processes, competitivity and value of companies is in the way the design professionals are (little) listened, in their work context. It is necessary to lobby the government structures, so that design starts to gain visibility and to be part of the political agenda, concerning the strategic lines at medium and long term. It is more effective to do it through the presentation of success cases (similarly to the DDC), so that everyone indeed realises what is at stake and revert it on behalf of more supports to the integration of design in the economy of the country. On the other side, it is fundamental the implementation of a thorough study about who uses design, how, at what level and for what purposes, with objective parameters which allow to evaluate the value of design for companies (which goes much beyond the profits).

ii) The role of design in the complex systems.
It is in the design DNA the ability to contribute actively to the development of the regional culture and economy. For that reason, schools are a fundamental pivot so that, especially in more peripheral regions, that involvement happens. Because of its proximity to community, by watching reflected in their programmes and strategies some of the needs of the local context, they are important agents of change, concerning the need to communicate the value of design. However, they are also strongly pressured to play roles which directly culminate in profit or ends in themselves and less to pedagogically contribute to the local innovation, culture and reinforcement of the identity.

Therefore, there is an obvious need to capture a real picture of the role played by designers and schools of design in this complex ecosystem. The creation of an organism which assumes the interface among designers, companies, institutions and schools is urgent.

4. Strategic vision for design

i) "We're navigate on sight".
With the extinction of the Portuguese Centre of Design (CPD), the last instrument of structured public policy for national design disappeared. This reflected, over the past few years, into disinvestment and the lack of concerted measures which promote, facilitate or simply recognise the value that design can bring as an innovation factor to the industry, society and national institutions.

A dependency from the government programmes is stated, limiting the actions to cycles of 4 years, when we should draw plans to 5, 10 or more years, involving the public and private spheres and a clear integration of design in the strategic plans of the government. In this regard, the Danish case, which transferred the design area of responsibility from the Ministry of Culture to the Ministry of Economy, was discussed.

ii) Design with purpose.
The subject of design must evolve at the same rhythm as the socioeconomic fabric. It must start to be a fundamental piece of the engine which boosts the innovation of the country, at the same time that it feeds the local development.

This means to adapt itself and raise the agility of the current and future design professionals. This implies the update of the transversal skills – from the theorical, methodological principles, to the technological tools –, always feeding a creative thinking, an inquisitive attitude, a holistic perspective of reality, but also the development of more concrete skills on the business area, the entrepreneurship and social and environmental responsibility.

It is a school obligation to educate a designer to shape the future the right way, and not the possible way.

iii) Portugal at two times .
The question related to the representation of the territory and the demonstration of the quality of the training in design, particularly in the interior of the country, was also an important discussion topic and which we highlight in this document. "The scientific and pedagogical richness exists", however, schools express a clear difficulty in the demonstration of that value to the outside, due to the lack of recognition of the transforming capacity (and generative of revenues) which design has. Consequently, the projects in partnership with the small and medium companies and the strategies of the local municipalities in the development of the corporate fabric, design start-ups and others, are an essential vehicle to the promotion of design and also constitute an effort to retain students in the interior of the country.

Representatives of schools participating in REDE#02

Since the disappearance of the Portuguese Design Center in 2013, there has been no public policy instrument that serves as an interface between the national design ecosystem and the Portuguese socio-economic fabric. Due to the lack of visibility, design becomes more and more operative as a factor of innovation and development. In this context, DesignOBS' mission is to collect and interpret data from the Portuguese design ecosystem, promote design knowledge and culture, and influence public policies.

It has a set of objectives, namely,

(1) to identify, analyze and characterize the agents involved in the design ecosystem, to design a model that represents the richness of this environment;

(2) to develop, apply and refine qualitative and quantitative observation instruments that allow a more efficient observation of design in various areas, including education, science, industry and culture;

(3) develop a participative and collaborative digital platform that supports discussions about the representation and impact of design in Portugal;

(4) promote academic reflection on design, through publications, exhibitions, events, or others;

(5) define strategies and organizational structures that will enable the creation of a long-term sustainable observatory;

(6) promote Portuguese design nationally and internationally, facilitate the creation of partnerships, also providing new opportunities for the country to assume a more active role in European design and innovation ecosystems;

(7) create guidelines that can influence public policies to promote and support design.

DesignOBS aims to achieve essentially three results: (1) models and instruments of observation of the design ecosystem, to comparison at

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national and international levels; (2) creating an online platform (www.designobs.pt), collaborative and participative, to facilitate dialogue and favor a more effective connection between design professionals, researchers, trainers, and other agents interested in design; (3) developing new ways of representing the design ecosystem in Portugal, better communicating its richness and value.

The case of design doctorates in Portugal
The study of doctorates in design in Portugal aimed to demonstrate the importance of the design community observing, interpreting, and communicating its own production in design, to better influence public policies. Given the challenge of building an observation model, it is important to create minimum support structures and define guidelines that can, in fact, make it easier
access to existing information about design and communicate its impact in multiple areas such as industry, health, culture, education, among others.
The case of the study of PhDs in Portugal, carried out as a first exercise in representing design research, is an example of the interconnection between the various elements of the observation methodology currently under construction in DesignOBS project.
Verifying the lack of specific data about design research, a survey was carried out in several institutional governmental databases. The comparison and overlap of the results showed significant discrepancies in relation to the amount of PhDs produced in the area.
Additionally, classification and content analysis through titles, keywords, and abstracts was uninformative given the significant dispersion among doctorates.
Based on this information, we propose a more objective and effective classification system to better communicate the main topics and themes, as well as professional areas of intervention so that people interested in the area – not necessarily involved in research and/or predisposed to undertake a deep analysis of the field – may actually use the existing information and make it useful. The case study is detailed in Costa et al., (2020).

DESIGNOBS:
proposals, structure, expectations and observation model
After presenting the objectives and mission of DesignOBS, as well as the study about design doctorates undertaken in Portugal, the participants suggested a series of recommendations and proposals for future studies. Since the purpose of the project is also to be useful for the REDE#02

community, expectations were also shared and a potential structure and observation model for the project were discussed.

1. Proposals for future studies
i) Development and application of categorization for design research, development of guidelines for national research.
The need to develop a taxonomy or categorization for research produced in/for design was stressed by participants. Also mentioned was the need to aggregate relevant studies on design in an organized way, to rescue studies from the Portuguese Design Center, to create a more robust common body on design research. Issues related to broadening doctoral studies were addressed – with the discipline becoming more and more diffuse, it is important to understand its contribution at the multidisciplinary level, moving towards doctoral degrees that are beyond the design field.
ii) Study of design practice in Companies.
Studies are needed on how companies in Portugal use design, how they understand it, how they value it; and to trace its impact on the socio-economic fabric. It is necessary to understand these various perspectives not only in the context of design firms (code 7410), but also in the other economic sectors, in the territory(ies).
iii) Impact of applied research.
PhD grants in companies are residual in the FCT (Foundation of Science and Technology) offer, so there are more PhDs in the academic environment then in the business context. There is a need to better study and communicate the potential impact of research on the day-to-day life of companies. Furthermore, the dynamics and challenges associated with the development of doctorates in a professional environment is still little known.
iv) Studies of the relationships between schools and companies.
The relationship between industry and schools needs to be better observed in order to understand local needs and adapt training. It is also important to better study the interaction models between schools and companies, as well as the role and added value that designers can have in companies surrounding the area in which they have been trained. This should be observed to understand how internships (or even after training) designers' experience is translated into qualified products.
v) Representation of the areas of design by territory(ies).
Analysis and representation of the various areas of design, from equipment or product design to communication design, graphic design, digital design, multimedia design, fashion design, interior design, service design, design management, among other typologies, locating them in the territory(ies).

2. Structure

i) Observation and design promotion.

The activities of observation, data collection and analysis, are different from the promotion and building awareness for design. DesignOBS covers these two objectives in its mission, however, some concerns have arisen regarding the execution of the second task. Raising awareness through schools may not be as effective as having an institution with dedicated to this exclusive activity. However, the nature of schools, with their obligation of outreach to the community and reference in terms of knowledge, may transcend the form of centralized organization which failed in the Portuguese Design Center; and that is also not effective in other associations e.g. National Association of Designers is not very representative of the area.

ii) Structural organization.

The minimum structure for a distributed observation approach would take advantage of the REDE's capillarity, thus allowing the preservation of its own autonomy and identity. However, given that funds associated with the project are limited, it is essential to involve companies in DesignOBS, not only demonstrating how essential it can be for the socio-economic fabric, being inclusive to designers and industrialists interested in the area, but also to find alternative organization and financing mechanisms. The possibility of the process being led by companies was discussed.

3. Expectations

information about design is fragmented and existing data is not fully reliable. The community hopes in this sense that the observatory can serve as a reference to collect more reliable information on multiple design-related topics. In addition to representing and demonstration of the value of design through the territory, the participants presented some points on which they would like DesignOBS to comment or to open a channel for discussion on the subject, namely, good practices in design pedagogical processes and promotion of ethical behavior in design.

THE OBSERVATORY AND REDE

The results of the study about design doctorates undertaken in Portugal is discussed in another document. For the present report, the results demonstrate how to use numerical evidence can be of service for design, to develop and implement specific actions to better communicate its impact on multiple levels. Additionally, it reveals the importance of establishing a more distributed observation typology throughout the territory, with representative of the diverse set of its local realities. Beyond the phenomenon studied, it is important to better understand and clarify the role of design and the designer in the socio-economic and cultural fabric. There is an important contribution of local structures, which can bring a set of knowledge, allowing a thickening of the analysis of the issues inherent to design, thus drawing a more faithful picture. The construction and discussion of public policies or guidelines for design can, therefore, benefit the various participating regions in a sense of distributed organization and the production of a representative and articulated body of good design practices.

The present discussion focuses on the cellular organization of a network, with the total autonomy of its own development, but maintaining one goal: the representation of design in Portugal. In that sense, we value this possibility that this cell of a network – which is what we are – may, on the one hand, contribute with a common set of information, but also with data that may only be of their distinct interest and which may prove to be of common interest.

For a more reliable representation, key elements are needed, distributed throughout the territory, and we believe that, given the structural, protagonist, timeless and independent role of political changes, the participation of schools in this process is vital.

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**ID+ INSTITUTO DE
INVESTIGAÇÃO EM
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