

## Nuno Coelho (University Coimbra)

*Oporto based Portuguese communication designer; professor of Design and Multimedia at the Department of Informatics Engineering (DEI) of the University of Coimbra (UC); and a researcher at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies (CEIS20). He holds a PhD in Contemporary Art from UC. He is interested in history, material culture, digital humanities, and visual semiotics and representation. He has developed self-initiated projects in the intersection between design and art, mostly on social and political issues. His work addresses topics related to identity and memory by exploring the politics of image-making and the archives of historic Portuguese trademarks and institutions. He has curated design exhibitions and talks, and has two books published. He has exhibited his work, given talks, participated in conferences and conducted workshops in Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iran, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Palestine, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.*

## Statues also die: the fortress of Cacheu as graveyard of Portuguese colonial legacy

Located in northern Guinea-Bissau, the town of Cacheu was where the Portuguese first landed in this area of the West African coast in 1446. Here, the Portuguese built a small fortress in 1588 to defend the first trading post founded in the region. In addition to securing the Portuguese military presence, the fortress supported the trade in ivory and manufactured fabrics, as well as enslaved people. After a decade long war against Portuguese colonial rule, which began in 1963, Guinea-Bissau conquered its independence in 1973. The statues left by the Portuguese colonial past in the Guinean public space were then dethroned from their pedestals, some of them have been destroyed. A few were taken to Cacheu fortress, where they can still be found today.

There are currently four statues here: of Nuno Tristão, the first Portuguese navigator to reach the current coast of Guinea; of Diogo Gomes, the first Portuguese navigator to enter the rivers of the kingdom of Gabu; of João Teixeira Pinto, a Portuguese colonial military and “pacifier” of the region; and of Honório Barreto, a governor of Cacheu of Cape Verdean origin. In 2004, the fortress was rehabilitated, and the scattered statues regrouped. Not having been restored, the statues were simply deposited in the interior space of the fortress, lying on the floor or leaning against the walls.

This presentation will focus on the history of these four statues, as well as of a bust of João Teixeira Pinto currently deposited in a storage room at the basement of the neighbouring regional government headquarters, from the moment they were erected, going through its dethronement and relocation, as well as some moments in which they were featured in film productions – namely Chris Marker's “Sans Soleil” (1983), Flora Gomes's “Mortu Nega” (1988), Filipa Cesar's “Cacheu” (2012), and others –, while addressing their presence at the fortress in present times.

