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Memories of a travelling painter: Fausto Sampaio and the Portuguese empire*

Maria João Castro**

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Resumo

Pensar a produção artística colonial numa perspectiva pós-colonial equivale a problematizar as suas dimensões formais e conceptuais, inscritas, que se encontram no universo alargado do discurso visual. Nesse sentido, e tendo como âmbito a reflexão sobre o discurso imagético, que durante o século XX contribuiu para a construção de um imaginário do “império colonial português”, a pintura assume-se no domínio da colonialidade como um lugar privilegiado de leitura dessa Identidade, Memória e História, convocando uma multiplicidade de experiências e rotas. Os cruzamentos viáticos do pintor Fausto Sampaio (1893-1956) levaram-no de São Tomé a Macau, de Timor à Índia Portuguesa, passando por Portugal continental, colecionando um raro dossiê pictórico do império.

Palavras-chave: Pintura Colonial, Império, Viagem Ultramarina, Arte Contemporânea.

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Abstract

To reflect on colonial artistic production from a post-colonial perspective means problematising its formal and conceptual dimensions which are found within the wider universe of visual discourse. Thus, within the context of reflection on imagistic discourse, which during the 20th century contributed to the construction of an imagined view of the “Portuguese colonial empire”, painting holds a privileged place in the domain of coloniality to help us understand this identity, memory and history while calling upon a multiplicity of experiences and pathways. The travels of the painter Fausto Sampaio (1893-1956), taking him from São Tomé to Macau, from Timor to Portuguese India, as well as throughout mainland Portugal, enabled him to put together a rare pictorial dossier of the Empire.

Keywords: Colonial Painting, Empire, Overseas Travel, Contemporary Art.

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MEMORIES OF A TRAVELLING PAINTER: FAUSTO SAMPAIO AND THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE

Maria João Castro

*Fausto Sampaio's paintbrush
has eyes, brain and soul.*

L6-P6-San

Introduction

The historiography of contemporary art has shown how important travelling has been to the rise and crossover of influences in artists since it involves a journey and the assimilation of new spaces and times; in other words, new atmospheres.

Within the context of this article it is important to begin by mentioning the *Grand Tour*. This phenomenon started in the 18th century and became widespread throughout the whole of the 19th century seeking to promote cultural and artistic travelling in a very particular way. Many of the *Grand Touristes* were also amateur artists or accompanied by painters whose job it was to record the places they visited in an age still a long way from the photography or video-making of today. Moreover, visually documented observations were of greater value in the emerging culture of the Enlightenment when empirical validation and the recording of such were prerequisites for the validity and reliability of the knowledge acquired. This idea was corroborated by the expedition of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) to Egypt in 1798-99 which opened up a huge field for new millennial landscapes and was later prolonged by the French conquest of Algeria, the commercial treaties with Japan and the exploration of Africa. In its turn, the greater accessibility of travelling together with the universal exhibitions that were held opened up a new field for the discovery of the “other”, thereby making the 19th century the “golden age” of the European empires. The travelling painter from the Old Continent responded to this call and journeyed to the Orient¹ in an attempt to interpret and reproduce this mythical world so that he could then bring it back to the metropole.

¹ Note that the 19th century Orient represented a rather vague concept with imprecise boundaries and included places that are not considered today as part of the East, such as Eastern Europe and Africa.

The canvases that were exhibited in the salons of Europe had a great impact in that the places they depicted became real for the urban public.

However, in the case of Portugal the scenario developed within a rather unique context. The 1755 earthquake, the French invasions, the civil war between the Liberals and the Absolutists and the abolition of the religious orders, the lack of efficient means of transport and passable access roads together with the relative tardiness in creating infrastructures to lend support to the traveller were all major obstacles to the circulation of foreign artists within Portugal as well as for Portuguese painters wishing to leave to go on the European *Grand Tour*. As a result, Portuguese Romantics did not venture abroad much. From among them only Silva Porto (1859-1893) visited Spain, Paris and Italy and in fact, enclosed as they were within the country's insularity, the artists of his generation mostly did not travel beyond the walls of the nation. Hence the works of some late naturalist Portuguese painters – such as Tomás da Anunciação (1818-1878), Cristino da Silva (1829-1877) and José Malhoa (1855-1933) – make us very much aware of an art of landscapes and customs, but all centred on an eminently rural specificity. If the Europe of the *Grand Tour* was practically unreachable, what could be said of the far-away territories of the Empire? The overseas possessions of Africa and Asia were an unattainable mirage, a myth only made real through the maps and compendiums of history, idealised but not experienced.

At the end of the 19th century the situation was highly complex. The Berlin Conference (1884-85) had not recognised the “historical rights” of the Portuguese in Africa, thereby accelerating the appetites of the great English, French and German empires who tried to divide up the lands of the Black Continent among themselves. At the Conference a new international law for Africa was decided which lay down conditions for the recognition of the rights of territorial occupation by European powers that were not at all favourable to Portuguese interests. As a result of this decision, Portugal was obliged to adopt a *de jure* and *de facto* position and from the consequences of this event emerged one absolute certainty – effective possession of their overseas lands was urgent as they had become a *sine qua non* for the survival of Portugal's project of nation.

In order to defend Portuguese interests in Africa, the *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* [Lisbon Geographical Society] was created in 1875². It

² Similar to its European, especially English and French, counterparts, the *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* promoted a huge number of studies, publications and events. Of particular importance were the 1901, 1924 and 1930 National Colonial Congresses (as a result of which the *Arquivo Histórico Colonial* [Colonial Historical Archive] was established in 1931).

embraced a series of undertakings that stimulated the gradual growth in commissions, explorations and expeditions, but artistic concerns were not forgotten either. In the 1890s, the British Ultimatum destroyed Portugal's aspiration to have an Africa stretching from coast to coast, and the proclamation of the Republic saw some colonial issues take a new direction since the rotation of consecutive governments in the First Republic meant it was unable to guarantee the necessary continuity. The *Agência Geral das Colónias* [General Agency for the Colonies]³ was set up but it was only with the revolution of 28th May 1926 and the consequent rise of the military dictatorship that priorities were redefined and, as a result, the whole question of overseas policy quickly became a priority. In fact it was in that very same year of 1926 that the international journey of a Portuguese painter began, which then introduced the fiery brightness of colonial landscapes into Portuguese art.

As mentioned above, it was during the *Estado Novo* that art found itself related in a singular way to the political power, serving as both a propaganda and indoctrination instrument for the nation and its empire. However, this relation was not always thought about and defined *a priori*; in fact in the case of the artist considered “the Painter of the Portuguese Empire”, it resulted from an uncommon personal artistic path that was only taken advantage of *a posteriori* as the pictorial ‘showcase’ of the overseas territory that was virtually unknown to the majority of the metropole's population. This meant there was no prior political intention to promote the journey of a Portuguese painter to the overseas provinces but rather that his colonial plastic production was taken advantage of afterwards. This makes all the difference when it comes to categorising an artist's work, forcing one to view it beyond the reductive labels of political alignment or allegiance. In fact, as will be shown, Fausto Sampaio's viatic path was primarily due to his urge to leave Portugal and record the Portuguese colonial experience and not to an overseas journey planned and subsidised beforehand by the *Estado Novo*. This, however, did not prevent its being appropriated by Salazar's government.

³ Decreto n.º 9944, de 29 de Julho de 1924. Under the 1951 Constitutional Revision, its name was changed to the *Agência Geral do Ultramar* [General Agency for the Overseas Territories] (Portaria n.º 13593, de 5 de Julho de 1951), but it was finally closed down in 1978 (Decreto-Lei n.º 208/78, de 27 de Julho de 1978).

Corpus

In 1926, encouraged by Columbano⁴, Malhoa⁵ and Sousa Pinto, Fausto Sampaio⁶ left for Paris where he enrolled in the Académie Julien, under the direction of Laurens. He visited museums and galleries and the following year, in 1927, he attended the Académie Renard where he was taught by Émile Renard. During his years in Paris, he submitted works for the 1928 and 1929 *Salons* and his paintings were accepted for exhibition. On his return to Lisbon in 1929, he held an individual exhibition at the Salão Bobone where he sold all his exhibited works, some thirty-nine canvases in all. These pictures in the naturalist style already show though the clear influence of French impressionism – this can be seen in *Pont Neuf no Inverno*, *Arco do Triunfo* and *Rio Sena com nevoeiro* – which, as Sousa Lopes said, “provides us with the weapons and the tools necessary to set off in search of our own form of expression, of our own art, that we want to be truly Portuguese”⁷. At the same time, the young painter “shows expressionist tendencies as in *Bairro piscatório*, Vigo (1930), where the chromatic contrasts and vigorous spatula-like brush strokes are similar to those of Joaquín Sorolla” (Silveira, 2009, 10). In 1930 he held a new exhibition at the Salão Bobone and added canvases inspired by the landscapes of Buçaco, Bairrada and Lisbon to the other examples of his work; in 1932, at the same gallery, it was the turn of his paintings with scenes from Porto. Then in 1934 he returned to Paris to enrol in the Académie La Grande Chaumière. In Paris he would certainly have seen works by Edouard Manet (1832-1883) and was influenced by the vibrant light of the exotic canvases of Eugène Delacroix (1789-1863), Paul Klee (1870-1940), Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and Paul Gauguin (1848-1903). All of these showed a new form of painting occasionally influenced by travel (especially Delacroix – North Africa –

⁴ Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro (1857-1929), who was trained in the Lisbon Academia de Belas Artes and later became his teacher, belonged to the generation of Portuguese Romanticism. He painted landscapes, historical themes and still lifes but it was as a portrait painter that he excelled, painting figures from the early 20th century in Portugal.

⁵ José Malhoa (1855-1933), the pioneer of Portuguese Naturalism, was one of the Portuguese painters who came closest to Impressionism. A painter of rural Portugal and an interpreter of popular customs, he was openly anti-modern. In 1880, together with Columbano, he founded the *Grupo de Leão*, a gathering of young artists who met in the restaurant-bar in Lisbon with the same name, which influenced him in his choice to paint in the open air.

⁶ Fausto Sampaio attended the Instituto Araújo Porto in the city of the same name from the age of eight, later becoming a boarder at Casa Pia in Lisbon where he had drawing and painting classes.

⁷ Lecture given by Sousa Lopes transcribed in *Diário de Notícias*, 27 April 1929, n.p.

and Gauguin – French Polynesia) that would aid him in his own colonial journey which was just about to begin.

Colonial pilgrimage

Fausto Sampaio, one of the best interpreters of São Tomé, Macau, India and Timor:

Mário de Oliveira

São Tomé

Later in the year 1934 he set sail for São Tomé, establishing his first contact with the Portuguese colonial empire in a sojourn that would last for some months and from which resulted his first exhibition at the *Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes* (SNBA) [National Society of Fine Arts] in 1935⁸. In a laudatory text on the occasion of this São Tomé series, Lopo Vaz de Sampaio e Melo (1848-1892)⁹, a professor at the *Escola Colonial* [Colonial School] went so far as to call him “the first¹⁰ national artist who knew how to see the colonial atmosphere” (Melo 1942, 26). Using the painter’s artistic journey, Sampaio e Melo developed a strategy for colonial propaganda and the political dissemination of art whereby painting assumes the role of an instrument of cultural propaganda for the “Lusitanian character”, in terms of both race and identity.

The pigments Sampaio chose and the tonalities he reproduced highlight the care he took in his figurative representation of the tropics, the people and landscapes, captured by an eye that observed the exoticism of customs that were strange and far removed from the metropolitan reality. The power of this evocation was so strong that the *Agência Geral das Colónias* bought *Fruta da Terra*¹¹, *Batuque de Moçambicanos* (Pereira 2011,

⁸ In addition to São Tomé motifs he also exhibited paintings of Paris and Portugal, namely of Batalha, Estarreja, Gerês, Leiria, Nazaré, Tondela and Rio Sul.

⁹ Professor at the *Escola Superior Colonial* where he was in charge of the following subjects: Portuguese Colonisation, Administration and Legislation, Indigenous Policies, and Ethnology and Ethnography.

¹⁰ Author’s bold.

¹¹ See *Exposição retrospectiva de Fausto Sampaio. Pinturas do Ultramar*. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1973, n.p.

217) and *Pérola do Cacau* (Melo 1942, 26) three of the pictures from the São Tomé series mentioned above¹².

Later, the artist would once again call upon his images of São Tomé in a series of drawings he did to complement a text entitled *Outras Terras, Outras Gentes* by Henrique Galvão (1895-1970). In this series, what stands out is the graphic treatment achieved through parallel vertical lines that, varying in thickness and concentration, manage to mould the forms in terms of both light and volume. It is almost as if it were pointillism but using vertical lines instead of dots. This technique, which required great graphic mastery, also became known as dip pen [*Bico de Pena*] drawing allowing the thick and thin effect of the lines to give the drawing volume.



Drawing in Henrique Galvão's *Outras Terras, Outras Gentes*

Still in relation to São Tomé, it is significant to see what Lopo Vaz de Sampaio e Melo said about this series of paintings:

Fausto Sampaio had already shown his worth as an artist with the work he did in São Tomé and he had already provided the country with an important service for which all the Portuguese, even those who were insensible to the artistic vibration, should thank the first national artist who knew how to see and suggestively reproduce the colonial environment [...]. The artist can be really proud that with such truth and such strong evocative power he succeeded in reproducing the tropical landscape and the light of the tropics,

¹² According to the catalogue of the *Exposição retrospectiva de Fausto Sampaio. Pinturas do Ultramar*. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1973, the *Agência Geral das Colónias* (later *do Ultramar*) also bought *Tipo de Nativa* (São Tomé, 1935), *No bazar* (Macau, 1936), *Avenida Almeida Ribeiro à noite*, *Farmácia China* (Macau, 1936), *Manhã nevoenta*, *Uma boa cachimbada*, *Vista da praia Grande* (all from Macau, 1937), *A caminho do poço*, *Baía de D. Paula*, *Capelinha em Margão*, *Castelo de Diu: Forte do mar e Gogolá*, *Fortaleza da Aguada*, *Machim e Machana*, *No Varadouro*, *Rua dos Banianes*, *Templos: conventos e ruínas*, *Portas de entrada do castelo* (all from India, 1944).

now with a ferocious cruelty, now gently blurred [...]. The polychrome hue of objects and people possesses a highly evocative power (Melo 1942, 32).

Macau

In 1936, he accepted an invitation from his brother, Carlos Sampaio, the Head of Civil Administration for the Colony of Macau, and left for the Orient. During his year in Macau, Sampaio organised drawing and painting classes and it was at this time that he began to sign his pictures with a Chinese brush.

In the pictures he painted there, “the old China, ancient, mysterious and distressing, is evoked [...], fragments of the faraway colony in the East. Fausto Sampaio’s journey to China was like an artistic embassy that Portugal sent to the ancient Middle Kingdom” (Jorge 1992, 21-27).

The painter produced a pictorial work that roamed between panoramic views of the city and the people and their ethnographic customs, which were far removed from those of Europeans, even though he always kept within the familiarity of non-defined figurative contours. However, quick impressionistic brushstrokes began to become more dominant in his work, with him managing to reproduce the hustle and bustle of the Macau streets as well as the stillness of the seascapes and the interiors of local everyday life. In a purely pictorial expression – before becoming a figurative image – this type of brushstroke would be repeated years later on his tour of the lands of Portugal. In a clear idealisation of the nation’s unity, Sampaio would achieve pictorially the cohesion of an empire that stretched “from Minho to Timor”¹³.

On the first floor of the Rua do Campo, the artist founded a school that brought Chinese and Portuguese students together and then in 1937 he held an exhibition in Macau in which he showed forty-two oils and six charcoal portraits.

¹³ One of the slogans that gained ground in the 1960s in Portugal at a time when the nationalist movements of various African countries were growing and the international community was pressuring Salazar’s government to abandon the empire.



Fausto Sampaio, *Fan-Tan Gambling Room*, Macau, 1937

The *Fan-Tan Gambling Room* is a notable example (similar to others in this article) of the gaze of an artist lacking any Orientalist sense¹⁴ in that both the plasticity of the figures' faces (which act almost like masks) and the atmosphere in the gambling room seem to be western if it were not for the detail of the Macanese features of those portrayed and their clothes. This characteristic was to be a permanent feature of all Fausto Sampaio's work, and perhaps here lies one of the fundamental reasons why his work was so well accepted by the *Estado Novo* and so well received by the public and the critics. Although a colonial experience is being depicted, the

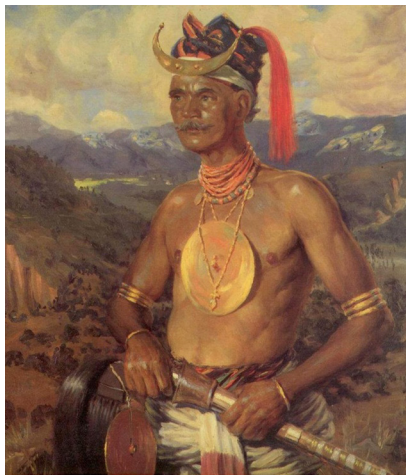
¹⁴ The fashion of Orientalism became the European way of relating to the Orient, influencing a new cultural wave more idealised than actually experienced. Thus started a rise in this literary *topos* which, allying itself to the Romantic movement and its fascination for ancient remains (ruins) and melancholic and/or sublime landscapes, meant that the countless travel narratives, produced from a culture of travelling to colonial territories, met with unusual success. Travel narratives and the fashion for Orientalism became fulchral in that they exerted a great influence over numerous painters who, after plunging into the narratives of certain works, grabbed their tubes of paint and their easels and departed for those destinations that had become synonymous with exoticism and seduction, but not always the Orient. It was through Orientalist canvases by, for example, Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) of the north of Africa, Jean-León Gérôme (1824-1904) reproducing the atmosphere of Constantinople, Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) painting Algeria, Étienne Dinet (1861-1929) in Egypt, David Roberts (1796-1864) in Cairo and John Frederick Lewis (1804-1876) in Morocco that the West 'saw' the Orient for the first time. Under the auspices of these painters' pictures exhibited in the imperial capitals, Europeans could actually see the concrete reality of the landscape described in travel accounts, experiencing the light and colour of a world as diaphanous as it was dreamlike. These paintings made faraway places 'visible' and made the specificities of the colonial territories known.

places and figures set within it are presented using a register that at the level of both line and expression (in other words, form and content) obeys a pattern that we could say bears a metropolitan stamp. It is as if there was a pattern, a typology of picture making, a mark that made the painting recognisable as being national. This is something that is very dissimilar to the painting done by his contemporaries.

Timor

In the same year, 1937, Sampaio travelled to Timor and some islands in Indonesia, visiting Dili, Baucau and Makassar. Later that year, he exhibited some works in the Town Hall in Dili that reflected the “acceptance of the objectives of a nationalist spirit [...] as seen from images of Portuguese lands in the East” (Silveira 2009, 15).

In 1939, the Timor series was shown at the SNBA in the capital of the Portuguese empire where they were very enthusiastically received. Álvaro de Fontoura (1891-1975), the Governor of Timor, said that “in his paintings there is not the slightest exaggeration, neither in the tones nor in the colour, since he has reproduced everything faithfully” (Fontoura 1942, 51). Along with other places, Sampaio painted the bay of Dili, the town and waterfalls of Baucau (at that time called Vila Salazar), the plain between Era and Manatuto, the Lacro Valley, Mount Libânia and the town of Hatolia (at that time Vila Celestino da Silva). However, he did not only do landscapes; he also portrayed local personages such as *Uma das rainhas de Timor* (a village chief) and *O Régulo D. Aleixo Corte Real*.



Fausto Sampaio, *Coronel D. Aleixo*, Timor 1937

This painting is worth analysing as it shows an example of loyalty since Aleixo was captured and immediately executed in the mountains of Timor by the Japanese invaders to whom he repeatedly refused to submit. For this he was posthumously awarded the rank of Comendador da Ordem Militar da Torre e Espada, do Valor, Lealdade e Mérito [Commander of the Military Order of the Tower and the Sword, of Valour, Loyalty and Merit]. On Dom Aleixo's chest is the *belak*, which represents the Sun, over which hangs a crucifix, the symbol and justification for Portugal's colonising mission.

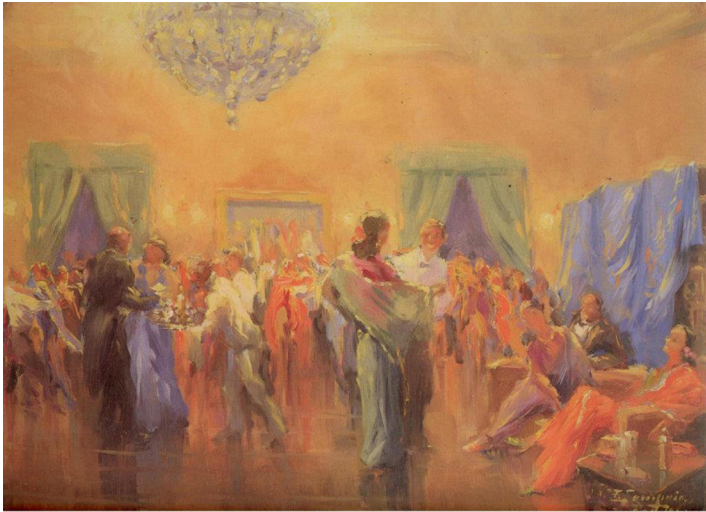
Portuguese India

In 1944, the artist also began a cultural pilgrimage through India, visiting Goa, Dadra, Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu. The former Portuguese provinces were represented through their ruined fortresses and churches and shown in one hundred and fifteen canvases and sixteen drawings exhibited at the SNBA in 1945. The artist's pen and ink drawings that appear scattered throughout the catalogue of the *Estado da Índia* [State of India] Exhibition show a technique he had probably learnt in the lands of the East.

In 1954, the show *Assuntos da Índia* [Indian Affairs] was held in the exhibition room of the *Secretariado Nacional de Informação* (SNI) [National Secretariat for Information] in Palácio Foz in Lisbon. The pictures, painted on his tour of Portuguese India in 1944, depict landscapes and portraits from Diu, Daman and Goa¹⁵.

We should note how the atmospheres of Portuguese India painted by Sampaio, of which *Dancing Room* is an example, repeat the continued absence of an Orientalist gaze in the sense that no illusion of the exotic is reflected. As in his Macau and Timor canvases, Sampaio's idealisation of the colonial Indian environment is not accompanied by any corresponding plasticity. It is as if the painter refuses to plunge into the environment depicted, as if he sees it through the canonical filter of western scholasticism that is not in line with the reality of the new natural and human landscapes he experiences in overseas lands. This aspect is a constant in Sampaio's production. In other words, Sampaio's painting lacks an Orientalist stamp since, although he paints the Portuguese Orient, he does so within a context that is devoid of any type of exoticism.

¹⁵ It is worth adding here a note to say that of the 115 canvases in this exhibition, 9 referred to Mozambique (Niassa and Lourenço Marques), painted during his stay in South Africa in 1946.



Fausto Sampaio, *Dancing Room, Goa, 1944*

It is important to remember that, at the time of this exhibition, the political tensions between Portugal and the Indian Union were becoming more critical. Ever since 1950 the Indian Union had been formally demanding that the “Portuguese State of India” be integrated into its territory. As Fernando de Pamplona (1909-1989) pointed out: “Now that Portuguese India is in danger and has suffered unacceptable aggression from Hindu imperialism, the artist, obeying a noble patriotic imperative, wished to bring before our eyes a collection of canvases that speak to us of these Portuguese lands which are so far away yet so close to our hearts in these uncertain times of national provocation” (Pamplona 1954, 4).

It is important to say that Fausto Sampaio’s exhibition at the SNBA was part of a much wider series of events that counted on the support of the government despite the 1950s being a problematic decade for national politics. There was, for instance, the trip made by the minister Sarmiento Rodrigues (1899-1979) to the Portuguese provinces of India, Timor and Macau in 1952 on board the *Índia*, a ship that inaugurated with this voyage a regular route between Lisbon and Macau with a stopover in Mormugão, Goa (Oliveira 1953, 11), and there was also the Portuguese Art Exhibition held in London in 1955-56 which was an “art exhibition, a political exhibition” (Fernandes 2001, 14). Not only were the consequences of the British government having given India her independence in 1947 being felt but

there were also concerns about the aspiration of the newly independent India to incorporate the Portuguese territory. What was of even greater importance though was the fact that in 1955 Portugal had been accepted as a member of the United Nations where it was becoming increasingly difficult to defend maintaining its overseas empire.

Below is what an article published in *Diário de Lisboa* had to say about his Indian works:

More than fifty works are now on show in the exhibition in the Palace in Restauradores. It must be said before anything else that this is a series of works that it would be a crime to break up by selling them separately. In our view, the best thing would be for the State to buy all the pictures and keep them for a future *Palácio do Ultramar* [Overseas Palace] [...]. For the rest, sooner or later some of our museums will have to create aesthetic sections to be filled exclusively with colonial works [...]. If literature and historical studies of the overseas territories comply with their duty to be of an informative nature, and, therefore, pedagogic and cultural, painting completes this education through the eyes with, let us say, a transcendent patriotic meaning [...]. In the canvases of Fausto Sampaio one sees India, one feels India, we travel through India from picture to picture, at one moment discovering her from the sea, at another burying ourselves in her land (*Diário de Lisboa* 8.11.1954, 7).

South Africa

In 1946, a last intercontinental trip took him to Africa once again, but this time to South Africa. There he painted portraits and landscapes, and more than eighty canvases were shown in exhibitions in Johannesburg and later in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo).

The paintings in this series were exhibited in 1948 at the SNBA, mixed in with others showing the Portuguese islands, India, Macau, Paris, São Tomé and Timor. The following year, in 1949, a new exhibition in the Salão Silva Porto in Oporto provided another opportunity to exhibit the Johannesburg canvases.

Touring lusitanian lands

Fausto Sampaio did not limit himself to merely building up a pictorial album of the empire. He also showed a concern to add Portuguese landscapes to his work. Some of the places that gradually became recorded in his canvases and act as a guided tour to the country in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s were: Águeda, Albufeira, Almourol, Anadia, Arouca, Arrábida, Aveiro, Azeitão, Azenhas do Mar, Batalha, Beja, Buçaco, Bairrada, Caramulo,

Cascais, Chaves, Coimbra, Costa Nova, Curia, Elvas, Estarreja, Estremoz, Évora, Gerês, Guimarães, Lamego, Leiria, Lisbon, Lagos, Mira, Monsanto, Nazaré, Olhão, Penacova, Peniche, Pinhão, Portalegre, Porto, Régua, Rio Sul, Sagres, Serra da Estrela, Setúbal, Sintra, Tomar, Tondela, Viana do Castelo, Vidago and Vila Real.

In an attempt to capture the diversity that made up the human geography and landscape of Continental Portugal, the painter developed a brushstroke technique that alternates between the textures of spatulated strokes and the flat surfaces of thin glaze, between monochromatic earth tones and the colours of a vegetation that filters both the ambient and the characters. He was magnetised by his journey through the country that “would hugely enrich our artistic baggage and contribute to elevating the level of Portuguese modern art, making it more varied and thereby freeing it from constant subjection to foreign schools” (Pires 1944, 330).

Indeed, and as Fernando de Pamplona wrote, “Fausto Sampaio interpreted not only the lands but also the people” (Pamplona 1954, 4).



Fausto Sampaio, *River Reflections*, Costa Nova, Portugal, 1941

***Estado Novo*, ‘policy of the spirit’, empire**

From early on, it became noticeable that Fausto Sampaio’s travels in both the overseas provinces and the metropole enabled a colourful image of the Portuguese overseas possessions to be constructed, which the *Estado Novo* did not refrain from taking advantage of. In effect, the ‘Policy of the Spirit’ [*Política do Espírito*] formulated by António Ferro (1895-1956) paid special attention to the importance of the Colonial Empire, heir to the Maritime Discoveries. Immediately following approval of the 1933 Constitution¹⁶, the *Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional* (SPN) [Secretariat of National Propaganda]¹⁷ publicised a programme whose theme was “Portugal is not a small country” [*Portugal não é um país pequeno*], a slogan presented shortly afterwards at the *Exposição Colonial Portuguesa* [Portuguese Colonial Exhibition] held in 1934, in other words, just one year after the SPN was set up. At this event, the coloured map of the Portuguese colonies, somatised within the European territorial space, embodied the idea of the extent of this European nation’s great empire and highlighted the importance of the overseas colonies in the nation’s ideology.

But there was a very important political instrument prior to 1933 which had prepared the path politically to bring into effect an imperial policy. In 1930, even before the *Estado Novo* had been constitutionally endorsed, the Colonial Act¹⁸ was drawn up — and would be republished at the time the 1933 Constitution came into effect — whereby the group of overseas territories possessed by the Portuguese were named the Portuguese Colonial Empire. This designation reflected the centralising nature of the government of Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) and reinforced Portugal’s historical right to possess, colonise and civilise. In general terms, this diploma ushered in a new phase in Portuguese colonial administration — its “imperial” and nationalistic phase — which would remain in effect until 1951. These years of “imperial mystique”, ruled by the Colonial Act and

¹⁶ Founding document of the *Estado Novo* which came into effect on 11 April 1933, the date it was published in the *Diário do Governo* [Government Gazette].

¹⁷ This was an institution that played an active and decisive role in divulging the nationalist ideology and in standardising the culture and arts of the *Estado Novo* regime. It was this institution that devised a whole range of national events, such as exhibitions in Portugal (1934 *Exposição Colonial do Porto* and the 1940 *Exposição do Mundo Português*) and abroad (Portuguese representation in the Paris exhibition of 1937 and in those of New York and San Francisco in 1939). These events established an important ideological framework which was later replicated in the following decades.

¹⁸ Decreto n.º 18 570 de 8 de Julho de 1930 published in the *Diário do Governo* N.º 156, I Série. Online at <https://dre.pt/application/dir/pdfgratis/1930/07/15600.pdf> (accessed 8.2.2018).



Fausto Sampaio, *S. Francisco Cloister*,
Goa, 1944

embodied in the speeches and actions of the Minister for the Colonies, Armindo Monteiro (1931-1935), reflected Portugal's apprehension in the face of the major European powers who coveted the Portuguese overseas territories. This "mythification" of the empire in the interwar period was shared by other countries (Great Britain, France, Holland and Belgium) but in the case of Portugal, there was a sacralisation of the empire, capable of firmly establishing in the Portuguese people the ancestral, and therefore legitimate, idea of ownership.

It is worth digressing here to mention that in 1933 the Portuguese artistic situation was not the best. The Minister for the Colonies, with his ambitions and his resources, had been kindly disposed towards the project of a group of artists who presented a proposal in which they offered to travel to the overseas colonies to "paint, sculpt and draw", condensing the result of their work in a future exhibition of colonial art. The request was signed by Álvaro Canelas (1901-1953) and Jorge Barradas (1894-1971). However, and despite the Minister's recognition of the project's interest, there was no funding available to support any such action¹⁹.

¹⁹ "A situação precária em que vivem os artistas portugueses". *Diário de Lisboa* 1933 (March 22): 5.

Given this “precarious” situation of artists in Portugal and based on the idea proposed by the 1933 Colonial Act of a “multiracial pluricontinental empire”, it became urgent to create the conditions necessary for there to be a corresponding plastic image that would help people “see” this distant mythical territory. This aspiration was achieved through exhibiting the works of Fausto Sampaio and making them known to the public.

Where did this happen? This took place during the important commemorations of the Double Centenary of 1940 [the founding of the nation (1140) and the restoration of independence (1640)]. The event that became known as the *Grande Exposição do Mundo Português* [Great Exhibition of the Portuguese World] did not forget to provide a special place for the representation of the colonial empire. The event was the expression of a major documentary of civilisation that commemorated eight hundred years of independence and three hundred years since the restoration of independence from Spain. It brought light to Lisbon and especially the area of Belém, and was in marked contrast to the foreign political reality that was marked by the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the Second World War (1939-1945), crises from which Portugal remained officially detached. It should be remembered that the Salazarist regime had been architecting a whole line of historical and patriotic legitimisation events which highlighted the triumphal moments of the nation’s past and of which the maritime discoveries and the building of the colonial empire were the jewels in the crown, and thus continually on show. As a result, the representations referring to the lands beyond the seas had the right to their own section, installed in the Tropical Garden, where the players were the indigenous peoples of the Portuguese colonies. This colonial section consisted of five pavilions (which represented the overseas territories) and two streets (from Macau and India) which gave the space a picturesque and exotic feel in a clearly fictionalised appropriation of the overseas possessions.

The cover of the colonial section’s catalogue reproduced one of Fausto Sampaio’s Macau paintings²⁰ and the following text appeared in the preface:

It seems to us to be in our greatest interest to create a school of Portuguese Colonial Art – the first in the last hundred years – not with the intent to resolve that huge problem but with the sincere desire to foment the interest that it could and should create.

²⁰ *Rua 5 de Outubro*, Macau.

Portuguese art does not bear a nationalist stamp – such a stamp that could and should be the reason for its originality. It merely finds here and there the support and effort of one or other artist whose creative spirit seeks to react against its internationalism – or rather, against its lack of defined expression. We write in the French way, we paint in the Spanish way, we build in the American way – but neither in the form nor in the motifs, neither in the technique nor in the inspiration is this so for the artists are Portuguese [...].

In fact, we can not see or understand any Portuguese art which has no overseas inspiration, no intervention from the colonies. It is overseas where our artists have to find the nationalist features of their art and the distinct stamp of their originality – because the fundamental elements of its greatness form part of the physiognomy of the Nation.

Unfortunately, our colonies have not been visited by artists. We can point to a Jorge Barradas, painting for some weeks in São Tomé and later showing – through his works – that the time he had was not sufficient to see and feel the island – and to a Fausto Sampaio, whose dedication and personal sacrifice is providing us with the first great and valuable artistic documentary of the Empire.

And so a decision has been taken to cultivate among the artists of the Colonial Section an appreciation of the motifs of Portuguese Colonial Art and to form the beginnings of a School that might well also be a school of Nationalist Art.

The public shall say whether these ideas have been achieved. The author has sought to give them the most extensive and widest practical projection, judging that the interests of the Nation would thus be best served²¹.

However, Galvão's wish that national artists should visit and paint the colonies took some time to materialise and, in its absence, a visual idealisation of the empire was created. Hence the work produced by Fausto Sampaio until then was extensively used to give colour to the area reserved for the Empire. A nucleus of ninety-one of his pictures figured as a "showcase" and a colourful album of the far distant places imagined by a population who were ignorant of the Empire. Forty had been painted in Macau, twenty-six in São Tomé, twenty-two in Timor, two in Makassar and one in Singapore. This was art assuming the role of a visual compromise between the ideology of the regime and the evocation of the distant colonial empire.

²¹ Preface by Henrique Galvão. *Exposição do Mundo Português de 1940, Secção Colonial*. 1940. Lisboa: Neogravura.



Cover of the Colonial Section Catalogue Portuguese World Exhibition, 1940



Photograph of Macau Street in the Exhibition Lisbon, Portugal, 1940

The Rua de Macau [Street in Macau], including an arch that can still be seen today in the Tropical Botanical Garden in Belém, was a typical street from the old colony in the East “with all the colour, movement, picturesqueness and the most important features that characterise it”²².

In this street – built to resemble Sampaio’s painting *Rua 5 de Outubro* – was the Colonial Pavilion inside which a wide range of documentation, several commercial establishments, a Fan-Tan lottery house, a pagoda temple and houses of the colony’s local people were on show. In a workshop recreated for the purpose, there were artisans who had come from Macau who worked in cedar and camphor wood; outside the workshop rickshaws carrying passengers went by. On the first floor of a special building next to the Colonial Pavilion, the “Fausto Sampaio Room” was installed in homage to the artist who had lent his paintings to the exhibition and “who is the first painter in the History of Portuguese Imperial Art who, on his own initiative, went to the colonies with the aim of undertaking a major artistic documentary of the Empire through painting”²³. There were also pictures by Fausto Sampaio dotted around the pavilion of the Colony of Macau, in the Pagoda and in the Pi-Pa-Chai Music Room, and in the pavilion of the Island

²² Idem, p. 277.

²³ Idem, p. 278.

Colonies (Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor) in the São Tomé Room and in the Timor Room as well as in the Exhibition Director's office.

The overseas experience that Sampaio's canvases recorded led shortly afterwards to Diogo de Macedo publicly defending the creation of a national Museum of Colonial Art. The purpose was not only preservation but also a preventive measure considering that, through educating the public, sensibility could be nourished and a taste for art promoted. This desire was based on some political requisites laid down by the reconfiguration of post-war Europe. When Portugal joined NATO in 1949, the UN in 1955 and EFTA in 1960 and signed trade agreements with the EEC as of 1972, this meant there had to be some changes made to colonial policy. It is in the light of these changes that the 1951 revision of the Constitution should be understood when it came to changing the term "colonies" to "overseas provinces" even though the provisions set out in the 1930 Colonial Act still remained. What is certain is that these political concerns and the configuration of the new post-war world diverted the attention of the Portuguese State away from questions of art. Thus it is understandable that although in 1952 there had been thoughts about planning a *Palácio do Ultramar* [Overseas Palace] to be built in the Praça do Império in Belém²⁴, this never went further than being an intention. Taking into consideration the commission as well as its function and location, one cannot help but view this intention as a bastion of colonialism, a monumental work flying in the face of the on-going international protests and the successive nationalist victories on the African continent and in Asia. Regardless of the fact that it never came to fruition, the project by the architect Luís Cristino da Silva reflected the concerns of the political power faced with a western world increasingly in conflict with the maintaining of colonial empires. The studies were finally suspended in 1959 allegedly because the idea, which dated back to 1951, was going to be rethought, but it was also due to a shortage of funds, alterations to the public works policy and the decision to remodel the whole of the Praça do Império and the riverside area of Belém²⁵.

²⁴ Decreto-Lei n.º 38.727, de 23 de April de 1952.

²⁵ It was above all the lack of political will that determined the failure of its realisation. This illustrates perfectly the ideological preoccupations of the regime in regard to the approaching Henry the Navigator Commemorations that were the driving force behind the increased scale of the project within the urban area of Belém, the bastion of the Discoveries and therefore of the Empire. In other words, the focal point remained within an area that was the mirror of Portugal's maritime calling and imperial dimension, a space for overseas representation.

The architectonic program had become extremely complicated when, in addition to the *Palácio do Ultramar*, a *Museu do Ultramar* [Overseas Museum], an *Escola Superior do Ultramar* [Advanced School for Overseas Studies] and an Institute of Tropical Medicine were also to be included. The whole complex encompassed a strong museological component linked to the overseas territories, thereby enhancing the relationship between colonist and colonised²⁶. In a certain way this would fulfil Diogo de Macedo's aspirations mentioned above and there would most certainly have been a prominent place kept for the work of Fausto Sampaio.

However, most of these projects never left the drawing board²⁷. The inescapable fact is that art had ceased to enjoy the special centrality that the Portuguese had become used to its having during the 1930s, and the removal of António Ferro, the director of the SPN/SNI, in 1949 was the swansong for a certain triangulation between politics, art and empire. From then on, those who succeeded him as head of the SNI did nothing more than maintain and continue with the same policy for the arts, albeit with a few exceptions.

It cannot be forgotten that up until then, the historically proven power of persuasion of the image had made the plastic arts (and in particular painting) a powerful ally of colonial propaganda in both its political and moral forms, acting as a symbolic standard that contributed to embedding cultural values and principles. Thus an "imperial art" that would make dissemination of the ideology possible and would simultaneously become an identity element justified its public defence, as can be seen from this citation in *O Mundo Português*: "Studying the primary causes for the unification of the Empire, we have noted that one of the main factors that influences it is Art. As long as Art is unified, the task is half done" (Pelayo 1939, 361).

The critics

The critics, more concerned with being in line with the regime than in producing any serious artistic analysis, showed their nationalist leanings, thereby reducing the scope of their work. For example, take the title of

²⁶ The project was designed taking into account an architectonic risk that oscillated between monumental form and a slimmer volumetry. See article by Vera Félix Mariz. 2013. "A encenação utópica da capital do império. O projeto de Luís Cristino da Silva para o Palácio do Ultramar 1951-1958". *Revista Rossio* 1: 124-138. Online at https://issuu.com/camara_municipal_lisboa/docs/revista_rossio/138%20 (accessed on 7.2.2018).

²⁷ With some exceptions such as the creation of the Instituto de Medicina Tropical and the Instituto de Investigação Científica e Tropical.



Fausto Sampaio, *Roça Pinheira, View from Monte Sameiro, São Tomé, 1935*

the book of lectures presented on the occasion of the 1942 exhibition in the SNBA which called Sampaio “the painter of overseas Portugal”. What must certainly have pleased the critics and contributed to a clear identification between the position of the State and the work of Sampaio was the fact that his appropriation of the overseas universe was not only thematic (colonial atmospheres) but also plastic (academic naturalism with a touch of impressionism) with no trace of tension between them. As Maria de Aires Silveira said in the catalogue *Fausto Sampaio, Viagens no Oriente*, “the colour and formal content of his foreign canvases contrasted with the grey national backdrop, based on the image as presented in newspapers, films and documentaries, all in black and white” (Silveira 2009, 17). In fact, the visual chromatic impact of Fausto Sampaio’s pictures brought colour to the monochrome taciturn national landscape as he brought his impressions of his travels overseas to life through colour.

Matos Sequeira, in an article in the newspaper *O Século*, refers to “the power of the artist who was able to capture and spiritualise those distant homes that were linked only by the Portuguese spirit” (Sequeira 1939, 2). By this he meant that the Portuguese presence was palpable and concrete in the overseas territories. Sequeira’s article ends with the promise that



Fausto Sampaio Exhibition, Palácio Foz, Lisbon, 1954

“the State will not fail in its duty towards the service provided by the artist and will purchase his paintings. It is necessary that it buys the artist himself in the good and honest meaning of the phrase. Fausto Sampaio, instead of travelling through the Empire at his own expense, should do so at the Government’s expense. Nobody asked us for this; it is our conscience that requests it”, meaning that the Portuguese presence was real in those far distant places.

According to Américo Jorge, his work was “an artistic ambassador that Portugal, this New Portugal in its upward movement towards renewal, sent to the old Middle Kingdom” (Jorge 1942, 17), referring to the colonial ethnographic fidelity that Sampaio reproduced in his Macau pictures, thus rendering “good service to the Empire’s propaganda”²⁸.

In the early 1940s his work received special prominence, reiterating his role as a painter of the overseas territories, especially after two exhibitions: the 1940 one (in the colonial section of the *Grande Exposição do Mundo Português*) and the 1942 one (in the SNBA). Later there was the 1954 SNI one (mentioned above) and a retrospective exhibition (1973).

²⁸ Francisco Machado, in the opening note to the artist’s 1942 exhibition, *Fausto Sampaio, pintor do ultramar português*, p. 7. 1942. Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colónias.

In an article that appeared in the magazine *Viagem*, António Montês (1896-1967) called him “the painter of the Empire”, praising him for his “Portuguesism” and for the artistic and documentary value of his work with its truly patriotic flavour, and saying that “it is a genuine source of pride for all the Portuguese” and that his paintings “are a precious album of the Portuguese Empire” (Montez 1952, 8).

As for Américo Chaves de Almeida, he relates Gilberto Freyre’s Luso-tropicalism²⁹ with Fausto Sampaio’s work, highlighting the faithfulness of his artistic “interpretation” to the “reciprocal exchange of cultures and not the dominance of one over the other” (Almeida 1992, 129-133).

Final reflections

Even though his travel painting incorporated fragments in line with the discourse of empire, this did not make it any less valid or relevant. In fact, the artist, who died on April 4th, the same day as he was born, lived for most of his 53 years elaborating a pictorial album which lasted beyond the end of the empire, showing that his work justified itself and did not need any political or ideological validation. Before committing himself to the Empire, Fausto Sampaio was committed to painting, but in many circles the idea still prevails that a committed painter is a “lesser” painter. However, as more recent studies in the field of contemporary art history have started to show (especially with regard to authoritarian regimes in Europe in the first half of the 20th century), the manipulation of art by the political power shows nothing more than an awareness of its force as a vehicle for the transmission of ideas. During the period in the 20th century when totalitarian European regimes were in power, such manipulation helped to implant, structure and disseminate knowledge of the single party ideology of the dictatorships on the Old Continent. This meant that art was used as the preferred means to communicate totalitarian values, transforming it into a remarkable vehicle for propaganda. The reason is that art is not neutral, with its value lying in the fact that it is recognised as “educational” and “transmissive” of values that allow principles to be moulded and customs to be moralised, all defined by strict guidance criteria that issued from the leaders of the single parties. Igor Golomstock in fact called our attention to the fact that “the culture

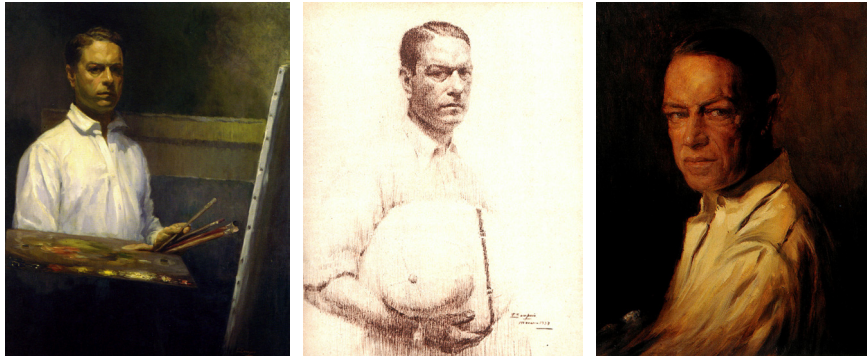
²⁹ A theory formulated in the 1930s in which Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987) praises Brazilian multiracialism as being the result of inter-racial breeding and the blending of cultures. This made the Portuguese case unique among colonisers by confirming the singular capacity of the Portuguese for miscegenation and adaptation to those they had colonised.

of European totalitarian states was transformed into a ‘magic mirror’ that reflected the actions carried out by their regimes” (Golomstock 1990, 55) and so showed that artistic works were not mere political indicators, but that they had real artistic value as well.

The truth is that the dictatorships “used” many of their artists, who had to align their aesthetic output to the directives issued. They were thus transformed into “official artists” who produced propaganda to order even if this “marriage” was often a forced one. In effect, a great number of artists only pretended to be committed in order to be able to continue to create. Three exhibitions, *The Art of the III Reich* (Frankfurt, 1974), *Realisms* (Georges Pompidou Centre, 1981), and *The 1930s – Art and Culture in Italy* (Milan, 1982), are only a few of the examples that illustrate the topicality of the theme, and show the re-thinking of contemporary culture through the values prescribed by non liberal-democratic states. At the end of the century, the *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators 1930-1945* exhibition was organised by the Hayward Gallery in London under the auspices of the Council of Europe and in collaboration with the Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona and the Deutsches Historisches Museum of Berlin to which the exhibition travelled in 1996. This exhibition reinforced the importance of the question of artistic creation in the service of the state, and as a language of propaganda for the dictatorial and totalitarian regimes of 1930s Europe. In addition, the recent exhibition, *A Question of Values: Art, Power and Freedom in Europe and Beyond 1939-2012*, promoted by the Council of Europe, was not merely another case. What stood out in this show was the proposal to take a new look at the art produced in totalitarian Europe, but now rethought in the light of the present day.

Strictly speaking, artists have always looked at the world and created proposals that were in accordance with their own experience of the political and aesthetic reality in an eternal dichotomy between the autonomy of art and an art *engagé* with the political power.

When we analyse Portuguese colonial art, especially painting, during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, it can be seen that this was always the result of an individual initiative taken by the artist himself although institutional organisations might support their exhibitions in specific cases. Such was the case of Fausto Sampaio’s exhibition in 1954 in Palácio Foz, the headquarters of the SNI. One must also not forget that the 1930s ended with the outbreak of the Second World War and, despite Portugal’s neutrality, national concerns were focused on political issues, with culture and art, especially colonial art, being relegated to the background. As a result, the



Self-portraits (1933, 1937 and 1947)

appeal made by Jorge Pelayo in 1939 and published in *O Mundo Português* when he said that “the need to create an imperial modern art is important at the present moment in order to oppose some curious demands” (Pelayo 1939, 359-361) can be understood and contextualised.

The response from the *Estado Novo* took some time to arrive as they were more concerned about constructing a univocal mythical image of Portuguese identity as a necessary strategy to combat the “disorder” into which Portugal had been plunged after sixteen years of republican government. But the mythification of an imperial and colonial existence notwithstanding, the representation of the overseas empire in its different manifestations and mediums assumed the role of being an extension and transmutation of the art of the metropole itself, which lies at the opposite extreme to an Orientalist view. Highlighting the ability of the plastic arts to portray the territories under Portuguese administration in a positive light, a proposal was made to develop a form of art along naturalist lines that was capable of being ‘read’ and understood by the urban public and which would be very much to the liking of the conservative-minded cultural elite. Fausto Sampaio’s painting not only fulfilled this requirement but also led to the idea of a Lusitanian ‘essence’, the identity of which was to be found in a pictorial Portuguese view of the lands where the Portuguese had roamed. His representation of the overseas lands led to the construction of a view of a nationalist and colonialist nature which, in a certain way, reflected the *Estado Novo*’s imperialist propaganda but did not, however, limit itself to this. Using an artistic language that was heir to the best representatives of Portuguese naturalism – Fausto Sampaio

was born in the year that Silva Porto, one of the founders of Portuguese naturalism, died – the painter produced a ‘classically inspired’³⁰ pictorial cartography of both overseas and home territories that endured for a long time even after the dismantling of the colonial empire. The conceptual support behind his painting is not therefore limited to mere art bound to the regime: it has its own worth *per se* as a representation of an overseas era and a colonial space which are linked in a Luso-tropical discourse of paint and have survived in the artistic-cultural hybridity of post-coloniality. “His paintings, where his spatula works with dollops of paint, making them highly expressive, and all superfluous detail disappears,” (Carvalho 1973) constitute a rare oeuvre documenting the overseas lands of the Portuguese empire. The artist compiled a sort of pictorial dossier of the Empire and his palette brings us the atmospheres of Africa, Asia and Europe with an intuitive perception of light and colour that characterises an artistic output divided between landscape and portraiture, most produced using paint but also some pen and ink drawings. Between his background in naturalism and his passion for Impressionism, Fausto Sampaio became the interpreter of an overseas aesthetic enjoying an unusual versatility that flows beyond the canvases and endures in their perpetual nature.

Sampaio’s work is an album of colonial Portugal and a documentary of painting. It illustrates what Reinaldo dos Santos (1880-1970) claimed some time before when he said that “art does not only express the Empire in the sense that it conveys its greatness [...] but it expresses the Empire in terms of the consequences of its expansion, in the discovery of new aspects of nature, men and customs” (Santos 1941, 21-22). He refers to art as the realisation of something that is truly capable of assimilating the empire’s hybridity, a reflection of the sensibility of national artists towards the new conquered lands. Reiterating this idea, consider what Lopo Vaz de Sampaio e Melo said at a conference in the *Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes* back in 1935 (Melo 1935, 431):

The intervention of art, as a consequence or cause in the imperial expansion, is a double-edged sword that promotes, in the direction of uniformity, the phenomenon of exchanges of motifs and processes between the artistic manifestations of the metropole and the different parts of the Empire, and can be considered under different aspects. One of them, the most important for me, is that of the great services that Art can provide to the Empire, competing admirably through the dissemination and pictorial or plastic description of the Empire’s charms [...] to clarify minds about the worth and the

³⁰ In the sense that its plasticity was dissimilar to the “moderns”.

possibilities of the Empire, to intensify and generalise a great interest in the colonies in the national spirit. In a word, to tighten and strengthen imperial ties. But there are many aspects of the problem that it is legitimate, interesting and may be convenient to consider. Thus, while it is interesting to examine the influence the exotic motifs might come to exercise on imperial art, no less interesting and which should be considered too are the fundamental alterations, or simply improvements, or the new orientations that the influence of metropolitan art might inevitably have on the indigenous arts of the overseas colonies (Melo 1942, 32-33).

A hearing problem when he was a young child led to Fausto Sampaio becoming deaf. What for others would have been a disadvantage was for him an advantage that allowed him to plunge into a silent world free from the distractions of sound. “Enclosed within his own world, only his eyes became used to communicating with life [...] and from this isolation was born a poet of colour”³¹. He was “totally detached from everything, living intensely only the emotion of inspiration” (Carvalho 1973, n.p.). Consequently, he could channel all his senses and attention towards light and colour, which allowed him to hone his unusual sensibility and which produced works of an uncommon popular nature.

Despite not being able to hear, “Fausto Sampaio danced wonderfully” (Borges 1992, 46) just as he made the paints on his colonial canvases dance. Contemplating the world, he interiorised landscapes that, under the dance of his paints and brushes, he then returned to us in the shape of a work of art, diaphanous and mellifluous.

“Although given the opportunity to be able to hear again, Fausto Sampaio chose to remain in his world of silence in order to be able to continue to paint”³². He continued to give himself over totally to painting, which perhaps shows how true his commitment was not only to the identity, memory and history of metropolitan Portugal and overseas Portugal but above all to a multicultural art that honours him as the only travelling painter to visit and portray the overseas Portuguese empire in the 20th century.

³¹ C. C. Notícias (Lourenço Marques), 23 April 1944, *Exposição retrospectiva de Fausto Sampaio. Pinturas do Ultramar*, n.p., 1973. Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar.

³² According to his daughter, Maria José Sampaio, in a statement on 19.8.2016.

Fausto Sampaio is represented in the following collections:

- Câmara Municipal de Lourenço Marques
- Casa Museu Fernando de Castro, Porto
- Fundação Medeiros e Almeida, Lisboa
- Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Ensino Superior, Lisboa
- Museu Regional de Aveiro, Aveiro
- Museu do Caramulo, Tondela
- Museu da Casa Pia, Lisboa
- Museu da Fundação Dionísio Pinheiro, Águeda
- Museu da Fundação Oriente, Lisboa
- Museu José Malhoa, Caldas da Rainha
- Museu de Macau, Macau
- Museu Marítimo de Ílhavo, Ílhavo
- Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Museu do Chiado, Lisboa
- Museu Nacional Machado de Castro, Coimbra
- Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis, Porto
- Museu Santos Rocha, Figueira da Foz
- Museu Vasco da Gama, Goa

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