

Exhibition of the Sociedade Promotora in 1880, Silva Porto exhibited 29 oils, an unprecedented number and quality. This intensity of work would continue, exhibition after exhibition, until the end of his life.

“O Grupo do Leão,” as the press described it, was formed after the name of the café-restaurant next to the Rossio. In 1881, the first exhibition of this group opened at the Sociedade de Geografia. Silva Porto exhibited with António Ramalho (1859-1916), João Vaz (1859-1931), José Malhoa (1855-1933), Henrique Pinto (1852-1912), among others. His success was cemented by the visit of King Ferdinand, who bought some of his paintings.

In 1882, Columbano (1857-1929) took part in the second exhibition of the Grupo do Leão. More exhibitions followed on an annual basis.

In 1890, Silva Porto founded a new association, the “Grémio Artístico”, with around 40 founding members. After Silva Porto's death, at the auction of his artistic estate in December 1893, his Artistic Guild acquired a set of 400 drawings. The merger between the Guild and the Sociedade Promotora resulted, in 1901, in the current SNBA, which today holds these works in its collection.

These testimonies are essential for learning about his career and thinking, which coincided with the introduction of modern art in Portugal.

João Paulo Queiroz

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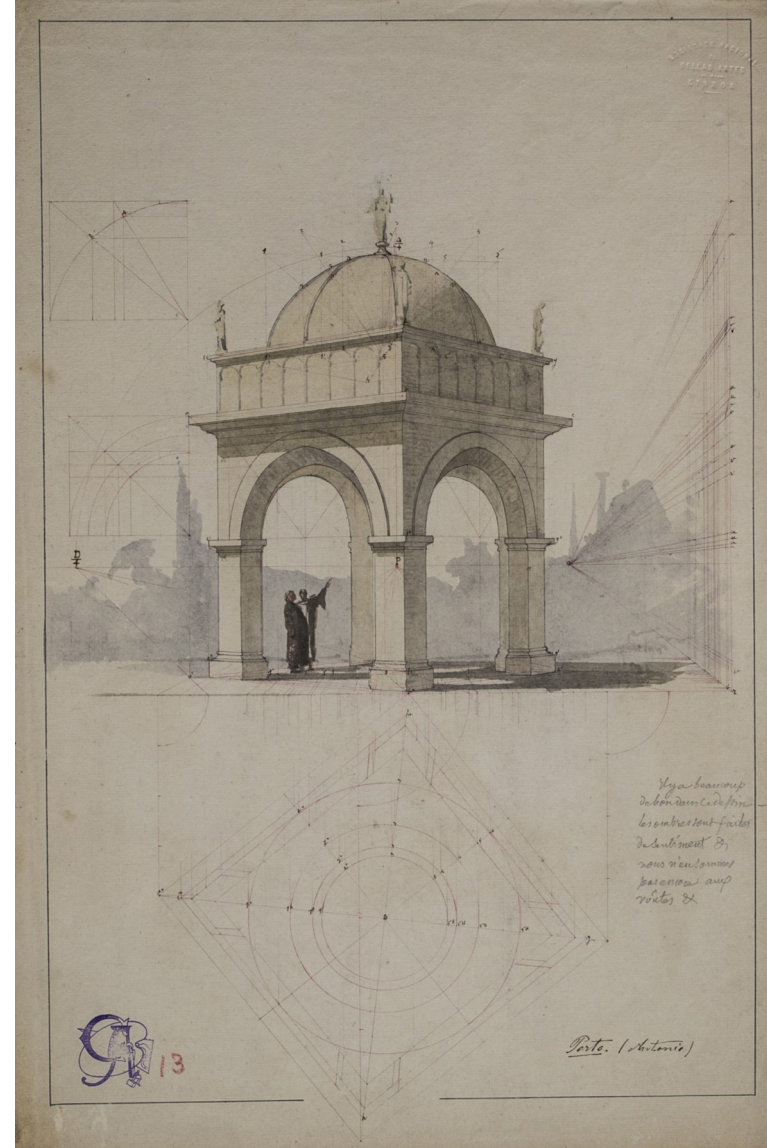
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SOCIEDADE NACIONAL DE BELAS-ARTES



SILVA PORTO

(1850-1893)

the formative years

Silva Porto: the formative years

This exhibition presents the formative years of the painter Silva Porto, born on November 11th, 1850, in Oporto.

António Carvalho da Silva Porto did a long and exemplary apprenticeship. After primary school, he entered the Escola Industrial do Porto at the age of 12. The course consisted of two levels. The first, elementary, for the Skilled Worker or Mechanical Officer Courses, to which were added Chemical Officer; Forging Officer; Casting Officer; Adjusting Locksmith Officer; Shaping Turner Officer; Master Mechanic. The second degree course was for Chemical Officers, but it was almost non-functional.

The elementary level of the Escola Industrial (converted into Instituto Industrial do Porto in 1864) consisted of the first two subjects, namely “Elementary Arithmetic - First Notions of Algebra - Elementary Geometry” (Prof. João Vieira Pinto), and “Linear Drawing and Industrial Ornaments” taught by António José de Sousa Azevedo.

But the most remarkable teacher at the Escola Industrial was Gustavo Adolpho Gonçalves e Sousa, the school's director and teacher of the 3rd and 5th subjects, respectively “Elements of Descriptive Geometry, Applied to the Arts” and “Drawing of Models and Machines, First Part”, in the second year. This professor is an outstanding architect and engineer, one of the architects of the Palácio da Bolsa, namely the staircase and the Arab Hall, as well as many other public roads and railroads.

The drawings of fortifications and mechanical parts (**drawings #01 to #03**) are from this period, 1863/6.

Silva Porto entered the Academia Portuense de Belas Artes in October 1865, at the age of almost 15, at the same time as he finishes his second year at the Instituto Industrial (the schools were in the same building) (**drawing #04**).

The Academy's disciplines functioned as separate courses, intertwined by precedence based on Drawing. Access to the Historical Painting course required passing the Historical Drawing course (five years) or taking exams; access to the 1st year of Sculpture required passing the 2nd year of Drawing; access to the 3rd year of Civil Architecture required passing the 1st year of Drawing.

Thus, Silva Porto attended Historical Drawing in 1865/6 (Prof. Thadeu Maria de Almeida Furtado). The subject of the first and second years was copying prints, first using only outlines

(**drawings #05 and #06**) and only later shading (**drawings #07 to #08**). In the third year, “figures” were made, also by copying (**drawings #09 to #10**), the drawing of statues was reserved for the fourth year (**drawings #11 and #12**), and in the fifth year, live model drawing (only male models were allowed).

Silva Porto began the course of “Civil Architecture” and “Perspective” in 1866/67 (**drawings #13 to #22**), and “Sculpture” in 1867/68. After completing the 5-year Historical Drawing course (in which he was awarded a cash prize), he was able to start attending the Historical Painting course (on the subjects of “Perspectives and Optics” and “Anatomy”) (**drawings #23 and #24**), in 1870/71, completing the three years. The teachers were João António Correia and Francisco José Resende.

In 1871 he completed the Sculpture and Architecture courses, with a mark of 18 in the former and 20 in the latter. Finally, at the age of 22, he completed the Painting course in 1873 with a mark of 19 (**drawings #25 to #30**).

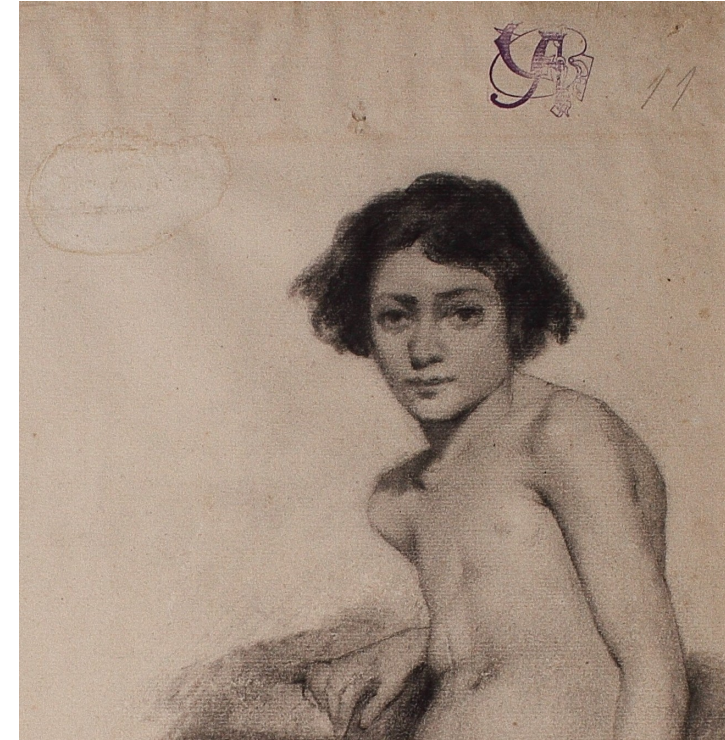
Still in 1873, followed a five-year scholarship in Paris as a state pensioner (**drawing #31**). He went through the usual workshops to prepare for the entrance exam to the School of Fine Arts.

In Paris, at the School of Fine Arts, he attended classes with Adolphe Yvon (1817-1893) in perspective drawing and plaster models (**drawings #32 to #42**), and Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889) in live model drawing (**drawings #47 to #50**).

Cabanel recommended landscape lessons to Silva Porto with the landscape artist Marcelin Groiseilliez (1837-1879), who had been a disciple of Corot (1796-1875). In the Oise valley, he met and followed Daubigny and his circle, whom he took as his masters. He joined the ranks of *en plein air* and militant artists, who were looking for a new school, made up of the truths of nature and the people, in the surrounding area, in the Oise valley and in the Barbizon forest (**drawings #51 to #53**). 50km from Paris, Barbizon was the “valley of painters”, preserved as a nature reserve by influence of Théodore Rousseau (1812-1867).

He spent most of his time in the Oise river valley, northwest of Paris, where Daubigny had moved, with his house and his well-known studio-boat (**drawings #54 to #57**). There he met Pissarro (1830-1903) and Cézanne (1839-1906).

In 1876 Silva Porto was admitted to the Salon with his painting “Banks of the Oise, in Auvers (Seine-et-Oise)” (Museu Nacional



Soares dos Reis), of which drawing #55 is a study. The Salon was highly contested: 10,000 artists competed that year, including painters, sculptors and architects, with just over 4,000 being admitted. The number of visitors to the Salon that same year was 520,000, acknowledging the importance of the institution.

From Paris in 1877, Silva Porto and his companion Marques de Oliveira made a study visit to Italy. The itinerary included Florence, Venice, Rome, Naples, Capri (where he stayed in April, May and June), returning via Milan, Lake Como and Paris at the end of the year (**drawings #58 to #60**). The young painter Henrique Pousão followed him to Paris in 1880, and Silva Porto recommended him some inns and models in Rome, Naples and Capri, which he took advantage of between 1881 and 83.

This is the end of Silva Porto's training, which gave the theme to this exhibition.

After his training, Silva Porto went on to teach at the Academia de Lisboa. As a teacher, he soon marked the revolution by taking his students to the countryside to paint from nature. At the XII