

MARIA ANA VASCO COSTA

1981



Untitled #4 (5 A.M.), 2022
Glazed volcanic stone
38 x 24 x 32 cm



Untitled #1 (5 A.M.), 2022
Glazed volcanic stone
34 x 27 x 30 cm



Untitled #3 (5 A.M.), 2022
Glazed volcanic stone
33 x 20 x 31 cm



Untitled #2 (5 A.M.), 2022
Glazed volcanic stone
30 x 25 x 25 cm

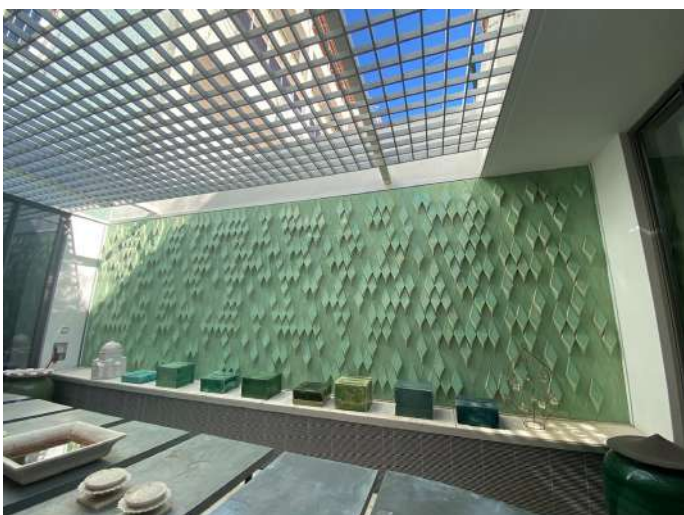


Exhibition *Toucher Terre, l'Art de la sculpture céramique*, 2022,
Fondation Villa Datris, l'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France
© Bertrand Michau

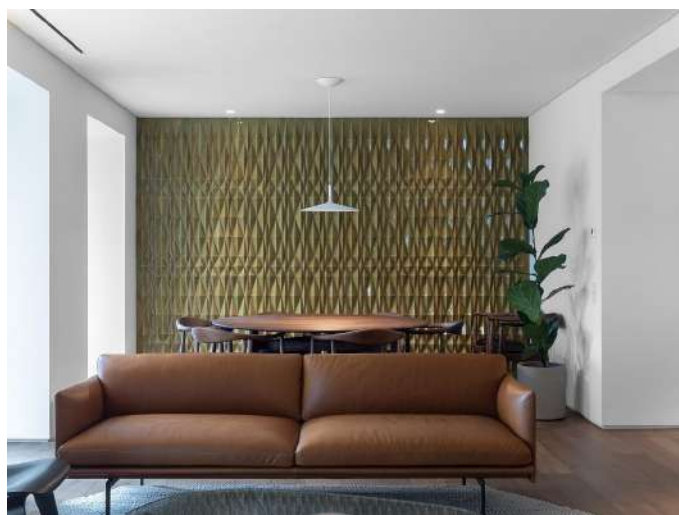
Maria Ana Vasco Costa creates sculptural objects and site-specific artworks, working mainly in the field of ceramics. After graduating in Architecture in 2004 and a brilliant professional career in London, collaborating with Sir David Adjaye and Sir Terence Conran, Maria Ana Vasco Costa returns to Lisbon in 2009, and graduates with Ceramics and Fine Arts degree from the Ar.Co Centro de Arte e Comunicação Visual. Ceramics becomes her favorite material, because of the plastic possibilities that the finished ceramic body offers, especially in terms of color, depth, temperature, variation. This fascination for ceramics is rooted in her Azorean origins. Surrounded by raw nature, volcanic rocks and vastness, the artist sees her aesthetic plasticity through these forces.

In 2014 she executes her first projects using handmade three-dimensional tiles and experimented with color, texture and pattern, combining simple three-dimensional geometric shapes, applied to an architectural scale, in the tradition of monochromatic Portuguese tiles.

That same year, she is invited to direct the Ceramics Department at Ar.Co, a position she still holds today. Between 2017 and 2019, the artist is invited to the residence at the historic *Viúva Lamego*. Her creations are awarded at the *Surface Design Awards* in London in 2016, 2017 and 2018. In 2019, the artist was shortlisted for the *Mostyn Open*.



Maria Ana Vasco Costa, Wall intervention, Borges Carneiro, 2019, Lisbon, Portugal
© Maria Ana Vasco Costa, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon



Maria Ana Vasco Costa, Wall intervention for Colectiv Arquitectura, 2018, Lisbon, Portugal
© Fernando Guerra, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon



1. Portrait of Maria Ana Vasco Costa © All rights reserved, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon

2. Maria Ana Vasco Costa, Wall intervention, Pedrita Studio, HotelHotel, 2019, Lisbon, Portugal © Maria Ana Vasco Costa

3. Maria Ana Vasco Costa, Wall intervention, Cartier store, 2023, Barcelona, Spain © All rights reserved

In 2022, Maria Ana Vasco Costa was featured in the exhibition *Toucher Terre, l'Art de la sculpture céramique* at the Fondation Villa Datris in l'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France.

As part of the closing ceremony of the France-Portugal 2022 Season, the Portuguese artist created in Lisbon a totem sculpture in homage to Simone Veil, inaugurated in the presence of the Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa and the French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, the Mayor of Lisbon Carlos Moeda, Jean Veil, son of Simone Veil, the Portuguese Minister of Culture Pedro Adão e Silva and the French Minister of Culture Rima Abdul Malak.

The artist presents, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Lisbon, in 2023, in the exhibition *I III III IV V - five decades of ar.co*.

Maria Ana Vasco Costa regularly exhibits her work in Portugal and abroad: *Ice Ice Baby*, Appleton, (2021); *Pitching yourself a tent were we all may enter*, Quetzal Art Center (2021), Vidigueira; *Água d'Álto*, Galeria Municipal de Almada, (2019); *Veículo Longo*, Casa-Atelier Vieira da Silva, (2019); *The Land of the Glazed Cities*, Imperial Palace, Beijing (2019); *Do presente para o futuro*, Museu do Azulejo, Lisboa (2018); *Portugal Tropical*, Merzbau Gallery, Miami (2016); *Primeira Escolha*, Museu José Malhoa, Caldas da Rainha (2016); *Mostyn 19 Agora*, Mostyn, Landudno, Wales (2015), *HD*, Espaço AZ, Lisboa (2014) e *ABECEDÁRIO - 40 Anos do Ar. Co*, Museu do Chiado, Lisboa, Portugal (2013).



Inauguration of the sculpture by Maria Ana Vasco Costa in tribute to Simone Veil, closing of the France-Portugal 2022 Season, with the Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa and the French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, the Mayor of Lisbon Carlos Moeda, Jean Veil, son of Simone Veil, Pedro Adão e Silva, Portuguese Minister of Culture and Rima Abdul Malak, French Minister of Culture © Rita Carmo / Temporada Portugal-França 2022



1. Maria Ana Vasco Costa, Œuvre murale, Boutique Cartier, 2023, Barcelone, Espagne © Droits réservés

2. Maria Ana Vasco Costa, Œuvre murale, Pedrita Studio, HotelHotel, 2019, Lisbonne, Portugal © Maria Ana Vasco Costa

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WHY WE TRAVEL

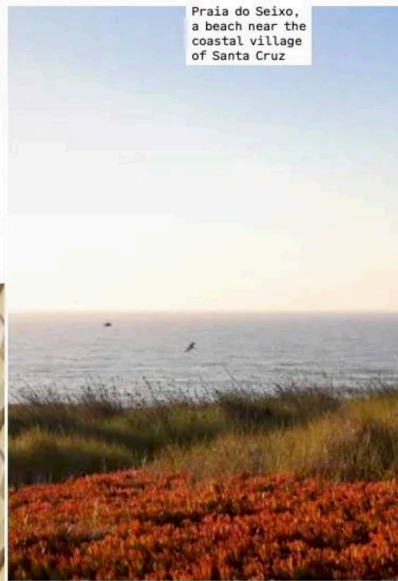
» road trip

Beneath the Surface

On a journey to explore Portugal's creative traditions, Christine Chitnis meets the craftswomen who are embracing the past while looking to the future



The artist Maria Ana Vasco Costa, in front of a Lisbon apartment building adorned with her glazed-tile façade



Praia do Seixo, a beach near the coastal village of Santa Cruz

As I navigated a terrifying series of hairpin turns along ancient stone roads in Minho, a mountainous region of northwestern Portugal, I began to question my spontaneous decision to road-trip here. I'd made the call in Lisbon a few days earlier over a glass of effervescent Suba pét-nat at Prado, an airy farm-to-table restaurant and market in a former fish factory. I'd come to research my upcoming book, *Patterns of Portugal*—an exploration of the country's visual culture—and my plans were relatively open-ended. So after a few deliciously bright sips, I thought, Why not? I'd go meet the young female vintner behind the bottle.

"Visitors come to Portugal for the architecture and the sights," Tânia Fonseca, Prado's co-owner, had told me as I swirled my pale-yellow wine. "But we encourage our guests to get to know the people behind the stops on their itinerary:

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRISTINE CHITNIS

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the farmers, winemakers, and artists." Fonseca walks the walk. At both Prado and The Lisboans, the nearby apartment building she opened around the corner with her husband and her sister in 2016, producers and artisans take center stage, from the locally sourced ingredients that appear on hyperseasonal menus to the hand-crafted textiles and light fixtures that furnish guest rooms. Taking her words to heart, I'd reserved what might have been the only automatic car rental in all of Portugal and began plotting my route.

Portugal is compact—roughly 350 miles long and just 135 miles wide. But despite its diminutive size, it was the first truly global empire, a legacy depicted in the ubiquitous azulejo-tile murals showing important battles and monuments that honor famed explorers. As I've often found during more than a decade studying various cultures' visual histories, these beautiful artifacts were largely created by men to document the exploits of men. On this trip, I'd resolved to connect with the female creatives who are shaping Portugal's visual present.

Even before leaving Lisbon, I met one such woman. The artist Maria Ana Vasco Costa, whose sculptural hand-glazed tiles adorn building façades in Lisbon and around the world, took me on a tour of her neighborhood, Estrela, and nearby Bairro Alto, where we visited several of her projects. My favorite was a veneer of sage-green

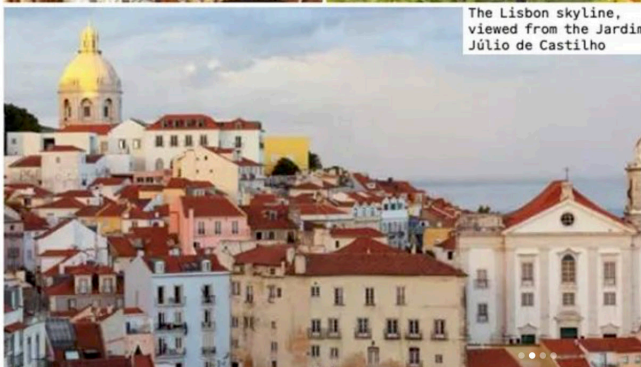


Tânia Fonseca, co-owner of The Lisboans, boutique apartments in a restored 19th-century canning factory in Lisbon's Baixa district



Prado Merceria, a market, bistro, and wine bar

The tiny, lush village of São Cristóvão de Nogueira



The Lisbon skyline, viewed from the Jardim Júlio de Castilho

geometric tiles on an apartment building; Vasco Costa pointed out the aberrations in the glaze. "The mistakes and variations that result from the handmade process give the tiles a depth," she said. Later, we had lunch at Instituto Macrobiótico de Portugal, a health-food institute cofounded by the macrobiotic-cookbook author Geninha Horta Varatojo, followed by a chilled glass of Limo vinho branco at Comida Independente, a market that sources artisanal produce, meat, cheeses, and wines from across Portugal.

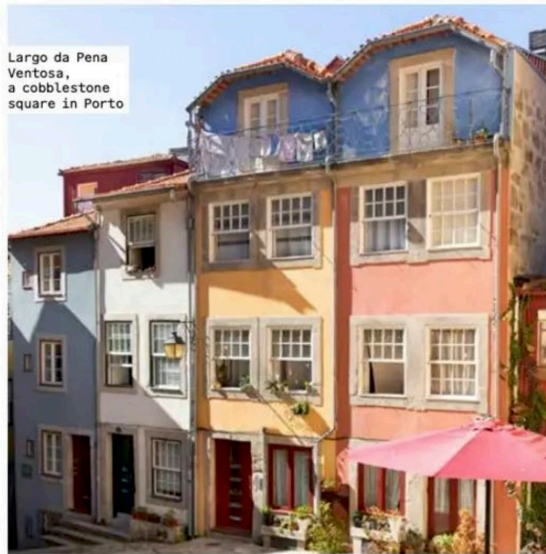
The next day, I headed north to Porto. Cruising along coastal roads with views of rugged cliffs that plunged toward golden beaches, I reached Duas Portas, an eight-room boutique hotel in a former home whose austere white-washed exterior belies the warm, relaxed rooms within. Co-owner Luísa Souto de Moura, whose mother designed the space, told me that Portugal owes its craft ethos to its unique history. In the late →

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WHY WE TRAVEL



Largo da Pena Ventosa, a cobblestone square in Porto

20th century, when other European countries were embracing modernity, the Portuguese were struggling under a dictatorship and mired in poverty. "We had to find a way to use what we had: local tools and materials. Our style was plain, but it had its own poetry."

The landscape grew lush and mountainous—and the roads increasingly treacherous—as I made my way toward the village of São Cristóvão de Nogueira, home to A Padaria Farmhouse. The refreshingly simple family-owned inn, which opened in 2020 in an old bakery, is full of objects made in the area: furniture crafted by the town woodworker, linens from a nearby market. On my first morning, I woke to a spread prepared by the owner Maria João Sousa Montenegro and her mother, Jacinta: juicy kiwis and crisp apples from the orchard; moist yogurt cake made with local olive oil; and tiny glass jars of homemade raspberry, apricot, and sour-cherry preserves bottled the previous fall, served with crusty bread from a bakery down the road. Maria's family has lived in this area for three generations; she and her mother have sought to harness the traditional cooking and gardening methods of their forebears to create this bucolic experience.

A week after setting out on my impromptu jaunt, I arrived at Peluda Vinhos, the vineyard in Mondim de Basto where Mariana Faria Pala produces the Suba I'd first tasted at Prado. Pala, who runs the vineyard with her grandfather, aspires to produce wines that highlight the region's unique varietals: The endemic grapes used in Suba's popular pét-nats, Azal and Espadeiro, thrive in the dry, warm climate and granite soil. When Pala began working at the vineyard in January 2019, her grandfather had initially resisted her ideas, like creating a low-intervention wine with no added sugars or gas, but since then he'd come around. "It's important to honor traditions," Pala told me. "But I'm bringing a fresh perspective to them."

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTINE CURTIS