

LISBOA
CLICHÉ

Daniel Blaufuks

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Translation
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LISBOA
TINTA-DA-CHINA
MMXXIII

A taxi in Lisbon at the end of the 1980s. When I was a child, I rarely rode in a taxi, but during this period I did it all the time, mainly because the newspaper usually paid. Lisbon's taxis were relatively cheap, as well as pretty filthy. The radio was, without fail, tuned to Rádio Comercial, and the drivers knew where each street was. Here, it was summer, the sunroof was open, and we were stopped somewhere in the hopeless Lisbon traffic.





A tobacconist's where, beyond the obvious cigarettes and cigars, you could also buy newspapers, magazines, lottery and *totobola* tickets, trinkets, toys, bottled water, sweets, lighters, tissues, incense and so on.

It was in one of these tobacconists that I saw, early one Tuesday morning, and for the very first time, one of my photos in print, having run downstairs, eager to buy *Blitz* – a weekly music and performances publication which I'd begun to work for the previous week.

A man walks along a narrow street in Bairro Alto, probably Rua da Rosa. He's passing in front of a grocer's shop with its typical wooden fruit and vegetable boxes out on the pavement. On the shabby wall, between two doorways where the shop's logo had once been, painted in big fat letters is a protest directed at the government – provisional as they all were at that time – against the rising cost of living. Until well into the 1990s, the city's walls were covered with political and revolutionary messages and murals. In the shop's doorway, beyond the crates of potatoes, tomatoes and pears on the floor, there are countless jars of Mokambo – a powdered drink made of various grains and coffee, which was very much in vogue at the time, not least because of an advert with the catchy jingle *say good morning with Mokambo, Mokambo...*, which played on one or other of the two television channels each evening.

The man, who walks by looking at the price of the pears out of the corner of his eye, is in a pale suit and tie, and is carrying a large black briefcase, an indication of being on his way to the office – the local branch of a bank, a government department or a ministry of some sort. Or perhaps he is a lawyer. In any case, back then the briefcase functioned as an important symbol – just like a pressed white shirt collar – separating the clerical and working classes, a representation of the upward mobility to which families in the Portugal of that era aspired.





The beautiful and incredible Olga, who lived with me for a while and who used to take drugs home with her, until the drugs ended up taking her.



In the middle of the afternoon, eight men in a bar somewhere over near Santa Catarina. Such bars, with their few marble-topped tables, served wine by the glass, often straight from the barrel, draught beer, *bagaço* and other such spirits; they sold tobacco, tinned tuna and matches, and they were the meeting place for the local residents—the site of conversations and information exchanges between men coming from different generations and geographies. Some, like this one, had a jukebox. The man, who smiles at me as he orders a *bagaço*, is wearing a jumper and suit jacket despite it being summer. He also carries a black band on his left arm, signalling that he has recently lost a close family member. It is a detail which contrasts with his seemingly jolly disposition.

Morning in Bairro Alto, a neighbourhood whose homes are not connected to the central gas supply, hence gas bottles being shouldered through the narrow streets and up and down steep stairways. The great majority of newspapers had their headquarters here—morning papers such as *Diário Popular* or *O Século*, on the street of the same name, or evening papers such as *Diário de Lisboa* and *A Capital*, on Travessa do Poço da Cidade. At a time of significant transformation and still before the arrival of the internet, daily newspapers were eagerly—often anxiously—awaited. But it was also in the newspapers that you found television, cinema and theatre listings, that you could read your horoscope, look for a house or a wife, that you found out who had died and whether tomorrow there'd be sun or rain.



*Two friends walking down a street
in Bairro Alto on a summer's day.*





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has worked on the relationship between public and private memory — a consistent subject in his work as a visual artist. He has exhibited widely in museums, contemporary art galleries and festivals, working principally with photography and video, presenting this in books, installations and film. He obtained a PhD from the University of Wales with a thesis on the relationships that photography and cinema have with texts by W. G. Sebald and Georges Perec, and with memory and the Holocaust. In 2016, he was awarded the AICA prize for the exhibitions *Attempting Exhaustion* and *Lexicon*.

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