

Filmmakers' Archive

Ernesto de Sousa

Interview with Isabel Alves

Salomé Lamas

Salomé Lamas: How was Isabel's life after Ernesto's death?

Isabel Alves: Difficult

The point of union today between Isabel Alves and Ernesto de Sousa is an archive. Memory, living man.

An eclectic archive, given the nature of the artist's production: video art, photography, exhibitions, criticism, academic texts, painting, new media: a "free artistic expression". And the memories. Ernesto's memories captured in hundreds of photographs: posters, visits, outings, friends, artistic events. The memories trapped in his work. Isabel's memories, also trapped in those documents and in her own memory.

Isabel Alves is a curator and researcher. Ernesto's wife, companion, friend and model. They met in 1966 at a medical students' party and spent more than 20 years together.

From 1988 until today, Isabel Alves has cared for and activated Ernesto de Sousa's heritage, preserving his memory, spirit and work, through numerous initiatives, among which stands out the creation of the Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies – Ernesto de Sousa (CEMES). This institution created a scholarship for Portuguese artists to stay at the Experimental Intermedia Foundation (New York) from 1994 to 2012, with the support of FLAD and the Gulbenkian Foundation.

Over the last thirty years, Isabel Alves, together with CEMES, has dedicated herself to organizing exhibitions and publications largely around the figure of Ernesto de Sousa, in addition to managing the artist's vast estate and facilitating access to research and exhibition material for researchers, artists and curators.

Between 1969 and 1988, he collaborated with Ernesto in the making and production of films, exhibitions and new media shows. He also collaborated with José Miranda Justo in the publication of the book *Ser Moderno em Portugal*, a collection of texts by Ernesto de Sousa. In 2012, he published in São Paulo, Brazil, the book *Oralidade, Futuro da Arte e outros Textos*, by the artist.

In the 1990s, he produced several exhibitions: in 1997-98 she joined the team of the 100 Days Festival at Expo'98, being co-responsible for the production of the exhibition *Journey to the 20th Century*, and was part of the team that produced the opera the

"White Crow" by Robert Wilson and Philip Glass; in 1996 she curated and produced the exhibition April-Woman for the Museum of the Republic and Resistance; in 1995, she curated the participation of artists with interventions in the Lisbon underground stations, integrated in the exhibition Waves of Influence - 500 years of Portuguese Tiles, in the Rhode Island School of Design, USA, with editorial coordination of the respective catalogue. In 1994 she produced and presented at CAM – Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the new media Almada, um Nome de Guerra. She was curator and coordinator of the exhibition catalogue Revolution My Body – Collection of Posters by Ernesto de Sousa. Since 2000, she is Coordinator of the Berardo Collection.

She is content manager of the site www.ernestodedousa.com.

Most of Ernesto de Sousa's vital archive is in Isabel Alves' possession, and its content is extensive and varied: photography, library, sound recordings, video and new media, artworks.

Ernesto lives in his archive, his memory wanders through the house he shared with Isabel. The intention of Isabel Alves after his death was to perform an act of reactivation of the archive through formats widely explored by Ernesto such as film, publications, happenings, exhibitions, conferences, visits.

Isabel Alves' house in Lisbon and the house in Janas that they both shared are containers of memories.

Salomé Lamas: How would you describe Ernesto de Sousa?

Salomé Lamas: How was your life together?

Salomé Lamas: What did he think about formal education?

Salomé Lamas: What were his ideas about education?

Salomé Lamas: How did he implement those ideas?