

**slanted 27**

**portugal**



# slanted 27

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178

10 × 10

10 QUESTIONS  
with  
100 ANSWERS

Bolos Quentes  
Epiforma  
FBA.

Andrew Howard  
küng design bureau  
Inês d'Orey  
Dino dos Santos  
Studio Dobra  
Thisislove  
White Studio



**Could you talk about your background?  
What made you become a designer /  
illustrator / photographer / typographer?**

Bolos Quentes

We belong to the same generation and we share the same imaginary as everybody who has born in the 80s. We've grown up in a country (Portugal) that was rediscovering the world. Duarte has grew up in Braga and Sérgio in Leça da Palmeira. We've met at the Fine Arts School in Porto. The challenge of working with a vast diversity of projects was, perhaps, what led us to be designers.

Epiforma

(Francisco Ribeiro) I've always felt attracted for visual communication which I ended up learning through design books and talented friends around me. My first degree was on Cinema, but ended up taking a masters on Web Project Design.

(Filipe Ferreira) I started pursuing Computer Engineering for my love for technology and the web. Ended up graduating in Visual Communication and taking a master in typography with the belief that it would shape my enthusiastic idealist spirit into designing for positive social impact.



Epiforma, *Ignition Festival*, 2015.

Posters and a flyer, part of the identity and collateral designed for Ignition Music Festival.

FBA.

(Alexandre Matos) FBA. is an improbable happening, since it is a design company founded by a biology major (João Bicker), and an electrical engineering drop out student (myself), neither with any previous experience in the design sector.

João had a self nurtured interest in typography and books while I always maintained a high level of extracurricular activities during university, taking part in and organizing events. FBA. began after we met and started working together at cultural events going on in Coimbra during the late 1980s and early 90s. Coimbra, being a relatively small city, but home to the oldest university in the Portuguese speaking world, had a vibrant cultural scene at that time. The design projects we toyed with during this period started to lead to more requests. One day we were simply faced with the decision to either keep some small design projects as a side-line hobby or to get organized and get some other people on board to tackle new and more challenging design assignments. We went for the latter.

On a personal note it wasn't a very reasoned decision to abandon a career in electrical engineering and start a design company. Electrical engineering would have certainly offered better guarantees of a job at the time. In retrospect, I think that the opportunity that design gives to be constantly working with different people, clients, and on different projects and subject matters was a big part of the attraction. The variety of the work and the privilege to get insight into different organizations as they plan a new product, a new service, an exhibition, a book, or whatever other design output, is still today one of the best rewards of this line of work for me.

Andrew Howard

I went to Fine Art School with thoughts of becoming a painter and if someone had told me then that I would become a graphic designer I would have laughed—well first I would have scoffed, then I would have laughed. I had no interest in a practice whose history was inextricably linked to commodity production and driven by the dominant economic imperative of perpetual consumption, but discovered its parallel existence and possibility as an activity that can instead generate knowledge and communicate critical information.

In short, I was drawn to graphic design once I understood that in the act of design, and contrary to the conventional emphasis the profession like to place on information-driven service provision, we are not simply navigating what the world contains, we are also navigating the perception of what it contains and what some want us to believe it contains. And this makes design a double-edged sword. Fiction or fact, distraction or empowerment, propaganda or information. Choose. Everything we absorb is mediated by the nature of its delivery. And that is the aspect of graphic design that interests me, what it has to offer—what it has always had to offer—the opportunity of modeling (visual) delivery systems that affect the significance, meaning and impact of ideas, knowledge and information. It's a limited practice in many ways, but for someone drawn to the visual and to the possibilities of mass production it's not a bad place to use as a base.

#### küing design bureau

(Valdemar Lamego) Since I was 10 years old, I've been drawing various types of letters for school posters. Always loved making posters, and covers of my preferred comic strip books. Later, instead of following an arts course, I preferred to follow another passion of mine, and I took a course in Biotechnology, and later entered the University of Veterinary Medicine, there I continued to make posters for the Student Association, and that's when I realized I was on the wrong course. I changed from Veterinary to Design. I've been working in design since 2004. I think my academic career influences my actual work, so I do more analytical and experimental design, I do design like it was a scientific experiment.

#### Inês d'Orey

In my twenties, I saw an exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe in London. I was really surprised with what you could achieve with photography. I decided to change my life path and went to study photography in London.

#### Dino dos Santos

I graduated in Graphic Design at ESAD Matosinhos, just nearby Porto. During that period (circa 1992) I started to design typefaces for my own works because there was not so many type stuff available that would allow me to make a more distinguishable design work.

I really fell in love with the process because it has nothing to do with graphic design. It's much more like industrial design!

You have certain pieces, with a variety of shapes and styles, and you must organize them in a peculiar, innovative, yet legible, and recognizable way. This compromise between innovation and tradition, made me become a type designer.



Dino dos Santos, *DSType Breve*, 2014.

#### Studio Dobra

We are two designers of about the same age who met at the university. We have a very similar background. Our first approach to graphic design was through music, mostly by diving into each of our parents' vinyl collections and trying to understand those covers while listening to the music. Long before this visceral relation with graphic design we had bands and went to shows and bought zines and this had an obvious influence in what we do nowadays.

#### Thisislove

(Joana Areal) In fact I don't quite recall the moment I decided for design. It was probably due to a childhood close to the arts, or growing up in the countryside and having enough time to read and search for knowledge on culture and its agents. I was drawn very quickly to its core subjects. Design was, therefore, the natural consequence of a precocious encounter with the world of arts.

#### White Studio

(Eduardo Aires) I have always wanted to be a designer. I had an epiphany around 8-9 years old. I guess it was due to the education system in Germany where drawing was an

important part. Once, I won a bicycle for participating in a contest for the *Stadtsparkasse Bank*. It consolidated in me the idea that drawing was a very strong and comfortable tool. I never imagined that a graphic element, the switch of the dot, would have the importance it had, when, later, I did the connection. After that I simply followed the will. So, my background is definitely drawing. Drawing had always had an important place in my life. It is the anchor to my connection with design.

## 2

### Lisbon or Porto?

#### Where is the design hot spot of Portugal?

##### Bolos Quentes

Porto is a very special city for us. Besides the extraordinary work that designers do in this city, we also like its scale and its people. These two elements create a state of wellness that allows us to have time to think about what we do. We think that the design developed in this city is a reflection of itself and also its framing in the global village. We don't really know if Porto should be considered a hot spot, design wise, but would surely be a great case study. Obviously, there's also great design in Lisbon, but Porto treats us well and we know it intrinsically.

##### Epiforma

Both have their own magic. Probably Lisbon has more happenings and therefore a bigger impact because in Portugal there is still (since the 6th century) a hugely centralized political system based in the capital that clearly favors its economy.

##### FBA.

Design as a professional activity is a very recent thing in Portugal. With only a handful of isolated designers with regular and relevant activity during the mid 20th century, you can only talk about the beginning of a design ecosystem over the past few decades. Lisbon and Porto, being the two biggest cities and regional economies in Portugal have, of course, a good deal going on and benefit from the spotlight of the media. But things have been popping up a bit all over the country. Coimbra for example, where we are based, has a very small design community, but an interesting environment has been

developing, from where some promising results may unfold. IPN (Instituto Pedro Nunes), an innovation and technology transfer center, along with the new Design and Multimedia course at the University of Coimbra, which João Bicker helped set up, are both concurring to create new startups and design business opportunities.

##### Andrew Howard

Porto seems to me the most vibrant location, but the design community although often defined by geography is not contained by it.

##### küing design bureau

It is very difficult to answer this question because I was born in Porto and now I live in Sintra, near Lisbon. There are very good designers in both cities. In Lisbon there are more big studios, in Porto there are smaller ones. Due to the centralization of economic power in Lisbon, the design in the capital is more commercial, in Porto design is more connected to cultural clients.

Porto is the second city of Portugal, historically there is an economical, political, and cultural distance from Lisbon. Why Porto has always been, or tried to be self-sufficient, covering all issues in a provocative and experimental way. In Porto, people are more open to new experiences, not afraid of risk, in addition the community shares knowledge and experience which helps in growth. Citing Herman José (Portuguese comedian): "Porto is a nation!"



küing design bureau, *PARQ Issue 27*, 2011.  
PARQ Magazine.

##### Inês d'Orey

I guess in both cities. The way I feel it, Porto has a more underground art scene, less mainstream, as second cities frequently have. But that also makes it more interesting.

Dino dos Santos  
I must say Porto. Definitely.

Studio Dobra  
Probably Porto.

Thisislove  
Lisbon was, from early on, the capital of Portuguese Design.

The first schools opened in Lisbon as well as the first ateliers. Currently, this dichotomy has blurred up and Porto is where some of the most "authorial" or "experimental" ateliers are, probably due to the cultural setting of the city and its increasing artistic dynamics of recent years.



Thisislove, *Ordem dos Arquitectos*, 2015.  
Poster for the Museu Nacional dos Coches.

White Studio  
That is a very interesting question and I think it deserves a thoughtful answer.

I am not from Porto. I was born in Ribatejo and no one can cut the roots where he is born. I have an emotional relation with the land where I was born which may overshadow my answer. But I will be as objective as I can.

I think Lisbon is the structural city. It is the city that runs the country, it is the center of the country.

Now, we must not forget that Porto had always lived with the stigma of the second city in the country. This stigma gives raise to

two reactions: The first, I think, is a certain subservience. The second, is survivability. There is a certain sense of affirmation of the city in face of what the first city in the country is. That is unveiled in the people's way of being. People in Porto are authentic, they want to give themselves, they want hugs, they want to open the doors. While in Lisbon you don't have that.

Now, in Lisbon there has always been more business, so design was always more present. But, being connected to teaching, I can recognize—and this is a theory of my own—that architecture in Porto had a decisive role in design.

Historical facts, such as the presence of English business men in the city, as well as being an invincible city (we call it "cidade invicta")—a city that was never deleted by an army—also have an important influence on the city's character.

All this personality is reflected in architecture. From historical names like Marques da Silva to the contemporary names as Fernando Távora, who open way to others, such as Alcino Soutinho, Siza Vieira, Souto Moura, and so many others! The influence of architecture in design is important in Porto.

Why? Because in the old times, a generation before mine, the architecture school was in the same place as the design school and both were part of the Fine Arts School, where painters, sculptors, and all other artists were working together, sharing the same physical and intellectual environment.

Students were also sharing the same teachers, the same drawing teachers. Porto Fine Arts School built the city over this equation of (artistic) interests.

So, Lisbon may be the leader, the protagonist, of what is a first city with its relation to design, but I believe that Porto is a hub of national design. Porto is the lighthouse of design in Portugal at this time.

I have to be honest. This is my perception, my theory. Obviously we passed through a lethargic period and now all this is much more salient. This will to make things. I should also say that, being connected to teaching, I can understand this state of art of what the design teaching is in Portugal. The Fine Arts School of Porto is very much approached by many.

So, answering to your question very directly: Porto. I would say that Lisbon is the hot spot of marketing agencies and Porto is the hot spot of design agencies.



**What do you love about the place you live?  
Do you think you could live  
somewhere else?**

**Bolos Quentes**

Porto is a city very precise in its dimension, where cosmopolitan cohabits, in a very healthy way, with a more quiet and traditional way of life. It's a city with very good cultural proposals, both from big institutions, and more alternative and underground structures.

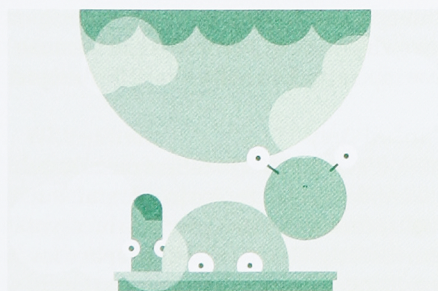
It's very easy to meet people in Porto. People are used to go for a drink after work, plan dinners, meet at exhibitions, dancing in clubs, or simply go for a walk in the park or by the sea/river. We could live somewhere else, but it would surely have to be some place with plenty of sun light, something we have a lot in Porto and Portugal.

**Epiforma**

Our sea coast. The average of 260 sunny days per year. The huge and amazing food culture. The world is full of wonderful places, and we could definitely see ourselves living in a lot of them.

**FBA.**

I definitely could and have lived in other places. Coimbra does however offer an exceptional quality of life, particularly for someone raising a family with young kids like myself at the moment. Coimbra is fairly well served and a laid back city you can get around quickly, benefiting from its historic importance and university, but, that is at the same time its drawback, keeping it from tapping into its full potential.



FBA., IPN, 2016.

Short promotional animation for Instituto Pedro Nunes to promote their technology transfer mission to the university community through social media.

**Andrew Howard**

I once heard that there is an optimum number for team work—five to nine apparently. Below five the input is too small, above nine it gets conflicting. Perhaps this dynamic applies to cities. Porto is large enough to encounter diversity, but not so big that it becomes impersonal. I like its human scale and that whilst it's easy to get to major European centers, it's nice to come back to a place where time is a little slower.

I've lived in many places and I guess I could live almost anywhere as long as I'm with my family.

**küing design bureau**

I live within the area bounded by the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park, and from my office window I see the Heritage of Humanity, Sintra, a better view is almost impossible. I currently do not see myself living elsewhere because I think where I live now is a good place to raise my four daughters. But in the future, why not.

**Inês d'Orey**

Porto is a beautiful small city full of creative people. I could live somewhere else, as I already did. But Porto will always feel more like home.

**Dino dos Santos**

What I love most about Porto is a certain kind of grayness that expands to the most colorful lights depending on the time of the day. Then you have the people ... the best you can find.

At a first glimpse everyone and everything will seem distant and cold, then slowly gets warmer and warmer and you won't be able to leave without a certain dose of "saudade." If I had to leave Porto, I would live in Rome because for someone like me, working with type everyday Rome is just a major source of inspiration.

**Studio Dobra**

I could easily live somewhere else. Meanwhile it's great living in Porto. If I put apart all of the economical constraints of living in the south of Europe, and close my eyes to the non-balanced relation between wages and life-cost, it's one of the best places I know to live in.

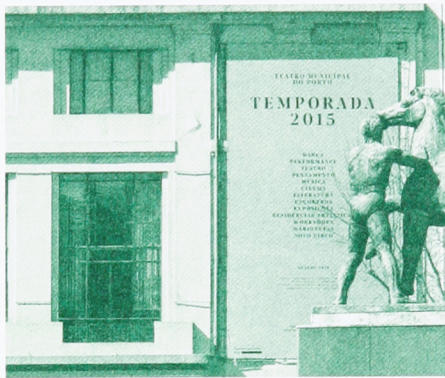
**Thisislove**

I love where I live. I live in Alfama near the S. Jorge Castle, at the heart of Lisbon, where everything happens. I have lived in other

cities such as Madrid and Barcelona, and despite the enormous sympathy that stayed for the latter, I would not give up the cinematic charm of going down this beautiful hill, in a city that each morning gets the first rays of sunshine of Western Europe.

#### White Studio

Hum ... I am a multifaceted animal. I live well anywhere. I have this chameleonesque ability. But the more I go out, the more I appreciate this little place. What I like is the scale, the proximity, the relation with water, which is not only visual, but also tactile. I think that is an important question. If I want, I can really touch the water. At the river and the sea. This makes the city an energetically interesting city. For the water that flows, the waves that flow. There is an energy that you can feel that makes Porto a very attractive city. This authenticity, connected with this proximity, and this scale, make it to be very nice to live here.



White Studio, *Teatro Municipal do Porto*, 2015.  
Identity for Porto City Theatre.

#### 4

### **In your opinion, is it important to incorporate cultural, social, or political topics in design?**

#### Bolos Quentes

We try to have that concern whenever we can. At the same time, we think this should be a concern transversal to all the professions. Society should think about itself. It's a civic duty to debate about society we live in, and only this way we'll be able to take the best options. But of course design is a good tool to make people think.

#### Epiforma

It is important to incorporate cultural, social, and political topics in every possible medium people can have influence over. Design is just a tool, but it's definitely a tool with a nice potential to integrate positive impact with the way it is used. Unfortunately, most of the times, the jobs that allow us to put food on the table are not always the ones that allow us to integrate this kind of communication behaviors in the most prominent ways. That's why personal projects are extremely important.

#### FBA.

Design as we see it, is about mediating and clarifying messages, communicating, so how can you not incorporate such topics?

#### Andrew Howard

The perversity of this question, which to be honest makes it a little depressing, is the implication (intended or not) that professional activity is somehow independent from the production of cultural, social, or political value or choice. All professional activity is a form of social production and the values that it generates are not voluntary or optional, they are not something from which people can be excluded, or from which they can exclude themselves.

Politics, culture, and economic organization are not separate or containable activities, they are the defining characteristics of social activity and relationships. Perhaps then the question should be "in what ways in your design practice are you able to, or care to manage the embodiment of cultural, social and political narratives?"

#### küing design bureau

Yes. Well, I think all these topics shape, influence, and foster the design. A designer grows, the more influence he has because those topics make a more versatile designer.

#### Inês d'Orey

I think it's important to reflect on cultural, social and political topics in general. But not all forms of creativity have to incorporate them directly. I believe there is space for everything.

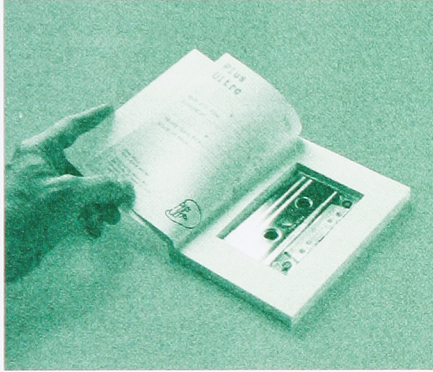
#### Dino dos Santos

Of course it is. Porto is known by the name of "Invicta," which means unconquered, or undefeated.

That spirit trespasses all the people from Porto, even if some don't live here anymore. That strength of spirit, when taken to design, certainly makes things different.

Studio Dobra

How can you not do it? Graphic design implies communication. For us it's impossible to do it without a point of view and without the influence of our surroundings, either political, cultural, or even gastronomical. We love when projects go way beyond the surface and the visuals surge as consequence of these cultural, social, personal, or political topics.



Studio Dobra, *Tapes, She Said*, 2015.

Independent edition of audio cassettes as a book series, inspired by *Murder, She Wrote*.

Thisislove

The designer's role in society is somehow the formatting of cultural and social message through the media, addressing both general audience and/or small groups. Both the integration of this subject in various activities and public communication sectors, and the scope of the increasingly widespread practice in format and message, have consecrated design as one of the most effective subjects in the transmission of meaning and values of the new millennium.

White Studio

I think it is of major importance. Design is a new scientific area at the moment that, although it is not well consolidated, is well defined. We are still in the first childhood of the importance of design in all that aspects, here in Portugal. We don't have the maturity of the EUA, where design is called for the discussions about voting. The northern countries, also. But we don't have that practice, yet. Although, I think the integration of

design on the social and political affairs is growing. Still, I think this is a round question since design is side by side with the other disciplines of culture and knowledge.

5

**Do you know designers who moved away from Portugal because of the financial crisis? Does the crisis have an influence on your work?**

Bolos Quentes

We have a lot of friends, designers, and others, that moved to other countries. There are a lot of reasons for that. There are some that left for the adventure. Others moved for love. Some of them moved because they received generous job offers. However, most of all went away because of the financial crisis we're facing, and consequent lack of opportunities and money. Crisis influences our life, therefore influences also our work. There are a lot of friends and relatives that are away and that makes us react. Also the means we used to have were reduced due to the crisis, and this affects the way we develop our work, and the shapes our works assume.

Epiforma

Yes, a lot of designers (and friends) moved abroad, which is always a nice excuse for us to get into a plane and visit them, allowing us to check up another culture and get to know new people. In general we try to move away from this topic, it's a complex subject to resume in such a short-answer interview, but the crisis is clearly an existential threat, not just for us, but for all kind of services and product providers working in this country. Once you're in a country where people (as potential clients) have tight budgets for investments, all the people in the chain will obviously be affected by that lack of resources. Thank god Germany banked our poorly managed government! (Sarcastic smile).

FBA.

We know many designers who moved, and are still moving away from Portugal, due to the financial crisis. Particularly those just starting out or in early stages of their careers. A good deal of them probably would not have made the move if they had any hope of

making it in Portugal. More recently, a new trend has also emerged: Designers remain in Portugal, but are working full time remotely for foreign companies.

Yes, of course. The economic environment influences our work, both, on a business level and on a creative level. The topic is always on the top of the mind of the Portuguese society and therefore affects decision making along all the cycle, beginning with the kind of initial briefs we get from clients, down to the budgets available, and willingness to risk taking in pursuit of possible better outcomes.

#### Andrew Howard

To the first part of the question, yes, quite a few. With regard to my studio it's safe to say that one of the first forms of production to loose funds in any financial crisis is spending on culture.

As this is the area of production on which the studio is founded, and depends, the last few years have been very difficult. The absence of professional commissions however is an opportunity to try and implement self-initiated projects which I've done by founding the *Porto Design Summer School*, which will be followed by other design initiatives, one of which is a design festival in the planning.

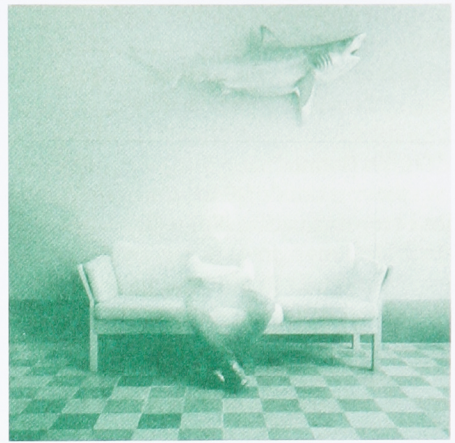
#### küing design bureau

Yes. Some of my friends have migrated to other countries, not only because of the economic crisis, but also in search of new experiences and wages more in line with their quality.

The economic crisis has led me to try other things such as letterpress, screenprint, and linocut. I am still a beginner in this new experience, but I hope soon to be able to do other things, and take advantage of these new areas in my work. The economic crisis forced me also to accept more commercial work, working in outsourcing with some studios.

#### Inês d'Orey

Actually, I know more architects who moved away than designers ... In terms of work opportunities, fortunately, the crisis hasn't affected my work. But it did affect the themes I explore in my work. Like my *Limbo* project, a series about young protesters who participated in the biggest civil demonstration since the revolution of 1974.



#### Inês d'Orey, *Limbo*, 2011.

Series of portraits of protesters who participated in the demonstration of March 12th, 2011. Inspired by a stencil spread throughout the city of Porto that said "We continue to wait for the fog to clear."

#### Dino dos Santos

No and no.

#### Studio Dobra

We know a few good designers who moved from Portugal because of the financial crisis. The crisis has influenced our work, but mostly the way we work.

#### Thisislove

I don't know, but I'm sure there were many. Not only designers, but professionals from all areas. The crisis in Portugal affected decisively the whole cultural production sector and the entire industry that feeds it. In my studio the crisis is felt even today. Economic dynamics have changed, collaboration schemes gained scale, production costs have affected processes and deadlines. There are new savings-driven mentalities, a setback in the implementation of new concepts, which settled the fear of risk.

#### White Studio

Yes. Many. There is some frustration. Due to the crisis and to the lack of demand on design, I know many that didn't make it. I guess that there is a mix of political disappointment and financial realism, but there is also this adventurous blood that runs into our veins that will help us go through. We began to work more and earn less. And if you are not well paid, there is this natural breakdown. Now, if you are in love with what you do, you persist. It's human nature. You are always

resisting. But we also have to say that our studio works counter-cyclically, since I have built a place in design through the years. The thing is: Work did not stop to appear, it just began to have less financial value.

6

**José Saramago said:  
"Being fired was the best luck in my life.  
It made me stop and reflect.  
It was the birth of my life as a writer."**

Bolos Quentes

Every rupture makes us think and choose other ways. We reach individual freedom when choosing a specific way instead of another. Saramago's choice led him to freedom because he reached his wellness in his new way. We think, that, most of the times, society drives us through ways we don't really want to follow, taking from us the time to think about other possibilities. Sometimes the pressure is so strong, that we keep faithful, unless we have a lot of guts to be free.

better luck with a mountain retreat, or a mind-altering psychedelic trip.



Epiforma, *Analog Human Digital*, 2015.

Poster for a collaborative exhibition, reflecting on visions of human existence in the digital world.



Bolos Quentes, *Tremor*, 2016.

Street Poster, 50 x 70 cm, two colors offset.

Epiforma

In our opinion everyone should stop and reflect once in a while. If for Saramago, being fired was the excuse, we believe we have

FBA.

That is true. Sometimes you just have to be thrown in the water to start swimming. There are a few stories in the air about designers pursuing international careers and becoming success stories after having all paths blocked in Portugal. Also quite a few about designers applying their strategic thinking to create small successful businesses in other sectors, mainly connected to the tourism industry, which is one of the few national sectors benefiting from the national economic crisis.

But for each of these highly publicized success stories, almost everyone in Portugal has, in their close circle, stories of families and young professionals struggling with unemployment. The prevalent perception is not optimistic.

Andrew Howard

Possibly interesting as a writer, perhaps not so interesting if you work in a shoe factory.

küing design bureau

During my life, I had several episodes as Saramago. When I changed the course of Veterinary for Design, for example.

The economic crisis also made me reflect on my work, and at the same time gave me the opportunity to do other types of work that I was not custom to make.



küing design bureau, *PARQ Issue 38*, 2013.  
PARQ Magazine Title.

#### Inês d'Orey

It actually happened the same to me. After college I got a job assisting an architecture photographer. After a year we had a big fight, and I was fired. Fortunately, it had nothing to do with my efficiency in my job, which kind of gave me confidence to look for photography commissions for myself.

#### Dino dos Santos

The same happened to me! I'm a full time type designer due to the fact I was dismissed from my previous company.

When you don't have much to loose, you forget about the "comfort zone" theory, and take a leap into what you really love.

#### Studio Dobra

Saramago was a great writer and a good man. We have to understand he came from an extremely poor background. He didn't have many chances to choose what to do in his early life because he needed to survive. About this quote, we like it as a concept, but it needs to be analyzed in the context it comes from. It's something completely different from

when our previous Prime Minister (Passos Coelho) tried to convince us of the idea of the financial crisis as an opportunity to change our lives. To that we say, sure, just as a fire in our studio, an earthquake or a terrorist attack.

#### Thisislove

It is a great fortune when you can opt for talent without constraints. In our days the problem is not lack of time, but by lack of opportunity.

How many writers are born today in social networks? How many photographers, how many artists? Who validates the "what" and the "how"? Long gone is the time when one could follow this love, this ability to learn how to add up.

Today it is hard to tell the will from the talent, the need to create from the need to appear. Returning to Saramago, yes, it is urgent to stop and it is urgent to meditate.

#### White Studio

I myself went through that in my personal life and I think that, in life, (as said in Portuguese) when a door closes, a window opens. In my case ten windows opened, and, at this moment, I am grateful for that door to have been closed, since I discover a whole new world. I even found a new person in me. Which is amusing. I began to see the world in a different way, perhaps, a happier way, and in a more open way, more transparent, and more truthful. So, I couldn't agree more with Saramago.

## 7

### **What is good / bad about the design education in Portugal?**

#### Bolos Quentes

Over the past years, higher education in Portugal passed through big changes. With Bologna Process courses got shorter and more generic. As we didn't pass through this, our experience is a bit different from what is going on right now. But what we felt as design students was the big gap between real practice and teaching.

On the other hand, as we've studied within a context of a Fine Arts School, along with painting, sculpture, and other techniques such as photography and cinema, this allowed us to create a richer vocabulary, not so closed in design itself.

## Epiforma

In sum, the main positive thing is there are great people spreading knowledge inside the design education system for those who honestly want to learn and translate that knowledge into prominent design works.

The main bad thing is clearly the evaluation methodology, which instead of being supportive of a meritocratic system, it seems that the natural state of the design education in Portugal is "fabricating" design degrees almost exclusively based on the average of classes attended during the year. Such behavior is inevitably leading the country design to evolve in contrast to the obvious pursuit of quality and disruptive thinking.

As we said before, we believe design is a tool with the power to create social, political and cultural changes.

Although ultimately, a tool doesn't have the power to change the world, people have. When an education system forges this kind of behavior into any discipline and the people who ultimately becomes part of it ... it's easy and sad to predict how these actions can backfire at our cultural, social and political scenarios!

## FBA.

The first generation of "graphic designers" in Portugal were essentially self-taught individuals coming from other academic areas, with the occasional exception of those who studied abroad.

Official graphic design courses in Portugal only started in the 1980s and were launched as an offspring of the fine arts faculties. These designers were generally creatively well skilled, but their education had flaws, namely regarding specific technical topics, such as typography and the understanding of design's role in the economy.

Designer's perception of their activity was skewed by the vision relayed to them by the "artists" which formed the first bodies of faculties teaching design.

Things have changed quickly over the past few decades. The Portuguese design community is gaining critical mass and a few design courses have become more relevant and have improved the quality of the education.

It is an exciting time to study design in Portugal since it is a field by its own now, but things haven't yet settled into formulas.

## Andrew Howard

On an institutional level probably the same as anywhere else—which involves facing the activity of learning being transformed into a commodity called "education," together with the head-counting and "ranking" table criteria of the education ministries. On the upside it's great to work with young people who have enthusiasm and are open to guidance.



Andrew Howard, *Dafne Editora / Imago series*, 2010.

Series of three books about aesthetic theory.

## küing design bureau

I can only answer you from my own experience. As a student, and in retrospective, I would like to had more design history lessons because I think the influences from the past are very important.

I also think, professors did not give sufficient attention to typography, how to use it, how to create it, etc.

## Inês d'Orey

I believe the design education already has a consolidated tradition. And there has always been a connection between the professional activity and the design education. But besides the Lisbon-Porto axis, there's a lot of work to do in the rest of the country.

## Dino dos Santos

Education is so standardized at these times, that it is hard to talk about the differences.

The EU plays a big part on this. Everything is getting standardized, from fruit to meat, from fish quotes to education processes.

My opinion is that there's nothing really good and nothing really bad about the design education in Portugal, which leaves us in this sort of bland soup, tasteless, like most of the Portuguese design at the moment.

## Studio Dobra

Although, it's very recent, it has changed a lot in the last few years. We don't know if it's

good or bad, but there is not a clear DNA in our schools' curriculum. I think we have great professors in our design schools giving us general skills of visual communication although not a specific orientation or style. This might be good as you have the chance to develop your own personality as a designer.

#### Thisislove

I see many common aspects between our schooling and design practice and Northern Europe schools. I don't have a thorough knowledge of all courses or educational contexts in this area, but the résumés that come to my studio (from all parts of the country) show an increasing quality in the graphic projects and profiles of young Portuguese designers. One downside is perhaps the lack of interdisciplinarity.



Thisislove, *ModaLisboa The Timers*, 2015.  
Invitations.

#### White Studio

I think this is an open question. It is very hard to tell what is good and bad in design education in Portugal. There are many things that are bad, but the good things are much greater and I believe the bad things are getting better.

We are driving towards a very good design education. The new generation of teachers is very good. They are young, they are instructed, they are multitasking, they are organized. They are aware of the world. And the Internet has a place here. I would say that this new wave gives me hope. These people are thoughtful. They go against this southern spirit that still exists, of the "laissez faire, laissez passer." So, I think we are keeping the joy of living and practice design, but with a new insight.

## How attractive is Portugal for young designers and what makes the scene in Portugal special?

#### Bolos Quentes

Maybe the fact that design history in Portugal is something very recent, which creates some kind of white sheet, without the historical burden. This allows the authors to claim personal ways, to experiment without barriers. We think that this can be attractive to young designers, even though with the difficulties, due to the sociocultural circumstances, of creating a professional career. It's a big challenge we think is worth to try.



Bolos Quentes, *O Fim das Possibilidades*, 2015.  
Poster for the Sarrazac play at the São João National Theatre.

#### Epiforma

Portugal is attractive, as a country, for its natural potential and its people, and did we mention the food? Not sure what is the Portugal design scene though ...

#### FBA.

This dawning of design in the Portuguese society which we are coming out of is probably the main attraction, along with the fact that Portuguese culture has always been able to be open to outside influence



while maintaining its heritage. Deeper understanding of the value of design, both within the design community as well as out of it, together with a more design fostering context would make it even more special.

Andrew Howard

Try as I might, I have nothing interesting or enlightening to say in response to this question. Sorry.

küing design bureau

Lisbon and Porto are fantastic cities to live and create. A designer can find spaces for rent in Portugal at much cheaper prices than in other major European cities, and from here work for the world. The weather is great most of the year, which allows great walks to look for inspiration or end the day on the beach.

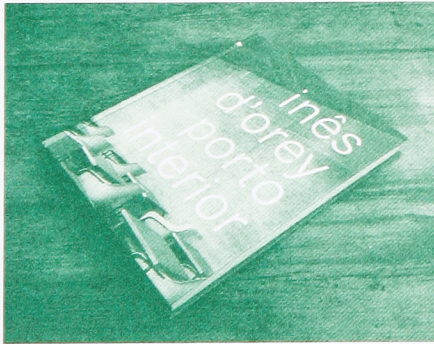
Inês d'Orey

I think we could compare the Portuguese scene with the one from Manchester at the end of the 1970s, early 80s. After all, we still are at the far end of continent, between the sea and the Spaniards ...

As Joy Division said,

"But if you could just see the beauty,  
These things I could never describe,  
These pleasures a wayward distraction,  
This is my one lucky prize.

Isolation, isolation, isolation, isolation, isolation."



Inês d'Orey, *Porto Interior*, 2011.

Collection of public and semi-public interior spaces of the city of Porto (ongoing project), designed by João Faria / DROP.

Dino dos Santos

We are not much into the "design scene" kind of thing ... we just do typefaces, over and over again, so I'm certainly not the best person to ask.

Studio Dobra

It's a combination of factors. We have a few good cultural institutions, good schools, but we also have the weather, the beach, very good looking people, and extremely good food and wine. You don't want much more than this when you are young.

Thisislove

Portugal became very "edgy" when it comes to design, fashion, and artistic culture in general. There is a certain empathy, a certain exuberance in people, a light that invites to life on the outside. The dynamics of cultural production, the mainstreaming of cultural areas, the thin barriers between social elites, this manner of being in community which belongs so much to us.

White Studio

Portugal is a hidden treasure. People tend to ignore this little corner on earth. There is no expectations. So, when people discover it, there is a double feeling of passion. That is what happens to people. People ask why they haven't come here before. We are not in the center. But we are genuinely authentic and nowadays that is forgotten.

## 9

### What does "Fado" mean to you?

Bolos Quentes

It doesn't mean a lot to us. It's a kind of music we're taught to enjoy, but at the same time it tends to glorify some negative and pessimistic weight that we prefer to be far away from. And as all the big traditions tend to take space to changes, it's something we don't appreciate that much.

Epiforma

Mind trip.

FBA.

As a music genre, not something I particularly relate to, even though I acknowledge it is ingrained in my culture.

Andrew Howard

Not a lot, but then I'm not Portuguese.

küing design bureau

Fado means fate. My Fado is editorial design and typography.

Inês d'Orey

A very Portuguese way of living your life.  
A dramatic and romantic way of accepting  
your destiny. I love it.

Dino dos Santos

It's a kind of music that reflects a certain  
Portuguese way of feel ... and that means  
absolutely nothing to me.

Studio Dobra

Not very much. We don't feel it as part of  
our personal life, and we also don't like  
complaining that much. But we have much  
respect for Carlos Paredes.

Thisislove

Saudade.

White Studio

Fado for me is the interpretation of what is  
our spiritualness, our "Portugalsness," through  
sound, music, and chant.

If design is the action that takes us to a  
good shape, Fado is what shows what we  
can be.

With this, I don't mean Fado is squishy. I  
mean it is something of the core, of the pitch,  
of the soul, and definitely I identify myself  
in many poems chanted in Fado. I get  
emotional with the tone of Fado's voices, and  
with the chords of the Portuguese guitars. It's  
something that touches my heart.

I also appreciate the new languages of  
Fado, like the ones of António Zambujo and  
Cátia Guerreiro.

## 10

### Portugal stands for ... (please complete)

Bolos Quentes

Sun, interesting traditions, small revolutions,  
friendly people, good food, good wine, a very  
good place to live and visit ... and to work and  
make good design.

Epiforma

Parliamentary dystopia. Did we mention  
the great food culture? Oh, and the people,  
such beautiful minds!

FBA.

An amazing place and culture which  
somehow always seems to fall short of its  
full potential.

Andrew Howard

Being able to absorb and adapt because it's  
a small country on the edge of Europe that  
has the humility that its larger European  
allies don't have.

küing design bureau

Country of explorers, adventurers, heart-  
warming people, good hospitality.



küing design bureau, *PARQ Issue 41*, 2014.  
Spread of PARQ Magazine.

Inês d'Orey

Portugal stands for small but cosmopolitan.  
Broke but creative. Peaceful but exciting.

Dino dos Santos

Someone to complete.

Studio Dobra

#home #comfort #sarrabulho #pernil-  
doguedes #luizpacheco #rosamota #carlo-  
sparedes #goodwine

Thisislove

I haven't figured it out yet.

White Studio

Portugal stands for the world as ... this is a  
harsh question. Portugal stands for Europe-  
and taking an idea from Padre António Vieira-  
like the eyes stand for the world.



P 178-192

**Inês d'Orey, Porto (PT)**  
[inesdorey.com](http://inesdorey.com)

Inês d'Orey was born in Porto in 1977. She works as a freelance photographer for private clients and public institutions and develops personal projects. She frequently publishes and exhibits her work in Portugal and abroad. She has a degree in Photography from London College of Printing. Inês won the Fnac New Talent prize in photography in 2007. Inês d'Orey is represented by Presença gallery.



P 2-11  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**R2 Design, Porto (PT)**  
[r2design.pt](http://r2design.pt)

R2 is a design studio based in Porto, founded in 1995 by Lizá Defossez Ramalho and Artur Rebelo. Their work spans a wide range of areas of design, exploring static, sequential and interactive formats – through media as diverse as paper, concrete or digital –, and embraces collaborative ventures with other disciplines such as architecture, engineering, photography, writing or programming.



P 163

**Ana Seixas, Porto (PT)**  
[anaseixas.com](http://anaseixas.com)

Ana Seixas is a graphic designer and illustrator, working as a freelancer since 2012. Relies on silk-screen as a mean of production, taking advantage of its possibilities to explore graphic results; her work focus on children's publications and magazines. Spends her days at a co-working space shared with several creatives and manages a small silk-screen workshop in Porto.



P 72-77  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**Oupas!, Porto (PT)**  
[oupasdesign.com](http://oupasdesign.com)

Based in the heart of the city of Porto, Oupas! is a graphic design studio, a team of four elements: Cidália, Joana, Sofia and Tobias (their cat). They are recognizable by the materials they use, especially by paper and cardboard: their materials of choice. From little pieces to stage and event design, they can make it happen!



P 164

**Mariana Rio, Porto (PT)**  
[marianario.com](http://marianario.com)

Mariana Rio is an illustrator and communication designer based in Porto. She has a BA in Communication Design by School of Fine Arts, University of Porto, and has also studied in ASP Wrocław. As an illustrator she has been published since 2012. She obtained acknowledgement by the Nami Island International Picture Book Illustration Concours, the Bologna Children's Book Fair, the CJ Picture Book Awards Seoul among others.



P 126-131  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**Jorge Silva / silvadesigners, Lisbon (PT)**  
[silvadesigners.com](http://silvadesigners.com)

Jorge Silva is an editorial designer, art director and member of Alliance Graphique Internationale. The illustration, a life-long passion, has brought him many awards and curatorships, and a blog where he writes stories about Portuguese illustration. With his studio silvadesigners, he has helped create and develop cultural brands representing Lisbon's immensely rich cultural life, like the iconic Sardine.



P 58-63  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**Pedrita, Lisbon (PT)**  
[pedrita.net](http://pedrita.net)

Pedrita is a multidisciplinary design studio founded by Rita João and Pedro Ferreira, operating from Lisbon since 2005. Team and resources are brought together according to each project, relying on a network of talented professionals. Every project casts an inquisitive look on logic and material culture, questioning processes and materialization, to gather the best formal and conscious solutions.



P 150-159

**Violeta Santos-Moura, Lisbon (PT)**  
[violetamoura.eu](http://violetamoura.eu)

Violeta Santos-Moura is a Portuguese freelance photojournalist and journalist. Her work revolves around the consequences of economic and political strife as well as dissent and unlikely agents of change within societies and countries. Her reporting has taken her from covering Portugal and Spain, amidst the European economic crisis, to the Middle East, covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as photojournalist and correspondent for several news outlets.



P 218-223

**Sonja Steppan, Munich (DE)**  
[questre.net](http://questre.net)

Sonja Steppan has partly studied journalism, anthropology and graphic design in Graz, Brussels and Munich. Sparked by an exchange program at St. Cyprian's School in Cape Town she traveled various continents, specifically the Middle East during the cultural-political reversals of the Arab Spring. Most currently she is engaged in an NGO that supports refugees and runs a zine project called *Questre*.



P 106-109

**Chris Steurer, Studio Chris Steurer  
Lisbon (PT), [csteurer.com](http://csteurer.com)**

Chris Steurer designs publications and visual identities—for cultural institutions, companies and individuals. His work won several international design awards. Furthermore he teaches typography and he has a soul.



P 169

**Tomba Lobos, Fafe (PT)  
[behance.net/tombalobos](http://behance.net/tombalobos)**

José Cardoso was born in Fafe in 1984. He has been working on design and illustration since 2008. Tomba Lobos is the name of his current multidisciplinary solo project which includes design, illustration, music and photography.



P 52-57, 178-192  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/  
portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**Eduardo Aires / White Studio, Porto (PT)  
[whitestudio.pt](http://whitestudio.pt)**

White Studio is a design studio with over 25 years of experience in the area of Communication and Interior Design, operating in multidisciplinary territories. It is based in Porto, London and Santiago de Chile. In its portfolio you can find a variety of clients such as Porto City Hall, Porto City Theatre, Esporão Winery, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and Serralves Contemporary Art Museum, among others.



P 122-125  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/  
portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**The Royal Studio, Porto (PT)  
[theroyalstudio.com](http://theroyalstudio.com)**

The Royal has a deep strategical attack to the design wonders. Considering an emotional approach to the graphic development, the notions of courtship, honor and authorship are never masters to the projects nor the clients at hands. It is a stone-cold-restless nerve with attitude. The Royal is anxious. It stares with cruel addictiveness. Mental and weird. Loyal to culture. Royal to business.



P 68-71  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/  
portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**José Vieira / Viarco, S. João da  
Madeira (PT), [viarco.pt](http://viarco.pt)**

Jose Vieira, 42 years old, general manager at Viarco—Portuguese pencil factory. With a degree in Marketing and Public Relations, he is the 4th generation of the family managing the company, working on areas such as the innovation of new products and development of cultural projects. The main goal is to prepare the company for the next 100 years :-)



P 224-229

**Aaron Winters, Sacramento, CA (USA)  
[primarilydesign.com](http://primarilydesign.com), [cooper-gold.com](http://cooper-gold.com)  
[any-every-other.com](http://any-every-other.com)**

Aaron's work has been published in IdN, Semi-Permanent and Typism annuals and appeared in the UC Davis Design Museum and the Pasadena Museum of California Art. Dropping out of an in-house-induced funk in 2010 to earn his MFA at Vermont College of Fine Arts, he has since opened his Primarily Design studio alongside teaching graphic and web design at the Art Institute of California-Sacramento.



P 178-192

**Thisislove, Lisbon (PT)  
[thisislove.pt](http://thisislove.pt)**

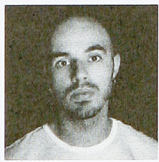
Joana Areal graduated in Communication Design at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Lisbon and holds a Masters degree in Communication Design and Art Direction at University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. She is Co-founder and Creative Director of Thisislove studio, creates and manages projects in the areas of Communication Design, Art Direction, Editorial Design and Fashion.



P 118 / 119, 168  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/  
portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**Rui Vitorino Santos, Porto (PT)  
[ruivitorinosantos.tumblr.com](http://ruivitorinosantos.tumblr.com)  
[damaafлита.com](http://damaafлита.com)**

Born in Batalha in 1971, Rui Vitorino Santos lives and works in Porto. He holds a PhD in Art and Design and is active in the illustration field. He teaches Communication Design and Illustration at School of Fine Arts, University of Porto. He develops in parallel curatorial projects and researches in illustration. His work has been presented in individual and group shows. He is founding member of *Dama Aflita gallery*, in Porto, dedicated to illustration and drawing.



P 36-39  
**video interview:**  
[slanted.de/  
portugal](http://slanted.de/portugal)

**Xesta Studio, Porto (PT)  
[xestastudio.com](http://xestastudio.com)**

Hugo Moura is a graphic designer based in Porto. In 2011 he founded Xesta Studio, a graphic design studio with focus on branding, calligraphy, lettering and typography. It works not only as an independent studio, but also as a collaborative studio. Worked with clients such as Ray-Ban, Lost my Name, Graham's, Pyramid Editions and NBC US. He's also a resident member and collaborator at We Came From Space.