

Between Scenarios:

Traces of Customs in Tullio Victorino's Paintings

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Introduction

The thesis project intends to digitally document the Portuguese naturalist painter Tullio Victorino. The main objective of the project is to promote the valorization of the life and work of Victorino. Therefore, we propose the creation of the “Tullio Victorino” website (under construction), the publication (in both physical and digital formats) of a book about the life and work of the painter, and the monitoring of the implementation of the “Museographic Project at Casa Atelier Tullio Victorino.” The priority is the valorization of his artistic production, the traditions, and the customs of his time – the cultural heritage of the town of Cernache Bonjardim in the municipality of Sertã. It is important to note that, for this purpose, the research utilizes digital resources, supplemented by in loco investigations in public and private collections.

Consequently, Victorino's biography, academic journey, professional life, studio-home, and the inventory of his iconographic production will be made public. To achieve this, the research leverages digital resources from online artistic communities, investigations on websites, in loco research in the archives of public and private institutions (Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes, Gulbenkian Art Library, Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Lisbon, Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Porto, and Municipal Archive of Sertã), exploration of museum and institutional collections, as well as interviews with collectors, contemporaries of the artist, and the local community in Cernache de Bonjardim and its surroundings.

Ultimately, after compiling and analyzing the investigated data, including the implementation of a museographic project at the Tullio Victorino House and Atelier (featuring digital interpretation and immersion models), the aim is to enhance local culture and the artist's significance in representing Portuguese customs, traditions, and cultural heritage.

1. The Artist Tullio Victorino

Tullio Victorino (Figure 1) was born in Cernache do Bonjardim in the municipality of Sertão, in 1896 and died in 1969 (Lopes 2013, 469). Throughout his career as a painter, he prioritized representations of rural landscapes and characters from his birthplace with a notable emphasis on local characters and customs. In summary, he is an artist with broad resources, committed to his processes and themes (without succumbing to the trends or market demands of his time), and his impressions of nature, and the effects of light and color, are expressed in a harmonious and emotive manner.

Figure 1. Tullio Victorino



Source: Lopes, 2013, p. 469.

Tullio's work is notable for its truth and fidelity to an ideal of painting that does not compromise with fashion or market conveniences. Feeling at ease in impressionism, free from the coldness of academic art, he enjoys open-air scenes where he skillfully addresses issues of light and color... (Antunes 1962, 7, translated by the author).

Most of his artistic production focuses on oil painting on wood and canvas, using brushes and palette knives. However, Victorino also engaged in design work for objects, scenography, illustration, tile work, charcoal drawings, and watercolors.

At the age of just fifteen (1911), on the advice of the renowned painter José Malhoa, he enrolled in the School of Fine Arts of Lisbon (EBA-Lisbon). In 1913, while still a student at EBA-Lisbon, he created a series of sets for theatrical plays (*Vinte mil Dollars*, *Casa de Estroimas*, *A Prima Francisca*, and *Os Tyrolezes*) at the Teatro Taborda in Cernache do Bonjardim (Pereira 2015, 223). The following year, he participated in the first collective painting exhibition held at the *Ilustração Portuguesa Salon (Revista Ilustração Portuguesa 1914, 830)* in Lisbon. On that occasion, the exhibiting artists allocated part of the sales revenue from their works to support war victims.

Victorino did not complete his studies in Lisbon. In 1915, he transferred his enrollment to the School of Fine Arts of Porto (EBA-Porto), where he concluded his studies in 1919, the same year he married Dalila Príncipe, with whom he had two children, Henner and Tito.

His first solo exhibition took place in 1929 at the IV Congress and Regional Exhibition of Beiras (Dias 1931, 473), where he displayed twenty-three paintings and received his first gold medal in the category of oil painting (Dias 1931, 497). His inaugural participation in an international exhibition was in 1931 at the International Colonial Exhibition in Paris, showcasing the painting *O Batismo Negro* (lacking documentary confirmation).

Left a widower in 1940, he moved permanently in Cernache do Bonjardim the following year. In 1953, he married Fernanda Drumond, with whom he had a son, Ticiano.

Victorino was an associate of the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes, considered the oldest and most representative artistic association in Portugal, founded in 1901 (Queiroz 2020). After his death, Victorino's works were featured in three exhibitions organized in Lisbon and in five exhibitions held at the Tullio Victorino House and Atelier. To date, more than 1,300 painting titles by the artist have been inventoried.

The painter's works are spread across private collections and public and private institutions in Portugal. Currently, one can appreciate, in loco, the painting titled *Igreja de Santa Maria* (Municipal Museum of Coimbra 2009, 176), in the Telo de Morais Collection at the Municipal Museum of Coimbra. Two other paintings can be seen in situ: *Igreja de Santa Maria* (Beja), 1948 (Oliveira, Silva, and Gomes 2009, 176), in the Telo de Morais Collection of the Municipal Museum of Coimbra, and *Garden Scene, 1936* (title assigned) at the Bissaya Barreto House-Museum.

2. *Tullio Victorino House and Atelier*

The property, showcasing a neo-Arabic architectural style, was commissioned by Tullio Victorino's father during the early years of the Republic and later completed by the artist himself. On the façade of the building is one of the most significant and representative tile panels created by the artist, dated 1936 (Figure 2). After 1941, Tullio Victorino permanently resided in the property, assigning it the dual function of studio and residence.

Figure 2. Tullio Victorino Atelier



Source: Author Elaine Karla de Almeida, 2023.

The house where Victorino lived was acquired by the Municipal Chamber of Sertã in 2005. At the time of acquisition, the building was in a state of decay but was subsequently restored by the municipality, transforming it into a cultural space called the “Tullio Victorino Cultural Space,” inaugurated on September 12, 2008.

Since its inauguration as a cultural space, the building has hosted concerts, art exhibitions, and educational activities, as well as events promoting the appreciation of local culture and its key artists: Tullio Victorino and Tito Vitorino.

In January 2022, the Municipal Resources Center of Cernache do Bonjardim was inaugurated, providing various services on the ground

floor of the Túllio Victorino House and Atelier, a branch of the municipal library of Sertã, a tourist information point, and a handicraft center. In the same year, the Túllio Victorino House and Atelier was classified as a monument of interest by the Municipal Chamber of Sertã (CMS 2023).

3. Study and Promotion for the Valorization of the Life and Work of Painter Tullio Victorino

The project to study and enhance the life and work of painter Tullio Victorino is in the research phase. We started the work with the inventory of the works. To this end, on-site visits and insertions in digital environments of public and private institutions in Portugal, private collections, and public and private archives were scheduled, as well as interviews with the artist's contemporaries and the local community of Cernache de Bonjardim and surroundings. Below we will present the routes studied and preliminary results.

3.1 Inventory

For the purpose of inventorying Victorino's creative production, as mentioned, studies were conducted concurrently in digital and in loco formats. The initial phase involved a preliminary survey of digital media regarding the life and work of Victorino. However, as anticipated, it was not satisfactory at the beginning of the investigation due to limited material available on-line.

This situation changed after the signing of the cooperation protocol between the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes (SNBA), Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa (FBAUL), Centro de Investigação e de Estudos em Belas-Artes (CIEBA), the Municipal Chamber of Sertã (CMS), and the Union of Parishes of Cernache do Bonjardim, Nesperal, and Palhais (UFCBNP) in September 2022. The main objective of the cooperation protocol is the development of a project for the study, promotion, and valorization of the life and work of Victorino. After the signing of the cooperation protocol, a significant, albeit insufficient, increase in information about the artist was observed on-line.

The majority of Victorino's works is not available online. However, access to some of his paintings is possible on various Web sites. The most representative Web site concerning the artist is (www.matriznet.dgpc.pt), under the tutelage of the Direção-Geral do Património Cultural (DGPC), the Direções Regionais de Cultura do Norte, and the Center Alentejo of Parks of Sintra – Monte da Lua. It serves as a public online catalog for thirty-

four museums in the Portuguese Museum Network. MatrizNet provides access to the collections of the National Museums of Portugal where the artist is represented: Museu Abade de Baçal – Bragança, Museu do Chiado (MNAC) – Lisboa, Museu da Guarda – Guarda, Museu Grão Vasco – Viseu, Museu José Malhoa – Caldas da Rainha, and Museu Nacional Machado de Castro – Coimbra. Despite efforts by professionals and institutions to qualify museum inventories, there is still much to investigate, analyze, and update due to extensive collections.

In addition to MatrizNet, pieces by the painter can be found on Web sites of municipal museums and private institutions in Portugal: Galp Energia Foundation, Municipal Museum of Coimbra, and Lisbon City Museum. Regarding the online promotion of the artist's paintings and drawings, some of his works can be viewed on auction and antique websites, such as Cabral Moncada Auctions, Veritas Art Auctioneers, João Moura Martins Antiques, among others.

The inventory phase of Victorino's works began in August 2022. During this period, the first location investigated was the Torre do Tombo (Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo), followed by the Library of the Chiado Museum, the National Library of Portugal, the Gulbenkian Art Library, the Library of Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa, the archive of the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes (SNBA 2023), and the Municipal Archive of Sertã (CMS 2023). It is worth noting that most of the inventoried material comes from the archive of the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes – which holds a vast collection of exhibition catalogs (held both within the institution and in other locations relevant to the artistic scene of Portugal), newspaper and magazine clippings, records of prizes awarded by the entity, and sales registration books – and from the Municipal Archive of Sertã, which owns a considerable portion of the artist's estate, acquired at the time of the purchase of the house and atelier by the Municipal Chamber of Sertã.

The project's research schedule proposes active document searching for the inventory of the artist's work until March 2025, after which the focus will shift to the qualification of the studied material. To date, more than 1,300 painting titles by the artist have been inventoried, with works presented in individual and collective exhibitions. During the investigations, in 2022, the scheduling of in loco visits commenced, aiming to document the largest number of the artist's works. For this purpose, appointments were made – with public institutions, private institutions, and private collectors – for photographic records, access to documentation, and analysis of the works. Among the main collaborators contacted during this period, we

highlight: the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes, the Municipal Chamber of Sertã, the National Chiado Museum, the Municipal Museum of Lisbon, CB Business Consulting, the Millennium bcp Foundation, Galp Energia Foundation, the Municipal Museum João de Castilho, the Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Sertã, the José Malhoa Museum, Clube Bonjardim, Clube da Sertã, Associação D'Artes Túllio Victorino, the Machado de Castro National Museum, and private collectors.

3.2 Works Studied

As in the case of the inventory, the in loco investigation of Tullio Victorino's works is ongoing. In the following sections, we present a summary of the studied works, categorized as watercolors and drawings, tilework, and paintings.

This category includes watercolors and drawings due to the limited number of specimens: only one watercolor and three drawings. The sole watercolor in the exhibition, untitled, is owned by the Associação D'Artes Túllio Victorino, dated 1954. The first investigated drawing is owned by Clube Bonjardim, located in the same building as the Teatro Taborda, and it is an untitled, undated portrait.

The following two drawings are owned by private collectors:

Self-portrait, dated 1918, titled "Tullio Victorino at 18 years old" – it's worth noting that at the time of the drawing's creation, the artist would be between 21 and 22 years old;

Drawing depicting three men with hats sitting at a table – untitled, dated 1942.

Based on a resident's account from Cernache do Bonjardim, we identified ten tile panels in cobalt blue tones, made by the artist, on building façades throughout the town, with dates ranging from 1936 to 1944.

Among the studied paintings, we highlight:

Nineteen paintings from private collectors, with execution dates recorded between 1912 and 1964. These paintings feature representations of portraits, still life, seascapes, and urban and rural landscapes;

Fifteen paintings from public institutions, dated from 1931 to 1964. Verified themes include portraits, still life, seascapes, and urban and rural landscapes;

Ten paintings from private institutions, with dates between 1929 and 1964, representing portraits, seascapes, and urban and rural landscapes.

3.3 Dissemination of Results

As mentioned, the main objective of the project is to promote the valorization of the life and work of the Portuguese naturalist painter Victorino. At the end of the thesis investigation, a Web site about the life and work of the artist will be published. For this, we refer to the database resulting from the research, inventory, and analysis of the referenced material.

The graphic design of the Web site is under construction, with an expected publication date in 2025.

The home-page proposal includes a brief presentation of the artist, his biography, and the socio-political-economic context of the era in which he was active.

This page includes subfolders with a list of individual and collective exhibitions by the artist, both during his lifetime and posthumously. Regarding exhibitions, we include lists of exhibited works, with respective values, press releases from the time, locations where they can be accessed, images of documented paintings, and photographs of exhibitions found during the investigation. To date, forty-two collective exhibitions have been inventoried, with thirty held at the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes, and thirty solo exhibitions, including fourteen at the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes. In addition to commissioned works and others, some commercialized even before reaching exhibitions.

The page also specifies awards received, whether in exhibitions or competitions. We also add the histories of the exhibitions where the artist received awards, detailing the works receiving prizes and where to find them. Throughout his artistic journey, he received several awards, three of them at the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes: Honorable Mention (1934), Third Medal (1935), and Second Medal (1946).

There is a list of publications, nationally and internationally, where the artist was mentioned, with indications of their locations (digital media, with website references, and physical media, with records of institutions and referred addresses).

The page links to access the Tile Panel Map and a description of the study process for its elaboration. The map is under construction and includes the inventory of ten tile panels on building facades in the town of Cernache do Bonjardim. By selecting the location, the user has access to images of the buildings – for location identification – and the panels (highlighted), followed by information about the depicted motif – dimensions, techniques, dating, addresses, among other characteristics.

There also are information and images about projects produced by the artist: book illustrations, objects, theater scenery, among others.

Artistic productions require further detailing with subfolder, as it encompasses the entire production related to drawings, watercolors, and oil paintings (on both wood and canvas, using spatulas and brushes), dated from 1912 to 1964 (according to records found to date). We will address two major groups: productions investigated in loco and productions investigated only in printed and/or digital media. Productions investigated on site will include the author's photographic records and inventory sheets for each work (with proper permissions from owners), and productions investigated only in printed and/or digital media will feature images composed with available images and their respective references.

After the inventory is qualified, we will begin the development of resources to contribute to educational services in cultural heritage, which can be used by schools and the general public.

Throughout his creative and teaching journey, Victorino had many disciples. Among them, two are highlighted: Lucília de Brito and Tito Victorino.

3.3.1 Lucília de Brito

Born in Lisbon (1918-2007), she began her artistic studies in drawing and painting courses at the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes. In addition to Tullio Victorino, her masters included painters Alfredo de Morais, Emmerico Nunes, and Adolfo Castañé. She received painting awards from national institutions: Third Medal – Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes, 1943; First Prize “Placa de Ouro” - Câmara Municipal de Santarém, 1974; Honorable Mention – Palácio Foz, 1980; Second Prize – Salão Ferreira Borge, 1981; Silver Medal – Salão do Ribatejo, 1982; First Prize – Salão Ferreira Borge, 1988; Third Prize – Palácio Nacional de Sintra, 1988.

The artist is represented in various museums in Portugal: Museu Municipal da Figueira da Foz, Museu Municipal de Évora, Casa do Povo de Borba, Casa-Museu Maria Fontinha, Junta de Turismo de Leiria and Region, Museu da Fundação Engenheiro António de Almeida in Porto, Palácio da Bolsa in Porto, national and foreign galleries, and in private collections, both in Portugal and in other countries (SNBA, n.d).

3.3.2 Tito Vitorino

The most important disciple was the painter Tito Príncipe Vitorino. Tito, son of Tullio and his first wife D. Dalila, was born in Cernache do Bonjardim-Sertã (Portugal), on August 17, 1921. He went to Africa in 1946, staying some time on the island of Fernando Po before heading to

Luanda, Angola. He worked at the Banco de Angola for 15 years – never abandoning his role as a painter – where he held individual and collective exhibitions.

In 1961, he returned to Cernache do Bonjardim, his hometown. Subsequently, he married Helena Guimarães, with whom he had a son. He worked at the Instituto Vaz Serra, an educational institution in Cernache do Bonjardim, until shortly before his death on October 22, 1988 (Rádio Condestável 2021).

“Autodidact in his pictorial formation, he was influenced by his father, with whom he collaborated in his studio in Coimbra in the late 1930s” (CMS 2018). Similarly, he was influenced by the naturalistic attitude and impressionist currents of the late nineteenth century. Tito Vitorino’s work focuses on natural and human landscapes. He painted mainly his home region but also Africa and the region of Figueira da Foz, which he frequented during the summer. His works, which generally express feelings of tranquility, balance, and serenity, have great expressiveness and liveliness in the constant pursuit of reconciling light with the object (a characteristic inherited from contact with his father’s artistic production), a result of his dedication and immense pleasure in painting.

Among his main exhibitions are Luanda and Lobito (Angola); Figueira da Foz, Lisbon, Braga, Tomar, and Sertã (Portugal). After his death, he was represented, along with his father, in two exhibitions at the Atelier Tullio Victorino, in the years 2014 and 2015, and in Paços do Concelho, in 2018. Tito is very dear to and remembered in Cernache do Bonjardim, a source of pride and admiration for the residents of the town.

3.4 Inventory Sheet

The inventory sheet was designed to identify and qualify the study of individual pieces created by the artist. For this, we used, as an initial reference, the basic principles of internationally adopted standardization in the field of museology, laid out in the General Inventory Standards – Fine Arts and Decorative Arts, from the Instituto Português de Museus, which aims to safeguard the peculiarities of the collections and the specific vocation of the different institutions that house them (Instituto Português de Museus 2000, 15). During the investigation, we adapted it to our object of study (Table 1).

Between Scenarios

Table 1. Inventory Form Model for the Elaboration of the Doctoral Thesis

Tullio Victorino: a journey in art Thesis Inventory Sheet No.	
Work Identification (Institution Information Owner)	
Collection Type	
Institution Name Piece Owner	
Depot Reserve Exhibition Location	
Investigation Date	
Institution Owner Inventory No.	
Author	
Title Piece Name	
Piece Type	
Piece Date	
Description	
Category	
Super-category	
Category	
Sub-category	
Incorporation Acquisition	
Incorporation Acquisition Date	
Type of Incorporation Acquisition	
Responsible for Incorporation Acquisition	
Origin	
Technical Information	
Signature	
Date	
Frame	
Support	
Techniques Used	
Piece Dimensions	
Marks Inscriptions Information on the Piece	
Inventory Qualification	
Piece History	
Historical Context	
Piece Description	
Photographic Records – Origin	
Photographic Records – Own	
Exhibition History Publications	
Marks Inscriptions Information Records	
Semiotic Analysis	
Observations	
Conservation	
Conservation Status	
Recorded Interventions	
Technical Reserve	
Climate Conditions	
Type of Reserve	
References	

Source: Author Elaine Karla de Almeida, 2023.

The criteria for defining the order of the thesis inventory numbers have not yet been established. The decision will be made at the end of the investigation.

In the first series of records entitled Work Identification (Institution Information | Owner), the objective is to identify the piece with preliminary information about it, indicating the type of collection (public and private) and location (provided it is in the public domain, respecting the General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR). The second group of records concerns Category and aims to classify the type of art of the inventoried piece.

In the Incorporation | Acquisition field, we intend to record the acquisition and incorporation process of the pieces: dates, origin, those responsible for acquisition and/or incorporation, identification of the type of acquisition, i.e., whether the piece was donated or purchased (in this case, the values).

The Technical Information does not refer exclusively to production techniques. In this section, we seek to identify all available information in the work, for example: Is the piece signed? Is it dated? If yes – location, typeface, size, color used, and other information. Does it have a frame? If yes – details and characteristics, support used, among other questions.

In the Inventory Qualification section, we aim, as explicit in the document itself, to qualify, improve, and validate the studied information: description; photographic and documentary records; history of the pieces, exhibitions, and publications; awards; analysis; marks, records; and observations, among other relevant issues.

The record group entitled Conservation seeks to identify the degree of conservation of the pieces, whether they are in suitable places for conservation, and whether they have undergone any intervention procedure, whether for cleaning, stabilization (as in the case of insect infestations, for example), or restoration.

The Technical Reserve informs us about the type of reserve, storage conditions, and location, whether in its own deposit or not. In the last field of the form, we compile the references studied throughout the investigation: magazines, newspapers, catalogs, websites, digital platforms, among others.

Conclusions

Tullio Victorino, while alive, was a renowned and important Portuguese naturalist painter. However, after his death, we observed that his name gradually fell into oblivion.

At the beginning of the investigation, little was known about the artist, given the moderate numbers of references in books and digital information channels. The first and only publication exclusively referencing the

artist (Antunes 1962) does not encompass the vastness or diversity of his artistic production.

Victorino's paintings evoke the traditions of the Portuguese people in the twentieth century, the richness and cultural diversity, modes of production, urban and rural architecture, portraits of local and international personalities (Queen Leonor of Portugal, Winston Churchill, Nuno Álvares Pereira, Libânio Vaz Serra, Abílio Marçal, as well as friends, family, and workers in general), and landscapes. This allows us to recall this rich cultural heritage through his creative production.

As the investigation progresses, we observe a renewed interest from the local community in valuing the life and work of the artist. Many residents of the village, or even residents in other locations, sought information about the study to express their interest and willingness to collaborate, either with information about the artist and/or to provide works by the artist for research.

Finally, at the end of the project, after inventorying, systematizing, analyzing, and disseminating the results of the investigation (Web site, book, and exhibitions), we can anticipate a revival of the appreciation of local culture and the projection of the artist from a local to national and international level, given his relevance in representing customs, traditions, and cultural heritage.

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