Contemporary Arts Activism for Reproductive Healthcare (Lisbon, 14 Jun 27)

Lisbon, Portugal, Jun 14, 2027
Deadline: Jan 5, 2027

Basia Sliwinska

International Forum: Contemporary Arts Activism for Reproductive Healthcare.

Organised by: Contemporary Arts Activism for Reproductive Healthcare in Portugal: CARE. In collaboration with Gulbenkian Art Library.

The International Forum Contemporary Arts Activism for Reproductive Healthcare is a culminating event for the FCT-funded project 'Contemporary Arts Activism for Reproductive Healthcare in Portugal: CARE'. It is imagined as a vibrant dialogical space for contemporary artistic research, knowledge and publishing culture centered around the graphic novel (to be launched during the one-day Forum) co-created by five Portuguese artists: Marta Condez, Carla Cruz, Salomé Paiva, Catarina Carneiro de Sousa, Cátia Ramos, and Basia Sliwinska and Bruno Marques from the CARE team.

Organised by CARE in collaboration with the Gulbenkian Art Library, the Forum is purposefully taking place in one of the finest private art libraries in Europe featuring an extensive and diverse collection of materials dedicated to art history, architecture, photography, and modern and contemporary visual arts. This unique collaboration foregrounds the ethos of the Forum, which is conceptualised as a durational event developed through and with the Gulbenkian Art Library to activate it as a public, arts- and research- led platform interfacing artistic practices and processes, feminist politics, reproductive healthcare, activism, and publication cultures.

Call for Participation:

The recent significant global surge in far right, nationalist and populist movements is accompanied by a renewed political mobilisation of Christian discourse undermining reproductive rights. This champions the conservative model of nuclear family reproducing cis-heteropatriarchal settler colonial structures endangering reproductive autonomy. Assumptions concerning what is medically available and legally permitted are in stark contrast with the lived reality of accessing reproductive healthcare. Moreover, individual reproductive needs and desires are often neglected, discrediting women (in all their diversity) as reliable agents of their own bodies.

Arts use in health research is well documented, specifically as a tool generating practical outcomes (e.g. data, communicating results or experiences). However, such approach focuses on aesthetic outputs rather than arts activist processes having a remarkable capacity to drive transformation in reproductive healthcare. This Forum attends to this potential in the context of Portugal. Interfacing the politics of rights and justice, and acknowledging personal experience, it thinks

with and through arts to, in Elke Krasny's (2025) words 'pay feminist attention'. The Forum foregrounds knowing from the body: the carrier of reproductive testimonies. Through diverse contribution formats participants are invited to attend to the following questions:
- How can arts activist practices reveal persisting barriers to reproductive healthcare access for women in all their diversity?
- How can storytelling visually translate complex and often silenced experiences of reproductive healthcare to audiences beyond the academic context?
- What are the specific methods and strategies arts activism generates not only to uncover systemic fractures and silenced situated and embodied experiences, but also to advocate for concrete changes in policy and practice?

We invite contributions by artists, art historians and theorists, curators, activists, policy makers, and medical practitioners to discuss imaginative arts activist practices engaging with lived experiences of reproductive healthcare in Portugal, or beyond (if relevant and/ or applicable to the Portuguese context), particularly concerned with abortion, contraception, endometriosis, menopause and obstetric violence, the five thematic foci of the CARE project. Please indicate which participation format your contribution addresses:

- arts-led workshops (duration of up to 45 mins)
We are interested in short arts-led workshops exploring ways in which lived experiences of reproductive healthcare access can be revealed/ visibilised/ unsilenced.

- in response talks engaging with materials held by the Library (up to 15 mins)
We encourage an active engagement with the material held by the Library and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which hold a wealth of resources foundational to the CARE project. We invite short inresponse talks focused on cultural work of books and archives, and their potentials to interrogate arts role in expanding public understanding of reproductive healthcare.
You will need to dedicate time to identify appropriate resources at the Library and in the archives (please be mindful of the scheduled works and the necessity to organise such visits well in advance; some materials are available online) as a basis for your contribution, and explain which specific resources you will be engaging with.

- guided conversations with the audience (up to 30 mins)
We invite proposals for discussion points and guided conversations with the audience of the Forum. We are particularly interested in facilitating dialogue on the complex and often silenced experiences of reproductive healthcare in Portugal.

- a roundtable to include representatives from cultural, health and legal sectors, NGOs and relevant associations (90 mins; discussion in Portuguese)
We encourage individuals from cultural, health and legal sectors, NGOs and relevant associations to join the open roundtable focused on current challenges within reproductive healthcare in Portugal.

- performative interventions (up to 15 mins) & collaborative presentations (up to 15 mins)
We invite proposals for performative interventions and collaborative presentations interrogating creative storytelling as a method for reproductive healthcare advocacy and education.

Contributions must present original, unpublished research or critical approaches. Existing artworks, publications and practices may be discussed. Selected contributors will be invited to develop their material into a published outcome (format and further details tbc).

Proposals may be submitted in English or Portuguese. The main working language of the Forum will be English. The roundtable on reproductive healthcare in Portugal will be held in Portuguese, with brief summaries in English provided by a bilingual moderator.

Please submit your proposal with ‘CARE’ in the subject line, and send it to the Organisers:
Inês Canhao: a58057@campus.fcsh.unl.pt
cc: Basia Sliwinska: bsliwinska@fcsh.unl.pt.

The deadline for sending proposals is 5 January 2027.

Please submit a single document with the following information:
1. a title for your contribution
2. an abstract up to 300 words in length; please specify the format for your participation
3. a short biography, including your current institutional affiliation, if you have one (up to 100 words).

Applicants will be notified of decisions by mid January 2027.

Reference:

CFP: Contemporary Arts Activism for Reproductive Healthcare (Lisbon, 14 Jun 27). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 15, 2026 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54585>.