

Heroines of Sea & Land

Can Art Transform Power?

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Portugal

Abstract

This visual essay is about two art projects that were initiated in the Azores Islands: "À prova de fogo e de bala" (fire-proof and bullet-proof) and "Super-Artista Incógnita" (Super-Artist Incognito).

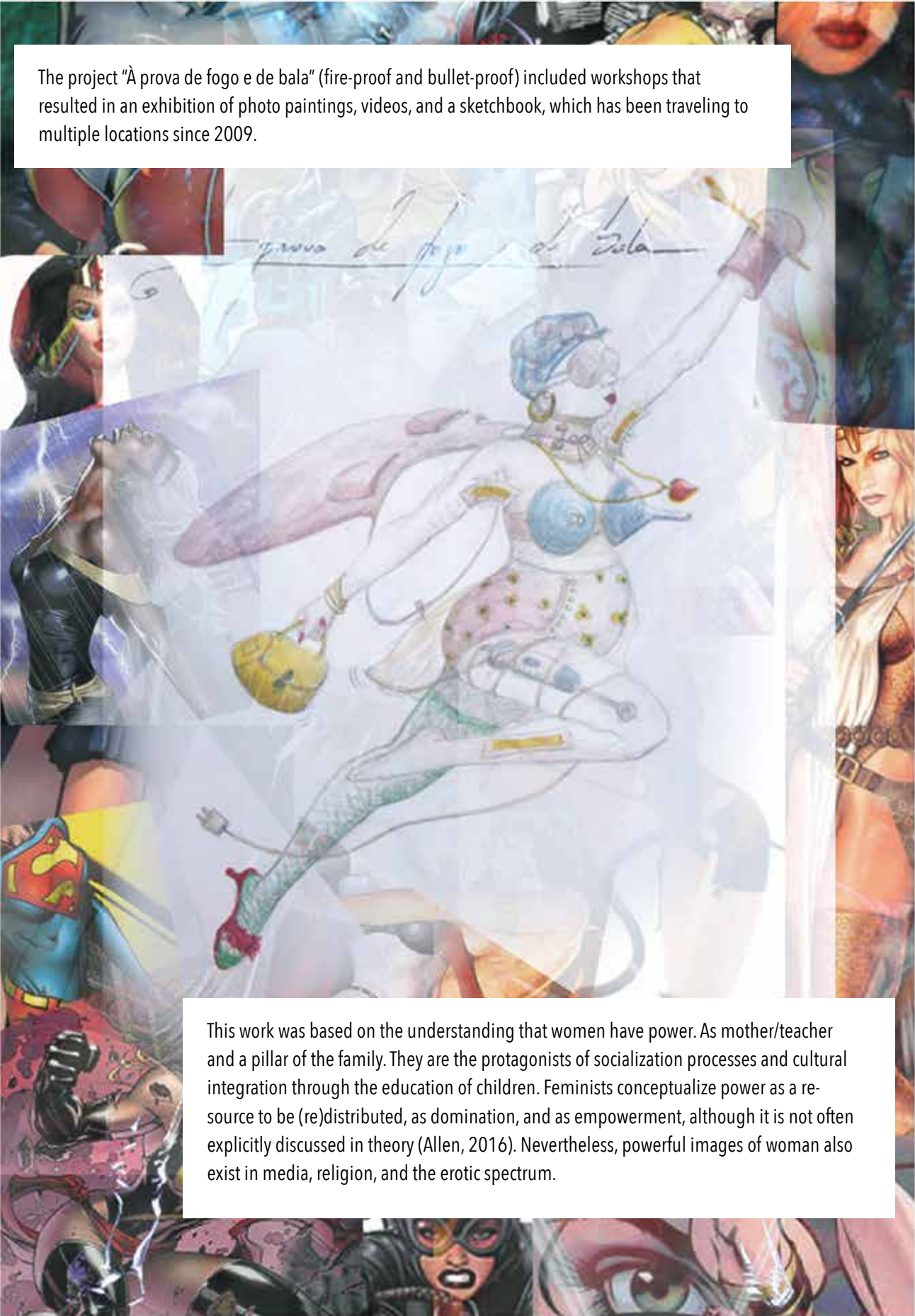
"À prova de fogo e de bala" was made with the collaboration of 15 women (10 to 60 years old) from the Association of Wives of Fishermen and Ship-Owners of Terceira Island (AMPA) and immigrants living on São Miguel Island who participated as creators and models of the heroic figures of women as complex social-cultural constructions.

"Super-Artista Incógnita" is the author's alter ego that emerged from the first project to spread and inspire creative power throughout the world.

Keywords: socially engaged art, fisherman wives, immigrant women, Azores Islands, super-heroines

Bio

Andrea Inocência is a visual artist and performer. She has exhibited and performed regularly for over two decades and has received several grants and awards, including those presented by the Internationalization Support Program of the Callouses Gulbenkian Foundation (Canada) and of the Camões Institute (Argentina); a grant by the KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Stockholm), INOV-ART/Duarte's (Barcelona), Euromissile Program (Paris) and by DRAC (Azores); and an honor by the Federation Nationale de la Culture Française. She is co-founder of the performance collective Malparidas, a co-organizer of the network Arts-Informed Research from CES – the University of Coimbra, and is a researcher collaborator at GECAPA/CLEPUL - University of Lisbon.
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The project "À prova de fogo e de bala" (fire-proof and bullet-proof) included workshops that resulted in an exhibition of photo paintings, videos, and a sketchbook, which has been traveling to multiple locations since 2009.

This work was based on the understanding that women have power. As mother/teacher and a pillar of the family. They are the protagonists of socialization processes and cultural integration through the education of children. Feminists conceptualize power as a resource to be (re)distributed, as domination, and as empowerment, although it is not often explicitly discussed in theory (Allen, 2016). Nevertheless, powerful images of woman also exist in media, religion, and the erotic spectrum.



The participants of one workshop came from AMPA - Association of Wives of Fishermen and Ship-Owners of Terceira Island.



The other workshop involved immigrants to São Miguel Island.





The process involved crossing social and cultural borders,



playing with stereotypes commonly associated with women,



and exploring trans-disciplinary art practices.



The goals were to increase the awareness of the value of women as beings and participants, and



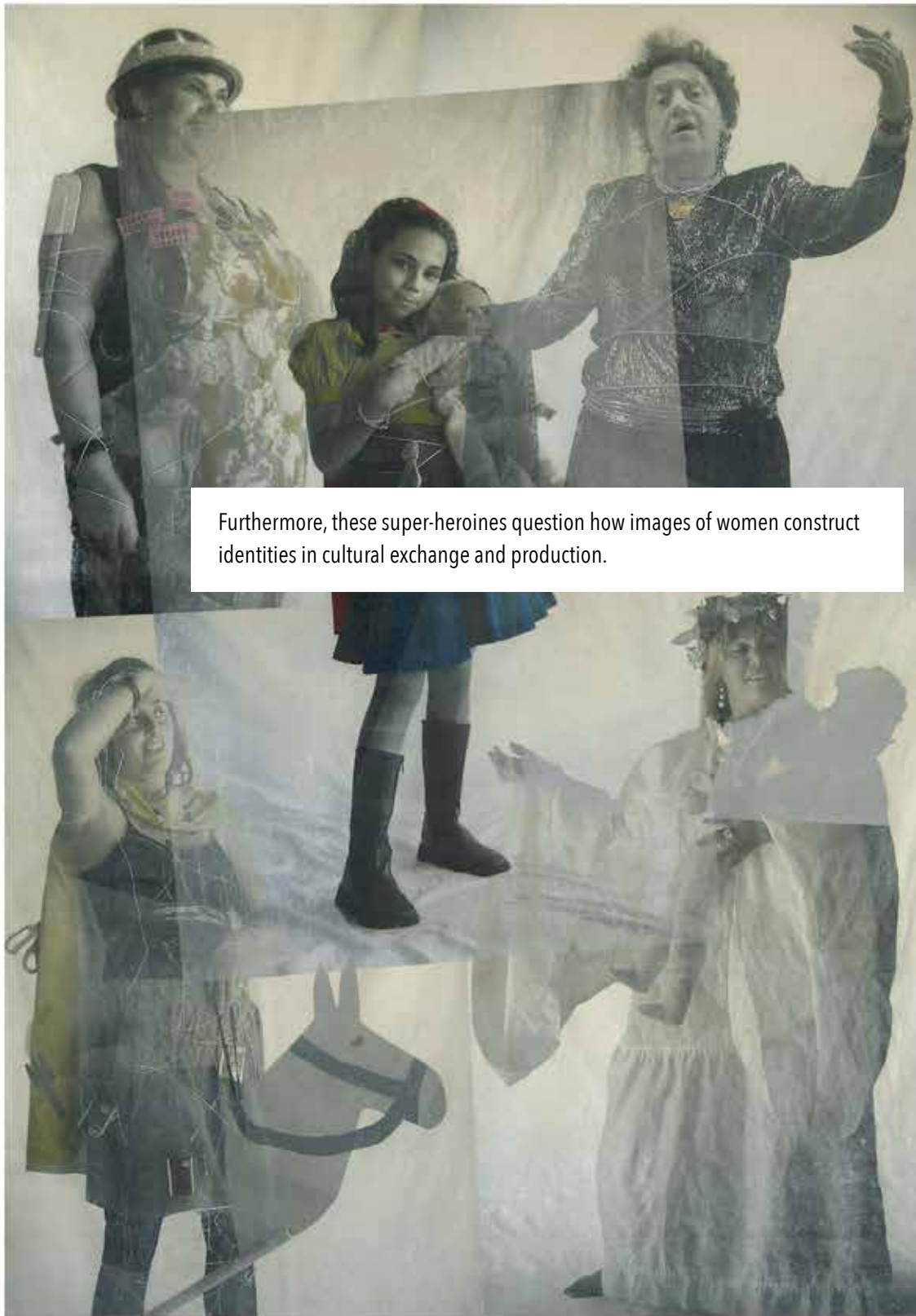
to offer them a collective experience of exploring and reflecting on their capacities for action.





These images of "comic book" heroines were created from the visions and experiences of the women.





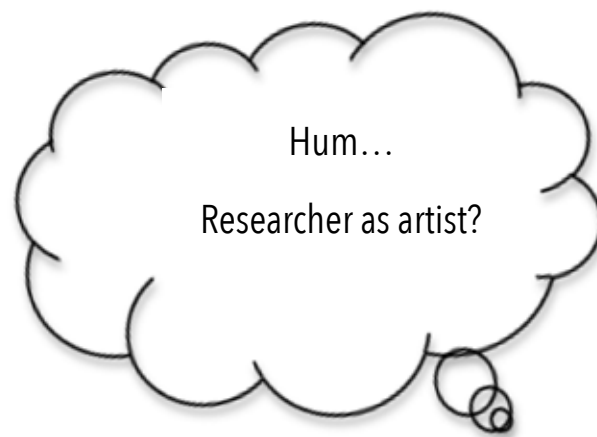
Furthermore, these super-heroines question how images of women construct identities in cultural exchange and production.



Andrea's alter ego "Super-Artista Incógnita" emerged from the work with the Azorean women and now spreads creative power and inspiration throughout the world via her spontaneous public performances.




Along with other super-heroines, "Super-Artista Incógnita" aims to highlight ways to transform practices to resist hegemonic and agonistic politics through art-based projects and artistic research (Neilson & Inocência, 2016).





The presented projects were developed in the scope of my artistic practice. The project "À prova de fogo e de bala" outcome was an itinerant exhibition of 15 real-size photo paintings, and 2 documental videos and sketchbook of the work in progress. This project was displayed in the following Portuguese cities: Estremoz (2009), Angra do Heroísmo in Terceira Island (2009), Ponta Delgada in São Miguel Island (2010), Abrantes (2010), Évora (2012); Almada (2012) and Coimbra (2016).





"Super-Artista Incógnita" has been exhibited and performed in several art events and has spontaneously come out in public protests in Portugal and public spaces in Spain, Argentina, Panama, Canada, Finland, Norway, and others.

Moreover, it was developed in co-creation with the Argentine performer Valeria Cotaimichi generating the project "Boda trans" (2009) and "Mujeres, diosas vírgenes y heroínas migrantes" (2009) performed in Córdoba and Buenos Aires, respectively.

Both projects, "À prova de fogo e de bala" and "Super-Artista Incógnita", were additionally presented in the form of conferences and lecture-performances at ESTAL - Lisbon Higher Education School for Arts & Technologies (2017); University of Panamá (2016); University of Lisbon (2016); University of Algarve (2016); Aalto University (2016); University of Coimbra (2016) and in co-creation with Alison Neilson "Waves and wigs: Cultivative processes of art and research meetings and transformations" at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology of Stockholm (2016).

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Links

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