



**Ponte de Lima** is a very well conserved and cheerful heritage town situated in the picaresque hill landscape. It has active cultural life and recently became a popular destination for a cultural tourism. Yearly this place holds internationally renowned art, sport and music festivals.

#### **Exhibition spaces/Museums**

Several authentic historical buildings, which have been converted into art museums by the city, are now welcoming contemporary art. Charismatic spaces, such as a medieval prison, tower, a castle, a wine cave and an old chapel have acquired new functions as exposition pavilions but the historical charms still gasp through. Fantastically preserved interiors maintaining some antique furniture and decoration, propose for the artists the conditions to expose 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional artworks of any size and have possibilities for video installations. Marvelous park (former wine yard) welcomes land art and open air installations.

## Curatorial

There are nine spacious exposition pavilions with rooms equipped for the installation of different kinds of artworks with good light conditions and an open-air garden. All galleries are the heritage historical buildings in the center of the town Ponte de Lima and in 3 minutes walk from each other. We will select up to 150 artworks for the show. The issue of the curatorial work will be of establishing the dialogues between the contemporary artworks and the ancient interiors with respect and care for both. During the exhibition period there will be a public voting for the best artwork, in general category, the winner will receive a certification. The contacts of the artists will be available and people interested to purchase the artworks can contact the authors directly.

## Concept

Art Encounter 2016 invites visual artists and poets to submit their artworks for the curated exhibition which will take place in Ponte de Lima, a fascinating town on the banks of the river Lima, in the North of Portugal. The legend tells that when the roman legions approached that river, the soldiers were afraid to cross it because of the local belief that anybody who enters its sorcery waters will be enchanted by the beauty of the site and forget himself. So the name *Rio do Esquecimento* – Oblivion, was given to the river. But Decimus Junius Brutus passed the river alone and from the other side called by the names all of his soldiers to encourage them, showing that he did not forget. Since then the river got another title, *Rio da Lembrança* - Reminiscence. So is the artistic work: sometimes this process can be scary and seem to bring to nowhere; through conscious forgetting of the conventional notions and representations, the artist seeks for new awareness to emerge in the form of an artwork. Intuition moves artistic thinking beyond the literal significations, transforming objects into projects, materials into messages and narratives into metaphors.

The recent critics of the beauty in art, claiming it to be an archaic concept, might confuse the artistic intention and the viewer's impression, inducing to look for the unenthusiastic interpretations. Yet the beauty is still here, it belongs to nature. Retained from the obvious manifestation in the artwork, the beauty is inherent to the mode of thinking of the artist; it can be sensed as the beauty of understanding, and for the viewer as the beauty of recognition.

This process of recalling the truth, which demands to be revealed, is so dignifying that one forgets himself when creates. Still, art is a cosmopolitan language and anybody can recognize veracity decoded in the artwork when looking at it. An abstract meaning of the emotional kind provides a contemplative experience and feeling of evocation of something what was forgotten for the observer. So what is that truth and which shapes does it take? Can a rational order be discerned in artistic objects, can the metaphorical language of artworks allow a higher level of communication?

What is so worthwhile in this process of recognition of indices and ideas inscribed in the artwork? Science asserts that we use only a small percentage of our mental faculty. What kind of capacities could contain the increased intelligence is little known and still belongs to theories and fiction, yet some observations can be made. Children are naturally joyful, and they are in the constant process of learning. While knowledge and experience is yet very small, child's brain actively creates new neurological connections out of everything she hears, sees or touches. It's to say that the elder person grows, the less sharp is the immediate perception and the more is the conviction. If the brain all the time exhaustively uses the same neurological paths, no emotion emerges. If we actively use our senses, if we pay

attention to what and how we hear or see, there is a constant wonder and an active exchange with the world. In such condition the individual feels more inspired. The artists, in the most part, are more alert to the things around them and are often described as having a “young spirit”. If the artists are innately more “sensitive”, this point of view can be argued, however would be reasonable to say, that due to their professional specifics, artist train their sensibilities and cognitive capacity of interpretation of what they see or feel. It is a hard work. The result of such cognition is the artistic expression, be it a painting, music or a poem. In front of an artwork we can recall the forgotten sense of beauty.

For some audiences it might seem more difficult to make out the contemporary art, because often it does not contain instant clues or evident references and needs time to be comprehended. Such artworks apply further than the regular notions, they involve with our memories, imagination, desires, fears and instincts which lay beyond our consciousness, but guide us.

In the experience of art, both the artist and the observer are subjected to the spontaneity of perception and to the better understanding of the self. If the alert consciousness makes us more happy, is a complicated question, hence awareness can be more painful than numbness, still it is in the condition of a mankind to search for the former.

### **Themes to reflect**

Poetic identities

Art is knowledge

Beyond the beauty

Poetic MessAGE

Reinventing the museum

Cabinet of wonder

History is present

Artists may like to read the legends of Ponte de Lima for inspiration.

<http://www.cm-pontedelima.pt/ver.php?cod=0E01>

<http://www.cm-pontedelima.pt/ver.php?cod=0LOC>