

Counter-Masks: Weaving Dialogues

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Team members:

1. Design ID: Centro de Investigação em Design
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Abstract:

The aim of this project was for students from different geographical and disciplinary backgrounds to engage in dialogue on issues that racism and colonialism raise (such as collective memory, reparation or historical justice), helping to enrich this debate with a diversity of concerns and points of view. The theme was generated from the theme of the MICAR International Anti-Racist Film Festival 2023. Organised in groups, students were also challenged to make this process of speculation and dialogical learning tangible in the form of a mask involving the face and body (produced by the students of the Drawing and Illustration Curricular Unit, with the help of the students of the Psychology and Diversity Curricular Unit) and, later, through a

video (produced by the students of the Psychology and Diversity Curricular Unit, with the help of the students of the Drawing and Illustration Curricular Unit).

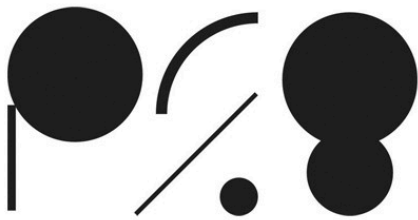
Building an effectively decolonial society implies the collaborative exercise of constructing counter-narratives capable of disputing the heroic or silencing dominant masks. This gave rise to the idea of the counter-mask, which is potentially transgressive and generates change.

The first class of the project (via zoom) was attended by students from both degrees. In this session, the students from the Psychology and Diversity programme shared orally with the students from the Drawing and Illustration programme the literature review they had carried out on key issues in the project, such as collective memory, racial stereotypes, historical reparation, etc. This was followed by a debate. The *Contra-Máscaras: Weaving Dialogues* proposal was launched and discussed, the students were divided into groups and shown examples, particularly of masks/figurines in the context of post-colonial African art and objects that visualise dialogues. All the information was aggregated on the Moodle Platform and in a folder shared (Google) by the students on both courses.

In addition to sharing the bibliographical review via zoom, another moment significantly nourished the project: the visit to the exhibition 'The photographic impulse: (un)tidying the colonial archive' at the Museum of Natural History and Science (MUHNAC). The exhibition's thematic and aesthetic intensity sparked a discussion among the students that allowed the first questions/ provocations and suggested solutions for the counter-mask to be launched (via a shared document) by the Psychology and Diversity students to the Design and Illustration students. The dialogue continued on this shared document. This was followed by classes to develop the counter-masks by the Design and Illustration students and classes to make the videos by the Psychology and Diversity students.

As it was not possible to exhibit the results of the project at the MICAR Film Festival (2023), the counter-masks were displayed at the exhibition "Duas Verdades, Uma Mentira" (Galeria P28, 27 June -10 August 2024) <https://p28.pt/event/duas-verdades-uma-mentira/>.

Partners:



Counter-Mask by Gabriela Gomes, Laura Rodrigues & Raynna Santos, 2023

Photo: Matilde César, FORCE