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Oficina do Cego

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Oficina do Cego is a non-profit organization dedicated to the graphic arts. Founded in 2009, in Lisbon, it aims to promote and endorse a great diversity of small-press and self-publishing practices. Its name literally means “the blind man’s workshop” and is taken from a famous and historically important 18<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese printing workshop.

Oficina do Cego offers a wide range of practical workshops of short duration as paper engineering for example, as well as theoretical seminars it also participates in exhibitions and fairs, both in Portugal and abroad.

Last year Oficina was invited to collaborate with the faculty of fine arts (Lisbon), to organize and carry out a 4 month course on self-edition, the main public being artists and professional graphic designers. Every “student” developed and materialized his/her own edition project, after attending a few seminars on subjects as “authors rights” and legal issues (ISBN, ISSN), artists books, etc.; technical workshops on typography, linoleum, silkscreen, the basis of bookbinding; and other subjects and techniques.

Besides this pedagogical input, in May, Oficina was invited by GHOST (<http://www.ghost.pt/EN/>) to simultaneously participate and promote a two week residency in the heart of Lisbon. A comfortable work space and a guest house were offered for an experimental tryout, creating a meeting point, bringing together a heterogeneous group of illustrators, artists and graphic designer who never worked together before, to collaborate in an edition entitled “*faca romba*”. Friday and Saturday, work hours were followed by late drink and dinner with editors, critics, young illustrators and people working in the graphic design field.

This dynamic and ambitious program will had a follow up in December 2011. This time, Oficina do Cego and GHOST, invited a panel of faculty art teachers, researchers and academics from Porto and Lisbon, to discuss artists books and self edition in Portugal. Since, in Portugal, there is not yet a formal academic investigation group on these matters Oficina aims to plant a seed for the future.