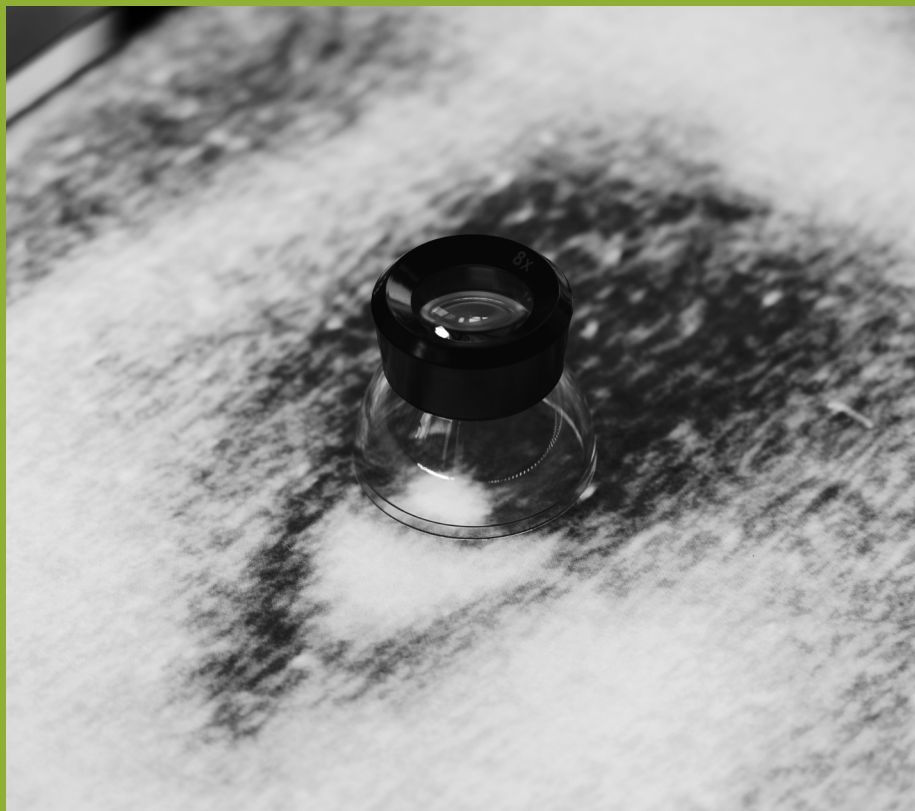


Desperfilar As Artes Visuais, o Objeto Enlouquecedor e o Movimento das Coisas - Volume 1

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Orlando Vieira Francisco
Lucie Fortuin
Mijo Miquel



“Análise de risco”, Felipe Argiles, 2024

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O historiador Achille Mbembe apresenta o “objeto enlouquecedor” como o “outro” que é perseguido pelo sujeito imerso na ilusão da vulnerabilidade, como produto e invenção de seu próprio desejo e imaginação, destinados a garantir-lhe a sensação de diferença e afastamento em relação a este “outro”, ao diverso, ao estranho, para preservar sua posse, seu status social, a “pureza” racial, o poder econômico ou político.

Nos dias atuais, o “objeto enlouquecedor” passa a ser a/o estrangeira/o, a/o imigrante, refugiados, a comunidade árabe e mulçumana, o islão, a comunidade indígena, o quilombo, os movimentos sociais, ativistas ambientais como Berta Cáceres, Bruno Pereira e Dom Philips, a reforma agrária e ocupação de terras, para citar alguns.

Na obra “Políticas da Inimizade” (2017), Mbembe faz ainda uma extensa lista tecnológica e política que se desenvolve no sistema no qual o “objeto enlouquecedor” é controlado: checkpoints, muros e bloqueios em estradas, controlo do espaço aéreo e marítimo, extinção e destruição de infra-estruturas, bombardeamentos, controle e identificação do perfil dos corpos e das mentes, assédio permanente, divisão territorial, violência celular e molecular, etc. Foi a partir deste sistema de controle que encontramos algo potencialmente tangível no âmbito das Artes Visuais, no desenho, na compreensão territorial e social da paisagem: o entendimento sobre perfil. A palavra “perfil”, ou ainda o verbo “perfilar”, tem sua origem no latim para expressar ou evidenciar um contorno, ressaltar a forma ou ainda qualquer sentido figurado que possa estar associado a este traçado, etimologicamente melhor definido pelo prefixo “pro” (à frente) e o substantivo “filum” (fio, linha). No entanto, reconhece-se também no “perfil” sua dimensão política, seja na intencionalidade do desenho técnico, no reconhecimento facial ou de produção de dados sobre um indivíduo, ou ainda na força política que uma pessoa carrega na sua própria identidade. Desperfilar, portanto, amplia a discussão, inclusive, no carácter paradoxal existente no entendimento da epistemologia, da diversidade, da justiça social e ambiental.

Desta forma, esta nova edição da série Desajustados - Coleção de Textos Falados surge a partir do seminário “Desperfilhar as artes visuais, o objeto

enlouquecedor e o movimento das coisas”, que aconteceu entre os dias 3 e 4 de Outubro de 2024 e foi organizado dentro do programa “Arquipélago”, promovido pelo ID_CAI - IDENTIDADES_Coletivo de Ação/Investigação (i2ADS - Instituto de Investigação em Arte, Design e Sociedade).

No âmbito das artes visuais e performativas, o seminário apresentou discussões da aproximação de uma análise transdisciplinar do perfil histórico, epistemológico e categórico no qual o sujeito e a natureza são percebidos, o território é pensado e a ciência se funde.

Nesta publicação, encontram-se textos dos autores que apresentaram suas pesquisas durante o seminário “Desperfilhar as artes visuais, o objeto enlouquecedor e o movimento das coisas”, sendo estes Isabeli Santiago, Lucie Fortuin, Mijo Miquel, Renata Gaspar, Ana Sofia Ribeiro, Felipe Argiles e Orlando Vieira Francisco. Durante os dois dias do seminário, os autores tiveram suas comunicações gravadas por áudio, depois transcritas com o auxílio de programas de edição, e finalmente editadas pelos próprios autores para esta publicação.

Qual é o perfil do tempo atual em relação ao tempo geológico? Como as Artes Visuais poderiam contribuir para uma análise do movimento a partir das migrações e os efeitos da crise climática? Como e quem define o perfil do movimento social e das frentes de resistência ao capitalismo e às indústrias extrativas? Estas foram algumas das perguntas apresentadas aos autores durante o seminário, para as quais encontrarão reflexões livres no desenvolvimento desta publicação, baseadas nos percursos de interesse e de investigação de cada autor.

Nesta publicação também se encontram imagens produzidas a partir do exercício de digitalizar e imprimir anotações feitas pelos participantes do seminário, e que gentilmente cedidas, apresentam-se como resultado complementar à leitura da presente publicação.

Convidamos à leitura nas próximas páginas dos “textos falados” em “Desperfilhar as artes visuais, o objeto enlouquecedor e o movimento das coisas”, na expectativa de ampliar o debate sobre o que já se percebe mas que ainda é preciso de alguma forma atravessar.

Orlando Vieira Francisco

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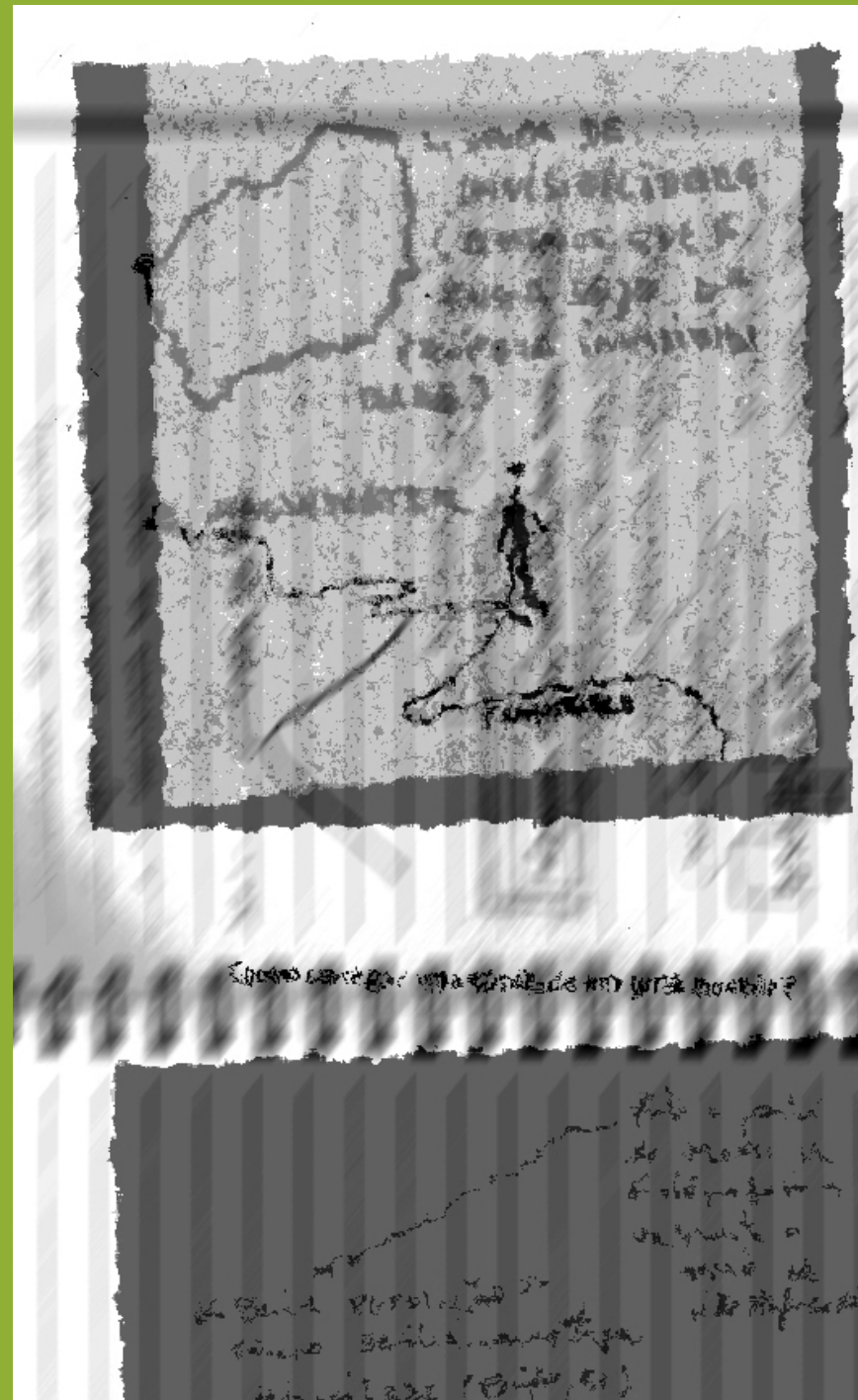
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O poder da visão no alto da montanha

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BIOGRAFIA

Orlando Vieira Francisco é artista visual e investigador integrado ao i2ADS – Instituto de Investigação em Arte, Design e Sociedade. Desde 2023 é professor no Departamento de Artes Plásticas da Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto e é editor da revista HUB – Journal of Research in Art, Design e Society. É também Investigador Principal do projeto de investigação “From the Top of the Mountains We Can See Invisible Monuments: transnational artistic investigation on landscape environmental changes caused by infrastructure space” (2022.05800.CEECIND), trabalhando as temáticas das mudanças da paisagem, produção do espaço social entre arte e política e práticas de ativismo ambiental.

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[Apresento aqui “*Tracing the Mountains: reflexões gráficas no contexto da Crítica Infraestrutural e da crise climática*”. Para começar, eu vou distribuir alguns postais que fiz para o dia de hoje, e depois eu volto para falar mais deste material durante a apresentação]

“Tracing the Mountains” falará sobre os resultados de pesquisa do primeiro ano do projeto *From the Top of the Mountains We Can See Visible Monuments*, para o qual também se organiza esse evento e que está inserido como projeto de investigação no i2ADS desde 2023.

Esse projeto de investigação explora os impactos sociais e ambientais causados por infraestruturas, abordando a crise climática pelas artes visuais.

Seus objetivos incluem refletir sobre os efeitos da infraestrutura no meio ambiente e promover a comunicação em respostas às práticas extrativistas.

Além disso, busca criar redes de conhecimento e ativismo, analisando movimentos sociais, e aprendendo como poderia ser entendida a ideia de movimento social e a voz coletiva. Um conceito bastante trabalhado nesse projeto seria o que chamamos de “power of the overview”, que consiste em descrever uma característica fundamental que é a produção de informação a partir de imagens aéreas — assim como vimos na imagem

aérea na apresentação de Mijo Miquel sobre o Parc Naturel de l’Albufera, em Valência. Ou seja, analisamos os efeitos produzidos pela tecnologia de drones e satélites, que é usado em nossas pesquisas, mas também muito usada por empresas de extração para reduzir o custo de exploração.

Em contrapartida, de forma ficcional, subimos a montanha, também enquanto movimento social. Ou melhor, como voz coletiva ou inspirado por alguns movimentos sociais, como o movimento Zapatista, ou o movimento da reforma agrária brasileira MST. Caminhamos até a montanha, e de lá temos essa visão do alto (*power of the overview*), mantendo-nos com os pés no chão, diferentemente dos satélites.

Na obra *As Três Ecologias*, Félix Guattari irá qualificar esse paradoxo que envolve a tecnologia e o devir das multitudes por justiça social e climática como algo lancinante, algo que aflige e atormenta.

Guattari diz, para onde quer que nós voltamos — que talvez seja a ideia do selvagem, como vemos na apresentação da Ana Sofia Ribeiro, encontramos esse mesmo paradoxo lancinante.

De um lado, o desenvolvimento contínuo de novos meios técnicos e científicos que são potencialmente

capazes de resolver as problemáticas ecológicas dominantes e de determinar o reequilíbrio das atividades socialmente úteis sobre a superfície do planeta. De outro lado, tem-se a incapacidade das forças sociais organizadas, dos projetos artísticos e das formações subjetivas constituídas de se apropriarem desses meios para torná-los operativos.

Provavelmente, esse é o maior desafio que um projeto como *From the Top of the Mountains We Can See Invisible Monuments* enfrenta, ou outros que vemos neste seminário, pois situam-se diante desse paradoxo científico constantemente.

Assim como a Lucie Fortuin que cita neste seminário a presença da montanha no aspecto de resistência, do conflito civil, percebemos neste mesmo contexto a multitude e os movimentos sociais. Cito primeiramente os indígenas do continente americano que lutam contra a extração de óleos e a indústria fracking.

Cito também o caso das montanhas nas fronteiras da Espanha com o Marrocos, onde se abrigam muitos refugiados. E podemos ainda nos referir aos refugiados climáticos que usam da montanha como lugar de abrigo. Lembro também o povo curdo que se protege nas montanhas contra a violência do governo turco. Na Palestina, no lugar onde as oli-

veiras e outras ervas se tornam símbolos de resistência palestina, a montanha também é um lugar de proteção.

Quando falo de montanhas, lembro também que foi nas montanhas que o povo armênio se protegeu do genocídio que já fez mais de 100 anos.

Por isso, quero evidenciar aqui que a história da montanha cruza-se com a história da resistência.

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Em março de 2024, a International Union of Geological Sciences decidiu por rejeitar oficialmente a proposta da declaração do Antropoceno com uma nova época geológica. Fato esse que marca um ponto importante no debate científico sobre a influência humana no planeta. Nas últimas décadas, o debate transdisciplinar no âmbito das artes visuais em torno da crise climática, da crítica infraestrutural, do embate decolonial e anticapitalista, e por isso em torno da diversidade epistemológica, ficou bastante vinculado a esse termo, o Antropoceno.

Falo aqui de Donna Hathaway, Anna Tsing, T.J. Demos, para citar alguns dos nomes que trabalharam constantemente em torno do Antropoceno, que criaram neologismos, conceitos e teorias em torno desse termo.

Por isso, pergunto, quais serão os efeitos para as pesquisas nas artes visuais após essa decisão das altas comissões da geologia? Esta rejeição impõe uma reflexão sobre as complexidades científicas e as implicações políticas e filosóficas.

A principal crítica à formalização do Antropoceno é técnica, porque gira em torno da dificuldade de definir um único *golden spike*, ou seja, sobre reconhecer uma evidência material no registro estratigráfico, dos estratos rochosos.

Sendo assim, existiria alguma forma de contribuir nesse processo de identificação de uma evidência material, por exemplo, nas Artes Visuais? Nas artes visuais, evidenciar é, de certa forma, colocar uma lente ao problema como vemos na instalação apresentada pelo Felipe Argiles.

Por exemplo, qual seria a leitura possível sobre a obra *Spiral Jetty* (1970) do Robert Smithson a partir desta indefinição sobre o Antropoceno? Que tipo de reflexão “planetária” podemos obter a partir do momento quando um artista submete o desenho à esta tecnologia mecânica (ou ainda *Artificial Intelligence* ou *machine-learning* para os trabalhos mais atuais)? Nestes casos, poderia haver um indicador de mudanças climáticas no planeta Terra? Ou seja, poderia haver um *golden spike* para o entendimento do Antropo-

ceno em *Spiral Jetty* ou em outros trabalhos relacionados à paisagem? Poderíamos considerar que existe no campo das artes um marco ou uma evidência da mudança climática, da interferência antropocênica?

Em 1970, *Spiral Jetty* foi construído ainda junto à água, submerso praticamente, utilizando-se da escavação para a sua construção. Hoje, o lago Great Salt Lake já está recuado por quilômetros da obra. Neste território, as mudanças climáticas são evidentes se você olhar a partir desse marco artístico. Quanto à biodiversidade, muito também mudou, como os pássaros se distanciaram, a fauna, o mundo microscópico, a qualidade da água, inclusive a presença do sal tão evidente que acaba com a diversidade. São registros e são lentes de um processo; trata-se de um scanner do processo de interferência humana sobre o planeta.

Na Antuérpia, durante residências artísticas nos anos de 2022 e 2023, buscava por zonas altas ou montanhas naquela região bastante plana. Então, em uma rápida pesquisa no Google, descobri que havia uma montanha na zona portuária. Tratava-se de Hooge Maey, que nunca foi propriamente uma montanha e sim uma construção sedimentada de elementos tóxicos.

A partir de Hooge Maey, portanto, surge a série *The Observers' Plateaus* e o conceito de *power of the overview* no platô da montanha.

A série de *The Observers' Plateaus* foi apresentada pela primeira vez na exposição “Desejos Compulsivos, a Extração do Lítio e as Montanhas Rebeldes” na Galeria Municipal do Porto. Segundo a curadora Marina Otero Verzier, a série ilustra os efeitos do racionalismo ocidental e das disciplinas científicas que transformam o ecossistema vivo que constitui uma montanha numa sucessão de transições geohistóricas.

Ou ainda, segundo a crítica da Maria Krugliak para a Revista Contemporânea sobre a exposição dessa série, diz que *The Observers' Plateaus* apresenta obras quase simplistas de cores primárias que representam montanhas planas e meras camadas de matérias prontas para serem exploradas, como o extrativista as verá. Acho interessante esse ponto de vista também sobre o problema do olhar: o olhar do autor, o olhar da crítica, e o olhar do extrativista diante de uma montanha.

No entanto, diante da imprecisão da obra abstrata que poderia se apresentar como um desenho, uma pintura acrílica ou mesmo um esboço para escultura e instalação, nesta obra pretende-se questionar as próprias

definições de extratificação e sedimentação situadas na ciência positivista quando provocada entre uma discursividade entre extrativismo e novas epistemologias.

Quando vemos esta obra que representa esta montanha da Bélgica extratificada, artificial e de sedimentos tóxicos, também estamos a falar da sua forma negativa. Ou seja, do processo extrativista que a compõe. Como Alberto Acosta define, o extrativismo é um modo de acumulação que começou a ser estabelecido em grande escala há 500 anos. E por isso, a partir deste cruzamento historicista apresentado por Acosta, podemos entender como o “poder da vista panorâmica” (*power of the overview*) se relaciona com as mudanças da paisagem, assim como com as práticas dominantes e de intervenção política e tecnológica.

Heather Davis para o texto “Blue, Bling: On Extractivism” irá dizer também a respeito disso que o extrativismo descreve tanto uma ideologia quanto um sistema econômico construídos no entendimento de que o mundo e todos os seus seres são inerentemente mercantilizáveis, violentamente transformados em coisas, operando como uma reserva

permanente para a acumulação de lucro e poder nas mãos de poucos dessa forma.

Acosta e Davis descrevem, portanto, os entrelaçamentos mútuos do colonialismo, capitalismo e ecocídio a partir da ideia do extrativismo.

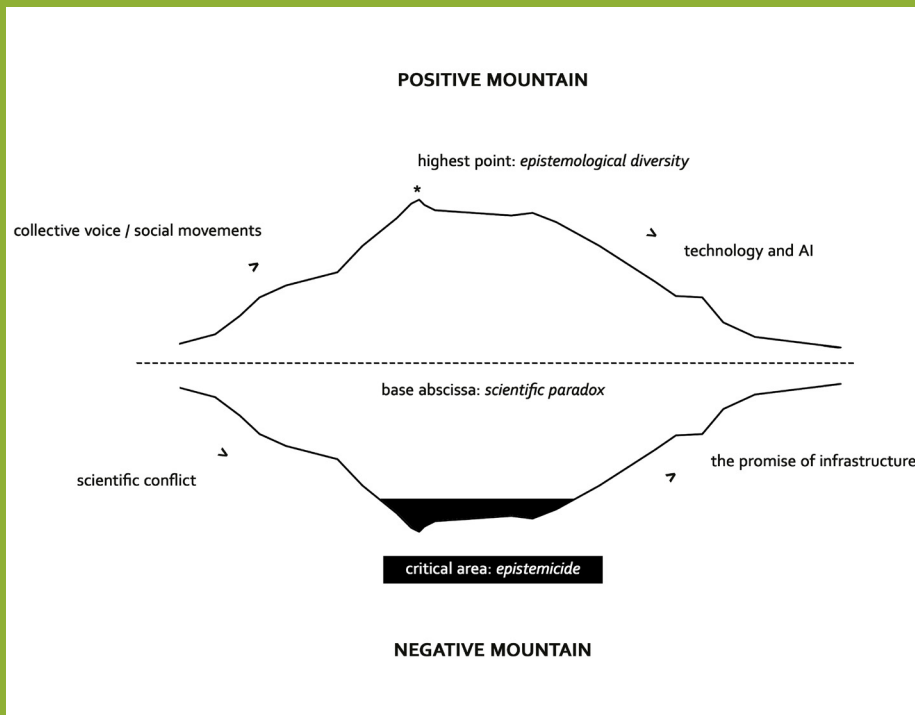
Por isso, trago para este evento estes postais no qual podemos ler as suas duas faces, e também girá-los: vê-se em uma das faces a obra *The Observers' Plateaus*; lê-se na outra face, ao girá-lo, “positive mountain” e “negative mountain”. Ou seja, temos representados o elemento construído e o simbólico. Assim temos a possibilidade de diferentes leituras da obra quando invertida, e por isso, o prolongamento do discurso da intervenção na paisagem devido a expansão dos ecossistemas submetidos à produção capitalista.

Entendemos que o passado colonial e seu impacto na exploração contemporânea por empresas multinacionais são os que determinam onde a mineração e o desmatamento ocorrem. Da mesma forma, a série *The Observers' Plateaus* se apresenta como resultado de impasses e indefinições.

Para concluir, apresento nesse esquema um resumo sobre ver do alto da montanha: no ponto mais alto, estaríamos a considerar uma diversidade epistemológica. Contudo, o paradoxo científico também nos oferece um outro campo, por isso se representa de um lado a tecnologia, representada também pela inteligência artificial e a produção de dados, assim como a promessa de uma ideia de infraestrutura de benefício à sociedade. Esta sociedade que também organiza o pensamento científico que às vezes nos leva para indefinições. Sobre o que seria o ponto mais baixo, o limite da versão negativa, entenderíamos, portanto, como epistemicídio.

Concluo, desta forma, que do alto da montanha (ou do “alto da ciência”), nós nos apropriamos de termos. Por exemplo, quando a estratificação será também um método de análise, assim como iremos entender a sedimentação como um processo de acumulação de diferentes partes. Ou ainda, quando continuamos a falar da geologia e da antropologia, como no caso do Antropoceno, como diz Mijo Miquel dentro do contexto deste seminário:

Nós precisamos desses termos, e encontramos esses termos. E nós os extraímos de um contexto científico rígido. É óbvio que nós estávamos falando de algo quando não tínhamos um nome. Agora nós temos um nome. E ele realmente existe. Então, nós não aceitamos o significado, mas já nos comprometemos com o significado. É a vida de palavras. Palavras para encontrar um lugar.



The Observers' Plateaus, diagrama para montanha positiva e negativa, 2024.

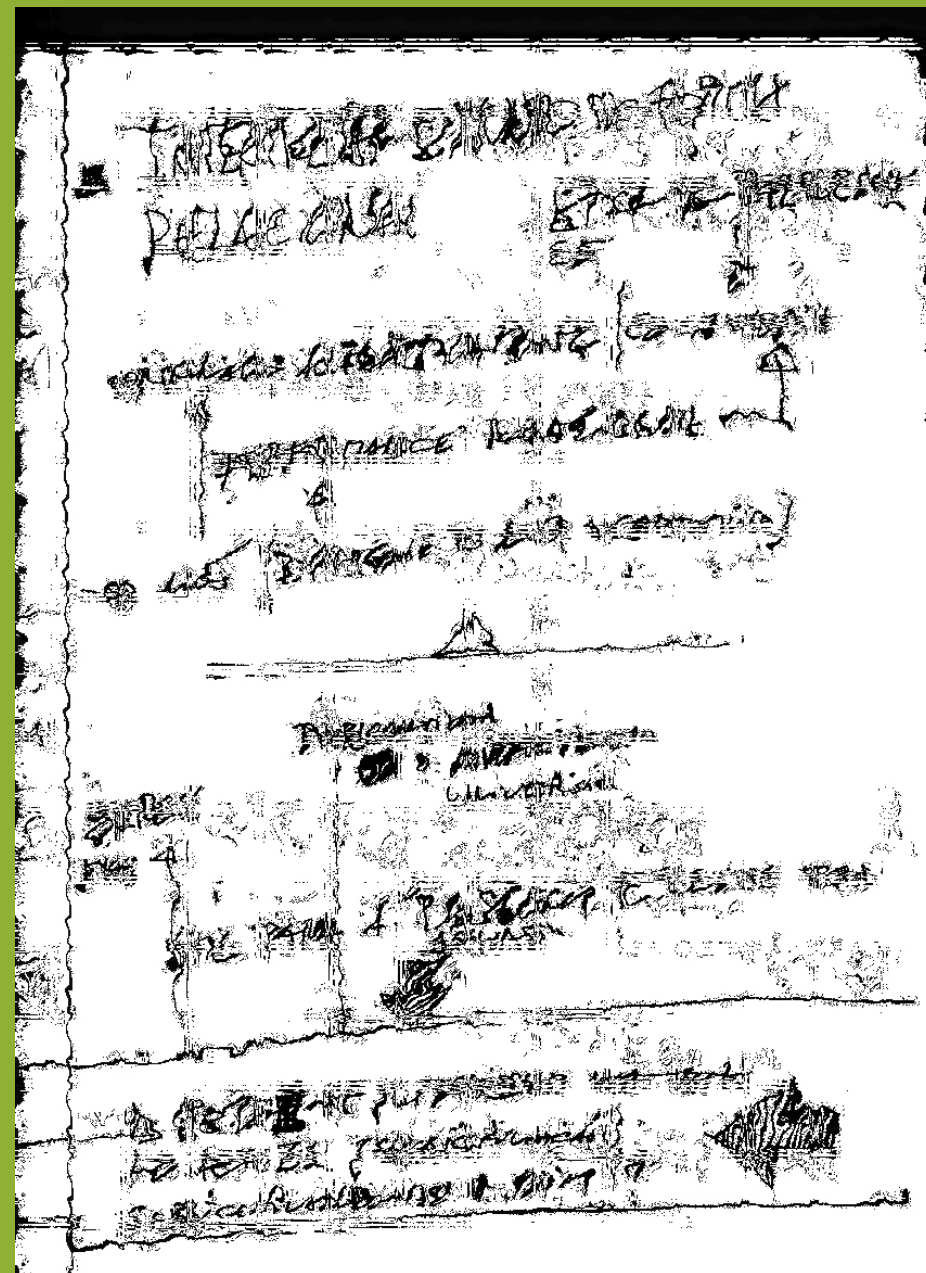
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Think Vertically: On Mountains, Biopolitics and Geontology

Lucie Fortuin

BIOGRAFIA

Lucie Fortuin is a writer and researcher with a specific interest in collaborative works and speculative writing practices. She holds an MA in Critical Studies from the Sandberg Institute, Amsterdam, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Feminist Studies at CES, Coimbra. Her work has appeared in *Metropolis M*, *de Appel*, *Manifold Books*, et al. She is an editor at literary magazine *DIG*.

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I took today’s invitation as an opportunity to think about something I love most: mountains. My thoughts have not yet completely evolved, settled, so rather than reading this text as a finalized essay, you can understand it as an opening, as questions. The title is a reference to Eyal Weizman’s essay “The Politics of Verticality.”

When Orlando initially invited me, he asked me to talk about deep time, a theme I discussed in an earlier text (“Grijze Tijd,” *Metropolis M*, 11.06.2023). Deep time is the geological time that spans over billions of years; it is the time during which tectonic plates move and rivers expand. But, as I was considering the “objecto enlouquecedor”, or, the “disturbing object,” it was *simultaneity* that seemed more pressing (Mbembe, 2016, p. 23). Rather than considering deep time, I use this invitation to think of different durations, all taking place at once. Mountains take millions of years to come into being and they continue to shift and grow; their shapes, however, are impacted not only by their own movements, but also by human interventions. In turn, these interventions impact the continuation of the mountain itself (Povinelli, 2016). One timeline extends into the other, and in these mountains past present and future meet; all existing together at the exact same moment.

1.

The mountain gifts air, as if only between its flanks it is possible for me to breathe. “The colors change depending on the time of the day, the weather, the mood” (Döring, 2024, p. 2). Sometimes a light blue, hazy white. Other times the mountain turns silver. More often a heavy grey, looming, the shapes invisible behind the clouds. When you finally get halfway the narrow path, and try to look behind a distant rock, you suddenly catch a glimpse of its snowy peaks. And sometimes, only sometimes, when you finally reach the mountains’ edge and look into its folds precisely as the sun is setting, you find the mountain to be of crimson red. It envelopes you, like safety.

I climb high mountains and do long agonizing treks in my downtime. This year I spend my summer at the French-Italian border in Piemonte, a region with long valleys, a soft grey. Starting from Valle Maira and reaching up, I start encountering large remnants of modern warfare. Instead of narrow paths with windy curves, broad roads carve deep dents into the landscape. I’m walking the Western border of The Alpine Wall. “All history is taken in by stones,” writes Susan Griffin, their “hard surface is impervious to nothing” (1993, p. 6). From other places in Italy, the Dolomites for example, I am familiar with seeing leftovers of

war in mountains. But those remains are from World War I and seem much more integrated with the landscape itself. Hide-outs built into caves, old via ferrata behind a grey rock. In this region it is different: a rupturing. In an effort to invade France in 1940, Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini had military roads and large fortifications built throughout the region. It is estranging to see these different realities meet: a silent region with wide mountains, and even in the middle of summer there are hardly any other mountaineers. Yet simultaneously huge structures of cement, rusting barbed wire and arms. In a different moment of time, there must have been hundreds of soldiers stationed here, sleeping in the barracks at an altitude of 3000 meters, nothing else in sight. And then there's me, walking.

In order to ask how environment and politics may be mutually constitutive, this essay I looks at the mountain as contested landscape. In trying to read together territory and politics, a question that comes to mind is: Is it through their geological formation that mountains attract necropolitical forms of governing? Do politics, in the mutually constituting reality between mountain and that which surrounds the mountain, turn even more violent on high altitude? And what role do European governments, including a flat country such as the Netherlands have in the shaping of these violent landscapes?

2.

Geopolitically speaking mountains are of high strategical importance. They contain minerals valued highly in current capitalist structures and provide source of clean water. Often mountain form border regions they allow overview yet simultaneously offer locations to hide. Although the highest peak of Israel *within* its Green Line borders has an altitude of only 1204 meters, the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) has a military brigade dedicated especially to mountain warfare. The "Alpinist Unit" was founded in 1974, shortly after their invasion of the Golan Heights. Providing one of the only stable water resources in the region, and being rich in minerals, the Anti-Lebanese mountains and, in extension thereof the Golan Heights, located in the south of Lebanon and Western Syria, are of particular strategic interest to Israel. From the 1960s onwards the Israeli army, IDF, has continuously tried to take control over different parts of this mountainous region, including parts of its highest mountain, Mount Hermon, that has an altitude of 2814. In March 2024, IDF launched an even more fully trained and equipped mountain infantry called the HeHarim Brigade. With much attention and pride they presented their new equipment, and from March onwards they have been stationed at the Leba-

nese Syrian borders, putting into practice offense techniques in the rugged terrain.

Although less high in altitude, in the Palestinian West Bank mountains too are of geopolitical interest. In *Hollow Land* Eyal Weizman describes how Israeli settler colonists in the West Bank have been purposefully "constructing settlements on the high summits of the mountainous terrain" as to "achieve territorial control" (2007, p. 12). Exemplary is the colonist settlement "Ma'ale Adumim." In 1978 the Israeli government decided on the location of the settlement: "The hilltop finally chosen" I quote Weizman here: "was selected for its location near Jerusalem and for its overlooking of a strategic traffic route; Road Number 1, which connected Jerusalem with Jericho and with the Jordanian capital, Amman" (2007, p. 112). The Jahalin and Sawahreh Bedouin tribes are nomadic people whose presence in this particular region dates back to 800 years BC. Marginalized since the 19th century, from the moment the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim was planned to be built, the bedouin tribes were "gradually hemmed in by restrictions" due to pressure from the development of the Israeli settlement" (Weizman, 2007, p. 20). In the 1990s there were still around 1050 Jahalin bedouins living in the vicinity of the settlement, and, "as part of the state effort to dislocate the Bedouin tribe that were camped on the lower slopes of a mountain

onto which the settlement town Ma'ale Adumim was now expanding, the military civil administration disconnected one of the settlement's sewage pipes, flooding large areas within and around the Bedouin camp with streams and ponds of polluted matter, forcing them to relocate" (Weizman, 2007, p. 21).

To this day the spilling of sewage water, with both human and animal waste, is common practice in the West Bank. The dumping of the hazardous wastewater contaminates critical water systems and agricultural lands, and, here I quote the Norwegian Refugee Council: "further destabilizing the already fragile Palestinian economy and heightening the likelihood of diseases such as kidney failure" (NRC, 2024). Taking into account the dynamics of territorial fragmentation, the colonization of the West Bank top falls exactly in line with Mbembe's description of necropower: the sealing off of and expansion of settlements" (Mbembe, 2019, p. 80). Recently, in March 2024, Israeli nationalist newspaper Haaretz, announced the building of another 2350 homes, adding to the population of 38.000 people in the illegal Ma'ale Adumim settlement on the top of the hill.

It is through hilltops and mountain

ranges that Israeli settlers built an intricate web of towns, with often high numbers of residents. A spatial organization that is planned “for the purpose of control”, to speak with Mbembe (Mbembe, 2019, p. 79). The colonists plant antennae as a method to claim the land, build viewpoints to assert spatial control, and from there on continue into the building of residential homes. The mountains in the West Bank have started to give shape to an “irresolvable geography,” and over time turned into a landscape that houses two completely separate realities (Weizman, 2007, p. 116). As Weizman describes, the mountains in the West Bank have come to accommodate “a vertical separation between two parallel, overlapping and self-referential ethno-national geographies, held together in horrifying proximity” (Weizman, 2007, p. 117).

Because of their isolated geography the mountains are often inhabited by resilient communities with their own languages and customs. From political centers, mountain people are more often than not, considered dissident: Exemplary are Kurdish resistance fighters who inhabit the mountains on the Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi and Syrian border region. The French and Italian partisans from Valle Maira who prevented Mussolini from an ongoing war with France. Or,

continuously resisting Palestinians: although under constant attack, Bedouin tribes continue encampments in the West Bank. As Weizman describes: “Tunnels will no doubt be dug under the bedrock of the West Bank mountains” (Weizman, 2007, p. 13). Mountain people, know how to speak the mountain’s language. I asked this question in the beginning of the text, but I will repeat it here again: Could one, in extension of these different examples, argue that it is through their geological formation that mountains attract even more necropolitical forms of governing?

“Held together in horrifying proximity.” Let’s return for a moment to the mountains on the French-Italian border. In August 2018 the dead body of twenty-one year old Nigerian migrant Blessing Matthew was found in the Durance river. Blessing had last been seen in nearby village La Vachette: a border town only 65 kms away from the area where I had been walking this summer. Whereas the police does not want to take any responsibility for Blessing’s death, the NGO “Border forensics” conducted an extensive research and through their spatio-temporal analysis demonstrate, “that by chasing Blessing, the gendarmes may have put her in danger, leading to her fall into the Durance and ultimately to her death.” More bodies are found. Between 2015 and 2022, there have been 46 registered deaths,

making the French-Italian crossing the deadliest of Alpine routes. Estimates by migrant organisations say this number to be much higher. Whereas these ‘pristine’ looking mountains shape a wholesome holiday location to a white Northern European woman such as myself, the exact same mountains are a hostile landscape to bodies that do not fit those remarks. Bodies that are instead read as “objetos enloquecedores”, “disturbing objects.” In a “fantasy of separation”, as termed by Mbembe, European border regimes clearly demonstrate their necropolitical governing. Through violent pushbacks the, in 2023 newly installed, Franco-Italian border control is trained particularly to prevent border crossings in rugged Alpine terrain.

3.

In her 2017 book, theorist Elizabeth Povinelli asks: “Can rocks die?” in an effort to answer to the question she proposes the term Geontology, or Geontopower. “Geontology,” she writes, “is a set of discourse, affects, and tactics used in late liberalism to maintain or shape the coming relationship of the distinction between Life and Nonlife” (Povinelli, 2016, p. 4). What is of importance here, is the way in which Geontology takes into account Nonlife, the inert; the geological. Throughout contemporary Late Liberalism, Povinelli argues,

there has been established a firm binary between that which is considered Life, and Nonlife. It is not as if in Late Liberalism the inert has not been present, on the contrary, often the geological has been fundamental to the exercising of capitalist structures, however, through their theoretical binary opposition matter has turned into resource, she argues. The geological has turned into property and progress (Yusoff, 2024).

Important is that in many indigenous understandings of the world, this binary is not present. On the contrary, in many indigenous societies, matter, such as rocks, mountains, minerals, have been understood as animated entities. They hear, they listen, and when violently attacked, rocks do die. Rather than defining the world through a life/nonlife binary, each material is recognized as “existent.” Geontology is thus not a new understanding of the world, but rather, a proposition to a shift in Western thought. By moving away from the theoretical framework of biopower, “which operates through the governance of life and the tactics of death,” and, through which policies, laws, and governing are shaped within the binary structure of Life/Nonlife, Povinelli argues that a geontological approach would recognize all matter as existent, and therewith, as being (Povinelli, 2016, p. 4).

Writing mountains. Considering Geontology, we can therefore ask ourselves; would Israeli settler colonists feel quite as comfortable as they do now, to bulldoze their peaks, to dump toxic wastewater on their flanks, when they would recognize the mountain as a being? Would European border control take on a different shape if they would listen to how the mountains speak back? Because the mountain does respond: Landslides, erosion, wild fires. “All history is taken in by stones, their hard surface impervious to nothing” (Griffin 1993, p. 6). Looking critically at the effects of human acting and read them in close relationship to the environment, we cannot look away from these different processes taking place, all at the same time. What are the ways in which we could transgress these boundaries? How can we, as artists and researchers contribute productively to such a shift? If we listen carefully, can we hear the mountains speak?

I wanted to finish this essay with a short excerpt from the book *Surge*, by Lebanese- American poet and artist Etel Adnan.

Mountains rise in us, as language
does, making of analogy
an intrinsic part of thinking

(therefore, of being)

So mountains are languages and
languages are mountains.
We speak both.

Orlando V.F., Lucie F. e Mijo M.

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FRESHWATER

Mijo Miquel

BIOGRAFIA

Mijo Miquel Bartual holds a degree in Philology and Fine Arts, PhD in Public Art (2013) and is a research member of the History and Philosophy of Experience group of the Center for Human and Social Sciences of the CSIC (2014–2025). She has been working in the field of languages (teaching, translation, and interpretation) from 1993 to the present. Since 2003, she is Professor of Sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts of San Carlos as well as an independent cultural manager. As a researcher, it is worth mentioning her constant involvement in seminars and various meetings as both organizer and speaker, as well as being the author of numerous scientific publications. She collaborates with different recognized university masters (Ecology, Urban Regeneration, or Art Therapy) and in research and innovation projects at European level.

Orlando V.F., Lucie F. e Mijo M.

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Firstly, I would like to thank Orlando and the Institute for their kind invitation to visit the great city of Porto once again, to bear witness to its decay and its sweetness. I'm always impressed by what tourism is doing to our cities all over Europe, and all over the world. I don't need to tell you about the consequences for us citizens, which mostly means that we are expelled from our homes, no longer able to live in our cities. But you have such a beautiful city, full of amazing little streets and shops and libraries and accommodation for tourists... Tourism as it is now is a very phenomenological agent that is transforming the landscapes all over Europe in a monumental way. And it's an 'objeto enlouquecedor', I mean it's really driving us crazy. Nonetheless, in this transformation, we are victims and accomplices at the same time, a circumstance that places us in a peculiar position. And it's not the only incoherence we have to integrate in contemporary times. It is important to acknowledge the challenging circumstances we are currently facing and pose the right questions to ourselves in a timely manner.

We are in a climate crisis of a similar magnitude to the political crisis that we are going through. As artists, citizens, and human beings, we need to acknowledge our collective identity and the implications of our actions or our inaction. So maybe it's time to connect our practices, our thoughts,

our learnings to the circumstances we are currently confronting. And doing so, I'm convinced that we will at some point feel that we want to make a change, make things better or at least try to change even slightly the drift of this landscape. It's worthwhile to approach it from our artistic point of view. We don't usually think about grounding our practices. However, because I'm a researcher, but also an artist and an activist, I'm always ready to think about how to changing things surrounding me. I have engaged in these hybrid practices for over 20 years, and I continue to do so at the present time. Therefore, I believe in this potential for real, and I invite you to do so.

Let me introduce you the Fresh Water project. The city of Valencia is home to a unique ecological feature: a freshwater lagoon called the Albufera. Originally, it was a saltwater lagoon, analogous to the coastal wetland in Murcia known as the Mar Menor. The Albufera underwent a gradual closure due to the creation of a barrier of sand, nearly completely enclosing the lagoon. Consequently, the quality of the water underwent a transformation, and it became a freshwater lagoon. Furthermore, the cultivation of rice led to a gradual reduction in the size of the lagoon, as farmers introduced soil to convert portions of the lagoon into agricultural land, specifically for the purpose of rice cultivation.

Nowadays you can see just a small lagoon but when the time comes to planning the rice, you have a very large expansion of water, equal to what it was. Sometimes you can barely see the thin line between the sea and the freshwater lagoon, which makes amazing sunsets and turns the place into a real tourists' trap. And then when the rice grows, it is even better, the water is pumped to the sea and there are waves of rice plants everywhere. There are two different 'golas', open canals for the exchange of salt and fresh water, as well as many small ditches to irrigate all the land surrounding the lagoon. You can cross it with special boats, very flat, to navigate through the canals and the lagoon. The traditional activities or uses of the land were fishing, hunting and then rice growing. Now, of course, tourism is the central one.

As you might expect, the balance of the ecosystem was not maintained. During the 1970s and 1980s, a major crisis emerged due to the utilization of pesticides and nitrates in the cultivation of rice, with the objective of enhancing its size, quality and speed of growth. These components have been demonstrated to engender a phenomenon known as hyper-eutrophication, which is characterized by an overgrowth of algae, turning the water green. These algae consume all the oxygen in the water, resulting

in a depletion that leaves no oxygen available for other organisms. This phenomenon is referred to as anoxia, which is defined as the absence of oxygen from the environment, leading to the demise of fish and other organisms. It was at this point that the government took the decision to initiate measures for the protection of the lagoon. However, this is not the sole factor contributing to the challenges in preserving it. The pressure exerted by the city, which is undergoing continuous growth, and tourism, are two of the most challenging factors.

It is a very fragile ecosystem. Its water comes from the Jucar and Turia rivers and from submerged springs. The water from the rivers is then conveyed to the rice fields. Consequently, in the absence of precipitation, springs become rare, and rivers experience diminished water levels. The current drought is the longest on record, and there is evidence to suggest that it is becoming more frequent. This poses a significant problem. Furthermore, in the event of a decline in the availability of fresh water and a consequent rise in sea level, the lagoon's salinity is likely to increase, as the narrow landmass between the lagoon and the sea does not serve as a reliable barrier. There have been many de-

monstrations over the years to ask for protection for the Albufera, because this landscape constitutes an integral part of our collective identity, fostering a profound sense of cultural affiliation and historical connection. That's why I think that it could be interesting to note that when landscapes are being transformed, we are being simultaneously transformed.

Back to the project, we launched it because we had collaborated with some researchers in the Mar Menor, which had encountered similar issues but in a subsequent period, during the 1990s. This lagoon is a particularly pertinent case study due to the concerted efforts of the local population that fought very hard against governments and companies to protect the lagoon. They successfully campaigned for the lagoon to be granted legal personality. This designation confers upon the lagoon the same legal standing as the Whanganui River in New Zealand and the Atrato River in Colombia. This signifies that the ecosystem is capable of defending itself through legal channels. The fact that international justice must acknowledge the potential for the legal recognition of other ecosystems signifies an ontological shift in the conceptualization of justice. It transforms environmental justice into ecological justice. The former perspective perceives environmental justice as a matter of individuals

being harmed by the harm inflicted upon the environment; in contrast, the concept of ecological justice is predicated on the premise that the natural environment is being adversely affected. This, in turn, constitutes sufficient grounds for the initiation of legal proceedings against the individual or entity responsible for the infliction of this harm.

We worked with these researchers in the Mar Menor, and one of the activities they had planned was to create a comic book with characters representing different points of view. So, there were women and men, migrants living there, young and old people, fishermen, hunters, tourists, activists. Regular people, though the blue crab was also seen as one of them, including the non-human perspective. They did these sessions where they pretended to be different characters and called for an assembly of all kinds of species. Everyone switched up their role through the sessions so all of them had to imagine how other people would think and feel.

We thought it was a great idea and wanted to do something similar in Valencia for the freshwater lagoon, so we sought to replicate it and set up a team with this aim in mind. Maybe it sounds very simple, but sometimes it helps to remember that you can put something together more easily than it seems, to change what you

want to change. We brought in participatory experts and a scientist to help us avoid making any stupid mistakes. Then we chose an artist, and we started having all these great ideas about how to do things. To be able to afford the project, we applied for funding from the European Climate Foundation. This requires a great deal of effort because it's about transforming your project into what the organization needs. Sometimes because we're trapped in our artistic boundaries and in our egos, we can't think out of the box so as to be able to meet our goals. We might need to forget about being the important part of the project, or being the author, or being coherent. Sometimes we just want to be pure and do everything as we are used to. That's not really an option when you're dealing with the world. You just have to be one of the wheels of the project and work on the same level as everyone else.

What is good about having to pitch your project for funding? That you really have to break your project down into different parts. You must make a timeline. You have to be precise. You must have a budget. And then when you have gone through all those things, you must focus on your goal. Ours is very clear because we all want a possible future in which we want to live. Not just to survive. Going back to Judith Butler, one of the things she is insisting on lately is that we have to project an irresistible future.

That we have the right and the need to make it irresistible because that is the only way to fight the fascist passions, which are hatred and fear. And these are indeed very powerful passions. We don't want to work with them but with joyful passions, as Spinoza says. We want to work with the seduction of an irresistible future.

That's why we chose Miguel Brieva, a comic book artist who always tries to create images of a better future. We were scared to propose to him because we didn't have much money and he's famous. We wrote to him and told him how much we could pay him. Surprisingly, he said yes. I would also advise you to go for the things you want and for the people you believe in, because you can always choose a second option, but if you don't try, you won't ever opt for the first one.

Once the team was settled, the first step was a cartography of the agents in the territory along two axes: affinity and power. We sorted that way all the people we needed to include in our comic. The ones we like and the ones we didn't. They all had to be there because we wanted to hear all the voices. We had to go through all this work trying to find the people and ask ourselves the

good questions: "Who knows this person? Who might talk on behalf of others? What part are we leaving out? Are we talking to the fishermen? Do we have someone from the village? Do we have young people, migrants, women?" All the different questions that you must take into account when you're doing participatory processes. This is very important because we're not talking about faking an artistic project. We are trying to analyze the elements of the project that might be useful in replicating it further. We know what artistic shortcuts are, so even though we always have to take shortcuts in life, we tried to take as few as possible in the project, because it needed a slow rhythm.

Once we had identified the people we wanted to interview, we spent months conducting semi-structured, open-ended interviews with high quality conversations. It's a sociological method that we used to share information with them, not to extract it. What does it mean? In a semi-structured interview, we ask some questions but then we let the conversation flow so that things can emerge, what's there, the conflicts they don't want to talk about openly or the family history they don't remember, all these things can emerge in a natural way. As you go through the process, you can build up a general scenario in your mind with all the different information from the interviews. But we wanted to agree

on a story with them, we thought that telling this story together might help to find solutions to their reciprocal opposition in some matters. Some of these feelings are political, others are personal, and some aren't even recognized as such. When we planned to propose to them to write the script of this comic together, we thought it might help them to admit that they have a common story.

So we did all these interviews, but when we suggested writing a shared story, they refused. They said: "We're tired, we don't want to talk to anybody, we've been to too many meetings, we haven't been able to sort anything out and we're not going to waste any more time. We are here because we want our voice to be heard through the comic, that's all." We had to admit that they didn't want to have a shared world. They didn't want to create a community. They didn't want to share a story that they were tired of. They didn't think it could change things even if they got together. They said: "It's not in our hands. It is in the hands of the institutions. It's in the hands of bigger entities that we can't change." They said, "We are old. We are still doing this because we love it. It's been our life. We know that our sons and daughters, our children, don't want to do it anymore. It's not worth it economically. So, we don't know if rice will be growing here in 10 years. Even if it's done now with the label of organic or regional produc-

tion, it's not worth the work it requires and the money we make. Who's going to be the next generation of fishermen, hunters, rice farmers?"

This is not something specific to the Albufera. Any practice that is not economically sustainable is going to disappear in 10 years because everybody that is still there will retire. Now, when craftsmen or traditional activities and practices are almost disappearing, they feel to us like extinct animals and extinct languages that we're losing forever. But simultaneously, they're right, they don't want to spend any more time trying to solve things. Most of them are burnt out; they're old and they don't want to spend any more time trying to maintain a building that's crumbling.

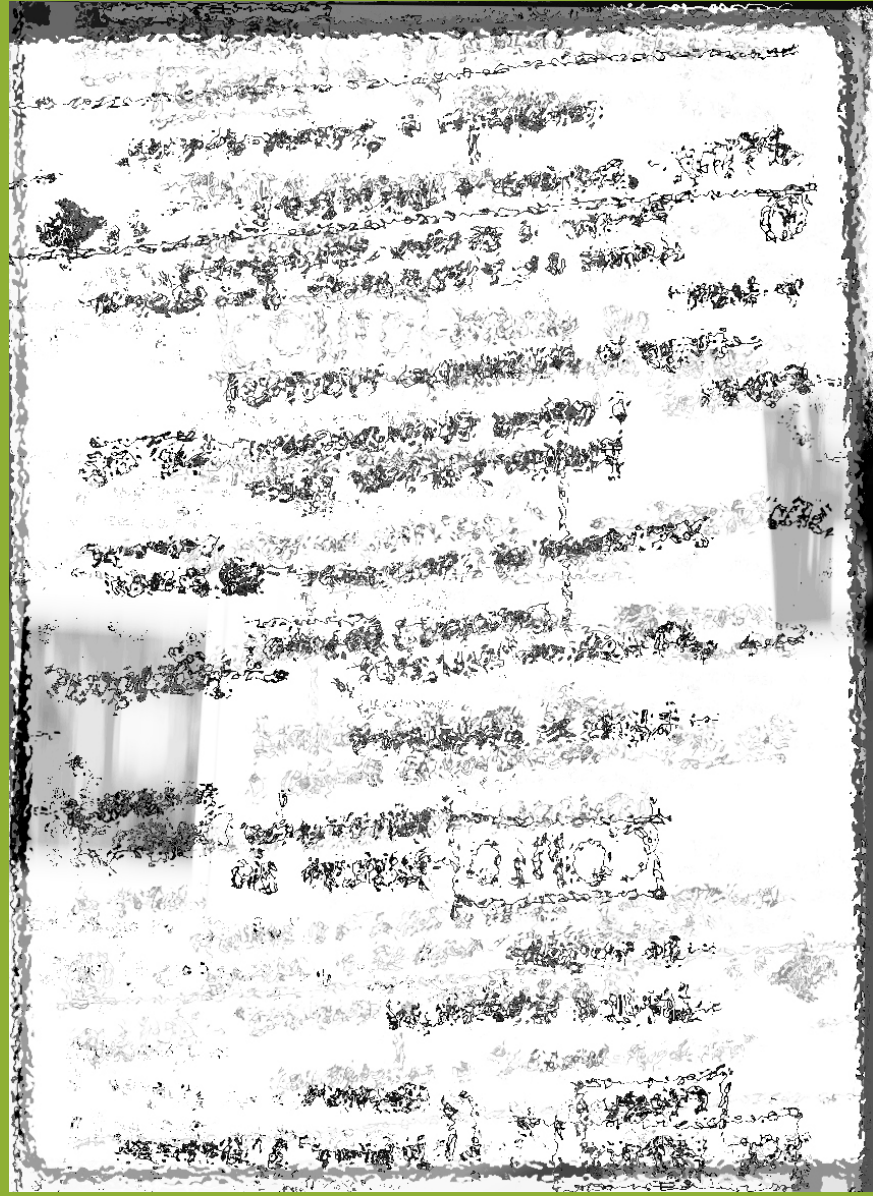
Therefore, we had to face that; we had all those good feelings and fundings and artistic projects, but we couldn't change their minds. We had already done all the interviews, and we had the comic book artist working on it, so we still decided to go for it. The artist has now finished the comic book, and we are thinking about how to use it to teach younger generations about the issue. We've already planned three sessions with different schools around the Albufera. We'll read the comic book with the students and discuss

how they're connected to the territory and what they could do to make it visible and protect it. This gives us hope that we can do something that will encourage new generations to fight for the environment, and that's what we're trying to do. We want to empower the new generations to make the changes that we can't make on our own.

We have already presented the comic at the IVAM (Valencian Institute for Modern Art) and we had an excellent reception. We have also been asked to present it in libraries, cultural centers and high schools in the area, and we are very happy with the repercussions it has had in the press and on television. We are considering the possibility of a second printing and a travelling exhibition. Once the project is finished, we have to try to give it maximum exposure if we really want to have an impact on society and change the general approach to certain issues.

Water is going to be one of the main problems we need to face in the near future, but it is also one of the main connections. All the people we interviewed had a special connection to the lake, a sense that it was part of who they were. When we asked them to imagine what could happen in the best possible scenario, they all said, "We would like to fish and swim in the water like our fathers or grandfathers did." It was an image that

was always present: crystal clear water as a symbol of the best possible future for them. It also talks about how we can use the almost mystical image of the lagoon's natural healing power to restore itself. The lagoon's water is made fresh by hidden springs that refresh the water from within. We need to tell stories like this about our territory. Irresistible new stories. Let's dare to do so!



Orlando V.F., Lucie F. e Mijo M.

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Desperfilar As Artes Visuais, o Objeto Enlouquecedor
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de Orlando Vieira Francisco
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