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# 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

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## 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Lusíadas)*, 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 the 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 the *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... (Principios 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 Geraes 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 Obra 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 Alexandrino, 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 myology 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*

*Desenho Colligidos e adoptados pela Academia das Bellas Artes de Lisboa para uso dos seus Discipulos*), in order to fill the lack of theoretical support for the young apprentices of the Lisbon Academy [34]. In this work, on the human figure, Joaquim Rafael presents concepts on the proportion and methodology of the representation of the human figure [35].

At the international level, it was possible to gauge the existence of some reference works, presented in the National Academy of Fine Arts publications register, between 1864 and 1867 [36]. The existence of the numerous volumes of *World Tour (Le tour du monde)* by Édouard Charton, as well as periodicals like *Gazette of Beaux-Arts*, *The Art Journal* and *The Fine Arts*. These works were bought from time to time and can be understood by reading the register from 1864 to 1867. However, it is possible that after that date, these works would continue to be purchased at the same intervals, so it is not possible to measure such information, since there is no public documentation on the subject.

In these records, it can be perceived the existence of books known at European level such as the publications *The Fine Arts Quarterly Review*, edited by Bernard Bolingbroke Woodward (1816-1869), allowing the young painters to update themselves on the international production [37].

Charles Blanc's *History of Painters (Histoire des Peintres)* (1813-1882) allowed not only a contextualization of the history of the world, but also of modern times, with illustrations from prints of excellent quality throughout the various volumes [38].

Curiously, at the beginning of the 19th century, the work of Jules Cloquet (1790-1883), on the *Anatomy of the Man... (Anatomie de l'Homme...)*, published in 1821, acquired by the Academy in 1837, is presented as essential in an illustrated compendium format [39, 40]. Another publication also essential for basic concepts in the history of art will have been the work of Louis Vitet (1736-1809), *Studies of the history of art (Études sur l'histoire de l'art)*, 1864, being possible to have a generalist approach, also accompanied by a certain connection with archeology, which did not cease to exist at this time [41]. Furthermore, the *Study about the Fine Arts of France and Italy (Etude sur les Beaux Arts en France et en Italie)*, by Henri Delaborde (1811-1899), 1864, divided into two volumes, Italian and French painting, respectively, allows a global comprehension of European artistic values in vogue at the time in Portugal [42].

The work of Jules Fau, *Anatomy of the external forms of the human body to be used by painters (Anatomie des formes extérieures du corps humains l'usage des peintres)*, produced in 1865, appears in the register list of the books of the Academy, being very descriptive and has no illustrations [43]. In spite of this, it was a work acquired and possibly used occasionally by the young painters throughout their exercise and study of anatomy.

Finally, the work of Paul Richer (1849-1933), *New Artistic Anatomy of the Human Body (Nouvelle anatomie artistique du corps humain)*, original version of 1906, written in a synthetic and practical form, accompanied by illustrations by himself, which presents the canon of 7.5 heads [44].

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 Pictórico 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 and gli scultori)* 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... (Élemens de Perspective Pratique...)* by Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (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 a 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. Arsénne 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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- [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 encontrarem algumas anatomias, que muitas vezes se vem nos corpos das figuras feitas por aquelas, que ignorão a symmetria, 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 Symmetriacos e Geometricos, advertidos, e descobertos pela industriosa perfeição das Artes, Esculturaria, Architectonica, e da Pintura*, Lisboa, Oficina de José António da Silva, p. 47.
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- [33] Original text: *No 'Methodo das Proporções', Francisco de Assis Rodrigues faz um resumo das proporções gerais do corpo humano, acompanhado de algumas noções de osteologia e miologia applicadas ao Desenho. No fim do 'Método', o autor faz uma advertência dizendo que não basta saver os nomes dos ossos, músculos, tendões e memorixar as proporções do corpo humano, se este conhecimento não for acompanhado pelo estudo dos originaes dos autores clássicos e sua applicação ao estudo do modelo vivo* - FARIA, Alberto (2012) 'O estudo da anatomia na coleção de Desenho Antigo da FBAUL'. In TAVARES, Cristina Azevedo (Ed.) *Representações do corpo na ciência e na arte*, Lisboa: Fim de Século, p. 131.
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