

Museu__
Nacional
_Soares
dos Reis



TOUR ITINERARY

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NATIONAL MUSEUM
HISTORY AND ITS COLLECTIONS

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There are two complementary readings of the long-term exhibition. One reflects its history and the way the collections have been integrated. The other emphasises the artists and their artworks. What has been the Museum's path, or paths, throughout its history? How have the collections been integrated?



The founding of the Museum

Soares dos Reis National Museum started life as the Museu de Pinturas e Estampas e outros Objetos de Belas Artes (Museum of Paintings and Prints and other Fine Arts objects), created by King Pedro IV of Portugal, the first Emperor of Brazil. Known as the Museu Portuense (Porto Museum), it was housed in the former Convent of Santo António da Cidade, on Praça de São Lázaro.

Portrait of King Pedro IV
John Simpson
1834



The Museum and the former monasteries

The first section of the Museum collection is largely composed of paintings and prints that were removed in 1833 from the abandoned monasteries, charitable homes and convents of Porto. The enactment of the decree for the dissolution of religious orders, in 1834, allowed the Museum to incorporate the artistic assets of the monasteries of São Martinho de Tibães and Santa Cruz de Coimbra.

Series of 26 plaques with scenes of the Cycle of the Passion of Christ
Anonymous. Small Passion of Santa Cruz de Coimbra Workshop (at.)
1570-1599



The Museum and the Academia Portuense de Belas Artes

The founding of the Museu Portuense was formalised in 1836 by decree of Queen Maria II and was followed by the creation of the Academia Portuense de Belas Artes (Porto Academy of Fine Arts), as part of a series of reforms in public education. This teaching of the arts had begun with the Drawing Course at the Academia Real de Marinha e Comércio (Royal Academy of Navy and Commerce), directed by Vieira Portuense. In 1839, the Museum came under the management of the Academy and remained that way until the proclamation of the Republic in 1910.

Painting Workshop
Domingos de Carvalho "The Roman"
(?-1848)



The Patron of the Museum – Soares dos Reis

In the reforms implemented by the new Republic in 1911, museums were regarded as an important means of social intervention, aimed at educating the aesthetic sensibilities of the country's citizens. With this in mind, large museums were founded in Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto. The Museu Portuense came to be called Museu Soares dos Reis in tribute to one of the most renowned names in Portuguese art – the sculptor António Soares dos Reis.

O Desterrado (The Exiled)
António Soares dos Reis
1882



National Museum status

In 1932, the Museum acquired the status of a National Museum, receiving a strong contribution from the valorisation efforts of its director, Vasco Valente. The collections of the National Museum and the former Porto Municipal Museum were brought together and housed in the Carrancas Palace, which was adapted to the new museological functions of conservation and exhibition. In 1940, the Soares dos Reis National Museum received the art and archaeology collections of Porto City Council. The safeguarding of this heritage contributed to a reconfiguration of the Museum, since then characterised by the strong presence of Decorative Arts. The Porto Municipal Museum had been organised in 1850 from the collection of João Allen and other sources.

Episcopal Crosier
Antonio Arrighi
1740



The Museum's encounter with Modernism

Between 1950 and 1960, under the direction of the sculptor and teacher Salvador Barata Feyo, the Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis invested in updating its painting and sculpture collections. It focused in particular on the purchase of works by contemporary artists, most of whom had studied at the Escola de Belas Artes do Porto. Thanks to this initiative, almost all of the most renowned names of Portuguese Modernism are currently represented in the collection.

Barcelos Pottery
Eduardo Viana
1915



The Contemporary Art Centre (CAC)

In the context of the emergence, in the 1970s, of independent and alternative spaces with innovative programming and after the establishment of democracy, the Contemporary Art Centre emerged in 1975 under the direction of art critic Fernando Pernes. During the six years of the Contemporary Art Centre activity, close to a hundred artworks were acquired, which were the genesis of a public collection of Contemporary Art.

Three Girls sitting
Joaquim Correia
19th century