

Ofélia Marques was born in Lisbon in 1902, and in 1922 completed a course in Philology at the Lisbon Faculty of Letters, becoming one of the first female graduates in Portugal. The fact that her training was not in the arts led critics to treat her work as naive; even though being self-taught was a characteristic of modernism, what was an asset for many male artists, for others, often female, was pointed out as a technical failure. After entering the world of illustration, she quickly began to collaborate with publications such as *Atlântico*, *Ver e Crer* and *Panorama*, for which she designed covers, illustrated short stories, children's segments, and comic strips. She worked with well-known feminists such as Ana de Castro Osório in the book *O Príncipe das Maças de Oiro* and Maria Lamas (under the pseudonym Rosa Silvestre) in the book *As Aventuras dos Cinco Irmãozinhos* and in the *O Reino dos Miúdos* section of the magazine *Civilização*. She also worked regularly with the author Fernanda de Castro for whom she designed two editions of the book *Mariazinha em África*, which today we cannot fail to point out as being problematic for the racist representations both in its written and visual content [see the extended caption for these objects, where Rita Carvalho discusses issues around these books in greater depth]. During the 1930s, she worked alongside Maria Keil [see ERRATA-16] and others at Estúdio Técnico de Publicidade, founded by José Rocha.

Like her contemporary Sarah Affonso [see ERRATA-03], Ofélia Marques exhibited for the first time at the Autumn Salon in 1926, joining with the group of modernists with whom she would collectively exhibit in the following years. She never had an individual show, but her painting work was recognized, and she was awarded the Sousa-Cardoso Prize in 1940.

Like many other artists of her time, the fact that she was a woman was a determining factor in her career, primarily in the work for which she was commissioned, which was often associated with the world of children. It was not only

the subjects of the commissions she received that tied her to the domestic space—in assessing her work, critics would insist on highlighting the nostalgia and sadness present in her drawings, attributing this to the fact that Ofélia was a married woman without children and that therefore she could only live in grief; and finally, history dictates that her delicate and melancholy work is too naive to be interesting, keeping her in the shadows.

An example that contradicts this idea of naivety is the collection of fictional portraits of her friends in which she imagined them as children, highlighting the characteristics, sometimes less sympathetic, of each one of them, achieving, without remorse and without any kind of innocence, a critical portrait of an influential group of the time. But because she decided to portray them as children, once more this work is considered naive. Ofélia Marques was not uninformed or naive, she was a woman with higher education, and a frequent traveller, often accompanying her husband on his official commissions outside Portugal, where she got to know museums and a more open culture.

Her death, by suicide in 1952, invariably features in discussions of Ofélia's work—another piece of a common narrative that portrays women as tortured and emotional rather than heroic or passionate, fitting easily with shallow interpretations of her work as being the work of sadness—though the death of her former husband Bernardo Marques a decade later, also by suicide, is rarely mentioned in these terms, nor is it used as a frame of reference for the understanding of his work.

In 1988, a series of erotic drawings of lesbian scenes was found and exhibited, revealing another side of Ofélia Marques' life and work, full of life, sophistication, and maturity—that for critics was hitherto unknown or ignored—which highlights how little is still known about this woman. *Isabel Duarte, 2021*