

Participants' reflections

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I attended this seminar as a one off and I accepted the invitation because of my involvement with the enquire programme over three years, personal interest, the impact that this seminar could have on the programme at Plymouth Arts Centre, and hopefully what I could contribute to the partnership.

Porto is an interesting and beautiful city in need of substantial investment to halt its decay. Our main base was Fundação de Serralves, a contemporary art venue housed in a stunning building designed by Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza. This dynamic white structure is set in world heritage gardens, located between the city centre and the sea. The majority of presentations were held at Serralves.



Presentations provided an insight into the Portuguese education system, culture and the history of the country, as well as developments in gallery education in Portugal and throughout Europe. The structure of the seminar provided ample opportunity to discuss the content of the presentations and the aims of the Grundtvig European Learning partnership. This was facilitated by break out groups, dining collectively, journeys to other towns and guided tours of other venues. This was an important platform of exchange, the benefits of which would reach beyond the partnership to the wider European community of art, culture and gallery education.

Of particular interest was the exposure to multidisciplinary programmes at Fundação de Serralves and *Solar Galeria de Arte Cinemática* a venue located Vila do Conde, a small town about 40 minutes from Porto. At Serralves the gallery education team works in response to the exhibition programme and deliver community outreach projects. In addition the team also offer a programme,

encompassing the environment and the architecture of the building, the grounds and other locations in the city.



Solar Galeria de Arte Cinemática is an organisation that has emerged from the passion of three individuals, who 17 years after the conception, have a beautiful venue. The specific interest of these curators is the relationship between cinema and visual arts, which forms the curatorial focus for exhibits at *Solar Galeria* as well as when guest curating for other organisations and for their annual film festival.

Plymouth Arts Centre currently delivers a visual arts programme and a cinema programme and my role as Education and Outreach Curator is to work across both disciplines. As a team we are also committed to exploring the connections and crossovers. The organisation is currently working collaboratively with architects with a view relocating to a purpose built venue. Participating in this event in Portugal has inspired new ideas for multidisciplinary developments at Plymouth Arts Centre.

The experience has held up a mirror to my own practice. Considering gallery education and the programme and processes at PAC through the lens of others has validated some of my ideology, whilst enabling me to question and, hopefully as a consequence, develop my programme. In the South West of England we have a very supportive network, however, contact with peers from a broader experience base and wider context has reinvigorated my enthusiasm for gallery education. As a consequence of spending time with a group of people who are dedicated to the progress of contemporary gallery education and concerned with the ethical issues of its development, I have returned from the seminar more confident about my practice. I now have more clarity about how to expand and be effective in developing partnerships within Plymouth, the South West and beyond.