



Bridging^{the} Gap

Synergies between Art History and Conservation

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Connecting the dots in the Coastal Memory Fort at UNESCO Geoparque Oeste Portugal: collaborative efforts in art history and conservation

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The Forte das Memórias (Coastal Memory Fort) project aims to revitalise tangible and intangible heritage through the safeguarding of the 17th century fort of Nossa Senhora dos Anjos de Paimogo, Lourinhã (Portugal). Located on the cliffs of Paimogo Beach – a place marked by the historical landing of the Duke of Wellington’s forces during the Napoleonic Wars – the fort stands as a prime example that brings together the best of Portuguese military architecture of former eras. The project endeavours to make this building become a living part of community identity once more.

The current state of the art in the Lourinhã region showcases a dynamic blend of cultural heritage preservation, technological innovation, and environmental conservation, reinforced by its recent integration as part of the UNESCO Geopark West since 2024. This recognition highlights the region’s profound geological and cultural significance. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach and leveraging innovative technologies, the group has overcome existing challenges and paved the

way for more effective and efficient heritage preservation efforts:

- › *Preservation of cultural heritage:* Through interdisciplinary collaboration, we have successfully preserved the cultural heritage embodied by the fort. By integrating art history with conservation practices, we have developed comprehensive strategies to safeguard the fort’s architectural integrity and historical significance for future generations.
- › *Innovative imaging techniques:* Our collaboration has enabled the adoption of innovative imaging techniques, such as augmented reality (AR) and photogrammetry, which have revolutionised the way we document and interpret the fort’s cultural heritage. These technologies have enhanced our ability to capture detailed information about the fort’s condition, important information to perform preventive conservation (photogrammetry) (Fig. 1) and engage visitors in immersive experiences.

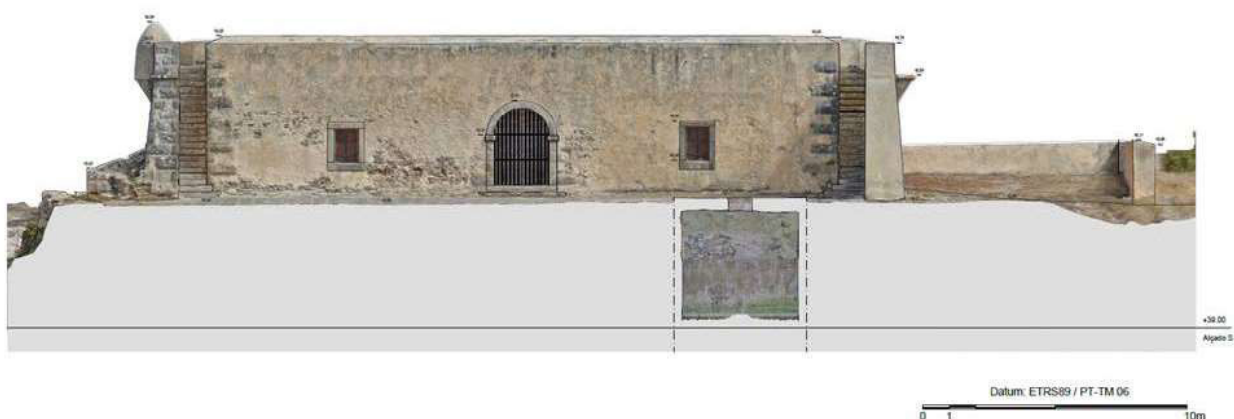


Figure 1 Paimogo Fort (17th century, Lourinhã, Portugal): photogrammetry overcomes challenging retrofitting measures, potentially resulting in the inefficient allocation of financial and material resources.

- › *Community engagement and empowerment:* Interdisciplinary collaboration has facilitated meaningful engagement with the local community, empowering residents to take an active role in the preservation of their cultural heritage. By involving stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, we have fostered a sense of ownership and pride in the fort, ensuring its continued relevance and significance.
- › *Educational outreach:* Our collaborative efforts have extended to educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness about the fort's art historical importance and conservation practices. By integrating conservation principles into school curricula and public outreach programmes, we have inspired future generations to become advocates for cultural heritage preservation.
- › *Legacy of interdisciplinary collaboration:* As the project concludes (2024), the legacy of interdisciplinary collaboration will endure, serving as a model for future conservation efforts. We have set a precedent for sustainable and holistic approaches to preserving cultural heritage by demonstrating the value of integrating art history with conservation practices.

In conclusion, interdisciplinary collaboration has been instrumental in bridging the gap in the Forte das Memórias project objectives, ensuring the long-term preservation of the fort's cultural heritage. This collaborative approach not only safeguards its historical significance but also actively engages current and future generations of the local community, fostering a deeper connection to their shared heritage.

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