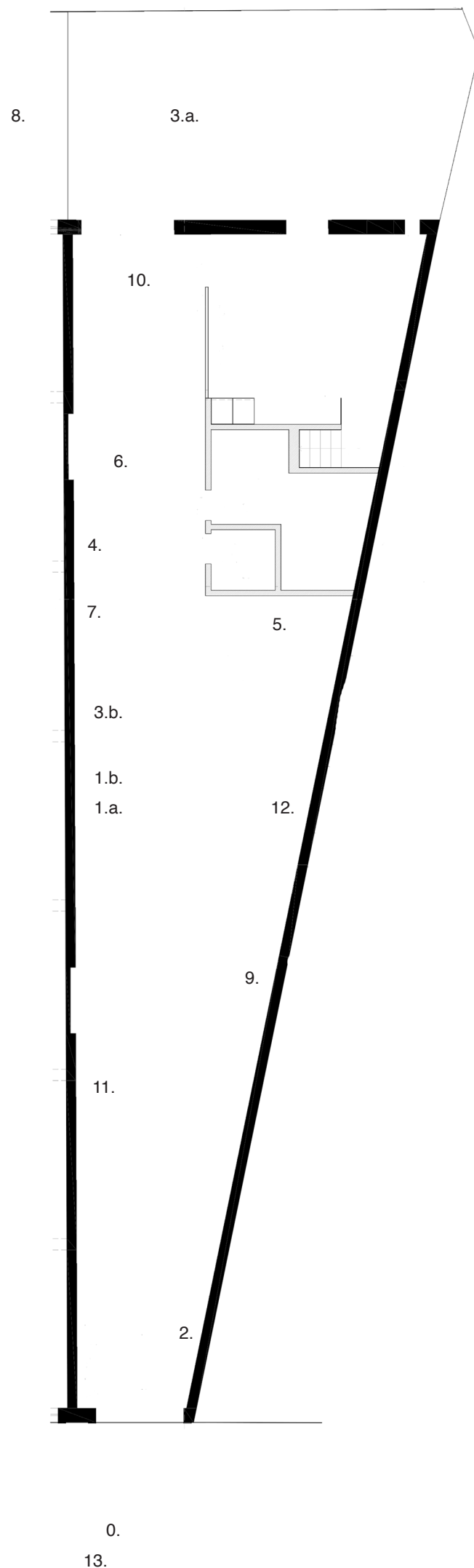


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Percepções e Alucinações



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Drift and uncertainty



Francesco del Cossa, *Santa Lucia*, c. 1473/1474 (detail)

Rather than saying that a hallucination is a false external perception, one must say that external perception is a true hallucination.

Hippolyte Taine (De l'intelligence, 1870: Vol. II, Book I, Chapter I, pp.12–13)

Saint Lucy, or Luzia, is the patron saint of vision and light. In some versions of the legend, her eyes are gouged out, either by herself or by her executioners. She is therefore celebrated as the patron saint of the blind, ophthalmologists, eye diseases and glaziers or stained-glass artisans. She is a visionary and hallucinatory saint, often depicted holding a tray with her gouged-out eyes on one hand and a palm branch symbolising her martyrdom in the other. In Francesco del Cossa’s famous painting, her eyes resemble blossoming flowers — living things, albeit disembodied. Among her other possible iconographic attributes, Saint Lucy may wear a candle-lit crown on her head, in direct reference to the Latin etymology of her name, 'Lux'.

In religion, the term 'Saint Lucy hallucination' refers to her post-mortem visions or miraculous encounters with saints. In other contexts, such as neurology, a “Saint Lucy hallucinatin” refers to Charles Bonnet syndrome, in which people who are blind or partially sighted experience sudden and vivid hallucinations. Saint Lucy, the saint with hollow eyes, is thus the patron saint of hallucinations and *blind imagination*. For years, whenever I climbed the hill of Santa Luzia in Viana do Castelo, in the North coast of Portugal, I would come across a photographer who would take our picture *à la minute*. He used a basic camera with a shutter made of a lid and a simple technique to make a paper negative, which he would then develop inside a dark bag with black felt sleeves. He proceeded to photograph this negative twice, resting it on a stand in front of the lens. Immediately after he would swiftly repeat the entire development process inside the dark bag right there in front of us. Afterwards, he washed the images at a nearby tap and handed us the photographs as though he were delivering an oracle. Each portrait was like a vision, a return to a time when photography was still something unnatural and each image an apparition, *a figure of wonder*, as Pedro Miguel Frade used to say. Over the years, I have kept some of those images, but others have been lost. Of all of them, however, I retain an almost hallucinatory memory. Not long ago, I returned to Santa Luzia, taking the elevator up the hill and finding the old photographer in the same spot. This time, remembering the visionary and hallucinatory nature of the other portraits he had taken of me and those who joined climbing the hill, I moved away from him, out of fear or superstition. Only on that day did I understood the reason for presence in that place. Only on that day I understood the divinatory power of that camera and its chemistry, there, on the hill named after the saint with hollow eyes — the visionary,

hallucinatory saint. We do not always wish to confront the machines that dream and imagine futures.

The relationship between perception and hallucination has never been simple or entirely clear. Perception is said to occur when the brain processes and interprets the signals sent to it by the rest of the body. Hallucination, on the other hand, is said to occur when the brain creates that same sensory experience, either in the absence of external stimuli or through the transformation or distortion of those very stimuli. The slippery nature of this relationship stems precisely from this zone of indeterminacy: both perception and hallucination belong to the realm of sensory experience, and both can be deceptive, to the point where it becomes difficult to distinguish between them. Even without delving deeper, it is clear that some of the mysteries of consciousness also lie here. Perceptions may be nothing more than controlled hallucinations. If every image, every sensation, is by nature hallucinatory, then the indistinct flow between perception and hallucination reminds us, first and foremost, that the imaginary and its images — through what we might call mediation — result from a denaturalisation of the world itself. This holds true equally for the cerebralization of experience or for the more or less modern history of the mechanisms that gear up perception. The flickering shadows cast on cave walls, mirrors, photography or cinema create a transformative movement in the production of the imaginary through a displacement situated somewhere between perception and hallucination. It is precisely this grey area that is addressed by Hippolyte Taine’s opening quote. Building on an early idea of Leibniz, Taine argues that external perception and other forms of awareness are like ghosts (or apparitions) of things and constitute true hallucinations in their own right. That is to say, although we can establish a correspondence with these things, their their presence (appearance) is phantasmal. Consequently, even though hallucinations seem to be closer to dreams, sleepwalking, illness or even madness in the absence of a clear correspondence with the things of the world, they nonetheless possess this same spectral presence. Both perceptions and hallucinations produce spectres, ghosts. From this perspective, the hallucination ceases to be a monstrosity and becomes the very *fabric of our mental life*. For Taine, the correspondence between the sensible world — or rather, the way in which this world presents itself to each of us — and reality oscillates between truth and falsehood, reality and fantasy, the real and the imaginary to such an extent that these categories dissolve into an indistinct magma. This shadowy, slippery, volatile and indistinct zone is also, to a large extent, the territory in which artistic practice has long flourished. As sensory actions, made of bodies and for bodies, of the things of the world for the world, the gestures of art constantly question the very notion of the imaginary. This is not only because such gestures constantly reconfigure the imaginary, but also because they flow between what we call — for lack of better terms — perceptions and hallucinations, whether false or true, real or imaginary. The *media* of art are, without exception, the very place where these gestures are enacted. At times, one even works with a total hallucination of the *medium*, transformed into a pure machine for producing spectres. In this impure and fluid autonomy, the *medium* is a body that creates and produces, blindly. Thus, everything that seemed certain becomes a place of uncertainty.

Perceptions and Hallucinations is the final exhibition by first-year PhD in Fine Arts (DAP) students, which is usually held at venues outside the FBAUP. This year's exhibition is taking place at Espaço Mira and brings together a series of

works diverse in nature and in the media they employ for their realisation. This diversity mirrors the kaleidoscope of artistic practices that find their place within DAP, a space that strives to be one of crossings, flows and drifts. We enter the gallery as if entering a cave full of ghosts and pass through these flows, these images and the constellation of works on display, just as they pass right through us. inside this spatial device, which is a constellation of possibilities, we lose ourselves in a world of perceptions and hallucinations.

Miguel S. Leal , Berlin, 26 May 2026

We were welcomed warmly and with open arms at Espaço Mira. We would like to thank the entire team, especially Manuela Matos Monteiro, João Lafuente, and, of course, José Maia.

0.Miguel Leal
Ritornello(verde), 2026
Reeds, adhesive tape, wood and metal tube
Dimensions variable

1.a. Alexandra Costa
Ninho I, 2026
wood, coconut fibre, animal hair
Dimensions variable

1.b. Alexandra Costa
Ninho II, 2026
stereo sound
3’33” loop

2. Amanda Copstein
Rua da Miragem — Introdução, 2026
Mixed media drawing, steel wire
Dimensions variable

3.a. Artur Prudente
Barçaça, 2026
Print on steel, canvas
Dimensions variable

3.b. Artur Prudente
Paisagem móvel, 2026
Print on ribbon, steel
Dimensions variable

4. Bruno Mesquita
Weight of Saying, 2026
Screen, custom Java software, concrete, steel
Dimensions variable

5. Filipe Marques
A vida é um empilhador cansado, 2026
Video, 60 min, steel, mirror and print on flag fabric
Dimensions variable

6. Inês Amorim
(De)construction, 2026
Painted iron, LED lamp
50 x 50 x 200 cm

7. Josemar Blures
ErêCoração, 2026
Kite in fabric and string; tail in food packaging; photographic images from personal archive in offset print
Dimensions variable, 400 X 400 X 150 cm

8. Letícia Maia
Bulbosa, 2026
Latex, polyurethane fibre, nylon
100 x 0,75 x 100 cm

9. Luísa Abreu
Mão na área, 2026
FHD video, foam balls, adhesive tape, projection screen
8’38 loop, 115 x 188 x 61 cm

10. Marcelo Reis
Mata de Albergaria e Valinhas, 2026
Glass, chalk, mono sound
110 x 220 x 200 cm

11. Pedro Bastos
A plantação do diospireiro, 2026
1 LCD, 1 TV CRT, projector com 80 diapositivos
Dimensions variable

12.Tânia Dinis
Depois do gesto, 2026
Super 8/16mm film, transferred to digital
5’00 loop

13. Zhenghang Fu
Gate, 2026
5 prints
25x150 cm (each)