

Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro (ed.)

# MODES OF (CO) EXIS TENCE

**confined space,  
global condition,  
resistance**

Modes of (co)existence,  
confined space,  
global condition,  
resistance

*Modos de (co)existência,  
espaço confinado,  
condição global,  
resistência*

EDITORIAL COORDINATION:  
Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro

TEXTS:  
Aurora dos Campos  
Beatriz Duarte & Inês Moreira  
Clarisse Coelho Pinto  
Federico L. Silvestre  
Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro  
Holga Méndez Fernández  
Jorge Marques  
Miguel Costa  
Miguel Leal


RESEARCH PROJECT:  
Talitha Gomes Filipe

VISUAL ESSAYS:  
Ana Vieira de Castro,  
Francisco Varela, Inês Moreira  
& Patricia Coelho  
Carolina Drahomiro  
Rodrigo Paglieri

MADEP STUDENTS PROJECTS:  
Claire Sivier  
Cristiana Pascoal  
Fernanda Zotovici  
Gisela Rebelo de Faria  
Juana Bravo  
Rayan Merhy  
Titos Pelembe  
Apartamento4b

TRANSLATION AND PROOF READING:  
Panorama Nómada

PROOF READING ASSISTANCE:  
Giovanna Silva Pereira

DESIGN:  
M. GRANJA 

© i2ADS, FBAUP, 2023

FBAUP / i2ADS  
Av. de Rodrigues de Freitas, 265  
4049-021 Porto / Portugal

PRINTING AND BINDING:  
Sersilito

ISBN 978-989-9049-48-2  
LEGAL DEPOSIT



**MADEP**  
Master in Art  
and Design for  
the Public Space



## Ana Vieira de Castro

Photographer, Curator and Producer, holds a degree in Visual Arts and Photography (ESAP), and a post graduation in Art Studies – Museum and Curatorial Studies, (FBAUP). In 2018 and 2019 worked in photography direction and production at *Encontros da Imagem – International Photography and Visual Arts Festival* and taught Techniques of Developing and Printing Photography. Finalist of *Descubrimientos Portfolio Reviews* at Photo España. Curador and producer of exhibitions, such as *Porto Photo Fest*. Digital content creator for Galeria Nuno Centeno. In 2020 started the project *Memories Lost in Time and Space*. Participated in Auckland Festival of Photography and was selected for a screening of her latest project at Photo Israel Festival.

## Aurora dos Campos

Set designer and artist-researcher. PhD student at Doctoral Program in Visual Arts (FBAUP) with a grant by the *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia* (FCT). Holds a Master's in Art and Design for the Public Space (FBAUP). Bachelor's degree in Scenography Design at the University of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO). Research member at the Research Institute for Art, Design, and Society (i2ADS). Member of the Board of APCEN – Portuguese Association of Scenography (APCEN) and of the Theater Group *Foguetes Maravilha*. Works between Brazil and Portugal. Holds important awards from the Performing Arts of Brazil for her scenography works. She also develops artistic projects in urban spaces and from everyday situations.

## Beatriz Duarte

Researcher developing her PhD investigation in Art Education (FBAUP) entitled *Resigned Contemporary Heritages: curatorial and art mediation strategies for the fragments of the recent past* with the support from the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). Master's in art studies | Curating and Museology (FBAUP) and graduated in Architecture and Urbanism (Faculty of Architecture at the Federal University of Minas Gerais). She was part of the research cluster *Curating the Contemporary: on Architectures,*

*Territories and Networks* between 2019–21 and is interested in new spatial practices' methodologies and languages for mediating and curating the relationship between contemporary heritages, human settlements, and local communities.

## Carolina Drahomiro

Architect and artist member of Coletivo Sauva, where she carries out multidisciplinary practices in the visual arts, especially in the fields of drawing, video and photography, in order to cross knowledge with the local community of Sairé, a city in the countryside of Pernambuco, where the collective is currently located. She holds a Master in Art and Design for Public Space (FBAUP) with the work entitled: *I'm Not Site-Specific: Manifestations of Post-Memory in Artistic Practices*. Graduated in Architecture and Urbanism at the Catholic University of Pernambuco. Participated in the course Furniture Design for Digital Fabrication, Escola São Paulo and in the course Image-Space, Cinema and Art Direction, Escola da Cidade, both in São Paulo. Integrated the artistic residencies Grão, in Aveiro, and A Salto, in Elvas.

## Clarisse Coelho Pinto

Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from the University of Houston, USA, and a Master in Art and Design for Public Space (FBAUP). Her continued research in ontology and contemporary arts unfolds in transdisciplinary action focussed on body, media, and communication. She is a member of *Túnel Espaço Cultural* as resident artist, in-house designer, and as part of artistic direction and curation in the visual arts program. She is also a founding member of *Tento na Língua* Collective that explores horizontal experimentation questioning the body, identity and interrelationality, in both an investigative-artistic practice as well as through its editorial project.

## Federico L. Silvestre

Professor of Aesthetics and Art Theory at the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC). The interdisciplinary and the liminal nature of his research on

thought and landscape is evidenced by his conferences, articles and books such as: *Micrologías* (2012), *Los pájaros y el fantasma* (2013) and *Culos inquietos infinitos asientos* (2018). He has developed an extensive editorial work with critical editions in Spanish of books by world experts on landscape such as Jean-Marc Besse, Gilles A. Tiberghien or Raffaele Milani. Editor of authors such as Karl Gottlob Schelle or Michel Onfray. Currently, preparing the edition of Guy Debord's complete texts on architecture, psychogeography and urbanism for Ediciones Asimétricas. Coordinator of the International Projects "Yucunet" (H2020, EACEA-UE) and "Deparq" (MICINN-Gobierno de España).

## Francisco Varela

Architect by the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP), Master in *La gran Escala* by the Escola Técnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona (ETSAB), Master in Building Construction by the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto (FEUP) and Master in Art Studies, (FBAUP). Currently attending the Doctoral Course in Fine Arts (FBAUP). Develops curatorial activity since 2018, comprising exhibitions, installations, video, performance and the creation of object-books/ artist books. Represented in the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum and in the Art Library of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. His practice is fundamentally characterized by a personal reflection on the notion of territory, through the creation of objects of a photographic matrix, essay writing and curatorial activity.

## Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro

Lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto, where she directs the Master in Art and Design for Public Space since 2007. She holds a PhD by Project and the Master Theory and Practice of Public Art & Design both with Chelsea College of Art & Design, London; Graduated in Sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto, she frequently participates in Seminars of an interdisciplinary nature in Portugal and abroad, as well as regularly publishes

critical texts in art and artistic research journals, having edited multiple books and catalogues under the editorial name Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro. She also has regular activity as artist and curator, having worked both with institutional collections and in alternative contexts.

## Holga Méndez

Interdisciplinary artist, PhD in Fine Arts from the University of Vigo, lecturer of the Degree in Fine Arts at the University of Zaragoza. Currently, is an external researcher at the Institute of Research in Art, Design and Society (i2ADS) based at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP), where she is developing the project *Peninsula. Cartographies of distance*, supported by a Spanish University Teaching Re-qualification Grant (2022–2024). Her artistic research reflects her own displacements – she lives and works between Porto, Pontevedra and Teruel – these peninsular changes of residence highlight distances and boundaries as open and elastic spaces, a sensitive geography where relationships and exchanges are rethought and reactivated, where culture and cultivation invent a living interspecies cartography.

## Inês Moreira

Principal Researcher in Visual Arts at Lab2PT at University of Minho. Completed a Post-Doctorate in Art History at University Nova de Lisboa (with FCT support) where she created the Interdisciplinary Research Cluster *Curating the Contemporary: on Architectures, Territories and Networks*, active between 2018–21 bringing together researchers from different fields and countries. Active in European networks, both cultural and research oriented. Doctor in *Curatorial/Knowledge* (University of London), Master in Urban Culture (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya/CCCB) and Architect (FAUP). Guest Teacher at FBAUP (2014–22) and Guest Assistant at FLUP (2007–2010). Curator, editor and programmer of cultural events and exhibitions such as the Bordeaux and Gdansk biennials, Guimarães 2012, among others interface projects between art and architecture. + inesmoreira.org

## Jorge Marques

Artist and Assistant Professor at the Drawing Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto. Holds a PhD in Art and Design, Drawing (FBAUP) with the theme *The process as a circumstance of design – Contributions to the study of experimental process models*. Collaborating member at I2ADS. As a professor and researcher at the Drawing Department at FBAUP, he has focused on understanding the issues involved in the processes and how they can become a viable means of thinking and drawing conception. As an artist he has been exploring the idea of limit in defining processes conventionally associated with painting, drawing and photography.

## Miguel Costa

Artist/architect and invited assistant professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto. PhD in Landscape Architecture and Urban Ecology (2018, ISA University of Lisbon) and Master degree in Art and Design for the Public Space (2011, FBAUP). Integrated researcher at Research Institute in Art, Design and Society (i2ADS). Works individually or in collaboration under the name *micro atelier de arquitectura e arte* [maarqa] and has been developing artistic research on the relationship between colonial botany and the landscapes of everyday places – abandoned, devalued, or unused urban spaces. Has been distributing his professional activities between small interventions and mapping processes on the urban landscape; artistic research and teaching.

## Miguel Leal

Visual artist. Lives and works most of the time in Porto. His work alternates between different formats and supports. He studied Fine Arts, Painting, History of Art, Philosophy and Communication and Language. Professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP) and integrated member at Instituto de Investigação em Arte, Design e Sociedade (i2ADS).  
+ [www.ml.virose.pt](http://www.ml.virose.pt)

## Patrícia Coelho

Architect, curator and independent researcher. Master in Architecture from the Department of

Architecture of the University of Coimbra and Master in Art Studies – Museum and Curatorial Studies from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP). Develops an investigation about the disciplinary intersection between the expanded field of architecture, curating and experimental artistic practices. Co-founder and curator of *ÔILHA*, an independent curatorial project that explores spatial and artistic micro practices in a direct dialogue with the local community. Currently works at Galeria Municipal do Porto.

## Rodrigo Paglieri

Born in Santiago, Chile, lived and worked in Brazil from 1988 to 2018 and since September 2019 resides in Porto, Portugal. Guest Assistant Professor in the Visual Arts course at the School of Architecture of the University of Minho (EAUM), where he also works as a collaborating researcher at the Landscape, Heritage and Territory Laboratory (Lab2PT). Doctor in Visual Arts (2019) by the Graduate Program of the School of Fine Arts of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (PPGAV/EBA/UFRJ). Between 2018 and 2019 lived in Barcelona where he developed his research at the Universitat de Barcelona (UB) as a fellow of the PDSE from Capes. Has been developing his work in two basic directions: one for fruition in a gallery space with the production of objects activated by mechanisms and video installations, and another for urban intervention, focused on public spaces. He was founder and member of the collective *Projeto de Arte Entorno*, between 2000 and 2004.

## Talitha Gomes Filipe

Architect from the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Brasília (FAUnB), Master in Art and Design for the Public Space (FBAUP), with the research *Between Body and City: Connections in Spatiality in the Multisensory Scope* and BA in Fine Arts from University of Brasília (IDA-UnB). As an architect works individually and in the field of arts has been developing works in different areas, with great interest in the theme of space and sensory issues.

## MADEP Post-graduates 2019-2021

### Claire Sivier

Black-British arts-based researcher, cultural producer. As an artist she is interested in the intersections of blackness, feminism, the queer experience, ecology, rituals, unlearning, and afrofuturism. In 2021 founded the group *Caminhada de Mulheres Negras*.

### Cristiana Pascoal

Interior Designer, she developed research on the subjectivity of the *Being and Inbetweenness*. Her work has been expanding on designing space experiences and scenography, guided by the search for the balance between innovation and the humanization of spaces.

### Fernanda Zotovici

Architect, illustrator and visual artist has collaborated in several ateliers producing urban installations, audiovisual installations and set design. Graduated from Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie in São Paulo (Brazil, 2016) with part of her studies done at Syracuse University (New York, 2014). Her academic and professional practice focus on participatory methods and co-creation, using the study of performance as a critical analytical tool to identify, investigate and re-discover everyday gestures of the city's inhabitants. Visual researcher at *tialt – there is an alternative*, an organisation that develops inclusive, creative and collaborative research and tools to explore the human condition. Founder of *Estúdio Memoa*.

### Gisela Rebelo de Faria

Graduated in Architecture. Her artistic and research interests are located in the disciplinary crossings between Philosophy of the City and Urban Studies, experimenting in an urban context with a performative interference (aesthetic and discursive) that seeks to transform the space of public use into an effective public space – the common place. Co-founder of the *Limina Cooperative*. Holds a PhD research grant by FCT with the Research Group in Philosophy and Public Space, IF-FLUP Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto.

## Juana Bravo

Artist, beekeeper and independent researcher exploring the ubiquity of ahistorical scientific thinking and its effect on landscape, personhood and intimate language.

## Rayan Merhy

Born in Boa Vista, Brazil, moved to Lebanon as a teenager having to learn a new language and adapt to a new culture. In the future, these cultural experiences would inform her work on how our cultural experiences form us and form the spaces through a specific tool: food. Studying the public space during the pandemic inspired her to use the kitchen as her atelier. Her work uses photography, storytelling, cooking, installation, performance and painting. Currently part of Food & Art Alternative M.A. (The GRAM OUNCE, 2023) and works at atelier for multidisciplinary practice StudioMezza (2023).

## Titos Pelembe

Currently a doctoral student in Art Education Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto (FBAUP). Attends a postgraduate course in Technology Design for Health (FBAUP). He is a research curator at Maputo Street and Polana Urban Creative Space. Co-author of the book *Maputo Street Art* (2022).

## Apartamento4b

Collective of artists conceived by Claire Sivier, Fernanda Zotovici, Izabel Barboni and Rayan Merhy – Brazilian and English artists living in Portugal. Through artistic experimentation, the artists seek to explore themes related with art and women in the public space, along with performance, installation, collective and individual memories, walks and food. They collaborated with *Festival Feminista do Porto* in 2019 with a series of workshops curated by the artists.

**Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro (ed.)**

# **MODES OF (CO) EXIS TENCE**

**confined space,  
global condition,  
resistance**

<b>11</b>	<b>Editorial</b> Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro	<b>110</b>	<b>Waking up on the other side: from the experience of suspension to the reconfiguration of everyday choreographies</b> Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro
<b>16</b>	<b>Everyday life / Daily life</b> Aurora dos Campos	<b>124</b>	<b>Bird's-eye, the silence of the birds</b> Miguel Leal
<b>32</b>	<b>(Re)building attention: the world like an architectural photograph</b> Jorge Marques	<b>148</b>	<b>Essay for an ecology of poetic resistance</b> Holga Méndez Fernández
<b>40</b>	<b>Error and coexistence: notes for a theory of co-creation</b> Federico L. Silvestre	<b>158</b>	<b>Among weeds: observations and experiments on a <i>lesser</i> landscape condition</b> Miguel Costa
<b>58</b>	<b>Spatial practices as experimental preservation: between the invisible and the ecological</b> Beatriz Duarte & Inês Moreira	<b>182</b>	<b>Mapping Invisibility: the possibility of seeing, in the impossibility of being</b> Ana Vieira de Castro, Francisco Varela, Inês Moreira & Patricia Coelho (Visual essay)
<b>78</b>	<b>Post-Digital Dispersal</b> Clarisse Coelho Pinto	<b>188</b>	<b>Selection of students projects</b> Claire Sivier                      Juana Bravo Cristiana Pascoal              Rayan Merhy Fernanda Zotovici              Titos Pelembe Gisela Rebelo de Faria      Apartamento4b
<b>90</b>	<b>Between Body and City: incomplete architecture and multisensory experience</b> Talitha Gomes Filipe (Research project)	<b>212</b>	<b>Suspended Territory (landscape)</b> Rodrigo Paglieri (Visual essay)
<b>102</b>	<b>América</b> Carolina Drahomiro (Visual essay)		



## Editorial

The publication intends to advance Bruno Latour's notion of "modes of existence" to reflect on possible 'modes of (co)existence' in light of the awareness that, in the recent living conditions, the notion of resistance has intensified. This set of texts and visual essays thus emerges as a way of bringing together different positions and ways of addressing the idea of resistance through notions of co-creation, spatial reconfiguration, poetics of everyday life or the fragility of a multiple ecological condition. In a year in which the public space as we knew it changed, on all fronts, from the psychogeography of our daily lives to the ways of working, the notion of a global condition versus an awareness of the immediate context changed radically. At the same time, the work carried out by students of the Masters in Art and Design for the Public Space at the *Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto* (Fine Arts Faculty of the University of Porto) in that period, was profoundly affected by the confinements and the changes in access to people, institutions and places, essential for carrying out the ongoing projects. Since there was no exhibition of finalists for the group of students who were then finishing the Cycle of Studies, and since it seemed necessary to reflect on the modes and experiences, within thought and artistic practices, from the perspective of being affected by those social conditions, the need to overcome them, the idea to produce a book emerged as a way to materialize both fronts.

With contributions from researchers both integrated and collaborators of i2ADS — Research Institute in Art, Design and Society, as well as other international institutions, the publication integrates views of different nature, updating the reflection towards an ontology of the post-pandemic experience and its modes of resistance. The edition also features contributions from PhD students as well as former Master's students, articulating research between different levels of postgraduate study and generating opportunities for further research and

knowledge production for students at those levels. Given the diversity of voices, the Portuguese language appears in some of its different forms — according to the Ortographic Agreement of 1990, and prior to that agreement in the Editorial and in my text “Waking up on the other side: from the experience of suspension to the reconfiguration of everyday choreographies”, as well as in Miguel Costa’s texts “Among weeds: observations and experiments on a *lesser* urban landscape condition” and by Miguel Leal “Bird’s-eye, the silence of the birds”. The text by Aurora dos Campos “Everyday life / Daily life” and the project description by Talitha Gomes Filipe “Between Body and City: incomplete architecture and multisensory experience” appear in Brazilian Portuguese, with the Spanish language being maintained in the way it appears in the respective original texts by Federico L. Silvestre “Error and coexistence: notes for a theory of co-creation” and Holga Méndez Fernández’s “Essay for an ecology of poetic resistance”. All texts were also translated into English.

The publication intends to promote a reflection that matters to other areas of society beyond academia where it was generated, debating the mutual influences between social situations, artistic practice and critical thinking.

The intimate descriptions of Aurora dos Campos transport us to the sensations and environment experienced in confinement. Her position *between* — between languages as expressed in her title: “Everyday life / Daily life — Quotidiano / Cotidiano”, between walls, between countries and continents — crosses personal memories and domestic family situations and puts us before our own experiential awareness in a reconstruction that needs to be critically relocated as the moments experienced in the pandemic fade away. Jorge Marques in “(Re)building attention: the world like an architectural photograph”, suggestively reconstructs the images of places that suddenly we were only able to see through the mediation of screens, looking at them with a kind of fearful fascination. For the students, the work of spatial analysis, which Jorge Marques usually develops with them, takes on a projective dimension instead

of an immersive one. We wonder what this passage does to our notion of belonging to the spaces we inhabit together. Which notion of the collective unfolds from an experience fractioned by mediation devices? What to do with the frightening poetics of a space emptied of body choreographies? How to deal with the separation between the observation and the experience of places?

Federico L. Silvestre in “Error and coexistence: notes for a theory of co-creation” proposes a reflection between the speculative-philosophical and the wandering-poetic that leads us to think about the idea of co-creation (*concreación*), proposing the need to go beyond a notion of “inoperative community” or “disjunctive multiplicities” to arrive at another philosophy of creation. In the text “Spatial practices as experimental preservation: between the invisible and the ecological”, Beatriz Duarte and Inês Moreira present an approach to material culture from the point of view of understanding the very idea of *heritage* in its critical conflict with the idea of preservation as it is operated traditionally, proposing ways of re-evaluating and re-signifying the residue and consequently the past that is inscribed in it, visibly or invisibly. In “Post-Digital Dispersal”, Clarisse Coelho Pinto seeks to characterize what she calls an indifference to the temporality of the way through which we access content and integrate our context into the current communication experience. Clarisse Coelho Pinto places ontological dispersion as an inevitability of the corporeal condition that divides us and, above all, always returns us to the point where we started to access communication, as an inescapable reverberation. My own text “Waking up on the other side: from the experience of suspension to the reconfiguration of everyday choreographies” intends to speculate on an approximation to the idea of reconfiguration of the aesthetic experience in the light of changes in the spatiality of everyday conditions and their impact in the modes of production of artistic practice. Miguel Leal in “Bird’s-eye, the silence of the birds” proposes a reflection, suggestively supported by aerial images, on how the pandemic condition, through the reverse

of mobility of its primordial devices — planes or freighters — revealed the pitfalls of the verticality of the globalizing gaze. The text “Essay for an ecology of poetic resistance” by Holga Méndez Fernández offers a kind of breath through the search to define the word resistance. Caught between two languages — Portuguese and Spanish — the narrative operates in a loose poetic structure, punctuated by philosophical references and political awareness. “Among weeds: observations and experiments on a *lesser* urban landscape condition” is the title of the text by Miguel Costa for whom the resilience of spontaneous plants reveals, in the pandemic period, a kind of liberation from human domination that an urbanity of control exerts over the plant world outside landscape planning. His text proposes a history of these plants between being hated or desired, and moved around the planet over time.

The publication presents a research project “Between Body and City: incomplete architecture and multisensory experience” carried out by Talitha Gomes Filipe within the scope of the Master in Art and Design for Public Space. It is an attempt to analyze the public space through its invisibilities in an experimental methodological transposition of typical procedures of the biological sciences to spatial visualizations, commenting at the same time on the structuring hierarchy of imposing urban policies.

The visual essays present conceptual approaches to the issues central to the editorial proposal, namely: our condition as subjects of surveillance expressed by the very concept of the panopticon in the collective visual essay “Mapping Invisibility: the possibility of seeing, in the impossibility of being”; the connection between the geographical/political and the personal operated by the relocation between continents — Europe/America in Carolina Drahomiro’s visual essay “América”; through a visualization of the world under a health crisis, Rodrigo Paglieri’s “Suspended Territory” seeks to move from *the possibility of the encounter* to an idea of a *contemporary critical landscape*. In the selection of student projects it was intended to bring to publication works that, while not

representative of what was produced in that academic year, signal a conscious research of a position in the world — and a world suddenly weakened by an initially unknown threat — translated by several artistic means and experimental procedures.

This publication appears in a sequence of implicit adjustments to the conditions in which the public space came to be lived during and after the periods of confinement, adjustments that justify the reflections that the very production of a book instigated.

After those adjustments that implied a transition to telepresence, this book intends to rescue the physicality of the printed page. Its physical dissemination will, perhaps, be part of the rescue of touch, of presence, of the experience of breathing together, which our post-pandemic consciousness will have to restore over time.

\*  
\*\*

# Everyday life / Daily life

Aurora dos Campos

The author plays with the different forms of the word "everyday" between the European and the Brazilian Portuguese – "quotidiano" and "cotidiano". We opted for translating the former as "everyday" and the latter as "daily".  
(Translator's note)

## Dawn

It was after midnight. The night seemed to promise freedoms. Small freedoms that could make the next day an ordeal. Reading, listening to music, drawing, writing, anything. But not without a cost. That's how it started, that's how I started.

It was nine minutes past midnight, I had already massaged my left scapula with arnica and wrote my first words. The letters emerged without promising much. The light on the computer seemed to whistle close to the ear: insomnia... insomnia... Keep writing and she'll come. The words will continue to inscribe themselves in her mind. Insomnia...

But it might be worth it. Might it be?

I turn on a light to balance the brightness of the screen. I hear night noises outside. Drunken groups pass by (strange for a state of calamity). But there they are. A girl laughs, a glass falls and seems not to break, they carry things in a bag, a party in the distance. As if nothing had changed. As if the city and life were still the same.

I decide to turn to "her". She could be me.

It's night and she can be almost anything; at home, for herself. Whenever she starts to write, she starts to listen better at the same time, she connects with sounds and things. The door ajar and the noises of her three-story building. She lives on the top floor, but she doesn't know it, for echoes or ghosts, she always hears footsteps on a seeming upper floor. (She writes down in her mind that she will ask him tomorrow if can hear them too. She writes down again in her mind as she thinks she will forget to remember). She turns back to herself and waits. She waits for something to happen that will indicate how to proceed.

Paragraph.

27 minutes have passed, she's not even sure if this is relevant, she's just going with the flow. Tomorrow her head might explode throughout the day. Making the day longer than it usually is in the Northern Hemisphere Spring. Thinking about it brings her some anguish. She remembers that before having



children the days were more manageable. Sleeping later could also mean waking up later.

At that moment she went on writing and thinking, in one of those states of semi-delirium. Perhaps the idea of delirium is exaggerated here. But a quasi-creative state in which the next day we think: it was tiredness.

### To dive into the house

Two months ago they had no idea what it would be like, they just dived inside their homes and discovered a new day to day.

Day 1: you can't imagine! / Day 2: what moment is this? / Day 3: we try a different way... / Day 4: collective mourning / Day 5: (sad) / Day 6: she makes lunch and he makes dinner / Day 7: no writing / Day 8: a strange cough / Day 9: the country borders closed / Day 10: stopped reading the news before bed / Day 11: chatted online with friends / Day 12: despite being far away, feeling close to the family / Day 13: patience with oneself / Day 14: won't that cough go away? / Day 15: took the son to the pediatrician / Day 16: felt short of breath / Day 17: worrying symptoms / Day 18: better not go to the hospital / Still day 18: spent hours on the emergency line / Day 19: health center / Day 20: they recommended staying at home / Day 21 / Day 22 / Day 23: they seem to have improved / Day 24: meditate, eat well / Day 25: go back and forth around the house as if crossing the city / Day 26: (they played every day) / Day 27: they even got tired / Day 28: the three-year-old child is at the peak of human energy / Day 29 / Day 30: they almost got used to it / Days and more days: blue sky / Rain / Hot / Cold / Wind / The balcony door almost fell off / They took the door off / They don't even want to go out anymore / They have to invent ways to earn money / A week without a door / The sleeping pills are about to run out / I'm glad it's not winter / They need to ration the chicken / The light / The water / ...

Calm down, it's getting a little desperate and actually it wasn't quite like that, it wasn't only like that.

And what happened? What will happen?

### Detour I

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard<sup>1</sup> notes that, for a phenomenological study of the intimacy values of interior space, *the house* is a privileged being; as long as we consider both its unity and its complexity, trying to integrate all its values into a fundamental value. To think about *the house*, it would first be necessary to overcome problems of description and seek to achieve the primary virtue of the original function of dwelling.

While a geographer or an ethnographer would describe types of housing with varied cultural specificities, according to Bachelard, a phenomenologist would try to focus on the house, analyzing the reasons why it brings (or not) comfort to the subject.

The author mentions that all shelters and refuges have oneiric values and that true *well-beings* have a past. So that when we move to another house, a whole past comes to live in the new home and *the house* doesn't just live the day-to-day. Parallel times — memory and imagination — coexist simultaneously. Memories linked to *the house* would bring in a different tonality from outside memories, a tonality affected by emotion.

*The house*, for Bachelard, is one of the greatest forces of integration between human beings's thoughts, memories and dreams. In this integration, the connecting principle is reverie. Reverie is like dreaming awake, a state of wandering in which human beings let themselves be carried away by memories, imagination and dreams. Times — past, present and future — live in the house and without it human beings would be dispersed.

Thanks to the house, a large number of memories are kept and the more physically complex it is in its parts, between the attic, corners and corridors, our memories begin to have their best characterized refuges (I like to imagine this part).

<sup>1</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *A poética do espaço*. Tradução: Antônio de Pádua Danesi. São Paulo: Martins Fontes [1957] (2003). The author uses the Brazilian Portuguese version. (Translator's note).

Gaston Bachelard proposes, in *The poetics of space*, the concept of *topoanalysis*, defined as the systematic psychological study of the places of our intimate life. Through memories, one arrives at the poetic depth of the house's space. We return to it throughout our lives, daydreaming. Beyond the memories, the house of our birthplace would be physically inserted in us, in the impressions of our initial gestures, linked to the spatial possibilities that we had in that place in our early childhood and that are engraved in our being.

Thus, we would become like a diagram of the functions of inhabiting that house.

## Morning

It's morning. I woke up and I'm here, hiding in bed. I could be her. Today "he" woke up earlier. I get that impression from the noises he makes in the house. He sits and reads the news for a while (I imagine him happy about it, as if taking a breath — for him that's the way to start the day off right). Afterwards, I hear the noise of the fridge, a familiar creak, he took some dishes out of the washing machine (another joy of his is having this machine).

We arrived in Porto from Rio de Janeiro with a baby and four large suitcases, including a pressure cooker. After we struggled a bit with house keeping, we decided that, at least generally speaking, he did the dishes and I did the laundry. It was a good decision: we don't often make structural decisions. At first, I almost drowned in small pieces of clothing. Until I found the rhythm between washing, laying out, picking up and putting away, in their eternal cycles.

Today is Sunday. Not that it makes much difference, but it does it, legitimizes a little laziness. I'm under the blankets enjoying the peace before our son wakes up. Silence, serenity. He went back to reading the news. I imagine he thought twice about the noise he was making and decided to go back to enjoying that same peace in the living room. Without waking anyone else. We seem to hear the seconds tick by. We enjoy the seconds.

I started the day differently, instead of watching the news on my cell phone — going through email, Facebook, Instagram, the newspaper from here and the newspaper from there — distracting myself in between with more or less imposed news, or things that aren't even always that interesting... Instead, I read a short story by Clarice Lispector.

Reading Clarice usually evokes a revolution in me, my heart beats with every word I read. I like how she makes anything a potency. An egg on the kitchen table leads to metaphysical and political discussions, the roses in a vase can penetrate the character's soul and trigger countless pages of reflections. I think Clarice has the gift of unfolding everyday life and reveal it, turn it over, narrate it — inside and out of her characters. I have been finding more with the author in my readings, I read her with a certain moderation, there are stories like "*Amor*" ("Love") that take me days to digest. In this year, 2020, the centenary of her birth is celebrated. Last Christmas I got Clarice's book of short stories, it was "he" who gave it to me, I say him, without a name, not for lack of affection, but for a reserve of intimacy.

I look around and see a child's room: today I was the one who slept in this room. Colours, animals of all kinds, doodles and drawings, lots of cars, small saucepans, books. The children's room, in addition to the inherent protection of a room, is adorned with creativity and affection. A lot of history in each thing, of each one who gave it as a gift, of each moment in which it was acquired. A relatively controlled mess.

The rooms in this house face the street and the balcony, kitchen and living room face the interior of the court. On the other side of our window is a building with other windows, with shutters always closed. A dog lives there. Above the building it is possible to see a rectangle of sky and if we allow more time for this piece of sky we will see a depth in magnification.

It's lasting longer than I imagined the peace that precedes the son's waking up, I didn't even expect so much. Imagine the silence before a bomb explodes. Almost that. I feel a little hungry, but I choose to continue writing. A pigeon makes that typical pigeon noise in the square next door. Some birds also

speak out. The blanket continues to cover me with sleep. I think I need to wake him up or he risks wetting our bed.

But maybe I can stay a little longer, I think it's worth the risk. Will it be?

## Detour II

My "daily life", as we write in Brazil, has been made "everyday", and the places we visited were gradually being renamed. That is, they acquired the possibility of having two names.

At home, the restroom (*banheiro*) became a bathroom (*quarto de banho*), the toilet bowl (*privada*) has been given the name of toilet (*sanita*) and the discharge (*descarga*) is now called a flush (*autoclismo*) (some words take longer to adapt to). When we go out of the house, we need to tie the shoelaces (*cadarços/atacadores*) and, now in the middle of the pandemic, put on the mask — which has the same name here. And off we go, crossing sidewalks (*calçadas/passeios*); traffic lights (*sinais/semáforos*); zebra crossings (*faixas de pedestre/passadeiras*); until we find a big lawn (*gramado/relvado*) where we can be. With the social distancing allowed by the rules for the gradual social "deconfinement".

The pandemic was like diving into another layer of everyday life.

Interestingly, at that moment, I got closer to my ancestors, my memories and my other homes. The food, the smells, childhood. When I scrub the balcony with soap and water, I remember my grandmother, my mother and one of my first memories: when I was three years old, washing the porch while my father brought breadcrumbs with olive oil and oregano. This memory immediately connects me with other early childhood memories: the blue curtain, which filtered the light from outside, for my afternoon nap and at night, when I crossed the hallway, until I reached my parents' room and asked for "*lelinho*" (a caress on the ear). I also remember that the smallest gardens felt big. And how we penetrated the plants, my sister and I, just like into a forest.

I wake up every day and start over, not always with all the energy of a good night's sleep. Sometimes I start over very slowly, with patience and a certain resignation to doing what is necessary. I usually alternate between one day with enthusiasm and another day with less, or with much less.

If a perfect person from the planet Mars came down and learned that people on Earth get tired and grow old, they would feel pity and amazement. Never understanding what's good about being people, about feeling tired, about cracking every day; only the initiated would understand this nuance of vice and this refinement of life.<sup>2</sup> (Clarice Lispector)

I think of my paternal grandmother, daughter of Portuguese parents born in Brazil. She is a contemporary of Clarice Lispector, she is close to completing 90 years of age and the author would complete 100. Clarice writes a lot about the daily life of women in Rio de Janeiro. My grandmother creates a link with that time.

Vó Tininha is now experiencing this crazy moment of Covid-19 in her apartment, with two caregivers taking turns. We are left with our hearts in our hands, each isolated in our own homes, waiting for this to pass in time to embrace her. Last time we spoke it was Mother's Day, she said she was afraid we wouldn't see each other anymore. I told her not to worry, that as soon as I could, I'd get on a plane and we'd be together. I didn't tell her I shared that fear as well.

<sup>2</sup> Freely translated from: "Se uma pessoa perfeita do planeta Marte descesse e soubesse que as pessoas da Terra se cansavam e envelheciam, teria pena e espanto. Sem entender jamais o que havia de bom em ser gente, em sentir-se cansada, em diariamente falir; só os iniciados compreenderiam essa nuance de vício e esse refinamento da vida". Clarice Lispector, "A imitação da Rosa", in *Todos os contos*. São Paulo: Rocco. (2016: 133-147)

### Almost lunch

(S) son and (M) mother.

- S** Mine is first, right? I saw already. This one here already.  
Look mom, from dinosaurs.
- M** Which one do you want? Have you seen them all?
- S** I've seen it first, the one I chose, I've seen of them all. Did you know?
- M** So you want it again?
- S** Huhmm, hey big Triceratops with the horn, I've seen it. Stopped?
- M** It's the internet... just a minute.
- S** You are doing more than me, why?
- M** Because I'm writing. I will go back to pick another one.
- S** Same, okay?
- M** Wow, the same?
- S** I want my share here, oh mother.
- M** No, the computer is on the mother's lap.... Shall we see this one?
- S** I don't want to.
- M** It's a real tiny mouse.
- S** No, it's not, it's a movie tiny mouse.
- M** It's real, son.
- S** I want this, and this, and this, to do it like this and then lock it up, okay mom?
- M** I also thought it is cool.
- S** And then do like this, and do like this and like this, okay?
- M** Huhmm
- S** Do you see that it's not real?
- M** They are magnet small balls.
- S** I want the little balls that hold, I do want to hold.
- M** I liked it too, do you want them for your birthday?
- S** Yes, I do want, so I can arrest, I want, okay, mom?
- M** Huhmm
- S** I want it for my birthday. I saw something falling over there, it went like this and boom.

- M** Is it?
- S** I want for BIRTHDAY, a little magnet ball, okay?
- M** Huhmm
- S** So I can play this game. Oh, it's doing it. Did you see mom?
- M** I didn't see it. Oh there! I saw it. Oh, it started again.
- S** I want the one with the little mice.
- M** Soon the internet will come back.
- S** So I'm going to see another one, okay?
- M** Oh, it's making an amusement park for the little mice!
- S** That's it, it's over.
- M** Oh, put some food in the middle.
- S** They entered.
- M** The first hamster entered.
- S** I want the park with little mice, okay? They are hungry.
- M** Ich...
- S** I want to choose another one.
- M** Uh, son, this one has fish.
- S** Real fish?
- M** Fish mixed with toys. Oh, how nervous, they look like little snakes.
- S** I want...
- M** Just the toy, without the animals, okay?
- S** It's good...
- M** Mom is going to make lunch, I'll let you watch, ok?
- S** Yeah. It was a lot, huh?
- M** I wrote a lot, right?
- S** Every day.
- M** Okay, I'll go there then. I'm going to enlarge your drawing to full screen.

### The afternoons

Here I have not written about the long afternoons, the way sleep invades me after lunch, and the times I tried, in vain, to lull my three-year-old son to sleep.



And I didn't even talk about the short afternoons, the strategies  
for working and caring,  
juggling between the rooms of the house,  
in juggling with the great movement of the world.

Here I didn't write about going out in a mask,  
about sterilizing all clothes, fruits and vegetables,  
about how a purchase became an all-day program.  
About how much less we are consuming and how happy we are  
about it,  
or about how we got closer to our neighbors.

Here I did not write about what we felt about the closing  
of borders,  
when we realize our families across the ocean,  
and when to see them again became beyond our choices.

I didn't write, either, about all the deaths,  
nor about hospital admissions, risk groups, curves and graphs,  
I didn't describe all the political nonsense and the economic crisis.  
How each country and government takes stock of the values of  
lives,  
about the depression of confined young people,  
or about those who don't even have water or a home to isolate  
themselves.

I also didn't write about a certain state of suspension,  
to be without work, without knowing,  
trying to invent other ways,  
in the gaps of the inexorable daily tasks.

I also didn't talk about the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions,  
and not even about the rivers becoming clean as it hasn't been  
longer seen.  
The photos of dolphins in the canals of Venice,  
the turtles at ease on the beaches,  
and wild animals traversing deserted cities.

Here I haven't talked about how I'm perceiving  
dimensions differently,  
and how the scales of imagination sometimes take us...  
The potted plant is a park where we spend the afternoon,  
the dinosaurs of other times, which became concrete,  
the Porto-Lisbon train that crosses forests of fitting pieces,  
the adventures on the mountain of doodles, among wax  
crayons and other animals.

Here I didn't write about the first walk we took to the beach  
after months,  
to see the sea, to breathe, to run,  
to see our son barefoot,  
to make a large spiral of sand,  
to dip our foot in the icy water.  
To look at the horizon with its wandering line.

### Final Detour

(I) of Interviewer and (T) of Systemic Therapist  
(Live on Instagram)

- I Come on, try again, thank you loves, for continuing.
- I I made this invitation because I really wanted to introduce you and I wanted you to speak... about what the *Family Constellation* is. Oh guys, I'm sounding crazy talking to myself here.
- T It is what it is, it's what it is... (The therapist does not appear but we continue to hear her voice).
- I People are talking here to do a test, is that it?
- T I don't know, I'm listening to you, waiting for the connection to be made.
- I So, I would like you to tell us about the *Family Constellation*.
- T Let's go, so let's flow.
- I So, I asked a question and you didn't listen. People are telling me not to be nervous, but oh, I'm super calm if it

has to happen it will happen, I'm also believing in the flow. I will try one more time. Oops, I can see you.

T Can you see me?

I You look wonderful, diva, but you froze in an image. How shall we do it?

T I'll keep talking and we'll be feeling it, it's an energy field, right?

I So let's go. Explain to us what *Family Constellation* is.

T *Family Constellation* is a brief therapy where we open a Morphogenetic Field. It's a Quantum Field, and there in that field, transgenerational memories can be revealed. Because we walk towards the past or the future. Then, energetically, you can make love flow again at the source, where the blockage happened. That sometimes it wasn't in us, sometimes it's further back, and then the field reveals it. The *Constellation* is systemic. That is, it is a whole, made up of interconnected parts. Our body is systemic, we have several parts. The heart, the legs ... and if we exclude a part, the body feels it.

I This is super deep...

T This field is a field that belongs to Biology. It's called the Morphogenetic Field. So, in this field there is memory transmission. For those who watched the movie Avatar, there was that tree, in that tree the people connected with the memories of everything. That is, this field is this, this infinite possibility of going to the past and going to the future to make love flow again.

I Alright, except that we believe in this Quantum Field that the past...

T (interrupts). You feel.

I The present and the future are here...

T You feel it, you feel it in your body. It is material, but it is experiential, it is experience.

I Yes, but it's here and now, we're not talking about...

T (interrupts again). Yes, it's not time travel. In the case of the open *Constellation*, we use representatives...

I Calm down, calm down. (Intervenes). For people to understand, because there are people who are listening and don't even know what *Family Constellation* is.

T Right.

I It exists in groups, right? And individual. I've done both and I think they're very powerful.

T And the third one is online, right? That we can do.

I Laughter...

T And the field is there, it is here. Everyone is connected. Who came, came to receive the subject that really resonates, right? With everyone here.

(At this point I stopped listening and finished washing the dishes).

## Dinner

(S) son, (M) mother and (F) father.

S Mom comes, it's ready, and it's pasta!

M I'm coming, son.

S Hmmmm, pasta is my favorite.

F Is it, son? Then we have to go to Italy.

S Why?

F Because there is the "land of pastas".

(...)

S Did you know that Amargasaurus is a dinosaur?

F Is it, son?

M Why are you sad?

S Movie with ice cream?

F Not chocolate at this hour, son.

S Ahhhh, I just wanted it so, so, so, so much.

F I'll prepare a little fruit for you, ok?

S Hmmmm, no way.

M What's that, son...?

F I'll arrange it here for you to watch a movie.

M Help dad put the lego together.

S I want to eat something with the film.

F I'll get you an apple.

S I think I want something else.  
 F Are you serious? What do you want?  
 S You know...

### Seeing the day end

To see the day ending on paper,  
 to write until you can't descry anymore.  
 To watch the natural light fading,  
 without screen mediation or any other artificial light,  
 feel the wind,  
 see the first stars.

From staying at home so much, we lost a little the sense of  
 the surroundings.  
 As if the house was some sort of autonomous capsule,  
 the cause for so much reverie, perhaps.

I hear a flute that crosses the space into my ear,  
 from the same balcony that during the day I hear the sound  
 of construction work.  
 The balcony is the threshold space between the inside and  
 the outside,  
 it divides the house from a great mass of air.  
 This air moves to encounter other planes and volumes,  
 creating a negative mould of the city.

The seagulls say goodbye to the day and make a point of  
 entering the story,  
 they communicate with each other in a sonorous gradient  
 that seems to move down the Douro River to Foz.

As it gets dark, I see the light of other lives being lit  
 around Bonfim.  
 Each life opens into roots,  
 spreads in ideas, in gestures, in every little thing.  
 A constellation of lives connect across the world.

We stopped counting the days.  
 Nothing has happened, even though so much has happened.  
 Or, a lot has happened despite no major events.

Today I received good news and bad news.  
 If I smoked cigarettes they would be a good company now,  
 time,  
 space,  
 pause.

\*  
 \*\*

# (Re)building attention: the world like an architectural photograph

Jorge Marques

The idea poetically expressed in this image — the *world* looks like a photograph of architecture — makes present a kind of modern awe. It is a somewhat incomprehensible image, an unimaginable image. It is an image without the slightest human trace. An image without humanity. It is an image that incorporates the result of the isolation condition resulting from the first state of emergency, (decreed on March 18, 2020), as a response to the pandemic situation.

How do you look at a *world* where — in the images we saw (then) of cities — you see nothing more than architecture, its objects and the texture of places? How does one look at a world that looks like this?

What brings us closer to these images, beyond their *disquieting strangeness* and the perplexity they cause, is also the expectation that we can restore the smallest gesture of human presence. It is, in a certain sense, an attempt to rescue some (human) empathy from these images, originating from personal experiences of living (the places). This is also what these images make evident. It is implied a kind of reciprocity (of actions) which reminds us of ‘what is’ and ‘what is missing’.

## 1

The *natural* alignment of the Project and Place Survey *practices*,<sup>1</sup> coherents with an idea of presence (in place), one which combines living and experience, was clearly affected by the context of the pandemic to which those *images* allude. Restrictions on the use of public space limited the exploration of places, their paths and itineraries, but also their deviations and abysses. It was therefore necessary to review what it was possible to do, how to do it, or ultimately, how to integrate, or remake, the (lived) experience, its *images* and memories, within the scope of the Units of Project and of the Place Survey.

Public space, as a setting for social interaction, was also profoundly altered. In particular, with the limitation of the right

<sup>1</sup> “Drawing and Project” and “Drawing and Place Survey” are Curricular Units of the Study Plan of the Master of Art and Design for the Public Space, Fine Arts Faculty, University of Porto (FBAUP).



of movement and, with it, the material and symbolic functions of individual and collective activities. Interpersonal relationships, fundamental to spatial organization, and that organize the distances of interactions — *body and place/ body and object/ object and place* — gained another meaning. The idea of a safe, measurable distance was the *new order* in the organization of interactions. Distance not only marked the (physical) interval of interactions, it also determined the involvement of the body and the senses in the experience of surveying or recognizing the place.

The senses (of the body) expand (our) ability to *feel* and endow the experience of feeling and thinking. And this is an important condition to understand how we affect and let ourselves be affected by the place. It is from the presence, in the place, that we assume a greater or lesser emotional or affective involvement with people, with things and, naturally, with *places*. Presence favors the recognition, in the public space, of the factors of symbolic identification of belonging and presence — *being/being at*<sup>2</sup> — so that we can identify our own interests and our scale of preferences or choices.

Any representation implies a choice, a program, that links experience to the continuous unfolding of places, of things and of events. Through the phenomenology of perception, we can look for ways to understand and embody experience in the representations of places. Still, according to Steven Holl,<sup>3</sup> an incomplete representation. The spatial experience has an open ending, it forms a network of *representations* — perspectives, plans, vanishing points, horizon lines, (...) — diagrams, flowcharts, graphic annotations, — an *entangled experience*, in Holl's language, which links experience and representation, or the combination between *field/subject/representation*, in Alberto Carneiro's language.

<sup>2</sup> "Ser" and "estar" in the Portuguese language could be distinguished as, the first, referring to a 'condition of being' and the latter to 'a state of being'. (Translator's Note).

<sup>3</sup> Steven Holl, *Cuestiones de percepción. Fenomenología de la arquitectura*. Barcelona: GG mínima, (2018: 21).

## 2

Vision *makes the world into a window*, in which we perceive what is in front of us, and in which we also perceive the importance of our own look. When we look or observe a place, we always assume a certain point of view. It is generically about assuming a point from which we observe the place, often without being aware of the limits that our position entails and circumscribes. From this point on, we also assume a set of *geometric* relationships with the built forms and with the different interaction scenarios. We assume an observation angle and position. We look at the place from frontally or obliquely, we look from above or below, we approach or move away from things and it is from these conditions that we perceive and understand the place. We are unconsciously repeating this model. We add views and observations, building images, diagrams, creating relationships, for a more complete representation of the place.

Being, closer or further away from the place, always implies the construction of a (new) point of view for observation. And whenever we change positions, the point of view changes. And with it, also change, the limits and conditions of observation and of what is possible to observe. But changing the point of view doesn't just mean changing the angle or position of observation. It must mean, above all, assuming another attitude of observation, which is to incorporate in the observation the demonstration of an intention, and to assume another way of seeing and understanding things and the place. In a sense, it is about determining what we want to *see* and how we want to *see* it (things and place).

Changing the attitude of *observation* is also training the gaze to an active attention in response to external stimuli, from slow and contemplative gaze and attention to abbreviated and *responsive* gaze and attention in reaction to a stimulus. In a certain sense, it is about adapting, altering, modifying, or intensifying the way of perceiving and understanding the place, based on observation. Observation brings with it a radical and silent change in its function. It brings attention. To look

carefully. And looking carefully requires concentration, care and effort to understand, to notice what is happening.

### 3

It is through vision that — *looking at* — we perceive the reflexivity of our body, a body that looks and can also look at itself in the relationship that is built with what is within sight. And if something is within sight, it is open to the involvement of the senses (of the body). A form of attention, ‘as an experiential continuum’ (Holl, 2018: 18).

I remember a short text by José Tolentino Mendonça, who says: “only when we notice, do we begin to see”, because, in his words, “to notice transports to the act of seeing a polysemy and an ethics”.<sup>4</sup> A kind of *pedagogy of vision*, in the language of Byung-Chul Han,<sup>5</sup> capable of educating the gaze *towards deep and contemplative attention*, towards a slow and prolonged vision. But noticing requires more than that. Because what it *alludes* to introduces into the gaze, in addition to this necessary attention, a kind of *restoration process*, on what we are looking at. In the language of Tolentino de Mendonça, it is a process capable of renewing, improving, retouching, not only the look, but visibility itself. A kind of empathic process, which involves a connection (intellectual or affective) with the condition of what ‘is at’ or what ‘is’ visible. Considering the *pandemic images* again, to notice renews the expectation that we can restore, the (spatial) experience and the smallest *trace* of human presence that these images can still contain.

### 4

*To (re)construct attention*, in a way, synthesizes the dramatization of the spatial experience. Experience needs silence and concentration for what is observed, for what is heard, in order

<sup>4</sup> José Tolentino de Mendonça, *A mística do instante*, Prior Velho: Paulinas, (2014: 187).

<sup>5</sup> Byung-Chul Han, *A Sociedade do Cansaço*, Lisboa: Relógio D'Água, (2014: 39).

to understand what is happening. The spatial experience needs attention. In the language of Yi-Fu Tuan, a silent space appears calm, lifeless and the spatial experience is limited as is the ability to extrapolate beyond the perceived data. A certain form of inability to act, to do, a kind of *inoperative operation*, in the language of Agamben, which can nevertheless become an act of mindfulness of phenomena and simultaneously awaken all the senses and all the complexities of perception (Holl, 2018: 12).

The experience, through which *reality* is known and constructed, and which always implies the ability to learn from one’s own experience, is (was) replaced, essentially, by memory and what is (was) possible to create from it.

The breadth of spatial experience encompasses what each person knows and builds from their own experience. And for that, you need both memory and experience, because experimenting is also learning and giving meaning to *capacities and needs*, in order to build *reality*. But to experience, according to Yi-Fu Tuan, is *to overcome dangers*, — to see if it can be achieved — to risk the unknown and *experience the illusory and the uncertain*.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps faced with the risk of becoming passive and vulnerable, it was necessary to resist. “How should we [can we] think about an inoperability that consists in contemplating our power, what we can or cannot do?”<sup>7</sup>

### 5

This exceptional public health situation made it evident that we were not prepared to radically change our relationship with things, with people and with the world. Although *each era has its paradigmatic diseases*, as Byung-Chul Han (2014: 9) would say, that leave their mark in the confrontation with the fear of a generalized pathological situation. It was evident the need to

<sup>6</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, University of Minnesota Press, (2001: 2).

<sup>7</sup> Giorgio Agamben, Giacomo Marrao, Jacques Rancière, Peter Sloterdijk, *Política/Politics*, Rui Mota Cardoso (Coord.), Porto: Fundação Serralves, (2007: 44).

draw up a plan that would help to describe, but also to understand, the *discourse* for a paradigm shift in response to the unfolding of the situation. A change that became difficult with the outbreak of information, often contradictory. Information aligned between fear, chaos, and other, in the search for a way out or any order that would not lead us “to fatigue and the feeling of suffocation”, as Byung-Chul Han writes (2014: 15), given the excess of information. This situation has made us almost unable to understand and identify movements on the various fronts of this pandemic circumstance.

As is often the case, in the course of catastrophic situations, entirely new fields of research and problems open up. From an experiential perspective, this happens because the *map* that organized, until then, social, spatial and temporal interactions is somehow lost, but also what of the latter connects us to the experience or living with the *other*, with their *objects* and meanings. It is, in a way, about understanding and giving meaning to a new (another) way of being, faced with a reality that involves some risk and that places limits on the exercise of some fundamental rights. Resisting does not just mean guaranteeing some of our rights and freedoms, it also means defending ourselves against the risks of losing the opportunity to learn from our experience. As a process of reconstruction from the original tension and from which it is necessary to understand an echo of *man* and his power to act, in Agamben’s language.

\*  
\*\*

# Error and coexistence: notes for a theory of co-creation

Federico L. Silvestre

This text is one of the first results of the research project entitled *Paisajes y arquitecturas del error. Contra-historia del paisaje en la historia latina (1945-2020)* financed by the Ministry of Science and Innovation of the Government of Spain (*Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación del Gobierno de España*, reference code: PID2020-112921GB-I00) within the 2020 call for *Proyectos de I+D+i en el Marco de los Programas Estatales de Generación de Conocimiento y Fortalecimiento Científico y Tecnológico del Sistema de I+D+i*.

A mystery are those of pure origin.  
Even song may hardly unveil it.<sup>1</sup>  
— Friedrich Hölderlin

Absolutely fascinating are the verses that Hölderlin dedicates to the Rhine. *Ein Rätsel ist Reinent-sprungenes* can be translated as Eduardo Gil proposes, that is, as “What is purely born is an enigma.” Now, it can also be read as “The absolutely fountainly is a mystery” and even, if a letter (h) is added to *Reinent-sprungenes* and it becomes *Rheinentsprungenes*, as “The Rhine fountain is a mystery.” The way in which poetry stammers and expresses the multiplicities that affect us is something that always reminds us of the key — that, just as the murmur of our inner river has to do with the roar of the external source, so the intuition of the excess of the world always links with the creative impulse. Of course, the landscape is always “cocreator”: that anonymous and mute place that makes possible the “coexistence” of the disparate or the *disparating*. That is why the reflection on the landscape spontaneously drifts towards a new theory of creation, one less “authorial” and less obsessed with the signature of the creative artist. Let’s say that Bruno Latour’s entire approach to Gaia and the coexistence of the different “modes of existence”<sup>2</sup> will become a sum of good intentions without much more to contribute, if a theory and praxis of “co-creation” does not derive from it.

The paradox of the matter is that there is nothing more everyday than that kind of creation based on the convergence of the disparate. And, that is why the theories of “being-with” and “co-create” have developed. On the one hand, it is worth referring to the work of that transcendental empiricism that

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Hölderlin, “The Rhine” in *Poems and fragments*, London: Anvil Press Poetry, (2005: 501), Translated by Michael Hamburger.

<sup>2</sup> See Bruno Latour, “Between modernizing and ecologizing, we have to choose” (p. 8) in “Introduction. Trusting institutions again?” in *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence. An Anthropology of the Moderns*, Harvard Uni Press, Cambridge: Mass. & London, England, (2013). The author uses the Castilian version: Bruno Latour, “Entre modernizar y ecologizar hay que elegir” in “Introducción. ¿Tener nuevamente confianza en las instituciones?” of *Investigación sobre los modos de existencia. Una antropología de los modernos*, Buenos Aires: Paidós, (2013: 24-38).

will go from Whitehead to Deleuze passing through Simondon and that proves itself capable of moving from becoming individuating to “co-creative”. And, on the other hand, it is worth remembering that line of Germanic roots that should be associated with the idea of *Mit-sein* and that, beginning in Feuerbach, will finally be found in Nancy.

### a) Co-Creation

On the one hand, it is worth recalling the lines of the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead on “co-creation.” By defining “creativity” in relation to the “Whole” and the “category of the Ultimate”, Whitehead left behind centuries and centuries of art theories and solipsistic genesis for a kind of rhizomatic or natural-masonic theory of creation. Faced with the traditional presentation of it, he preferred to speak of “concrecences”. In this regard, he said:

‘Creativity’ is the universal of universals that characterizes the ultimate fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the *many*, which are the universe in the disjunctive sense, become the *one* current occasion, which is the universe in the conjunctive sense. It is in the very nature of things that the *many* form part of a complex unit. [...] Thus, the ‘production of new conjunction’ is the ultimate notion contained in the term ‘concrecence’.<sup>3</sup>

What is Whitehead trying to do? With the idea of “concrecence” Whitehead tries to refer to a world so rich that it precedes all subjectivity but which, nevertheless, makes it possible. The

simple overlaps are not only infinitely varied given the multiplicity that constitutes them, but they can go from the merely *iectum* of the junctions and the mere “abject” juxtapositions to the *coniectum* of the first conjunctions. But, in turn, these other equivocal juxtapositions can give way to “concrecences” in which some elements or parts become “apprehended” by others. That is where the coordinated unit begins, that is, the *subiectum*. But influencing the process allows Whitehead to connect the “chaos” of disjunctive multiplicities with the “occasion” or “opportunity” of the “event” par excellence that is the appearance of each new coordinating “subjectivity.” Now, since the starting point is the *Many*, before accessing the hierarchical unit, these “epigenetic events” or occasional or momentary sparkles — the *actual occasions* — are “co-creative” processes. In front of the mere Newtonian “datum” and the simple “concept” of rationalism, there will be the equivocal junctions and the “epigenetic concrecences” — which go from the mere paratactic juxtaposition to the conatus of coordination [*disparation*] and to the “inoperative community”. But, against the optimistic assumption of unity and teleological coordination of the *Whole*, there will be the always individuating “concrecences” that unite the eternally disjunctive multiplicities.

Needless to say, if Simondon’s concept of *disparation* runs parallel to Whitehead’s “production of a new conjunction”, the Deleuzian-Guattarian emphasis on “compossibility”, on disjunctive-synthetic becomings, and on “bodies without organs” will be directly inspired by the same presentation of the problem.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the close proximity of Deleuze’s thought to that of Whitehead emerges in the dialogue that the Frenchman establishes between the latter and Leibniz himself. Why do we live in the best of all possible worlds? Not

<sup>3</sup> See Alfred N. Whitehead, *Proceso y realidad*, Girona: Atalanta, (2021: 109–110), (quoted from the Castilian version). Whitehead then added something certainly interesting: “These ultimate notions of ‘novelty production’ and ‘concrete conjunction’ are inexplicable both from broader universals and from components participating in the concrecence. Component analysis produces abstraction from concrecence. You can only appeal to intuition.” (Translated quote). Alfred North Whitehead published *Process and Reality* in 1929, following his Gifford Lectures. (Translator’s note).

<sup>4</sup> See Gilbert Simondon, *La individuación a la luz de las nociones de forma e información*, Buenos Aires: La Cebra, (2009: 244 (quoted from the Castilian version) for the idea of *disparation*. For the idea of “the body without organs” see Deleuze, Gilles; Guattari, Félix: *El Anti Edipo*, Barcelona: Paidós, (2004: 17–24), and for the “con-possibility” of the disparate, see Deleuze, Gilles; Guattari, Félix: *Mil mesetas*, Valencia: Pre-Textos, (2004: 155–172), (quoted from the Castilian versions).

because that world is already programmed from Eternity and for Eternity. Nor because it responds to any great story or any objective or final goal. No matter how beautiful it may be, any closed or unequivocal conception of the cosmos or of the logos turns the world and identity into something similar to *The Truman Show*. It is precisely when the “cosmos” is conceived as “*chaosmos*”, and when any thing or organism is thought of as “chaotic” and multiple, that the world becomes excessive again and, precisely for this reason, breathable, that is, perpetually open to those new “concrecences” that, by definition, even after being forged, remain multiple and open.<sup>5</sup>

## b) Being-With

On the other hand, it will be the German philosophy of the 19th century that will develop an idea little known outside the specialized field but of great interest to us, we are talking about the notion of *Mit-sein*. The person who started to develop it was the Christian philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, who, in his time, used it to criticize both Stirner’s individualist anarchism and the Hegelian ideas of “being-for-itself” and “being-in-itself”, always for the benefit of a “being-with” infinitely less “anthropomorphic” and “subjective”.<sup>6</sup> Despite the criticism he received in his time, Feuerbach’s emphasis on the flesh, the emotion and the sensuality, propitiatory of “intersubjectivity”, will have a remarkable run in the 20th century. Before, in the aftermath of the Second World War, both the members of the Frankfurt School, as well as the anarchist surrealists and the situationists begin to read and quote him, Martin Heidegger will strongly develop the thesis of a “being-with” in dialogue

<sup>5</sup> See Gilles Deleuze, “¿Qué es un acontecimiento?” in *El Pliegue*, Barcelona: Paidós, (1989: 101-108), (quoted from the Castilian version).

<sup>6</sup> See Ludwig Feuerbach, “Principios de la filosofía del futuro” in *Tesis provisionales – Principios de la filosofía del futuro*, Barcelona: Orbis, (1984: § 60), (quoted from the Castilian version) in which he says: “Loneliness is finitude and limitation; community is freedom and infinity. Man for himself is man (in the usual sense); man with man—the unity of the I and the Thou—is God.” (Translated quote. Italics in the Castilian version).

with their “being-there” to the point of equating them. And what is valuable about it is that it will show the impossibility of defining “being” from a perfect autonomy or from a supposedly free “subject”. Nothing is completely autonomous, ergo, everything “is-with”.<sup>7</sup>

A disciple of Heidegger, Hans George Gadamer, will later develop a beautiful theory of the game that is based on the ontology of “being-with” and that, without a doubt, can help us to better understand the idea, because in it he showed that the essential in many games and “co-creations” was no longer neither a concrete player with his own theory or “project”, nor a toy or ball, but the game itself with its infinite “paths”. Somehow, in these games the “subject” is no longer, neither this, nor that, and the toy or ball does not act as an “object” either, but rather plays a role; in these games the subject — what is imposed as essence to the parts or elements — is the whole of the game itself.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, to better understand the success of Feuerbach’s community theses after the Second World War, it is worth mentioning: from the Frankfurt School, not only Marcuse, but also Alfred Schmidt and his Feuerbach or emancipated sensuality — published in German in 1973 shortly after Schmidt’s new edition of Feuerbach’s texts in 1967 —; from post-war anarchist surrealism, those who mentioned it in the magazine *Le Libertaire*; and, from Situationism, to Guy Debord who quotes Feuerbach right at the beginning of *The Society of the Spectacle* of 1967, probably because he was familiar with Schmidt’s edition.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Martin Heidegger, *Introducción a la filosofía*, Madrid, Cátedra, (1999: § 13, § 18, 92-98 and 149-160, 467-468). Heidegger will present his critique of both the free “subject” of traditional humanism and the “autotelic” path of Hegelian or Marxist idealism in his *Carta sobre el humanismo*, Madrid: Alianza, (2000). That “subject” appears, in his thought, overwhelmed by an “existing” “project”, that is, thrown into the world and implicated in it.

<sup>8</sup> See Hans-George Gadamer, “El juego como hilo conductor de la explicación ontológica” in *Verdad y método*, I, Salamanca: Sígueme, (1977: 143-182), (quoted from the Castilian version) — with the occasional unexpected reference to Portmann and biology.

<sup>9</sup> See Alfred Schmidt, *Feuerbach o la sensualidad emancipada*, Madrid, Taurus, 1975; Gérard Legrand, “El rostro de la libertad es un rostro de mujer (15 de febrero d(e 1952)” in Plinio Coelho, (ed.),



Finally, it will be Jean-Luc Nancy who, basing himself on that tradition as well as on Heidegger's work, insists on *Mit-sein*. In fact, as in the case of Deleuze and Guattari, such a notion will not only allow him to blur traditional identities and subjectivities by considering them crossed by pluralities — this is what he is trying to do when speaking of the *Being Singular Plural* —, but, in the opposite sense, it will also allow him to propose emerging subjectivities or “proto-subjectivities” in the unforeseen spaces of the “inoperative communities”.<sup>10</sup>

### c) Of Errancies and Epigenesis

Transiting again from the current that springs from Feuerbach to the one that dialogues with Whitehead, it is easy to realize that what is exposed in both is not only a new ontology, but a new “ontogenetics”. If the idea of the autonomous being and creator is defenestrated there, it is because it is shown that all creation has to do with certain implicit wanderings in the games of multiplicities put in agreement.

Undoubtedly, it is possible to bet on “coexistences” and, without a doubt, “we are what enters us”,<sup>11</sup> but, in order to approach the infinite problem of creation, it does not suffice to say that. It is necessary to ask about what introduces novelty and difference in the midst of the eternal return of frictions and pairings. Well, our emphasis on the “faculty to err” goes in that direction. In our opinion, there are two sources of creation: the unforeseen overlaps that come out of wanderings and physical games, and the also new junctions that come out of meanderings and dreams. Picking up the tradition that repeated that

Surrealismo y anarquismo. Proclamas surrealistas en ‘Le Libertaire’, Buenos Aires: Libros de Anarres, (2005: 77); Guy Debord, *Oeuvres*, Paris: Gallimard, (2006: 766), (quoted from the Castilian and French versions).

<sup>10</sup> See Jean-Luc Nancy, *Ser singular plural*, Madrid: Arena Libros, 2006; and, of the same author, “El ser-en-común” in *La comunidad desobrada*, Madrid, Arena, (2001: 149–174), (quoted from the Castilian versions). English versions: Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, Stanford University Press, 2000 and *The Inoperative Community*, University of Minnesota Press, (1991).

<sup>11</sup> See Ignacio Castro Rey, *Sexo y silencio*, Valencia, Pre-Textos, (2021: 61), (quoted from the Castilian version).

of the *errare humanum est*, the Dutch artist Herman de Vries coined the phrase: *ambulo ergo sum*. And, in fact, if something “exposes” us to the world and “lays down” our weapons, it is that wandering openness to what can enter or touch us, that is, the set of bodily, nutritional, sexual, genetic and neural infinite “errancies”.

It is with these openings that the *Sein* is confirmed as *Mit-sein*. As such a being neither imposes nor submits, it is convenient to avoid projecting on him the idea of *subiectum* that still fascinated Whitehead. But reducing it — in the behaviorist way — to a mere *objectum*, would also not serve to explain the eternally novel or creative processes that occur everywhere. For this reason, taking for granted that the “faculty to err” refers to an innocent and primal desire that turns us into a mere *traiectum*, in the face of both extremes it would only be convenient to speak of “co-creative games”. The “faculty to err” is only the ability of the living being to open oneself to that excessive world and to those games in which one is no longer a mere creative “subject”, but rather a *traiectum* or “subgame” within a “pretelic” game, both internal as external.<sup>12</sup>

Every subject and every guiding program establishes a purpose, a *telos*, or a clear genetic paragon for what must

<sup>12</sup> The theoretical value of the idea of the “obgame” or *objeu* —the closest thing to our “subgame” or *subjeu*— was suggested by Pierre Fédida but from a still conservative psychoanalytic perspective. Fédida associated the *objeu* with the systematic search for desire, but, on the other hand, also linked it to something called “Absence” very close to the Freudian-Lacanian “Lack” (in this regard, see Fédida: “L’‘object’ — Objet, jeu et enfance. L’espace psychotérique” in *L’absence*, Paris: Gallimard, (1978: 97–195). In fact, Fédida spoke of object and not of *subjeu* or “subgame”, not so much under the influence of the poet Francis Ponge (who was the one who coined the expression *objeu*: “Le Soleil placé en abîme”, in *Le Grand Recueil, III, Pièces*, Paris, Gallimard, (1961: 151–188), as of the “little object a” of Lacan, of Freud’s children’s game, or of the horizon of meaning [*Bedeutungsrichtung*] of Heidegger’s work of art. Of course, it is not by chance that a great friend of Fédida, the *khôra* theorist Julia Kristeva, also linger from that “obgame” in dialogue with his theory of the *ab-iectum*, which, in turn, she distinguished from the *ob-iectum* (see Julia Kristeva: “On objection” in *Powers of perversion*, Mexico: Siglo XXI, (2004: 7–9). Faced with all of them, our “subgame” or *subjeu* owes much more to “desire” that “does not lack anything”, and to “the objective being of desire” that “is the Real in itself”, of Deleuze and Guattari: *The Anti Oedipus*, *Op. cit.*, (2004: 33–34).



be developed. On the contrary, the “pretelic” mixture of “quasi-causes” or crossed elements that the world offers to the wanderer,<sup>13</sup> as well as his unpredictable wanderings and dreams, is the double source of those “co-creations” that always become “events.” In this regard, the Stoics already knew how to value the matter and, although they insisted too much on the idea of “destiny”, they did not fail to glimpse the excessive chaos that is hidden behind the work of “comprehension” of laws and principles. In this sense, Emile Brehier, a great specialist could say that:

The event is an effect, an incorporeal which, as such, is only an effect and never a cause, always passive. If it is determined, it is in relation to a cause which is itself a real being of a totally different nature from it. Fate is this real cause, this corporeal reason according to which events are determined, but [it] is not at all a law according to which they would determine each other. Since, on the other hand, there is a multiplicity of causes, since the reason of the universe contains the multiple seminal reasons of all beings, destiny is called “the connection of causes” [...].<sup>14</sup>

As Catherine Malabou suggests, the processes open to this event offer performances and metamorphoses that are albeit

<sup>13</sup> The terms “pretelic” and “supratelic” are ours, but both ideas are inspired by Heidegger and Schürmann. Reiner Schürmann states it clearly in *El principio de la anarquía*, Madrid: Arena Libros, (2017: 363–37), (quoted from the Castilian version). Aristotle founded Western teleological thought and Heidegger will de-teleologize it by pointing to those “forest paths” devoid of purpose. For this issue, which is the distinction between the ontic and the ontological but presented in a fresher way and closer to our wandering thought, you can also consult Peter Trawny, *Fuga del error. La anarquía de Heidegger*, Madrid: Herder, (2016). The theory of multiple “quasi-causes” that do not allow us to foresee “ultimate ends” or the “effect” or “event” is of Gilles Deleuze, “De la doble causalidad” in *Logica del Sentido / Logic of sense*, Barcelona: Paidós, (2005: 126–127). (All quotes from the Castilian versions).

<sup>14</sup> See Emile Brehier, *La théorie des incorporels dans l'ancien stoïcisme*, Paris, Vrin, (1907: 35) – this book, which fascinated Deleuze for decades, was still being republished again in 1997, (quoted from the French version).

passive, but always surprising. Nobody knows the exact Picasoian dimension that a face can acquire after an accident; like nobody knows how a certain semi-broken couple will survive infidelity.<sup>15</sup> Now, not only are the effects of the accident always surprising, but — although a posteriori we can explain its causes — what is interesting about error and chance is that, a priori, such intersections of elements could not be foreseen either.

Departing from this world of multiple unexpectedly juxtaposed “quasi-causes” that define unpredictable “events”, it is easier to arrive at understanding our insistence on “co-creations”. The unexpected game of gibbons and tigers that was recently filmed in the jungle is just one example of this type of passive “events” resulting from strange conjunctions that advance towards “concrecences”. In any case, in order to understand what is at stake there it is not enough to appeal to the goodness of “coexistence”, but to show to what extent these almost always emerge from wandering biographies and lives at risk. For example, speaking of these vital games, Roger Caillois not only valued those well directed or organized by programmed adaptations, but also cataloged other turbulent and uneven ones. To these he referred, above all, with the name of *illynx*, but he also lingered on the questions of “turbulence”, “contingent conjunctions” and “luck”.<sup>16</sup> It is these expressions that allow us to better understand the two blades of the razor’s edge: the most exposed or possible opening to the self-destructive abyss and the most trusting or potentially new coordination. This is a clear case in which the “faculty to err” and the “empty” movements — developed in the past by primates to move in the trees and reach the tall fruit — appear totally delocalized and now again valued in relation to the curious dance that is established with the felines.<sup>17</sup> But we are

<sup>15</sup> See Catherine Malabou, *Ontología del accidente. Ensayo sobre la plasticidad destructiva*, Santiago de Chile: Pólvara, (2018: 18–19), (quoted from the Castilian version).

<sup>16</sup> See Roger Caillois, *Los juegos y los hombres. La máscara y el vértigo*, México: FCE, (1986: 64–80, 128–129 and 185–20), (quoted from the Castilian version).

<sup>17</sup> See Konrad Lorenz, “Vacuum Activity” in *The Foundations of Ethology*, New York: Springer, (1981: 127–129), Castilian translation by Ed. Paidós, (1986).

also speaking of appreciated movements and gestures, not in their manifest uselessness, but as something that can even go against the “teleonomic program” of survival and of any practical project.

The same can be said of the playful life of those artists who prefer to go hungry and enjoy their camaraderie, their wanderings and their meanderings before submitting to the “teleonomic” or familiarist regime of work and reproduction of the species. Walking errors, they are, evidently, the champions of the eroticization of error and of erring,<sup>18</sup> to the point of having been captivated in such a useless return to the flow of repetitive and germinal desire.<sup>19</sup> What gives them pleasure? Deleuze and Guattari have already said it: to settle, precisely, in a “faculty to err” and in a desire that “does not lack anything.” This allows them to open themselves to the passive “events” of the new “co-creations” in dialogue with the deterritorialized and “pretelic” materials of their own dreams or with the materials found in their rural or urban wanderings.

What, then, is the “supratelic co-creation” fostered by this “faculty to err”? Although the “co-creation” already emerges in the “teleomatic repetition”,<sup>20</sup> “in the “teleonomic solution”,<sup>21</sup> or in the “hypertelic reinvention”,<sup>22</sup> the “supratelic co-crea-

<sup>18</sup> See the equivalence, in the English language, between the continuous infinitive of the verb to err – erring – and the idea of roaming and wandering, that is the implications of a moving body. (Translator’s note).

<sup>19</sup> See Nicolas Bourriaud, “Formas-trayecto” in *Radicante*, Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo, (2009: 123–152), and Alberto Ruiz de Somaniego, *Cuerpos a la deriva*, Madrid: Abada, (2017), (quoted from the Castilian versions).

<sup>20</sup> The “teleomatic” creation is that of the mirroring automatic repetition, be it crystalline, organic, or typical of the copyist. The term “teleomatics” is coined by Ernst Mayr in “Teleologia” in *Por qué es única la biología*, Buenos Aires: Katz, (2006: 59 et seq.) (quoted from the Castilian version).

<sup>21</sup> The works of the *animal laborans*, of the animal or human artisan who conceives his works always directing them towards productive and concrete ends – associated with the “essential teleonomic program”. See Ernst Mayr in “Teleologia” in *Por qué es única la biología*, *Op. cit.*, (2006: 59 et seq.).

<sup>22</sup> That type of “reinvention” is the one that, without questioning the essential “teleonomic” goals – nourishment, courtship, protection, refuge – is capable of changing the functions and purposes of its tools and its spaces. In this regard, we speak of “hyperthelia”. See Gilbert Simondon, “Hipertelia y autocondicionamiento en la evolución

tion” is only that type of production of “events” that are the result of the most open “paths”, that type of creation that results from the vital “faculty to err” that exposes living beings to accidental “mixtures” stripped bare of any purpose and exposed to the highest risk. If it is appropriate to speak of “teleonomic behaviors”, however, it is not appropriate to think of “supratelic behaviors”. The “ability to err” does not “determine” but, precisely, “indeterminates”; it does not “reappropriate” and “immunize”, but precisely “expropriate” and “communicate”. For this reason, rather than speaking as the “behaviorism” of “erratic behaviors”, it is convenient to think of games, events or “supratelic experiments”.

#### d) Types of Mixtures

In all cases we are dealing with complex “paths” that affect unstable multiplicities in dialogue. But, the difference between the elementary types of “co-creation” and the “pretelic” and “supratelic” is that, in the first cases, the “preform” or “resolving project” and pre-established is imposed on the rest and, in the latter, the parties enter into a “game” of reasonable and meaningless dialogues that turns the process itself or “playful activity” into essence, subject and end in itself. That is why it is useful to distinguish: (a) the *generatio aequivoca* or the random juxtapositions, from (b) the deviating but previously established “*telic ontogenesis*”, and from (c) the “*epigenetic events*” that make profitable this dialogue with the “wandering” and contingencies. It is useful to distinguish all this because, especially in the first and third cases, the clear governing or authorial subject disappears in favor of a “multipart co-creation.”

(a) *Generatio aequivoca*. To understand the idea of the zero degree of creation, one can think not only – like Lautréamont – of the casual superimposition of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a surgeon’s operating table, but also of the idea

técnica” in *El modo de existencia de los objetos técnicos*, Buenos Aires: Prometeo, (2018: 71–77), (quoted from the Castilian version).

of the *generatio aequivoca* or absolutely “pretelica” already outlined by tradition and present in any landscape.<sup>23</sup> To what purpose, project or mandate respond the unexpected coincidences that lead various substances or beings to coincide at a point in space-time? Obviously, to none. To what service of subject or will do children or young birds put themselves when they linger in a new playful movement that they have just discovered, in a new cooing, or in a new dance, if not with their own enjoyment and their own “capacity for err”? If Duchamp or Valéry<sup>24</sup> were right, to the service of none except the “co-creative” movement itself and, precisely for this reason, an equivocal or “proto-subjective” movement. The lack of fixed determinations in a cause always makes possible the lack of fixed determinations in the result. And, although ungainly, it is the oldest creation mode. It is enough for chance to drag elements until they coincide in space and time. Then the bodies’ ability to affect and be affected does the rest. It is about something basic but always diverse: essentially innovative because it has the ability to bring together what was previously dispersed. By opening ourselves to the indeterminate, the “capacity to err” is the source of the *generatio aequivoca*.

(b) “*Ontogenesis*.” After the zero degree of creation or mere overlapping, it is possible to move on to the next level, which is the one that exemplifies crystallization; for example, that of quartz under stable conditions is pure stable “preformation” or “ontogenesis”. The bulk of the “teleomatic” conformation has to do with the macroscopic replication of the microscopic arrangement of atoms. However, even under stable laboratory conditions, there are small variations between some crystallizations and others due to micro-changes in the variables that affect the mother liquor. We see there how even what

is obviously “preformed” and “predetermined” ends up being different because several factors or causes intervene in its creation —metaphorically, one could speak of several hands.

(c) “*Epigénesis*”. Finally, the construction of a termite mound is apparently “ontogenetic”, but deep down it is more like a creation with an “epigenetic” mood. On the one hand, it is a “solution” raised among many individuals of the same species following an irrepressible instinct. These unify their tasks with the help of “*stigmergic*” practices. Since the ultimate goal is to create something as programmed as the refuge to breed and survive, it still seems like an “ontogenetic co-creation”: a mere “solution” at the service of that great universal subject called “essential teleonomic program”. However, thanks both to the small variations of the horizontal “stigmas” of many<sup>25</sup> and to the most aggressive environmental contingencies —storms, type of terrain, malleability of materials—, the result of the termite mound is always different. Furthermore, the termites themselves adapt, just as soil and mud adapt by decomposing in different ways. In this regard, the concept of “conduct” or “static and mechanical instinct” should be abandoned. The “termite mounds”, without a doubt, are built “ontogenetically”, that is, starting from inherited behaviors and routines. But they are crossed by movements, clashes and overlaps. Hence, they also have a lot of “co-creation”. What termites do is incorporate these small changes to the structure they make up, that is, what they do is to proceed “epigenetically”. The skin or contact surface is what exalts the prefix of Greek origin “epi-”. In the field of developmental biology, “epigenetics” refers to something less architectural and more embryological than what has been said about termites. Even before the development of that Biology of development, Simondon had insisted that the deepest part is the skin and that, although “it could be said that the living substance that is inside the membrane regenerates the membrane [...] it is the membrane that makes the

<sup>23</sup> See John Farley, *The Spontaneous Generation Controversy from Descartes to Oparin*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1977; and Peter McLaughlin, “Spontaneous versus equivocal generation in early modern science” in *Annals of the History and Philosophy of Biology*, 10, (2006: 79–88).

<sup>24</sup> See Paul Valéry, “Noción general del arte” en *Teoría poética y estética*, Madrid: Visor, (2018), we are referring to the Chapter 10 of the Castilian version.

<sup>25</sup> See Félix Guattari, “L’ethologie des ritournelles sonores, visuelles et comportementales dans le monde animal” in *L’inconscient machinique. Essais de schizo-analyse*, Paris: Recherches, (1979: 117–121) (quoted from the French version).

living being at every instant living” so that “the living lives in the limit of itself”.<sup>26</sup> Following this track, “epigenetics” is that current of scientific studies that has broken the hylomorphic distinction between the epidermal and the essential, or the soma and the genome. In this regard, some biologists have realized that what the cell touches and eats, everything with which it comes into contact with its membranes and friction surfaces, all that physical and even geographical that affects it, does influence and change it, both on the surface and in the genetic nucleus, as well as in the subsequent developments of the new cells that come out of it.<sup>27</sup>

### e) For another Philosophy of Creation

All this is true for cells as well as for macroscopic beings, embryonic development and works of art. In this sense, it is convenient to insist that it is a mistake to continue repeating the distinction between the essential or determining “ontogenetic” and the superficial and little determining “epigenetic”. If, before any moral conflict between Form and deformation, there is the constant erratic movement that finds the “formless”, also before any philosophical opposition between the original seed and the simulacral fruit or copy, there is that “epigenesis” capable of moving from the simple junctions, juxtapositions and contacts, and the true assimilations and coordinations. Therefore, “epigenesis” designates, less the zero degree of erratic “co-creation”, or *generatio aequivoca*, and more the zero degree of the “concessive event” in which the “mixture” begins and the “fusion” is sensed.

It so happens that, although we find examples of these transitions with an erratic background even in non-human animals, the philosophy of art has not always considered the *generatio aequivoca* and rarely the “co-creative epigenesis”. Even the

<sup>26</sup> See Gilbert Simondon, “Topología y ontogénesis” en *La individuación...*, Op. cit., (2009: 336).

<sup>27</sup> See Nessa Carey, *La revolución epigenética. De cómo la biología moderna está reescribiendo nuestra comprensión de la genética, la enfermedad y la herencia*, Barcelona: Biblioteca Buridán, (2013), (quoted from the Castilian version).

anonymous worker or mason who built, for example, the first city, did not participate in this “co-creation” either, since in their collaboration they clearly responded to a “teleonomic project” established in advance by the leader who guided citizens and workers. Thus, before the contemporary emphasis on the *ready-made*, on the *objet trouvé* or on the “death of the author” and before the nineteenth-century drift towards nihilization,<sup>28</sup> one has to go to Zen Buddhism or to Molinist asceticism to locate a type of creator who self presents in relation to “non-being” and who does not seek to structure and produce but rather to disappear in their own work and internal or external wanderings. According to this desert athlete specialized in openings and “coexistence”, it would not be a question of using action to solve vital problems, nor of using it to extend their sovereignty over what was touched. It would be rather that they themselves were used by the movements with no goal, as a kind of incinerator teacher, a teacher capable of dying in his bonfire always in pursuit of “disartization.”

If in that case, neither the master project, the intention, the hard work, nor the production are present, how is it that the creation occurs? It occurs because the “co-creation” only needs the “pretelic” of the world — that which overflows the “weft” functioning as a “warp” — to take place. In fact, all “co-creation” implies and is born from contingency, that is, from a series of causal and deterministic “plots” or “teleomatic tendencies” that, overlapping the “teleonomic” and “hypertelic” “plots”, are overwhelmed by new erratic, casual and unnecessary “warps” motivating unpredictable collages or new “epigenesis”.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> See Alberto Ruiz de Samaniego, *Alegrías de nada: Ensayos sobre algunas estéticas de la anulación*, Sevilla: Athenaica, (2018), (quoted from the Castilian version).

<sup>29</sup> It is always dangerous to keep the plane of the indiscernible “warp” of “monads” too separate from the plane of the definable “webs” of “things”. Although our vision and our reason deceive us, we live in the “real” world of the former, not in the simplifying and “comprehensive” space of the latter. It is convenient to constantly move from inductive generalities to subtle events and complex thoughts in which “plots” are presented for what they are: a useful but simplifying tool. Faced with this, it is necessary to return to the “warps” of art, life and creation, the essential

It could be argued that, at least in the cases of “pretelic” or equivocal juxtapositions, it only makes sense to speak of low-profile creations. But, as some theoreticians of concrete music, the magicians of “psychogeography” and certain specialists in collage or abstraction know, creation already begins to take place when a certain set of multiplicities randomly overlap. Now, if even a blank canvas fed by the *dripping* of one or more abstract artists implies *generatio aequivoca* or “supratelic co-creation”, how could we deny the “pretelic co-creativity” of any square, street, city or landscape composed of elements that interact in perpetual becoming?

\*  
\*\*

Bibliographic and other references,  
page 56, version in Spanish.

---

place that belongs to them because, as Leibniz's Filaletes already stated, "if syllogisms serve to judge, I doubt that they can serve to invent". See Gottfried W. Leibniz, "Capítulo XVII. Sobre la razón" of the "Libro IV. Sobre el conocimiento" in *Nuevos ensayos sobre el entendimiento humano*, Madrid: Alianza, (1992: 585), (quoted from the Castilian version).

# Spatial practices as experimental preservation: between the invisible and the ecological

Beatriz Duarte  
Inês Moreira

This essay is part of Beatriz Duarte's doctoral project in Art Education (UPorto/FBAUP) funded by national funds through the Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P. (ref. 2021.04620.BD)

Experimenting with porosities between spatial practices and material culture, a new area of knowledge production and artistic practice has emerged in recent years. Inserted in the emerging field of *Experimental Preservation*, these practices incorporate a critical view and establish a tangential relationship with what is generally understood as heritage.

By pointing to new approaches to material culture, these practices indicate concerns that can be presented in general terms: they critically reassess the rigidity of consolidated modes of operation and conceptual frameworks based on notions such as preservation, value and authenticity; they potentiate gaps in established knowledge by overcoming nostalgia and experimenting with alternative logics to heritage for contemporary contradictions and complexities; they turn towards the re-signification of the past, the production of new definitions for residual matter, the recognition of alternative uses and the awareness of new ecologies. It is important for us to highlight how these spatial practices include recording unexplored narratives and invisible aspects of what is neglected and unforeseen in contemporary heritage and culture.

This essay contextualizes the relationship between preservation and material culture, points out the reconsiderations that have been proposed by contemporary theorists of archaeology and critical heritage studies, and addresses four case studies that propose hybrid articulations between artistic creation, artistic practices and curating urban spaces. The analyzed projects are diverse and vary from the microscale of invisibility, matter and fragment, as in the cases of *The Ethics of Dust* by the architect-artist Jorge Otero-Pailos and *Sín Título* by the artist Martín Hernández Molín, and the macro scale of critical production and urban intervention, in *In the Name of the Past: Countering the Preservation Crusades*, by Beatriz Ramo from the *STAR strategies + Architecture* studio, and in Emscher Park, a project carried out in the city of Ruhrgebiet in Germany.

## The preservationism

The historiography of western heritage preservation reveals to us that safeguarding the vestiges of the past for the future has always been experimental, undergoing different revisions and transformations that have accompanied changes in values, mentalities and cultural contexts up to the present day. The techniques, rules and protocols used to protect remnants of the past, considered valuable, followed technological advances and also the motivations and priorities practiced by society.

The relationship with the past, previously merely utilitarian and disconnected from the need to make historical testimonies last, achieved greater seriousness with the consolidation of a historical awareness and appreciation of art and its products.<sup>1</sup> Objects, architectures and places acquire a special status and change their value according to the aesthetic, ethical and social regimes of different times: from the formal admiration for the 'geniuses' of the past, to the feeling of regret and historical nostalgia, to the devout and mystical respect, the need to reinforce national symbols or perpetuate narratives of power and sovereignty, and to the more recent reconsiderations in defense of marginalized narratives or heritage as a global marketing strategy.

If, on the one hand, a certain subjectivation of preservation is admitted today as a social, shared and controversial practice, by valuing the immaterial aspects of culture,<sup>2</sup> on the other hand, the remnants of the technical rationality of the scientific methods developed in the 19th century still persist (Muñoz-Vinas, 2004: 1). Since that time, the understanding of historical heritage and practices of preservation, conservation, restoration, etc. that are associated with it, have established themselves as an increasingly specialized and institutionalized field, based on Western consensual values of accumulation of

the past and the careful attempt to rescue or perpetuate an identity considered primordial and authentic.

In recent debates, there has been reflection on how preservation has become symptomatic of the contemporary relationship with the past and surpassed other ways of relating to memory and historical testimonies, generating an "accumulation crisis" (almost obsessive)<sup>3</sup> of things contrary to the actions of time and contextual specificities:

In the last part of the twentieth century the development of heritage management has seen a greater concern with conservation and indeed 'rescue' of archaeological sites. [...] This shifts the focus from the intellectual and emotional results of our work to the need to protect it. This can neutralise uncomfortable political aspects of argument so that learning from the past becomes less important than 'saving' the past for our future.<sup>4</sup>

We are even witnessing the reduction of the temporal distance between the protected past and the present, due to the increasing inclusion of modern buildings in the list of world heritage sites, such as the Opera House in Sydney.

Starting from the premise that society is a constant threat to history and memory, guidelines are defined with which heritage institutions, imbued with an attempt at a certain objectivity, choose which places, objects and documents (and consequently, which narratives) will be crystallized for the future. Ranging in scale from artefact preservation to entire cities, these rules guide how the past should be represented, and align with a categorical moral that history will be

<sup>1</sup> Salvador Muñoz-Vinas, *Contemporary theory of conservation*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, (2004: 03).

<sup>2</sup> Leonardo B. Castriota, & Guilherme M. Araújo, "Patrimônio, Valores e Historiografia: a preservação do conjunto habitacional do Instituto de Aposentadorias e Pensões dos Industriários - IAPI", in *Arquitetura Revista*, São Leopoldo, v. 5, no. 1, (2009: 38).

<sup>3</sup> Rodney Harrison, "Forgetting to Remember, Remembering to Forget: Late Modern Heritage Practices, Sustainability and the 'Crisis' of the Accumulation of the Past" in *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19 (6), (2013: 579-95).

<sup>4</sup> Sarah May, "Then Tyger Fierce Took Life Away: The Contemporary Material Culture of Tigers", in Cornelius Holtorf and Angela Piccini (eds), *Contemporary Archaeologies: Excavating Now*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, (2009: 65-80).



stabilized through the formal and visual integrity of matter in an ideal state.

At the microscale of surface, heritage studies microscopically rehearse the behavior of materials in order to delay their deterioration, sterilizing dusty buildings and artefacts (sometimes to states of purity only possible at the time they were built) and restoring formal integrity through reconstitutions or the removal of additions. On the urban macro scale, they demarcate buffer zones that stiffen the dynamics of territories and buildings adjacent to historical heritage, reconstitute architectures to a preferred timeframe, while museums proliferate (seen by many as a massive phenomenon of museification<sup>5</sup>). Regarding these relationships between material culture and preservationism, necessary for the creation of the experience of heritage, geographer Caitlin DeSilvey points out that “massive amounts of energy are invested to keep heritage systems in a steady state so that the matter contained within them will continue to function as a cultural mnemonic device”.<sup>6</sup>

Faced with the central role that heritage and preservation have conquered in post-industrial and modern society, in the revitalization of economies, urban spaces or in the claiming of identities, theories and practices have emerged in recent decades that seek to rethink and oppose the rigidity of scientific methods, the austere rules of preservationism and the conceptual frameworks related to what we call heritage, such as the notions of memory, value, identity, authenticity, and so on. These reconsiderations are guided by questions that reflect on their impacts on the thinking and construction of the presents and the futures of contemporary cities, in addition to asking which pasts are being preserved and, consequently, which ones are erased or generated as by-products in the preservation processes.

5 António Guerreiro. “O património e os media”, In *Revista Punkto*, <https://www.revistapunkto.com/2016/11/o-patrimonio-e-os-media-antonio.html>, (2016). (Access: 7/2021)

6 Caitlin DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage beyond Saving*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, (2017: 11). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1kgqvb5>. (Access: 1/2020)

## New paradigms for material culture

Branches in the fields of archaeology, heritage studies, architecture and the arts interested in approaching the remains and traces of the past with a fresh look, investigate formally established principles, concepts and methods intrinsic to preservation and heritage. Reassessing what is already classified as heritage,<sup>7</sup> these fields begin to imagine and indicate new values, uses, interpretations and to consider the legacies produced by contemporary culture:<sup>8</sup> abandonment, pollution, garbage, ecologies adapted to terrain disturbed by human presence, the emergence of new patterns, materials and objects relevant to mass culture, among others.

Still embryonic and tentative, these practices take for themselves what is denied in the objective and scientific view of dominant preservation — experimentation — as a starting point to launch new challenges to material culture and test alternative readings as a necessary method for the advancement of knowledge. Operating close to critical spatial practices, a concept defined by Jane Rendell,<sup>9</sup> these practices call for an inseparable space between theory and practice and disciplinary interweaving as a fertile ground for thinking and acting on material culture, either unclassified or classified as heritage. These views at the vestiges of the past resignify heritage beyond the static representation to be ‘saved’ and ‘guarded’ for the future.

“Experimental preservation”, “creative conservation”, “counter-preservation”, “post-preservation”, “persistence”, are terms from the vast vocabulary of concepts used to rename classical preservation and reconfigure the modes of operation and epistemological structures of the binomial material

7 By renouncing total certainties, by welcoming creativity and subjectivities as intrinsic to preservation, by questioning normalized aesthetic standards of value, by admitting the inevitable loss of certain mnemonic devices due to climate change.

8 Inês Moreira, (ed.), *Post-Nostalgic Knowings*. Porto: Ágora Cultura e Desporto do Porto, E. M./ Galeria Municipal do Porto, (2020).

9 Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*. London: I.B.Tauris, (2012).

culture/memory. Pointing to diverse theoretical formulations, these theories share traits: if in one of their directions they identify the intentional deterioration/degradation of buildings and historic sites as a radical act of counter-preservation,<sup>10</sup> in another, they propose that what we consider heritage deserves to be expanded beyond a human construction, by including more-than-human narratives, in the interweaving of human and natural relationships (DeSilvey, 2017). Also, the critical reading of the legacy of patrimonial mediation practices suggests that the obsession with preservation qualifies as a testimony of contemporary mentality about the past,<sup>11</sup> in which mediation technologies,<sup>12</sup> necessary to create the experience of heritage, can infer an expanded notion of material culture from the present to the future.

These basic and conceptual issues resonate with the contribution of artistic and architectural experiments that react to conventional devices through activations, frictions and fictions *in* and *about* space. Although in some cases artistic and spatial interventions do not occupy the three-dimensionality, they experience space in a situated and contextual way and make reference to it, questioning its limits or overwriting historical, cultural, natural, material layers and narratives, among others. In the cases that we analysed, it seemed pertinent to us to take the different scales of the action of preservation mentioned above, from the microscale of the surface to the large scale of the urban phenomenon, to contribute to the purpose of bringing together practices that simultaneously arise from an artistic perspective and challenge architectural and urban projects.

<sup>10</sup> Daniela Sandler, *Counterpreservation: Architectural Decay in Berlin Since 1989*, Cornell University Press, (2016).

<sup>11</sup> Cornelious Holtorf, "The Heritage of Heritage", in *Heritage & Society*, 5:2, (2012:153-174).

<sup>12</sup> Such as signposts, guidebooks, information panels, museum stores, photographic prints, databases, etc. (Holtorf, 2012: 162).

## The notion of object: from surface to fragment

From the perspective of contemporary culture, the artistic works of Jorge Otero-Pailos and Martín Hernández Molín, artists from different generations and contexts, reveal concerns about the ability of cultural artifacts to incorporate meanings, official values, truths and static knowledge. In their complexity, they question the limits of the very notion of historical object. We will see how the works of these two artists narrate the phenomenon of what is unwanted and give a new meaning to the notion of 'waste', either as a by-product of the act of preserving or as a neglected object of patrimonial interest, whether it be debris from the utilitarianism of buildings or architectural construction components.

The chosen works, *The Ethics of Dust* and *Sin Título*, in a more or less planned way, allude to architectures in which a historical and patrimonial interest became official or rejected due to the lack of recognition, interests and public-private investments. Part of the materiality of these spaces, such as dust or slag, becomes the focus of interest for these artists to compose an extended interpretation of the idea of artifact and monument. By reinserting material culture into the aesthetic field of contemporary culture, they bring these wastes back to the debate, enunciating them as cultural objects.

*The Ethics of Dust* is a set of projects developed by the architect-artist Jorge Otero-Pailos that deals with the notion of restitution of truth to the historical object through the restoration of a condition considered original. The artist reconciles conservative preservation, which cleans historic buildings, with an experimental and creative exercise, which registers what is considered a by-product of this same act of cleaning: dust. With multiple iterations on historic buildings — such as the *Alumix Factory* in Bolzano at the *Manifesta Biennale* (2008), the Doge's Palace in Venice (2009), Trajan's Column at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (2015), *Westminster Hall* in London (2016), among others — the project removes deposits of air pollution that have settled on buildings over time with the help of a special type



Fig. 1, 2. Jorge Otero-Pailos, *The Ethics of Dust* (2008). Process of preserving accumulated pollution at the Alumix Factory (Bolzano, Italy) on display at Bienal Manifesta 7 (image source: <https://www.oteropailos.com/the-ethics-of-dust-alumix/>) [Access: 6/2023]

of latex, capable of absorbing small dust particles without damaging the existing surface of the monument.

Similar to engraving techniques, ink gives way to dust, resulting in a fine, translucent, natural-scale impression that makes tangible and preserves what is discarded from the surface of the original wall. The final artistic pieces reintroduce in contemporary cultural debates what is seen as a threat to the integrity of the historical object as an element of discursive, architectural, historical and cultural value. The works invite us to question the nature of this residue either as part of an expanded notion of the architectural object or as an autonomous hyper-object.

The relationship with the life cycle of buildings changed with modernism, when dirt ceased to be seen as evidence of time and came to mean impurity and contamination — let us think of the influence that industrialization had on cities. The high ejection of pollution from factories made the urban atmosphere powdery, with high levels of unhealthy conditions and aggravated the darkening of buildings which, in their layers, registered the transformations of the environment. If modernism brought air, sun and green as references, deindustrialization brought the rise of a pure and sterile aesthetic. The cleaning of architectures degraded by pollution acquired importance and mobilized a specialized preservation market, responsible for solving this threat to buildings of heritage interest.

In this scenario, Jorge Otero-Pailos attests that “cleaning is not just a matter of practical maintenance, but an epistemological pursuit” (2007: iii), questioning the nature of cleaning buildings as a way of operating preservation and the emphasis given to excessively clean and pure surfaces. By pondering the limits of the historical object, he displays pollution as a phenomenon that is not extrinsic to architecture, but an integral part of its historicity and manifest of heritage decisions. Its fine latex dust fabric simulates a replica of the original wall and encapsulates the history of the space, physically recording the intricate relationship between the building, society and the atmosphere that surrounds it, and highlighting a sensorial



aesthetic of coping with the unwanted and forgotten by the ideologies and value judgments imbued in preservation.

On the other hand, by giving form to the volatile and ineffable condition of pollution, *The Ethics of Dust* tests the possibility of this fine residue being a cultural hyper-object of contemporary society: an unintentional hyper-monument, as expressive as the monuments it obscures, produced by the interweaving of human actions and atmospheric and natural phenomena. Distributed spatially and temporally around the world, this thin layer of dust goes through cycles of dispersion in the aerosphere, retention on the surface of artefacts and architecture and constant inhalation, which will last much longer than the buildings and monuments that are being constructed.

In opposition to the dichotomy between nature and culture, the artist questions the planetary condition in which the climate is no longer just a natural agent and is intrinsically associated with the cultural and human relationship with the world. Otero-Pallos says:

We now understand that through our pollution we are altering the weather to such an extent that we have initiated a whole new geological era: the Anthropocene. Cultural production has become a form of natural production, such that it is no longer possible to draw a clear line between culture and natural forces. According to climatologists, the process of culturally induced environmental degradation is irreversible. Even if we were to stop producing pollution, the damage has been done.<sup>13</sup>

Along the same lines as this reflection on materiality, Martín Hernández Molín incorporates the vestiges of material culture into his artistic practice, which he integrates into a new artistic piece. During his wanderings, the artist finds objects in the city that have been devalued and discarded by human use

<sup>13</sup> Jorge Otero-Pallos; Erik F. Langdalen, & Thordis Arrehenius, (eds.), *Experimental preservation*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, (2016: 28–29).



Fig. 3. Martín Hernández Molín, *Sin Título* (2020). Detail of the work that amalgamates the remains of the former Freixo Thermoelectric Power Station (Porto, Portugal)

of spaces, and accumulates them. Opposing the intentional search for historically and aesthetically valuable objects (according to those normative molds) of archeology and conservation, the artist's involuntary and intuitive mapping is an anti-archaeological gesture that estimates the micro-stories and aesthetics contained in the materiality of rejected objects. The fragments found are full of tactility and rawness, embody different preceding narratives and convey the meanings of a utilitarian, biological and chemical life, through its disposal and destruction. They are configured as evidence, traces or residues of values and past uses of both objects and

architecture, or even documents. By integrating the essential cycle of matter, these residues become the starting point for the creation of new aesthetic compositions and perspectives.<sup>14</sup>

In the project *Sín Título*, commissioned for the curatorial project *Materialidades Persistentes* (Persistent Materialities),<sup>15</sup> Martín Hernández Molín exhibits the traces found in the ruins of the former Freixo Thermoelectric Power Station (Porto, Portugal) amalgamated into a new artefact: a work of art. The materiality of this building enters a third phase of its existence, the first as a material and functional component incorporated into the building, and the second as part of the entropic reality of its ruins left to fate. The detritus of the factory, once central in discussions about the city's industrial heritage, carry the narratives of its dismantling and de-industrialization, of the informal uses that invaded the space and of the actions of time that elapsed, now articulated and persistent in a new biography and formal constitution.

In contrast to preservation, this project approaches the concept of persistence defined by Tim Ingold who, from a perspective of contemporary archeology, considers material culture "not of finished entities [...] but of processes that are continuously carrying on, and of forms as the more or less durable envelopes or crystallisations of these processes."<sup>16</sup> Thus, artifacts and architectures are not constituted by the unification of form and substance, but are temporary arrangements of matter, dynamic and in continuous processes of change. The formal crystallizations would only be phases of transformation of the flow of materials that compose them, persisting part of their essence and history in the different configurations that they acquire.

<sup>14</sup> Martín H. Molín, "Resíduo" in Inês Moreira (ed.), *Post-Nostalgic Knowings*, Porto: Ágora Cultura e Desporto do Porto, E.M./ Galeria Municipal do Porto, (2020: 72).

<sup>15</sup> Beatriz G. Duarte, "Potencialidades da ativação curatorial: Central Termoeletrica do Freixo & Projeto Curatorial: Materialidades Persistentes", (2020). (Tese de mestrado, Universidade do Porto)

<sup>16</sup> Tim Ingold, "No more ancient; no more human: The future past of archaeology and anthropology" in David Shankland (ed.), *Archaeology and Anthropology: Past, Present and Future*. Berg Publishers, (2012:77-89).

In the work *Sín Título*, the traces of the material presence of the Thermoelectric Power Plant persist, in a more or less legible way, in the new artistic piece. The brick, concrete and metal fragments have biographies of formation, consumption and transformation that precede the supposedly cohesive form of the old historic building of the Central. Their constituent parts have future cycles, now part of them integrating the art work.

Both artistic projects highlight the increasingly intertwined relationships between the environment, the cycles of production, use and disposal of matter and contemporary architecture. Pollution, dismantling and deterioration, by establishing material, mechanical, historical and social links with architecture, complicate its limits and integrate an expanded notion of the historical object.

### The urban: from fiction to concrete

Recently, there has been a growing interest from architects, artists and urban planners in questions of memory and transience, which express an interest in the temporal palimpsests that accumulate in cities and in the conflicts between the extreme preservation and the progressive demolition of architectures. In search of new readings and tactics for managing change and traces of the past, they highlight a dialogic relationship between heritage preservation and urban development, through the design of new fictional or concrete spatial proposals.

The projects discussed next, *In the Name of the Past: Countering the Preservation Crusades* and later, *Emscher Park*, despite being considerably different, express these interests in a similar gesture to the projects discussed above. On the one hand, they experiment with the official framing rules of UNESCO World Heritage Sites and, on the other hand, they test design with the landscapes that hesitate to be included in the canonical practice of heritage management:<sup>17</sup> post-industrial spaces.

<sup>17</sup> Anna Storm, *Post-Industrial Landscape Scars*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, (2014: 11).

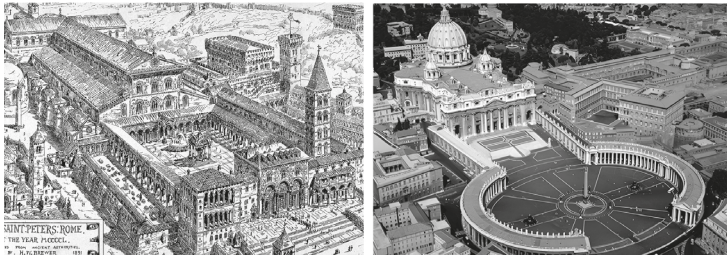


Fig. 4. *The Lucky Monument*. Basilica di San Pietro if UNESCO rules existed in 1450 (left) and as they stand today (right), in *MONU Magazine 14 – Editing Urbanism*, (2011: 72).



Fig. 5. *The Digital Monument*. "Saving the City from the Cruelty of Nostalgia; Could Digital World Heritage Sites become the utopia of preservation?". *MONU Magazine 14 – Editing Urbanism*, (2011: 76)

The proposal by Beatriz Ramo, a member of the Dutch architecture studio *STAR strategies+architecture*, for the architecture and urbanism magazine *MONU*, arises from the firm's participation in an international project competition for the creation of the *Mirador do Palmeral del Elche* (Spain), a complex UNESCO heritage site. The constraints identified in the intervention of this protected landscape, instigated the architect to meticulously revisit the excessively restrictive and inflexible rules<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Beatriz Ramo, & Philip Vandermeij, "In the Name of the Past: Countering the Preservation Crusades" in *STAR, Strategies, Architecture*, (2011: 69). <http://st-ar.nl/in-the-name-of-the-past/> (Access: 2/2020)

agreed by the cultural institution, exposing their anachronies and proposing a series of imagined monuments.

The project can be understood as an affirmation to the urgency of more in-depth and alternative dialogues for the binomials of crystallization/progress and between the disciplines of preservation and architecture. Retrospectively, it identifies that the main world monuments classified today — such as the Tower of Pisa, the Cathedral Square in Florence, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and others — would never have existed or reached their condition today under the influence of current patrimonial rules. Since they went through processes of change, demolition, subtraction or were built in a way that affected the visibility of other monuments, their existence would be vetoed by the buffer zones, which protect the surroundings of the monuments from visual barriers, or by the prohibition of new constructions inside historic sites.

By underlining yet another current heritage trend, the contribution to the touristification of cities driven by the inclusion of recently built masterpieces, the architect suggests that preservationism is contributing to the unbridled production of iconic buildings, to be accumulated and crystallized prematurely. In a satirical gesture, she takes this hyper-conservation of architectures to the extreme by proposing, therefore, that potential masterpieces be included in the list of World Heritage Sites still in the design phase, even before their implementation, or that places like the IKEA stores, the islands of Dubai and Las Vegas, are testaments to what is bestowed by popular culture and symbolize man-made entertainment and construction. The radical speculation with UNESCO's criteria mounts an acidic critique of the discourses implicit in the official preservationist policy, as an institution full of inconsistencies, which has lost focus on the productive relationship with the past and raised questions about which interests have been served and for which what purpose the auratic status of monuments has served.

In a counterproposal, in *The Never Ever Monument: Protecting from Protection; The Authentic Urban Reserves and The Digital Monument: saving the city from nostalgia*, Beatriz





Fig. 6. *The Future Monument*. "Preserving Ideas to Ensure their Implementation", in *MONU Magazine* 14 – *Editing Urbanism*, (2011: 73)

Ramo suggests the definition of protected areas of preservation and the faithful replica of existing monuments in the untouched realm of digital, in order to protect preservation itself from the contradiction in which it has become (Ramo & Vandermeij, 2011). The work raises important questions about what is restrained by historic preservation of buildings, such as the marks of time erased by the fetishistic valorization of the surface or the potentialities of uncertainty, freedom, failure and disappearance brought by the alteration of values and expansion needs of contemporary cities.

With regard to this distancing from an ideology of integrity and purity of preservation, the *Emscher Landschafts-park* project in the Ruhr valley in Germany is paradigmatic. Its spectacular appearance stands out for involving a living, metaphorical and literal composting process of its structures and memories. Trees, ruderal plants, bushes and wild woods spontaneously colonize the interior of the massive deactivated industrial vestiges, which were once central to coal extraction and the production of steel inputs for the European



Fig. 7. *Emscher Park*. Traces of the old factory taken over by new ecologies and uses. Michel Latz/ *Latz+Partner*

market and in supplying the country during the world wars. As an alternative to the usual reconversion of post-industrial spaces into industry museums, the different components of the former factory — blast furnaces, gasometers and bunkers — were converted into supporting sculptures for other cultural and recreational activities, such as climbing, cycling, diving, concerts, exhibitions, among others.

The proposal for the transformation of this post-industrial landscape, planned by the architecture firm *Latz and Partner Landscape Architects Urban Planners*, welcomes the hybrid condition of space of continuous collaboration and transformation between the techno-built and natural elements, admitting them as an ecosystem of a fourth type,<sup>19</sup> an industrial nature: "In time, the greenery will dominate the technical constructions of the gateways. So bit by bit another history, another understanding of the contaminated site and

<sup>19</sup> Ingo Kowarik, "Novel urban ecosystems, biodiversity, and conservation" in *Environmental pollution*, 159 8-9, 1974-83, (2011: 6).



of the idea of the 'garden' is developing."<sup>20</sup> Nature is codified simultaneously as an autonomous and uncontrollable agent, and as a human artifact, since the disturbance and toxicity of the soil caused by industrial activity is the main factor responsible for its advancement and survival.

*Emscher Park's* minimal intrusive intervention celebrates the different previous uses, rust and new ecologies that reconfigure the identity and commemorative character of this old factory and highlights the porosity in the co-creation of meanings between cultural and natural heritage, expressed as opposing criteria in the List of World Heritage Sites. Material loss, precariousness, ruination and change become integral parts of the historical continuity of the place and offer a reflection and tangential action to the post-industrial legacies, revealing their marks of conflicting, polluted and mundane pasts. The new uses, instead of keeping the space intact, take over its structures, assume the raw aesthetics of de-industrialization, open themselves to unpredictable results and cycles of renewal.

### Final considerations

By reconsidering heritage as active, mutable and discursive social processes to be practiced and pondered in a situated manner, situated artistic and architectural practices, also known as critical spatial practices, recognize the material changes and values attributed to heritage in the present time. These four projects reveal approaches and readings of the re-signification of material culture and its epistemological frameworks and intervention for patrimonial preservation.

Through instantiations positioned in different artistic concerns and areas, whether originating in the artistic or architectural dimension, or directed by research on the valuation of what is safeguarded, neglected or unwanted, this set of projects intertwines concerns and challenges inherent in

the relationship with materialities and immaterialities of the past and the costs they carry. In general terms, we see how artistic creation seeks to rewrite and complexify the historical narrative of spaces and architectures in the production of new narratives for residual matter, in the recognition of alternative readings and by the awareness of new ecologies.

In a broader reading, we see how they align with concerns on the planetary conditions of the new geological era that many identify as the Anthropocene, how they highlight the gaps and paradoxes of the heritage paradigm that currently dominates cities and buildings. They also contribute to the recognition of new narratives on the passage of time that accommodate ruination and the by-products of preservation, promoting ecological and environmental thinking that dissolves the dichotomy between nature and culture. They are, therefore, critical and aware of the conflicts between extreme preservation and the relentless modernization of contemporary cities.

We can thus state that, by critically reassessing the rigidity of protocolled modes of operation on heritage and the very notions of preservation, value and authenticity, spatial practices contribute to overcoming the implicit nostalgia for the traditional idea of heritage and experiment with alternative logics to read, value and re-signify contemporary legacies.

\*  
\*\*

Bibliographic and other references,  
page 78, version in Portuguese.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Latz, "Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord: The metamorphosis of an industrial site" in Niall Kirkwood (ed.), *Manufactured sites: Rethinking the post-industrial landscape*, New York: Spon Press, (2001: 157).

# Post-Digital Dispersal

Clarisse Coelho Pinto

## 1. A Virtual Territory

With the internet at our fingertips, there is seemingly free and open access, to an object created one hundred years ago as to one created one hundred seconds ago. This spans the written word, performance, visual art, music, idea, all potential matter of communication. In the present moment so much varied information is accessed through the same essential medium, indifferent to the content's temporality and often also to its context. The initial experience of something like art accessed through contemporary modes of communication can ignore the originally intended experience of the object which has now been mediated through layers of abstractions and transformed at its core into a string of ones and zeroes.

These are virtual objects, meaning they exist as an image or simulation of the intended real. Which isn't to say they are less valid, as cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard discussed in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), these images can often be more useful to society than the real object. There he confirms a culture in which one can no longer distinguish what is real from its simulation, or, rather, he excludes the necessity of the real as origin point. This is prophetic of the contemporary experience in which the real and virtual have reached a confluence of value, and mediated experience is indistinguishable from unmediated experience. However, virtual is not to be understood as a direct opposite to real, rather as discussed by Gilles Deleuze in *Bergsonism* (1988: 96–98) virtuality exists in opposition to actuality and real opposes the idea of the possible. This view allows for the coexistence of real and virtual objects and their environments as is now the lived experience across our variously extended selves. *Real* and *unique* are characterizations of much less significance when communication and its objects can be spread through time and space across the possibilities inherent to the digital realm. The idea of the simulation is akin to what we consider the virtual, a nonactual object, or else that which is brought about through computation and so never existing physically in a way we can relate to simply with our bodies.

Digital objects and communication now constantly exist stored on a server, and yet are also in constant reduction and reproduction across time and physical space for storage and access at a whim. The ubiquity of the cell phone has quickly led to a banalization of the information consumed through this device and its interfaces, which we now can carry with us to privately continue the act of public consumption even to the locations in which the most intimate necessities of the body are enacted. Holding small boxes of light and sound, and seemingly infinite access, has allowed a new height of spectacle. In Guy Debord's terms, "the spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images. The spectacle cannot be understood as a mere visual excess produced by mass-media technologies. It is a worldview that has actually been materialized" (1967: 2–3). This underscores what Baudrillard later comes to assert on communication not as an act of pure exchange but rather a form of social reproduction for cultural organization (1987), in this way even the most basic communication has necessarily morphed into an act of spectacle.

The body might occupy similar physical territories as sixty years ago, when ideas of spectacle were first being disseminated, but now actions and interactions also take place in parallel planes that are atemporal and aspatial; constantly existing nowhere in particular but with the potential of Being anywhere or everywhere at any time. This plane is also what allows the full immersion with little break in an oversaturated digital image culture characterized by being both highly filtered in appearance and not filtered at all in subject. This territory of constant overload means that images last but a few moments before they are replaced with the next. Regardless of the level of communication, it can be made immediately irrelevant, past, banal as if each instance were a tile on the facade of a building only meant to be passed by as part of a whole, detached and trivial. When all is banal, what is left can be a perpetual yearning for meaning, for the conclusions of communication. Through the act of communication,

the medium — the space, the form, the ear of the listener — alters the message just by virtue of being the matter through which information passes. As it passes, information gains and absorbs, is manipulated and misconstrued like a children's telephone game until it is received. The reception of the information is then further subject to the plural constructions of the receiver up until that point of communication.

The discussion around these questions surrounding mediation of communication through virtual public spaces should here be digested through the lens of philosophical posthumanism. In the most simplistic sense, philosophical posthumanism refers to a critique or turn against liberal Humanism that reframes thinking away from the separation between Human and 'Everything Else' into discrete ontological domains, toward a less hierarchical and more unified ecological context. This mode allows for the reevaluation in considering what is the Self — and its actions — derived from an awareness of the profound interconnectedness of Humans with 'Everything Else'. Through new extensions of the Self across computational technology, these networks of relation have become unignorable and require this reassessment to better make sense of how the Self acts and inter-acts in complex interwoven systems. It also allows for the understanding that objects have relations within themselves when no human is present in the system, thus the Being of all objects and their relations create ripples that affect humanity in ways previously ignored by the Humanist tradition on which current foundational institutions—including political, academic, social and cultural structures—are built. It is important to highlight that 'posthumanism' in this text should be read as distinct from 'transhumanism'. As according to critical theorist Cary Wolfe in *What is Posthumanism* (2010) who describes transhumanism as rather an intensification of the Humanist tradition in which the human transcends the biological and all embodiment or materiality, repressing animal origins to achieve some higher form or a superhumanity through machines; such as the classic example of the immortal mind uploaded to a computational system.

Instead, the posthumanism considered here is one towards absolute immanence of the Self with surrounding systems and their objects, rejecting transcendence as a goal for betterment of the individual Self. This departure has become necessary as Wolfe explains in an interview with the *New York Times* in 2017:

The sketches of the ‘human’, ‘the animal’ or ‘nature’ that we get from the humanist tradition are pretty obviously cartoons if we consider the multifaceted, multidisciplinary ways in which we could address these questions. Humanism provides an important cultural inheritance and legacy, no doubt, but hardly the kind of vocabulary that can describe the complex ways that human beings are intertwined with and shaped by the nonhuman world in which they live.<sup>1</sup>

It can be seen that what is left behind in posthumanism is not the Human and all its prosthetic and embodied complexities, but rather Humanism and its rigid dichotomies. From another point of view, literary critic Katherine Hayles lays bare in *How We Became Posthuman* — as early as 1999 — that the post-human signals:

(T)he end of a certain conception of the human, a conception that may have applied, at best, to that fraction of humanity who had the wealth, power, and leisure to conceptualize themselves as autonomous beings exercising their will through individual agency and choice. (1999: 286)

In that critique lies the clear illustration that this newer model of thinking was made possible as more diverse voices and backgrounds are able to participate in the ontological conversation as part of an ongoing shift in power dynamics. This abandonment of the autonomous liberal subject also signals a



Fig. 1, 2, 3. *Autopoiesis* (2022). Digital photograph

The feedback loop of self-recursivity in effort to reach the Other can be a dangerous act of self-indulgence if the effort to reach self-identification does not also create a desire to further develop the new external nodes and connections brought about by the reverberations and folds.

<sup>1</sup> Cary Wolfe in <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/09/opinion/is-humanism-really-humane.html> (Access: 3/2023).

change from where meaning is derived. Instead of being guaranteed by an object's unique origin, meaning erupts through a 'natural' evolution. There is Being when a pattern emerges from the chaos, free from any illusion of control or conscious agency.

## 2. Being and Meaning in the Posthuman

To understand the totality of the environment as comprised of endless nuances of structurally coupled systems also requires Wolfe's definition of "meaning as a specifically modern form of self-referential recursivity that is used by both psychic systems (consciousness) and social systems (communication) to handle overwhelming environmental complexity" (2010: 20) untethered from individual subjectivity. This view offers an opportunity to free oneself from the violent numbness developed as a defense mechanism from the overstimulation of our extended bodies as previously laid out by Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media* (1964). This self-referential recursivity is a feedback loop by the Self looking for itself while in the pursuit of connection with an Other. In other words, the attempt to resolve non-identification of the Self is what leads to exteriority, as Wolfe describes:

The very thing that separates us from the world connects us to the world, and self-referential, autopoietic closure, far from indicating a kind of solipsistic neo-Kantian idealism, actually is generative of openness to the environment. (2010: 31)

This is Niklas Luhmann's openness from the closure principle described in *Social Systems* (1995). He writes:

In the self-referential mode of operation, closure is a form of broadening possible environmental contacts; closure increases, by constituting elements more capable of being determined, the complexity of the environment that is possible for the system. (1995: 37)

Given this principle, the more virtual the world is the more real it is because internal complexity increases connection, sensitivity, and dependence on the environment by developing further instances of understanding. Essentially, increasing the surface area of the system through folds or fractions and thus increasing the possible nodes of outward connection. As an object aims inward in constant recreation of an image of itself — plural or fractal virtualities — the more chances it has to obtain identification of itself externally as real.

Unable to view the possibilities of these ecological structures, liberal Humanism is attached to foundations which require the Self to exist in one compact point. The fear of the complete dissolution of the Self mars ideas with pessimism where, as Hayles would come to describe, "by contrast, when the human is seen as part of a distributed system, the full expression of human capability can be seen precisely to depend on the splice rather than being imperiled by it" (1999: 312). Distributing embodied awareness and cognition across human and nonhuman agents of the environment, allows for an expansion of the Self that is at greater interplay with all ecological agents, making possible a better understanding of human articulation with intelligent machines.

## 3. The Distributed Self

In the terms provided by Hayles (1999) the Self exists as a distributed body, a dispersed assemblage of elements that takes many forms and materialities and temporalities, essentially a *Thing among Things*.<sup>2</sup> Else as Wolfe (20017) describes:

A prosthetic entity... constituted by many elements, some of them physical and material and biological, some of them not, the constitution of the self by language and how it rewires the brain being the most

<sup>2</sup> This term is affectionately appropriated from the title of Jon Yau's 2008 book on the work of Jasper Johns, in which he imbues with humanity and emotion a body of work traditionally analyzed as purely formalist and materialist.



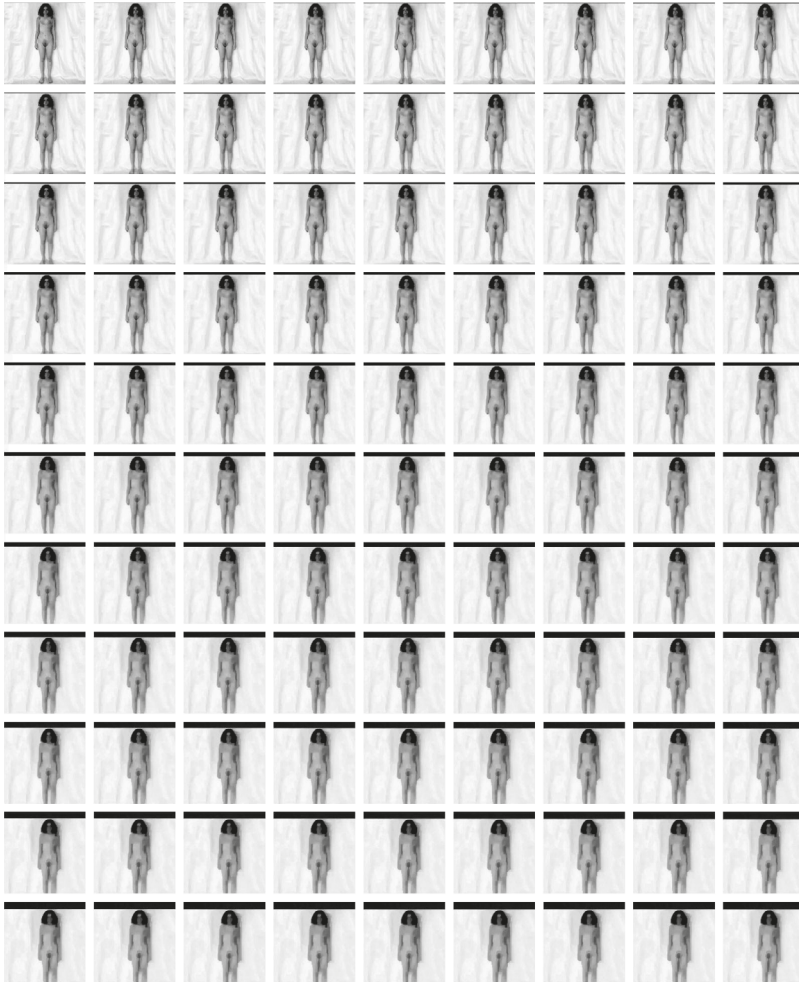


Fig. 4. *This Body Does Not Exist* (2022), digital collage of a digital body passed through a digital system

Here a 'Generative Adversarial Network' called 'DreamTime' — a machine learning system trained with images of nude female pornographic bodies to essentially 'remove the clothing' from a photograph by generating new body parts — was used to create this nonhuman, virtual body based on a clothed image of my own. This image was posted to an Instagram account, screenshotted, the screenshot posted and repeated the cycle one hundred times to watch the degradation and dissipation of the digital body as it recreates itself online.

obvious example. That is, if you like, the 'truth' of the self: that it exists nowhere as a totality.

Social media being the most obvious example of this dispersal. Endlessly replicable representations of the Self exist scattered across screens and servers, that can be accessed, stored and manipulated, but all still hold a part of what creates the totality of the Self. This perpetual existence in space, both here and there, physical and virtual, now and yesterday, and always accessible at its most basic form through a string of binary code is what could be termed as Hyperpresence—a constant, atemporal, aspatial, state of Being that possibly exists anywhere at any point in time expressed through any of its folds and facets across various media.

Many of these parts are avatars, created by the physical or real body to exist in virtual space as a simulation, and interact with other virtual and nonhuman elements inaccessible by the body alone. This act of self replication comes from a desire to reach out in communication to Others who are equally reaching across time and space and media to confirm themselves as *Being*. If the new speed of communication killed fantasy for Baudrillard, then the Hyperpresence permitted by virtual public space is a new pornography. However, with the ability to manipulate the avatar to reflect desires beyond physical reality, it is possible that those virtual filters and veils serve to recreate a certain mystery. But is it a mystery of falsehoods or of seduction? This may depend on the intent of who controls this information and the media that it passes through. This is the multi-layered act of communication that now takes place through human and nonhuman actors in the ever present, ever happening virtual space as Wolfe (2017) goes on to exemplify:

That's what makes email such an incendiary form of communication: all those dampening and texturing dimensions of the communication go away, and so the communication becomes all the more thin and brittle, and to try and get some of it back we start inserting

emoticons, and so on. In all this, the properly ‘human’ is only part of the story; it’s nested in a larger, and in many ways nonhuman, set of contexts and forces.

Without these nonhuman elements, the attempt at communication across virtual space through digital media could feel like an act of screaming into a void or banging one’s head against unbreakable glass, reactions to the overstimulation that would require numbness of the Self to access or else result in total dissolution. If digital media is the singular form in which the hyperpresent Self communicates in continual autoreference to create contact with its exterior, a careful look at this media is of utmost importance if we are to understand the new shape of our environment and attempt to locate our bodies in this expansive new territory.

\*  
\*\*

### **Bibliographic references / Referências bibliográficas**

- Baudrillard, Jean, *Simulacra and Simulation*. Tr. by Sheila Glaser, Michigan, USA: Uni Michigan Press (1981)
- Deleuze, Gilles, *Bergsonism*. Tr. Hugh Tomlinson & Barbara Habberjam, Princeton, USA: Uni Princeton Press, Zone Books, (1988)
- Hayles, Katherine, *How We Became Posthuman, Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago & London: Uni Chicago Press, (1999)
- Luhmann, Niklas, *Social Systems*. Stanford, California: Stanford Uni Press, [1984] (1995)
- McLuhan, Marshall, *Understanding Media, The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, [1964] (1994)
- Wolfe, Cary, interview in the New York Times, in <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/09/opinion/is-humanism-really-humane.html>, (2017) (Acesso/Accessed 03/2023)
- Wolfe, Cary, *What is Posthumanism*, Minnesota: Uni Minnesota Press [2009] (2010)



# Between Body and City: incomplete architecture and multisensory experience

RESEARCH PROJECT

Talitha Gomes Filipe

Excerpt from the dissertation  
*Entre Corpo e Cidade –  
Conexões na Espacialidade  
no Âmbito Multisensorial*,  
carried out within the scope  
of the Master in Art and  
Design for the Public Space  
of the Faculty of Fine Arts  
of the University of Porto,  
2019.

The research *Entre Corpo e Cidade* expands the thinking about what we are — in the human body there are many more bacterial cells than human ones — to the field of the city to reveal bacterial cells that are part of the composition of cities. It is precisely at this point where both body and city merge, and that the city becomes an effective extension of the body. The research begins with the collection of microorganisms in the city of Porto, which we will call ‘space collection’. These spaces ranged from green areas with little movement, to areas predominantly used by road transport, beach areas and living and social gathering areas. The variation of the physical characteristics of the spaces and their choices occurred from the sensory perception, in each of the selected areas, seeking to understand how their configurations determine social behaviors and urban layout, in an attempt to investigate whether these differences in configuration also affect the invisible layer under study and whether the environment and urban constructions determine how that invisible layer will develop. From the collection of spaces, small simplified maps were developed, which came to be part of sampling processes.

Each of the public spaces was walked through to collect the samples. This collection took place in an intuitive and arbitrary way, determined by walking and by what the eyes captured as points of interest, sometimes guided by a color, a texture, an interesting surface, a different material, an odor or a characteristic of the environment. selected space, in a kind of sensory drift or, according to James Gibson, a walk guided by ‘natural vision’:

When no constraints are put on the visual system, we look around, walk up to something interesting and move around it so as to see it from all sides, and go from one vista to another. That is natural vision.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perceptions*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, (1986: XIII).

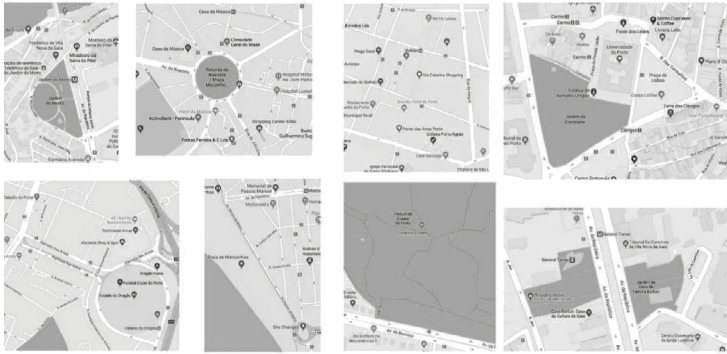


Fig. 1. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019).  
Collection of public spaces

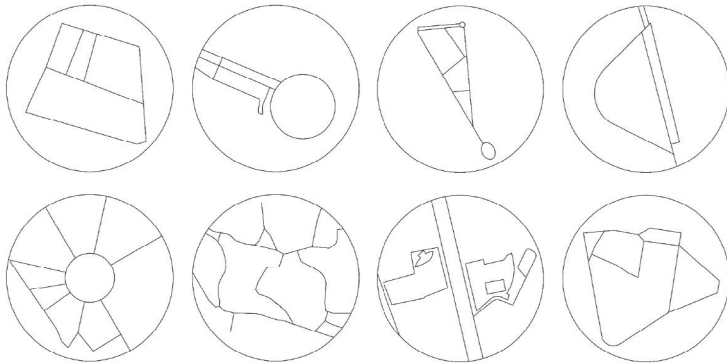


Fig. 2. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019).  
Simplified maps

The experiment enabled a way of reading not only the invisible, but also the performative gesture of walking, the microbial exchange carried out with the public space by depositing microorganisms present in the body itself at the time of collection, and also the natural exchange that occurs while walking. The interaction with the invisible is revealed in the form of a sensory response. This exchange can perhaps be interpreted as a first sign of communication with the invisible dimension of space, of action and reaction.

In sequence, the collected samples were placed in plastic bags and identified, to be later transferred to Petri dishes that were previously prepared with an artisanal culture medium suitable for the development of colonies and with the use of red cabbage as a pH indicator. The choice of indicator was due to the fact that with the change in pH, the surface colors change and become interesting for a visual study.

The experiment covers two types of culture: induced samples and natural samples, differentiated from each other by the type of touch and contact they receive. But both prepared by tact:

- a. The induced samples have at the bottom the design of the simplified maps of the areas of the public spaces where they were collected, which serves as a guide to determine where the samples will be deposited, in a relation of interference of contact or induced touch. Tracing the map itself is not as relevant as drawing, but it serves to reinforce the relationship of contact, touch, feeling, tact and to investigate whether the behavior of samples with induced contact develops significantly differently from those samples without this contact and how this characteristic could be interpreted when we articulate with the body-city layer.
- b. The natural samples do not have the design of the maps and participate in the determined path, uncovered, in order to capture samples of microorganisms present in the air, only through a natural contact, invisible to our eyes. The layer of microbes deposited on the plate comes from the gestures of walking and movement. It is not a static sample, unlike the one described above, in which the microorganisms are added. In this one, they participate and accompany the performative movement of the sensorial drift. It does not take into account specific points of attraction, it is a random and natural collection.



Fig. 3. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019). Samples collected and stored in plastic bags

The development of the samples was monitored daily and recorded through photographs and notes of the observed changes. During the beginning of the growth of the colonies, the emission of an odor is observed, that denotes the existence of new beings. In sequence, new forms begin to emerge, one observes the variation of colors, the distinction of species, organization in space, vertical growth, variation of structures and textures, contamination. Over the days, the plates are filled in and acquire an aspect that awakens a strong ‘visual touch’ due to the variation in textures and formats of the colonies, with which we are not familiar and with whose presence we are not naturalized. Strangeness appears in the visual revelation of the invisible accompanied by the awareness of coexistence: body-space / visible-invisible.

The appearance of a *visual touch* represents the beginning of the body’s connection with the invisible and the search for harmony in the encounter of the three scales: micro, medium and macro.

From these thoughts, questions and from the observation of the structures and forms that emerged over the days, drawings and types of maps were extracted with the traces and paths of the microorganisms, as an exercise to bring this communication from the microscale to the medium and macro scale.

By superimposing the different maps that are part of the process, the existing ones, the simplified ones, the ones traced by the microorganisms and the ones derived from this tracing, it is possible to observe some logic in the spatial distribution, hierarchy, order and form of growth, time and speed of growth, development and stagnation. Maps were derived from the experiment based on growth taints and resulting in graphical maps with lines.

There was a predominance of circular, concentric shapes and a radial expansion from a main center. It is the movement present in nature, which practically accompanies the development and growth of almost all living beings, and mimics the growth of cities. The drawings are an attempt for interpretation and approximation to a language with which we are familiar: cartography, technical drawing. With drawings of different scales superimposed, it is possible to make not only a comparison, but also to complement the natural traces of microorganisms and “transcribe things that are normally removed from the conventional representation of architecture”, thought defended by the Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi, in *The Manhattan Transcripts*<sup>2</sup> where he questions the methods of representation used by architects.

In this transcription process, it is possible to recover elements that are usually discarded as incapable of contributing to thinking about urban and architectural space. An attempt was made to extract forms from a specific and actual reality, which mixes the constructed, the natural, the living, the biological. The body and the city.

From the moment of the birth of the colonies until their death, although on a smaller scale and infinitely greater

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Tschumi, *The Manhattan Transcripts*, Londres: Academy Editions, (1994: 7).

speed, a parallelism with the city was observed with regard to the transformations that occur over time. It was possible to follow the expansion and emergence of new nuclei, the aging of the pioneer areas, changes in colour, the mixture of species, occupation and non-occupation of empty areas and vertical growth. This verticalization opened space for the three-dimensional and the consequent spatiality of the colonies. The studies began to cover structural possibilities, meshes and textures that could integrate the public space from where the samples were taken, in a return to the place of origin, like a magnifying glass over a layered and invisible scale.

The samples with induced contact had a different growth from the natural contact samples, and they revealed that the more control of the contact and of the areas of contamination we have, the more organized and well structured the colonies grow and the more interesting they become visually.

The spaces, structures, hierarchies and organizations of the observed species reveal an existing behavior in invisibility. They are like invisible cities superimposed on the cities that our bodies inhabit. They provide information that can be taken for reflection at the scale of the city, mainly within and from the context of the pandemic. They remind us that there must be balance in the competition between species. The simple gesture of collecting, touching, determines a better or worse development of the colonies of microorganisms. Action and reaction. This research, that is still developing, resulted in some prototypes, drawings and tactile maps that could later serve as a basis for the development of larger, real and viable structures, with the intention of being integrated into the public space.

\*\*\*



Fig. 4. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019).  
Samples induced over the days



Fig. 5. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019).  
Natural sample – no contact



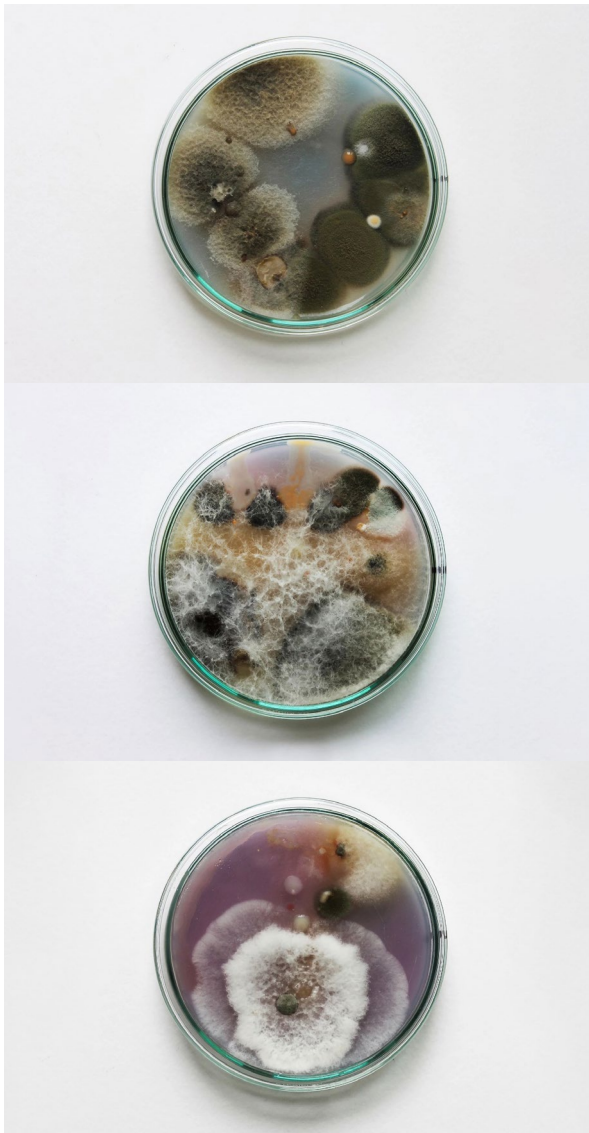


Fig. 6. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019).  
Samples induced over the days

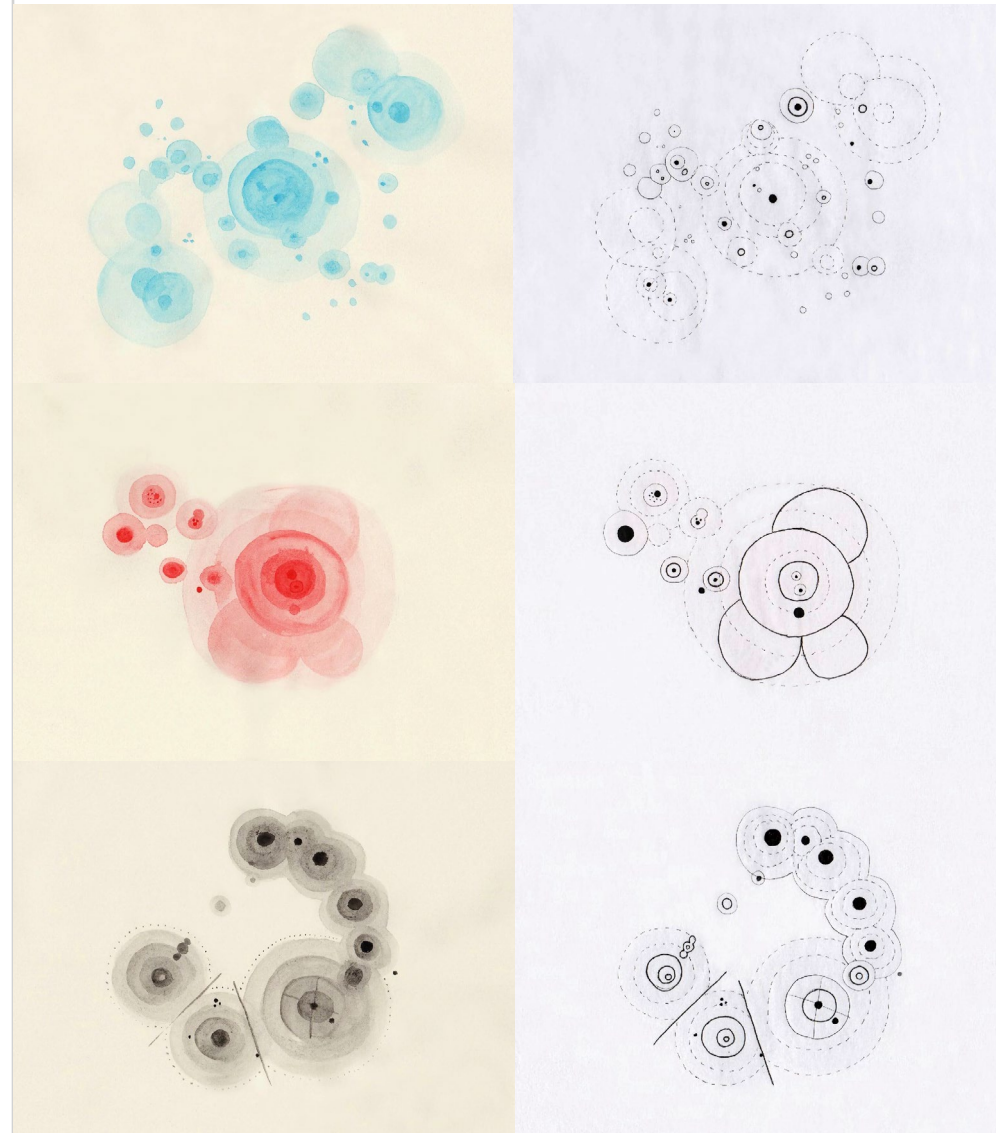


Fig. 7. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019).  
Maps traced with spots and lines



Fig. 8. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019).  
Tactile maps



Fig. 9, 10. *Entre Corpo e Cidade / Between Body and City* (2019).  
Study prototypes

# América

VISUAL ESSAY

Carolina Drahomiro

## Travessia

Departing from the play on words between ‘traversing’ and the Portuguese word for ‘pillow’ (*travesseiro*), the object, of an intimate and autobiographical nature, refers to the journey from Brazil, where the artist was born, to Portugal. Safeguarding the possibility of a dreamlike transit between ‘territories’, the project intends to denounce and ‘absorb’ the artist’s own experiential meaning — her *place of displacement*.

Embroidery on cotton  
pillowcase, digital photographs,  
variable dimensions, 2020

## América

Pointing to America is, in a way, creating an invisible line where the ‘personal magnetic force’ acts, considering the situation of permanence beyond the border of the continent. The path through the water contextualises, geographically, a naturally established route, an ancient trail that unites and at the same time distances the territories. The performative act, registered in digital photographs, took place in Porto, Portugal, in 2020 and in Pernambuco, Brasil, in 2021.

Performance, Porto, Portugal,  
2020 and Pernambuco, Brazil,  
2021. Digital photographs









AMÉRICA





# Waking up on the other side: from the experience of suspension to the reconfiguration of everyday choreographies

Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro

Durational force, the force of temporality is the movement of complication, dispersion or difference that makes any becoming possible and the world a site of endless and unchartable becomings.<sup>1</sup>

— Elisabeth Grosz

We did not know what we would find on the other side of the intermitent and unsettling confinements. In that period, we started using several terms and expressions and performing several rituals without realising the real scope of their validity, in time and in meaning. We realised then that many important values, of freedom, movement, sharing, that so many had fought for, since before our own birth, were suddenly put at risk by a very basic need for survival: first of the body then of culture. One can follow historically how social conditions influence art practice and in this text I intend to bring up a very particular derivation of the consequences of the Covid era, in the certainty that those conditions were not generated in the confinement period itself but had already been developing for some time. Most of the effects of the pandemic are still to a great extent unmeasured, especially with regards to the impact on education, cultural production and art. Historicism has sometimes been a sort of grain of sand in the engine for critical thought and to follow the sequence of 'turns' in art may seem a unnecessary exertion. But I have been interested in fostering an idea that stems from and hopefully will develop the notion of the *durational* in its multiple assertions.

For periods in which very real menaces suddenly start to cut short lives (the first moments of the pandemic in Italy are still in the memory of many), art and culture were certainly not an immediate priority. At a private level, artists did withdraw to their studios and, notwithstanding a sense of insecurity and/or solidarity for a unexpected global sanitary crisis, many have expressed that the retreat imposed by the confinements

<sup>1</sup> Elisabeth Grosz, "Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming" in *Parallax*, Vol. 11, no. 2, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, (2005: 4–13). <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>, DOI: 10.1080/13534640500058434 (Access by permission).

resulted in a fertile time. In terms of access to art institutions, containment was an obvious necessity and it has been clear for those in charge of museums and theaters that the efforts to build audience's loyalty over the years were seriously compromised by the social conditions in place. Moving in public became, as we all remember, a choreography of distance in which care and concern were often replaced by suspicion and insecurity.<sup>2</sup> Something quite poignant about the body in motion surfaced. The relation between the inside of domestic homes and the space outdoors was reconfigured. Many artists embarked in projects that addressed such relation, for many it was even a form of survival. The notion of territory shifted because the reality of access and movement changed. How has art practice moved forward? If one considers that works of art circulate, that artists and audiences move through different spaces and spatialities, then a revision of the politics of artistic territoriality had to be taken through. Not simply because we may consider that the end of the 'spatial turn' had already occurred, releasing the pressure of the discourse of site-specificity, at least, upon practices that attempt to incorporate the political or those that claim a decolonising perspective, or even indeed for those practices that postulate the processual.<sup>3</sup>

If the site-specific discourse has enabled a praised freedom for artistic modes of production, it has also assigned the production of art to a sometimes strict condition of spatiality, as we know all too well. I have claimed, and surely others much better before me, that a discourse for forms of art practices that do not require a strict attachment to the physical conditions of their siting, was needed. As Miwon Kwon claims on the first line of her *One place after another* other terms could be used for this turn:

<sup>2</sup> There were at the time many voices calling for the replacement of the motto "social distancing" by "physical distancing" as a way of reinforcing collective connection and combat isolation. The circulation of rumours and disinformation ripped through society as we recollect all too well.

<sup>3</sup> There could be an angle of argument around the spatial conditions instigated by conceptual art but pursuing that route would divert us at this moment.

*Site-determined, site-oriented, site-referenced, site-conscious, site-responsive, site-related.*<sup>4</sup>

But how is it that we may address this turn if not incorporating a dimension of the transitory and the performative? One needs to return to the consideration of the imprint of the performative in the construction of identity from feminist discourses, in order to better understand the disruption upon our everyday under the pandemic, and subsequently the effects it had on art, its production, circulation and reception. We do, therefore, need a new ethics of experience, namely the individual experience of the body and of a sort of transitory reconfiguration of identity that a new everyday (suddenly) installed. So, first we ask, how did this reconfiguration affect public space? One tends to think of the lockdown days from the images of its impact in the public spaces, streets and plazas emptied of people, like poetic resonances of utopian architectures and urban settings. And when we returned, it was unavoidable to retrace their emptiness in our memory, in sharp contrast with the reappearance of car crammed highways and corridors of shopping malls filled with people again. The structure of our liberal form of life returned very rapidly and this is also a consequence of an embedded character of the collective in which a shared notion of everydayness is inscribed as a normative form for individual life, but one in which individuality is considered, not in its potential for singularity, but as a trait celebrated or appeased by consumerism: a mirror in which each person seeks validation through the image of others. In truth, we do need a shared notion of everydayness, should it also not be fully (and often exclusively) entangled with the lived experience within what Marc Augé has long defined as 'non-places', that is those places where identity and memory are formed through, predominantly, *ahistorical* (and largely *acritical*, I would add) activities.

Different countries dealt differently with the need to curb contamination, mostly, as we've seen, by implementing

<sup>4</sup> Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another – Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*, MIT, (2002).

restrictions of movement. These restrictions reinforced what we already knew: that societies rely on flows, of people and goods, to carry through their ways of life. Besides making clear how different societies deal with that mobility, they also made clear the separation and interdependency between physical and digital mobility. The fact that the intangible circulation of digital networks generated an increased sense of connection, did not hide the fact that physical mobility is not equivalent everywhere in the world, as everydayness is not. What we may take from Judith Butler's discourse on gender, that the performative always produces an effect particularly in the formation of identity, is that the disruption of our everyday actions had to actualise some form of detour from a norm that by no means is universal. If anything, those days made evident differences in everyday experiences across the globe, not only differences of the enforcement of authority and domination, but also sharp differences in the possibilities for survival.

My main objective with this text is to attempt to delineate the possible consequences for art practice in the wake of a period which made clear that the historical determinants that placed it beyond territoriality, a sort of overtaking of the post-autonomous turn, no longer applied, because that period made clear that there is no separation between context and content, and that there was effectively no return from the dissolution of the frontier between the private and the public domains. Moreover, it became increasingly clear that an alleged neutrality (and deceitful impartiality) of the digital space needed to be debunked. Bruno Latour says that "(t)here is now a yawning break between what encloses and what is enclosed, between the more local and the more global".<sup>5</sup> Because the landscape, upon which one projects oneself, is no longer flat, it develops in zigomatic ways, layering instances of power, that, at discretion, may distribute either mischief or solidarity.

<sup>5</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social, An Introduction to Actor Network Theory*, Oxford Uni Press: Oxford and New York, (2005: 173).

So, we could secondly ask how did that reconfiguration affect art practice? And there are many articles and opinions as to what the pandemic did to the art world, how institutions responded to the restrictions of access. And there are plenty of articles and books about creativity in times of crisis. Historically, there have been other sanitary crisis in the world to which artists have responded: more poignantly the black plague and the HIV/AIDS crisis.<sup>6</sup>

However my point here is not to identify art made either responding to or symbolising the sanitary situation of the world. I briefly refer to questions of institutional response but in the sense that the art system could have (and has in several instances) incorporated a need for a more dialogical approach to issues that affect the world. There are widespread claims that a world crisis such as the pandemic, which has instigated a large scale need for connections through digital communication, prompted a widening of the democratisation of art and the increase of self expression. Claims that I believe to be misleading as that openness also developed devoid of a sense of critical awareness. Besides, the effect of a survival impulse cannot be fully evaluated in its immediacy. And we know that, in the connectiveness of the internet, it's not all fair and truthful, supportive and progressive, right? Much like in the initial impact of the AIDS days, the general idea that precariousness is an instigator of creativity is profoundly acritical and very damaging for what art and culture mean to humanity. What artists are able to do in times of crisis is to reveal a deeper sense that humankind cannot move forward without the awareness of the symbolic dimensions of our existence.

But one knows that the collective meaning of that 'we' is problematic. Human existence is socially bound by character

<sup>6</sup> See for the first e.g. the exhibition *Hope and healing, Painting in Italy in a Time of Plague 1500-1800*, April 3 - September 25, 2005, Worcester Art Museum <https://www.worcesterart.org/exhibitions/past/hope-and-healing/index.htm> (Access: 11/2022). For the HIV/AIDS crisis see e.g. Smith, Royce W. "Local Responses, Global Pandemic: Rethinking Representations of HIV/AIDS" in Jeffery, Celina and Gregory Minissale (eds), *Global and Local Art Histories*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle UK, (2007: 1-26).



and the relational dimension of humans (gregariously or by contrast in isolation) is anthropologically the very justification of humanity. The problem lies in the fact that to assign (classifying) definitions to groups of humans, sometimes by disciplinary need, has the risk of pulverising difference. And this is a contradiction in terms, in other words, defining a group reinforces its social and political representation, but it may also risk to reduce its intrinsic diversity. I will call here Jean Luc Nancy's triad *Being Singular Plural* in which the grammatical interchange amongst the three words is a precept to discuss the impossible isolation and transitory condition of our existence. Nancy writes:

The whole task, here, is to do right by identities, but without ceding anything to their frenzy, to their presuming to be substantial identities ('subjects', in this sense). This task is enormous, and it is very simple. It is the task of a culture remaking itself, or the recasting of thinking such that it would not be crude or obscene like every thought of purity. It means mixing together again the various lines, trails, and skins, while at the same time describing their heterogeneous trajectories and their webs, both those that are tangled and those that are distinct.<sup>7</sup>

Jean-Luc Nancy is in fact describing the dangers of essentialism that the feminist discourses had already warned us against. The truth is, it seems that the effects upon the world of critical thinking have been too weak or had any impact at all on a wide and consistent acceptance of cross-cultural differences.<sup>8</sup> I have before attempted to discuss the issue with the

terms 'simultaneity of singularities' as an attempt to address the transient character of socially bound definitions.<sup>9</sup> For this I have tried to distinguish between 'public' and 'audience' in the sense that an audience may be considered a social group that, at a given moment (and space), is being measured by some form of surveying procedure, for example, auditing the number of spectators of a TV show or pressing a tally at an exhibition entrance for its visitors' entries and exits. In other words, an audience is a measured collective entity. A public, although also potentially an audience, could, for the purpose of this argument, be considered mainly as a 'simultaneity of singularities', that is: a group of individuals with very distinctive characteristics between each other that happen to coincide in time and space, for example, attending a theatre performance or a class, conditions that are always transitory but which only within a measured recurrence may generate an audience. Where an audience feeds a marketing or statistical strategy, a public implies a production of diversified meanings. Such awareness leads, at the level of critical thought, to an understanding of *difference* and is, I would say, a matter of critical maturity.

I would like to introduce Elisabeth Grosz' text "Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming" in Parallax (2005) in which the author discusses the influence of Bergson's thinking in Deleuze's philosophy of *difference*. Although one should not need to justify the importance of philosophy, Grosz writes that "[...] when it is oriented to well-formulated questions, philosophy is drawn to the question of *difference*, that is, to the immersion of difference in and the production of difference by *duration*".<sup>10</sup> (2005: 4) From a philosophical point of view, critical thinking widely considers the notion of difference as a

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, Stanford Uni Press, Stanford California. (2000) (p. 147). The book was written at a time of many conflicts in the world derived from the assertion of cultural/identity differences (Nancy gives several examples such as Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian). At the time of publishing this book world conflicts of this kind still proliferate across the globe.

<sup>8</sup> It is Michael Warner that says that "(if) (intellectuals) fail (to lead public discourse) [...] then failure must lie at their own

door" Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone Books, [2002] (2005: 143).

<sup>9</sup> See my text "Acção – arquivo – [re]acção, uma reflexão a propósito de Guerrilla Girls Shout-Out! Arquivo Gráfico de Alice Neel" in *Contemporânea*, Ed. 07-08-09, <https://contemporanea.pt/edicoes/07-08-09-2022/guerrilla-girls-shout-out-arquivo-grafico-de-alice-neel>, (2022: Paragraph 19). Text in Portuguese only. (Access: 12/2022).

<sup>10</sup> Bibliographic reference as above. Added italics.

methodological procedure to bring into question our relation to the world and to others.

It has been an interest of mine to address and connect the concepts that Grosz' article synthesises: **difference, duration, intuition** and **becoming**, not necessarily in this order. The editorial space of this text will certainly leave too many threads undeveloped as these are much wider philosophical territories. The concepts are, nevertheless, important for my attempt to address the consequences of the period of the pandemic for art production making sure that the trajectory I am trying to clarify was much longer before under way.

Briefly on **intuition**. As Grosz points out, it is "Bergson and Deleuze (that) commonly refer to art and the activities of artists as giving a clearer expression to this intuitive impulse." Grosz continues:

This immersion into the continuity of being without containment is the very condition of art, which nonetheless, while harnessing or expressing this continuity, cannot unambiguously communicate it. (2005: 9)

Art is not the illustration of said continuity of being. When mobilising intuition and elaborating forms of the aesthetic experience, art is one of its modes of occurrence, it produces and contributes to said continuity.

In his, "After method, Mess in Social Science Research", John Law argues that the social sciences do not "catch" what he calls the "[...] different textures of the world." He continues, "(p)ains and pleasures, hopes and horrors, intuitions and apprehensions, losses and redemptions, mundanities and visions, angels and demons, things that slip and slide, or appear and disappear, change shape or don't have much form at all, unpredictabilities [...]"<sup>11</sup> all of which are phenomena that

<sup>11</sup> John Law, *After method, Mess in Social Science Research*, London and New York: Routledge, (2004: 2). I have been fond of this quote for a very long time. See my text: "Prática contextual e mais além, algumas reflexões sobre ReaKt" in *ReaKt – Olhares e Processos / Views and Processes*, Guimarães 2012, Fundação Cidade de Guimarães, (2013:7)

a pandemic world has certainly experienced in an exceptional manner, both at social and individual levels.

At a time when science played such an important role, a shift in the current critical discourse could have worked on the awareness of the difference so fundamental to the implementation and effectiveness of scientific solutions to the health crisis in general in the world. What an opportunity for the western world to actually embark on the reconfiguration of critical, philosophical and historical discourses from this awareness! Bruno Latour asks if there is "[...] an alternative philosophical tradition that allows us to take up European history in a different manner, by relocating the question of science and reason, even while forbidding the bifurcation of nature?"<sup>12</sup> (2004: 305) The reciprocal influence between the impact of a disease on the body and the reconfiguration of a philosophical Western-european standpoint becomes apparent. It is Latour who also defined the body in terms of affection, that is, modes that allow for the occurrence of mutual effects between the world and the body, so that the body is not a vessel "[...] of something superior" but "a dynamic trajectory by which we learn to register and become sensitive to what the world is made of".<sup>13</sup> (2004: 206) However, I am less interested in the subjective than I am in the collective dimension of this awareness and its reverberations, how it affects and is affected by the world. And affection is a curious word to use here in the sense that it contains both emotion and repercussion. Tactics became somehow more visible and inseparable of strategies.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bruno Latour, "Reflections on Etienne Souriau's Les Modes d'existence", in Graham Harman, Levi Bryant and Nick Srnicek (eds) *The Speculative Turn Continental Materialism and Realism*, Melbourne, Australia: re.press Australi, (2004: 304-333). [http://www.re-press.org/book- files/OA\\_Version\\_Speculative\\_Turn\\_9780980668346.pdf](http://www.re-press.org/book- files/OA_Version_Speculative_Turn_9780980668346.pdf) (Open access PDF).

<sup>13</sup> Bruno Latour, "How to Talk About the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies" in *Body & Society*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, Vol. 10./ 2-3, (2004: 205-229).

<sup>14</sup> For more on this see the well-known thinking of Michel De Certeau in *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press (1984).

The postponement of activities became constant and implied numerous adaptations to cultural events. Performance, or any events or situations that implied physical presence, were certainly the most affected. The transference to the digital space certainly generated valid alternatives to addressing the performative and the spatial, but a sense of incompleteness was unavoidable. Not just for performers, the body became an archive of density, a density of time and gestures, because one was living the possibilities for expanding its spatial limits through memory and projection, expansion which we knew we could not in effect *perform*. This is where I would say a form of the *durational* encounters a unexpected sense in a projection of a relational occurrence that happens beyond contact but is informed by the body's resistance to (age long times of) unequality in the ways the everyday is lived that the pandemic made so apparent. And the extraordinary thing is that I believe this awareness, in different intensities, spread beyond the art and the cultural sectores. This is what Victor Turner framed as the *becoming*, an optimistic project that recognises that societies live and evolve through moments of unrest that propell intense (self)reflexive processes, a liminal condition lived both socially and at an individual level. And if Turner supports his thinking on an analysis of the rituals of the Ndembu people in Zambia, it would be perhaps opportune to recall that it is through those periods of crisis that rituals are remade even if only at a mundane level: washing hands, putting on masks, waiting in spaced queues, and so on. As Bruce Kapferer puts it:

What is most often glossed as 'ritual', as with a variety of arts in their independent formation in numerous cultures, is a complex compositional form as revealed through the process of performance.<sup>15</sup> (1986: 191)

<sup>15</sup> Bruce Kapferer, "Performance and the structuring of meaning and experience" in Victor Turner and Eduard Bruner, (eds.). *The Anthropology of Experience*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, (1986: 188–203).

At this point, the interconnection of the categories in discussion seems to be based on a continuous back and forth amongst them that form (and are formed by) the complicity between the body, space and time. To the body Latour attributes the struggle to mend the fissure between nature and culture. Within the consideration of space we have seen that art practice has moved beyond first the spatial constraints of site-specificity and secondly beyond the volatility of a processual condition. Time as considered within the scope we are dealing with, could be divided in two conditions: *temporality* and *temporariness*. I have addressed these conditions apropos the notion of expanded cinema in a text for the on-line issue of *Contemporanea* magazine.<sup>16</sup>

Temporariness refers to any ephemeral work. A temporary work is placed (virtually or otherwise) in contact with spectators within a specific time frame. Its display is predetermined by an 'end by date' but no material or formal changes occur, in principle, over that period, and the work may or may not continue to exist after removal (that is a different matter). On the other hand, temporal works go through changes that are intrinsic to their very activation of meaning. They are conceived within a frame of change in which time is integral and cumulative to the whole process, and it is in this sense that their temporal condition may open the discussion on the durational.

For Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty a durational approach to public art departs from a form of engagement that values the recognition of "[...] the significance of engaging audiences and encouraging research-based outcomes that are responsive to their specific contexts, audiences and locations over time".<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro, "Feixe de Luz: Escultura Projetada, Cinema Exposto – Cinema expandido e escultura em movimento: sugestões para uma abordagem duracional" in *Contemporânea*, Ed. 10-11-12, <https://contemporanea.pt/edicoes/10-11-12/feixe-de-luz-escultura-projetada-cinema-exposto>, (2022). (Text in Portuguese only) (Access: 12/2022).

<sup>17</sup> The full paragraph reads as follows: "Locating the Producers: *Durational Approaches to Public Art* was itself devised as a durational research process, which would investigate how public art and its curation has begun to recognise the significance of engaging audiences and encouraging research-based outcomes that are responsive

(2011:5) Particularly, this approach reacts both against the spectacularisation of participation and against the processes in which culture is put at the service of the tourism industry. So, the contributions of artists, participants and spectators integrate the work to the full extent of their very transformations over a given time.

Let's see what Edward Scheer says on the durational:

The phrase 'durational art' implies a specific construction of time, a deliberate shaping of it to effect a particular experience for the viewer or the audience. [...] Yet durational art has another quality that invokes the flux of temporal experience, the quality of time experienced in the doing of an action rather than simply the quantity of chronological time that a task might consume.<sup>18</sup>

So, time is taken in a temporal sense. It is a quality of experience and not a measure *per se*. But, in spite of a common sense attributed to the experience of time and although viewers produce individual meanings, it is not exclusively about subjectivity. The subjective as a relation to the world is only one form of knowledge and is always inscribed in a chain of influences that shatters any claim to its autonomy. Subjectivity is cumulative and ever changing, it is always part of the simultaneity of singularities I attempted to describe above and is always in a process of becoming in which differentiation is inseparable from continuity. Calling Elisabeth Grosz again, she writes:

Becoming is the operation of self-differentiation, the elaboration of a difference within a thing, a quality or a system that emerges or actualizes only in duration. (2005: 4)

to their specific contexts, audiences and locations over time." Paul O'Neill & Claire Doherty [eds.], *Locating the Producers: Durational Approaches to Public Art*, Amsterdam: Antennae Valiz, (2011).

<sup>18</sup> Edward Scheer, "Introduction: The end of spatiality or the meaning of duration" in *On Duration, Performance Research, A Journal of the Performing Arts*, Volume 17, Issue 5, (2012: 1).

And incorporating duration and the cumulative action of time may also mean that a work of art incorporates the possibility of its own failure because it would have existed as a node in a path that proceeds from and to diversions, returns and crossroads. In the continuity of being no route is a failed route although it may be either rugged or effortless.

Contradicting my own purpose of refraining from tracing the sequence of 'art turns', perhaps I venture to finalise by proposing that we name the conditions of art this text addresses as the durational turn.

\*\*

Bibliographic and other references,  
page 126, version in Portuguese.

# Bird's-eye, the silence of the birds

Miguel Leal

This text was written  
between Freiburg and Porto  
January–February 2022

*There is no pure land now. No safe place.  
And we stand here on the pier  
Watching you drown.  
Love among the sailors.  
Love among the sailors.<sup>1</sup>*  
— Laurie Anderson

Where do planes go when we no longer need them? What have we been doing for decades with the thousands of aircraft that become obsolete or surplus? And those that are still expected to fly again? Where do they stay? Where do they hide?

There are half-secret places where these metal birds are kept. They are far from almost anything and are places of oblivion and immobility. In those places, the aircraft, after their useful life cycle, are laboriously dismantled, piece by piece, treated as mere junkyard, at best cannibalized to repair or build other flying artefacts. And those planes for which a second life is still awaited, remain in a sort of limbo, as if cryogenised and waiting to be woken up, protected from the usury of time and the elements. All these delicate technical objects are stored in vast outdoor spaces, almost always in arid deserts, ideal for their preservation. We find these cemeteries, which in fact for many planes are just a place of passage and not a last abode, in various parts of the globe. The largest of all is located in North America, on the city limits of Tucson, Arizona, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, known simply as *The Boneyard*.<sup>2</sup> In an area of more than 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>, almost 5,000 aircraft and ballistic missiles are currently stored, mainly of military use. The altitude, dry air and rare rains, the alkaline soil, flat and firm as rock make this place a paradise for storing aircraft for long periods of time.

<sup>1</sup> Laurie Anderson, "Love Among the sailors", in *Bright Red*, Warner Music, (1994).

<sup>2</sup> Created at the end of World War II to store and dismantle military aircraft taken out of service, these facilities are managed by the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (AMARG), responsible for the maintenance and regeneration of the aircraft stored there.



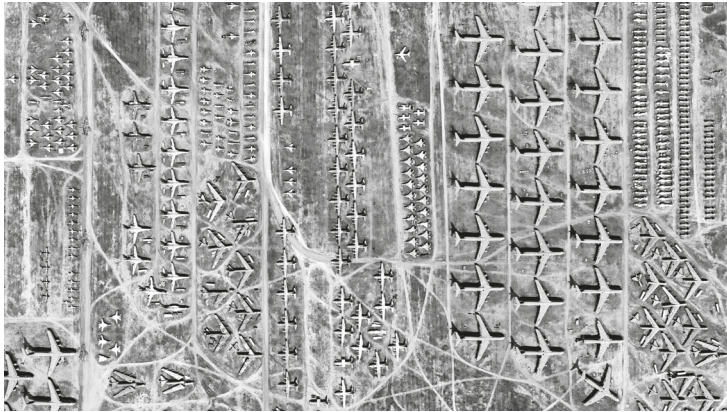


Fig. 1. Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Tucson, Arizona, February 21 2022 (satellite image)



Fig. 2. Airplanes parked on the runway at Berlin Schönefeld airport, April 28 2020 (satellite image)

With the help of satellites that swarm around the earth, it is easy to survey this vast area of the Arizona desert and observe the repeated geometries drawn by the outline of these thousands of planes, aligned next to each other in varied patterns. In their smallness, they become objects that seem to fit in the palm of our hands, like the Lilliputian toys of our childhood. Flying over *The Boneyard* in this way offer us a necrological view of aviation and the thousands of planes that, away from the sky, await the predators that will gut them or the emergence of other uses or new wars that could wake them from the sleep they were forced into. Seeing them like that, paused and transformed into miniatures, clinging to the ground, helps, above all, to destroy and trivialize the myths that we continue to associate, in one way or another, with aeronautics. The romantic idea of freedom glued to the imitation of the dominating and imperial flight of birds becomes even more distant and misleading in the face of the inversion of the usual order of factors, with the planes on the ground and we sitting in front of the computer looking at the images that reach us from the Earth's orbit...

\*  
\*\*

As of mid-March 2020, in the midst of the pandemic crisis and with countries restricting commercial flights and entry into their borders, the bulk of the world's commercial aviation fleet, with more than 25,000 active aircraft, was suddenly grounded. In April of that year the peak of this crisis was reached, with 75% or more of the planes stopped,<sup>3</sup> parked in now silent airports or in rear facilities. Ready to fly around the clock, with just a few maintenance breaks, these sky giants now required extra care. The companies urgently order thousands of wooden chocks (*Corona chocks*) and technical teams organize to guarantee that the planes, intricate and complex pieces of machinery, are kept in good condition. It is necessary to insulate all the

<sup>3</sup> According to official statistics, this peak was reached on April 14, 2020, with 28,502 commercial flights, compared to 111,450 on the same day of the previous year. [See : <https://www.flightradar24.com/blog/tag/covid-19/>]. (Access: 1/2022).



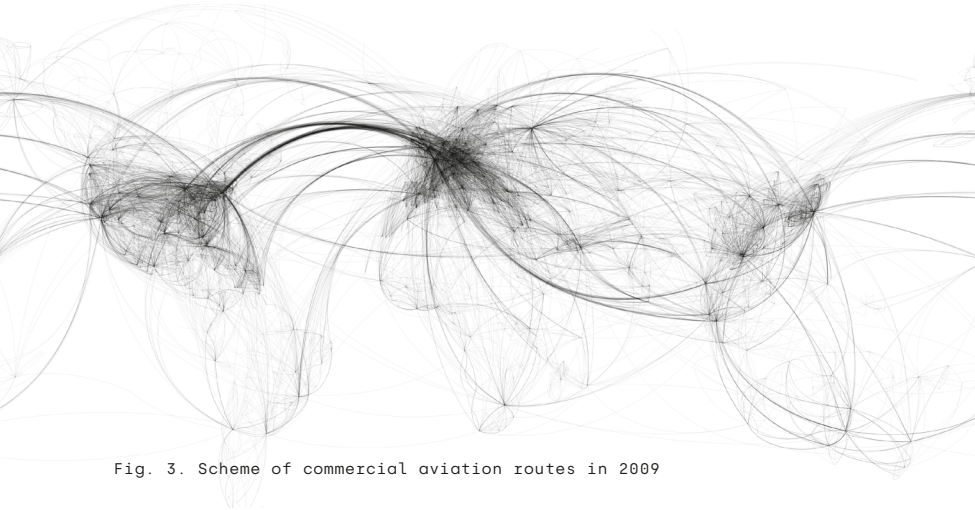


Fig. 3. Scheme of commercial aviation routes in 2009

holes, protect them from moisture with giant silica gel bags or move the wheels regularly along the tracks. In many cases, the usual parking platforms installed in dry climate geographies are chosen. Therefore, in a short space of time, a whole logistics of immobility is organized.

At the same time, the irrationality of the model in force in world aviation has led to many flights taking place with empty aircraft, just to meet quotas and guarantee airlines the maintenance of their precious slots at the main airports.<sup>4</sup> These flights without passengers created a new instance, that of ghost flights. Lufthansa alone will have carried out more than 18,000 of these ghost flights that winter, as was made public in early 2022.<sup>5</sup> Many of the planes we saw passing over our heads were actually relatives of the 'Flying Dutchman', that legendary ship unmanned and inhabited only by specters. Along with those other grounded planes, ghosts on the ground, these flights cast a spectral cloak over commercial aviation,

<sup>4</sup> The European Union obliges companies to carry out at least 80% of the scheduled flights in order to keep their slots at the airports. At the beginning of the pandemic, it temporarily suspended this requirement, but then established a minimum of 50% for these flights, rules that remained in force at the beginning of 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Ver, por exemplo: <https://www.thebulletin.be/brussels-airlines-runs-3000-empty-flights-maintain-airport-slots>. (Accessed at the beginning of 2022 the page has since been removed – Editor's Note.)

not only that of ghost planes that, empty, cross the skies, but also that of passivity, immobility and the grandiose and excessive void of the apparently immaterial gestures of capital in pure movement around the globe.

We knew from the beginning of the health crisis the role of this global aviation map, with tens of thousands of daily flights, in the acceleration of the pandemic. Airplanes were, at first, the main vectors for the spread of the virus. Although representing only a small part of the commercial movements in the world, this aeronautical network is the conduit of the fast and increasingly frequent global displacements of our bodies. Hence the limitation of air circulation has been a crucial instrument from an early moment to try to stop the rapid spread of the virus. Planes are to this pandemic what boats were to the pneumonic plague that broke out in 1918, sowing the virus in every port of passage on the return home of military contingents after the end of the war.

Seeing these planes on the ground therefore summoned a series of ghosts, turning each airport into a spectral place, a temporary aeronautical cemetery. The generalized slowdown has allowed us to see things that would otherwise remain invisible or hidden in the midst of the unbridled spin around the globe. The sudden limitation of movement offered us the opportunity to finally look more clearly at the map of globalization. From our rear posts, prisoners in our own homes, sitting in front of the luminous windows of our computers, the images of the planes immobilized on the runways, brought by the satellites that continued their orbits, awakened other images, other spectra.

\*  
\*\*

A year later, the pandemic crisis continued to drag on and a small episode once again reminded us of the fragile condition of this world in perpetual movement and in which, despite all the immateriality of capital, it is still of goods in transit that people talk about when it comes to trade and consumption. On the morning of the 23rd of March 2021, pushed by the strong winds of a sudden sandstorm, the Ever Given, a giant boat with

a capacity of 20,000 containers,<sup>6</sup> turned sideways and ran ashore in the middle of the Suez Canal, completely blocking the passage. The ship, belonging to Ever Green, a company based in Formosa, was traveling from the Port of Tanjung Pelepas, in Malaysia, to the Port of Rotterdam, in the Netherlands. It took six days of effort to free the channel, as hundreds of ships amassed, waiting their turn to cross. The effects of this accident would last for some months throughout the distribution chain and, suddenly, awaken the most distracted to yet another level of insanity in global capitalism and to the emergence of the *global accident*, announced by Paul Virilio over and over again.

Planetary trade is completely dependent on maritime transport. Worldwide, approximately 90% of goods are transported by boat and, of these, 70% in containers.<sup>7</sup> Note, for example, that only 0.25% of products are transported by air. The growth of logistics even surpasses the growth of production. There is more and more merchandise being moved around the globe. This is a rampant phenomenon. In 1975, an average of 27 ships per day crossed the Suez Canal, carrying an average of 247 tons. In 2019, there were already 52 ships per day, but the average load had risen to 3,307 tons.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, official forecasts point to a tripling of maritime transport in the next 30 years.

We are currently experiencing an inflationary crisis that is directly linked to a problem of global logistics, especially maritime transport. With the breakdown of the chains of production, distribution and consumption during the various hiccups of the pandemic crisis, we have now reached a point where the lack of products in many areas has unbalanced the relationship between supply and demand, as well as transport costs, generating complex phenomena of price increases and speculation in the management of market expectations. In fact, an important part of the problem is essentially the lack



Fig. 4. The container ship Ever Given stranded in the Suez Canal, March 27, 2021 (satellite image)

of containers in Asia to ship the products, as a source and result of the breakdown of the chain of logistics. The containers piled up, empty, in the west, and the carousel had to get back to cruising speed, which would take many, many months.

None of this is new, only the scale has changed radically. The size of this problem is proportional to the Ever Given and the dozens of other super container ships that sail the seas, putting to shame the giants capable of transporting 10,000 containers that dominated the oceans just a few years ago. It is as if the Ever Given were “an accident waiting for a place to happen”,<sup>9</sup> an accident that will be larger the bigger and in greater number these ships become. Accidents exist even before they happen and are inscribed in the matrix of each technical object, of each device. Then it's just a matter of probabilities.

\*\*

<sup>6</sup> Or TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit), using the standard measurement in effect to calculate the volume of a container.

<sup>7</sup> Data from OECD, <https://www.oecd.org/ocean/> (Access: 1/2022).

<sup>8</sup> See Elizabeth Braw, “A Shipping Crisis Waiting to Happen”, Wall Street Journal, 20/04/2021 <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-shipping-crisis-waiting-to-happen-11618955494>>. (Access: 1/2022).

<sup>9</sup> See Virilio in his Preface to the catalogue to the exhibition *Unknown Quantity*, Paris: Cartier-Fondation Pour L'Art Contemporain, (2002: 9).

These two events, as if summing up some of the causes and consequences of the pandemic — a global biological accident —, brought us awareness of the way speed manipulates time and shapes space, articulating these two instances. The suspended movement of these vectors — planes and ships — temporarily returned the world to another scale, accentuating what we had been feeling with the closure and suspension of everyday life to which almost all of us were forced. The perception of space is relative and we know how the notion of its scale decreases in inverse proportion to our speed of displacement. The faster we move, the faster we reach our destination. If this movement is global, that means getting to the starting point faster, shrinking the world, as if we were running in circles, until exhaustion and with great speed, in a space that is closing in on us. Changing the relationship between these factors, even temporarily, is changing the practical and conceptual framework of what we mean by globalization.

The first evidence of this temporary suspension of global agitation arrived at our observation windows through the images of the satellites that continued, tirelessly, to travel orbit after orbit around the earth. Only this vertical gaze of the contemporary panoptic could offer us such images and such a perspective, thus summoning a whole history of the verticalization of the gaze, mapping and domination over the things of the world. We thus arrive at the history of globalization, at the globes and at the era of the media objectification of the territory, its things and its peoples, through this topology mediated by the vertical image that only an external gaze, a gaze like that of birds, could produce.

\*\*

The last century, between the two world wars, saw the intensification of the air race around the globe, with records being surpassed one after the other. The first aerial circumnavigation flight took place in June 1924,<sup>10</sup> taking 175 days to complete.

<sup>10</sup> Completed by 4 American planes, covering a total of 27,550 miles, but stopping 74 times along the way.

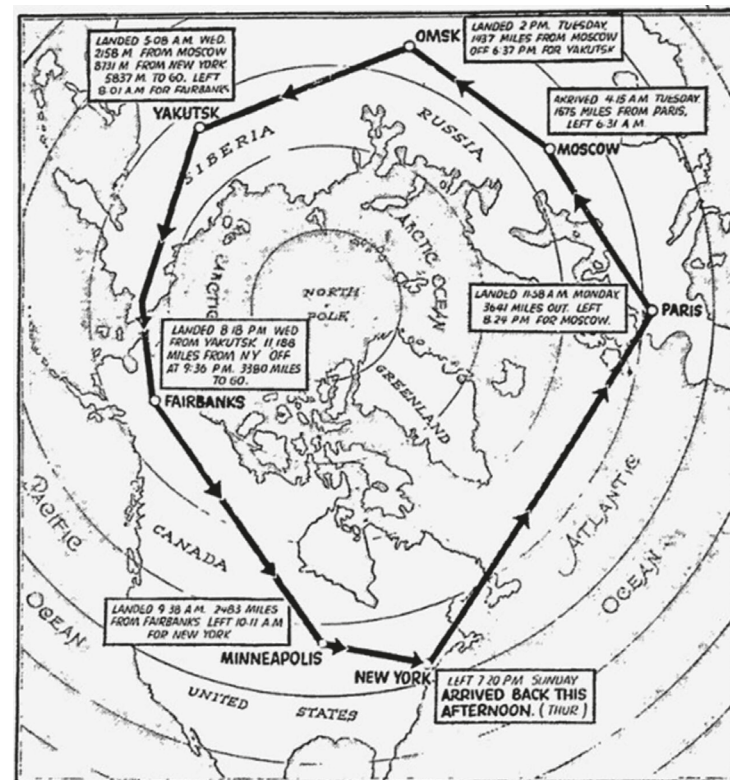


Fig. 5. Howard Hughes' air voyage in 1934, which set a new absolute circumnavigation record

A little over a decade later, on July 14, 1934, movie mogul Howard Hughes landed in New York, completing his round-the-world tour in just 91 hours. The world was shrinking and there seemed to be no limit to this fatal embrace, initiated by boat hundreds of years before.

On March 2, 1949, a USAF aircraft, the Lucky Lady II, completed the first non-stop flight around the globe, being fueled in midair and covering 23,452 miles in just over 94 hours. We were getting faster and more efficient to get back to the starting point. The first truly global war had, however, accelerated the processes of arrest and domination by the great



powers and corporations, an exercise inseparable from cartography, topographical mediation in general and global navigation. Colonization processes now depended on air travel and, soon, space travel, at first as a symbolic gesture of sovereignty and then as a practical exercise of domination over the world. Such sovereignty was celebrated aboard bolides such as the Concorde, the only supersonic plane to operate commercially and which, in November 1986, at the service of British Airways, as the last gasp of a long-vanished Empire, would complete the trip around the world in a short time, less than 30 hours...

Still in the aftermath of World War II, on October 24, 1946, a German V2 missile with a 35mm film camera was launched from the White Sands base in New Mexico, which would capture the first images of the Earth from space. The launch of these V2s also marked the beginning of the American space program, led by the same Werhner von Braun who had been one of those responsible in Peenemünde for the construction of the V1 and V2 that lashed out at London and other cities in 1944 and 1945,<sup>11</sup> underlining the continuation of the war for other means in an umbilical link between the gravitational release capacity of these missiles, their travel speed and the ubiquity of the panopticon. Thus, the first steps were taken so that the planet Earth as a whole could become an object of this panoptic. These images represent a new principle of exteriority in the mediation of the planet and, in the following decades, many other perspectives on Earth were successively inaugurated. One more stage of a history that had its origin with the advent of the balloon but that would only truly see its beginning in the middle of the First World War, when the association of the photographic camera and the airplane, was accomplished.

<sup>11</sup> The American program, that begun in 1945, would take a decisive turn with the arrival at White Sands, directly from Europe, of 300 carriages with parts for the V2, which von Braun and his team of scientists would undertake to assemble and perfect. In fact, the space programs of the Americans and the Soviets took as a starting point the development of the V2, whose original acronym came from the word *Vergeltungswaffe*, weapon of retaliation or revenge.

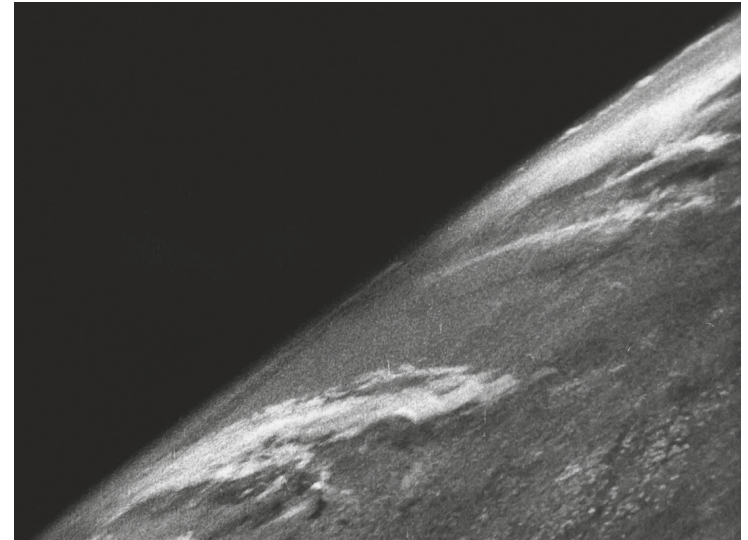


Fig. 6. First images of the earth taken from space, made by V2 No. 13, October 24 1946

Michel De Certeau, in a well-known passage,<sup>12</sup> referring to the Twin Towers, reminded us of the way in which this elevated point of view converts the observer into a *voyeur*, putting him at a distance and transforming the city into an object, into a text that can be read and traversed with the eyes. This gaze is that of a *solar eye*, which sees a world as a god would, adds De Certeau. Everything that spreads out before his eyes is thus transformed into a mere representation, as if it were a map, an aerial photograph or a satellite image, we could say today. This elevation of the gaze, this privileged point of view, is confused with the history of the conquest of the air and with the vertical observation that it offers us. When we combine this point of view with technological mediation, it is not only the entire topology that changes, but also our idea of the world. De Certeau contrasts the experience of everyday life and the plain

<sup>12</sup> See Michel De Certeau, "Walking the City", in *The Practice of Everyday Life* [*L'invention du quotidien. Vol. 1, Arts de faire*], Trans. Steven Randall, Berkeley: University of California Press, [1980] (1988: 91 ss.)

practice of walking with these other totalizing forms of the imagination. These visions that colonize the imagination and the imaginary of the globe are precisely the subject of this text.

\*\*

A small history of the verticalization of the gaze will invariably begin with the balloons and the possibility of abstraction they bring with them, transforming the world into an object. However, this story only comes close to our problem when we associate the balloon with the camera and the images produced in this way to a kind of steamroller that flattens everything, potentially transforming the world into an immense planisphere. It will be later, already in the middle of the First World War, when the plane (and the dirigible), a vector of displacement, allows to overcome the fixed point of view, that this convergence of topological mediation comes to boiling point. The reconnaissance plane is an instrument of cartography and orientation, a machine for seeing, as pointed out by Christoph Asendorf,<sup>13</sup> capable of recording, reconstituting and providing understanding, establishing the primacy of mediation in the relationship with events and territories so vast that only these mobile machines of image capture could encompass in its entirety. In fact, despite some extraordinary examples in the past, such as the aerial views of Amsterdam painted in the 16th century by Cornelis Anthonisz and in the following century by Jan Micker, only the technical association between the camera and the plane produced the necessary rupture so that one could start talking about a topological mediation of the territory.

Flying is always vertigo-inducing, metaphysical and real, disrupting the senses and mobilizing the imagination, while freeing us from material reality and gravity. For Romanticism, it is the balloon trip that embodies this metaphysics. The modern program, on the other hand, for these operations, takes the airplane as its instrument of choice.<sup>14</sup> Without the

<sup>13</sup> Christoph Asendorf, *Super Constellation: L'influence de l'aéronautique sur les arts e la culture* [Super Constellation: Flugzeug und Raumrevolution], Paris: Éditions Macula, [1997] (2013: 75).

<sup>14</sup> See Christoph Asendorf (2013), especially pp. 77–86.

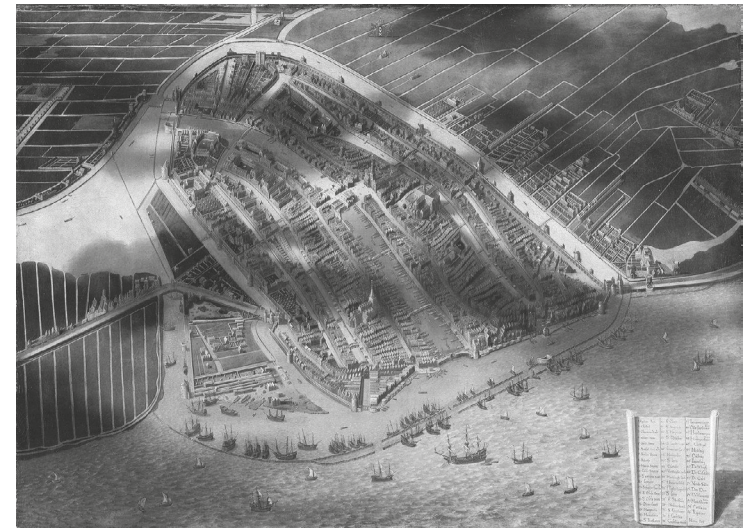


Fig. 7. Jan Micker, *Gezicht op Amsterdam in vogelvlucht* (Aerial view of Amsterdam), c. 1652, oil on canvas, 100 × 137 cm



Fig. 8. Aerial view of Amsterdam, 1939–40 (German photograph taken for military purposes)



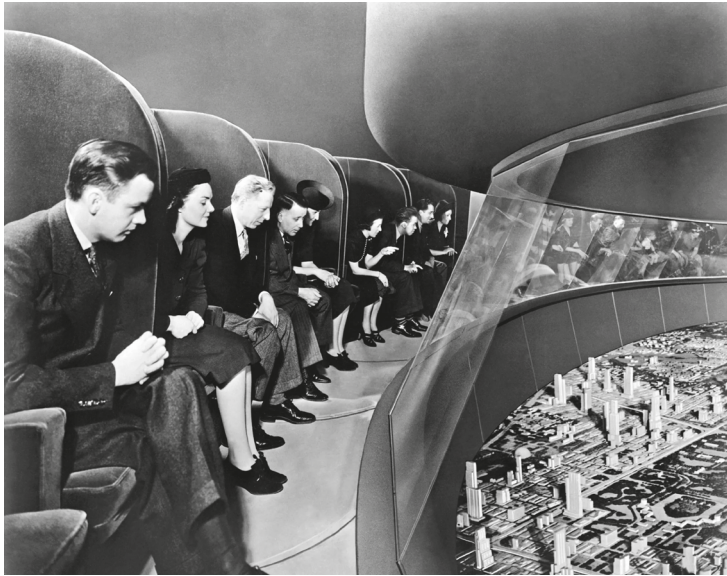


Fig. 9. Futurama, New York World's Fair, Norman Bel Geddes, 1939–1940

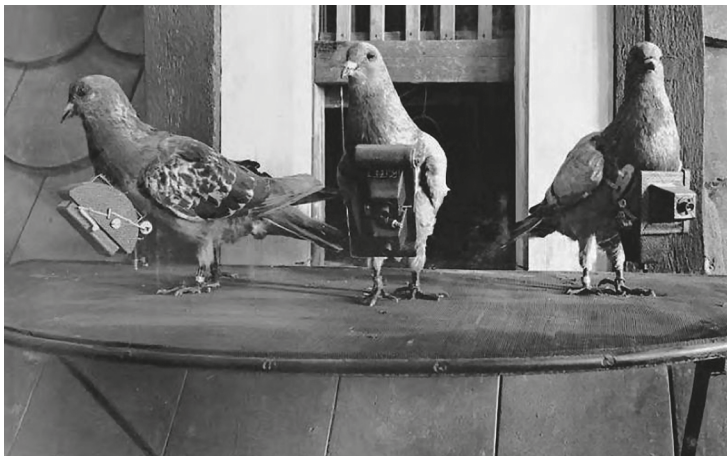


Fig. 10. Pigeons with cameras for aerial photography, n.d. These panoramic cameras were invented by Julius Neubronner in the early 20th century (c. 1903)

plane and without the topological mediation of the aerial view, the brutalism typical of this program would not have been made possible. The world was taken as an object and a blank slate was made of it, capturing it, in a first instance, through this panoptic that merges with a new idea of cartography, vertical, technically mediated, ubiquitous and totalizing. The spell turned against the sorcerer when, in the middle of the 20th century, this utopian desire to destroy cities (and the rest of the world) in order to remake them from scratch became tragically real in many places, having as its main agent the same aeronautics that offered to the modern gestures the view of the world and the global reason they needed.

Returning to the point of origin of our question, this panopticon associated with aeronautics is, above all, a device for condensation of the world, articulating global space-time. It is an instrument of unification and standardization of the globe, but also of surveillance, control and possession. In the age of aeronautics, “the only satisfactory map is the globe itself”.<sup>15</sup> It is the panoptic dream finally realized and which will have its paroxysm with satellite triangulation, which has come to free cartography from the limits of the plane, making it truly spatial, totalizing and global.

This story is also that of the connection between representation and landscape, with the devices of mediation of the territory contributing decisively to the construction of the landscape, articulating the real and the imagination, and anticipating the transformation of the world, in greater or lesser radicalness. In fact, these devices are not simple instruments of representation, they are also authentic oracles and produce landscape, fortelling and modelling its future. For more than five hundred years, the terrestrial globe and its two-dimensional counterparts, the large maps and planispheres, had the monopoly of the visual representation of the terrestrial surface. World War II was also the last in which the topographic map played a central role in operations. The use of vertical aerial photography was already dominant, but still as an instrument of observation,

<sup>15</sup> William F. Ogburn [1946] cited by Asendorf, (2013: 402).



something between the human eye and an instantaneous topographic map.<sup>16</sup> After that, with space-age vertical photography it's a whole new world view that is invented, it's a whole new world that needs to be interpreted.

\*\*

The globalization that is today so much talked about, but which has been at an accelerated pace since the earth as a whole was first embraced, would not be possible without an image of the world, because "there is no planetarity in the absence of a capacity for global representation of the earth".<sup>17</sup> The unequal distribution of power, violence and capital would not have been possible without this engine, without that representation that gave an image and a body to the central motive of the modern program: globalization.<sup>18</sup> This phenomenon, which is above all a collective condition, begins as a metaphysical undertaking to quickly inscribe itself in the body of the world, in an unbridled exploitation of its minerals and of the living beings that inhabit it.

Peter Sloterdijk tells us that globalization started with the Greeks and the *geometrization of the immeasurable*, with the globe being its perfect image (1999: 45-ss.). The World was thus conceived, ideally and mathematically, as globe long before the globalization born of the navigation around the world, of that empiricism that results from a journey in which one returns to the starting point. With that globalization that is directly inscribed in the things of the world, as experience, to build globes or terrestrial atlas was to fill-in the voids of the map, walking in strides towards a total absorption of space by time. That is, walking towards that point of arrival that is a simultaneous world, in which all places and all living beings are finally at one same time, even if unequal in their political,

economic or social dimensions. The time in which this world moves is common to the entire planet, and it is this, more than anything else, that creates globalization; and this is also why movement—that of ships or that of airships—is so important. Creating images or technical mediation is not enough. It is necessary to unite them to a vector of displacement and the possibility of overcoming gravity. It is not by chance that cinema and modern aeronautics were born almost at the same time, in an association that, as we have seen, would later make it possible to cinematically revolutionize the mediation of the globe, laying the foundations for a complete obliteration of conventional notions of space, territory or sovereignty (or of ecology, for example). Modernity is the age of verticality and exteriority. Only an external vision, an exo-vision that could only be technical, allowed us to imagine the world as a closed thing and as an object. It was the techno-experimental imagination of *aeronautics and astronautics* (Sloterdijk, 1999: 779) that brought us here. Add to this equation the era of informational navigation, in its technological fragility, so subject to accident and rupture, and we finally have the globe as an image of the world.

We often associate globalization with the annulment of borders, which have become obsolete. We know well that this is not so. Boundaries do not disappear, they expand. We are no longer able to measure them quantitatively but started measuring them qualitatively. Borders are no longer extensive, they have become intensive, as are the movements of capital. Globalization began as an exercise in Eurocentrism, and maps and globes over the centuries explain this better than anyone. Only very late in the second half of the 20th century, was Europe able to understand that the main consequence of the externalization inherent to globalization was decentering, that this was in fact the main long-term meaning of this process of *planetarization*. Once set in motion, the machine was unstoppable. It was just a matter of time. However, this decentering will not mean the loss of the center, but rather the loss of the periphery, bringing with it the inevitable catastrophe of local

<sup>16</sup> For this matter see John Brinkerhoff Jackson, "El paisaje visto por los militares", in *Descubriendo el paisaje autóctono*, Madrid, Biblioreca Nueva, (2010: 239-248).

<sup>17</sup> Achille Mbembe, *Brutalismo [Brutalisme]*. Trans. Marta Lança, Lisboa, Antígona, [2020] (2021: 65)

<sup>18</sup> See Sloterdijk's overwhelming undertaking in his triptych *Sphären*, especially in the second volume (Peter Sloterdijk, 1999). *Globes: Spheres Volume II: Macrospherology [Sphären II. Globen]*, South Pasadena, Semiotext 8 and 9, (2014).

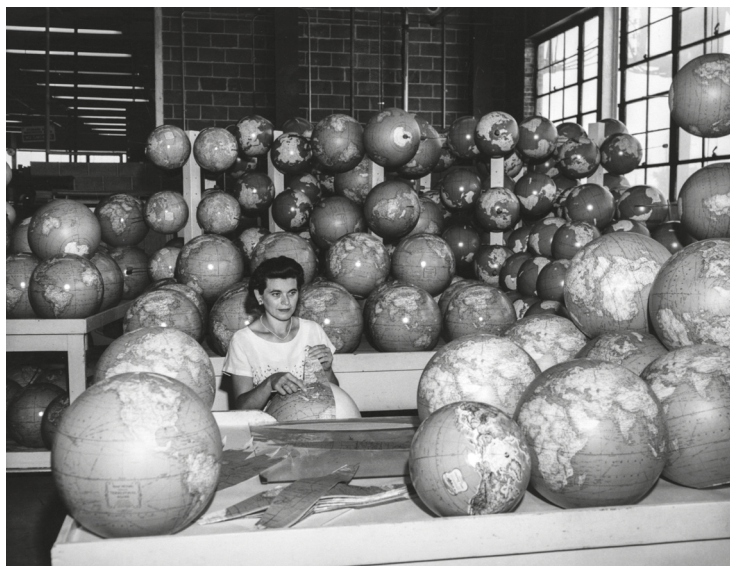
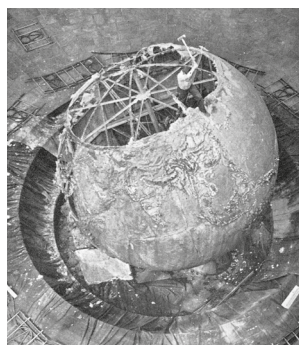


Fig. 11. Globe factory, Rand McNally and Company, Chicago, mid-century XX (The Newberry Collection)

Fig. 12. The Terr-A-Qua Globe in the National Archives building, Washington D.C., 1975

Fig. 13. Demolition of the Ford Rotunda globe, in Dearborn, Michigan, after the fire that in 1962 destroyed the complex designed by Albert Kahn for the World's Fair in Chicago, in 1933



ontologies (Sloterdijk, 1999: 789–ss.). Everything is now the center. The global is the beginning of the end of the local. All effects are global.

In this new world order, borders become over-determined and heterogeneous, drawing new walls and barriers in unexpected ways. But where are those borders? Despite the exercise of national sovereignty continuing to insist on maintaining the old vision of the world inherited from the 19th century, seeking to underline it with new walls that are intended to prevent bodies from crossing the imaginary lines drawn on maps, the phenomena of global mobility suggest that the borders are of another kind, because the multiple and intertwined network of places of destination and transit today has a different map, that, in its multiplicity, gets confused with the world itself.

The age of *astronautics* brought with it visions such as the *Instruction Manual for Spaceship Earth* by Buckminster Fuller,<sup>19</sup> a utopian and proto-ecologist proposal that proposed to think of the planet earth as an articulated system in which it will be necessary to redistribute unequal resources and to rethink the complex interaction between living beings and the vehicle that transports them through space, questioning the wrong use of the complex *chemical system of energetic interchange* that allows the regeneration of biological life.

In this way, we will have entered the era of the *world's combustion*, in which “the need to recreate life from the unbearable” has now become the condition of all the inhabitants of the earth and not only that of the dispossessed,<sup>20</sup> without any frontier or wall that can protect us of the revolt of the planet whose complex chemical and biological system has been pushed to the limit, finding itself close to exhaustion. Climatic

<sup>19</sup> Richard Buckminster Fuller, *Manual de Instruções para a Nave Espacial Terra* (*Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*), s.l., Edições Mondar, [1969] (1984) (Portuguese edition). The pedagogical instrument of Fuller's proposal was the Geoscope, a geodesic globe constructed on the basis of an open triangular grid that allowed, at scale, to experience both the interior and the exterior of the planet. Inside the geosphere, with its polar axis aligned with that of the earth, we could view the earth as a spaceship moving in space, and see ourselves as its passengers.

<sup>20</sup> Achille Mbembe, (2021: 22–23).

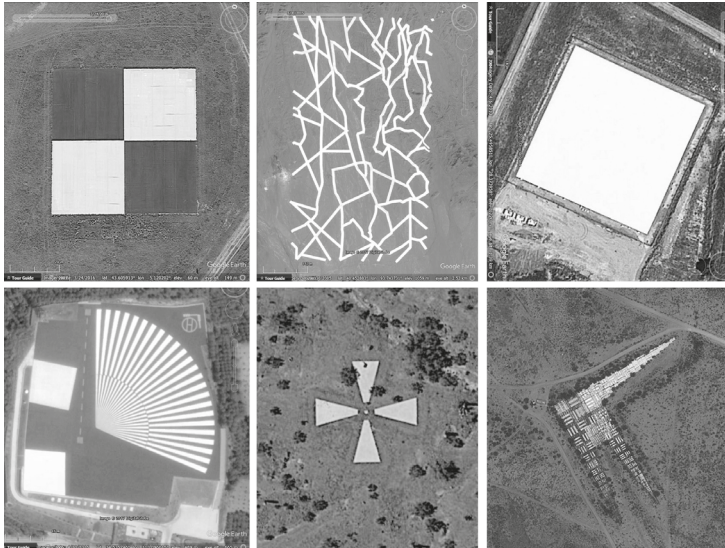


Fig. 14. Test and calibration targets for satellites (satellite images captured between 2005 and 2022)

or geological emergencies repeat themselves in increasingly shorter cycles and, for its part, the global financial system has long since gone bankrupt, since sustained by the unbridled consumption of resources and the exploitation of work, it lived from the constant discovery of new lodes. However, the earth's resources are limited and those that are known have since been almost completely exhausted. Maps do not show us any more hearts of darkness or offer us more surprises that can be exploited by capital. There is no more pure land. There are no more safe places.

\*\*\*

Let's go back to the beginning of this text. What the abrupt silence of the birds taught us was the temporary and forced return to the private sphere and, indirectly, a descent to the earth and the horizontality of the gaze that we had lost somewhere along the way. That this was only possible thanks to a global biological accident and that the images that allowed

us to see it were offered to us by the panoptic of astronavigation is paradoxical. To a certain extent, the imperial sphere invented by modernity and its globalization, and the private sphere that in the same period seemed to be the ideal guarantor of intimacy, creating the illusion of a cosmic shelter in the midst of the expansion of the world and the loss of referents, have been in crisis for some time,<sup>21</sup> making it difficult to return to a unifying vision in the midst of multiplicity. This is how we suddenly began to balance again between a micro sphere and a macro sphere, between the local and the global, instances that, in the midst of a pandemic, were taking shape and from which it was even possible to obtain a succession of images that validated their existence. This pendulum movement was also that of micro-politics and macro-politics, of micro-economy and macro-economy, expressions that regained strength and a place in the critical space.

To a certain extent, the transformation of the world into images, its appropriation and transfiguration through the pictorial, especially after mediation became technical, was fundamental for modernity, but this enterprise did not end and continues to modify the ways in which we think and imagine this world. It is difficult not to think that the instruments of exo-visualization of the globe — first with aeronautics and, later, with the age of astronautics and satellites — promised a global and unifying vision of the world that was not entirely fulfilled. On the more exclusive level of the image (or of images), by turning the earth into the abstract object of panoptic attention, the idea of a single image capable of encompassing the entirety of the world ended up being lost in the idealizing conventions of globalization. The current panoptic came, in fact, to atomize in the detail that runs out in the last pixel and in the maximum resolution of satellite images<sup>22</sup> and geolocation by

<sup>21</sup> For this matter see again Peter Sloterdijk, (2014: 792-794). In the third volume of his trilogy, Sloterdijk argues that after the era of spheres, these would have given way to foam, with its multiplicity of bubbles in constant rearrangement and mutation.

<sup>22</sup> See Hito Steyerl's video: "How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational. MOV File", 15'53'', (2013), <<https://youtu.be/LE3Rlr-VEyuo>>. (Access: 1/2022)

triangulation. In terms of the image as an instrument of sovereignty and the ubiquity of surveillance, it is the detail of the pixel that counts. In order to become invisible in the era of the orbital panopticon, it would also be necessary to atomize our existence at the level of the pixel, the new minimal, variable and ever-changing unit of measure of things in the world.

With satellites, a panoptic was inaugurated that literally inscribes itself onto the world, drawing its targets directly on its surface, a finished example of the abstraction and geometrization of the earth. This is another way of saying that there is no longer a safe place not only on the face of the earth but in all planetary space, as this panopticon extends far beyond the surface of classical topography or cartography. The vertical axis that dominated the topographic mediation of the world since aerial photography, is today much more insidious and has taken over the entire planet, layer by layer, from the subsoil to the entire atmosphere,<sup>23</sup> as if the earth were sectioned by the cuts of a worldwide Computerized Axial Tomography. It is no longer just a panopticon but also a global imagery. In a horizon that is impossible to determine, the spatial finitude and the micro-digitization that these (and other) new instruments of globalization accentuate, could also, finally, be the propellers of something more than the sovereign exercise of violence over the world, to, on the contrary, help to give substance to the idea that we cannot escape a common and shared destiny, therefore a communitarian one.



Bibliographic and other references,  
page 152, version in Portuguese.

<sup>23</sup> See Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, Berlin: Sternberg Press, (2012)



# Essay for an ecology of poetic resistance

Holga Méndez Fernández

A few years ago I was invited to participate in a round table with a tribute to the Galician artist Elena Colmeiro at the Consello da Cultura Galega in Santiago de Compostela, it was the year of 2014. The title I was given to guide my presentation read as follows: *Art of resistance in current artistic practice*. Since then, resistance has pursued me, or I have been pursuing it, in fact: I experience it almost every day, but it also forms part of some of my pieces. Today I am rethinking poetic resistance from ecology, as an apparition, arrival, advent. All living beings are connected to a complex system that includes humanity, air, water, rocks and the invisible field of energies. A context in which each element affects all the others in a finite space: the biosphere. It is a paradigmatic word especially at the beginning of the 21st Century because it transformed the vision of the world and our perception of life. The question is no longer *what* or *why*, the urgency of the situation shifts it to the *how*. We are in direct relationship with the components of the terrestrial universe, and day by day we experience the consequences of our own actions. This thought was enough by itself to build an integral ethical project where ecology and artistic practice are inseparable. The words that follow are my position, attitude, in the poetic act of artistic practice, where resistance is in the heart, in the stomach, in the back, it is breathing and bloodstream in an *interspecies* ecological coexistence.



dates are accidents,  
a constellation of modes,  
a collection of facts, a map  
of circumstances. the dates  
do not refer to a single  
homogeneous calendar, but to  
space-times that change on  
each occasion. forces, facts,  
deslocations, winds, storms,  
diseases, places, locations,  
species — made up names.  
breathing, thinking, feeling,  
resisting, inventing, creating,  
are infinitives that designate  
becomings and events that  
go beyond fashions and  
times. what is exciting is  
when resistance manages to  
provoke by itself that feeling  
of imminence, that something  
is going to happen or has just  
happened behind our backs.

days, years, a sum of years,  
lives, breaths. we drag things  
and facts. the time that  
extends in a lifetime. the years  
take space, they make room.  
the distance, the duration,  
what happens, or what goes  
by. vertigo to see so many  
years below me, as if i were  
leagues tall, because all  
that time was not only lived,  
thought, segregated by me,  
without a single interruption,  
to feel that it is my life, to be  
my own self, but also that

i have to keep it tied to me  
every minute, that i cannot  
move without moving it.

i am going to speak in  
terms of uncertainty and  
improbability, i don't know  
what i am. i speak in my name.  
in my own name. i speak from  
the bottom of what i don't  
know, from the bottom of  
my own development. i am  
the set of names, surnames,  
voice, languages, gestures,  
hair, skin, woman, ... here i am  
today to restart a breath, a  
thought, a writing, in my own  
name, speaking of affections,  
intensities, vibrations,  
encounters, experiences.

i have the habit of beginning  
by delimiting the terms,  
looking for the definitions,  
the meanings of the words,  
trying to understand them  
from their origin — lexical  
and morphological. what  
do they want to say from  
themselves? following them in  
their in-human evolution helps  
me to understand, to make an  
honest approach.

resistance comes from the  
Latin *resistentia*, quality of  
the verb *resistere* 'to stand  
firm', 'to persist', 'to oppose

repeatedly without losing  
one's position'; formed from  
the prefix re- which implies  
an action that is repeated  
or reaffirmed; and the verb  
*sistere* that is 'to establish',  
'to take a position', 'to secure  
in a place'.

in mechanics, resistance is,  
according to the Dictionary of  
the Royal Spanish Academy,  
that "cause that opposes  
the action of a force",  
or "the force that opposes  
the movement of a machine  
and has to be overcome by  
power".

in electricity, resistance  
is "the difficulty that a  
conductor opposes to the  
passage of a current."

in common language it is said  
that a thing offers resistance  
to time and environments;  
that is, the duration of a thing  
or the survival of a living  
being. living beings survive, we  
continue to live; while things  
last. in the first denotation  
resistance is the opposition  
of a body or a force to the  
action or violence of another.  
the passage of time, our finite  
existence.

a word game is a challenge  
and a risk. to risk is to put at  
stake. set me in motion, let go  
of danger. what is at stake?

it is not just a question of  
words, of the order and  
relationship of the words  
in the sentence. where are  
they taking us? what do they  
suggest? what do we think  
when we hear or read 'act of  
resistance'? the words imply  
intentions and strategies.

when we talk about artistic  
practices, we situate  
ourselves in the ways of doing  
things, in the ways of relating  
to the world, of how to be in  
art and in life. articulating  
these modes in everyday  
life is what Foucault calls  
'modes of existence', which  
comes from Nietzsche and the  
vital possibilities, and Félix  
Guattari (1996) condenses in  
the word "ecosophy", where  
he proposes to create poles of  
resistance.

and it is in everyday life,  
what happens here and now,  
in this moment, actuality  
that opposes both time and  
eternity. Foucault says that at  
present we seek the formation  
of the new, the emergence.

Nietzsche referred to the inactual, what is *in acto*.

i am interested in this *in acto* because it takes us to another part of the dictionary and situates us in the action of the act on potency. un act is a fact or an action. a human act is what comes from the free will with caution on the good or evil that is done. and potency is what is in the quality of possibility and not in act: ability to become.

resisting — as an act, thought and action — is a way of living, and living supposes the tension towards a permanence-in-being that, from the beginning, began as adventure and risk; that is, as a possibility. my ethical and aesthetic responsibility as an authentic effective creative force and source of emotional, intensive energy.

the challenge implicit in the displacement of meaning, not the displacement of the subject from the object. a process of subjectivation is much more than the pleasure principle, or what drags us towards the reality principle. It is the elementary dynamics

of the world, because much more important than thought is what makes us think. and much more important than the subject is that contingency of gestures and acts, ways of being and doing in the world. what art produces are relations with the world. an ethical-political articulation between the environment, social relations and subjectivity: it's Guattari's *three ecologies*.

we learn that what is essential is outside of thought, it is in what forces us to think. in this way, the world and we are not far away, another type of relationship is established amongst us: we participate in an exchange. by means of this game, of this relationship — the symbolic balance of the world is sustained. there is complicity and total reversibility between the two. at this point the world becomes a player, the player becomes the world. our thought regulates the world, on the condition that instead we think that it is the world that thinks us, the language that speaks us and time that loses us.

from the moment that the personal is political, all work, oeuvre, act or action — private or public — is resistance.

it cannot be otherwise, because if we understand power as forces that act on the social and on the individual, my combats and my resistances are part of this framework of art. because i am also power, a micropower.

and what is a resistance if not a force that we oppose or that opposes. we resist falling. we resist obeying. we resist being deceived. and a body, be it made of flesh, bones, fluids or wood, stone, paper or air: is a field of forces. as Gilles Deleuze says, "a nutritious medium disputed by a plurality of forces" (1993: 60).

it is then a matter of inventing ecological modes of existence following optional rules capable of resisting power and eluding knowledge. invent sources of resistance within the couple, within the family, in the neighborhood, at work, on the street, in one's own identity.

resistance in its origin as a movement, is linked to the political and social activism of the citizens, organized (almost spontaneously and outside the institutional or official) to oppose, curb, put up resistance, to the authoritarian impositions of power, dictatorships, fascism, inequalities, cuts or limitations to health, education, culture, freedoms, etc.

let's not think that subjectivation is simply a way of protecting oneself, of sheltering oneself. it is, on the contrary, the only possible way to face power (Foucault, 1983).

resistance to the rule of power covers an extension of manifestations and movements that are very complex to define in a story with two characters: those who exercise power and those who resist it.

resistance exists, but this is not the essential. the essential thing is that from the moment that label is placed, to the extent that this art resists, the process of constituting this art of resistance begins.

it is not about confronting the institutional with the freedom of the artist, since one resists models in a double sense: because their intention is to combat rigid models of thought; resistance only makes sense from the contingent and is unrepeatable as a formula as long as it is circumstantially validated in the here and now. as soon as it is structured, formalized or simply propagated as an alternative, it ceases to be resistance to become an instrument that ends up reinforcing the dominant forms of thought.

the strategy of resistance has as its objective not the destruction of power, but the destructuring of its models. since the field of power is related, coexists, with the field of individual behaviour, it is not only a theoretical question that bipolarizes the institutional and the marginal, the state and the freedom of the citizen, but it is part of our identity and this is how we experience it as everyday subjects.

in this context, the responsibility for the reception of the work of art weighs

more and more on each one of us, who of course are more and more free to interpret, but at the same time, we are more and more vulnerable when it comes to soaking up unconsciously some values and criteria that, latently and surreptitiously, we assimilate from the power structures without being aware of it.

artistic practice produces relationships with the world. it expresses ethical positions through forms and modes. it creates value models and proposes economies of existence.

art induces a creative ethic, unsubmissive to the collective norm. to interpret a work of art is to situate it within some context — of philosophical, aesthetic, ecological ideas, of political and social events, of a personal biography. the context designates the set of circumstances in which an event is inserted, circumstances that are themselves in a situation of interaction. etymologically the word 'context' is fusion, it comes from the vulgar Latin *contextus*, from *contextere*, which means 'to weave with'.

María Galindo (of the Bolivian collective Mujeres Creando) summons us to riot, not to ask for permission, to practice "civil disobedience". it is not a spectacle, but an implication, a weaving of unusual and forbidden complicities. to build an ecology of poetic resistance.

in this sense, we are interested in the role that institutions, educational centers or universities can play, because although power structures are generated from them, it is also true that depending on their project, they can contribute to de-structuring them by harboring within them an intention of resistance to the hierarchy that they hold and represent, in order to offer the community a much more complex but rich framework, where they can pour in and out the conscious responsibility that each individual has with the present.

an act of resistance follows its own line. an active line of flight, a precarious line at all times, zigzag for some, sinuous for others; an underground line, alive and dynamic: intermittent,

a mutable line. only here, in that precariousness, can one find focal points, knots of interrelationships, nuclei of resistance, processes of subjectivation that are always relative, always capable of being untied to continue on that mobile line.

to preserve is to create. art preserves but always against time because the time of the work is not the time that runs, but the one that lasts and coexists. "to create is to resist" (Deleuze, 1987). to create lines of flight, fluences, flows. situations. events. breaths.

processes are becomings, which cannot be judged by the results they achieve, but by the qualities of their course and by the power of their continuity. what we do and say is implied in our mode of existence. as creators we also invent our way of life. and each stage, each facet of life, needs this invention. to create new situations, so we keep on standing, moving forward, yesterday there, today here, tomorrow... tomorrow, to survive, to breathe and to remain free in thought and action.

acts and thoughts are part of  
a way of life and a habitat.

the signs refer to ways of life,  
to vital possibilities, they are  
the symptoms of an emerging  
or decadent life. but the artist  
cannot conform to a decadent  
life or a personal life. the work  
is not done with the i, with  
illnesses nor with memories.

the creative act is an attempt  
to convert life into something  
more than just something  
personal, to free life from  
what imprisons it. organisms  
die but life doesn't.

what matters is what  
happens, what we are and  
what we do today.

ecology is related to an  
attitude, to taking a position  
in life and in art. it is a  
posture, a gesture. an act  
of resistance.

resistance, definitely, is a  
vital problem, of breathing,  
of orienting and navigating,  
on a planet with limits.

\*  
\*\*

### Bibliographic references / Referências bibliográficas

- Deleuze, Gilles, *Qu'est-ce que l'acte de creation?* La fémis, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Métiers de l'image et du son, (1987).  
<https://youtu.be/dXOzcexu7Ks> (Access/acesso: 10/2022)
- , *Nietzsche y la filosofía*. Anagrama, (1993).
- Foucault, Michel, "El sujeto y el poder". *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*. Vol. 50, No. 3 (Jul-Sep, 1988), (1983: 3-20). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3540551> (Access: 10/2022)
- Guattari, Félix, *Las tres ecologías*, Valencia, España: PRE-TEXTOS, (1996).

# Among weeds: observations and experiments on a *lesser* landscape condition

Miguel Costa

This text gathers the research and field work initiated in 2019. Presented on 14th of February 2020 at *The Oblique Think Tank #2: Heritage, Rubbish, Fetish? Curating Territorial Conundrums*, "Histórias de Vegetação: reflexões e especulações sobre vegetação ruderal" in Inês Moreira (ed.), *Curadoria de Enigmas Territoriais + Incursões ao Porto Oriental*. Porto: Parábola Crítica, [2020] (2022: 221-243).

## 1. A brief triumph of vegetation

On March the 11th, 2020, due to the speed of the propagation and the increasing number of new daily infections, the World Health Organization publicly recognized the pandemic nature of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, with the epicenter in China. In an attempt to contain the spread of the virus, many countries gradually close their borders and decreed the first confinement measures. In a possible response to the first wave of the pandemic, the first State of Emergency enforced in Portugal was mainly characterized by fear and ignorance. The measures adopted between March and May compromised the economy with the stoppage or relocation of many services. The approved measures conditioned movements of circulation to the essential and to the respective areas of residence. And in the city of Porto, not even the public gardens, a symbol of leisure, health and well-being, escaped closure.<sup>1</sup>

Faced with the gradual collapse of economies, historic lows of carbon monoxide and the quality of breathable air were celebrated. But this was a condition that cannot only be narrated from the lesser use of internal combustion engines, or by the compression and distribution of public daily life into different domestic fragments. The urban landscape, significantly emptied of its human dynamics, also provoked a greater visibility on an extensive vegetal appropriation. Interestingly,



Fig. 1. In a city significantly emptied of its human dynamics, plants no longer encounter resistance to their development and proliferation. Photographic surveys of vegetation and fieldwork (Porto)

<sup>1</sup> See Miguel Costa, "A natureza que circulou numa caixa: narrativas alternativas para um jardim público em Estado de Emergência", in Inês Moreira (ed.), *Valise en Carton: Exposição Viajante*, Porto: Parábola Crítica, (2021: 14-21).



the first State of Emergency also gave us a small glimpse of a possibility long fictionalized in science fiction novels and films and their contamination scenarios; in its abandoned cities densely overgrown with vegetation — settings admirably described or filmed, but which often serve as a scenic background for human performances. In fact, Emanuele Coccia tells us of a historical indifference or neglect of philosophy, and also of the sciences of life, on plants in the face of a strong anthropocentric and/or zoocentric tendency.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, it is the ruins and the stories of rise and abandonment, which continue to exert greater visual fascination and fertile ground for investigation.

In reality, these are neither new nor unknown landscapes. They are ecological places that have always been very present in the daily life of cities, in their processes of occupation, vacancy and deterioration; in vacant lots and abandoned buildings. Even so, the first State of Emergency/mandatory confinement (March–May 2020) introduced a momentary and subtle triumph of vegetation. Not exactly in the places where we know it to be spontaneous in its appropriation, but precisely in the places where these species are regularly removed — sidewalks, flowerbeds, gardens and parks. Thus, counterbalancing the subsequent optimism of gradually being able of breaking out of the confinement, the work process and the corresponding observations, presented in this text, focus on a set of conditions and associations that may allow speculation about vegetation's breaking out of confinement. In other words, these are observations and experiments that explore a cause-effect relationship between 'vegetable confinement' and 'human confinement'. But, in order to be able to speak of the condition of 'vegetable *deconfinement*', it is also necessary to recognize its progressive confinement based on the processes of removal, eradication, classification and regulation. Today, expressions such as weeds, infesting and invader species are mixed and overlapped terms. Taken together, they

<sup>2</sup> Emanuele Coccia, *A Vida das Plantas — Uma Metafísica da Mistura*, trad. Jorge Leandro Rosa. Lisboa: Fundação Calmon e Costa / Documenta, (2019: 21–23).

seem to form more part of a vocabulary of containment and exclusion procedures, than of an investigation into the conditions that determined their wide biological reach. However, these are predominantly ruderal species, originating from the Latin *runderis* or *rudus* (rubble and ruin), a term that also defines a specific ecological area or *habitat*. These species are therefore spontaneous and pioneers in the appropriation of land disturbed by human action, abandoned or contaminated land, as well as walls, roadsides or structures in ruins.

In this context, this has been a process of work, investigation and speculation that has tried to incorporate the heterogeneous processes that contributed to the production of these 'lesser' fragments of landscapes, giving them a greater framework in the context of 'biological invasions'. These are observations and fragments of that work process that intersected with a city in a State of Emergency.

## 2. *Herbae inutiles*

In its association with agricultural production, the expression 'weed' grew from its ability to appropriate land and disturb crops. In *Historia plantarum* (~ 350–287 b.C.), Theophrastus already refers to its dominant behavior in agriculture.<sup>3</sup> But as agricultural techniques and treaties improved and began to prove structural in the economies of expanding empires, their framework became even more decisive for the success of plantations and harvests. In 1731 Jethro Tull dedicates a chapter to them where, in the first lines, he traces a clear direction in the understanding and perception of these plants. He writes:

That there are in Nature any such things as *inutiles* *Herbae*, the Botanists deny [...] But the Farmer, who expects to make Profit of his Land from what he sows

<sup>3</sup> See: Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, Vol. II, translated by A. F. Hort, London: William Heinemann, Loeb Classical Library, (1916: 193–197).

or plants in it, finds not only *Herbae inutiles*, but also *noxiae*, unprofitable and hurtful Weeds.<sup>4</sup>

Tull's publication was already at the tip of an agricultural advance that simultaneously proposed to contribute to the European colonial project. In the Preface to the 1751 edition, it is emphasized that the cultivation methods proposed there should not be limited to Europe, but that they would be very advantageous in the British colonies in America.

In fact, the planting and transplanting processes were indispensable for the colonization project and, in his essay "Of Plantations" (1625), Francis Bacon reflects on the conditions for a 'perfect' establishment of colonies, proposing different species to plant, according to their speed and productivity; referring that the preferential conditions for the establishment of the colony/plantation should be located in unoccupied territories. He also opposed processes of extirpation or hasty profit.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, conflicts between natives and settlers in the first British colony in North America — Jamestown — would not have been indifferent to Bacon's thinking. Still, the colonization and plantation procedures involved violent processes, not only towards indigenous populations, but also towards their territories. The processes of removal, replacement and cleaning of their forests and other traditional livelihoods, were replaced by wider fields of cultivation, that is, from the subsistence of the colony all the way to the extensive extraction and commercial exploitation of existing resources.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the writings of Francis Bacon had already opened a door to the legitimization of this dominion and triumph over nature.

And with the frequent transatlantic crossings, not only did new knowledge and information about the immense existing

<sup>4</sup> Jethro Tull, *Horse-Hoeing Husbandry: Or, An Essay on the Principles of Vegetation and Tillage...*, London: A Millar, [1731] (1751: 73).

<sup>5</sup> Francis Bacon, "Of Plantations", in Mary Augusta Scott (ed.), *The Essays of Francis Bacon*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, (1908: 154–159).

<sup>6</sup> See also: S. Max Edelson, "Clearing Swamps, Harvesting Forests: Trees and the Making of a Plantation Landscape in the Colonial South Carolina Lowcountry", *Agricultural History* 81(3) (Summer, 2007: 381–406), DOI:10.3098/ah.2007.81.3.381.



Fig. 2. *Narrativas de perturbação e provocação* (Narratives of disturbance and provocation) (2020 – on going). Studio research and experimentation on disturbed soils and landscape maintenance operations

biological diversity begin to be revealed, but also its importance as an economic engine for the domain and expansion of the European colonial project. Thousands of Europeans moved with their plants, fodder, crops and animals. A massive movement of human migration, carried out practically in a single direction, carrying with it 'weeds' that, in the wake of conquests and occupations, found in the vast areas of disturbed soils the ideal conditions for their appropriation and dissemination.

### 3. *Natures in circulation*

The transition to the 18th century gave rise to a particularly prolific period in the global circulation of plants and the gradual transformation of landscapes. The expansion and exploration of colonial territories, the great expeditions and scientific advances are accompanied by a social and cultural interest in 'new exotic plants' as well as in their acquisition, collection, dissemination and commercialization.<sup>7</sup> Although many of the species present in these territories were already known, in England, publications such as *The Gardeners and Florists Dictionary or a Complete System of Horticulture* (1724) and *The Gardeners Dictionary containing the Methods of Cultivating and Improving the Kitchen Fruit and Flower Garden* (1731) by Philip Miller, not only spurred but were spurred on by

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Easterby-Smith, *Cultivating Commerce: Cultures of Botany in Britain and France, 1760–1815*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2018).

the growing public interest in horticulture and gardening, with later reprints containing updates and additions of new species and accompanying instructions on their cultivation. These and other publications became the visible popular face of these ‘exotic novelties’, anchored in a wide international network of friendships, correspondents and correspondence. One of these particularly productive correspondences was carried on between John Bartram, a Philadelphia agronomist and naturalist, and Peter Collinson, a London naturalist and merchant. For about thirty years they exchanged seeds and live plants, books, illustrations and scientific knowledge, building around them a network of other correspondents and subscribers who received boxes of seeds and plants collected on Bartram’s personal explorations of North American territories. In return, Collinson also sent Bartram seeds and plants from Europe.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, it was from these networks of interests and correspondence that many of the new species began to arrive in Europe to be named, classified, planted or acclimatized, and, at the end of the century, the catalogs of nurseries and horticultural establishments in both sides of the Atlantic already had an immense diversity of plants and trees available for purchase. And in the catalog of species grown and for sale at John Bartram & Son’s Kingsess Botanic Garden, the “Exotics” section also features many of the European species that Bartram has been receiving and planting over the years.<sup>9</sup>

This immense biological diversity has also accelerated the need for more effective classification systems of the natural world. It will be with Carl Linnaeus, that this systematization, already thought and tested by other authors/naturalists, becomes progressively perfected, internationally standardized,

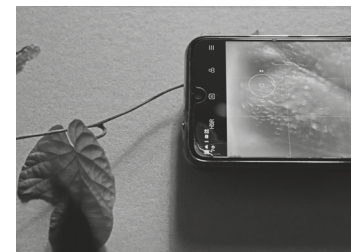
<sup>8</sup> See: William Darlington (ed.), *Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall, with notices of their botanical contemporaries* (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1849). Ver também: Andrea Wulf, *The Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire, and the Birth of an Obsession*, New York: Vintage Books, [2008] (2010).

<sup>9</sup> John Bartram & Son, *Catalogue of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, indigenous to the United States of America [...] to which is added a catalogue of foreign plants, collected from various parts of the globe*. Philadelphia: Printed by Bartram and Reynolds, (1807: 27–33).



Fig. 3–6.  
*Histórias de Vegetação (...)*  
(*Vegetation Stories*) (2019–2020)

Field work and studio experiments  
— research, collection of species;  
observation; and cataloguing.  
Indigenous species in Europe that have  
become invasive in other continents;  
indigenous species in other continents  
that have become invasive in Europe.



Experiments in the studio: adaptation of an ordinary mobile phone to a microscope for observation and recording of the collected species. The use of the microscope was decisive for the study of plants, insects, and other mineral curiosities — technologies and knowledge that circulated and were discussed through correspondence, meetings, publications and scientific trips. For example, John Ellis’s microscope, an adaptation for the study of corals, was described in detail in his “An Essay Towards a Natural History of the Corallines [...]” (1755). This was also the microscope model used by Carl Linnaeus. Later, Asa Gray’s microscope was widely disseminated and popularized from 1870 onwards among students, amateurs and those curious about the natural sciences due to its low cost.





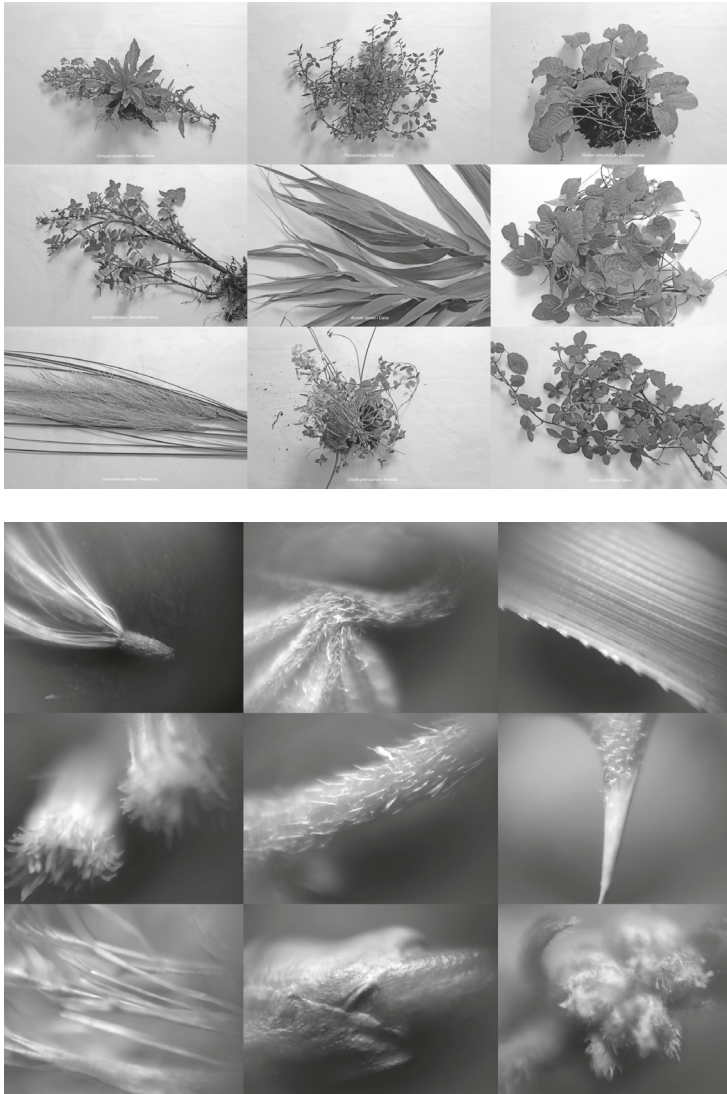


Fig. 7, 8. *Histórias de Vegetação (...)*  
(*Vegetation Stories*) (2019–2020)

and placed at the service of colonial botany. The first edition of his *Systema Naturae* (1735) proposes a hierarchical systematization of the natural world based on three kingdoms (mineral, animal and vegetable) as well as a sexual systematization for plant identification, also working as a basis for future improvement and dissemination of a binomial systematization that is gaining greater expression, visibility and global implementation with subsequent publications.

On the other hand, the global circulation of this immense biological diversity simultaneously imposed the improvement of systems for packaging and transporting seeds and live plants. The fragile techniques of wrapping seeds in paper and mailing envelopes or sending live plants proved to be ineffective in the face of the adversities inherent to the great transatlantic crossings. The weeks and months of travel; the storms; thermal variations; the salinity and humidity of the air; the scarcity of water; the difficulties of monitoring and surveillance of plants; rats; sailors; and even conflicts between colonial powers had a high impact on the success and failure of the global circulation of plants.

Once again, the systematization of transport and packaging instructions and procedures proved to be vital for reducing failure rates. In this sense, the publication *Directions for bringing over seeds and plants, from the East Indies and other distant countries, in a state of vegetation* (1770) by John Ellis, it functioned as a compilation of experiences from exchanges of correspondence and suggestions that reflected the numerous transport attempts, their successes and failures. The publication also contained alerts for fraud in the acquisition of seeds from China and the care to be taken when choosing them, or indications for monitoring and procedures to be carried out along the itineraries and respective stopovers, according to the relationship between climate and geography. In summary, and taking into account the extensive periods of time involved in exchanging information between correspondents or the necessary periods of observation on successes and failures in planting seeds and transplanting live plants, Ellis'

publication compresses into about forty pages, the thickness of years of accumulated knowledge. Like many others, Ellis was part of an already extensive network of friendships and correspondents that included Philip Miller, John Bartram, Peter Collinson and Carl Linnaeus.

However, it was the Ward system (Wardian case) that had the greatest impact on the success of the global circulation of live plants. Discovered unexpectedly in 1829 by Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward, it was tested on several trips and widely promoted by Ward and his network of friends, correspondents and members of scientific communities before his publication — *On the growth of plants in closely glazed cases* (1842). Its ability to keep plants alive and protected in a closed environment for long periods of time will enhance the experimentation and transfer of economically profitable plants (for example cinchona and rubber) between the imperial centers and their territorial extensions.<sup>10</sup> Also in Portugal, the first edition of the *Jornal de Horticultura Pratica* (1870), was presented with “*Breves instruções sobre o modo de colher e expedir sementes e plantas das províncias ultramarinas*” (Brief instructions on how to harvest and ship seeds and plants from the overseas provinces)<sup>11</sup> using the Ward system. In other words, beyond the fascination with the exotic since the beginning of the first transatlantic crossings at the end of the 15th century, that the plants continued to configure sources of income and resources for the consolidation and colonial expansion. In fact, from the beginning of the 18th century, in such a prolific period of expeditions and scientific explorations, trips without the presence of naturalists on board were rare, resulting in numerous scientific publications on the acquired knowledge.

One of these expeditions — the voyage of James Cook in command of the HMS Endeavor (1768–1771) prepared to

observe the transit of the planet Venus and try to determine the size of the solar system — also contained the parallel mission of finding a mass of land thought to be located in the Southern hemisphere, exploring and returning with samples of its resources.<sup>12</sup> On board, Daniel Solander, disciple of Carl Linnaeus sent to London to promote and help in the classification of plants according to the binomial system; and Joseph Banks, naturalist, explorer and later head of the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew (Kew Gardens), who will set the global standard in so-called ‘plant hunting’, sending his gardeners to every corner of the empire. Due to the condition of the ship and the existing supplies, it was not possible to carry out the mission. It was decided to sail to the coast of New Holland (now Australia), surveying its Eastern coast and claiming it for the British Crown. But as the territories were being occupied and explored, many naturalists, collectors, travelers, correspondents and scientific expeditions studied and disseminated plants and animals still unknown in Europe. In Portugal, around one hundred years later, Australia was referred to as the “promised land of gardening [... and] of European forestry”<sup>13</sup> and eucalyptus was expected to play a prominent role in the national industry.

So for years, plants—whether they were useful; profitable; ornamental; for cataloging and classification; or as collectors’ items — could circulate globally and freely; they fed the fascination for knowledge and for the acquisition of new species; part of large collections and herbaria; they were introduced in gardens and parks; they spread and appropriated (accidentally and intentionally) territories around them.

<sup>10</sup> See also: Lucile H. Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion: The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, [1979] (2002).

<sup>11</sup> Edmond Goeze, “Breves instruções sobre o modo de colher e expedir sementes e plantas das províncias ultramarinas” in *Jornal de Horticultura Pratica*, Porto: Typographia Lusitana. Vol. I, 6–7 (1870: 28–29).

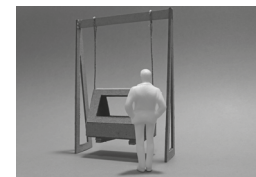
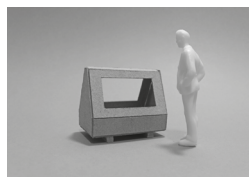
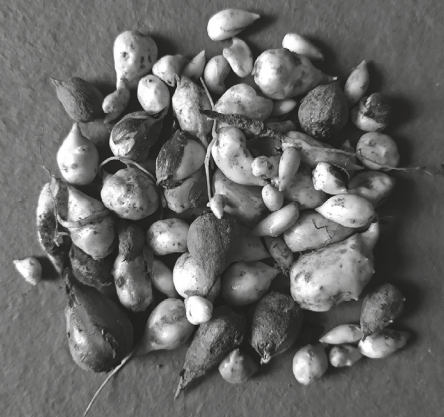
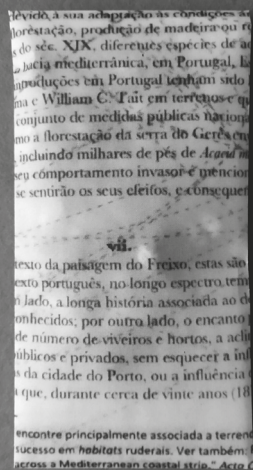
<sup>12</sup> See: William J.L. Wharton, ed., *Captain Cook’s Journal during His First Voyage Round the World Made in H.M. Bark ‘Endeavour’, 1768–1771* (London: Elliot Stock, 1893), xxviii. Ver também “Extracts from secret instructions to Captain James Cook, 1768 July 30 [manuscript]” [Accessed 12/ 2021] <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/6101813>.

<sup>13</sup> Edmond Goeze, “Excursão Botânica e Horticola”, *Jornal de Horticultura Pratica*. Porto: Typographia da Livraria Nacional. Vol. II (1871), 144–145.



Fig. 9-15.  
*Naturezas viajantes /*  
*Paisagens viajantes*  
 (Traveling Natures /  
 Traveling Landscapes)  
 (2021-on going)

Experiments on packaging and transport of seeds and live plants. In the course of the 18th century, the great proliferation of instructions for the transport of live plants tried to increase survival efficiency along transatlantic voyages. But it was Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward's system (Wardian case) that substantially increased not only the success rate but also the number of plants in circulation. Between 'useful plants' and 'exotic' curiosities, some escaped these circuits, acclimatizing and appropriating other landscapes





situations observed, where the species of the 'Old' continent present a more prepotent action explained by a longer period of experience in clashes in the struggle for survival.<sup>18</sup>

Although plant appropriations are more expressive in new territories, the truth is that these appropriations expand globally, capturing the attention of naturalists, botanists, and scientists; gaining visibility in specific thematic reports, correspondence, articles or publications — for example, the findings described in John Bartram's correspondence about the "pernicious", "problematic", "destructive" and "difficult to eradicate" characteristics of some plants he received from Europe and which already occupied vast uninhabited areas of Pennsylvania;<sup>19</sup> the Articles of Constantine Samuel Rafinesque-Schmaltz (1811)<sup>20</sup> or of Lewis David de Schweinitz (1832)<sup>21</sup> on the diversity of European plants that have become naturalized in North America; or the survey by Carlos Berg (1877) on the European plants present in the province of Buenos Aires and in Patagonia.<sup>22</sup> On the other side of the Atlantic, less intense plant appropriations are devalued by Hooker, although Rafinesque-Schmaltz had already listed some of the North American species that successfully appropriated European landscapes, a situation still little studied in Europe.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, as many of the species introduced into the colonies came from the British Isles or Europe, the compilation of its counterpart only appeared in 1905 — *The Alien Flora of Britain* by Stephen Troyte Dunn.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Dalton Hooker, see note 14, p. 125.

<sup>19</sup> John Bartram, "Letter to Philip Miller [June the 16th, 1758]", in William Dorlington (ed.), *Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall, with notices of their botanical contemporaries*, Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, (1849: 382–388).

<sup>20</sup> Constantine Samuel Rafinesque-Schmaltz, "An essay on the exotic plants, mostly European, which have been naturalized, and grow spontaneously in the Middle States of North America", *The Medical Repository* 8 (1811: 330–345).

<sup>21</sup> Lewis D. de Schweinitz, "Remarks on the Plants of Europe which have become naturalized in a more or less degree, in the United States", *Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New-York*, 3, (1832: 148–155).

<sup>22</sup> Carlos Berg, *Enumeración de las plantas europeas que se hallan como silvestres en la provincia de Buenos Aires y en Patagonia*, Buenos Aires: Pablo E. Coni, (1877).

<sup>23</sup> Constantine Samuel Rafinesque-Schmaltz, see note 23, p. 331.

## 5. Lesser landscapes

In this context, urban environments also naturally accompanied this diversification of species. In addition to the species already present, there were others from other places that, due to their ability to adapt, easily appropriated and spread in these environments in constant transformation. In fact, the history of cities has always been closely linked to the histories of plant appropriations and expropriations. Indeed, urban environments provide specific conditions for ruderal species to emerge as pioneers in the colonization of the interstices of human occupation. These are the *locis ruderalis* of Johann Christian Buxbaum (1721)<sup>24</sup> or *ruderalis* of Carl Linnaeus (1751);<sup>25</sup> as well as the areas of study and interest of several other authors — from the studies on the flora of the ruins of the Colosseum in Rome carried out by different authors between 1643 and 2001; the *Vedute di Roma* (1748–1778) by Giovanni Battista Piranesi; or surveys of urban flora in environments in London by William Curtis (1777–1798) or in Paris by Joseph Vallot (1884). These ruderal species are also some of the vagabonds of Gilles Clément (2011),<sup>26</sup> travelling, occupying and colonizing species, fond of disturbed soils and enhanced by human action.

But, farther away from the discourses of the manifesto and the fight against invasive species, these studies above all demonstrate the human interest and fascination with these biological contexts. However, with or without invasive potential, these spontaneous appropriations continue to challenge the planned environments or the ideals of beauty and cleanliness proposed for the city, for its gardens and public parks, with removal strategies becoming more frequent and effective. or

<sup>24</sup> Johann C. Buxbaum, *Enumeratio plantarum accuratior in agro Hallensi locisque vicinis crescentium...* Halae Magdeb: Officina Libraria Rengeriana, (1721).

<sup>25</sup> Johann C. Buxbaum, *Enumeratio plantarum accuratior in agro Hallensi locisque vicinis crescentium...* Halae Magdeb: Officina Libraria Rengeriana, (1721).

<sup>26</sup> Gilles Clément, "In Praise of Vagabonds", *Qui Parle*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Spring/Summer, 2011: 275–297).



Fig. 17–20.  
*Narrativas de perturbação  
 e provocação*  
 [Narratives of disturbance  
 and provocation]  
 (2020–on going)

Experiments/performative fieldwork based on observations about weed removal operations — on the one hand, the ‘recovery’ operations and the return to the original design/plan of gardens and flowerbeds; on the other hand, regular maintenance and weed control actions. This set of performances (or performative field work) sought to incorporate these landscape maintenance actions and reflect on gardening also as a gesture of violence and selection. However, instead of the vegetation fragments being left at maintenance sites or being transported to a treatment plant, these fragments were moved to the studio and remixed with soil. In a few weeks, small micro-landscapes began to grow, even though it was not known in advance which species would flourish.



eradication policies that expand beyond the economic areas of agricultural fields.<sup>27</sup> Gradually, and all over the world, ‘harmful’ and ‘out of place’ plants are increasingly confined to regulations, exclusions or eradication processes and campaigns.

Even so, these species are still very present in the urban landscape, also a result of the popularization of ornamental preferences and botanical/floral novelties spread globally, with easy acquisition in nurseries, especially from the mid-nineteenth century — for example in London, among a great diversity of plants, in the catalogs of the Royal Exotic Nursery, James Veitch & Sons, Ltd., there were also the great reed (*Arundo donax*), bermuda buttercup (*Oxalis pes-caprae*), pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), or morning-glories (*Ipomoea indica*)<sup>28</sup> and in Porto, the catalogs of the establishment and nurseries of the Real Companhia Horticola-Agricola Portuense, in addition to the feathers (*Cortaderia selloana*) or the morning-glories (*Ipomoea indica*), presented through elegant descriptions, also the Australias (*Acacia melanoxylon*) were referred to as the best forest trees in the country. These are just a few examples marked by a specific social, cultural, political and economic context, but which show some of those preferences that were implemented in public and private spaces, for ornamental or economic reasons, and that years later began to incorporate the national list of invasive species. Since the objective of this set of observations is not to determine or confirm the origins of their dispersion, it is a reality that the presence of these species continues to vigorously mark slopes, roadsides or other urban spaces left in suspense. And as active neighbours in the occupation of these spaces, we also find the

<sup>27</sup> See for example: A. J. De Oliveira e Silva, “Meio de destruir as mas hervas das ruas”, *Jornal de Horticultura Pratica*, Vol. VI (1875: 42). The publication *The Gardening World Illustrated* (London: Brian Wynne, 1884–1909), often contained advertisements and directions for weed removal. In the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, many of the Regulations of cities in North America also made constant reference to the removal of weeds.

<sup>28</sup> The names were placed according to how they are present in the *Lista Nacional de Espécies Invasoras* (National List of Invasive Species) (D.L. 92/2019; Annex II), but in some cases, the species presented in the catalogs are referred to with another botanical synonymy.





Fig. 21. Return to cleaning and maintenance operations on sidewalks, flowerbeds and gardens. Photographic surveys of vegetation and fieldwork (Porto)

sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*) and the broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) — two of the indigenous ruderal species, but which were classified as invasive in a large part of the American continent, with records of their presence since the arrival of the first Europeans.<sup>29</sup>

This is a current plant condition and, simultaneously, a coexistence that has become difficult in view of the risks of ecological imbalance and loss of biodiversity, materialized and amplified in the sharpening of discourses and expressions of combat and exclusion — invasive, harmful, infesting, eradication targets, join alerts and citizen mobilization programs against a potential public enemy — expressions that carry with them a suggestion of premeditation; or the idea that these species engineered the destruction of the ecological balance, when in fact they are part of a constellation of entities and associations that created favorable conditions for their biological reach, later expanded through favorable soils, winds and water courses. Ignoring this system of entities and associations implies a gesture of indifference or a lack of responsibility.

Thus, and upstream from these positions, this is an artistic work/research process that continues to try to incorporate and give visibility to the mechanisms, human and non-human, that contributed to the production and reproduction of these ‘lesser’

<sup>29</sup> Heike Vibrans refers that both *Sonchus oleraceus* and *Rumex obtusifolius* are already described in the *Codice Florentino* (*Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*) written between 1540 and 1575/77. See: Heike Vibrans, “Native maize field weed communities in south-central Mexico”, *Weed Research* 38 (2), (March 1998: 153–166), (DOI:10.1046/j.1365-3180.1998.00082.x).

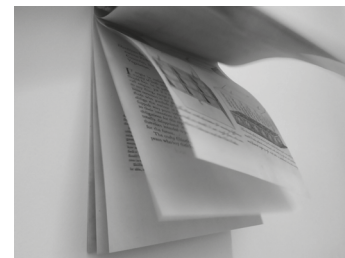
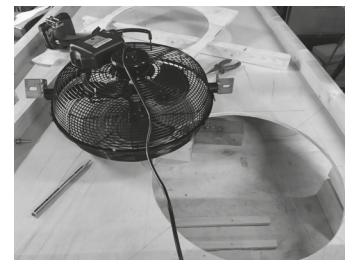


Fig. 22–25. *Paisagens menores – narrativas de dispersão e de exclusão* (Lesser landscapes – narratives of dispersion and exclusion) (2021)

Research, studio experiments and installation “Lesser landscapes”. From the ongoing research, six publications were selected and reprinted, produced between 1735 and 1870, which intended to give strength and form to a mapping of associations, invisible but also structuring, in the production of *lesser landscapes* — classification systems of plant species; logbooks of scientific expeditions; instructions and progress in systems for packaging and transporting live species; botanical surveys in distant countries. But, between publications and transatlantic expeditions, it was the wind that worked not only as one of the engines for the dispersion of plant species, but also, together with sea currents, as an engine for the dispersion of the ‘European colonial project’ and the respective circulation of this scientific knowledge and technological advances.

fragments of landscapes, and respective species present. In this sense, it is ironic that a group of species that find their ideal conditions in disturbed soils and that have maintained a close relationship with human activities of transformation, have been considered as agents of disturbance; or, how some of the consequences of the global dispersal of species, whether intentional or accidental, have provoked such extreme and celebrated discourses in eradication operations, when the mechanisms of these biological introductions and dispersals remain little visible or relevant — disputes between imperial centers, invasions, occupations, explorations, displacements and removals of human resources and raw materials, which intersect with the history of the landscape transformations, with the history of gardens and parks, or with the history of ornamental preferences.

Naturally, in a city in a State of Emergency, with reduced movements and services, forces of maintenance and transformation, it was the vegetation that was most notable for its temporary freedom of appropriation, also evidencing other narratives of disturbance and different conditions of coexistence — of the places where it is tolerated, to places where it is regularly controlled or excluded.

The return to activities (post-confinement) was also the return to the regularity of maintenance operations — a return to garden design; to the planting plan; for cleaning berms, sidewalks, flowerbeds and tree pits. The ‘human deconfinement’ came to restore the cleaning and control protocols of this spontaneous vegetation, sending it to its vegetal confinement. But, underneath the soil and between the cracks in the pavement, it is known that life will always try to escape, between opportunism and the sense of opportunity.

\*  
\*\*

# Mapping Invisibility: the possibility of seeing, in the impossibility of being

VISUAL ESSAY

Ana Vieira de Castro  
Francisco Varela  
Inês Moreira  
Patrícia Coelho

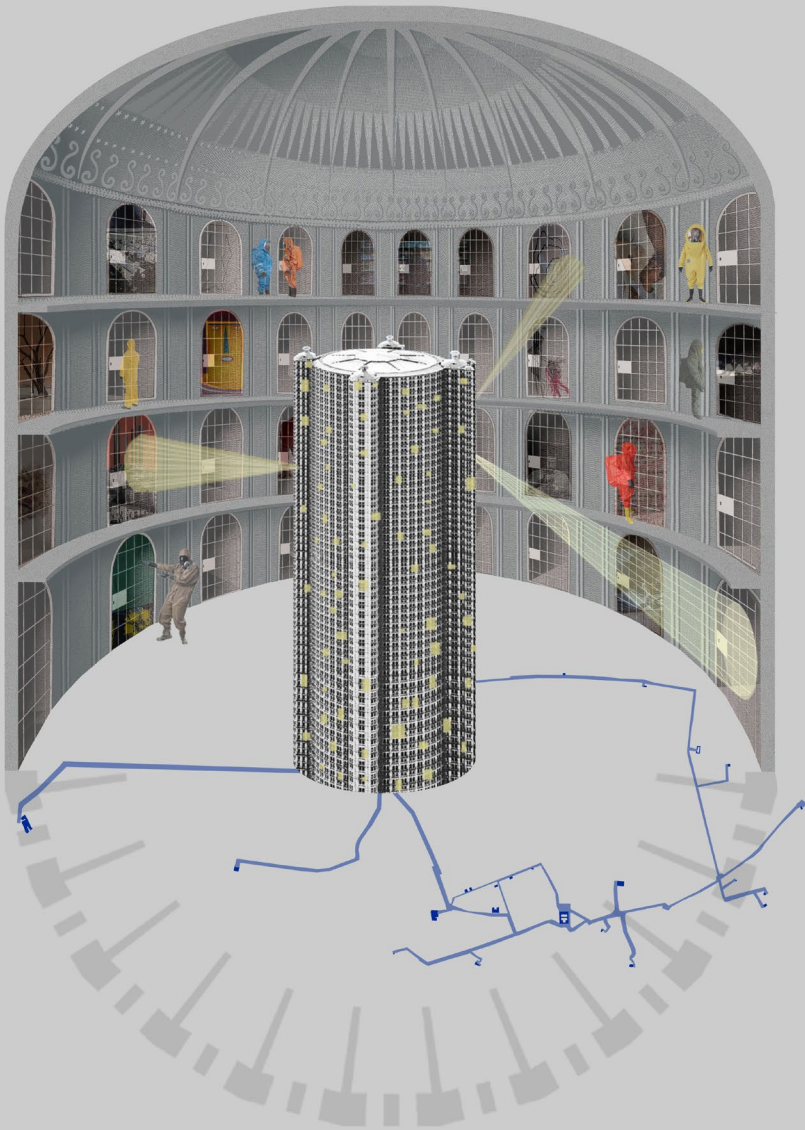
The journey into the invisible is a journey through what is out of reach, of what exists beyond our daily lives. [...] However, these places persist in our culture, they are inscribed in the collective memory. They therefore exist, but essentially in the form of images, events and narratives, real and fictional, documentary and artistic. The journey into the invisible is thus the precise moment in which the experience of these places intersects and overlaps with their representations, participating in the challenge of making the visible the invisible.<sup>1</sup>

In the circumstances dictated by the recent pandemic, the condition of living in the panopticon that Jeremy Bentham conceived in 1785 as a model of incarceration was inevitably comparable to the period of confinement. According to Michel Foucault, the panopticon is characterized by a social and spatial architecture, within which surveillance and punishment are indistinguishable. This model of self-surveillance is similar to the potential and exponential visibility of virtual reality, imposed or voluntarily assumed because we could not leave the place where we were.

Our situation of being under surveillance by power and controlled by it, which made it impossible for us to move, in no way distinguishes us from someone who is under house arrest. All that's missing is the electronic ankle bracelet.

To the image of the panopticon is added, in our imagination, another by Joshua Benoliel, which shows a ceremony, held on February 5, 1913 at the Lisbon Penitentiary, for the abolition of the hood that prisoners were obliged to wear at all times when in a situation in which they could see each other. The photographer José Luís Neto, in an act of reaffirming the contemporary relevance of this image, recovers it from anonymity, in the Municipal Archive of Lisbon and makes it visible before our conscience. On this work of José Luís Neto, Francisco Feio says:

<sup>1</sup> Luis Santiago Baptista & Maria Rita Pais. *Viagem ao invisível: espaço, experiência, representação*. Viseu: Purga Lda, (2019).





The image, made in the amphitheater of that prison, presents us with a fragment of the moments that preceded that ceremony. From it comes the vision of this strange place where the bodies of the prisoners are distributed in individual compartments, without visual contact with the contiguous space, and of which we only see the head, covered with the white hood [...].<sup>2</sup>

It so happens that, in addition to finding ourselves enclosed in the panopticon, we can also say that we put the hood on our heads, that is, we are like the prisoners of 1913, unable to have social contact and, like them, also confined to our individual compartment. These metaphors, regarding the moment which we lived, may be associated with another one, which is the potential and exponential visibility of virtual reality in counterpoint with the situation, imposed or voluntarily assumed, of not leaving the place where we are.

In the virtual world, neither matters the physical dimension of the space nor the importance of the institution. What really counts is its virtual dimension and its weight in terms of information. We increasingly observe the importance that each space attaches to online information, creating digital content through various platforms and reaching a high number of people who access knowledge of the space without ever having physically attended it.

As we live in the existential architecture of the panopticon, our ability to see the world is inversely proportional to our ability to live outside it. We live confined, in the paradox between the visible and the invisible, where we only travel through virtual visibility or remain physically invisible within our real social space.

Incapable of being physically in space, we seek a new notion of place, we are forced to ask the following questions: which spaces have the digital capacity to provide us with information

with a greater weight than they would have physically? What spaces define a map that is not inscribed within the physical space we know, but within the virtual space that we gradually discover through invisible networks?

As in the situationist psychogeographic maps, we can also create the constellations of our possible travels through virtual space and we can, like the Dadaists, travel through places that had no reason to exist.

The collage that we observe results from the mapping of some cultural spaces in the city of Porto and their geographical location, counterpointing the images provided virtually to show only what became visible in times of closure.

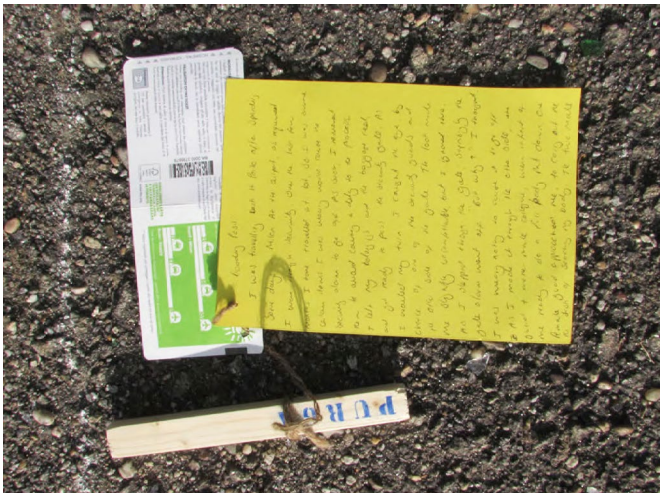
'Mapping Invisibility' mapped the journey of visible virtual spaces where we were not allowed to physically go during confinement. As observers of this new state of enclosure, we make cultural and artistic networks visible from the center of the panopticon and as virtual interpreters, we map the possibility of seeing, in the impossibility of being.

\*  
\*\*

<sup>2</sup> Francisco Feio, "Uma imagem, um negativo, todos os rostos", (2000), in <http://www.joseluisneto.pt/pt/04-01-02-01.html>. (Access: 10/2022).

**Claire Sivier  
Cristiana Pascoal  
Fernanda Zotovici  
Gisela Rebelo de Faria**

**Juana Bravo  
Rayan Merhy  
Titos Pelembe  
Apartamento4b**



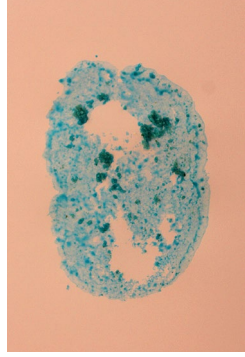
Apartamento4b, *Purga* (2019)  
 Relational Workshop. Various objects. Performative action in public space. Registration photographs  
 Workshop relacional. Vários objetos. Ação performativa em espaço público. Fotografias de registro



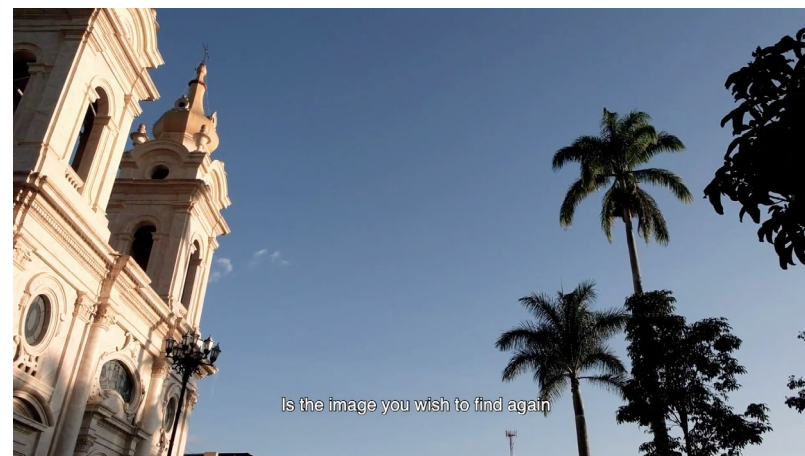
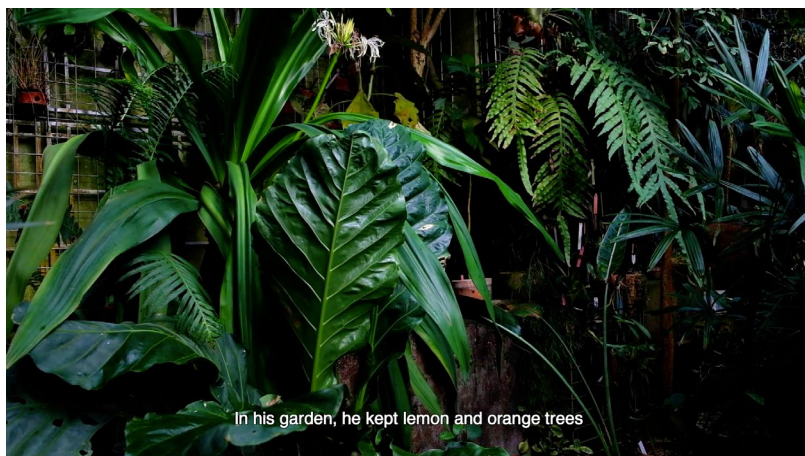


Titos Pelembe, *Jogo Modular / Modular Game* (2019)  
 12 painted wooden elements. Intervention in public space.  
 Registration photographs  
 12 elementos de madeira pintada. Intervenção no espaço público.  
 Fotografias de registo









Juana Bravo, *Palms* (2019)  
 Colour. 6'46''. Video stills  
 Cor. 6'46''. Frames do video

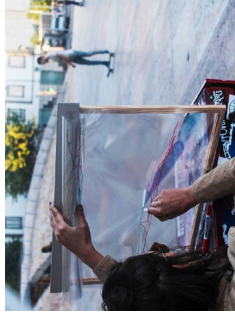
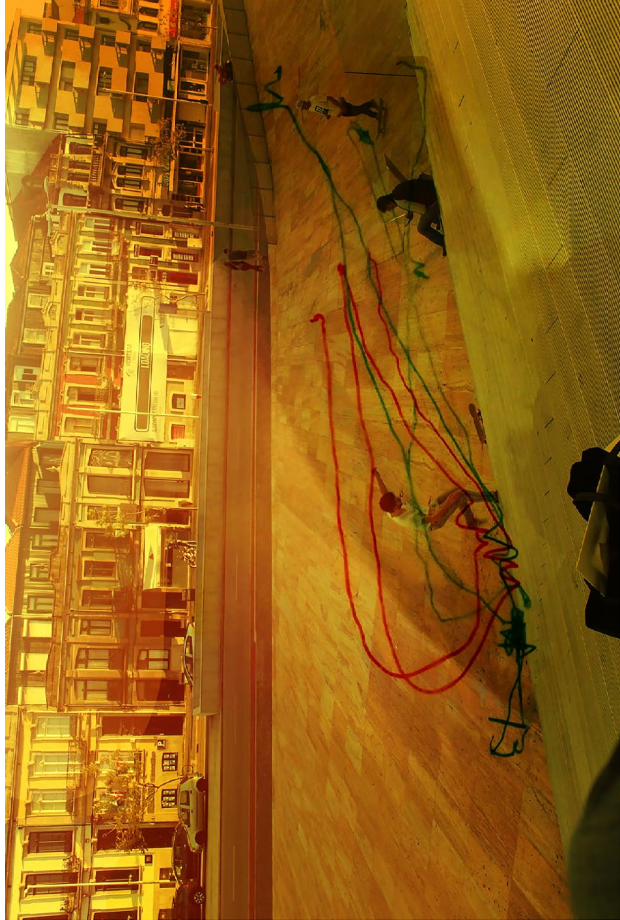
Juana Bravo, *Palm trees, Crosses, and Antennas* (2019)  
 Colour. 14'28''. Video stills  
 Cor. 14'28''. Frames do video





Gisela Rebelo de Faria, *Cartografia Performativa / Performative Cartography*  
 Performative action. Registration photographs. Diverse dates  
 Ação performativa. Fotografias de registo. Diversas datas





Fernanda Zotovici, *Skdrawing* (2019)  
 Performative drawing. Registration photographs  
 Desenho performativo. Fotografias de registro

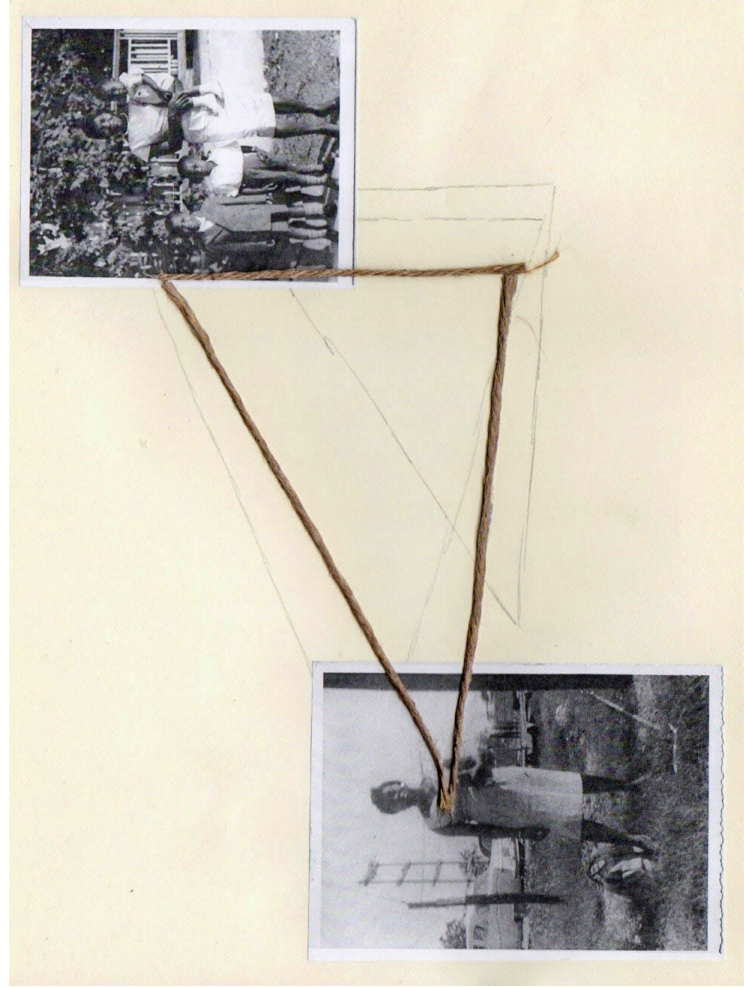
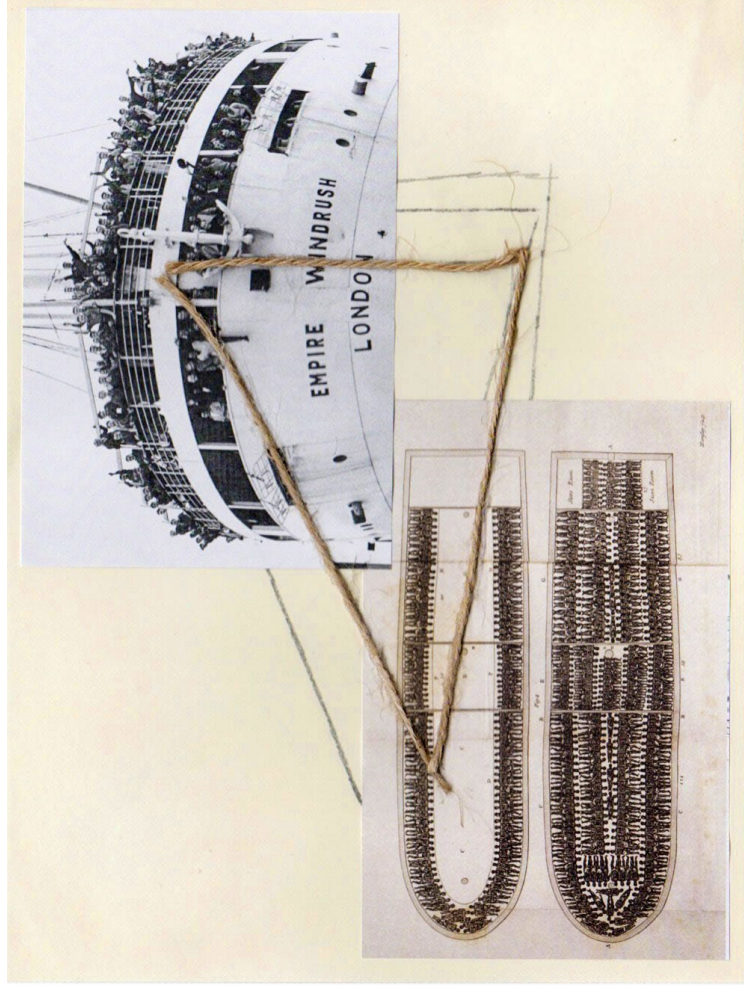


**LET'S STOP  
PRETENDING  
WE ARE  
SUPER  
HUMANS,  
BEFORE  
WE ARE  
SUPER-  
HUMANS.**

**SPACE  
IS  
LUXURY.  
SO IS  
BEING  
WELL.**

**AI  
NANO,  
ARRRR!**

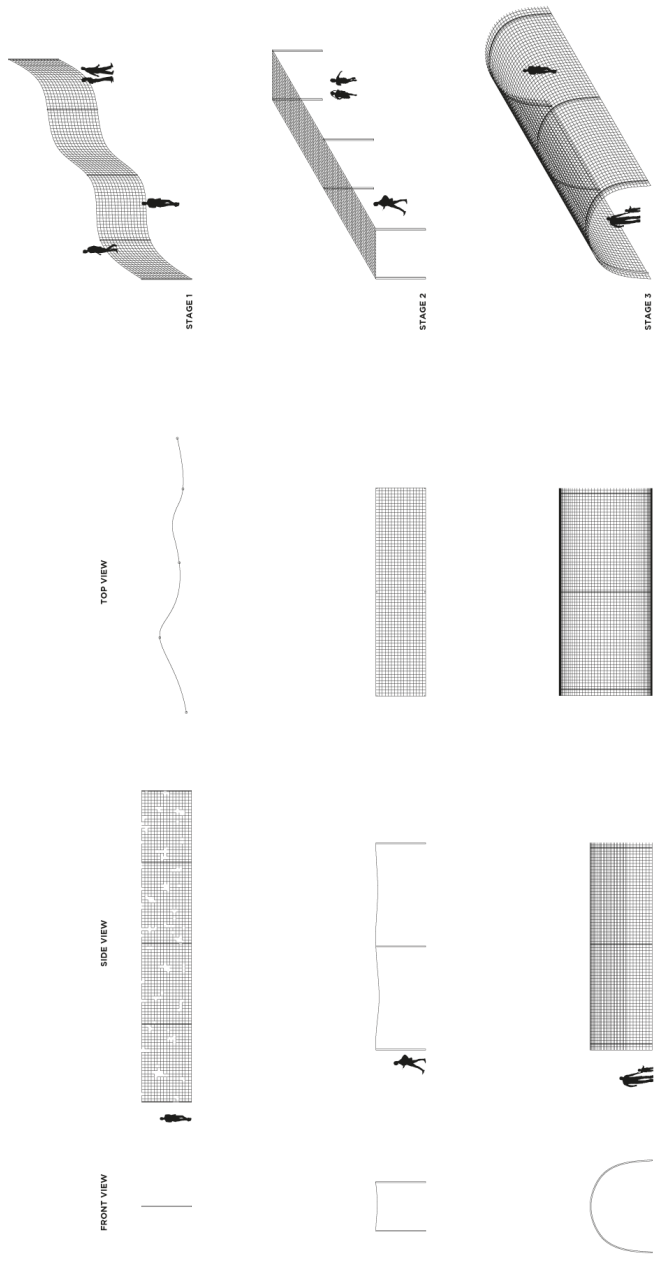
**DON'T  
LET  
THEM  
HACK YOUR  
TOASTER  
AND ASK  
FOR MONEY!**



Claire Sívier, *Historical Cartographies of the Black Female Body* (2019)  
 Collage on paper. Diverse materials and dimensions  
 Colagem em papel. Diversos materiais e dimensões







Cristiana Pascoal, *Da Fronteira ao Abrigo* (2018)  
 Desenhos técnicos da instalação  
 Technical drawings of the installation



Cristiana Pascoal, *Da Fronteira ao Abrigo* (2018)  
 Simulação por computador para a praça do El Corte Inglés, Vila Nova de Gaia  
 Computer simulation for El Corte Inglés square, Vila Nova de Gaia



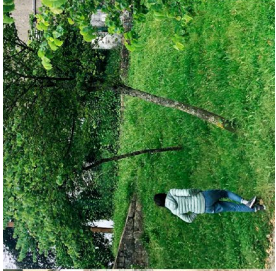


Fernanda Zotovici, *Troca de Memórias* (2019)  
Ação performativa. Fotografia de registro  
Performative action. Registration photograph



Fernanda Zotovici, *Troca de Memórias* (2019)  
Exemplos de memórias transcritas à máquina. Dimensões e suportes variáveis  
Examples of typewritten memoirs. Variable dimensions and supports





trajetória em estado líquido



Juana Bravo, *Palm Trees and Columns* (2019/2020)  
 Palmeira morta no Jardim Botânico e Pelourinho do Porto.  
 Díptico. Fotografias a cores  
 Dead palmtree in the Botanical Garden and Pillory of Porto.  
 Diptic. Colour photographs



-A- 9/11/20  
 Schaumomlett ~~Sh~~  
 (translation from German = foam Omelette)

Every Saturday morning at 10:00 promptly, my grandpa = Vavve" will arrive for brunch.

Even though I grew up in Israel, my grandparents' German culture was very vivid in my up-bringing. Though to be honest the middle-eastern cuisine I grew up with speaks closer to my pallet than the German but there is one dish that I celebrantly recall.

Schaum-Omelet (foam Omelette) is a sweet fluffy omelette that is made very delicately. You first eat with a spoon gently. An sweet "foam" and in the end you spread jam or honey over the left omelette and eat it like a crepe. I was told that







Titos Pelembe, *Direito de brincar / direito à cidade* (2019)  
 Experimentações lúdicas na periferia urbana da Cidade de Maputo.  
 Intervenção relacional. Fotografias de registo  
 [Right to play / right to the city] Playful experiments in  
 the urban periphery of Maputo City. Relational intervention.  
 Registration photographs



Apartamento4b, *Purga* (2019)  
Workshop relacional. Vários objetos. Ação performativa em espaço público. Fotografias de registro  
Relational workshop. Various objects. Performative action in the public space. Registration photographs

Synopsis of featured projects

Cristiana Pascoal



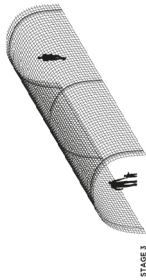
*Humans and Technology* is a set of posters that, with a critical and humorous tone, expresses some concerns, calling into question ethical and moral questions in the changes in lifestyles caused by technology, in addition to predicting possible scenarios in the emerging future.

Titos Pelembe



*Modular Game* was an intervention in public space consisting of a modular game with the aim of revisiting the practice of spontaneous games, activating recreational spaces and contributing to the interpersonal relationships in the public space.

The set is made up of twelve elements on whose surfaces traditional games are represented.



*Da Fronteira ao Abrigo* was a project developed from the exercise of 3 Approaches: Performativity, Visuality and Spatiality. A mesh fence called *malha-sol* was used. It is a metallic mesh with different applications, that was used for attempting to materialise the concepts of micro-map and macro-cell. Between both, there is a limit, a barrier, material or psychological, that breaks the fluid communication between spaces.

In the reconfiguration of this barrier to others that allow coexistence between places, other *malha-sol* formats emerge that not only create passages, but also potentially create shelters.



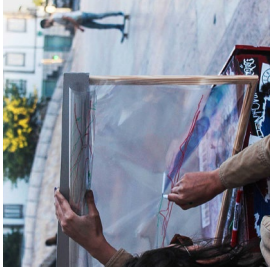
*Right to play / right to the city.* According to data provided by the Municipal Council of the city of Maputo, recreational spaces only exist in the center of the city, a fact that may contribute to the process of socio-spatial segregation and to the deprivation, in particular, of children from enjoying their fundamental rights, such as: the right to play and the right to the city. In this context, the artistic experiments carried out, aimed to stimulate the practice of spontaneous games in disuse, at the same time rethinking and acting on social inequalities in the city from the activation and adaptation of public recreational spaces, as a social right.



## Fernanda Zotovici

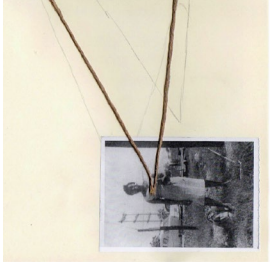


*Troca de Memórias* is a performative urban intervention that consists of an action in the public space that challenges passers-by, offering a differentiated experience and a possibility of exchange, which in this case is not done in a mercantilist way, but rather passionately, affectively and intuitively: swapping one memory for another.

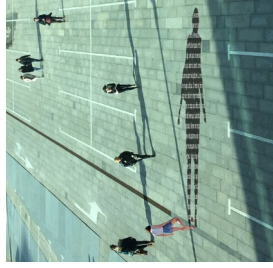


*Skidrawing* is part of an ongoing investigation into skateboards at Casa da Música, Porto. Two references guide this work: Albrecht Dürer "Drawing of a reclining woman" (1525) and the performative drawings of Morgan O'Hara (1982). In this extrapolation, a display is developed that acts as a transparent screen on the movement of the Skaters. In addition, using the dynamics of skateboarding, a spontaneous gesture is made on the created canvas in order to guide a free drawing, where the "invisible" movement takes shape and dimension.

## Claire Sivier

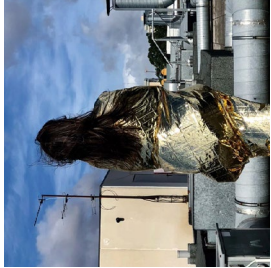


*Historical Cartographies of the Black Female Body* aims to illustrate how the triangular transatlantic slave routes between the 1400-1800s — three core routes: from Europe to Africa, and then to the Caribbean, Brazil and the USA — overlap and collided as they identify the maps and modes of movement of the black diaspora during this time and how these have changed since. Using the historical cartography of my grandmother and then myself, I aim to highlight how rapidly these modes of movement have changed; from an unthinkable confined journey, to the freedom of movement I have been privileged to hold.



*Só de Noite: Shadow (Portrait) Series* asks how, as women, does moving through our neighbourhoods, those public spaces familiar to us, effect our sense of self, social mobility and safety at night compared to the day time. Looking over your shoulder, stepping into the light to avoid shadows, are regular strategies used to deal with a sense of insecurity or uneasiness.

## Gisela Rebelo de Faria

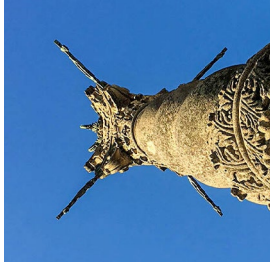


*Performative Cartography.* The act of walking is one of the first human interventions in the territory. It forms an integral part of the landscape; participates in and transforms it, but also allows one to look at it, apprehend it and get to know it. Walking involves a performative charge that extends to urban and architectural practices, but also to artistic, social and cultural practices.



*Trajectory in Liquid State* proposes a space that invites the local community to "return the water to the Reservoir". It intends to encourage the care required by an essential good as basic and vital as water. Through an act and a symbolic object, around the *Reservatório de Água do Bairro do Carriçal* (a neighbourhood water reservoir) an awareness of water consumption is sought. Due to the context of confinement, the work was carried out through the distribution of postcards through the mailboxes of the inhabitants of *Bairro do Carriçal*.

## Juana Bravo



*Palm Trees and Columns.* Fragments of a visual research on the dialogue between metropole and periphery, and the place of "nature" in the city. The pictures feature a delapidated palm tree and a historical pilary. The project, at large, reflects on the connections between colonialism and the translocation of plants from the colonized places.

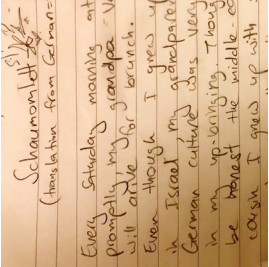


*Palm trees, Crosses, and Antennas.* Video essay on the dialogue between metropole and periphery, city and nature, European and South American Catholic cities, through three main elements: palm trees, crosses, and antennas. The video was shot and edited in increments over a year-long period; it includes worries, whims, and musings that I found along the way researching traveling tropical flora and Climate Change.



## Rayan Merhy

CookBook intends to experience the act of eating communally and the memories and stories we have through what we eat or have eaten once. Turning the living room into the public area of investigation, I invited my guests, through the course of eight months, to write their childhood memory of a specific dish and its ingredients.



On collective baking project approaches and experiments on processes of collective baking and sharing bread as a form of cultural exchange and space activation. The project took place in different locations and triggered different moments in which bread acted as a social connector.

## Apartamento4b

Purga was an urban intervention conceived to expose the issue of harassment experienced by Women and to highlight the variation of experiences in an artistic way to the public space. The action invites women to an experience divided into three moments: workshop, performative urban drift and installation of objects. An object of the participants' personal choice was the common thread of this performative action.



Apartamento4b:  
Fernanda Zotovici, Rayan Merhy,  
Izabel Barboni, Claire Siviér

# Suspended Territory (landscape)

VISUAL ESSAY

Rodrigo Paglieri

## From the possibility of the encounter to the contemporary critical landscape

I write from the city of Porto in Portugal, the territory of my confinement. I am writing at the beginning of 2022, the date on which, globally, we completed two years of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the virus that spread around the world changing everyone and everything, and to this movement of transformation, especially during the most critical period of the pandemic, the notion of territory was not immune. The territory we learned to inhabit during the pandemic was thus a restricted, reduced, virtualized, confiscated, suspended territory. Then, with the advancement of vaccination, we gradually recovered the right to enjoy and circulate in public spaces, but for about a year and a half — before the emergence of vaccines, when the virus created its mutations and spread like the wind across the planet, making thousands of victims — we had to learn to deal with an even more political territory, even more guarded, even more panoptic. The variables changed according to the number of contagions in relation to the number of inhabitants, the geographic area and the lethality rate of a given variant of the virus, and played with each other in graphs and statistics, guiding governments of cities and countries to further restrict borders. They were an attempt to prevent new variants of the virus from crossing territorial divides and claiming lives. The implementation of Sanitary Barriers that limited circulation between municipalities and countries came to be added to the other restrictive measures imposed by governments on bodies and territories, such as: lockdown, social distancing, curfew and many others that sought to impose spatial limits to bodies and territories, creating new frontiers, controlling the relation between distancing and approximation between bodies and territories. Territory under tension. Territory where the relations between bodies became more acute on a scale of tension, a territory that here we call *suspended territory*.

In tonal instruments we use scales, which are ordered sequences of notes whose function is to guide the musician

in composition and execution. They are arranged in intervals of tones and semitones, which represent the distance from one note to another. Among the natural notes that we know (C, D, E, F, G, A, B) there are other notes that contain tonal accidents, sharps<sup>1</sup> and flats. To help us in this reflection on the possible modes of co-existence between artistic practices aimed at urban spaces and territories affected by restrictive measures of use and circulation, we will adopt the concept of sharp for *suspended territory*, since sharps are tonal accidents that raise the pitch of the note by one semitone. I propose this musical metaphor, so that we can try to understand how the relationship between a contemporary artistic practice on the landscape and the real territory of urban spaces is affected in the historical context imposed by this new situation in which the territory sees its symbolic and semantic potential compromised by the destruction of *the experience of the territory*.

A *suspended territory*, therefore, is that in which *the experience of the territory* is compromised by exceptional measures that restrict the existence of bodies and limit their permanence and circulation in public spaces. In this brief study on the effects of a *suspended territory* on artistic practices, we will take *the experience of the territory* as the relational practice that the artist/researcher develops in the artistic work that deals with intervening in urban spaces and their multiple symbolic and semantic territories. Our aim is to try to point out some possible strategies to act in this territory of exception, strategies that serve as an antidote against the crisis of *the experience of the territory*, mitigating the impact on artistic practices focussed on the territories of the urban landscape, and therefore expanding the possibilities of realizing a *critical contemporary landscape*, even in territorial situations of exception.

As we saw in music, the sharp is an accident that raises the height of the note by a semitone, there is a tension in the

<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese word for the musical tone sharp is *sustenido*, a word whose meaning is close to suspended. The author appropriates the word in Portuguese for its current meaning in everyday context. (Translator's note).

note that causes it to be placed in suspension, this is what happened to the public space during the 2020 and 2021. In the most serious period of the Corona virus pandemic, the territory was transformed into an acute panoptic model, where surveillance reached the point of establishing borders within the urban perimeter itself, barriers that were defined by the requirement of the vaccination passport for entry into certain areas of the city. They were necessary restrictive measures. It is important to clarify that we are not questioning the implementation of such measures, they are often unavoidable to contain a pandemic; what is intended here is to investigate how the necessary restrictive measures of circulation in the pandemic period affected our *experience of the territory* and how this compromises the artistic approach to the landscape and its occurrence as a *contemporary critical landscape*.

What I propose, firstly, is that we accept the premise, posed in my doctoral research, that *the experience of the territory*, which refers to the relationships we establish with the different layers of a territory, it is what promotes the lived landscape, that is, a landscape committed to the "historical present"<sup>2</sup> and that the latter, in turn, is the only one capable of producing a *contemporary critical landscape*, which is to say, a landscape that generates displacements with critical power over the social, political, cultural, technical and geographic territories of urban space.

Only the *lived landscape* brings the commitment to the "historical present" necessary for the realization of the *contemporary critical landscape* as a coefficient of success of an artistic practice on the reality of the landscape. This coefficient of success is measured by the breadth in the field of possibilities that a given artistic practice has to transform itself into a

<sup>2</sup> I am using this concept from the understanding by Peter Osborne in his book *Anywhere or not all – Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, where the author presents his philosophical theory about a new paradigm for the visual arts, in which, the "historical present" – which refers to the commitment of the artistic production with the socio-political and cultural context in which it is inserted – is brought as a *sine qua non* condition for the realization of the work of art as critical art.

transversal poetics capable of dialoguing with the context, the event and the Other. Once this premise is accepted, we will look for the event of the *lived landscape* in the *suspended territory*.

This search raised some questions: what is suspended in *the experience of the territory* in a *suspended territory* that prevents the occurrence of the *lived landscape* and frustrates its realization as a *contemporary critical landscape*? What are the possible strategies that may serve as an antidote against this suspension? How to combat this radicalization in the destruction of experience in exceptional times of restricted circulation and, consequently, the impoverishment of existence and co-existence in the territory of public spaces? How, despite the territorial crisis in moments of exception, can we find the *lived landscape* in the *suspended territory* in a way that leads us to the *contemporary critical landscape*?

I moved to Portugal in October 2019, shortly after finishing my PhD in Rio de Janeiro and receiving an invitation to teach at the Visual Arts Degree at the University of Minho. The challenge was set and it was twofold, to gain geographic and conceptual knowledge with the territories of my new habitat and to teach what I had spent some years investigating in theory and in practice. What I, or anyone else, could not have foreseen, is that the challenge would be radicalized due to a new territorial context where free circulation was suspended and the territory became sharp (*sustenido*), a half tone above its usual tonal placement in the natural scale. These measures, which put the notion of territory and public space in suspension, also involved a new form of territorial demarcation, which defined the territory of vaccinated people as opposed to the territory of non-vaccinated people, so that some governments, and the European Union as a whole, came to implement a vaccine passport, which allowed or prevented access to a given country or municipality, or even to specific territories within the urban perimeter. I reiterate that this brief essay does not question the territorial restriction measures, but it is important for the reader to remember the moments of tension that involved the *suspended territory* in this period.

In order to respond to this challenge, both in the artistic field of my poetic practice and in the field of teaching and theoretical research, I set out to observe where the main crisis of the territory lies in times of restrictions in relation to occupation and circulation and how, in these circumstances, we may seek strategies for the realization of a *lived landscape*, that is, marked by experience. I wanted to know what the current situation of suspension of the right to be, to come and go in the public space implied for artistic practices that deal with urban spaces? What ceases to happen, what is suppressed, what is erased, what disappears, due to territorial restriction measures? After some drifting and some experimentation on this new *suspended territory*, the answer came to me: what is suppressed when the territory is in suspension, what is at risk is precisely the *possibility of the encounter*. The encounters that take place in the territories of public space — intersections, corners, streets, squares and esplanades — are responsible for the phenomenon of the *experience of the territory*, they are cause and effect of its full realization. In other words, the *possibility of the encounter* is the initial trigger for the *experience of the territory*, and the latter underlies the *lived landscape* that moves the *nomadic and narrative landscape* towards the *contemporary critical landscape*. It is the *possibility of the encounter* that expands the symbolic and semantic field of the territory that makes the landscape a possible space for the co-existence of the “historical present”: of power relations, political tensions, social and cultural exchanges, the poetic event. The erasure of the *possibility of the encounter* forces us to think about new modes of co-existence, through other modes of co-occupation and co-circulation in urban spaces. Encounters with the territorial Other, with the urbanism of the territory, with the technical objects of the territory and with the connections that move the narratives of these encounters, are what tension, dimension, build and deconstruct the critical power of the *experience of the territory*. We need to think about co-circulation, co-occupation and co-existence



strategies between the agents of urban spaces that move the ways of *experiencing the territory*.

A sharp is the shortest distance between two musical notes, sharp notes are responsible for shortening the distance between two natural notes. They, therefore, at the same time that they are capable of raising the tension of the note by a semitone, are also responsible for bringing musical notes closer together, for promoting encounters between notes, for creating intervals and spaces of mediation. For example, at the same time that a C# is a C raised by a semitone, it also presents itself as a mediator between the C and the D, it is the C closest to the D, it is the C that goes to meet the D. In a musical composition, the scale is responsible for building the melody and harmonic fields, that is to say, fields where the notes are in harmony, the sharps act as mediators of the harmonic fields.

The *contemporary critical landscape* in its relational game between the “historical present” and the various layers of re-signification of this present and this presence, takes place as a process, as a means of the work of art. Its event is in the mediation of encounters between bodies that co-exist in a given territory. It is the means, the antidote against the destruction of *the experience of the territory* in a *suspended territory*. It is about aiming at mediations. It is about trying to articulate connections between the constitutive territories of urban landscapes, enhancing sharing and the collective, betting on relationships of otherness and on network relationships, investing in connections that promote encounters and the construction of harmonious fields of mediation capable of promoting new possible ways for the *contemporary critical landscape* to co-exist and re-exist as a means of *suspended territory*.

\*  
\*\*



**espaço confinado,  
condição global,  
resistência**

# **MODOS DE (CO) EXISTIR TENSÃO**

**Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro (ed.)**