

Title:

Author:

Occupy Climate Change (OCC!)

*Creative story
entry*



FORMAS



Many dreams fold here, where the pine-tree stands.

One stems from the 1950s and takes the shape of a large dam, which was to be called Alqueva.

It would unfold for 50 years, in the form of many scenarios, each dreamt by people both near and afar; by engineers, statesmen, farmers, activists, a conflict of many dreamers, discussing the place where many dreams fold, where the pine-tree stands. The dream of the Alqueva dam itself unfolded from a greater vision: one that goes back to the turn of the 20th century, and dreamt of dams and forests transforming unproductive land into an efficient arcadia, one that could sustain the nation with food and energy.¹

1976: It is not possible to see the dam, from the place where the pine-tree stands. In 1976, one cannot see the engineers sketching, or the workers digging, the foundations of the Alqueva Dam.

One can't see them stopping in 1978 and going back at it in 1993.



¹ Campos, Ezequiel de. *Problemas Fundamentais Portugueses*, 1946.

Saraiva, Tiago. *Fascist Modernist Landscapes: Wheat, Dams, Forests, and the Making of the Portuguese New State*, 2016

2002: There is a village growing here, at the foot of the hill where the pine-tree stands.

It is called Luz and 423 villagers come to dwell here in its last days.



Many villages in the Alentejo region look like this one, scattered around the place where the pine-tree stands: low and compact, with narrow streets twisting between the white houses, their facades forming rough walls with tiny crevices for windows.

These villages inhabiting the Alentejo landscape as the Schwarzwaldhof inhabits the Black Forest:² an embroidery of vernacular technologies of building, through which humans have mediated their relationship with the climate and constructed their identity amidst this land throughout centuries.³

1960s: From the standpoint of the village, at the base of the hill where the pine-tree stands, the dream of the Alqueva dam resembles closer to a premonition, edging towards a nightmare; for the technical-arcadia sketched by engineers, through which the New State government aims to sustain the nation with water, energy and food, comes at the cost of putting the houses of Luz underwater.⁴

² Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, 1971.

Norberg-Shulz, Christian. *Genius Loci, Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, 1980

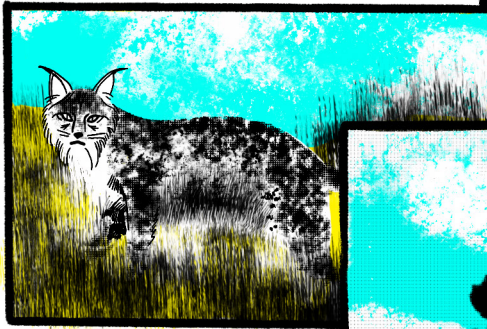
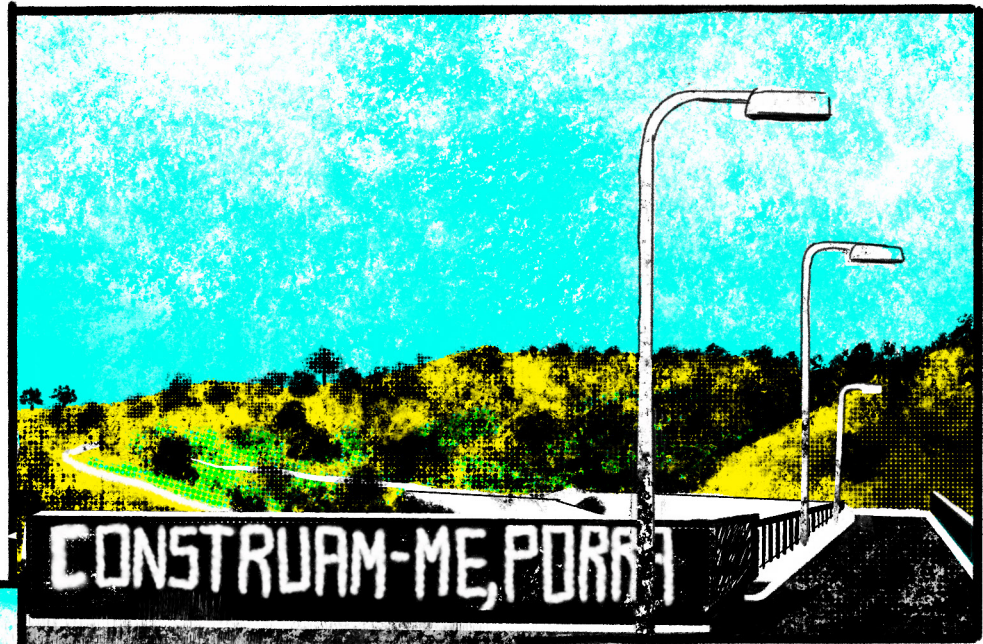
³ Ribeiro, Orlando. *Portugal: o Mediterrâneo e o Atlântico*, 1945

⁴ Cardoso, Maria. *Aldeia da Luz: Memória de uma Identidade*, 1996

Reino, João. *Casa, Terra e Comunidade na Aldeia da Luz*, 2002

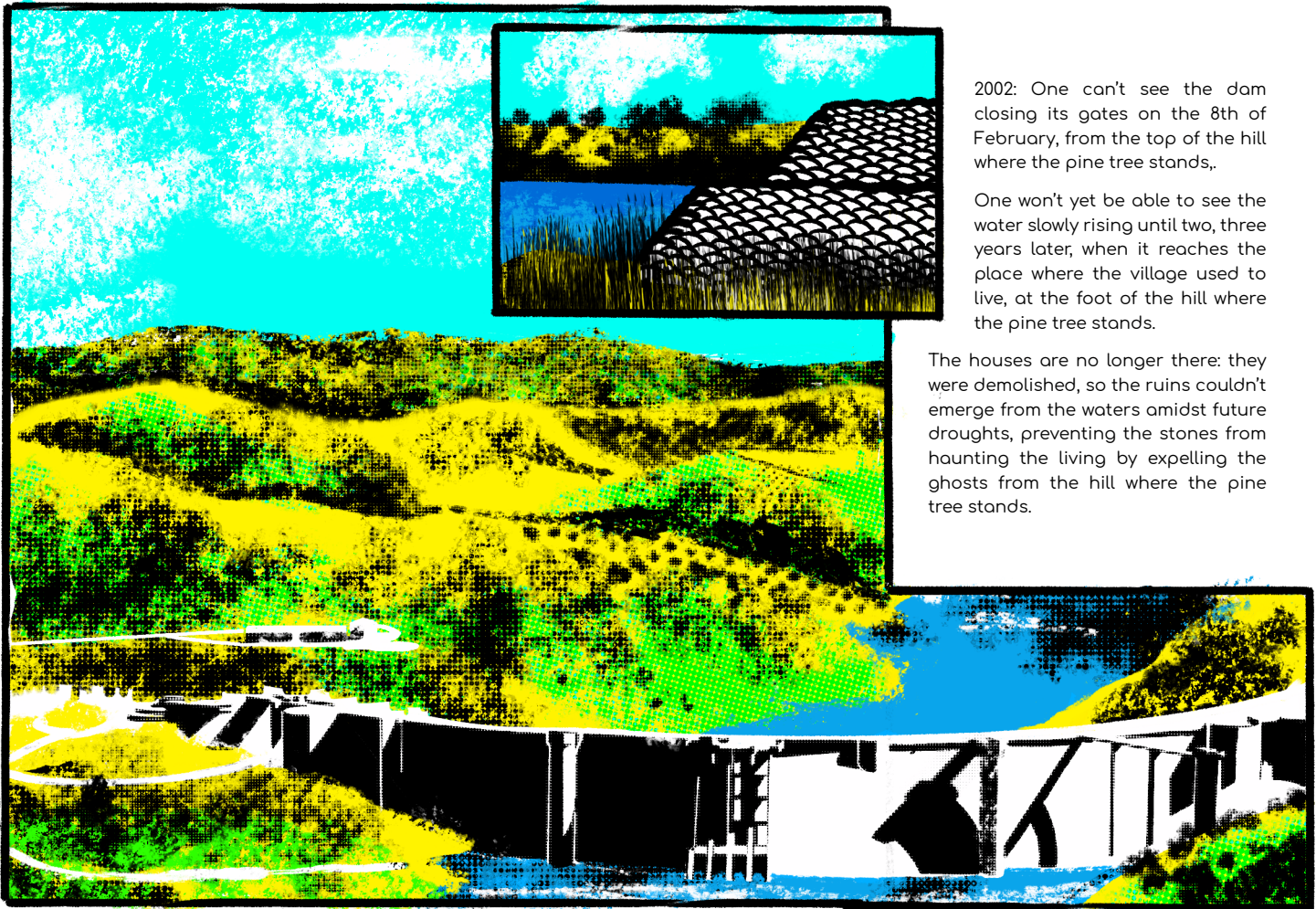
1978—1993: One can spot the engineers and the environmentalists and the activists roaming through the land around the place where the pine tree stands.

They're moulding different dreams for the Alqueva, by conducting the first environmental impact studies, or by imagining the great wall reshaped into several smaller ones, or by proposing the lake doesn't get filled to the top.



They're dreaming the possibilities of the landscape: the size of its agricultural plots; or how one could employ those living locally and abroad; or how the tourists can spend their leisure in the man-made lake.

How the locals would benefit with the seasonal visitors or how the iberian-lynx and the black-bird could once again room these hills, where the pine tree stands.

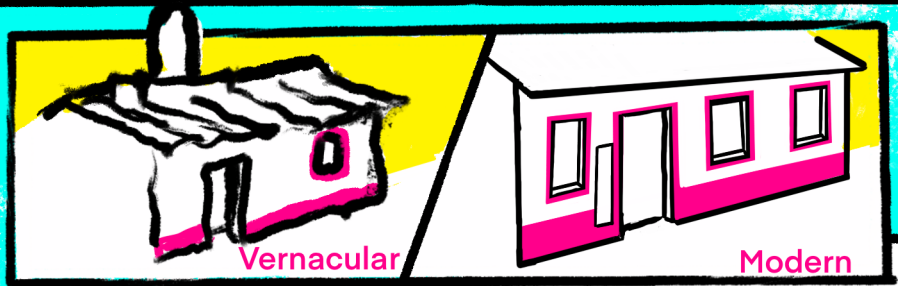


2002: One can't see the dam closing its gates on the 8th of February, from the top of the hill where the pine tree stands,

One won't yet be able to see the water slowly rising until two, three years later, when it reaches the place where the village used to live, at the foot of the hill where the pine tree stands.

The houses are no longer there: they were demolished, so the ruins couldn't emerge from the waters amidst future droughts, preventing the stones from haunting the living by expelling the ghosts from the hill where the pine tree stands.

A new village lies to the north, where the 423 villagers were made to dwell.

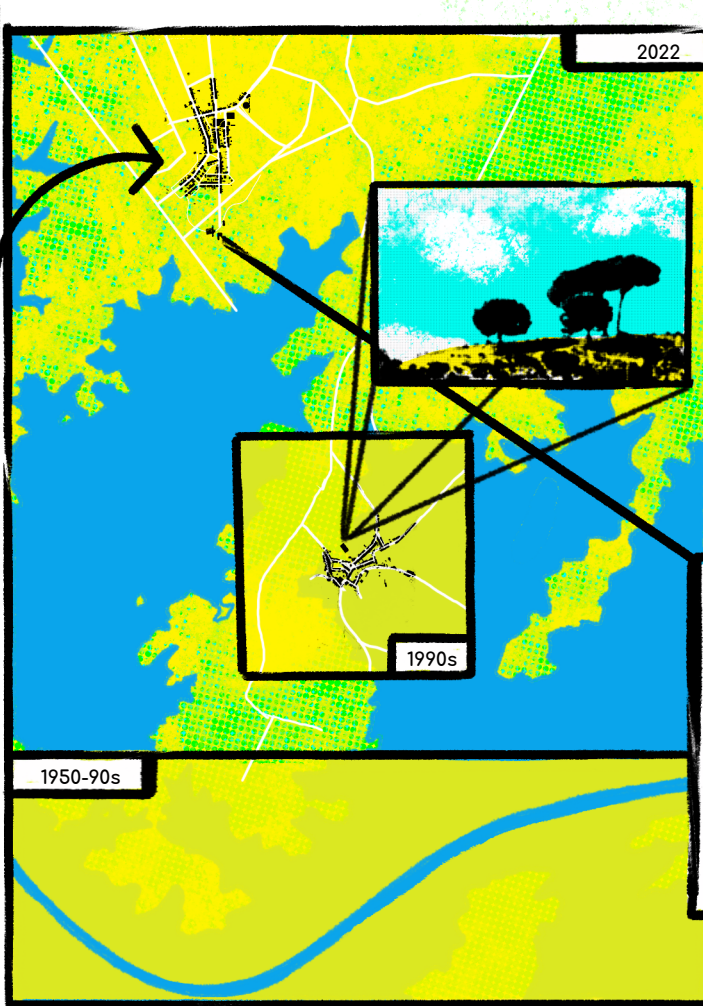


On the surface, it resembles the old Luz and the many other villages that scatter around the desert, although not so low and compact, the pathways not so narrow and not so twisted.

The streets now shoot through the village, separating the dwellings with precision. Its white facades are polished surfaces, where generous windows open the interior of the houses to the street, pacing a mechanical rhythm for the dwellers walkin down the road. This village is foreign to the desert, placed here by the rigours of computer-design, mimicking the relation of the old one to the environment only in aspect. The streets are too wide and the windows too large to protect from the sun; these houses are no longer the product of knowledge learnt from the relationship of people to the land, but a result of standards and directives expressed on urban-planning imperatives.

The New Village itself is another dream that unfolds here, near where the pine tree stands: one of urban wishful-thinking, of hope to recreate long-established relationships as a way to mitigate the sacrifice of the locals in favour of the many (it is the early 2000s, and no longer palatable to call it "the nation").

Many new facilities were built here, expecting a future where people stick around, mingling in the streets, and where tourists come to visit the village, to look through the window of the museum, towards the place where the pine tree stands.



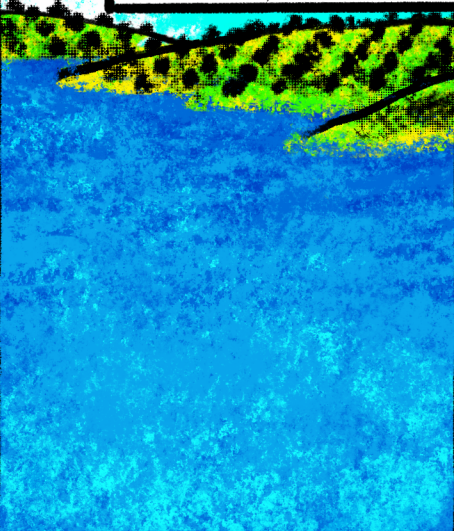
Instead, many fled and few came. The dead also came to dwell here, away from the hill where the pine tree stands.

They were buried anew, in a gathering with the ancestors of the nearby village of Estrela, whose old graves were also swallowed by the water.

The old church of Luz also came to live here, dismantled from the foot of the hill, where the pine tree stands, and put back up at the outskirts of the new village.⁵

A house for memories was also built here, in the form of Museum of Luz. A small window was placed there, pointing towards the hill where the pine-tree stands. Villagers and tourists look at it from a distance, remembering the village that once grew there, at the foot of the hill where the pine-tree stands. (picture of the museum, and then of the small window). The desert where the village was placed is now a peninsula.

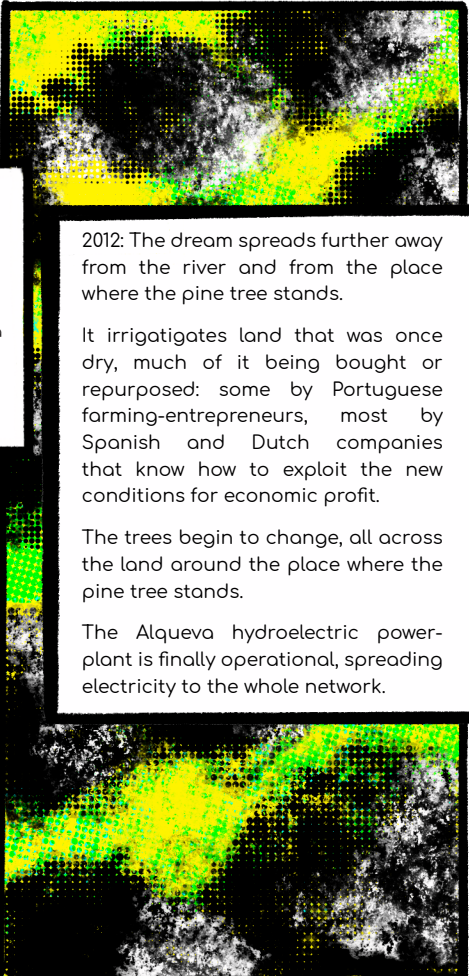
⁵ Mourão, Catarina. A Minha Aldeia Já Não Mora Aqui, 2005



2004: The water has risen to its maximum level, reaching the marker of 147m.

2007: No tourism yet.⁶

6 Alfredo, Tânia. Políticas e Práticas Organizacionais em Turismo: um olhar sobre o planeamento estratégico na zona de rego de Alqueva. Évora, 2003
Amador, Hélder Coeiro. [Re]inventar Alqueva: do turismo de luxo dos resorts à reinvenção de um lugar com identidade. Livro Horizonte, 2018




2012: The dream spreads further away from the river and from the place where the pine tree stands.

It irrigates land that was once dry, much of it being bought or repurposed: some by Portuguese farming-entrepreneurs, most by Spanish and Dutch companies that know how to exploit the new conditions for economic profit.

The trees begin to change, all across the land around the place where the pine tree stands.

The Alqueva hydroelectric power-plant is finally operational, spreading electricity to the whole network.



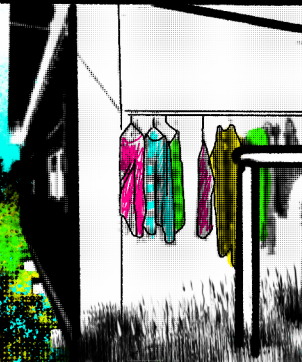
2014: Dreams of economic growth begin to materialize.

The once yellow hills are now sliced by grid-lines of olive trees, covering the landscape in dark green, everywhere around the hill where the pine tree stands.

The olive trees' demand for cheap labour brings foreign migrants to the region, mostly from Nepal and India, who take shelter in the rooms left by those leaving to the shore.

New tenants mean new opportunities and so these migrants are packed into small rooms 4 at a time...

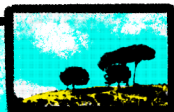
Some come to live in containers near the fields.



2016: The grid-lines of olive trees enclose the New Village at the tip of the peninsula, facing toward the lobe where the old village used to lay and where the pine tree stands.

Water reaches its slope before being pumped into "the desert", where it helps the new species blossom. The workers tend to the berries in the greenhouses to the north, while machines roam the grid-lines of the olive trees.

The workers work eight, ten, twelve hours a day and many houses in the new Luz are empty.



Vilarinha das Furnas

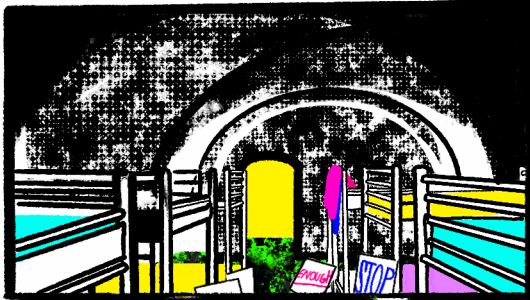


2022: Ruins of submerged villages pop up all over Portugal, far away from the place where the pine tree stands. Houses stand like ghosts atop the mud, their graves drained by the drought that ravages the land.

Restrictions on the use of water are put into place.⁷

⁷ "Poupança da água passará por restrições na rega e lavagens, revela ministro do Ambiente" in Público, February 22, 2022.

No such ghosts haunt Old Luz, under the hill where the pine tree stands. for the houses were demolished before the waters could flood the streets, It's been 20 years since the gates of the dam have been closed. The dreams of greening Alentejo through intensive practices of the olive-grids begins to be seen by many as a nightmare.



People complain of widespread poor internet connection.⁸

Upper north, the workers from India and Nepal are fed up by two years of the pandemic and regular mistreatment: they risk their stay-visas by confronting their exploiters directly, demanding for better work conditions.

⁸ "Aldeia da Luz: 'As pessoas até parece que têm medo de assomar à porta, não se vê vivalma'" in Pública, February 8, 2022



2024: A new drought ravages the country, both near and far from the slope where the pine tree stands.

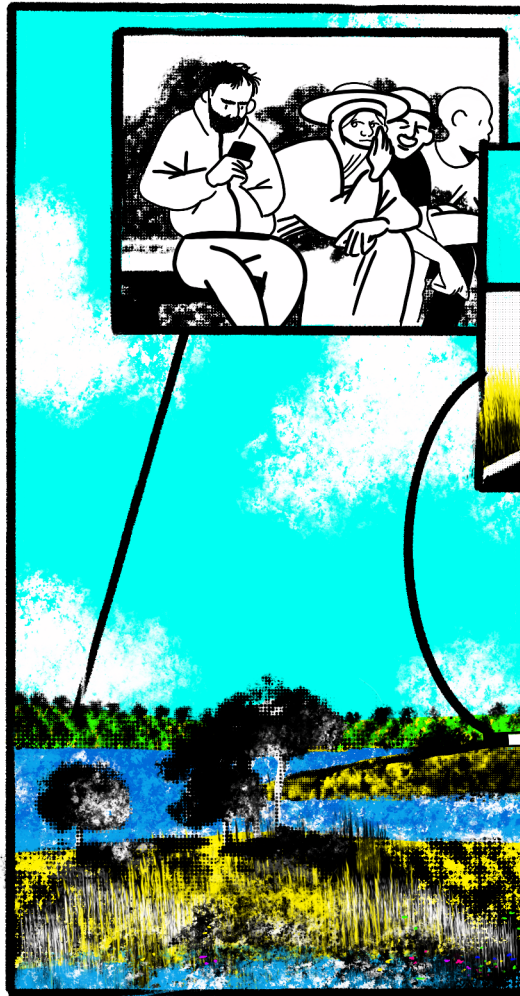
Migrant workers keep coming to these lands: people fleeing war zones and climate catastrophe, who come to inhabit the empty houses of New Luz, to tend to the grids that barricade the village at the tip of the peninsula. They are met with suspicion by some of the locals.

The locals whisper their fears amongst themselves, articulating their thoughts through the grammar and the vocabulary they acquired on TV.

2025: internet connection remains poor around the place where the pine tree stands.

Pundits point to the lack of infrastructure to help explain the failure of yet another state program aiming to repopulate the interior.

Upper north, conflict escalates on the greenhouses of Odemira, as the Portuguese government persists on turning a blind eye to the demands of migrant workers.



2026: Signal is weak, near the window framing the strip where the pine tree stands.

An alliance emerges between the citizens of Luz and the migrant workers, demanding for better internet connection in the region, accusing the government of not addressing the opportunity inequality preventing locals to work remotely, a practice normalised during the Covid-19 pandemic three years ago.

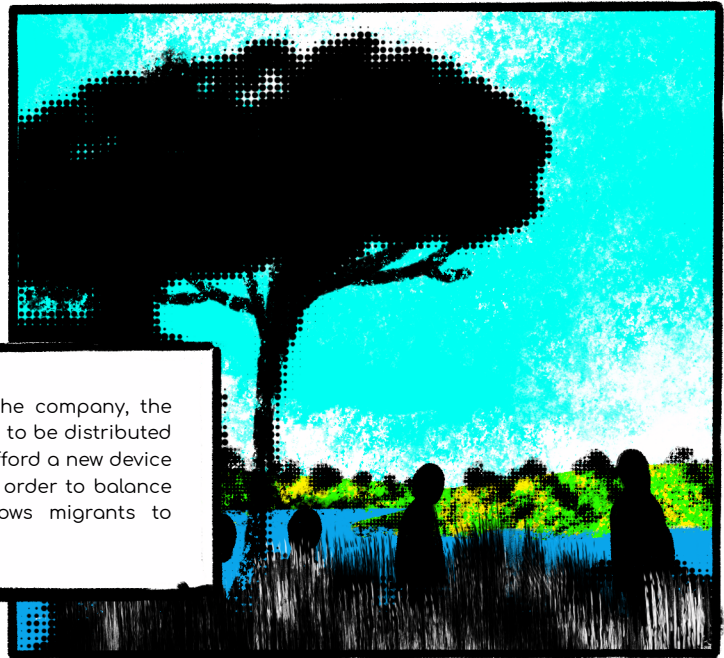
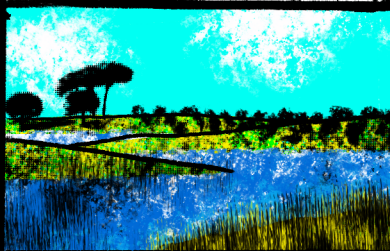
Their demands spike the interest of established tele-communication companies, who seize the opportunity to grab deals with the state, allowing for the testing and promoting of new technologies in Alentejo.

A new solar-powered balloon prototype is unveiled, intended to spread internet signal across hard-to-reach regions.

2027: A committee looks through the window, towards the place where the pine tree stands.

They came to New Luz to announce the launch of a new state subsidy aiming to help the development and testinf of the solar power balloons in the Alentejo region. As part of the enterprise, an announcement is made for the creation of a network of technological parks, hoping to attract specialised professionals to work in the region. The first one is to be built near New Luz, as a symbolic gesture seeking to make good on the promises of economic flourishing, made to the population in 2002.

As part of the deal with the company, the state pays for smartphones to be distributed amongst those unable to afford a new device or update their old one, in order to balance opportunity; this also allows migrants to easily call their relatives.



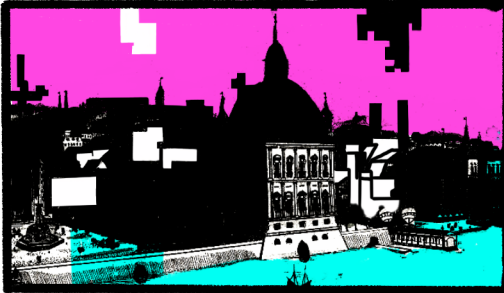
2030: People assemble under the shade, at the bottom of the hill where the pine tree stands.

They've come to protest with the workers, who have been laid-off en masse, amidst yet another drought. They point to the retreating waterlines of the Alqueva dream, right at the place where Old Luz used to grow and revive old talking points used in the 1980s to protest against the Alqueva dream. The demand the end of intensive soil exploitation and to transition back into a culture of Montado, invoking its status as UNESCO natural heritage.?

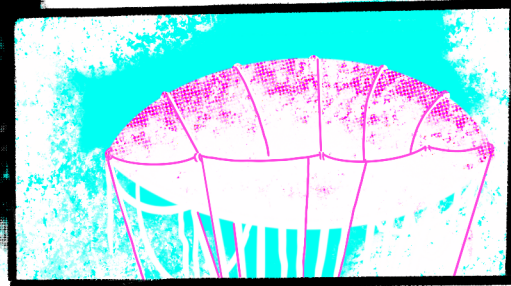
2031: A technician adjusts their tripod, aligning it with the point where the pine tree stands.

They're taking measures to build a 3D model, to materialise the dream of digital recreating Old Luz in the Metaverse.

The recreation will be part of a bigger package of lost Portuguese landmarks built anew with scientific rigour (such as Vilarinho da Furna and the old Praça do Comércio, before the 1755 earthquake). It is part of a campaign that aims to generate interest and attract new users to the global service, which has been garnering followers and critics worldwide.



The project is met with ambivalence, both locally and nationally, seen as an opportunity to breathe new life and revisit old memories, but also as mining the trauma of the remaining living villagers of old Luz as a cheap publicity stunt.



2032: Claps are heard in the distance, intercutting with the waves that splash at the beach where the pine tree stands.

A ghostly figure flies over its needle-leaves, marking a successful launch for the first solar balloon released over Alentejo.

It floats toward the clouds, away from the protests of workers and environmentalists taking place at the same time of the celebration, reminding that only 30-40 years of fertile ground are to be expected before global, irreversible soil exhaustion.

The migrant workers join the protests, demanding for Portuguese citizenship as a reward for their contributions to the national economy. They are joined by the movement of Cota 139, who ressurged for the 30th anniversary of the closing of the Alqueva gates.

Together, they rehash the old vision of a rich ecosystem, still possible to achieve by lowering the water levels to the 139m mark. Proposing the rewilding of the Guadiana, they demand for the goal to be reached by 2039.

2035: "139 by 2039" is painted on a wall near the pier, across the dune where the pine tree stands.

It's been plastered all over the region.

2039: Water eats at the foot of the hill, where the pine tree stands.

Legislation mandating the lowering of the water level in Alqueva to 139m hasn't passed.

A couple of engineers sit under the shade, resting. They're repairing the prototype for a water solar farm, a system of floating solar panels intended to provide an alternative to the energy produced by the Alqueva powerplant. A dream of power autonomy begins to gestate.

2040



2040: A ghostly figure flies high, over the pond with the island where the pine tree stands.

The solar-balloon network proves to be a success. The technological park of New Luz houses a workshop for the maintenance of the "web-jellyfishes".

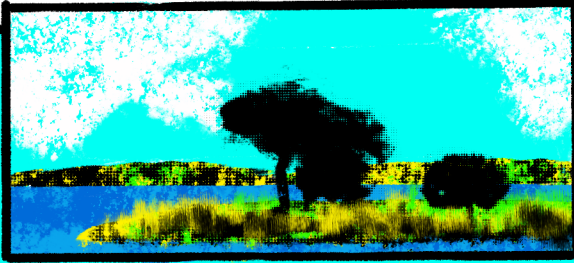
Luz shows signs of flourishing: despite initial backlash from the locals, the migrant workers grow into a community. More kids join the school every season, breaking the low records of previous years. A new mini-market opens in the village, the first in 10 years.

To provide shade during the long, intense summer periods, people start spreading blankets over improvised metal or wood structures in front of their houses and in their backyards.



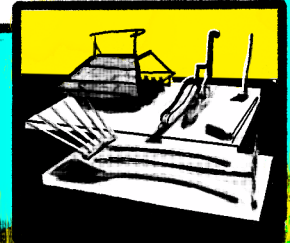
2042: Roots break through the sand, at the foot of the slope where the pine tree stands.

A couple of old villagers, kids at the time the gates of the dam closed, return to look at the place where the old village used to grow. It's been 40 years and they came back to live their retirement years at New Luz. They go walking through the mud, reminiscing on the now invisible streets of memories.



They look at the old artefacts at the Luz museum, which belonged to their relatives and friends.

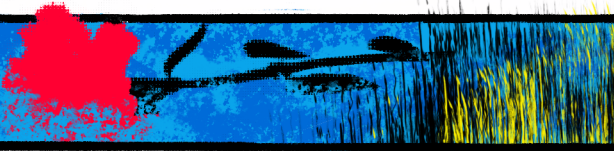
The dwindling visitor numbers compromises the project of the but it still stands, serving as the hub for discussions regarding the local inhabitants and New Luz. Currently, they've integrated a taskforce to make sure the Metaverse recreation of the old village is accurate.



2044: A red carnation floats on the water, near the beach where the pine tree stands.

Dwindling profits compel the companies exploring the olive-tree to divide their properties and sell fractions to new owners, who, subsidised by the state, commit to recover the practices of Montodo across the region.

Radical protestors claim that's not enough and urge the quick abandonment of large-scale agricultural exploitation, celebrating the 70 years of the Carnation Revolution by proclaiming the need for expropriating the landowners in order for a quicker recovery of the soil.

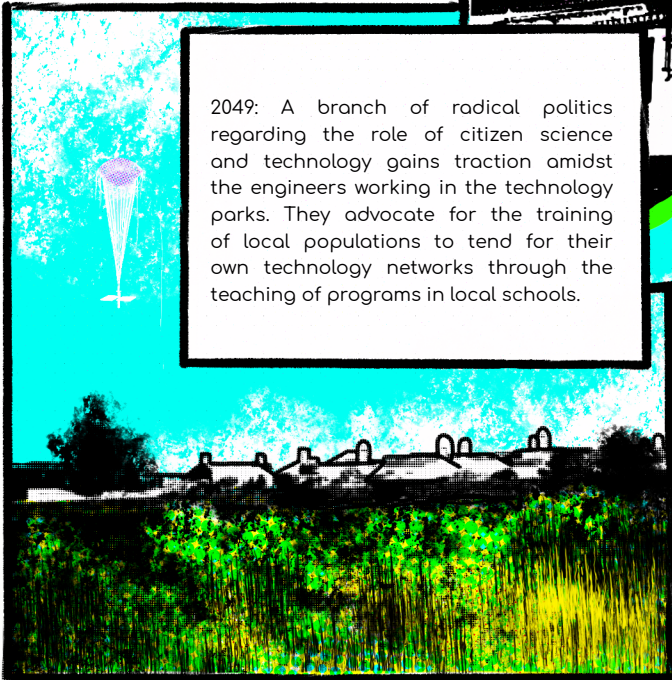


2046: a medieval soldier roams the streets of Old Luz on neon-rollerblades, speeding through the hill where the pine tree stands.

Dozens of beta-testers look in awe at the digital replica of a place they could never visit. Teary-eyed, villagers take off their VR helmets, finding the reliving of their childhood too emotional to bear on the simulacrum.



2049: A branch of radical politics regarding the role of citizen science and technology gains traction amidst the engineers working in the technology parks. They advocate for the training of local populations to tend for their own technology networks through the teaching of programs in local schools.



2052: A journalist takes a picture of the New Village of Luz, from the standpoint of the hill where the pine tree stands.

The picture focuses on the bright future of New Luz rather than on its melancholic past, portraying the village as a beacon of life amidst Alentejo and the Portuguese rural interior.

It places that status firmly on the multicultural population of the town and its involvement in the tending of its infrastructure. The photo illustrates the 50 years of the closing of the Alqueva dam and the narrative gains traction online, spreading alongside stories of popular takeovers of large agricultural fields owned by foreign corporations that still practice intensive soil exploitation.

2053: Popular takeovers occur in the hills around the place where the pine tree-stands.

As protests demanding the closure of the dam reach their peak, a radical action to revert the process of intensive soil exploitation is called upon, before it's too late.

The "blankets" that adorned the front of a few houses now cover all the streets of Luz in the summer, crystallizing the village's new vernacular.

2054: Voices of protest can be mumbly heard, over the lake and away from where the pine tree stands.

Several olive trees have been put down by activists, freeing the land for the practice of montado. The early plans for the Alqueva are recalled upon with furious remembrance, as the project seems adrift in a sea of controversy over the impacts it had on the land.

2072: A botanist bags a sample of a root coming out of the sand, under the hill where the pine tree stands. The tree is ~150 years old and it's been 70 years since the Alqueva dam's gates were closed.



The year marks the threshold when the exhaustion of arable soil would become irreversible. Radical politics of land reclamation and occupation have made it possible to delay this date in many countries.

Around New Luz and all over Alentejo, the practices of Montado have picked up, by activists that reclaimed the occupied land as autonomous zones.



2090: A group of pigs pulls roots from the ground, digging the sand under the hill where the pine tree stands.

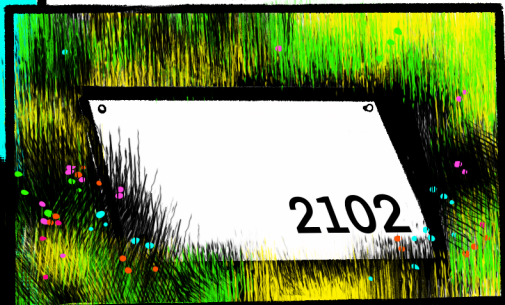
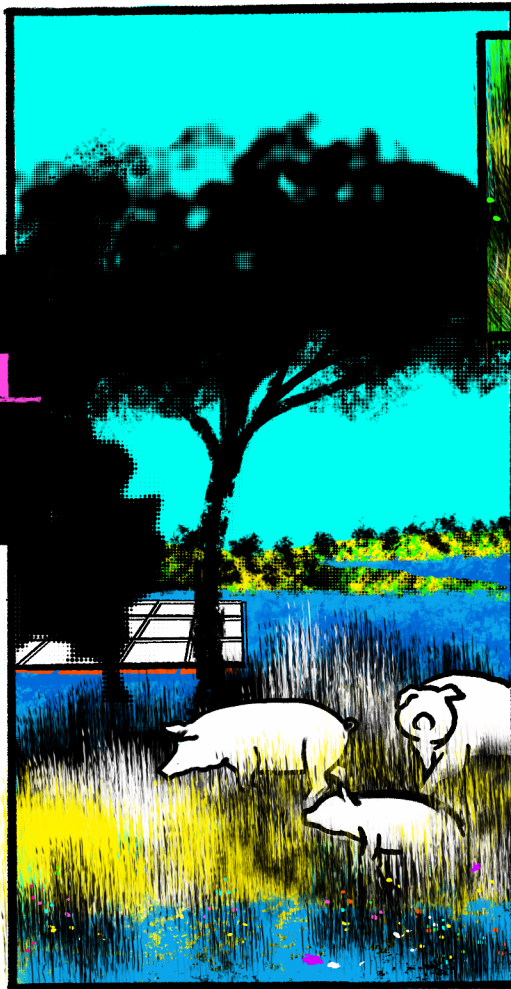
They roam the mud on the outskirts of the Montado of New Luz, where local inhabitants and experts develop the skills necessary to the tending of the land. They connect with kin-minded activists through a pirated copy of the Metaverse, hosted on the dark-web.



A multi-village consortium was created to negotiate with national and private institutions; it works as a co-op, aiming to reclaim the sovereignty of technologies used for communication, namely the "Jellyfish-Network".

A school is improvised on New Luz technological park to provide engineering classes to kids, aiming to assure the maintenance of the network and other technologies by locals in the long-term.

Solar farms float alongside the river banks, its margins receding evermore, after the succession of severe droughts.



2102: a slab is placed on the ground, under the hill where the pine tree stands.

It depicts a drawing of the old village, submerged 100 years ago.

Water has receded to 139m and some of restrictions once put in place are now lifted up. The montado cultures are slowly restoring some balance to the margins of the Guadiana river, attracting some people back from the cities, into the countryside.

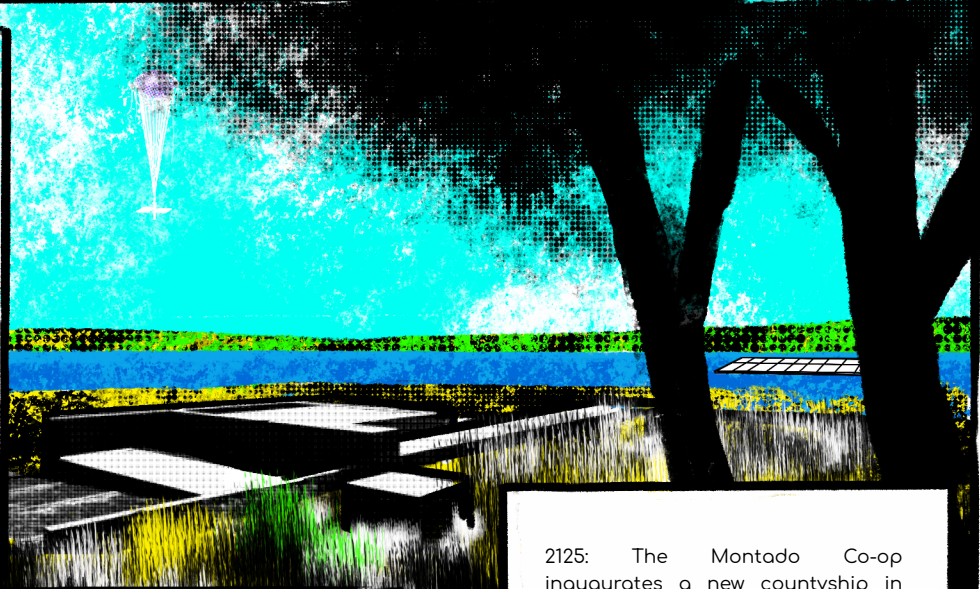
Villagers celebrate the 100 years of New Luz, which continues to flourish and represent a beacon of hope and renewal amidst the "green-revolution" of the anthropocene.

They have to build fences to protect the cattle from the lynxes that began roaming the nearby hills.

2122: Cheers can be heard in the distance, arriving as a muffled sound to the place where the pine tree stands.

The montado of New Luz celebrates the creation and approval of its maintenance corps, hereby responsible for the Montado's section of the Jellyfish-Network, which got transferred to citizen control under the new law.

Museum of Luz makes its archive accessible on a free-to-access metaverse: the clandestine version finally emerges from the dark-web, allowing people to interact with it freely, without fear of persecution.



2125: The Montado Co-op inaugurates a new countyship in the southern region of Portugal, as assemblies of citizens gain the legal statute that allows them to decide on local issues.

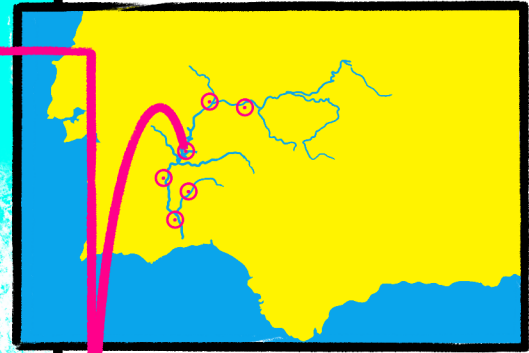
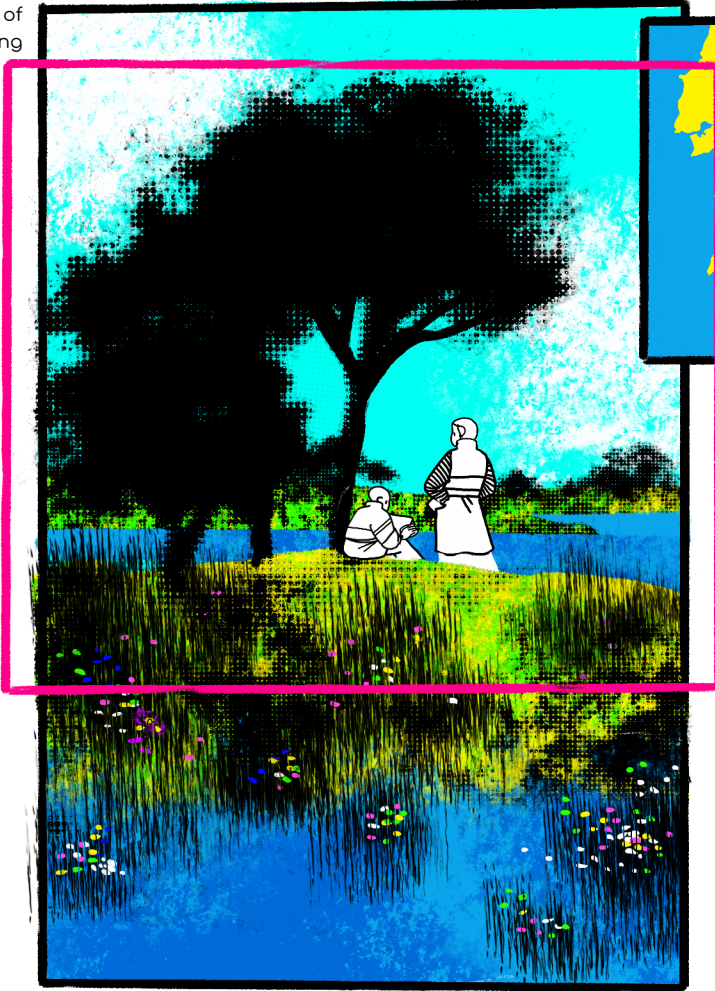
Inspired by the success of this initiative, similar policies and organisations are put into motion in the north of the country, envisioning the return of common land taken during the 20th century for the planting of industrial forest.



2128-2139: A group of technicians climbs the leaning trunk, to take in the landscape where the pine tree stands.

They came to survey the land, under the New Vernacular Architecture Survey being conducted as part of the 11 year celebrations of the 1000th anniversary of Portugal.¹⁰

¹⁰ The Survey to the Popular/ Vernacular Architecture of Portugal (Inquérito à Arquitectura Popular Portuguesa) was a campaign that took place in the late 50s of the 20th century, in which a group of architects roamed the country documenting the traits and patterns of Portugal's traditional and vernacular architectures. These are categorised by regions, putting into evidence the several different strains co-existing within Portugal.



This is done in conjunction with a scientific survey on vegetal and animal species and, despite part of national celebrations, is bound not by national borders but by local ecosystems, accompanying a gesture that symbolises their cohabitation.

New Luz is presented as part of the Guadiana biome, which crosses the border to Spain in a series of montados connected through several independent networks of power and communications.

The Jellyfish-network now covers the whole portuguese territory, complemented by land and water receptors and transmitters.

Some solar-farms, which now spread to other rivers, have been repurposed to serve as receptors as well.

2152: A thump is heard across the woods, coming from the place where the pine tree stood.

The tree has crashed into the ground, by years of erosion eating at its roots. A group of wild hogs runs away, startled by the fall.

New Luz is now 150 years old and the rewilding projects are fully into gear.

The Alqueva Dam is repurposed as an outpost for the maintenance of Floating Farms, a remnant of an older concept of modernity, a historic and natural landmark of a bygone era, where technology was used to dominate nature...

2222: A trunk blossoms with new sprouts, where the pine tree stood. The old tree no longer marks the place of the old village, whose memory is framed by the window pointing towards the place where the trunk now sprouts.

The Montado lines of Guadiana become a cross-nation semi-autonomous belt, both materially and digitally: they are responsible for maintenance of their metaverses counter-parts, where speculative futures are discussed in real communities...

