Treatises Used by Nude Painting Students at the School of Fine Arts of Lisbon in the ‘Turn of the Century’

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Abstract: This paper research on the existing treatises on nude painting at the School of Fine Arts of Lisbon in the ‘turn of the century’. The collection of all bibliography is presented with a summary of its content and importance to the young painting students with the aim of understanding the treatises that these students used and can represent an influence on their academic production. The compilation was possible to be done with the help of the public national online archive of the Academy of Fine Arts and a publish from (at the time) Professor Varela de Aldemira (1895-1975). The methodology is based on an existing list of acquired publication by the Academy of Fine Arts and the testimony of this last mention Professor. It was noteworthy the importance of the works made by Édouard Charton, which the volumes being produced at this time were important to provide a view of the world. It was anticipated many books on anatomy and painting techniques, but the periodical acquisition of Gazette of Beaux-Arts, The Art Journal, The Fine Arts and The Fine Arts Quarterly Review, allowed ceaseless knowledge of what was being studied and produced internationally. Finally, there is scarce national production, which could be explained by the foreign circulation in Portugal and the special edition made by the Portuguese Professor and founder of the Academy of Fine Arts of Lisbon, Francisco de Assis Rodrigues, revealing that he cared for pedagogical issues. The author hopes that this paper encourages international researchers to fulfill and contribute to a more global understanding of European Painting Education History.

Keywords: Fine Arts, Lisbon, Portuguese Painting, Treatise, Turn of the Century

1. Introduction

The present study represents a bibliographical survey on the manuals, books and periodicals that nude painting students had access while they were students of Painting at the School of Fine Arts of Lisbon. Young apprentices used many kinds of literature and engraving books to support technical difficulties that could be encountered, but also to help on the creation of complex paintings that were the final works for evaluation [1, 2]. Nevertheless, nude painting was a mandatory class and students could be confronted with many difficulties related to anatomy and painting technique to represent the human body [3]. The period of study is comprised between the creation of the Academy of Fine Arts in 1836 and the first decade of the 20th century, being defined has the ‘turn of the century’.

The collection of all treatises can help understand and delineate the Painting Education in Lisbon at the ‘turn of the century’ at a methodological approach, which still represents a blank to fill at international publishing, since it has a compelled relationship with France and Italy [4-9]. The author hopes that this paper encourages international researchers to fulfill and contribute to a more global European Painting Education History.

2. Treatises Used by Nude Painting Students in the ‘Turn of the Century’

But after all, what treatises and other bibliographical resources did the young painters use during the teaching of nude painting? The answer is based on the testimony of these painters who passed in the School of Fine Arts in Lisbon, being a central figure of this testimony – Varela de Aldemira –
and also a list of books acquired by the Academy of Fine Arts in the middle of the 19th century.

In his work Painting in Theory and Practice (A Pintura na Teoria e na Prática), Varela de Aldemira presents a lively testimony of Columbano's classes, which not only represents proof that he practiced at the School of Fine Arts in Lisbon (although there is no such record in the Archive Dead of the Human Resources of the FBAUL). In this work, the author surveys the existing treatises and the list of Biblical themes, current or real, mythological, historical, allegorical, hagiological and The Lusiads (Os Lusiadas), produced in 1572, by Luís de Camões (1524-1580), possibly chosen by the teachers of the School for the course of painting [10]. Aldemira, in his work Complementary Studies on Painting (Estudos Complementares de Pintura), presents his version of manual of painting, with the various programs of the curricular units of the Course of Painting [11].

After the bibliographic survey of the National Library Archive that was visible in the facilities of the current faculty, it was possible to perceive that the young apprentices had contact with some works. On the other hand, throughout the several studies published on the theory of the art, it was possible to complete what would be a possible library accessible to the young apprentices of the Academy [12].

Odoardo Fialetti (1573-1638) made drawings and engravings for various manuals, with representations of the human body, fundamental for the study of the human body [13]. Father Ignacio da Piedade Vasconcelos (?-1752), writes Artefactos Symmetriacos e Geometricos… (Symmetrical and Geometrical Artifacts…), in 1733, addressing issues of proportion, linked to classical theory and framed in relation to architecture [14-17].

In fact, for Inácio da Piedade Vasconcelos, in the artistic formation the important thing was the study of the nude, “because [the figures] who make themselves dressed in their clothes serve as a cloak, to find some anatomy, which is often found in the bodies of figures made by those who ignore symmetry, which belongs to the proportion of a human body, and therefore of the nude bodies, which we especially deal with here.” [18].

On the other hand, the Discurso sobre as utilidades do desenho by Machado de Castro, in 1788, represents a didactic manual, whose writing demonstrates educational application, in order to facilitate learning [19].

In 1801, Charles-Alphonse Dufresnoy (1611-1668) published The Art of Painting (A Arte da Pintura), exposing a historical context of painting and an interesting reference culture in the representation has it is so different in other countries [20]. On the other hand, this author elaborates a simple and practical manual of the painting, from the chromatic distribution, direction of light, body and shadow. At the same time, Gérard de Lairesse (1641-1711) also prints The Principles of Drawing… (Princípios do Desenho…), addressing issues of master, studio, and disciple and made an approach to the basic concepts of painting [21].

Shortly thereafter, the work Regras da arte da pintura, by Michelangelo Prunetti (1770-1823?), is translated by José da Cunha Taborda (1766-1836) in order to cultivate the interest of the general public, ending up presenting itself as a painting handbook, accompanied with painting’s historical references [22].

In 1810, the publication of Joaquim Leonardo da Rocha (1756-1826), General Measurements of the Human Body… (Medidas Gerais do Corpo Humano…), in the form of dialogue, with questions and answers and pictures representative of body, correctly draw the human body [23, 24]. On the other hand, it is worth noting the work of José Mendes de Saldanha (1758-1796), Brief Treaty of Miniature Posthumous Work (Breve Tratado de Miniatura Obitra Posthuma), from 1814, with notes on the need for knowledge of chemistry and botany to understand the pigments and, respectively, mixtures of colors and their plastic results [25, 26].

Certainly, the work of Roberto Ferreira da Silva would be known in the Academy, since this, in relation to the Elements of Drawing and Painting (Elementos do Desenho, E Pintura), of 1817, deepens the questions of contour, chromatic application and composition of the figures at the level of plastic proportion and representation, with examples of painters such as Pedro Alexandrinho, Jerónimo de Barros (1750-1803), Cyrillo, Vieira Lusitano (1699-1783) and Domingos Sequeira [27, 28]. Maurício José Sendim (1790-1870), was appointed in charge of the creation of the Academy of Fine Arts of Lisbon in 1835 [29], developing three issues and two problematic supplements and reflections regarding the application of painting, with depth in the questions of the representation of the human figure, at the level of the copy and the draw by natural [30].

In 1830, originally published by Gérard Audran (1640-1703), translated by Cyrillo Volkmar Machado and later by Francisco de Assis Rodrigues (1801-1877), the work The proportions of the human body: measured on the most beautiful figures of Antiquity (Les proportions du corps humain: mesurées sur les plus belles figures de l’Antiquité), deals in depth with the notions of human proportion, with illustrations brilliantly performed by Audran, giving examples from the Egyptian whole-body sculpture to details of the face [31]. Institutionally, it should be highlighted the work Methods of Proportions and Anatomy of the Human Body (Methodo das Proporções e Anatomia do Corpo Humano) by Francisco de Assis Rodrigues (1801-1877), published in 1836, presenting itself as a manual of synthetic and didactic design [32].

In the 'Methodo das Proporções', Francisco de Assis Rodrigues summarizes the general proportions of the human body, accompanied by some notions of osteology and mythology applied to the Drawing. At the end of the 'Method' the author gives a warning that it is not enough to save the names of bones, muscles, tendons, and memorize the proportions of the human body if this knowledge is not accompanied by the study of the originals of the classical authors and their application to study of the living model [33].

Shortly after, in 1840, Joaquim Rafael (1783-1864) wrote Elements of Drawing Compiled and Adapted by the Academy of Fine Arts of Lisbon for disciple’s use (Elementos de
In 1898, he realized the existence of a Painting Manual (Manual de Pintura) by Manuel de Macedo (1820-1882), painter and curator of the National Museum of Fine Arts in Lisbon at the time of its opening [45]. Joaquim Pimenta refers to the intersections between Macedo's paintings and painters such as Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Eduardo Viana (1881-1976) and Abel Manta (1888-1982), and the constant Cezannian relationship in production Portuguese pictorial of this time [46].

[...] Manuel de Macedo warns for the observation of the geometric forms that light and shadow behave in their different shades. It seems to us to be innovative and brings us closer to the conjugation of small planes of color, used by Paulo Cézanne (...) in the definition of volumes and, among us, painters like Eduardo Viana (...) or Abel Manta (...) also potentiated in their works [47].

Apart from these registers, one also wished that other works were consulted by the young painters, in order to theoretically base themselves on subjects of color application referring to the reproduction of the human body. However, Joaquim Pimenta raises the hypothesis that the theoretical subjects are insufficient compared to the European production, of which little was felt in the national territory [48].

The Painting Course for Beginners (Cours de Peinture par Principes), by Roger de Piles, dated 1708, presents itself as an apology to colored painting with models based on Rubens and Richelieu, debating the importance of colorism and the importance of drawing, summarizing the artistic doctrine of century XVII, introduced in Real Academy of Painting and French Sculpture [49, 50].

The work of Antonio Palomino (1655-1726), found the Spanish version with the title of The Painting Museum and Optical Scale. Painting Theory... (El Museu Pictorico y Escala Óptica. Teórica de la Pintura...), published in 1795 [51]. This work contains a retrospective of the most important works of the authors as Practical Perspective of Vignola, Father Maestro Fray Ignacio Dante, among others, putting into practice and demonstrating the issues related to optics as a "faculty" necessary for Painting. This work is illustrated at the end of the volume with reference to mathematical and perspective measures [52]. The work Anatomical engravings for painters and sculptors (Tavole anatomiche per gli pittori e gli sculptori) by Giambattista Sabattini, we can find a basic work for the students of the Academy of Fine Arts, in this case of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Bologna, which was projected through the treatises in the Academy of Lisbon [53].

Adding the possibility of accessing the bibliography that Maria Helena Lisbon did not have the possibility at the time of doing so, it is mentioned the work Elements of Practical Perspective... (Éléments de Perspective Pratique...) by Pierre-Henri de Valenciannes (1750-1819) [54]. In this work, it can be find systems and rules of perspective representation in drawing, painting and sculpture, but in particular in landscape painting, with illustrations at the end of the monograph.

Another work now accessible through the website
www.archive.org, is the work Études sur l'Histoire des Arts by Pierre Toussaint Dechazelle (1752-1833), divided into two volumes, being a reference work at the level of art history for students of Fine Arts, with elementary notions unrelated to Winckelmann's theory [55]. Jean-David Sutter's later work, entitled Philosophy of Fine Arts Applied to Painting (Philosophie des Beaux-Arts appliquée à la Peinture), is also a work of academic use with the fundamental principles to develop quality and excellence in artistic works [56].

The New Complete Manual of Painters and Sculptors (Nouveau Manuel Complet du Peintre et du Sculpteur), by L. C. Arsène and Ferdinand Denis, published in 1858, is presented as an aesthetic work, exposing general principles and practical applications in art, such as notions of execution and colors, observation and vocabulary [57, 58].

As Maria Helena Lisboa affirms in 2007, a lot of treatise mentioned by some personalities of the Fine Arts of Lisbon is missing, there being no available copy, such as the Doquet's Anatomical Treaty (Tratado de Anatomia) or the Treaty by Padre Campos (Tratado do Padre Campos), two fundamental works chosen by scholars to give theoretical support to students of Fine Arts [59]. Both works of J. P. Thenat, both the Treaty of Pratical Perspective (Tratado de Perspectiva Prática), and also the Treaty of Landscape for Natural Drawing (Tratado de Paisagem para Desenho do Natural) were also not possible to locate, as happened with the author Maria Helena Lisboa [60]. Not being discouraged in the future, with the expansion of libraries and online repositories, it is possible to locate and study these works.

3. Conclusion

Taking into consideration the bibliographical survey presented, the Portuguese School of Fine Arts was much influenced by the French treatises, not only due to the proximity, but also given the fact that Portuguese students would go to the École des Beaux Arts in Paris to study.

It is interesting to understand the importance of the works made by Édouard Charton, which the volumes being produced at this time were important to provide a view of the world. It was expected many books on anatomy and painting techniques, but the periodical acquisition of Gazette of Beaux-Arts, The Art Journal, The Fine Arts and The Fine Arts Quarterly Review, allowed ceaseless knowledge of what was being studied and produced abroad.

Finally, there is scarce national production, which could be explained by the foreign circulation in Portugal and the special edition made by the Portuguese Professor and founder of the Academy of Fine Arts of Lisbon, Francisco de Assis Rodrigues, revealing that he cared for pedagogical issues.

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References


[18] Original text: Aliás, para Inácio da Piedade Vasconcelos, na formação artística o importante mesmo era o estudo do nu, “porque [as figuras] que se fazem vestidas as roupas lhe servem de capa, para encombrarem algumas anatomias, que muitas vezes se vem nos corpos das figuras feitas por aquellas, que ignora a simetria, que pertence à proporção de um corpo humano, e por isso dos corpos nus he, que especialmente aqui tratamos” - VASCONCELOS, Padre Ignacio da Piedade (1733) Artefactos Simetriccios e Geometricos, advertidos, e descobertos pela industriosa perfeição das Artes, Esculturaria, Architectonica, e da Pintura, Lisboa, Oficina de José António da Silva, p. 47.


[32] RODRIGUES, Francisco Assis (1836) Methodos das Proporções, e Anatomia do Corpo Humano, Dedicado á Mocidade Estudiosa, que se aplica ás Artes do Desenho, Lisboa, A. S. Coelho & Comp".


[34] RAFAEL, Joaquim (1840) Elementos de Desenho Colligidos e adoptados pela Academia das Bellas Artes de Lisboa para uso dos seus Discípulos, Lisboa, Academia das Bellas-Artes de Lisboa.


[51] PALOMINO, Antonio (1795) *Museu Pictorico y Escala Óptica. Teórica de la Pintura, en que se describe su origen, esencia, espécies y cualidades, con todos los demas accidentes que la enquecen ê ilustran*. Madrid: Imprenta de Sancha.


century. 7 Bedtime at the reformatory of Mettray. 8 Lecture on the evils of alcoholism in the auditorium of Frsnes. prison. 9 Steam machine for the 'celeriferous' correction of young boys and girls. Å used were not accustomed to drawing; consequently, instead of four, six were needed; and when that did not suffice, they were forced, in order to cut off the wretch's thighs, to sever the sinews. Å School. At twenty minutes to eleven, at the drum-roll, the prisoners form into ranks, and proceed in divisions to the school. The class lasts two hours and consists alternately of reading, writing, drawing and arithmetic. Art. 23. At twenty minutes to one, the prisoners leave the school, in divisions, and return to their courtyards for recreation. At five minutes to one, at the drum-roll, they form into work-teams. Art. Although the school typically only accepted students several years his senior, Picasso's entrance exam was so extraordinary that he was granted an exception and admitted. Nevertheless, Picasso chafed at the School of Fine Arts' strict rules and formalities, and began skipping class so that he could roam the streets of Barcelona, sketching the city scenes he observed. In 1897, a 16-year-old Picasso moved to Madrid to attend the Royal Academy of San Fernando. Å At the turn of the 20th century, Picasso moved to Paris, France Å the center of European art Å to open his own studio. Lonely and deeply depressed over the death of his close friend, Carlos Casagemas, he painted scenes of poverty, isolation and anguish, almost exclusively in shades of blue and green. The 18th century, when the national school of painting flourished, is represented by artists who brought fame to England far beyond its shores. Three works by the first president of the Royal Academy of Arts, Sir Joshua Reynolds, represent a most unusual Å the Zone of Venus (1788) both intended for Count Potemkin. Works by Reynolds' contemporaries also found their way to Russia: Venus Comforting Cupid, Stung by a Bee, and Portrait of George, Prince of Wales, and Prince Frederick, Duke of York (1778) by the historical painter to King George III, Benjamin West, who headed the Royal Academy after Reynolds's death.