

ACCESS - THINKING A MORE OPENED MUSICAL EXPERIENCE FOR THE AUDIENCE

EVALUATION REPORT



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Evaluation Report

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Executive summary

This report presents two rounds of monitoring and evaluation of the artistic residencies (2025-2026) held at Sonoscopia, as part of the ACCESS programme, a European programme co-funded by Creative Europe. The first residency took place between 12 and 18 May 2025, bringing together six European artists working in experimental and improvised music, while the second residency ran from 18 to 24 May 2026, with the participation of seven artists. In structural terms, both followed the same format, with individual and collective working sessions throughout the week, small-scale actions in public and private (commercial) spaces on Rua de Silva Porto, and a final presentation open to the surrounding community.

Figure 1: Sonoscopia's façade, 2025



Source: the team

In terms of data, this report draws on two distinct types of evaluation, although both were grounded in a qualitative approach. For the evaluation of the first residency, participant observation was recorded through field diary entries (16 and 17 May 2025),

together with three semi-structured interviews with artists (Audrey Chen and František Chaloupka, Audrey Chen, and Milana Zaric). The evaluation of the second residency followed the same structure, with an interview conducted with every participating artist, participant observation records, and, in addition, interviews with audience members (seven regular attendees of Sonoscopia's activities and the owner of Café Silva Porto).

Two main strands stand out from the analysis of the first residency: first, a process of group cohesion that was slower and more difficult than is usual in Sonoscopia's residencies, acknowledged both by the host team and by the artists themselves, arising from the heterogeneity of backgrounds and working methods; second, a relationship with the space and the local community that evolved over the course of the week, moving from individual actions with little interaction with passers-by in the early days to a final presentation with strong engagement from neighbours, children and shopkeepers. In the second residency, these two strands were overcome, becoming instead the main positive aspects of the edition, insofar as interaction among the artists was far more fluid and close-knit, as was the relationship with, and involvement of, the local population.

The report closes with a preliminary comparative reading of the two Portuguese editions and a set of concrete recommendations for future residencies and for the evaluation design of the project itself.

Figure 2: Interior of Sonoscopia. References to various artists who have passed through the space



Source: the team.

Team

The technical team comprises a group of specialists, with differing degrees of involvement.

i) Coordination

Paula Guerra

Paula Guerra holds a PhD in Sociology from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto and a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the same University (IS-UP). Paula is a member of the Scientific Committee of the Master in Sociology at the University of Porto. She is also part of other

international research centres within the framework of the social sciences and humanities: the Centre for Geography and Spatial Planning Studies (CEGOT), the Transdisciplinary Research Centre for Culture, Space and Memory (CITCEM), and the Centre for the Study of Socioeconomic Change and the Territory (DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte). Since 2013, Paula has been an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research (GCSCR) in Australia. Paula is President of ESA Arts (2026-2028) and President of the KISMIF Association. She is the founder and coordinator of three prestigious scientific research networks on music and culture: the International Association for the Study of Popular Music - Portugal (IASPM-PT), Urban Music Studies, and of the Rede Todas As Artes - Luso-Afro-Brazilian Network of Sociology of Culture and Arts. She is also co-editor (with Andy Bennett) of the journal *DIY, Alternative Cultures & Society* (Sage).

ii) Researchers

Ana Oliveira

Sociologist, assistant researcher at DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte, within the “Cities and Territories” research group, where, in addition to her research, she is currently engaged in scientific management activities. Since September 2022, she has been Invited Assistant Professor of Urban Sociology at Universidade Aberta. She holds a degree in Sociology from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto and a PhD in Urban Studies from Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon. She is executive editor of “Todas as Artes. Revista Luso-Brasileira de Artes e Cultura” [All the Arts. Luso-Brazilian Arts and Culture Journal], based at the Institute of Sociology of the University of Porto, and book review editor of the scientific journal “*DIY, Alternative Cultures & Society*”, published by Sage. She is part of the scientific and executive committees of the KISMIF International Conference and of the International Lusophone Meeting Todas as Artes, Todos os Nomes [All the Arts, All the Names]. She is part of three prestigious scientific research networks on music and culture: the International Association for the Study of Popular Music - Portugal (IASPM-PT), of which she is a founding member, Urban Music Studies, and Todas as Artes, Todos os Nomes.

Sofia Sousa

She holds a PhD in Sociology from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto (FLUP). She has worked as a contract researcher for the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). She is currently a researcher on the project KWI_SIRUK (Ref. 2023.17383.ICDT), funded by FCT. She is a researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the University of Porto (IS-UP). She is a member of the Organising Committee of the KISMIF International Conference, a member of the Executive Committee for Web/Publications of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM); Secretary-General of IASPM-Portugal (International Association for the Study of Popular Music, Portuguese Branch) and Executive Editor of the journal *Todas as Artes*, *Revista Luso-Brasileira de Artes e Cultura*. She currently works on research in areas such as migration, gender, the arts, culture, social inclusion and arts-based research.

Framing the ACCESS project

ACCESS is a European cooperation project, co-funded by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, based on a consortium of three organisations: Muzzix (France, project coordinator), Unijazz (Czech Republic) and Sonoscopia (Portugal). The project was organised into two cycles of artistic residencies — 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 — each comprising one residency in France, one in the Czech Republic and one in Portugal, dedicated to artists working in improvised and experimental music.

A photograph of a cluttered wooden table displaying various objects. On the left, there is a typewriter and a small electronic device with a cassette tape. In the center, a mirror reflects the room, and a vase of purple flowers stands next to a saxophone and a tuba. To the right, a cat figurine is visible, along with a small electronic device and a white paper. The background is a plain white wall.

The project's central aim, as formulated in the funding application, was to rethink access to music and to offer audiences a more open experience, through three lines of experimentation: i) active listening processes, ii) greater audience involvement and participation, and iii) access to new venues not conventionally used for artistic and musical production, such as shops, public spaces and heritage buildings, among others. Each residency culminated in a public presentation that tested these three dimensions *in situ*.

Three main objectives were defined in this regard, each with an associated quantitative target, which served as points of reference for this report.

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- **Objective 3** — To develop the capacity to work with a broad range of actors at territorial level, contributing to the diversification of the types of partners mobilised in each territory.

Cross-cutting environmental priorities were also established, such as the need to favour the use of acoustic instruments, reduce energy consumption, and serve local and vegetarian meals, among others, as well as the need to promote gender equality, inclusion and diversity (parity among artists, diversity of nationalities, attention to the inclusion of artists with disabilities).

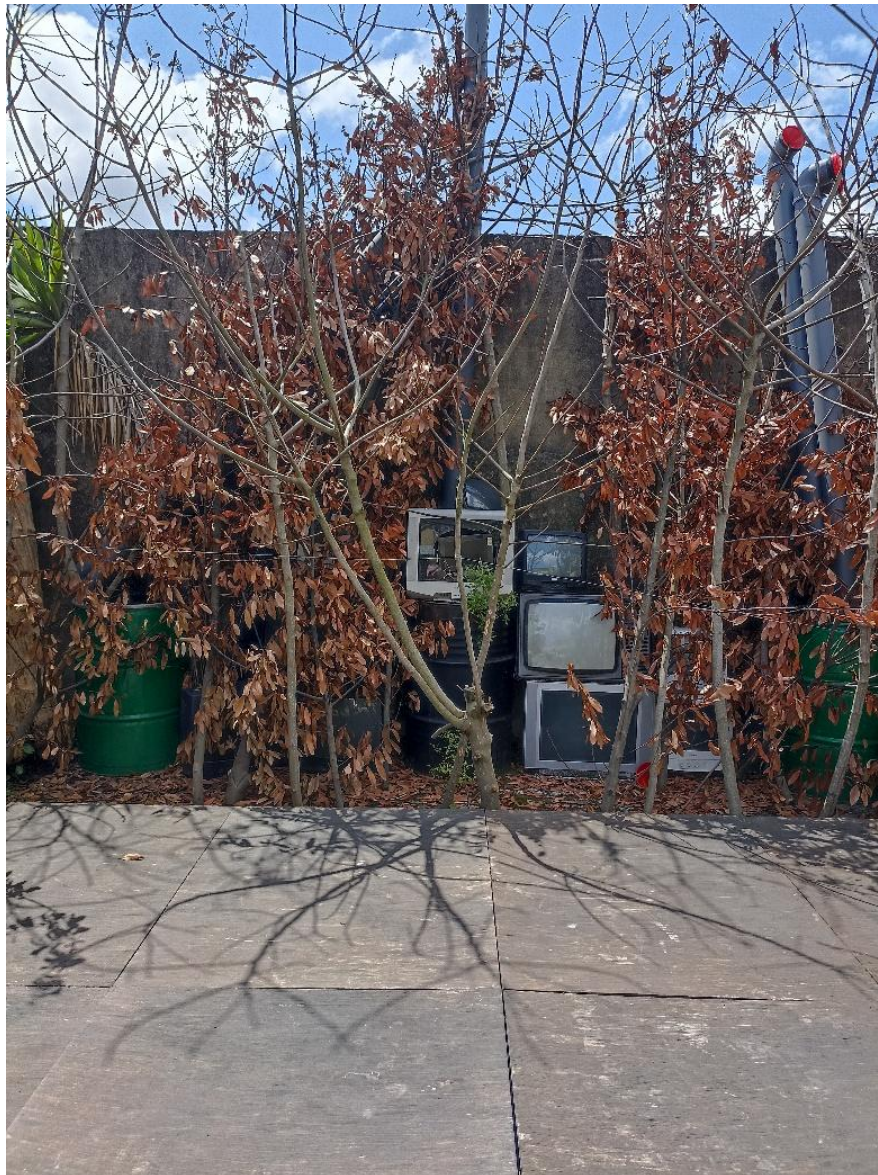
It is worth noting a difference between what was originally proposed for the Portuguese component of the project and what was actually carried out. In the funding application, the second Portuguese evaluation-creation action was planned to take place at Mosteiro de Tibães, a historic monastery, precisely in order to diversify the territories of experimentation relative to the first action, hosted at Sonoscopia's own premises. In practice, both Portuguese editions (2025 and 2026) took place at Sonoscopia's headquarters, on Rua de Silva Porto.

This choice made it possible to deepen the work with the same street and the same commercial partners over two years, which is discussed further below as an asset for the continuity of neighbourly relations. It should nonetheless be noted as a departure from the original design, since it means that the Portuguese contribution to ACCESS chose to deepen its territorial anchoring rather than to diversify it.

Sonoscopia: institutional and territorial context

Sonoscopia is the host of the two residencies evaluated here. This section seeks to situate the residencies within the institution's own context, beyond what emerges solely from observation of the two working weeks themselves.

Figure 4: Sonoscopia's courtyard, 2025



Source: the team.

Origins and trajectory

Sonoscopia was founded in 2011 by Gustavo Costa and Patrícia Craveiro, in a trajectory that dates to a group of musicians who had shared, since 1999, a rehearsal room at the Centro Comercial Stop (CCSTOP), in the city of Porto (Guerra, 2020, p. 26). The association was born of an explicit desire for self-management and for sharing equipment and resources among artists. Indeed, Gustavo Costa refers to this principle as a “libertarian way of thinking”.

Gustavo Costa is a symbol of the Portuguese alternative and experimental music scene. He has been a key figure in the Portuguese alternative and experimental music scene since the early 2000s, and he first gained wider recognition through his involvement in experimental rock and free improvisation projects, later consolidating his position as a performer, composer, curator, and co-founder of several independent music infrastructures, including Sonoscapia. His engagement with music began at an early age and gradually became a defining element of his life. As his musical training developed, he became involved in multiple artistic projects.

After a room dedicated to experimental instruments, the association acquired, in early 2013, the house that came to hold its projects, then located on Rua da Prelada, in Carvalhido (Guerra, 2020, pp. 24-26). It is, therefore, a trajectory of gradual consolidation of a physical space of its own, a condition the founders themselves identify as decisive for their ability to host artists in residency on an ongoing basis. More recently, Sonoscapia settled on Rua de Silva Porto, where the two residencies evaluated here took place. By May 2025, the association's team had been at that address for around four years.

The association maintains a DIY ethos inspired by libertarian structures, self-organised spaces and the underground punk movement (Guerra, 2021, p. 107), independently confirming the reading Gustavo Costa himself offers of Sonoscapia as a “libertarian way of thinking”. As the founder sums up, Sonoscapia “is part of our life, not something parallel to it” (Guerra, 2021, p. 108).

Mission and resources

As a non-profit cultural association, Sonoscapia defines itself as a platform for the creation and promotion of artistic projects centred on sonic exploration and evaluation, with an interdisciplinary crossover between different artistic fields and scientific and pedagogical domains (Guerra, 2020, p. 24). Since its founding, the association has produced more than 600 events, artistic proposals, educational activities and publications, taking its productions to around 20 European countries.

Physically, the space includes dedicated studios, among them an analogue studio with equipment from the 1960s and 1970s and synthesisers, a library specialising in

experimental, improvised and avant-garde music — with thousands of CDs, vinyl records, cassettes, handmade instruments, books and scores — and a garden used for communal meals, all of them central, as will be seen, to how the ACCESS residencies unfolded.

Among its most established programmes are Colexpla — the International Festival of Sonic Exploration — co-produced since 2018 in partnership with Teatro Carlos Alberto and continuing on from the earlier event CoLab; the No Noise festival, produced and hosted at the association's premises since 2015, with international artists and audiences; and Microvolumes, described as perhaps the association's most significant contribution to Porto's experimental scene (Guerra, 2021, pp. 107-108).

Territory and transformations

The description of the area that accompanies the project's documentation for the two Portuguese editions situates Sonoscopia within a “peripheral working-class area” of Porto, marked by gentrification and touristification pressures that, according to the project's own text, have already produced more than ten new apartment blocks over the past five years, with a new complex of around 250 apartments under construction right next to Sonoscopia at the time of Residency 2. It is precisely this coexistence of two social worlds on the same street that the ACCESS project explicitly chooses as the problem to be addressed, positioning collective creation as a tool for strengthening the sense of community and communication among neighbours, regardless of their background, age or social role.

Methodology

This report follows a qualitative methodology, grounded in ethnographic observation records of the area surrounding Sonoscopia and of the activities, semi-structured interviews with the artists, and the collection of audience reactions through focus groups or informal conversations after the activities.

Methods and Residency 1

- Participant observation with a field diary, recorded in two entries (16 and 17 May 2025), covering the essential aspects of the working week, namely the group's arrival and introduction, familiarisation with the street's spaces, the collective rehearsals, the recording of individual actions, and preparation for the final presentation.
- Semi-structured interviews with three of the six participating artists: a joint interview with Audrey Chen and František Chaloupka (16 May, immediately after the recording of a joint action), an individual interview with Audrey Chen (17 May), and an interview with Milana Zaric (19 May, after the residency had already ended).

Methods and Residency 2

- Ethnographic and participant observation, carried out on 20 May 2026. This involved accompanying two artists on a visit to the surrounding area to gather artistic material.
- Semi-structured interviews with the seven artists. Three of them on 20 May 2026 and the remainder on 22 May 2026. All interviews were conducted individually.
- Ethnographic records of all the individual presentations and of the final presentation at Sonoscopia.
- Eight semi-structured interviews with members of the audience present at the final presentation. It should be noted that the interviews were conducted individually or in pairs, and that an effort was made to ensure gender heterogeneity.

Results. Residency 1 (12-18 May 2025)

Dates: 12 to 18 May 2025

Location: Sonoscopia, Rua de Silva Porto 217, Porto

Artistic and technical coordination: Gustavo Costa and the Sonoscopia team (Patrícia Caveiro, Vicente Mateus, João Ricardo)

Framing within the project: last of the three residencies of Cycle 1 (2024-2025), following Prague (September 2024) and Lille (October 2024)

Table 1: Summary table of the artists participating in Residency 1

Artist	Instrument(s)	Country / Nationality
František Chaloupka	Composition	Czech Republic
Audrey Chen	Voice, analogue electronics	Germany (Taiwanese-American)
Marcell Csuka	Accordion	Germany (Hungarian)
Sylvia Hinz	Recorder, voice, electronics	Germany
Maryline Pruvost	Flute, voice, harmonium	France
Milana Zaric	Harp	Netherlands (Serbian)

Source: the team.

Regarding accommodation, František Chaloupka and Maryline Pruvost stayed at Sonoscopia itself; Milana Zaric and Marcell Csuka shared a nearby flat; Audrey Chen and Sylvia Hinz shared another nearby flat. This arrangement, discussed further below, had concrete implications for the group dynamics over the course of the week.

As for the **surrounding spaces** selected for the individual and duo actions, **eight spaces** were made available on Rua de Silva Porto and its surroundings: **the neighbourhood grocery shop Doce Coração, an aesthetics/beauty studio, Corpo e Alma, a large construction site next to Sonoscopia, a second grocery shop, a household goods shop, a seamstress's workshop, as well as a shared entrance hall serving a karate school and a hairdresser's** (used informally, with permission). Three further venues were reserved for Sunday's final presentation: **Café Silva Porto, Lavandaria Roupress — a second-hand shop that also functions as a kind of small museum of curiosities (Figure 5) — and Atelier Modular, a music studio.**

Figure 5: Interior of Lavandaria Roupres



Source: the team.

Figure 6: Residency 1 rehearsal room, 2025



Source: the team.

In terms of the residency's structure, it followed this logic: mornings (Tuesday to Friday): individual work and free rehearsal; afternoons (Tuesday to Friday): collective rehearsal and recording of individual or duo actions in the street's venues; Sunday, 18 May, was the public presentation, which included a performance from Sonoscopia's windows, followed by short presentations at Café Silva Porto, Lavandaria Roupres and Atelier Modular, as well as a final collective concert at Sonoscopia and a communal dinner.

Group dynamics

The six artists did not know one another before the residency. Indeed, most of them met for the first time on Monday, 12 May, although some had already crossed paths at a concert held at Sonoscopia on the Sunday. The first morning was devoted to introducing the space, the team and the available instruments, and to allocating the artists to their rooms and to the rehearsal room — the same room that would later serve, the following Sunday, for the final concert. Gustavo Costa presented the programme, which had already been sent to everyone in advance, leaving explicit room for adjustments at the artists' request. Audrey Chen arrived only on the Tuesday, coming from a tour in Mexico, which delayed the start of collective work. That Tuesday morning, the group toured the available spaces on the street together. This was a moment that sparked curiosity about Lavandaria Roupres, regarded by the evaluation team as a “curious, unusual” space, a kind of second-hand museum. In the afternoon, the group chose not to rehearse.

On Wednesday, the group rehearsed together for the first time, in an uninterrupted session of around 25 minutes, described by the team as an attempt to work out “how the dynamic between them might function” for the Sunday concert. On Thursday, the first duo action was recorded, by Audrey Chen and František Chaloupka, in an entrance hall giving access to a karate school and a hairdresser's, a space chosen for its acoustic quality and identified by Audrey Chen while getting to know the street. On Friday, the remaining individual actions were recorded: Sylvia Hinz at the construction site, Milana Zaric at the grocery shop, Maryline Pruvost at the seamstress's, and, later that afternoon, Marcell Csuka in a corridor giving access to an ilha, playing accordion and a plate of metal discs with violin and double-bass bows.

One finding that runs consistently through the evaluation team's field diary entries is the central role of the communal lunches — shared every day between the artists and the Sonoscapia team — as the main driver of group dynamics and interaction. In the diary, the team noted that, without these moments, the residency would have been “even more difficult”, and that it was over lunch, more than during rehearsals, that the artists set the course for the rest of the day's work and shared personal stories.

“When they were rehearsing together, she was always very attentive, watching the other musicians closely, as if trying to work out the best moment for her to come in herself.” Field Diary, 17 May 2025*

Both Gustavo Costa and Patrícia Caveiro, who have a basis for comparison with other residencies held at Sonoscapia over the years, shared with the evaluation team their perception that this edition was particularly difficult in terms of the musicians' attunement to one another. Our field diary attributes this difficulty to the heterogeneity of the group's backgrounds and working methods, with artists who already enjoyed considerable recognition in their field, sometimes with a more assertive style, alongside other artists who were used to more fluid and organic ways of working, and who in some cases were more reserved or found it harder to assert their own point of view.

Figure 7: Residency 1 rehearsal records, 2025



Source: the team.

This institutional perception is confirmed by the two interviews conducted. In the interview of 17 May, Audrey Chen is particularly direct on this point, stating that, with two days to go before the final concert, she felt that almost no one in the group was truly connected to the others, and that the situation had not moved on much since the start of the week, comparing the experience with other residencies she had taken part in with musicians she did not know, in which the group had worked better as a collective. Chen attributes this difficulty to very different personalities within the group — some stronger, others less so — to the point of describing certain combinations as “oil and water” situations.

“I think basically no one in the group is really connected to the other, and I don't think it's got much further now than where it started.” — Interview with Audrey Chen, 17 May 2025*

It is also worth mentioning that on Friday afternoon, at Audrey Chen's suggestion, put forward days earlier, the group rehearsed an idea that would go on to open Sunday's presentation: each artist would play, freely and improvised, from one of the first-floor windows of Sonoscopia, before the audience moved on to the other spaces on the street.

The evaluation team took part in this rehearsal, together with the Sonoscopia team. This moment is described by the team as a turning point in the week's dynamics, being the day on which “there were more hours of working together” and on which the artists “began to realise [...] that they had to make decisions” in preparation for Sunday's performances.

Milana Zaric, in the interview conducted after the residency had closed, raises a different tension, namely the doubt, felt by her from the outset, as to whether the residency should focus on the group's collaborative work as a collective, or whether there would also be room for the development of each artist's individual work — a question that, in the way she puts it, does not appear to have been explicitly resolved by the organisation at the start of the week.

“It was a little bit tilted, at the beginning, for me, whether we should focus and concentrate on the work of mutual collaboration, or whether we have enough space to also think about our own individual development.” — Interview with Milana Zaric, 19 May 2025*

Zaric offers a more constructive reading of this difficulty. As this was a group chosen externally, and not by the artists themselves — unlike what usually happens in the collaborations she normally sets up — she considers it natural that a period of adjustment and of searching for common ground was needed, and values the fact that the outcome was, nonetheless, varied (solos, duos, a collective *site-specific* piece at Sonoscopia's windows).

The relationship with the space and the local community

One of the central and explicit aims of this residency — to strengthen Sonoscopia's neighbourly relationship with the street where it is located — is acknowledged, both by the host team and by the artists themselves, as one of the reasons that led them to choose this residency. Asked why they had preferred the Porto residency, the artists pointed, beyond the convenience of the calendar, to a stronger identification with the concept behind Sonoscopia, namely the creation of a connection with the surrounding community (Field Diary, 17 May).

A reading of the material collected suggests an evolution over the course of the week, rather than an instant relationship of closeness. In the first recorded action — the duo formed by Audrey Chen and František Chaloupka in the entrance hall leading to the karate school, on the Thursday — the evaluation team observed that a few people passed by on the street, but none stopped to watch, and there was no interaction whatsoever between passers-by and artists, suggesting that the creative process was unfolding “largely on the basis of improvisation, with little planning”, without any explicit reflection, on the artists' part, on how to adapt their performance to the specific space or to the people moving through it.

By Friday, however, the team recorded a change, since in the two shops where recordings took place that day — the grocery shop (Milana Zaric) and the seamstress's (Maryline Pruvost) — those present showed genuine interest in finding out who the artists were. It is also in this context that Gustavo Costa articulates what he identifies as one of the project's central objectives, namely using this week to deepen the neighbourly relationships Sonoscapia already had, but which were little activated, mainly owing to a lack of awareness of what actually happens inside the space.

The interview conducted with Audrey Chen provides a particularly relevant finding for the evaluation, in that it documents an explicit gap between the artist's original application to the residency and what actually came to happen. Chen relates that, in her application to ACCESS, she had proposed a project to gather the voices and sounds of the street's inhabitants, with the aim of having neighbours themselves produce small sound or spoken-word recordings about their everyday lives, to assemble a sonic collage from which the group would improvise, creating an object the residents themselves could recognise as their own — but she ended up facing several difficulties. Asked directly whether she felt a disconnect from the street or simply that there had not been enough time, Chen states that she would have needed more time, and that the one-off use of spaces is a very different form of relationship with the community from a process of closer, more sustained sharing. This self-assessment by the artist herself suggests that more ambitious forms of community engagement than a one-off action in a shop may not be realistic within the timeframe of a single week-long residency, and that it will be for the project to decide whether it wishes to continue accommodating this type of proposal or to steer artists towards formats more compatible with the time

available. The same interview also records a reflection by the artist on the social tensions within the neighbourhood itself — the coexistence, on the same street, of recently refurbished housing occupied by higher-income residents and of an older population linked to small shops and the café — noting that it is chiefly with this second population that Sonoscapia and the artists in residence establish direct contact, rather than with the new residents.

The final presentation and audience reception

From 5.00 p.m., the audience was invited to gather at Sonoscapia for a first performance from the building's first-floor windows. This was followed by short presentations, between 5.00 and 6.00 p.m., at Café Silva Porto, Lavandaria Roupres and Atelier Modular, before returning to Sonoscapia for the final collective concert, which began at 6.00 p.m. and lasted approximately 30 minutes — a duration shaped by the expectation of a mixed audience, including people with no habit of attending experimental music concerts. The concert room was arranged in a “U” shape, with the artists along the walls and the audience seated on small chairs in the centre, a spatial choice that concretely reflects the project's aim of active listening. The day ended with a communal dinner, free of charge and open to the whole street.

The most detailed account is the one Milana Zaric offers in her interview of 19 May, an enthusiastic account. According to Zaric, turnout was significant and included children, older people and people with dogs. She also notes that several of those present had never before set foot in Sonoscapia, despite living or working on the same street for years, and recounts with particular satisfaction the spontaneous comment made by the owner of Lavandaria Roupres, who, at the end of the harp performance held there, said he felt like buying a harp.

“None of us played any particularly melodic or harmonic or rhythmic music, but we seemingly managed to engage with just common people around in the street who were sitting, listening. [...] Nobody complained.” — Milana Zaric, interview of 19 May 2025

Zaric also underlines the role of the communal meals, noting that Sonoscapia cooked for the group every day of the week, as integral a part of the residency as the music itself,

since it was chiefly in these moments, as noted earlier, that the artists actually talked and got to know one another.

Critical reading against the objectives

This section weighs the evidence gathered on Residency 1 against the three objectives.

Objective 1 – Relationship with the audience

There is no information collected directly from the audience that would allow this indicator to be assessed. The evidence available is indirect and comes from Milana Zaric's account, which describes a warm reception with no perceptible rejection, but this does not amount to a systematic gauging of audiences.

Objective 3 – Diversifying the type of partners

Within a single week, Sonoscopia mobilised at least eight distinct commercial and service venues as artistic-action partners — two grocery shops, an aesthetics/beauty studio, a construction site, a household goods shop, a seamstress's workshop, a café and a second-hand shop — in addition to an entrance hall shared by a karate school and a hairdresser's, and a music studio.

Summary of Residency 1

Strengths

- Diversification of the local partners mobilised (Objective 3), with at least eight distinct venues involved within a single week.
- Positive evolution of the relationship with the community over the course of the week, culminating in a final presentation with strong engagement from neighbours who had never set foot in Sonoscopia.
- The daily communal meals proved to be a device for group cohesion as significant as the rehearsals themselves — a simple, replicable, low-cost element that should be maintained and valued as such.

- The moment at Sonoscopia's windows, born of a spontaneous proposal from one artist and rehearsed only the day before, shows the format's capacity to generate creative, site-specific solutions even within a poorly planned process.

Challenges identified

- Group cohesion that was slower and more fragile than is usual in Sonoscopia's residencies, associated with the heterogeneity of backgrounds, working styles and personalities among the invited artists, and with the absence of a clear initial framework regarding the balance between individual and collective work.
- In the early days, the individual actions in the street's venues took place with little explicit reflection on adapting to the space and the audience, and without generating any real interaction with passers-by — a temporary mismatch with the objective of active listening and audience participation.
- The more ambitious proposal for community engagement put forward by one of the artists did not come to fruition, owing to time constraints she herself acknowledged.

Results. Residency 2 (18-24 May 2026)

Dates: 18 to 24 May 2026

Location: Sonoscopia, Rua de Silva Porto 217, Porto

Artistic and technical coordination: Gustavo Costa and the Sonoscopia team (Patrícia Caveiro, Vicente Mateus, João Ricardo)

Framing within the project: first residency of Cycle 2 (2025-2026) in Portugal, building on the work developed in Residency 1

Table 2: Summary table of the artists participating in Residency 2

Artist	Area / instrument	Country / Nationality
Ridina Ahmedová	Voice	Czech Republic
Imsu Choi	Ondes Martenot, composition	France (South Korean)
Xuân Mai Dang-Lombardi	Voice, objects, electronics	France
Aina Font	Saxophone	Spain (Valencia)
Lucija Gregov	Cello	Netherlands (Croatian)
Augusto Lado	Video direction / motion design	Portugal
Aya Masui	Percussion	Austria (Japanese)

Source: the team

Two differences stand out relative to Residency 1. First, the group grew from six to seven artists; second, and more significantly, the artistic team included, for the first time in the Portuguese editions, a video and *motion design* director (Augusto Lado), with a non-performative profile, distinct from the six musicians who made up the entire group in 2025.

For one week, the participating artists explored the neighbourhood around Sonoscopia, using its streets, public spaces and everyday soundscape as a field for musical experimentation. Rather than bringing music into a conventional concert setting, the residency invited the artists to work directly with the environment: listening to the city, interacting with its sounds, rhythms and inhabitants, and imagining new ways of creating and sharing music in public space. Through walks, collective improvisations, site-specific experiments and encounters with local residents, the musicians gradually developed forms shaped by the places and situations they experienced.

In terms of venues, these remained largely the same as in Residency 1, with changes occurring mainly at the level of the residency's programme. From Wednesday to Friday (20 to 22 May), from 2.30 p.m. onwards, individual actions took place in the local shops on Rua de Silva Porto, and these were publicly announced, unlike in

Residency 1, where the recordings of individual actions had not had the character of an immediate public presentation. On Saturday, 23 May, at 6.00 p.m., short presentations began in the surrounding public venues, such as the launderette, at Café Silva Porto, at a home-care support shop, at the launderette, and so on. That same day, at 7.00 p.m., the final collective concert took place at Sonoscopia, followed by the communal dinner. This change of format — namely, making public the actions that in Residency 1 had taken place as closed recordings — suggests an adjustment on the project's part aimed at broadening the window of contact between artists and community across the whole week, rather than only on the day of the final presentation.

Group dynamics

Asked about their expectations for the presentations and for the final presentation moment, the seven artists unanimously answered that they had no expectations. This finding replicates what Audrey Chen and František Chaloupka had already stated in Residency 1, and reinforces the reading, already put forward, that this stance may not be an idiosyncratic trait of particular artists, but rather a relatively stable response to the residency format itself, grounded in the one-week timeframe, a group that had never worked together before, and a process built largely through improvisation.

"I never have expectations regarding my concerts or the audience, because I do experimental things and I know that most people, when they come to these performances, also don't know what to expect. That's also what attracts me to live performances" — Xuân Mai Dang-Lombardi, interview 20 May 2026*

"I don't like creating expectations about anything, because it seems to then influence the creative process" — Aya Masui, interview 20 May 2026*

Beyond what the artists put into words in the interviews, the residency's own monitoring process made it possible to observe this openness taking shape. Everyday informal moments — above all shared lunches and joint outings around the city — functioned as spaces of sociability running alongside the creative work itself, in which the interaction among the artists and with the surrounding territory was consolidating itself outside the residency's formal framework. In these moments, the artists received the sociological

evaluation's presence with curiosity, actively seeking to understand how sociology intersected with the artistic process and what the nature of this monitoring was — questions that, in themselves, point to a willingness to reflect on the creative process itself and on its place within a concrete social and community context, converging with what would later be expressed more explicitly in the interviews.

Figure 8: Records of the performance at Lavandaria Roupres by Aina Font and Aya Masui, 2026



Source: the team.

Figure 9: Record of the performance by Xuân Mai Dang-Lombardi and Lucija Gregov, at the Corpo e Alma aesthetics/beauty studio, 2026



Source: the team.

Figure 10: Record of the performance by Ridina Ahmedová at Café Silva Porto, 2026



Source: the team.

The relationship with the space, audience and local community

The most significant episode documented for this dimension of Residency 2 is the visit, during the week, to one of the street's *ilhas* and to the home of an 80-year-old woman who lives alone. This direct contact with an elderly, isolated resident represents, at first glance, a deepening of the relationship with the community relative to what Residency 1 had achieved, given that, in that edition, the closest documented contact with the resident population (as opposed to shopkeepers) was indirect.

The visit arose on the artists' own initiative, during a walk around the street aimed at gathering, in audio form, childhood songs and other everyday sounds that might feed into their creative work. The 80-year-old woman, a resident of the same space for 75 years, was approached because she happened to be right in front of Sonoscopia and was known to a neighbour from the adjacent café, who made the initial introduction. The visit translated chiefly into a spatial and affective closeness rather than a discursive one: the resident gave the artists a short, guided tour of her home, a typical, small house dwelling, with a corridor shared with neighbouring houses, including a shared bathroom — while recounting stories about her life there. Direct verbal interaction was limited, both because of the need for translation and because of the resident's hearing difficulties, but the moment proved particularly significant from a visual and experiential point of view, exposing the artists to the concrete materiality of popular housing in Porto and to the ways of life that persist within it. In the interviews conducted, the artists themselves identified this episode as one of the moments in which they felt the closeness with the local community — which they repeatedly cite as the residency's central learning — become concrete.

A second finding gathered from the interviews with the Residency 2 artists deserves attention: all seven reported having already taken part in other artistic residencies, but none had found anything comparable to Sonoscopia, attributing the difference to the atmosphere, the conviviality and the very activities the association develops with the involvement of the local population. It is worth situating this statement, rather than merely recording it

"I think the experience has been very good, the atmosphere here at Sonoscopia is very welcoming and we have a lot of freedom to experiment" — Ridina Ahmedová, interview 20 May 2026*

“It has been very positive, the main experience is perhaps this matter of sharing and learning to live alongside others. We get a great deal of that kind of contact here and it's incredible” — Aina Font, interview 22 May 2026*

Also relevant is the testimony of the owner of Café Silva Porto, one of the partner venues for the final presentation in both editions. The fact that this shopkeeper agreed to host a presentation again in 2026, having already done so in 2025, and describes his participation as something he repeats “every year” of his own accord, is a relevant finding for the project's Objective 3 — not only in terms of the diversity of partners mobilised within a single week, but also their loyalty across successive editions, a dimension of continuity that the project's original indicators, focused on the type of partner per edition, do not directly capture.

“I think it's very important, even for me, because it ends up giving the venue some variety too, and the people who are there are always curious to see what's going to happen. Even this year, the girl singing and using the water, there was a lot of interest. I think it's a very good initiative and it also allows us to build connections between us here on the street and with people from outside who come and end up getting to know my place” — owner of Café Silva Porto, interview 23 May 2026*

The profile of the audience members interviewed during Residency 2 reveals a heterogeneity of profiles and relationships with Sonoscopia worth distinguishing, even though all interviewees were, in one way or another, already connected to the artistic or academic field. A first group, made up of regular attendees of Sonoscopia's programme, justified their regular presence by the markedly experimental and never-repetitive nature of the activities, with the expectation of seeing something different each time identified as the main factor behind their loyalty as an audience. This group also linked its continued participation to the nature of Sonoscopia's programme, described as active, current and disruptive relative to other cultural offerings in the city, setting it apart on the Porto scene as a reference venue for audiences with an established interest in experimental music and cutting-edge sound creation.

Figure 11: Final presentation of Residency 2, 2026



Source: the team.

Figure 12: Record of the final communal dinner of Residency 2, 2026



Source: the team.

By contrast, a significant proportion of interviewees were attending an activity at Sonoscopia for the first time, which makes it possible to assess the residency's reach beyond its usual audience. Within this group, two particularly relevant sub-profiles stand out for assessing the project's impact: on the one hand, artists who were entirely unfamiliar with the space and who used Residency 2's final presentation as a first point

of contact to get to know Sonoscapia as both a structure and an artistic community; on the other, artists already preparing for or considering taking part in future residencies, for whom attending the presentation served as a moment of approach to, and recognition of, the institution's working format and philosophy before becoming directly involved with it. This coexistence of loyal audiences and audiences in the process of discovery or approach suggests that Sonoscapia functions simultaneously as a pole of continuity for an already-established artistic and programming community and as a gateway for new artists and new audiences, reinforcing its role as a hinge between experimental artistic production and the surrounding social and artistic fabric — a role that, as will be seen below, is also identified by the resident artists themselves as one of the distinctive traits of the experience at Sonoscapia relative to other residencies in which they had already taken part.

Suggestions for improvement

Audience interviewees pointed out, on their own initiative, two concrete aspects for improvement:

- **Outdoor gatherings.** Several mentioned that the convivial moments associated with the presentations — currently held mostly inside Sonoscapia — could take place outdoors, precisely to more easily involve people who live on the same street but do not end up coming into the space.
- **More diversified communication.** There was also mention of the need for greater investment in communicating the activities, which should not rely solely on digital channels — with word of mouth and physical notices in cafés and other local shops suggested as ways of reinforcing this.

These two suggestions are consistent with the evidence already discussed, since if the neighbourly relationship deepens chiefly through direct, informal contact — meals, conversations, a visit to an elderly neighbour — then taking part of this conviviality out into the public space of the street, and reinforcing non-digital forms of communication, appear to be logical extensions of what the residency has already shown works best. These suggestions are taken up again in the final recommendations

Critical reading against the objectives

Objective 1 – Relationship with the audience

Unlike in Residency 1, there is now direct evidence gathered from the audience: eight interviews, seven with regular attendees and one with the owner of Café Silva Porto. This represents a genuine advance relative to the gap identified in Residency 1. However, the gap has not been fully closed, since, as noted, all interviewees have a professional connection to the artistic or academic field, meaning that the voices of a non-specialist audience — precisely the type of neighbour the project identifies as its priority target audience — remain unrepresented.

Objective 2 – More open experiences

The evidence here is positive, given that the seven artists report having learned, over the course of the week, a greater openness to interacting with the local population — precisely the competence this objective aims to develop. The episode of the visit to the ilha and to the 80-year-old neighbour is, in this sense, concrete evidence of this learning being put into practice, although its depth and reproducibility outside the context of the residency remain to be confirmed. On the venues' side, the testimony of the owner of Café Silva Porto — now repeating the experience for the second year — is likewise evidence that at least one local partner has developed a stable, autonomous relationship with this type of action, not dependent on intensive mediation by Sonoscopia in each edition

Summary of Residency 2

Strengths

- A deepening of the relationship with the local community beyond the commercial register of Residency 1, through direct contact with residents of the ilhas.

- Confirmation, by an entirely different cast of artists from that of 2025, that the atmosphere, the conviviality and the activities of proximity with the local population are a distinctive and recurring trait of Sonoscopia as host, and not a one-off effect of Residency 1.
- Greater involvement of local residents in the presentations and in the final concert

Challenges identified

- More outdoor gatherings, so as to include the whole of the surrounding local community.
- Offering both vegan and non-vegan options at the communal dinners, for greater variety and inclusion.
- Investment in other means of disseminating the activities.

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Attachments

Attachment 1 – Interview script

Access

Residencies, Porto

Artists

Artistic Motivations and Foundations

1. What was the initial spark or inspiration for this artwork, and what do you hope to achieve through it?
2. Which core beliefs or assumptions guided your creative process?

Space and Community Connection

1. How did you consider the specific physical or conceptual space where your work would be displayed?
2. In what ways does your artwork respond to or engage with the surrounding community?
3. Did you incorporate local elements or draw inspiration from the community in your work?

Audience Relationship

1. Which elements of your work were intentionally designed to engage the audience?
2. What types of audience participation did you hope to encourage with this work?
3. Have audiences interacted with or interpreted your work in ways you didn't anticipate?

Evaluation and Reflection

1. Which aspects of audience engagement have been most meaningful or surprising to you?
2. What have you discovered about audience interaction that wasn't evident during your planning phase?
3. Based on what you've learned, what would you change about your approach to audience engagement?

Attachment 2 – Methodology design

Access

Residencies, Porto, 2025-2026

During this residency, musicians are expected to develop **collective work** that should be able to provide specific insights on the following topics:

- **Creation of site-specific works**, to be presented in several locations in and around Sonoscapia: public gardens (jardim de Arca D'Água), local stores (laundry / antiquarium) and the local cafe;
- **Inclusion of the local community** surrounding Sonoscapia;
- **Cultural re-definition of periferic urban areas** under the pressure of gentrification;
- **Cultural identity** within a pan-european context.

Exploring the relationships between:

Audiences and activities

Audiences and spaces

Artists and spaces

Methodology:

1. **Ethnographic work** in the neighbourhood, during the preparation of the activities, in order to get to know the type of spaces and services that exist, as well as the type of people who use them and circulate through them.
2. **Semi-directive interviews with the artists** (possibly the first part before the activities and the second one afterwards)
 - motivations/assumptions/objectives underlying the artistic work;
 - how the relationship between the artistic work and the surrounding space and community was conceived;
 - how the relationship between the artistic work and the audiences was envisaged;
 - expectations in terms of audiences involvement/appropriation/participation;
 - evaluation of the activity and the audiences involvement/appropriation/participation, including different modes of participation;
 - in the future, what can be done differently, how can artistic work be adapted to spaces and audiences?

Attachment 3 – Evaluation Questionnaire – Audiences

Evaluation Questionnaire - Audiences

Motivations for Participation

1. What motivated you to participate in these activities (concerts and community dinner)?

Expectations about the Activities

1. What were your initial expectations before participating in the activities?
2. To what extent did the activities correspond to what you expected?
3. Was there any aspect of the activities that exceeded or fell short of your expectations? Why?

Prior Knowledge/Use of Spaces

1. Did you already know or had you used these spaces (Sonoscopia, Café Silva Porto, Landaria Roupress, Atelier Modular) before? If so, in what context?
2. How did your familiarity (or lack thereof) with spaces influence your experience?
3. In your opinion, how did the use of these specific spaces contribute to the activities carried out?

Evaluation/Comments on Activities

1. How do you evaluate the activities in which you participated?
2. Which aspects of the activities were most meaningful or impactful to you?
3. Were there particular moments or elements that stood out during your experience? Which ones? Why?

Suggestions for the Future

1. What suggestions would you have to improve the performance of this type of activity?
2. How could the relationship and involvement of artists and Sonoscopia with the public/community be improved?
3. What could be done differently in future editions of these activities?