ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
A Practice of Togetherness: Telling an Experience of Online Learning During the First Covid 19 Lockdown

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• Abstract (300 words):
This paper explores the experience of online learning in the Advanced knowledge Seminar of the PhD in Architecture at the School of Architecture of University of Minho, Guimarães, Portugal, during the first Covid 19 Pandemic lockdown, between the 10th of March 2020 and the 3th of July 2020. With the key motto “making-with”, this is a program with a cross-disciplinary approach, that brought together worldwide connoisseurs, such as Tim Ingold, Jane Rendell and Shelley Sacks, just to name a few, to an open platform of critical discussion. Beyond the students of the program, in this platform everyone interested was welcome to participate. Unexpectedly, we had in our virtual classroom, people coming from the most diverse places, Brazil, UK, Belgium, etc., and what was meant to be a closed teaching and learning experience between the students and the professor, become a platform of interconnectedness between different cultures, lives, and experiences.

Such was only possible due to the unforeseen situation we were all living in. The invitation to the keynote speakers was done as an adaptation plan to the compulsory shift to online
education. With such a short notice we relied mostly on their generosity, but also on the fact that suddenly they were free to decide where they would like to be present, due to the gap in time consequent to the canceling of events in their busy agendas. Being a peripherical school of architecture, with precarious means of existence, namely financial, was not a minus anymore. Something singular happened here: togetherness. We all desired to connect somehow. By living in a time of physical distance, being with the “other” become more crucial than ever, not only for the learning practice but what is more for our survival as humans.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Cidália Silva is an architect and Assistant Professor of Architecture and Urbanism at the School of Architecture of the University of Minho (EAUM) and Integrated Research Member of Lab2PT. Currently she is the director of the PhD Program of the EAUM and coordinator of the research group on Architecture and Urbanism of the ProChild CoLAB – a Portuguese nationwide consortium with a transdisciplinary approach dedicated to combating poverty and social exclusion in children from 0 to 10 years old. Holding a Diploma in Architecture (2000) and a Master in Planning and Design of Urban Environment (2006) she concluded her PhD at EAUM (2014), with the research entitled “See(d)(k)ing Time: an Approach to How to Design as Research”. She is passionate about the acts of thinking, writing, and generating ideas, practices she utilizes with her research students as she leads them to discover ways to catalyze their potential to create original knowledge. "Interconnection" is one of the key-words in her research, and functions not only as the method to seek ways of crossing fields, scale(s) and time(s), but also to connect the “I” with the “other” in a dialogical practice of consciousness. Published in international journals and a participant in various interdisciplinary conferences, Professor Silva is the Editor of The International Journal of the Constructed Environment.