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As an artist, conservationist, and academic, Frühauf is inspired by Portugal's protected coastline

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Carolin Frühauf fell in love with Portugal's Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park (SAVCNP) in 2018 when she spent seven months living in a permaculture project near *Vila Nova de Milfontes*. But the haven of biodiversity—though included in the European Union's network of protected areas, *Natura 2000*—is threatened by pollution, tourism, and invasive species. Frühauf, who works in communications for Eurosite and is launching a freelance career as an artist, let her adoration and concern for the preserved landscape take root in her work across disciplines. It is the subject of much of her photography, painting, and written work, and was featured as a case study in her master's thesis on the impact of surf tourism on Portugal's natural resources.

View Frühauf's full portfolio on Instagram [@carolinmakoah](https://www.instagram.com/carolinmakoah) or at her website www.makoah.com. To follow her career, connect with her on LinkedIn [here](#).



'Hills of Bordeira' Aquarelle colour and Acryl on paper

The many cone-shaped hills ranging from Bordeira to Pedralva are unique in the southwest coast of the Algarve, Portugal. The area lies within the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park, which stretches for 100 kilometers, from São Torpes to Burgau, and is one of the best-preserved coastal areas in Europe. It has the most biodiversity of native plants of any other region in the nation; is home to several endemic and endangered species of flora and fauna as well as the near-threatened Eurasian otter; and is often recognized for its unique population of cliff-nesting white storks.

On full-moon evenings the hills are shining an enchanted soft light with a big fat full-moon sitting on top of this natural creation, overseeing the magical scenery.



'The brave will stay' Wooden pathway at Praia da Bordeira leading into the lagoon that fills with water every winter. Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park.



'Praia da Bordeira' Aquarelle colour and Acryl on paper

Near the village of Carrapateira, Bordeira Beach extends over a broad stretch of sand and sand dunes. A small river reaches the sea here and forms a lagoon. The seabed along the coast also boasts considerable biodiversity. *Praia da Bordeira* is backed by sand dunes and rugged limestone cliffs. Behind the beach there is a forest of ancient pine trees. The cliffs of Bordeira are famous for their fishing spots, almost inaccessible and highly sought after by many seabirds that find shelter here.

The sea is wild much of the year, with waves reaching up to four meters during the winter months. Watching the immense power of nature from the clifftops in Bordeira, listening to the sound the smashing waves create, and breathing in the sea-mist, is one of my favorite things to do in the winter.

What is a nature park? The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [defines](#) seven categories of protected areas, each of which asserts a different level of protection to the landscape's ecosystem or, in some cases, culturally significant landmarks or characteristics. Most protected areas are natural spaces, set apart from other land and sea areas to preserve unique ecosystems from the stress of more intense management strategies. National Parks—perhaps the most well-known type of protected area—are a category II protected area, typically a large landscape set aside to preserve biodiversity, but still allowing widespread access for education and recreation. In contrast, a natural park is a category V protected area. These are defined as spaces where historical patterns of human interaction with nature have contributed to the uniqueness of an area with significant ecological, biological, cultural, or scenic value. Protecting these areas prioritizes enabling these interactions to continue. Where national parks aim to minimize or strictly control human activity to preserve a landscape in its natural state, natural parks encourage continuous human interaction. Natural parks are often ecotourism destinations and are typically overseen by local or regional governments, making their use and management more varied than that of national parks.



Waves arriving at Praia da Bordeira, Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park

This area of Europe struggles with both water scarcity and overabundance, depending on the season. The Ocean shapes the life and the people of the Costa Vicentina Natural Park, but at the same time the summer months become dryer and dryer and desertification is on the move. January and February tend to bring a lot of rainwater in a short amount of time, leading to dampness, moldy houses, and flooded roads. In the summer heatwaves and intense tourism activity depletes groundwater.

What is the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park (SAVCNP)? The SAVCNP is comprised of 60,567 hectares (ha) of land and 28,858 ha of marine territory.¹ It was declared a natural park—*parque natural* in Portuguese—in 1995. The designation affords it special attention from the government, as these areas are planned, clustered, used, and developed under eco-friendly management plans, but falls short of protecting it from the stressors of allowed recreational and industry use.² In SAVCNP, this leaves the park’s ecosystem under regular threat. Invasive species such as the Hottentot Fig are disrupting ecosystem balance and industries such as monocultural agriculture are causing pollution that further degrades biodiversity health and natural resource availability.³

1. Clemente, P. et al. “Mapping Stakeholders Perception on Ecosystem Services Provision Within the Portuguese Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park.” (2015): p3
2. Marco Meissner, “What are the differences between nature reserve, nature park and national park?,” inFranken.de, May 29, 2017. <https://www.infranken.de> (accessed March 25, 2020).
3. Paul Rees, “Plastic greenhouses ‘out of control’ in Costa Vicentina Natural Park,” algarvedailynews.com, May 18, 2018. <https://algarvedailynews.com> (accessed March 25, 2020).



'Body of water' Aquarelle colour on paper



'Tourists are always the others' Praia da Amoreira, Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park



'Farmlife in the Alentejo' near Vila nova de Milfontes, Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast Natural Park.

More about the artist:



After Frühauf's initial stay in SAVCNP, she relocated to the southwest Algarve, where she remains today. Her love for the area was reflected in her master's thesis "Local governance in touristic coastal zones with focus on surf tourism and a case study in Aljezur, Portugal", which she wrote while a student at *Fachhochschule Eberswalde*. Frühauf has always expressed her experiences through various art forms. In addition to painting, she sketches, writes, and makes music, all often inspired by the region of Europe she so loves. Protecting the wild west of Europe is a cause especially dear to her heart and is what her art aims to transport.

Follow Carolin Frühauf on Instagram to view her full portfolio and newest work [@carolinmakoah](#). You can also visit her website www.makoah.com and connect with her on LinkedIn [here](#).

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