



Performance



in



the



Public Sphere



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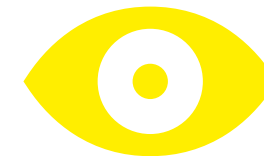
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FEELING, THINKING, TAKING ACTION

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Ana Pais



“After Trump, we must begin”, said Alain Badiou speaking to an audience of students and teachers at the University of California in the aftermath of Donald Trump’s election to the presidency of the United States of America. Sharing his surprise at the result, and diagnosing its causes, the philosopher maintains that the 2016 American elections lacked an alternative strategic vision of the current times, which was in itself a reflection of a similar lack at a global scale. Characterizing this context as a “global crisis”, the era of neoliberal capitalism, which subverted the separation between the public and private spheres and accentuated the rift between material and immaterial work, Badiou pointed out the resulting “monstrous social inequalities” that the new political protest movements seek to voice. More than an economic crisis, this is a “crisis of subjectivity” insofar as the “destiny of human beings is more and more unclear for themselves”. Badiou claims that in the

last two centuries there was always an alternative, a “strategic choice” of that destiny, a choice that has been vanishing since the 1980s. As he highlights, the lack is not only at the political level, but, crucially, at the symbolic level as well. It is necessary to create other policies for communal living through thought, action and political determination. After Trump, we must think and take action. We must not yield to the “law of affect”:

You know, for me, but I think for many people, it has been, in some sense, a sort of surprise. And we are often, in that sort of surprise, under the law of affects: fear, depression, anger, panic, and so on. But we know that philosophically, all these affects are not really a good reaction, because in some sense, it’s too much affect in front of the enemy. And so, I think it’s a necessity to think beyond the affect, beyond fear, depression, and so on. To think the situation of today... what we must do, which is not precisely to be under the law of affect, of negative affect, but at the level of thinking, action, political determination, and so on.

(Badiou 2016)

Perhaps this is precisely where the problem lies. Alain Badiou proposes a continuation within the elitist bubble that generated surprise because we remained deaf to the outcry of the world and insisted on downplaying the power of affections – seen as negative – on thought and action. Despite the heated speech on the day following the elections, Badiou’s statements expose the dichotomies between thinking/taking action.

Their presuppositions condemn us to a life under the “law of affect”, like slaves of a principle that controls human behaviour, but which we do not know; good or bad, the implication is that they cloud vision and clear thinking; that “affect” must be ignored, controlled, hidden or silenced so that we are able to “think beyond” them. However, if we continue ignoring the causes that generate affect – fear, depression, anger, panic –, or underestimating the importance of knowing individual and collective processes for the transmission, circulation and activation of affect that shape and mediate our contact with the world, thinking and acting will become much harder. If there is one imperative in the current moment it would be to “start” listening to the other and to allow ourselves to recognize and name what we feel at the various moments and junctures of individual and social life. Old constellations often repeat themselves under a new guise. After Trump, we must feel, think, take action.

AGONIC SPACES

While carrying out a critique of rationalism, in her work *On the Political* (2005), Chantal Mouffe claims that we should not ignore the affective dimension of politics mobilized via collective processes of identification and projection in which passions play a crucial role in the construction of desires and fantasies. Passions or emotions are acting forces in the political field as they feed and determine the conflict of opinions required by a healthy democratic practice. Mouffe’s agonistic model (2013)

has influenced the rethinking of the notion of the current public sphere as a discursive space within which ideological, ethical and affective forces are at play. Taking into account desires and affect when debating ideas, this notion sets itself apart from that of Habermas, author of the reference work that established the concept of the public sphere (1991). By identifying the emergence of the public sphere in the context of the eighteenth century rise of the bourgeoisie in the West, Habermas affirmed the centrality of the argumentative power of reason as a tool for consensus building between people that share a certain set of values and consider themselves equal. But if we consider the mobilizing power of affect in the debate of ideas within the public sphere, as highlighted by Mouffe, rational argumentation is not enough to understand its dynamics and the collective processes that arise from and, consequently, affect it.

The public sphere also has a historical location. Currently, it tends to be seen as a globalized space in which a plurality of public spheres corresponding to specialized interest groups, whose opinions circulate in the media and in social networks, co-inhabit and are debated. Public interest is decided by the neoliberal market. Those who are allowed to speak are opinion makers, alongside emerging collective protest movements and civil society across social networks. However, unlike the public sphere in the eighteenth century, the best argument does not necessarily lead to the appropriate political decision, i.e., civil society has limited leverage to pressure and influence deliberative power. However, is anyone ever really heard? Are you really in a position of equality within that (those) public sphere(s)? Which affect circulates, and which can be heard and/or felt?

Although Badiou and Mouffe use the terms “affect” and “passions” as synonyms of “emotions”, I resort to a broader notion that includes the felt quality of experience which often cannot be named – in other words, I understand affect as ways of affecting and being affected within a constellation of political, economic, cultural and affective forces.

In the essay “Agonistic Politics and Artistic Practices”, in the volume *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*, Chantal Mouffe develops her reflection on the political force of affect on the arts, maintaining that these play a relevant role in the counter-hegemonic struggle insofar as they act politically in the construction of other perceptions of the world in the affective experience (2013, 96–97). Participative projects, which invite spectators to an empowering experience (as they actively participate in the making of the work), have in this regard been as emblematic as they are problematic. The active spectator idealized by futurism emerged as a participant in the 1960s-70s, namely in performance art, an aspect which is crucial in the work of Alan Kaprow, for instance. Here, performance art is understood as the artistic genre that emerged in the early twentieth century with Italian futurism, as RoseLee Goldberg argues in *The Art of Performance* (1979), and which was intensified and which affirmed itself in the 1960s-70s. Characterized by a series of predominantly self-reflexive aesthetical strategies, performance art challenges the relationship with the spectator, the boundaries of the artistic object and the very notion of artist, radicalizing the modernist premise of the art-life fusion. While theatre was for centuries the place for social encounters for a public sphere precisely in which affect play

a clear role in the exercise of citizenship¹, performance art opposes the paradigm of representation to create forms of being with the spectator that are convivial and reflexive, in the reality of the here and now. This is one of the pillars of the political potential of 1960s-70s' performance art, inherited by different contemporary performing practices.

Where is Portuguese performance art located in this framework? Symptomatically, performance irrupted in Portugal in configurations of change (the establishing of the Republic in 1910, the Carnation Revolution in 1974, and the accession to the EEC in 1986), creating a time and space to breathe within those contexts. Its history is made up of fleeting episodes in the different arts (poetry, music, visual arts, performative arts). After Almada Negreiros and Santa Rita Pintor's futurist conference of 1917 at the Teatro República (currently São Luiz Teatro Municipal) which can be considered as the inaugural milestone of a possible history of Portuguese performance, it was only in the wake of experimental poetry and music practices undertaken in the 1960s-70s that the visual arts were able to participate in the 25 April revolutionary process with actions and happenings. After Portugal's accession to the EEC, performance began manifesting itself in theatre and dance, a period of vitality that waned with the first internal reflections of the global financial crisis of 2007-2008. Since it systematically occurs at moments of political change, it is possible to detect a lineage in the modes of participation of performance art in the public sphere. On the one hand, this approach al-

¹ On this subject see Wiles (2011) and Balme (2014).

lows us to weigh the mobilizing power of performance at the various moments of its emergence, and, on the other hand, to think about the way in which each artistic field activates a specific participation in the public sphere via performance.

Can performance art today assemble, recreate and participate in the public space? How can the worlds created by performance reconfigure the political, ethical and aesthetical possibilities of an encounter with the other, of acting upon the world and upon the relationship between the private and the public spheres? To answer these questions it is necessary to examine the politics of affect on which every work is founded, creating the ethical, political and aesthetical conditions of the encounter that it promotes. As Lauren Berlant reminds us in *Cruel Optimism* (2011), public spheres are worlds of affect. They are saturated with norms and ideologies that shape desires and ways of living through social practices (at work, in the family, within institutions). Performance art operates upon the constitution of affective attachments conditioned by those implicit norms and narratives, which nurture desires that are publicly negotiated and shared by criticizing, subverting or imploding them. Acknowledging that to "start" it is necessary to feel, to take action and to think, performance art can thus have a meaningful place in a process of collective listening to public feelings and, perhaps, in an affective mobilization of thought and action.

FUTURIST ANNIVERSARIES

This ebook is intended as a contribution towards thinking how performance art acts upon the public sphere: how it sheds light on ethical, social and political issues with very limited public expression; how it creates spaces for the circulation of ideas and opinions; how it generates affect worlds that demonstrate the extent to which the conditions for affective experience determine our thinking and acting; how, sometimes, it shows that we take decisions that impact our lives and the lives of those around us every day. Here we outline the framework of this volume, reflecting on what the arts, particularly performance art, can enable us to feel in order to take action and think.

Considering the cultural and socioeconomic context diagnosed by Badiou in the aforementioned lecture, it is important to understand how performance art makes politics via the provocative, disturbing, excessive and controversial experiences that it generates, opening up the space for other possibilities of thinking and feeling. If it is capable of all this (provoking, disturbing, being excessive, creating controversy), it is because of its aesthetical and ethical commitment to change. In this sense, it is crucial to weigh its potential for action in the public sphere, the place for debate, influence and mobilization. Sharing these concerns, several academic works in the field of Performance Studies have made significant contributions to account for the role of performance art in public life and public art as performance; the recent study *Tactical Performance: the Theory and Practice of Serious Play* by L.M. Bogad (2016) is one example.

This ebook appears in the context of Projecto P!, a curatorial and critical programme (April 10-14, a one week event held in several venues in Lisbon), the pretext for which being the commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of Almada Negreiros and Santa Rita Pintor's futurist conference. This motivated a retrospective overview of the history of Portuguese performance art. The other two areas of the programme involved an international conference (at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) and a selection of performances presented at the São Luiz Teatro Municipal, Maria Matos Teatro Municipal and MNAC – Chiado National Museum of Contemporary Art. Particularly relevant was the reinvention of the futurist conference with fourteen performances by artists from different generations and different artistic fields, which occupied the place where it was originally held – São Luiz Teatro Municipal. In the website performativa.pt you can find the video and audio recordings of all the events of Projecto P!

Inspired by the one hundredth anniversary of Marinetti's "Futurist Manifesto" (2009), a series of peripheral histories of performance art proliferated, seeking alternative narratives to the prevalent Anglo-Saxon discourse, especially RoseLee Goldberg's thesis (1979), alongside the process of the institutionalization of performance art – by the museum, the market and the programmatic tendency for reenactment. Expanding the perspectives on the futurist movement and, consequently, the genealogy of performance art, several authors dedicated themselves to reviewing the history of the avant-gardes, such as Mirella Bentivoglio and Franca Zoccoli, who published a study on Italian futurist women in the visual arts (2008), or

Chistine Poggi, who, in *Inventing Futurism: The Art and Politics of Artificial Optimism* (2009), identifies a subterranean ambiguity in the futurists' fascination with war or speed resulting from the impact of the industrial revolution. From geographies that are peripheral relative to the American epicentre of performance in the 1960s-70s, such as the Slavic countries or Ireland, originate publications that seek to write or rewrite the history of local performance art taking in consideration the specificities of their contexts (Phillips 2015; Bryzgel 2013). Projecto P! falls within this retrospective movement.

This ebook is a version of the printed paperback *Performance na Esfera Pública* [Performance in the Public Sphere], originally published by Orfeu Negro in 2017. All original texts have been translated into English. The articles and artist pages previously published in English were excluded from this edition² and new texts were added, which are flagged in grey. At the Projecto P!'s conference (10 April 2017, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian), Rebecca Schneider, Jen Harvie and Idalina Conde³ presented timely contributions to the topic. Their papers were included not only to keep the orality of speech reverberating the different temporalities of reflection and critical thinking of Projecto P!'s event but also to preserve the memory of those intensely lived moments.

² Bojana Cvejić and Ana Vujanović, "Public Sphere by Performance" (excerpts of *Public Sphere by Performance*, 2012); Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: collaboration and its discontents" (adaptation of the first chapter of *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, 2012); Maria Andueza Olmedo, "Lectura, apropiación, protesta y conversación. Expresiones sonoras en el espacio público" (Aural 2, 2005); Leif Elggren / KREV, "Kingdom" (excerpt of *Genealogy*, 2005); "Practical Jobs for Utopian Artists (From the 'Imaginary Activism' series)" by Guillermo Gómez Peña (*TDR*, 60(4), 2016).

³ Brazilian theoretician Christine Greiner was also a guest speaker, but her article was already published in the Portuguese version of the book.

Performance in the Public Sphere is organized into three interconnected sections (i.e., the articles may show traces of sections other than theirs) the aim of which is to highlight the overlapping topics in each set of texts. The essays in part one, **VECTORS OF INFLUENCE**, provide contextual information on the concepts of public sphere and performance, as well as on crucial moments in Portuguese performance art: the futurist movement and 1960s-70s experimentalism. Here, the different vectors of influence between the national and international, political and historical, ethical and aesthetical planes that conditioned emerging phenomena in the public sphere and performance art are considered.

In this section, the first essays offer insights into the historical understanding of the public sphere through different configurations of change, of the Portuguese futurist movement and the values promoted by the 25 April from the point of view of performance art. The opening text, **Appearing to Others as Others Appear: Thoughts on Performance, the Polis, and Public Space**, is the paper presented by Rebecca Schneider at the launching of the Portuguese printed book *Performance na Esfera Pública* (Performance in the Public Sphere). Hence, you will find a generous number of references to it. The essay opens a dialogue with different articles and artist pages from the book to discuss how acts of appearance (Arendt) are performative (Butler) in relation to the making of public space/sphere and to performance scores. Discussing both authors, Schneider proposes that appearing in public space (and in public spheres) is both theatrical and political, architectural and choreographic, mobile and corporeal; in one word, "interstitial". She further

suggests that performance art, in particular, scores as a potentiality of call/response gestures that cross time and space, which can also be considered as interstitial for they can perform actions both “as is” and “as if” (“again” and “not yet”), disclosing alternative pasts and potentially different futures.

The specificity of Portuguese futurism is key to understanding its connections to performance art in Portugal. On the one hand, cultural sociologist Idalina Conde approaches Portuguese futurism through assessing the aesthetic and political position of Almada Negreiros concerning Europe in the “Ultimatum Futurista às Gerações Portuguesas do Século xx” [Futurist Ultimatum to the Portuguese Generations of the Twentieth Century], one of the manifestoes he delivered at the conferência futurista, in 1917. Keeping in mind the relevance of war for futurism inscribed in the manifesto, Conde presents a detailed overview of historical conceptions of Europe in the 20th century. In particular, she looks at how war and its devastation prompted the emergence of institutional narratives about Europe and its identity. This is a delicate issue that regularly resurfaces in the public sphere, both in political and in artistic discourses.

>>> CARLA CRUZ

On the other hand, the retrospective exercise of questioning Almada Negreiros’ futurist conference as the foundational milestone of Portuguese performance art calls for a questioning of the alignment, or lack thereof, of Portuguese futurism vis-à-vis the international modernist avant-gardes. In the essay **Sacrificing the Body to the Manifesto: Language, Futurism and Performance**, Sandra Guerreiro Dias identifies a dialogue be-

tween national and international futurism in a genealogy harking back to the *Orpheu* generation with a particular focus on Almada Negreiros’ oeuvre. Considering that the performative activation of auditory, visual and semantic materiality via the aesthetical and political saying/making is central to futurism, the author calls for a revision of this movement through the concept of performance.

>>> DAVID HELBICH

Such influence of the international plane on the national plane is also identified by Isabel Nogueira in an essay on experimentalism in the visual arts in the 1970s and its links to poetry and music. In **Performance as Art and Celebration: Democratization, Collective Events and Public Space**, the author looks into the collective actions, exhibitions and new protagonists that emerged after the 25 April 1974 Revolution, mobilized by affects of hope, joy and enthusiasm. Particularly relevant to the aesthetical ideal of celebration [*festa*] argued for by Ernesto de Sousa, the artists who called themselves “aesthetical operators” built a public sphere at the service of a democratic ideology of art according to which the invitation extended to the public to participate in artworks offering a direct and non-elitist experience of art is crucial.

>>> ELEONORA FABIÃO

In part two, **POINTS OF FRICTION**, the essays expose the wearing that may arise in aesthetical and political encounters (and confrontations) occurring both at the level of the action of performance art in the public sphere, such as resistance, protest and intervention within and without institutions, and at the level of political protest actions as performance, which often resort to the aesthetical strategies of

performance art. In her article **Choreographing Resistance in Turkey's Gezi Park Movement, 2013**, Sevi Bayraktar demonstrates how dance and performance became protester mobilization tools crucial to their interaction and collaboration. The author analyses two types of movements: to stand still and to dance in circles, arguing that collective learning during protests is central to understand mobilizing power, the resistance of choreography and the performative potential of repetition in the acquisition of a corporeal lexicon. In the same way that dance and performance generate productive frictions, there are performances that address pressing issues in the public sphere to render frictions visible. That is the case with the projects discussed by Jen Harvie in the paper **Housing Crisis, Art, and Performance**. Taking the critical situation of housing in times of accelerated gentrification and escalating real estate prices in big cities, Harvie provides an overview of performances in the UK from the 1990s onwards which tackle these problems and present diverse solutions. Looking closely into two feminist performances (GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN's *Number 1*, *The Plaza* and Sh!t Theatre's *Letters to Windsor House*), Harvie suggests that by showing the social and emotional distress of the precarity of housing (lived privately, thus, in invisibility), those performances contribute to raising awareness of painful realities that need to "be shown as collective" and to "be made public".

>>> CHRISTOF MIGONE

>>> RUI MOURÃO

The frictions between performance art and the museum are even more pronounced. While, on the one hand, the museum

discovered performance art, and the experiences it offers, as a means to captivate audiences, on the other hand, the ephemeral nature of performance – its protocols, practices, and work and presentation conditions – poses problems to institutions the primary mission of which is to collect and conserve⁴. In Liliana Coutinho's interview, **When Performance Meets the Museum**, it is possible to read the position of Catherine Wood, coordinator of the Performance department at Tate Modern, on the relationship between performance art and the museum. At the end of this section, **Appearing in Public as Public**, a conversation between Peggy Phelan, Ana Bigotte Vieira and myself, reflects on several subjects germane to the debate on the current public sphere, the role of performance art and protest as performance: the refugee crisis in Europe (forced to re-evaluate its hospitality policies); the Occupy movement in the United States and its inspiring contaminating force; the sinister side (in terms of democratic freedom) of former Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff's impeachment; and the theatrical rhetoric that generates fictions perceived as reality in the US presidential campaign, in a dialogue with Badiou's diagnosis mentioned earlier.

In the last section, **LINES OF TENSION**, the essays review concepts in the light of artistic practices that resort to the strategies of performance art. In doing so, they effect a tensioning and toning of both the concepts and the works or contexts under analysis, contributing to the reflection on the modes of participation of performance art in the public sphere. A press-

⁴ For an in-depth analysis of these subjects, cf. Jackson (2014)

ing question is to know what the outlines and specificities of contemporary Portuguese performance art are. It is urgent to listen to the echoes of the dissemination of its strategies across other artistic genres, which eventually update and redefine it. Those strategies, particularly from the 1990s onwards, manifested in dance and theatre already filtered by postdramatic practices, were brought in by creators that began enjoying a de facto participation in European networks and in international art discourse.

>>> ANA BORRALHO & JOÃO GALANTE

Sílvia Pinto Coelho's text, **Exile – Deterritorializations in Contemporary Dance/Performance: Two Recent Episodes from the Portuguese Context**, provides a brief contextualization of these processes in New Portuguese Dance and invites us to think of performance art as “deterritorialization potential”, i.e., as a destabilizing force. The author creates a dialogue between Félix Guattari's concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization and notions of artistic field, exile and gentrification, by looking at two cases: *Muito atento a tudo o que se está a passar* [Very attentive to all that is going on] by Pizamiglio/Furtado, and *Art Piss, on Money and Politics* by Ana Borralho and João Galante. While this essay identifies the lines of tension between place, population, performance and reception, João Macdonald's text reflects on the tensions between provocation, the audience and the Portuguese pop-rock bands of the 1980s. In search for an inspiring reference, some of the decade's most emblematic bands explored, more or less explicitly, modernist aesthetical strategies. In the text **The Avant-garde Front to Back: Portuguese Musical Retroperformance and Communication**

Between the Decades of 1980 and 1910–1920, João Macdonald examines this gesture in the international context of the history of rock, establishing bridges between Manuel João Vieira's (Ena Pá 2000), Rui Reininho's (GNR) and Heróis do Mar's provocation and the irreverence of Santa Rita Pintor, Almada Negreiros and Raúl Leal. The appropriation of strategies from the past is related to the modern format of reenactment – the re-making, reactivating, recreating of an action – insofar as it seeks to activate the latent aspects of a performative gesture in the present moment of making. This topic is examined in the two essays that close this volume.

Reenactment offers the possibility of understanding the political character that is constitutive of performance art. For Christine Greiner, the destabilizing power of performance art lies precisely in its ability to create spaces for openness and sharing with the other through a “microactivism of affects”, as the author suggests in **The Political Reenactment of Performance and its Microactivism of Affects**. Resorting to examples from Brazilian creators (Marcelo Evelin, Núcleo Marcos Moraes and Oriana Duarte), Greiner shows how those microactivisms may erupt in Teresina homes, at the table of a “performatic kitchen” and in the body of a performer.

>>> ANDREA MACIEL

According to Paulo Raposo, reenactment (or re-performance) is a useful political category to consider the various forms of protest and even the logics of the hashtag as the re-appropriation of a full public life. In **Performance, Activism and Public Sphere: Archive, Repertoire and Re-performance in the New New Social Movements**, Raposo reflects on the forms of digital

sociability as political action. Aside from constituting fast media for the circulation of information and opinions, crucial in mobilizing public protests, social networks are also tools for political activism that resort to different forms of performativity.

Throughout the book, the reader will find artist pages (interventions and texts), which more or less explicitly reflect on their artistic practices in the current debate about the public sphere. They do not require the type of introduction that essays demand, but are organized according to a careful dramaturgy that seeks to highlight the resonance between the pages and the articles, along with the themes they deal with. Moreover, these contributions offer an invaluable dimension of sensitivity, bring in elements of humour and offer profound reflections under the guise of next to nothingness, generating a dynamic that can positively contaminate the reading. This series of essays and artist pages draws vectors, points and lines that elucidate influences, frictions and tensions in the complex geopolitical constellation of the current moment in the globalized world, in which the role of performance art in feeling, thinking and acting in the public sphere is as urgent as it is contingent.

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INFLUENCE

VECTORS

OF

INFLUENCE

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APPEARING TO OTHERS AS OTHERS APPEAR: THOUGHTS ON PERFORMANCE, THE *POLIS*, AND PUBLIC SPACE

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[The *polis*] is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me...

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*

Rebecca Schneider



>>> Coutinho p.270
>>> Phelan p.290
>>> Raposo p.421

>>> Nogueira p.145
>>> Bayraktar p.180
>>> Harvie p.211

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In this talk, I will discuss performance-based art and architecture in relationship to political theory about public space as coextensive with acts of appearance. Throughout, my comments should run parallel to those working on extensions of public sphere theory – that resolutely modern idea, associated with Jurgen Habermas, in which print provides a (discursive) space for the generation, negotiation, and evolution of (bourgeois) public opinion in a (bounded) democracy. Habermas’s *Öffentlichkeit* (publicity, or, public sphere) is grounded in ideas “coextensive with a bounded political community and a sovereign territorial state, often a nation-state” (Fraser 2007, n.p.). Here I follow Seyla Benhabib (1998) and choose to use the phrase public *space*, rather than sphere, and, in doing so, include a discussion of Hannah Arendt as well as the haunting reiterativity of Western pre-modern form. I also chose the phrase in order to emphasize the spatial and embodied aspects

>>> Phelan p.296

of “appearance.” Thus I will be focusing less on (19th century) modern capitalism’s circulating print cultures and more on the circulation of bodies/images that move, speak, talk, act in and among architectures that script comportment, relation, enactment (whether ancient or as contemporary as a traffic median). Public space helps me think, here, about something as seemingly simple as bodies walking and talking, moving and breathing in the (publi)city. That is, I am interested to think about a public(ity) potentially less bounded by sovereign national borders or logics of capital that flow across those borders, but given to both question and critique, deploy and resist of the norms of appearance that make a space “public.”

I’d like to start my talk by lifting out a score of one of David Helbich’s “Scores for the Body, Building, and Soul for the São Luiz Teatro Municipal, Lisbon,” published in the book we are gathered at this conference to celebrate, *Performance na Esfera Pública* [Performance in the Public Sphere].¹

From among Helbich’s scores based on prior work by other artists, I chose a work that gestures to Valie Export. Here, Brussels-based conceptual artist Helbich gestures simultaneously to past work by Valie Export and future work by possible participants. >>> That is, his score instructs participants in future actions based on prior actions – or, said another way, prior actions reset in possible futures.

¹ These scores were performed on April 11th thru 13th 2017, in the realm of Projecto P! and the video recording is available online at performativa.pt



Körperkonfigurationen, Valie Export, 1972-76 / Photograph: courtesy Atelier VALIE EXPORT

Austrian performance artist Valie Export made significant work composed of her body in the late 1960s and 1970s, often in pronounced opposition to the violence and misogyny of the Viennese Actionists. She is best known for *TAPP und TASTKINO* [TOUCH and TAP Cinema] from 1968, in which she invited random passersby in public space to touch her naked breasts through a cardboard mock television box she wore on her chest, and *Aktionhose: Genitalpanik* [Action Pants: Genital Panic], 1969, in which she wore pants with the crotch cut out and walked up and down the aisle of a porn movie theatre. But in pieces such as *Körperkonfiguration* [Body Configuration] from the mid-1970s, Export pressed her body to a different kind of service. *The Body Configuration* photographic series documents actions Export made in public space in which she used her body as something of an architecture among architectures, or even (in keeping with the more sexually explicit work) a public space in public space. In this way, her body questioned not only quotidian relations between stone and flesh, but the ways our spaces script us and become us as mutual constructions – we *are* the buildings we build; we *are* the sidewalks we walk; and they *are* us. There is an intimacy in these works with buildings not unrelated to her more famous genital panic art, and there in an “intra-inanimacy” as well, by which the animate and the inanimate blur their otherwise presumptive distinctions (Schneider 2017).

Taking up Export’s work, along with the work of other artists, as if those works were invitations to reenactment, Helbich turns the works into explicit instructions. “Cheers Valie Export” invites readers to realize the script he sets forth, asking participants not only to “absorb” the physical building of the

São Luiz Teatro Municipal, Lisbon, but in doing so reabsorb Valie Export. And, of course, in a citational chain of invitation-al gesture – Helbich himself. It is partly the aspect of “score” that does the cross-temporal work here. A score passes a work along, hand to hand, existing between iterations – much as a walkway might exist, scripting access between or across actions. A sidewalk, after all, is a kind of instruction: walk this way. And, as Export’s *Body Configuration* series suggests, a built environment is a kind of instruction as well, as if to say, “Put your body in relation to stone in this way.” Of course, Export draws attention to the score that is architecture, or the score that is a traffic median, by playing the score against the grain of habitus. She publically presses her body into architectural spaces in ways contrary to the norm, illustrating, in that way, the norm that otherwise goes unremarked.

Though Helbich wrote this score for a specific municipal building, that building is a theatre, and arguably recognizable as *any theatre* according to certain architectural conventions (in the way one might recognize a sidewalk as a “way to walk” across distinct cities, or compose an aria for a specific soprano that can be sung by any number of sopranos thereafter). Helbich offers these scores in the style of other artists, writing that they are “instructions and scored concepts to be self-performed in and around architectural landmarks,” similarly indicating the elasticity of the specific theatre in a blend of possible *theatres* of architecture. The word landmark suggests public space, but whether public or private, the insertion of the body into the space suggests the *making* of public space, and possibly the *theatrical* making of public space, by virtue of performance.

Let's think a little bit more about scoring. A "score" pronounces a possibility for a performance yet to come. It is a blueprint for an action deferred into a future when it might appear, being realized in a space become public by virtue of the *appearance* of the action. A score contains a "not yet" aspect in that a score is a set of instructions for actions. The score itself is not entirely, or at least finally, the artwork it gestures toward. As any score pronounces both a "not yet" and a "might be," any action that takes place via a score is, much like a script or a blueprint, necessarily cross-temporal in that it realizes a score that comes to the moment from another time. A score is something of an invitation to action. It is a gesture – a call to make a response. An action made into a score is a combination of the score's call and the action as response, and as such, as already suggested, it weaves its work in multiple times. A score – perhaps like the architecture of a public square or a simple sidewalk – is a potentiality. An action that realizes a score takes place in double, triple, or multiple times, just as a public square or a sidewalk is laid down for access again and again. In addition, the time of the score is syncopated with the times of the actions. Many actions that realize a score, themselves become calls – calls to future actions that might appear again, as others potentially realize the score as well. Given that Helbich is composing a score in the style of another artist, his score (which is a call) is also a response (in this case to Export) and as such, by virtue of response, it renders Export's prior work a kind of call – which is to say, Helbich's call/response gestures in multiple directions: to Export's actions, his own call, and to futured "Cheers Export" actions.

Appearance, in performance-based art, is often a strange amalgam of reappearance, or overt citationality, and a call to difference. Like call and response, scores for performance work punctuate the time of appearance with multiple other times, much as chants in street protests often recall prior protest actions while calling forward, simultaneously, to as yet unrealized futures (Schneider and Ruprecht 2017). As such, call and response can expand the idea of public space into potentialities for different futures (born of different pasts). So, too, a reenactment of a protest is both a protest in the present, and a dragging of a past event into a temporally porous set of times where forgotten pasts might re-irrupt, such that, as Jack Halberstam has written, so-called failed revolutionary actions may not in fact be wholly disappeared (or failed) but lie in wait for future re-ignition or "animation" (2011, see also Foster 2003). Let us think now together, in a next section to this talk, about "appearance" in relationship to performance in public space. To do this, we will make a bit of a detour to ancient Greece, but we will encounter walkways there as well, and so, perhaps, a certain kind of instruction art.

WALKING TO THE THEATRE AND BACK

In *Public Sphere by Performance*, Bojana Cvejić and Ana Vujanović ask:

Is the Public Sphere the domain of performance? Or, can it only be performed? Why, and in what sense "perfor-

mance”, and why “only”: is performance too little, or just enough? (2015, 27).

Remembering that the Greek word for actor is *hypokrites* and gesturing toward the long tradition of anti-theatricality in the West, we might add to their question: is performance “too much”? Perhaps, and paradoxically, performance is all of these simultaneously. Too little, just enough, too much.

Cvejić and Vujanović wind their questions along the well-worn path that follows Hannah Arendt, to remind us of the centrality of theatre in Athenian democracy where the space to appear in the Ekklesia on the Pnyx (the political assembly, the “citizen’s assembly”) mirrored/mimicked the architecture of the theatre of Dionysus on the southern slopes of the neighboring Akropolis. They claim, as have others, that “theater and politics belong to the same order of activities” (2015, 28). We are certainly well aware of the fact that theatre and politics are entangled. To this day, whether with or against Arendt, critical and political theorists still turn to ancient Greece to negotiate the *theatricality* of state, kinship, moral duty, civic law (Ranciere 2011, Honig 2013, Butler 2015, 85). Fully disentangling theatricality and politics is, in some ways, a fool’s errand given the degree to which each seeming binary pole relies mimetically upon the other. Nevertheless, across Western history we arguably have relied on architectures and conventions of standard usage of said architectures to claim for one (theatre) or the other (politics). A (theatrical) actor on a stage and a (political) actor in the assembly are in part distinguished by the venue that conditions and even scores their appearance.

One assumes, by means of habit, that when one buys a ticket and enters a standard Western theatre, “theatricality” will take place. And though the architecture shares some basic aspects with assembly halls, arenas, and political forums, the assumption is that a standard audience would be able to read a distinction between the “real” of political deliberation and the “just pretend” or, in J.L. Austin’s words “infelicity,” of theatricality. Reality television may have changed all that, but the verdict is, as yet, still out. The mimicry between courtrooms, assembly halls, senate floors, and theatres with bicameral divides clearly marking stage, or dais, from house (and note that this bicameral division is not a “given” in all global performance traditions), asks us to consider the theatre/politics connection as one not only of performance, but of habits of embodiment that divide viewer from viewed, speaker from auditor. Returning to ancient Greece we note the fact that the two distinct sites at the Pnyx and the Acropolis mirror each other, but to what degree do the politicized citizen and the theatrical actor also mirror each other? Is there a (dis)connection between public appearance as a citizen, and public appearance as an actor – a hypocrite, *histrione*, hysteric? After all, both the assembly and the theatre are spaces for appearance – if one for the excesses of the fake, and the other for the adjudication of the real.

“Appearance” is a big word in Arendt, though contrary to what I have been saying it is *not* necessarily the stuff of architecture. The polis “appears” wherever people appear, she argues. Arendt writes: “The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies be-

tween people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be” (1958, 198). For Arendt, the polis is a mobile space of appearance, a space “where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but to make their appearance explicitly” (idem, 198-99). Such public appearance – made “explicitly” – nevertheless bears a habit or gesture or posture perhaps determined by architecture, as if bodies cite the civic architectures that contain them. This is to say that the means by which one stands out, or make one’s appearance “explicit,” to use Arendt’s word, may be a (learned) posture of display proper to the twin houses of performance. Recognizing the “man who makes his appearance explicit” to paraphrase Arendt, may be a recognition trained in the twin arenas as well. Though it is not clear in Arendt precisely how this performance of explicit appearance takes place, it seems as though theatricality may be implicitly involved – for how is one to “appear to others as others appear to me” except by conventions of (overt or covert) mimetic display? The theatre/politics tangle is already impossibly manifest even at the site of citizen appearance, for while Arendt assumes that men are appearing as *themselves*, even more complicatedly these self-appearances appear *as others* appear.

Despite the fact that the Ekklesia on the Pnyx mirrored the theatre of Dionysus on the Acropolis, just as today architectures of assembly and jurisprudence continue to share what could be called spaces for theatrical scenes of “appearance,” we rely on the social sanctioning of proper usage to determine “theatre” from “politics.” That which happens in the theatre proper is presumptively theatrical fakery – or *mere* performance – ap-

pearing, but appearing only “as if.” What happens in theatre is presumptively fakery – or mere performance – appearing, but appearing only “as if.” Theatre is recognizable as theatre when it complies with accepted habits of architecture and comportment that delimit “pretend” from “real.” At other times what happens in similar spaces for public assembly is considered real. The same space might make possible the appearance of citizen subjects considered performative rather than theatrical. What is key here is that both theatricality and citizen subjecthood occur by means of appearance. Clearly, legislating the real from the fake, the political from the theatrical is hounded by the leaky borders of any frame that might contain the efforts of both hypocrites and citizens to claim voice – fake or real. Donald Trump’s “alternative facts” are only the latest example of a fundamental porosity in which “theatocracy” (to quote Plato) can at any point show its face to be the Janus face of so-called democracy (which is why Plato was not a fan of democracy). If political acts are supposedly “real” and theatrical acts supposedly fictional, the very real stakes in the theatrics of politicality, and the politics of theatricality is today, as across the history of the West, still of paramount importance.

What can it do to remember the street that runs between the fake and the real?

In Athens, the street between Political Assembly and Theatre of Dionysus runs in a snaking line between the hills. Of course, this is not any surprise at all. Sidewalks run between state houses and theatres in most cities. But we rarely take count of them as anything other than intervals between actions, much



Walking the ancient road between the Acropolis and the Pnyx. May 2013
Photograph: Rebecca Schneider

as scores or scripts exist between instances of enactment. But, what happens when we walk this way, from the theatre to the state house? Or back? What changes along the road – *on the street and at the level of feet* – to make us comfortable (or uncomfortable as the case may be) with the interstices, the passageways, the intervals between or among so-called theatre and so-called politics? Is it on the street, in these corridors between institutions, that Arendt’s mobile space of appearance manifests? And if so, is it somehow useful to think of that appearance as interstitial, “between” these houses, as well as what Arendt declares as “between people” (1958, 198)? Of course this might be called, with Michel de Certeau, basic “Walking in the City” (1984). But for now, let’s stay with the theatre/assembly problematic. For I think it is possible to argue that this theatre-[interstice]-assembly paradox continues to inform, or choreograph, our engagements with ideas of the public. Judith Butler’s *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015) as well as Cvejić and Vujanović’s *Public Sphere by Performance* (2015) certainly indicate that the question of performance is still ripe – too little, just right, too much.

Let’s walk together for a moment again, back again to the Ekklesia on the Pnyx. At the Athenian political assembly, the *demos* are given to appear. Members of the citizen public could appear, to speak as citizens in public. We have been asking: to what degree did the Ekklesia depend upon its twin, the theatre? Walking back to the theatre, we recall that those who appear in the theatre are actors who are acting as others. They appear as others appear, and are not what they appear to be. Between the Assembly and the Theatre we walk and talk and wonder: does

the rift between appearance as is, and appearance as merely appearing to be, create a generative paradox for political action? To what degree is the appearance of a member of the public (and, for Arendt, one is only a member of a public if one has access to the space of appearance) always already dependent upon the twin theatricality, or what Butler calls the “theatrical self-constitution,” that grounds its formulation (2015, 85)? To *appear* is itself a performance-based (and potentially theatrical) operation. To appear to appear as one – a subject – is necessarily haunted by the fundamentally conjoined operation of appearing both to and as an other. Or, as Butler has written in another context, to appear “beside oneself” (2004, 20). The promise in the fact that appearing to act is also, simultaneously, *only appearing* to act may seem like a damnation of any ultimate efficacy, but it is damnation only if we insist that only “felicitous” performatives get things done. That is, only if one sees “failed” performatives as... failures (see Halberstam 2011).

On our walk back to the theatre, let’s tarry for yet another moment with Butler engaging Arendt. Like Arendt, Butler argues that public space itself does not exist independently of public action (which Arendt marks as appearance and Butler sees as embodiment). As Moya Lloyd has written, for Butler like Arendt, “public space as such does not exist”:

Instead, when the “new social movements” fighting against precarity demonstrate on a square or rally in the street they “reconfigure the materiality of public space” and by laying claim to that space, they constitute it as public. (2015, 178)



Walkway to the theatre (and elsewhere) as seen from the Pnyx
Photograph: Rebecca Schneider

This is to say that public space is constituted by/as performance. But unlike Arendt, Butler makes clear the ingredient of architecture in the mix when she suggests that it is impossible to think of the body that appears (in distinction to what she calls the opaque “given” body) apart from the “architectural regulation” of that body. This is Butler from “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street”:

[The] act of public speaking [...] *depends upon* a dimension of bodily life that is given, passive, opaque and so excluded from the realm of the political. Hence, we can ask, what regulation keeps the given body from spilling over into the active body? Are these two different bodies and what politics is required to keep them apart? Are these two different dimensions of the same body, or are these, in fact, the effect of a certain regulation of bodily appearance that is actively contested by new social movements, struggles against sexual violence, for reproductive freedom, against precarity, for the freedom of mobility? Here we can see that a certain topographical or even architectural regulation of the body happens at the level of theory. Significantly, it is precisely this operation of power – foreclosure and differential allocation of whether and how the body may appear – which is excluded from Arendt’s explicit account of the political. Indeed, her explicit account of the political depends upon that very operation of power that it fails to consider as part of politics itself (2011, n.p.).

Politics necessitates the space of *explicit* appearance, and that space of explicit appearance, by means of performance, facili-

tates politics. We might think of this space of appearance, paradoxically manifested through embodied action, as neither one (the theatre) nor the other (the state/court house). We might think of such space (space for potential appearance) as running on the street between theatre and assembly, always on the road or in the intervals between one and another. Such a notion of public space as intervallic, or interstitial, would remind us that such space is always both theatrical and political – architectural, choreographic, mobile, and, for Butler, irreducibly corporeal (2011b). For Butler, a space becomes a public space by virtue of the claim made where and when bodies appear to other bodies as bodies like others – which is to say by conventions of appearance based on the *likeness* of bodies. There may be significant problems with the likeness based model of determinant appearance, but for Butler, what appears as a body (“to others as others appear to me”), appears in/as bodily vulnerability. That is, for Butler, the “likeness” between bodies is mutual vulnerability.

We have reached the theatre. For it is at the threshold of the theatre that I wonder whether Butler’s formulation is limiting. One problem with Butler’s formulation is that despite its reliance on appearance, and acknowledgement of a double body (the given body and the body that appears), her theory revalorizes “the body” as somehow both self-identical and blind to itself, even as it is essentially “beside” one own self and others. This move strangely forgets the very theatricality that it simultaneously relies upon. In some ways it forgets *performance* in its effort to rush to performativity.

Let me try and explain. Butler writes: “[W]hat we are seeing when bodies assemble on the street, in the square, or in other public venues is the exercise – one might call it performative – of the right to appear, a bodily demand for a more livable set of lives” (2015, 25-26). Here we can see that the Arendtian space of appearance that is morphed to Butlerian bodily space is still, for Butler, “the space where I appear to others as others appear to me.” This is the making of public space by showing up *as oneself* to a scene. Showing up *as oneself* means that one is vulnerable to and with the others who also appear. Butler is invested in an idea of shared bodily vulnerability as a “sociality that exceeds us” and renders us interdependent and always more than one. This is a scene entirely proper to the assembly form of appearance, where, in Arendt’s words again, “men exist [...] to make their appearance explicitly” (1958, 198-99). But oddly, these men who appear, *appear as others appear*, and yet, Butler writes, *they cannot see how they appear to others*. This is a strange interdependency of the blind, based on a classical idea of perspective (inherited through Nietzsche and his frog). For Butler, that is, the body is limited to itself, and somehow blind – it cannot see itself as others see it. She writes: “The body is constituted through perspectives it cannot inhabit; someone else sees our face in a way that none of us can” (2011, n.p.). Why is she so determined that this must be the case? How is it that we cannot show each other to each other as each other (one of the basic tenets of theatre)? Why is she so certain that we cannot appear as someone or some *thing* we are, in fact, not (another tenet of theatre)? And is it really the case that we can never know, or never orchestrate or choreograph, precisely how we are given to appear (yet another tenet of the stage)? What I am arguing here is that this approach to appear-

ance forgets the shared interstice, the interval of theatre, that constitutes the public in the interstices of spaces of appearance.

At the theatre of Dionysus, unlike at the Pnyx, I might appear to others as I am not, or where others appear to me as they are not. Or not yet. The logic of perspectivism meets its vanishing point at the theatre and the idea that the body is necessarily blind to the way that it is seen is rendered bogus. The blinded body (a theatrical trope par excellence) reveals itself to be one more “architectural regulation,” scored perhaps most iconically for Oedipus. But in the interstices of Oedipus’s acts, sighted actors emerge again from behind the mask, knowing exactly how they had appeared to others. You might rightly argue that these be-masked actors bodies are not Butler’s vulnerable bodies. They are, you might argue, highly skilled bodies trained to manipulate appearances such that bodies appear *as if they are the others they appear to be*. Actors, you might say, are affected – they are “as if” – they are manipulating affect, not effecting the real. But isn’t the *effective* performative always engaged with infelicitous, affective performance in the twin, intervallic, and oscillating possibility that the way in which one appears is not or not only the appearance of what is but also of what was (not) and might yet (not) be?

At base, for Butler “our thinking gets nowhere without the presupposition of [...] corporeal interdependency and entwinement” (2011, n.p.). The space of appearance of public space is, then, as Loyd would have Butler say: “irreducibly corporeal” (2017, 178). The issue we may have with this is not the presupposition of corporeal interdependency, but of the idea that seems to fol-

low regarding irreducibility. There is, I would submit, nothing irreducible about corporeality. Corporality is necessarily protean when it appears in and through performance. Corporeality or corporality that appears by means of performance, or performs by means of appearance, is always in the throes of alteration, becoming the too little, or too much, at the interval of the just right. Corporeality is not irreducible precisely because it is also always inter-corporeal, and we would do well to register the spaces among our embodiments, or the spaces between appearances at least much as we look directly at material “embodiment,” or, what appears to appear. Again, Arendt’s phrase “where I appear to others as others appear to me” implies a space across which appearance takes place as relation. If public space is “where I appear to others as others appear to me,” then public space is always inter-corporeal, even if the “others” that might also appear are, as in Valie Export’s performance with the traffic median, not only human but nonhuman – inter(non)human.

Clearly, we can concede that the public sphere depends on public space in which a subject can appear *as one* and, simultaneously, to others (therefore *as others*). And as we know from the volumes of work on the privatization of the public sphere under neoliberalism, emplotted public space has been rendered virtual – uploaded into cyberspace for instance. Writing in their prolog to *Intermediality, Performance, and the Public Sphere*, of events leading to the Arab Spring, Khalid Amine and George F. Roberson state the situation succinctly: “The lack of democracy on the ground led the youth to *perform* it online, spurring the people to mobilize in cyberspace” (2014, 12). This raises new questions not only about intercorporeality and the vulner-

abilities of the body, but about appearing to others as others appear to me on the seeming traffic merideans of information highways. When we think of digital “appearance,” public space is not delimited to what Critical Art Ensemble, back in 1996, termed the bunker mentality of thinking of appearance as necessarily *either* corporeal *or* immaterial, *either* present *or* absent. At that time, in CAE’s opinion, public space was nonexistent. They wrote, “Legitimized autonomous zones where one can freely express oneself (politically or otherwise) are long gone, if such spaces ever existed at all” (1996, 40). If public space is a matter, in any case, of showing up – mobile in the way we have explored – can showing up be manifested digitally, at a distance, and still be counted as present? Can corporealized vulnerability appear without bodies? This may be another question of or for the theatre, or between the assembly and the theatre, where bodies appear regularly that are not (yet) there.

All of this is to say that we would do well to recall that, with Arendt, political “scenes of appearance” (the appearance of those with or without the rights to appear) are also spaces for/as performance. As Butler writes, “we might call them performative.” Insofar as appearance is vital to the idea of the public and, indeed, the manifestation of a public, appearance occurs by means of performance. But performance, to act and to do via performatives, is always, simultaneously, to tap performance in its always potentially infelicitous aspect: to act *as if*. This is to say, the inextricable double, the twinned aspect of theatricality and politics, is the always double-edged aspect of performance. Performance can manifest both *as is*, and *as if*, simultaneously. Both the reiterative or resurgent *again*, and, simultaneously, the *not yet*.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION, BUT NOT YET

The logic of bringing forward (alternative) pasts in the form of performative re-dos (as Helbich re-scores Export), is the idea of making palpable the alternative futures that those alternative pasts might have realized, or might *yet* realize. Though the following example may seem very far afield of Helbich redoing Export, the idea that pasts may irrupt into presents available for redo is at the basis of some work in decolonial theory. Dene nation political theorist Glenn Coulthard has written movingly on this in *Red Skins White Masks* (itself a performative re-do of Franz Fanon's *Black Skins White Masks*). In that book, Coulthard calls for the "emergent theory and practice of Indigenous resurgence" (2014, 153). In making that call, he is remaking a call put forward by Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson in *Dancing on Our Turtles Back* (2011). For Simpson, resurgence can "reclaim the very best practices of our traditional cultures, knowledge systems and lifeways in the dynamic, fluid, compassionate, respectful context in which they were originally generated" (2011, 18). In fact, Simpson links the practice of reclaiming to performance-based art (idem, 96). Simpson's book begins with performance-based actions on the streets of Nogojiwanong, the Michi Saagiig name for Peterborough, Ontario. The performative "resurgence" of indigenous lifeways is not a failed past now submitted to representation, but an alternative future making ongoing claims in/as public space. As "Nishnaabeg dancers, artists, singers, drummers, community leaders, Elders, families and children walked down the main street of Nogojiwanong," Simpson writes, they were "not seeking recognition or asking for rights" (idem, 11). Rather,

they were *appearing* in/as *public* space, and not necessarily only as/in the "recognized" space (time) of the colonizer. Importantly, they were not representing themselves. This was not representation, but reiteration. Not image, but gesture. As Simpson writes, they were "celebrating" (idem, 11).

If performance-based actions may be *off* of the present, or not only present but composed in repetition, or resurgence, this is related, I would argue, to the ways in which performance rendered explicit as performance can effect what Ana Pais has termed a "disturbance" to norms of convention. Pais asks whether the "function of performance art could be one of rearranging connections between existing materials, matters, objects, people in the public sphere precisely because it infiltrates from the side of the site? Perhaps performance art activates the public sphere through an injection of 'side affects' undermining prevalent public feelings" – or conventional trajectories of those feelings. >>> Drawing on Ahmed, Pais asks: "By disturbing public feelings through sparkles of solidarity, empathy, generosity and kindness, is performance art able to reshape, reconfigure, and change social spaces?" (ibidem). In this she is playing, with Peggy Phelan, on a double meaning of parasite. Recall that "para" is a prefix appearing in loanwords from Greek, most often attached to verbs and verbal derivatives, with the meanings "at or to one side of, beside, side by side" as well as "beyond, past, by." For me the "para" opens a passageway of besideness, something of a *side walk*, meridian, or interstice, that might move us out of the forever forward, habitual march of the dialectic.

Performance art actions that are both/and – both is and as if – might be seen to be interstitial or intervallic. Or perhaps to the side, marginal. This *to the side* aspect (and again, if we think of ourselves as beside ourselves in the strange logic of “I appear to others as others appear to me” in Arendt’s phrase) opens whole worlds of alternatives to otherwise unidirectional or dialectical thought. The idea of *to the side* is implicit, for example, in Carla Cruz’s discussion of *All My Independent Wo/men* in the book. >>> Cruz writes of artists who “see their work marginalized/or consciously marginalize their work because of the subject matter and methodology but mainly as a search or a different way of doing and making in the art worlds.” For Carla Cruz, to consciously marginalize, or to make marginalization explicit, is to institute a kind of sideness, or para – siticness. As para-sites, sites that move to the side, performance acts to move the sidewalk itself, or move our relationships to the architectures of comportment that define us. If we only keep the side walk running between the theatre as we already know it, and the state house as we already know it, we will never discover new intersections, old lifeways, or alternative ways of moving to other heres and other theres. To step out of the presumptive habits of *recognition*, out of the mores and modes of habitual appearance, is to also ask appearance to move aside – allowing us, perhaps, to imagine how we might find other intimacies at (or with) our meridians, and appear beside ourselves in difference.

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1917-2017, ALMADA NEGREIROS AND EUROPE

Idalina Conde





WHAT PERSPECTIVE FOR TODAY?

One hundred years ago, amidst the furore of World War I, and of war as futurism's "great experiment", José de Almada Negreiros (1893-1970) ended his "Ultimatum Futurista às Gerações Portuguesas do Século XX" [Futurist Ultimatum to the Portuguese Generations of the Twentieth Century] with an appeal to patriotic heroism: "Above all, take advantage of this unique moment in which the war in Europe invites you to enter Civilization. The complete people will be that who bring together all their qualities and defaults to the maximum. Courage, oh Portuguese you only lack the qualities" (Almada Negreiros 1997, 650).¹

>>> Guerreiro Dias p.94
>>> Macdonald p.370

¹The transcription of the "Ultimatum" can be found online in a longer version of this text with complete bibliography, at [iscte-iul.academia.edu/idalinaconde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-\(texts\)](https://iscte-iul.academia.edu/IdalinaConde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-(texts))

Exactly in the same year, 1917, in November, Álvaro de Campos, the sensationist heteronym of Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), began publishing his "Ultimatum" in the supplement to the magazine *Portugal Futurista*, with an "Eviction notice to the mandarins of Europe! Get out! Get out!", that he repeated in a tour of European references and geographies, while defending "another" way, which he announced for a near future. And he ended: "I shout this out at the top of my lungs, on the European coast where the Tagus meets the sea, with arms raised high as I gaze upon the Atlantic, abstractly saluting Infinity!" (Pessoa 2001).

Such is the contrast between expectant and problematic relationships with Europe, which, seen from the land's end of Portugal, they regarded as an other-space; and the national intelligentsia took on the representation of Portugal's distance in the face, or in front of Europe over that of a country on common soil, Portugal in Europe. Given the vastness of the theme I shall move on to reflect following in the wake of Almada Negreiros' challenge with regard to the trilogy Europe, war, and civilization. Since it is an exhortatory patriotic "Ultimatum", coupled with a futurist praise of war, this will be the theme for a dialectic between the drive to war and the quest for peace. There have always been wars in Europe, to which is added the latent and permanent paradigm of terrorism, but for this text a note on that dialectic in part of the last century is required.

Beyond the literal warmongering, the apology for war using futurism had more an artistic meaning. Aside from the nationalist references that characterize it, even in Almada Ne-

greiros' "Ultimatum" war symbolized, above all, the combat of the avant-garde in art, and in the name of art: a creative destruction. In parallel, both modern and technological, and as one of the deadliest ever, the First World War opened up the twentieth century to wholesale destruction and paved the way for its own recreations of Europe. Boosted by ideals of peace, cohesion and prosperity, the "European project" that emerged in the post-Second World War had prior roots, from the First (1914-18) to the Second (1939-45) World Wars. A project that helped to forge institutional, economic and political re/construction in the post-Second World War.

Besides the UN – United Nations – created in 1945, in the following years the major European institutions were set up, propelled by those ideals such as the former European Community, until the current European Union, and the Council of Europe. Despite irregularities, failures or setbacks in this process, among its achievements are reference documents for the safeguarding of human rights, values, democracy, citizenship, and diversity in Europe. In brief, outcomes from the ideals of anti-war European modernity that obviously transcend Europe, as a space seeing beyond its institutional pillars and perimeters. In our time Europe has been globalized by all kind of flows; a vast, complex, metamorphic and multiform space in which the twists and turns of identity and culture often end up in the apories of an "imagined community" (Anderson 2006).

Instead of those issues, my perspective in this text aims at the conjuncture of ideals, values and citizenship. Precisely because of contemporary turbulences and dystopias, it matters to recall

the pathway of ideals. Broadly, the ethical dimension that endures as the imperative for many forms of activism and artistic practices. Their claims and interventions in the public sphere are committed to a value-based ethical and axiological turn manifesting in European contexts and beyond.² Bringing this perspective after a journey back to the time of Almada Negreiros, futurism, and the experience of wars in Europe, is to provide a perspective for today.

THE CONFERENCE AND THE "ULTIMATUM"

The theme of Europe continued in the writings and invectives of Almada Negreiros. Eighteen years after the "Ultimatum", in June 1935, the publication *Sudoeste – Cadernos de Almada Negreiros* [Southwest – Notebooks of Almada Negreiros] appeared with the subtitle *Portugal e a Europa* [Portugal and Europe]. Its three issues, namely the third, included various collaborations, such as Fernando Pessoa's, with the opening text "Nós os do *Orpheu*" [We of the *Orpheu*] and a poem.³ Almada explicitly wrote about Europe in the first issue, in a text that begins with the symbolic importance of maps to situate the Iberian, and insular, condition of Portugal. He repeats the anathemas and lamentations about the country, yet euphemized in the

² See two reports from the last decade (Koivunen and Marsio 2007; Wiesand, Chainoglou and Simon 2016).

³ Here represented by the heteronym Álvaro de Campos with the text "Nota ao acaso" [A random note]. Cf. more references in the complete version of the text at [iscte-iul.academia.edu/IdalinaConde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-\(texts\)](https://iscte-iul.academia.edu/IdalinaConde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-(texts))

arguments of another, Almada. After returning from Madrid in 1932, (where he had been since 1927), he was even called a “futurist in slippers”,⁴ but this Almada, judged by many as defeated, would “arrive”, and for which his marriage to Sarah Affonso (1899-1983) in 1934 greatly helped (Conde 2015).

Curiously but significantly, Almada did not meet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), the historical founder of futurism, when he visited Lisbon on 23 November 1932. Ironically, now at a distance of 23 years since his *Futurist Manifesto* (1909), Marinetti was received by the early “staunch enemies of futurism” in Portugal (Cabral 2014, 95-122).⁵ To wit: the still-journalist António Ferro (1895-1956), who would become a key figure in the *Estado Novo* dictatorship’s “policy of the spirit”; architect, professor and politician Adães Bermudes (1864-1948); and Júlio Dantas (1876-1962), the butt of Almada Negreiros’ 1915 *Manifesto Anti-Dantas*. However, the visit took place as the so-called “second futurism” was afoot (1921 to 1944), a phase in which the movement had turned academic and was connected to Italian fascism.

⁴ According to the note by José-Augusto França on the “jocose and opportunistic accusations” of “aging” that Almada was subject to: “[...] in 1936 *O Sempre Fixe* [a humoristic weekly] published a fictitious and rather dry interview in which he was called ‘a futurist in slippers’” (França 1986, 321).

⁵ Words of Almada Negreiros in “Um Ponto no i do Futurismo” [Clarifying Futurism], originally published in *Diário de Lisboa* on 25 November 1932: “The staunch enemies of futurism in Portugal won their first victory the day before yesterday in the presence of the leader of futurism, F. T. Marinetti [...] The admirable creator of futurism has reached that stage in academia and in life that lends itself beautifully to the scheming of shameless plotters [...]. We, the Portuguese futurists, regret [Marinetti’s] amnesia regarding Portugal, his loss of memory of the heroic names of futurism that fought a war without a truce [in Portugal] against the rotten and the antediluvian.” [TN- Portuguese version for this essay]. See also “The reception of futurism in Portugal” (Miraglia 2011).

At the time, Almada Negreiros and Fernando Pessoa produced their criticism, despite their own nationalistic and messianic values. In fact, they had belonged to the first “heroic” phase of the movement in Europe (1909-1920; from 1915 in Portugal, with a peak in 1917).⁶ Among us, futurism represented an avant-garde front rather than an adherence to the orthodoxy of Marinetti’s principles. Santa-Rita Pintor (1889-1918) declared himself a futurist immediately, but the magazines *Orpheu* (1915) and *Portugal Futurista* (1917) displayed an eclecticism in terms of their influences. Fernando Pessoa distinguished himself from futurism, which he recognized in Almada Negreiros, whose “Ultimatum Futurista” was above all a form of account-settling with Portugal.

For Almada and his peers, a passage through futurism was one more way of “being modern”,⁷ of which the “Ultimatum” with the furore of his “twenty-two years brimming with health and intelligence” is an example, as he declared at the beginning of the text (Almada Negreiros 1997, 649), not missing a note of narcissism: “[I] demand a nation that recognizes me”. Besides, in the poem *A Cena do Ódio* [The Scene of Hatred], written in 1915 and dedicated to Álvaro de Campos, Almada already claimed to be a “Sensationist Poet and Narcissus of Egypt” (Almada Negreiros 1997, 641).

⁶ In 1916, Almada Negreiros and Santa Rita Pintor formed a Comité Futurista [Futurist Committee].

⁷ Title of the exhibition *José de Almada Negreiros: Uma Maneira de Ser Moderno*, curated by Mariana Pinto dos Santos with Ana Vasconcelos, 3 February to 5 June 2017, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon (Pinto dos Santos 2017).

An identical furore inflamed Almada Negreiros' futurist conference at the Teatro República in Lisbon on 14 April 1917, for which he put on an aviator suit, like someone flying into the future, and manifestos were read.⁸ The conference was echoed in the press and in the magazine *Portugal Futurista*. According to him⁹ (and the specialists), the "Ultimatum" was read at the conference, although the text was only published in the magazine seven months afterwards in November 1917, along with the Almada-aviator photograph.¹⁰ During that interval much happened to justify certain nuances in interpretation, which is why I dare to ask exactly which text did Almada read at the Conference: the full published text, or a previous version, published later with changes or corrections?

The Portugal of 1917 was the immediate context for that text and those seven months provided Almada with more information on the country, such as episodes on the negative impact of the war, among other circumstances, which do not feature in the manifesto. Moreover, by November, the tone of the "Ultimatum" was closer to the political about-face of Sidónio Pais' coup (1872-1918), which overthrew the government of the democratic republican Afonso Costa (1871-1937). Thus, the

⁸ *Tuons le Clair de Lune!* (1909) and *Le Music-Hall* (1913) by Marinetti, as well as the muscular *Manifeste Futuriste de la Luxure* (1913) by Valentine de Saint-Point (1875-1953), the author of *Manifeste de la Femme Futuriste* (1912). Cf. entry "Conferência Futurista" (Arquivo Virtual da Geração de Orfeu [n.d.]).

⁹ "Thus I began my ultimatum [sic] to twentieth century Portuguese youth, and the audience, used to exclusively literary and pedantic conferences, were visibly shocked by the virility of my statements, bursting into premeditated and cowardly isolated reproaches, albeit without any substantial effect." (Almada Negreiros 1997, 648-649).

¹⁰ Cf. entry "Portugal Futurista" (Arquivo Virtual da Geração de Orfeu [n.d.]).

"Ultimatum" heard in April at the Teatro da República, with either perplexity or joy at the "madness"¹¹ of the young, visionary and rebellious futurist, could be heard, after November, with that ideological tone of patriotic exaltation denouncing the failure of the Republic and of the "democratic attempt".¹²

The magazine *Portugal Futurista* was seized by the police, but the question remains valid: was it an offensive against the modernists by the democratic government still in power, or a mere application of state of war "preventive censorship" targeting all publications capable of "enemy propaganda" or "aimed at depressing the soul of the nation or the honour of its army"?¹³ In this case, Almada's "Ultimatum" really pointed out the lack of soul in Portugal, parallel to the apology for war shared by futurists, which for him was a masculine, Darwinist, Promethean epiphany.

¹¹ "O Elogio da Loucura" [In Praise of Madness] was the title of an article about the futurist conference in *A Capital*, a newspaper to which Almada wrote: "thanking the 'futurist camaraderie' of the press, and taking the opportunity to announce a new futurist spectacle – which never took place". Cf. entry "Conferência Futurista" (Arquivo Virtual da Geração de Orfeu [n.d.]).

¹² "We live in a country in which the democratic attempt is compromised every day. The mission of the Portuguese Republic had been completed since before 5 October [1910]: to display the decadence of the race. It was doubtlessly the Portuguese Republic which consciously proved to every brain the ruin of our race, but the revolutionary duty of the Portuguese Republic reached its limit in the powerlessness to create" (Almada Negreiros 1997, 649-650). [TN- English version for this essay].

¹³ With the by-laws of 10 and 13 November, and cinema censorship since September; cf. sources in the complete version of this text at [iscte-iul.academia.edu/idalinaconde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-\(texts\)](https://iscte-iul.academia.edu/IdalinaConde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-(texts))

THE YEAR 1917 IN PORTUGAL

What did Almada Negreiros know about war, he who did not fight at the front, unlike many who, before the exhortation – “Go seek in the war in Europe all the strength of our new fatherland” (Almada Negreiros 1997, 650) – had fought, suffered, won and died since 30 January 1917, when the first brigade of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps (CEP) left for France. Almada knew of the war from a distance mediated by the press, in which he could follow the intense diplomatic activity, such as official trips to France, England and Spain, among others.

In daily life, Almada experienced¹⁴ the effects of war with the food crisis, unless he was spared this in his bourgeois and artistic circle. There were restrictions on the use of electricity and gas, scarcity of food products, hoarding and price speculation – all of it with the potential for upheaval. In April, the month of the futurist conference, a “Soup Kitchen” opened in Lisbon, soon followed by disturbances and fights with the police, to the point where the government declared a state of emergency on a few occasions. On May 19 and 20, in Lisbon and the suburbs, the “Potato Revolution” spread and violent confrontations resulted in the deaths of a few officers, twenty-two people and many wounded. The fight for bread led to more strikes, more dead and a strong mobilization of the União Operária Nacional (UON; National Workers’ Union).

¹⁴ A word dear to him in the “Ultimatum”, that of experience, in the narcissistic sense: “I am the conscious outcome of my own experience [...]. The experience of someone who has been living all the intensity of every instant of his own life” (Almada Negreiros 1997, 649). [TN – English version for this essay].

With turmoil and war, political life was less than quiet. Parties organized themselves into congresses, two elections saw huge abstention rates, the narrow victory of the Democratic Party in the last of these announced their parting with the early December coup. The Military Junta, headed by Sidónio Pais, approved the measures for the new regime, and the year ended with Pais at the head of the Government and the Presidency. He was a controversial First Republic politician, for his “Germanophile position”, which worried the Allies at war, even so Fernando Pessoa praised him with the epithet “Presidente-Rei” [President-King]. The title, however, did not apply for long. Sidónio Pais was assassinated on 14 November 1918, a year after the coup and three days after the Armistice of 11 November 1918.

The kaleidoscopic year of 1917 saw other contrasts as well. It was the year of the alleged Fátima Apparitions (13 May at Cova da Iria, and supposedly with repetitions lasting until October) and also of the Ballets Russes in Lisbon.¹⁵ A sort of “miracle” of modernity and to such an extent that, with a few exceptions, the reception was less than warm,¹⁶ albeit a high point, which Almada Negreiros did not lose. Before the arrival of the company, scheduled for October [they arrived in December], he published the manifesto *Os Bailados Russos em Lisboa* [The

¹⁵ A company created in 1909 and directed by Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929) until his death. Their visit to Lisbon was due to the war; it was an alternative to the great stages, as they looked for contracts not only in Portugal but in Spain as well.

¹⁶ With such exceptions as “Impressões dos Bailados Russos” [Impressions of the Ballet Russes] by critic Manuel de Sousa Pinto, who wrote about the shows (eight) at Coliseu dos Recreios (December 1917) and (two) at Teatro de S. Carlos (January 1918).

Russian Ballets in Lisbon] (Arquivo Virtual da Geração de Orfeu [n.d.]),¹⁷ spent time with them during their stay and found inspiration for his dance activities. The figures of Arlequim and Columbina in Almada's drawings were inspired by *Carnival*, one of the pieces brought by the Ballets Russes to Lisbon.¹⁸

In 1917, Almada Negreiros also published *K4 Quadrado Azul* [K4 Blue Square] and *A Engomadeira* [The Ironer], pieces from a long prodigal life. *Reminiscência de Almada Negreiros* [Reminiscence of Almada Negreiros], since 2014 at Ribeira das Naus (Lisbon) is the last monument dedicated to him on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of his birth. This sculpture by his granddaughters recovered a portrait of the artist with the "giant eyes" and Almada seems to be gazing at the Tagus, Europe and the world, at that place at once real and mythical from whence departed the Portuguese ships on the odyssey of the Discoveries.

The image has a double meaning here. On the one hand, a souvenir of Almada the visionary of a new horizon; on the other, a representation of Almada in his time, under the weight of mythologies and ideologies about Portugal. A "decadent" country of "weak men", as he wrote in "Ultimatum"; a country "asleep since Camões" (Almada Negreiros 1997, 651 and 653). So, the

¹⁷ Manifesto published in *Portugal Futurista*, in October 1917, and distributed at the Coliseu; signed by Almada Negreiros, José Pacheco and Ruy Coelho, although in 1925 Almada claimed he was the sole author. Cf. Castro (2012); Serra (2013).

¹⁸ Originally a 1910 creation with music by Robert Schumann, choreography by Michel Fokine and costumes by Léon Bakst. In the wake of this involvement, Almada developed and produced dance projects (he was at the head of a group in 1918) as script writer, choreographer, costume designer, set designer and, occasionally, as a dancer.

image points us to the word "for", Portugal for Europe, at a distance or facing a Europe that national perception had reduced to the largest countries. In this way, Europe was represented as enlightened, advanced, majestic and central, whereas Portugal only belonged due to geographical and historical reasons. A small backwards country plagued by long lasting endemic instability, though in fact similar cases existed in Europe in the process of destruction and territorial re-arrangement. Even if we had a "potato revolution" in the same year as the Russian Revolution, it was nevertheless a European moment on our scale, after all caused by the First War. A war that ploughed through contexts and countries, destroying some in its path.

WAR AND PEACE, IDEALS AND INSTITUTIONS

From 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918, the First World War spread from Europe to Africa, Asia, the Pacific and America, as the United States and Canada joined the conflict and other countries declared their alignment. When it was over, four empires (German, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman) had vanished and the borders of several countries had been redefined – some were born, others re-born. At the time, it was an extraordinary war for Europe and the world with a huge "machine" for mobilization and death. By land, sea and air it involved 70 million military personnel, of which 60 million were European.²⁰ 16 million lives were lost, including genocides, especially that of 1.5 million Armenians executed and deported in the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

Despite the magnitude, and the impact due to historical proximity, we should widen the scope in Europe and its “theatre of war”²⁰ which is as old as its civilization. On the eve of the First World War there had been a total of over 500 conflicts, along with the 1917 Russian Revolution and civil war (by 1921). Despite all efforts, peace²¹ was temporary and literally relative because in the two decades between the wars there were dozens of conflicts on European soil. During the Second World War (1939-45) parallel conflicts took place and, from 1945 until the early 1980s another twenty flared up. Afterwards, the Cold War maintained a semi-permanent conflict,²² and the spiral of upheaval, wars and terrorism has continued down to our time.

The fall of the symbol of the Cold War in 1989, erected in 1961 and known as the Berlin Wall, along with German reunification, meant the end of an era. In the words of historian Eric Hobsbawm in *The Age of Extremes* (2012), the “short twentieth century” with so many wars, revolutions and political, eco-

← ¹⁹ Over 9 million soldiers and 7 million civilians, such was the death toll from technological and tactical innovation in the trenches (the number of deaths per square metre was very high); although forbidden by The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, chemical weapons were also used, cf. attachments to the text in note 1, at [iscte-iul.academia.edu/idalinaconde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-\(texts\)](http://iscte-iul.academia.edu/idalinaconde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-(texts)).

²⁰ According to a list of conflicts in Europe from pre-Christian antiquity until now, cf. the text in note 1, at [iscte-iul.academia.edu/idalinaconde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-\(texts\)](http://iscte-iul.academia.edu/idalinaconde/book-8a-europe-in-cultural-vision-(texts))

²¹ Operations ceased with the Armistice in 1918, and peace was formally declared in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which also called for a League of Nations to prevent conflict. At the end of the Second World War it was replaced by the United Nations Organization on 24 October 1945, which included 51 member states (currently 193).

²² NATO (founded in 1949) to the west, and the socialist-Soviet sphere under the Warsaw Pact (established in 1954); two blocks in a delicate balance of power and mutual vigilance engaged in an arms race.

nomic, social, scientific and artistic changes. But to establish a link between war and peace, we must return to the period between the First and Second World Wars, which saw fundamental changes in Europe. The First World War still endures in European remembrance as an epic war involving patriotism, courage and veterans, and in the monuments to the “unknown soldier” honouring some of the fallen millions. However, if futurists, including Almada Negreiros, had believed in that war as an “entry into civilization”, civilization was left behind with the Second World War, a war of trauma, especially the Holocaust, the darkest moment in the history of Europe and the twentieth century – a collapse of civilization. Without forgetting that, aside from Hitler’s Nazi Germany (1933-45), it paralleled European totalitarianisms, each one with its own perverse and brutal idea of civilization: fascism in Italy (with Mussolini, 1922-1943/45), Franquismo in Spain (1939-1975/78) and Soviet Stalinism (1927-53). Portugal accompanied these with its long *Estado Novo* dictatorship, from 1933 until the democratic revolution of 25 April 1974.

Civilization has then been a word as shining as it is dangerous, and decades afterwards came the post-modern deconstructions of civilization in the enlightened and hegemonic sense. Among several epistemological, intellectual and historiographical filters, the post-colonial paradigm has shaken like no other the notion of civilization, itself replaced with European culture(s) and identity/identities – both in the plural and always the subject of much writing and discussion. However, here a note on the main institutions that emerged in post-war re-foundations is required, and on the ethical dimension fostered by them.

Along with the political, military and economic diplomacy involved in the European project, the cultural dimension has had wider scope to contribute towards re-civilization.

The UN – United Nations – appeared immediately after the Second World War, in 1945, and the Council of Europe in 1949 as a mainstay of human rights, legality, democracy, citizenship as well as for culture, literacy, heritage, and historical memory in Europe. In 1950, the Council produced the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (in place since 1953, with amendments and protocols), the basis for the foundation of the European Court of Human Rights in 1952. Almost thirty years afterwards, the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was created in 1987 (in place since 2002, after two protocols). There has also been the European Cultural Convention, signed in 1954, and the European Social Charter, from 1961,²³ covering the social and economic rights that complement the civil and political rights in the 1950 convention. In brief, there have been many reference documents created throughout decades of dedication to citizens, and with a focus on linguistic, ethnic and cultural minorities and migrants in Europe.²⁴

The construction of the European Community has run in parallel since the 1950s; its executive organism, the European Commission, has existed since 1958. Among the treaties, institutions and stages leading up to the current European

²³ First version in force from February 1965, reviewed in 1996 and in effect since 1999.

²⁴ Examples: *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992); *European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995).

Union (EU), there were three milestones: the Treaty of Rome (1957), the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) and the Treaty of Lisbon, signed in 2007, twenty years after Portugal joined the EEC (European Economic Community) in 1986. Spain joined that same year, and, thus did the Iberian Peninsula. Europe was our destiny, it was said, but we had always been in Europe even through our totalitarian regime. In 1986 we entered into the perimeter of an economic and political architecture that has become inseparable from the continent's geography as the EU expanded, while the continent continues to “conceptualize” around ideas of Europe within Europe (Pagden 2002).

With regard to cultural matters, a counterpoint has been in place between the EU's political and economic scope (since the former European Community), and the humanist and cultural role of the Council of Europe, cooperating with UNESCO in many situations. Nonetheless, following its previous actions, the European Commission has expanded its cultural agency mostly since the 1990s, also thanks to an article in the Treaty of Maastricht that provided a legal basis for this.²⁵ The recent stage has reached the “Creative Europe” programme (2014-2020) parallel to other areas addressing citizenship, education and cultural literacy as well as the areas of heritage and digitization. Despite the socio-economic rationale that usually forms the basis for European Commission operations, the last tone even shifted towards the goal of “strengthening European identity through education and culture”.²⁶

²⁵ Since 7 December 2000, and adapted in 2007, there is also the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights, which includes provisions on human rights; a document promoted by the European Parliament, EU Council and the European Commission.

FINAL REMARKS

Indeed, not everything is solved through the economy and other values for the “European soul” have re-arisen because of the Eurozone financial crisis that erupted in 2009. In the final phase, 2013-14, the actual presidency of the European Commission launched an initiative with appeal to a “new narrative for Europe”, also a value-based narrative.²⁷ The harsh and prolonged crisis was the equivalent of a war and it shattered the European project,²⁸ which also received further setbacks, such as the influx of refugees and the tragedies in the Mediterranean; Brexit; and terrorist attacks in the name of Islamic fundamentalism. Despite all this – and because of it – values endure as ideals, be it ideals related to the ethical turn in our millennium or the legacy of ideals that have contributed to the reconstructions of Europe.

In retrospect, the speed and dignity of the response to the collapse brought about by the Second World War is still impressive as a kind of re-civilization that embraced the ideals of peace, prosperity and cohesion in tandem with the safeguarding of democracy, citizenship, freedom and human rights. Ideals were a mirage, and they might have sounded like mere entertain-

← ²⁶ Title of the communication from the European Commission to several EU bodies on November 2017.

²⁷ Cf. references about this initiative launched by the European Commission in the first part of Conde (2016).

²⁸ The crisis brought about an intensifying of the divide between rich countries (north) and deficit economy countries (south). Violence erupted on the streets with various protest movements, especially in Greece, the country at the centre of the crisis and which, like Portugal and Ireland, had to be “bailed-out”.

ing music in the difficult European “concert”. However, they were the compass with which to create a common space (more than a “community”, which is a debatable concept in a space where there are several) offering institutions at the service of citizens. International and European law is a crucial element. Almost the entirety of the history in this text, largely about war, is about moving from the battlefield to tables at which treaties, conventions, decrees, norms and regulations were signed. In other words, a host of documents were necessary to implement the rule of law beyond the volatility of agreements and commitments. Diplomacy, negotiation and law as weapons, thus providing more weapons in the fight for peace.

Now, from ideals to contemporary dystopian visions of Europe, there is an understandable reductionist leap, considering the times we live in. Ideals seem like a litany, repeated ad nauseam in political rhetoric, against a backdrop of conflict, exclusion, inequality and deficit that bring with them a narrative of disenchantment and failure. Yet, it is one among many ways of seeing the contemporary Europe to oversee in other place. As I stated at the beginning, here I wanted to remember the conquests that took place in the name of ideals even if through wars and crises. These conquests, incomplete or vulnerable as they may be, deserve their own narrative alongside dystopian visions. They represent a dialectic of/in civilization, like the narratives of war and peace, both carrying a part of the truth and both endless.

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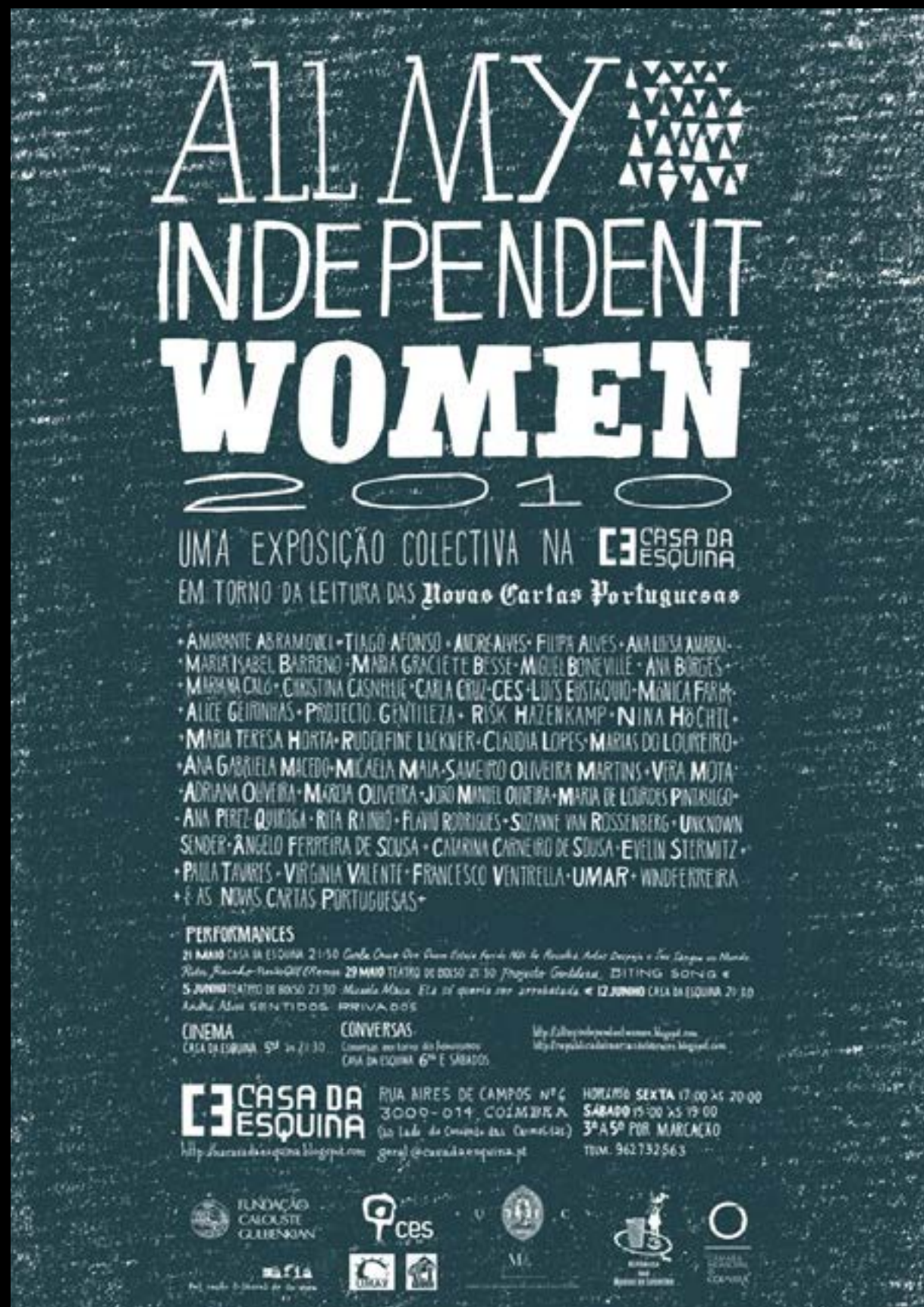
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All My Independent Wo/men

84

85

Carla Cruz



Poster for *All My Independent Women*, 2010, Casa da Esquina, Coimbra
Design: Christina Casnellie

PART 1

All My Independent Women (AMIW) deals thematically with the representation of wo/men through the art works that are presented in its exhibitions. The participant artists, however, are not exclusively women; they are people who identify as woman, man, and transgender, and use feminist methodologies and an embodied position to produce artistic gestures. AMIW uses curatorial strategies to question the (in)visibility of these artists in the mainstream artworld. Artists who see their work marginalised or consciously marginalise their work because of its subject matter and methodology but mainly as a search for a different way of doing and making in the art worlds. In AMIW, representation appears both as aesthetics, as depiction – as occupying a place in the sensible – and as a claim for difference – i.e., a difference that proposes an alternative, that acts. AMIW discusses constructions of sexual and gender differences, but also attempts to create a space where the visibility (of these artists) is no longer measured against a centre.

This wasn't so from the beginning.

87

PART 2

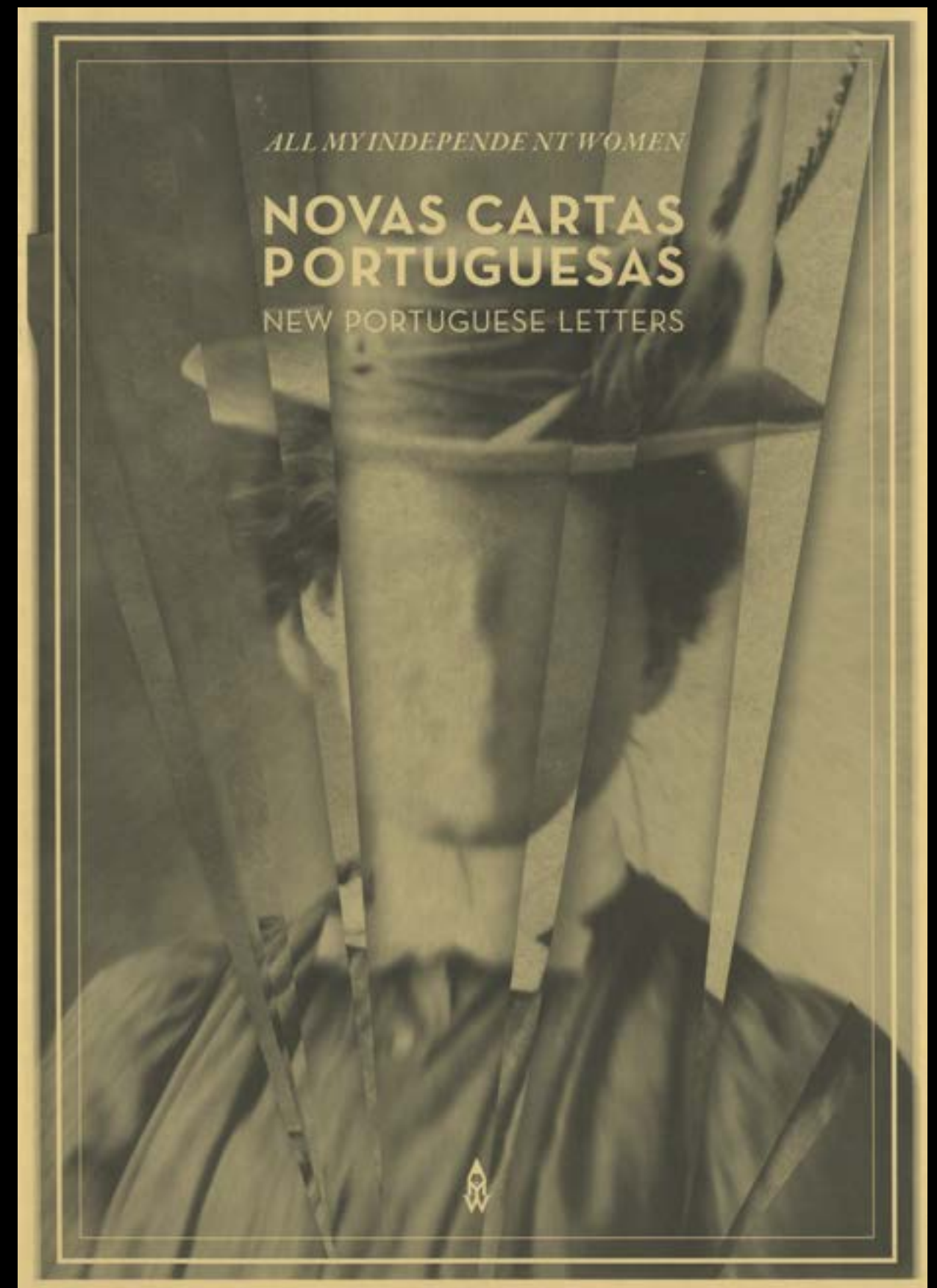
In 2005, when I initiated AMIW in Portugal, I believed that the mainstream artworld did not acknowledge artistic practices that dealt with gender and feminist critique. I organised AMIW in order to fight for the recognition of these practices; to insert them in a given logic. Visibility was a central question. AMIW has always been a marginal project that hoped at some point to become central. In its beginning, central according to mainstream art world logic. It was only after the 2010 exhibition, the 5th one, that the prospect of our feminist discourses being peacefully absorbed by the mainstream art discourse, without bringing any real change, became manifest. When I started to question, what it means to want to inscribe feminist art practices within the "visible" art arena, knowing that the very constructions of what is rendered visible and what is not, is what we actually need to figure out.

Reclaiming a form of visibility without it being transformative runs the risk of absorption into the visible – the canon – in a neoliberal procedure, where differences are transformed into anodyne characteristics, welcomed and quickly absorbed in an ever-growing pluralist society that, on the one hand acknowledges those differences, and on the other cancels out their political potential. AMIW, from a project of visibility started to position itself as a project of solidarity. Here I should mention a very particular characteristic of AMIW and its eight instantiations. AMIW is a network of friends. It started in 2005 by being an exhibition of fifteen artists whose common denominator was working from a feminist perspective and being related to me in some way or another: shared a studio, studied with, worked/collaborated with. Today the network is composed of over 90 artists, and it grew from the same logic, friends we knew, friends we meet along the way and that have affiliated to the project.

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PART 3

Thus, I became less interested in promoting individual artists or collectives, and inserting them into a given visibility logic, and more interested in subverting that logic by recollectivizing our practices. It was at that moment that AMIW's marginal position became a very comfortable place to be. This place, where before we felt that this was where we had been thrown in to, whilst excluded from the centre, became the place we wanted to inhabit. AMIW's situatedness in what can be perceived as the margins of the artworld, but nonetheless the centre of AMIW's counterpublic, allows us to articulate our aims not just within the art sphere but in relation to the world itself, and imagine new possibilities of being and making in the different spheres we operate in. From where we stand we can propose our own fictions, for the creation of the self but also for the production of art.



All My Independent Women – Novas Cartas Portuguesas
Publication cover by Virginia Valente

SACRIFICING THE BODY TO THE MANIFESTO: LANGUAGE, FUTURISM AND PERFORMANCE

92

I drag the whole curtain down:

Somersault,

And leap over the piano...

The show will be wonderful!

I tear the music sheets to shreds,

Smash the whole set to pieces,

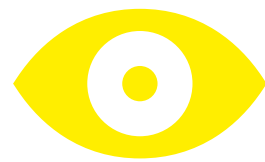
Burst out laughing,

And run out through the foyer...

Mário de Sá-Carneiro, *Tourniquet*, Paris, 1915

93

Sandra Guerreiro Dias



FUTURISM, POETRY, AVANT-GARDE: ACTION!

Over one hundred years on, it would not be redundant to emphasize that the initial impetus of Italian futurism consisted of an ontological and performative reflection on language. Deeply influenced by French symbolists Charles Baudelaire and Gustave Kahn, as well as by the Phataphysics School of Alfred Jarry, F. T. Marinetti, the Italian poet and playwright, was a proselytizing patron of the early twentieth century Parisian anarchist poetry salons¹ which were revolutionizing the art of reading poetry and proposing an art of “words in liberty”.

The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism (1909) was literary in nature. In fact, it consisted of textual action that proposed a rhetorical-political reconfiguration of literary discourse alongside a formal renewal in close dialogue with technological in-

¹ After his stay in Paris, between 1893 and 1896, Marinetti often returned to the French capital, staying in contact with the city’s literary and artistic milieu. During that period, he was a regular at the offices of *La Revue Blanche*, where poetry was violently read, together with Alfred Jarry; the anarchist community of the Abbaye de Créteil, where the same type of readings took place; the *Samedis populaires* organized by Gustave Kahn to restore the intensity of live reading to the printed word and the poetry evenings organized at the Grand Théâtre du Gymnase in Marseille (Beghaus 2000, 272–80).

novation. With a programmatic and militant orientation, the movement wanted to give a voice to, and be the agent of, an avant-garde, which finds expression, through a renewed aesthetical drive, in a new “way of saying”, namely the manifesto². From the statement of this combative intention ensues the encounter with theatre and the *serata*, namely the need to physically confront the audience, at the heart of public space, as well as the full doctrinal manifestation of an art of saying that proposes a radical exploration of the plastic and semiotic materiality of language.

In their aesthetical-political dimension these aspects constitute the historical roots of twentieth century performance, a structuring detail in the history of futurism for the relationships of similarity established with Portuguese futurism. While also in this case the historical dis-alignment with the avant-gardes is a reality, this did not hinder the possibility of a de facto dialogue, albeit a profusely experimental one.

The advent of this movement in Portugal took place in a variety of ways: grants to study in Paris given to artists such as Santa Rita Pintor, Eduardo Viana, Emmerico Nunes, Domingos Rebelo, who upon their return to Portugal contributed to the spreading of those aesthetical ideals. With the onset of WWI some returned, such as Amadeo Souza-Cardoso, Armando Basto, José Pacheko and Eduardo Viana; while others, such as Sonia and Robert Delaunay, settled in Portugal from 1915

² Despite the initial symbolist inspiration, it was futurism that definitely established the manifesto as a literary subgenre.

to 1917. According to Raquel Henriques da Silva, this wave of artists formed a “peculiar geography” that determined an “intense unfolding” of history (2008, 10), which included the history of futurism. In this regard, the Corporation Nouvelle project is important for its combination of poetry and painting. The project was the result of a friendship and artistic dialogue between the Delaunay couple, Souza-Cardoso, Almada Negreiros, José Pacheco and Eduardo Viana³, and benefited from the crucial role of Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso, the only truly international Portuguese artist at the level of, and in contact with, the emerging avant-gardes. His connection to futurism was documented in the famous 1916 interview given to the newspaper *O Dia* on the occasion of the exhibition at Liga Naval, in Lisbon. In this interview, he stated his approval of futurist aesthetical ideals: “All of our life is looking ahead. Let us glorify the great mechanical and geometrical splendour, large-scale industry, electric adds, music hall [sic] alongside grand modern theatre and art as the sole universal expression of dynamic sensation” (Souza-Cardoso 1916). The creative dialogue between Pessoa and Sá-Carneiro, from 1912 to 1916, embodies the decisive critical reception of futurism in Portugal, with clear reverberations within the *Orpheu* project. Despite the exhaustively studied differences between them, the dialogues are most relevant to the history of the two movements. They are obvious in the two magazines: *Orpheu 1* includes Álvaro

³ The objective of the project was to organize itinerant exhibitions of painting, poetry objects, sculpture, etc., as well as to publish painting and poetry albums, including one of the precursor works of early twentieth century aesthetical avant-gardism, the famous visual poem in twenty-two panels by Sonia and Cendrars entitled *La Prose du transsibérien*, printed as an accordion-using folded cardboard.

de Campos’ “Triumphal Ode”; *Orpheu 2* announces a series of conferences which, true to the futurist style, never actually took place, along with a few futurist texts such as Mário de Sá-Carneiro’s “Manucure”, Álvaro de Campos’ “Maritime Ode” and Santa Rita’s *hors-texte*. As for *Portugal Futurista*, it features a series of texts ranging from Apollinaire to Blaise Cendrars and from Sá-Carneiro to Fernando Pessoa. I have chosen to systematize this relationship according to an affinity with and belonging of futurism to modernism in which the former is seen as a trend or variation of the latter. However, this ambiguity becomes clearer when taking into account Pessoa’s own testimony in a letter to an English publisher proposing the publishing of a sensationalist anthology which, as transvestite as it may appear, explains this relationship in the following terms: “We are the descendants of three earlier movements – French ‘symbolism’, Portuguese pantheistic transcendentalism, and the hodgepodge of senseless and contradictory things of which futurism, cubism and others of the same ilk are the occasional expressions” (1972, 134). Also in line with this connection are Pessoa’s dialogue with the vorticist current of English modernism (McNeill 2015) and Sá-Carneiro’s with the Parisian cubist avant-garde, as well as the fact that it was only in 1914, when Sá-Carneiro and Santa Rita returned home, that Parisian avant-gardes resonated in Lisbon for the first time, that Sá-Carneiro and Pessoa truly committed to the *Orpheu* project and the crucial role of futurism in the Portuguese modernist emergence became observable.

In fact, Fernando Cabral Martins underscores the need to read *Orpheu* as “an event” that “exposes the very genesis of the

Avant-garde” (2015, 75), and Celina Silva also highlights its “mise-en-scène aimed at generating a revolution in the cultural space-time” (1999, 1295). Similarly, Nuno Júdice had already outlined the more specifically performative aspects (albeit not under this designation) of both movements: the framing of literature in the broader context of the other arts; the dimension of a theoretically based literary group meeting periodically at cafes to “impose themselves as avant-garde”; the use of the manifesto-magazine format, which translated into an innovation not only in terms of content but also graphic layout; and a concern with capturing, shocking and educating audiences (Júdice 1990, 2).

Despite the dearth of theoretical considerations of performance and literature by performance and literature studies, it is possible to identify in these aspects of futurism, and in the light of performance theory, an “instantiation of text” in its performative character insofar as an activation, of its semic materiality, via performance, be it in terms of “typefaces, format, spatial distribution of the elements on the page or through the book, physical form or space” (Drucker 1998, 131-2). This realizes the technical, semiotic and organic foundation of language. In addition, from the perspective of the classic concept of performance, as outlined by RoseLee Goldberg, futurist manifestations take on the “form of solo or group spectacle” presented by the author-actor in venues ranging from the “theatre” to the “bar”, the “café” or the “street corner”, following no specific script. There is also the exploration of “large-scale visual elements”, in events that can last hours or minutes and which could follow a script despite a significant improvisational component (Goldberg, 1979).

In one word, futurism truly distinguishes itself from modernism due to its plastic-literary prank, which in the Portuguese case ensured its singularity and modernity. This genealogic link between *Orpheu* and ideas that were the precursors and the protagonists of futurism via the flow of artists between the French *Belle Époque* and Lisbon dictated its literary character through its alignment with the avant-garde and futurist performance of the time.

PERFORMERS, MANIFESTOS & ALL: A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

While it is true that it is possible to detect a type of futurism in Portugal akin to the Italian, French or German, an approach from the angle of the presuppositions mentioned above allows us to trace an expanded chronology of the movement based on the aesthetical-sociological rupture of which it was the protagonist. On the one hand, it is possible to observe in Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso’s parody of Velázquez’ *The Drunkards* (Paris, 1908) a premeditation of futurist actions to follow. On the other hand, it is also possible to see how these were prolonged in a series of texts and actions that very concretely rekindled the futurist legacy in the 1920s.

However, the two magazines *Orpheu* (1915) and *Portugal Futurista* (1917) were the first to become the performative prototype of futurist actions. Falling under the category of magazine-op-

eration⁴, due to the experimental nature of their texts and the public scandal they caused, these publications, along with the immersive-phenomenological space of the café, newspaper articles, works and conferences (in the case of *Portugal Futurista*), were the urban core from which this performative action and language project radiated. For instance, *Orpheu 1*, a venture that included the staging of its management (Pessoa 1968, 60), was orchestrated by Pessoa and Sá-Carneiro at a café table. As for *Portugal Futurista*, seized at the printer's by President Afonso Costa's republican police in November 1917, it exemplified the transgression effect which translates into the symbolic effect that the seizing represented in the public space in terms of its social, aesthetical and political impact. Both magazines reflect the performative matrix of modernism within the Portuguese public space and their role cannot be emphasized or researched enough.

Well before Almada's 1917 talk at the Teatro da República, there was Raul Leal's intervention *O Bando Sinistro* [A Sinister Band] in 1915. The poet, a staunch monarchist, was one of the brightest performative figures in Portuguese futurism and the protagonist of one of the first recorded performances in the public space of that period: the distribution of the manifesto entitled *Apelo aos Intelectuais Portugueses* [A Call to Portuguese Intellectuals] against Afonso Costa and the First Republic. Printed clandestinely with the aid of Santa Rita, Leal began by throwing copies "from the upper gallery of Café Martinho, the leaflets flying about and flooding the floor and tables below" (Leal 2010, 25) and then handed them out in one of the Cascais line

⁴ According to the taxonomic categories proposed by Dias (2016).

trains. A playwright and admirer of Wagner's total theatre, Leal corresponded with Marinetti, whom he had personally met in Paris in 1914. Raul Leal was also a polemist, particularly in the case of António Botto, where he sided with Fernando Pessoa against the conservative morals of the Lisbon Students Action League between 1922 and 1923, having written the pamphlet *Sodoma Divinizada* [Deified Sodom] (1923), which was seized a month after publication. Raul Leal was one of the most important and singular interlocutors of the Portuguese orphic-futurist spirit. In the human drama of his brilliant madness, he personified the existential stance of a true futurist dancer.

On the occasion of Pessoa's death, Almada said: "I did not know of any example similar to Fernando Pessoa's: the man replaced by the poet", adding: "Until, one day in 1935, the poet personally buried the body that had accompanied him all his life" (Almada Negreiros 1935, 48). In Portuguese literature, no one personified the "drama in people" and in language like Pessoa, for whom "art is essentially dramatic" (Pessoa 1999, 84). A subject that deserves a study in its own right is his crucial legacy to a theory of performance and language. In this context, it is also worth mentioning the mysterious episode, of which he was the protagonist, together with Augusto Ferreira Gomes, of Aleister Crowley's disappearance at Cascais's Hell's Mouth during his visit to Portugal in 1930. The staging of the mystery surrounding the obscure disappearance of "Master Therion" on the pages of *Diário de Notícias* and *Notícias Ilustrado*, had lasting repercussions in the press and the impact of an international practical joke, and it deserves a reference in a chronology of Portuguese performance.

Furthermore, Mário de Sá-Carneiro played a preponderant role here. While it is true that the poet always distanced himself from futurism, there are manifold ways of including him in that project. Starting from the end, it is possible to glimpse a dialogue between the moment of his death and the opening of “Manucure”, the most futurist of his poems. In a letter to José Pacheco, dated 6 May 1916, Jorge Barradas testifies: “Before taking the poison, I know he did his nails, put on his finest suit, combed his hair and, after taking the poison, lay down on the bed to wait for death” (quoted in Nobre 1990, 16). This should be compared with the beginning of the poem mentioned above: “In the sensation of polishing my nails, / a sudden inexplicable sensation of tenderness. / I include everything in Me piously” (Sá-Carneiro 2001, 51).

Despite his known vocation as a playwright, the author nevertheless made a distinction between literature and theatre, considering them as “two opposite arts”: theatre as a “plastic art” aimed at “seeing” and literature as an art of *feeling* (Sá-Carneiro 2001, 240-1), as laid out in the article-manifesto “Teatro-arte” [Theatre-art] published in the republican daily *O Rebate* on 28 November 1913. In it the author conceptualizes the drama *in persona* that he embodies as the actor of his art-life. Cabral Martins has spoken at length on this theme extracting an “exhibitionist” and “confessional tone” from the rigorous temporal recording of his texts that has crystallized them as “quasi-theatre” (Martins 1997, 68). Aside from some more markedly avant-gardist poems, such as the “poems without support” that he dedicates to Santa Rita (“Elegia” [Elegy] and “Manucure”, or “Apoteose” [Apotheosis] and “Torniquete” [Tourniquet],

among others), in his youth the author also participated as an actor in theatrical recitals translating and writing theatre plays. But there was also his bohemian café life in Paris, in true futurist style, featured in such poems as “Serradura” [Sawdust] (1915) or “Cinco Horas” [Five o’clock] (1915).

From Guilherme de Santa Rita, who had returned to Lisbon in September 1914 with the mission of spreading the futurist aesthetical ideal, we are left only with the striking testimony of the painting *A Cabeça (Cubo-futurista)* [The head (cubo-futurist)] (1919-1912), the *hors-texte* for *Orpheu 2* and the four paintings for *Portugal Futurista*. Despite this sparse output, Santa Rita’s place in Portuguese futurism is central and he was continuous and fervently remembered (by Sarah Afonso, for instance) for his histrionic and clownish gesture as the “art theoretician” (quoted in Almada Negreiros 1982, 34) or “terracotta model” of futurism, as Carlos Parreira called him (quoted in Neves 2006, 169). This is due to the fact that Santa Rita had become, as a body-canvas, a unique futurist work that, despite not having survived, became crystalized in the anamnesis of that *mise-en-scène*. Moreover, after having had direct contact with it in Paris, he played a crucial role in spreading futurism in the country and turned himself into an *ipsis verbis* example of sacrificing the body to the manifesto. Ruy Coelho, who lived with Santa Rita in Paris, offers the following testimony: “Here is the prankster. Here is Santa Rita. A painter who strolled the streets of Paris until late at night, talking and creating the most fantastical theories of art and who, once lost, did not want to find his way back home. A prank?” (Coelho 2015, 93).

Deeply influenced by the Delaunay couple, José de Almada Negreiros is the most consensual artist among Portuguese futurists for his consistency, for the diversity and singularity of his oeuvre, for his expansive and non-conformist personality that combines with the leitmotif of movement, for the multiplicity and abundance of performances, texts and interventions the legacy of which, in its quantity and quality, is still untapped and calls for a full and detailed systematizing from the point of view of performance.

In his orchestration of innumerable interventions three aspects stand out: the performances and interventions, the programmatic texts and the countless conference-performances. His major texts include “Saltimbancos” (contrastes simultâneos) [Wandering jugglers (simultaneous contrasts)], “Mima-Fataxa” and “Ultimatum Futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX” [Futurist Ultimatum to Portuguese generations of the twentieth century], published in *Portugal Futurista*; the 1917 surrealist novella *A Engomadeira* [The ironing woman]; *A Cena do Ódio* [The Scene of Hatred], 1915, intended for *Orpheu 3* but only partly published in 1923 in *Contemporânea 7*; the leaflet “Manifesto da Exposição de Amadeo Souza-Cardoso” [Manifesto for Amadeo e Souza-Cardoso’s Exhibition] (1916), which accompanied Sousa-Cardoso’s exhibition in Portugal (Lisbon and Porto); the leaflet-visual poem “Litoral [Coastline]” (1916) and *K4 O Quadrado Azul* [K4 The Blue Square], one of the masterpieces of Portuguese futurism. In these and other texts, the artist explored the performative potential of language in corporeal, plastic, auditory and planographic terms by developing a spatial-temporal instantiation

>>> Schneider p.51
>>> Bayraktar p.180
>>> Greiner p.388

of the text in the space-time of what Fischer-Litche calls “the semiotic body” (2008). His performances include the opening futurist conference at Teatro República, in 1917, with Santa Rita, wearing the blue futurist worker’s overall that he had designed for the occasion, and the intervention “o pacto do grande frete da poesia: enquanto a Poesia não é” [the pact of the great bore of poetry: while waiting for Poetry]. In line with the notion of the intermedia relation between literature and the other arts, this manifesto was proclaimed by Almada, Santa Rita and Souza-Cardoso in front of the painting *Ecce Homo*, at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, in Lisbon, in 1917, an event for which the three artists shaved their eyebrows and beards and went for a stroll in downtown Lisbon (Almada Negreiros 1959, 20). *Manifesto Anti-Dantas* was written following the famous controversy with Júlio Dantas, after Almada had seen the play *Sóror Mariana* [Sister Mariana] at the Teatro Ginásio on 21 October 1915. The manifesto, published in an experimental brown paper edition, was read aloud to his generational companions while standing on top of a table in Café Martinho. Later, on 15 August 1965, there was a performative reading of the manifesto at Casa dos Galos in Lisbon (Almada Negreiros 2013). In this context, we should mention Almada’s involvement with the ballets russes when Diaghilev’s company toured the Coliseu and Teatro São Carlos in 1917 and 1918. Aside from the passionate manifesto *Os Bailados Russos em Lisboa* [The Ballets Russes in Lisbon], the artist participated as a director, costume designer and dancer in such pieces as *Bailado Encantamento* [Enchantment Ballet], *A Princesa dos Sapatos de Ferro* [The Princess with the Iron Shoes], *Jardim de Pierrette* [Pierrette’s Garden] and *Carnaval*

>>> Conde p.70

[Carnival], by Fokine and Bakst, becoming famous for his performances as Harlequin and Pierrot.

Among his most important performance-conferences is *Arte, a Dianteira* [Art, the Frontline], one of his last, held at the University of Coimbra in 1965. It featured a close-up reproduction of a canvas with the famous formula “1+1 = 1” hanging above his head (Almada Negreiros 2006, 343). In his graphic presentation of the concept of knowledge as absolute, in the scope of which he defined art as vital drive, Negreiros proposed a notion of poetry as “voice” and “vocation”, coming to the conclusion that “Poetry is the vigour of personal birth. / One is born a Poet. Everyone. Each one.” (Almada Negreiros 2006, 321-2). This formula sums up Almada’s concept of art as life, an operation in which language plays a primordial role.

FOR A HISTORY OF EPIGONIC FUTURISM IN PORTUGAL

The studies on Portuguese futurism are unanimous as to its fleetingness and intensity. However, a broader analysis of its sociological-performative impact allows us to put this fleetingness into perspective and speak of an epigonic futurism. Sá-Carneiro’s suicide in Paris, in 1916, Santa Rita’s and Souza-Cardoso’s deaths in 1918 and Almada’s departure for Paris in 1919 foretold the end of the first cycle. However, a last breath can be identified in António Ferro’s publication of the manifesto “Nós” [We] in 1921 and in the Coimbra group.

In 1916, Francisco Levita published the manifesto *Negreiros-Dantas* in Coimbra against the “volatile” lust of Almada Negreiros in his disproportionate attention to Dantas, and organized the iconoclastic “Banquete Futurista” [Futurist Banquet] together with two of his friends at the Hotel Bussaco. The graphic and material performativity of the manifesto, in its performative arrangement of visual and spatial experiments on the page and featuring the text on two folded leafs, in true futurist style, along with the experimental happening at Luso, allow us once again to trace a vocation of Portuguese futurism for provocation, between intermedia experimentalism, performance and language. A few years later, and in the same vein, the “Coimbra Futurist Movement”⁵ brought together public space intervention and the manifesto-conference. The beatific mission of the “sensational conference” subtitled “Sol” [Sun], which resulted in a happening with programmatic intentions, was to “exhort humanity to learn how to Be-itself” (S.1925, 5). The conference was presented, and duly baptized with cold water from a fire-hose, at Teatro Sousa Bastos, in Coimbra, on 13 March 1925. The same militant intention is apparent in the tone of the flyer and manifesto simply entitled “Manifesto”, which opens with quotes by Marinetti and proposes “states of mind to be lived in sequence” as well as “dances strong intersections planes sculptures”, because “forms are not inert but always moving” (quoted by Marnoto 2009, 28).

The main figure of this epigonic futurism is António Ferro. Well before joining the National Information Secretariat (SNI),

⁵ Which included António Navarro (Príncipe de Judá), Abel Almada (Tristão de Teive), João Carlos Celestino Gomes (Pereira São-Pedro) and Mário Coutinho (Óscar).

Sá Carneiro's high school friend and colleague brought together pose-theatre, writing and social-cultural intervention, which he cultivated through theatre, literature, cinema, journalism, the graphic arts, scenography, and even couture and decoration. The triad composed of theatricality, literature and public space intervention, together with his futurist and modernist spirit, culminated in a series of interventions and works that are worth mentioning.

António Ferro's notion of art can be elucidated by his words concerning the polemical demonstration on the "SNBA matter" at Chiado Terrasse, in Lisbon, on 18 December 1921:

All Arts are plastic, all Arts can be reduced to forms. Art is truly the outline of life. There is flowing hair in a melody by Debussy, there is a majestic andante in Rodin's *The Walking Man*... In Art everything is plastic; in Art everything is a body. A sonnet by Eugénio de Castro is plastic, Notre Dame is plastic; Ruskin's prose is as plastic as the plastic arts he writes about. In Art all is alive, in Art all is form. (quoted by Rodrigues 1995, 87)

Aside from *Teoria da Indiferença* [Theory of Indifference] (1920), in which he states that "Life is the artist's studio. / Clothes are the posters of the body" (quoted by Henriques 1990, 107), there was also the literary manifesto "Nós" (1921; the third manifesto of Portuguese futurism⁶), an author edi-

⁶ Together with Almada's "Ultimatum Futurista" and Álvaro de Campos' "Ultimatum".

tion personally distributed at the door of the Brasileira in the same year. In that text, written with a theatrical structure in a dialogue between "I" and "The Crowd", the author calls for the creation of a global theatre – "That life may be a theatre in white and gold..." in which every word is "a drop of blood" (Ferro 2006, 159). Then, in 1922 he presented the performance-conference "A Idade do *Jazz-Band* [The Age of the Jazz-Band]" in Brazil, which culminated in a happening-concert with a jazz orchestra and a dancer. In 1923, his experimental theatre play "Mar Alto" [High seas], briefly featuring Ferro as actor, was presented in Lisbon at the Teatro de São Carlos. Echoing the *Orpheu* scandal, this controversial play was forbidden. Ferro also designed a Parisian-inspired studio-theatre to produce avant-garde plays and experimental scenographic projects. This dream came true in 1925 under the name Teatro Novo at the foyer of Palácio Rivoli with an exuberant decoration by José Pacheko. The presentation of the plays *Knock or the Victory of Medicine*, by Jules Romain and *Right You Are* (if you think so), by Luigi Pirandello, considered too bold for Portuguese society of the time, led to the closing down of this aspiring experimental theatre.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Futurism proposes and brings to fruition a new relationship between the word and its corporeal and technical materiality. Broadly speaking, its main contribution to the history of performance is the destabilizing of genres, the exploration of

literature as praxis, as well as an effective epistemological dialogue between the arts. It is in this context that the manifesto, as performative and experimental language theatre, affirms itself as a catalysing event of the, and in the, public space.

Concerning the Portuguese case, it is symptomatic that José de Almada Negreiros, in a retrospective exercise in his *Orpheu 1915-1965*, repeatedly invokes the following set of nuclear spaces of this avant-garde: its experimental character, “the encounter of letters and painting” (Almada Negreiros 2015, 24), the “simultaneity of various kinds of knowledge” (idem, 19) and “plenitude, i.e., that the mental and sensible function is exercised in a ‘natural freedom’” (idem, 20). These are transversal aspects to this history, the protagonists of which literally sacrificed their body. Although futurism did not last in Portugal, the “sociological scandal” (Melo e Castro 1980, 42) that it brought about cannot be overlooked in its lasting historical repercussions. Sharing an aesthetical revolutionary project based on the principles of free art, literature as praxis and the intersecting of the arts, defence of manifesto-action and radical and ontological questioning of the world, Portuguese futurism is a unique and undeniable legacy in Portuguese art.

The reasons for this lack of recognition, especially in the field of performance, are threefold: a difficulty on the part of critics to find a framework for art forms that challenged the epistemological boundaries between art and life, the different artistic languages, art and science, and the past, present and future. Its ephemeral character also amplified the loss, defying historicization and reception. As João Alves das Neves remarked a few

years later concerning Almada there are “very few truly valid documents left from this past of already almost half a century ago that preserve the signature of the impetuous and indomitable talent of Almada” (Neves 2006, 36). The same could be said of all the futurist actions mentioned here. Still, from the point of view of literary studies, the reception of modernism has been mostly through the perspective of *Orpheu* and Fernando Pessoa. As Osvaldo Manuel Silvestre has pointed out, “the futurist avant-garde calls not only for a critical or historiographical revisionism, but for methodological and disciplinary rigour. The instrument of this revision is the concept of performance, or rather, the rereading of the avant-garde under its light” (2008, 878). In other words, choosing to study these movements from the perspective of performance implies questioning that angle, requiring a redefinition of coordinates from the literary field and from the arts themselves, namely regarding the theoretical recognition and practical criticism of such concepts as intermedia literature and performance.

It is in the nature of performances and the avant-garde to start ending fast. The more ephemeral, the more apothecotic its passage and escape from time, the more it persists in a “future-desire” (Melo e Castro 1980, 45) of persevering transformation. As Almada wrote in his manifesto on Souza-Cardoso’s exhibition at Liga Naval in 1916: “We, the futurists, know nothing of History, we know only Life that passes us by” (2006, 20). Performance defies loss insofar as its “deposited acts” and its “spectral meanings” (Schneider 2012, 71-72) last. One hundred years on, what we celebrate here is that performance of art and life.

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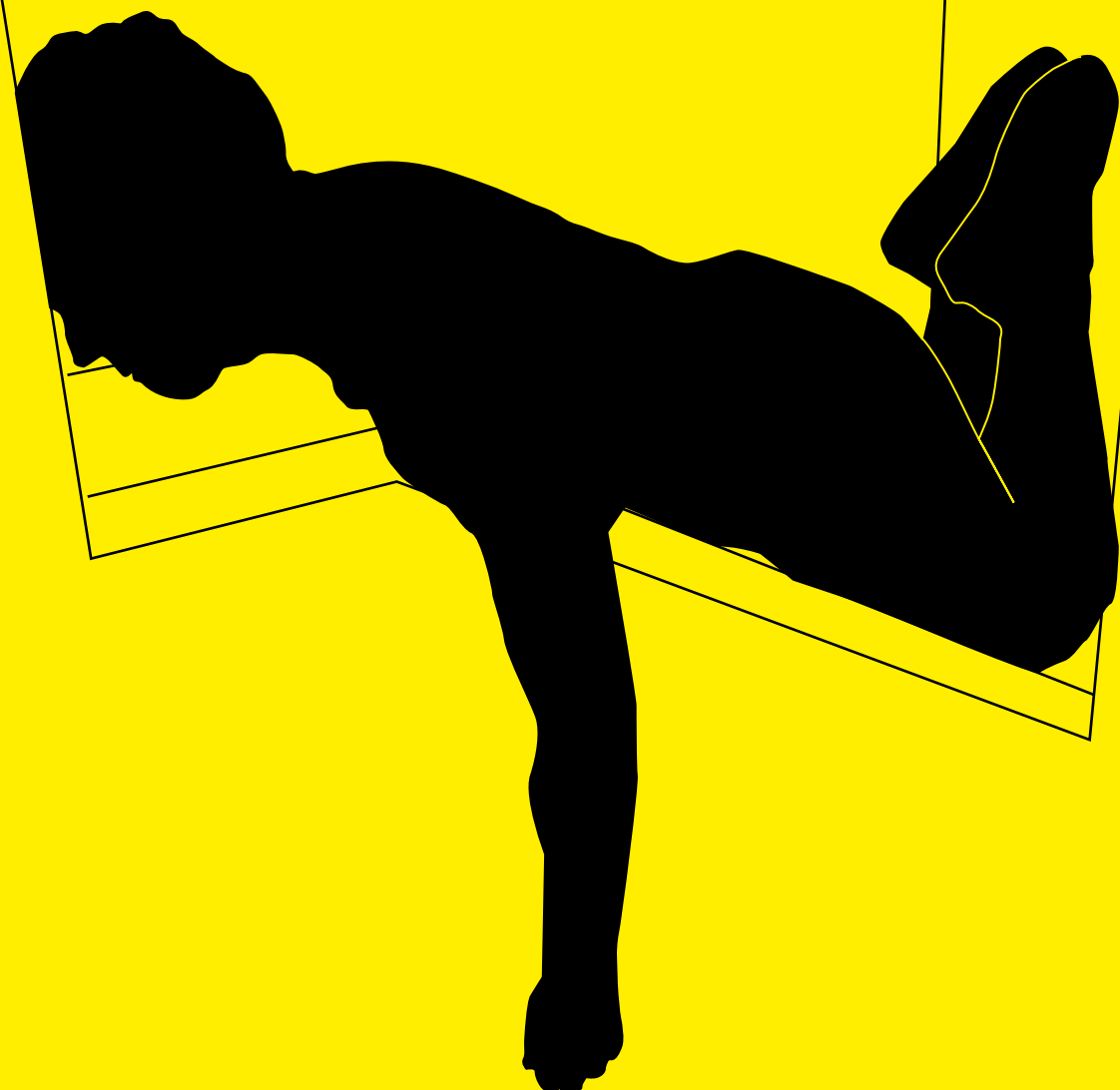
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Scores for the Body, Building & Soul for the São Luiz Teatro Municipal, Lisbon

PERFORM THE PIECES IN ANY ORDER, BUT FOR BEST RESULTS DO THEM ALL.
DON'T BE PUT OFF BY THE HISTORICAL REFERENCES. IT IS ALL ABOUT YOU AND YOUR ACTUAL EXPERIENCE.
IF YOU ENJOY THIS, DO IT TWICE.

illustrations: Miriam Hempel (daretoknow.co.uk)

David Helbich



CHEERS VALIE EXPORT

Go to any particular architectural element present.
Press your body, your side, your back or your front firmly against this
element, as if you try to disappear into it.
Absorb your body, mind and soul into the element.

Finish with this one:

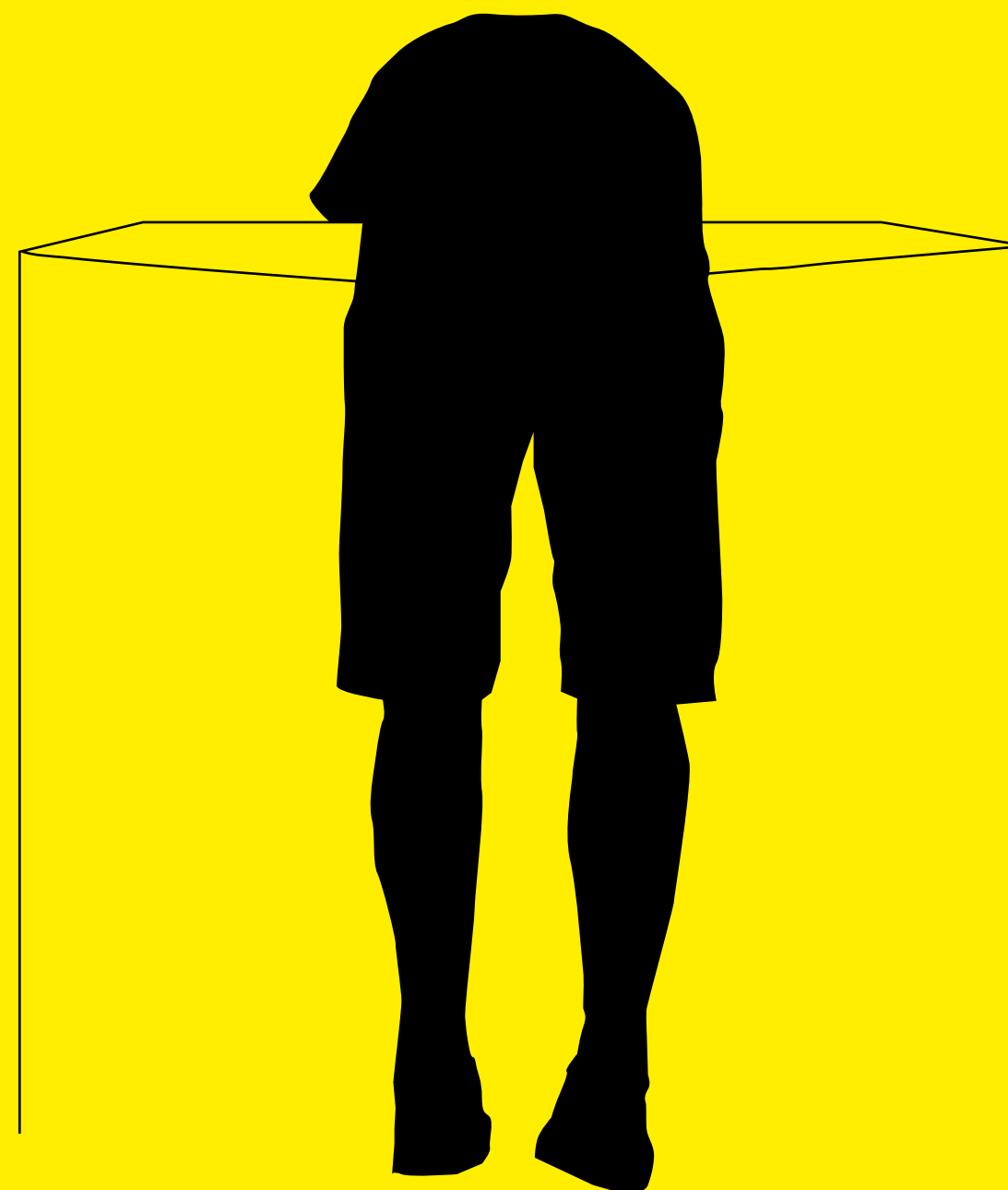
Go to the landing of the main staircase.
Lay down on the floor and squeeze yourself “under” the last step.
Try briefly to forget, where you are.

WOW, HUNTER S. THOMPSON

Hang head first over waist-high objects, like the bar counter
on the second floor or the staircase railing to the toilets.

Hang there for at least 30 seconds.

Actually, try even longer.



YVONNE RAINER IS IN THE HOUSE

Do this in one naturally slow and fluid movement.

Go stand in front of one of the old heaters – directly lift your right foot from the floor – stretch this leg to the back – put your left arm all the way behind the heater – touch the ground with the tip of the lifted foot and make a movement as if you stub out a cigarette – also shove the right arm behind the heater – slowly turn your face, probably squeezed against the wall, to the other side. Hold this position for a bit.

Get out of this position by taking out the left arm – slowly turn your body to the left away from the heater – while leaving pull out the right arm without looking at it – leave the heater location at a slow pace – look back only once.

Go to another heater, on another floor and repeat the phrase.

118



WALL SEX I

On the ground floor, to the right of the main entrance, go to the cloakroom on the left side of the theater space, hidden behind a wall in the corner.

Go to this wall and touch both sides of the wall with one hand on each side, so that your forehead is pressed lightly against the short end of the wall.

Try to find the location of the other hand on the other side and press both hands "together". Slide both hands lightly over the wall, in sync and exactly not in sync.

Keep caressing. Enjoy every smallest bit of the wall.
Much later: lick your palms clean, libidiously.

119



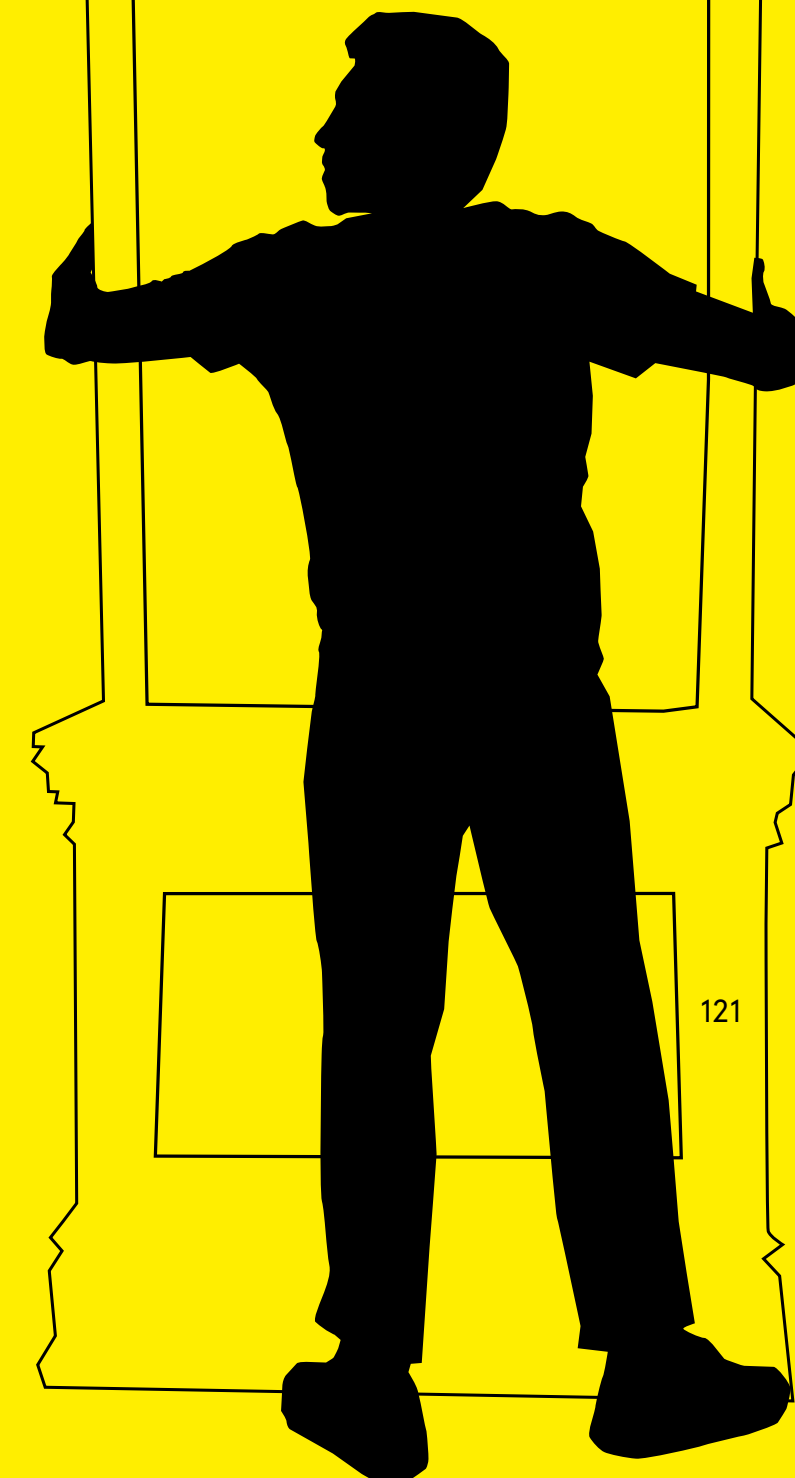
120



WALL SEX II HURRAY, ANDREA FRASER

Grab the round walls on the ground floor to the right of the main entrance. Spread your arms wide open, grab as much of it as possible. And even more. Feel the tension within your wide reaching hug. Think of the wall as part of a huge body. Start playing with the pressure of your finger tips. Later, lift one leg and write a name with your foot on the wall, carefully, but with dedication.

121



PILLAR HUG

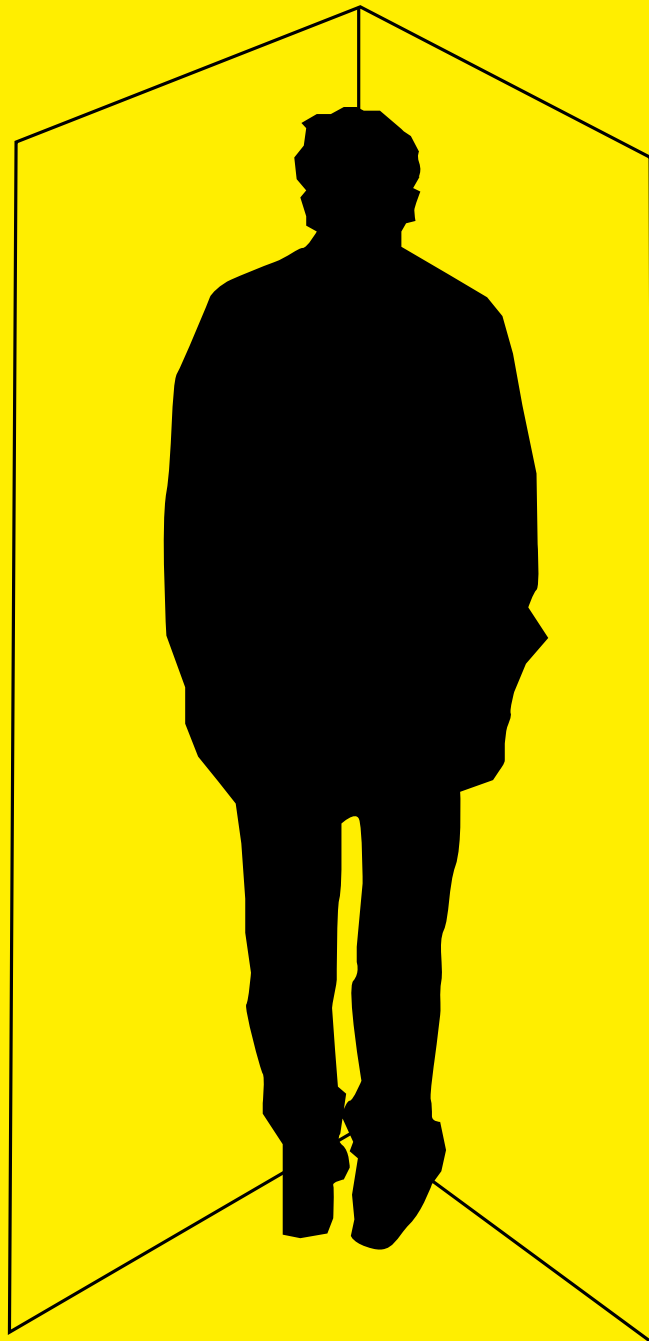
HOLY MOLY GUACAMOLE, ALL YOU BEAUTIFUL HIPPIES! ALRIGHT, MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ, DOES IT WORK OUT, LADY GAGA?

Hug the pillar on the second floor. Give it a good, warm, strong and long hug. Close your eyes and count to 40, slowly.
Project yourself inside the pillar.

HELLO BRUCE NAUMAN, HOW DO YOU DO, AKIO SUZUKI

Squeeze yourself into narrow corners, like, on the second floor, the corner of the cloakroom. Face the corner and stand very close to it. Touch both walls with your forehead and shoulders. Stay like this for at least one minute. Slowly move your head out of the corner. Start really slowly to bounce back and forth.

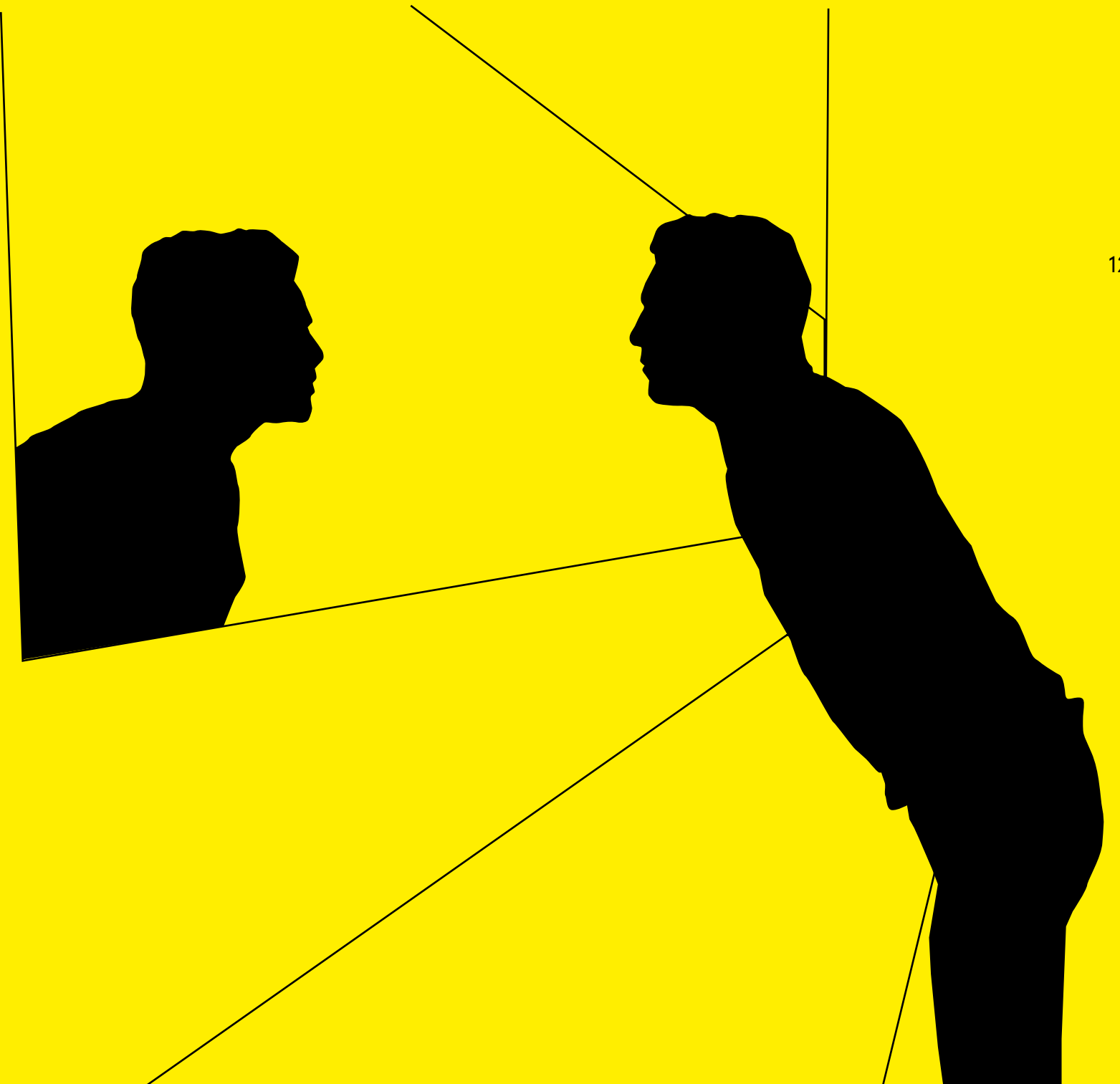
Consider the changes of the sound reflections as micro-changes. Imagine your head being a huge ball racing through a space of moving molecules; think of a centimeter as a meter.



122

NICE TO MEET YOU, DAN GRAHAM

Go to any bathroom in the building and stand in front of the sink. Look straight at the reflection in the mirror. Ignore yourself.



123

CHECK THIS, NSA

Press your ear against the loge-door number 24.
Do this hard and light. And hard again.
Make some mental notes and leave.

24



WINDOWS

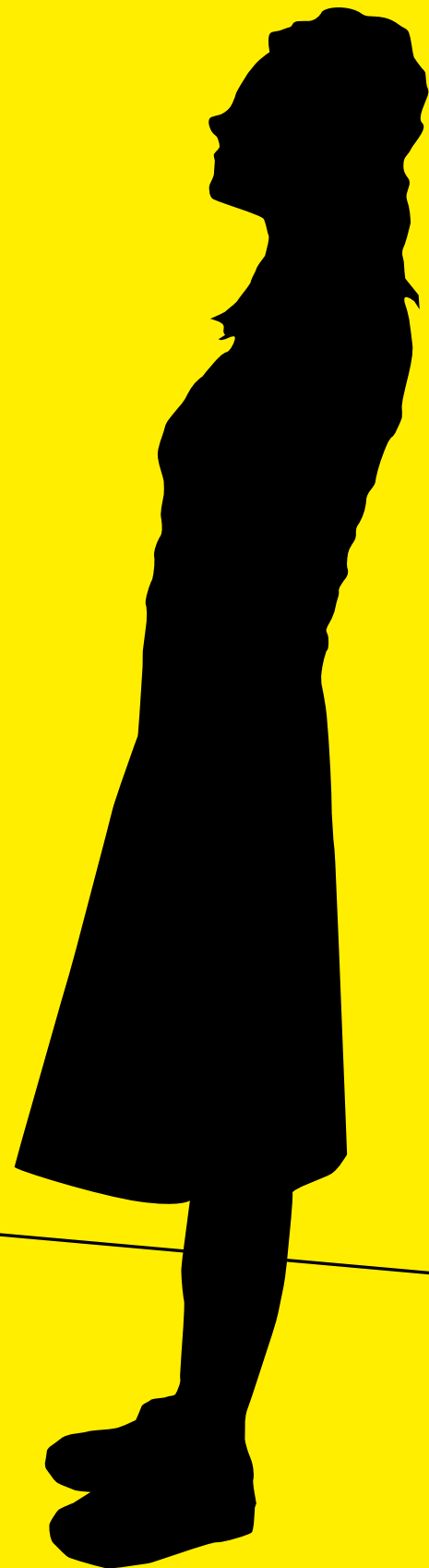
Stand in front of the big window on the first floor that looks out over the city. Find a spot to look out of the window in a way that the frames fit exactly the lines of the buildings behind. Once you found what you were looking for, hold this body posture for 10 seconds. Observe, how you become self-conscious.



MANY WORLDS

In the hall behind the main entrance, go to the inside windows that go to the new part of the building. Stand on the small strip of the floor that slopes very slightly downwards. Stand in a perfect 90 degrees angle to this plane of the slope.

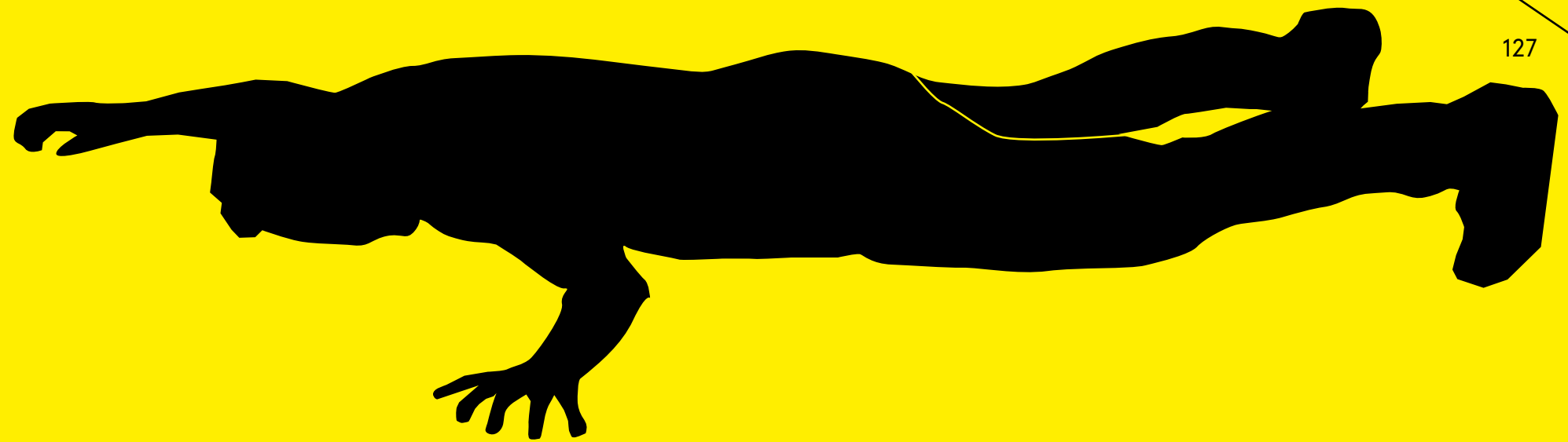
126



EARTH HUG YOGA GREETINGS MONTY PYTHON'S STREET CLIMBING

Lay on your belly on the floor of the entrance hall in the middle of the red carpet, arms wide spread. Press your ear at the floor, tightly. Slowly move your arms in half circles, concentrating on your finger tips.

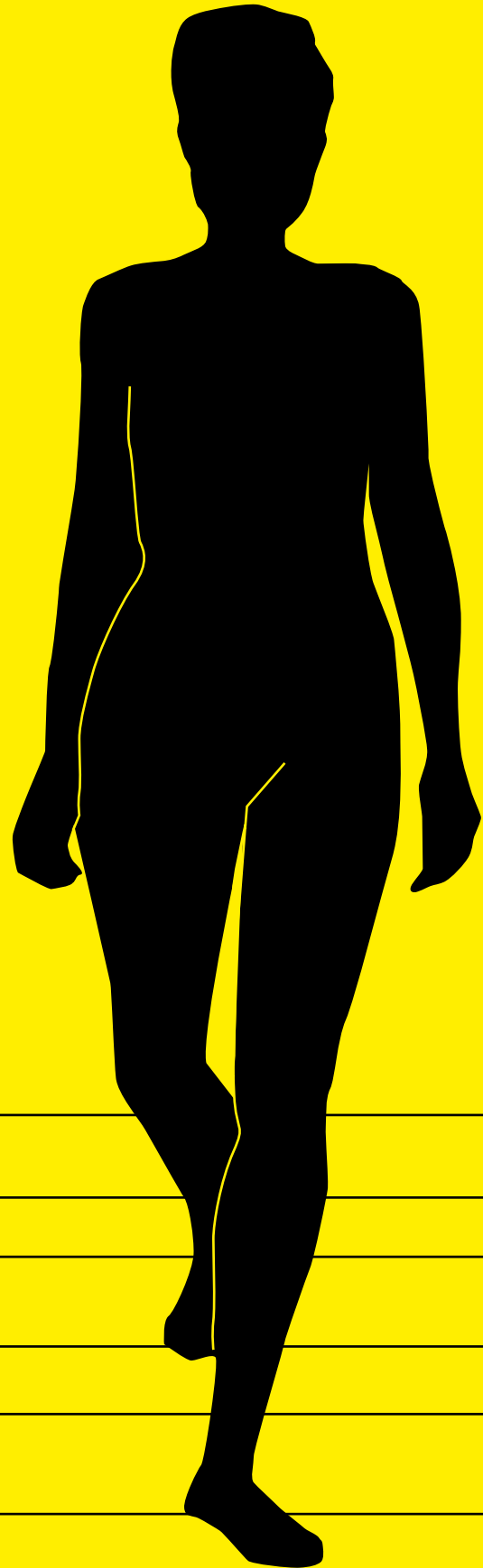
127



HIYA! GERHARD RICHTER

Walk down the stairs, as if you were in deep thought.

128



WHAT'S UP, VITO ACCONCI

Look for a more or less private space.
Have an erotic moment by yourself.

129

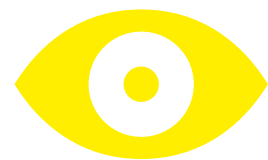


**PERFORMANCE
AS ART AND
CELEBRATION:
DEMOCRATIZATION,
COLLECTIVE EVENTS
AND PUBLIC SPACE**

130

131

Isabel Nogueira



This reflection focuses on the moment that followed the 25 April 1974 Revolution. More specifically, it is set against a background that saw the emergence of certain artistic and cultural issues in Portugal at the time. Political openness was linked to the movement that opened up public and collective space, but also to Celebration (*Festa*) understood as sharing and artistic experimentation. In fact, collective events, particularly in the context of the visual arts, were a constant during those years (R. Gonçalves, 1992). It was as if, in tandem with regime openness – with its political, social, cultural and artistic implications – a similar movement was possible in the visual arts – particularly concerning their performativity. This movement was manifested in some collective events that were important not only for the period at hand but which also had implications for the history of Portuguese art in its connection with the specific revolutionary moment and the broader movement of the international neo-avant-garde.

The final years of the corporative dictatorship were characterised by mounting crisis. The political and economic crisis, compounded by the 1973 global oil crisis, turned into a social crisis in an increasingly claustrophobic and depressed country. But what happened in the visual arts during those years? According to historians such as João Pinharanda and António Rodrigues, the Portuguese 1960s were decisive for the development of art, being defined by an attempt to establish a dialogue with, and accompany, the international trends of the moment in a country that was clearly peripheral. As João Pinharanda wrote: “the 1960s are the most decisive years in Portuguese art, only comparable to the 1910s – they could be said to have been a ‘second foundational decade’” (Pinharanda 1995, 602). According to António Rodrigues, the 1960s were a privileged decade because of the innovative notions of image and sign, along with the conceptual and perceptual foundations of the object. This innovation was not related to the socio-material conditions of Portuguese artistic life of the time, but to the cultural stance of artists and artworks (*Anos 60, Anos de Rupturas* 1994), i.e., to an effective autonomy of individuals and works and a quest for new horizons of experimentation.

However, according to Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, and despite the fact that the 1960s constituted a period of fundamental changes, they were not years of rupture because Portuguese art had undergone a long change in status, function and intention away from the ideological purity of historical modernism, which was accompanied by an international process that questioned the very concept of avant-garde (Almeida 1999). Indeed, the decade proved a crucial period, with the developments in pop art, con-

ceptual art, new figuration – often preceded by informalism –, optical art, land art, process art, performance art, assemblage, etc.

This fragmentation associated with a creative individualism was due to contact with the exterior through émigré artists – especially after 1957 (with the financial support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation), there were brief visits to the most influential artistic centres, contact with specialized foreign magazines, direct or indirect contact of journalists and critics with major events abroad, and exhibitions of internationally renowned artists in Portugal (although few and far between).

The first major aspect to highlight was a certain autonomization of the visual arts vis-à-vis the chronology of political events, which was underway as a process of activation of creative individualities. An understandable historical optimism emerged in the wake of two crucial moments: the so-called Marcelist spring and, above all, the April Revolution. However, numerous artists tried to be modern and pursue modernity, regardless of the geographical space they occupied or the very real limitations of the Portuguese artistic milieu.

In 1974, the military coup occurred that ended forty-eight years of dictatorship and the 1933 Constitution. The anti-democratic, colonialist, isolated and authoritarian regime fell. However, unlike what might have been expectable, the fundamental political and social changes operating in a closed, conservative country were not by themselves a determining factor for the development of the visual arts. With the April Revolution, the only artists who returned to Portugal were those who

had left for specifically political reasons. The vast majority had left mainly for artistic, intellectual, lifestyle or didactic reasons, illustrating the ongoing problems of Portuguese cultural and artistic life, and did not return. In fact, and from the artistic point of view, a pulverizing individual change had been underway since the 1960s or even the 1950s led by artists who, independently of their political-geographic space, effectively wanted to be modern, which runs against belief (that was naturally experienced during the revolutionary period) in the pioneering impetus of politics over art.

With few exceptions, from the point of view of the publishing and circulation of art and culture, Portuguese periodicals did not pay any in-depth attention to these themes, and even more so at a time of freedom of speech. In fact, politics dominated the order of the day. In this context, the magazine *Colóquio/Artes* played a unique role in Portugal. However, other publications dealing with artistic questions are also worth mentioning, such as the magazine *Arte/Opinião* (launched in 1978 by the students of the Lisbon School of Fine Arts), and the magazines *Opção* (Lisbon 1976-1978), *Brotéria* (Lisbon, 1925-1999) and *Revista de Artes Plásticas* (published by Galeria Alvarez, Porto).

As for artistic and museologic institutions, aside from the Sociedade Nacional de Belas-Artes, it is worth mentioning the Portuguese Section of AICA, which had been founded in 1955 and restructured in 1969. A series of important AICA/SNBA exhibitions were organized in 1972 and, in 1981, the AICA/SEC (Secretaria de Estado da Cultura) Award was launched. Other institutions were equally important, such as the Coope-

rativa Árvore (Porto), founded in 1963; the Círculo de Artes Plásticas de Coimbra (CAPC), established in 1958; and Galeria Ogiva, founded in Óbidos in 1970. However, there were no modern or contemporary art museums in Portugal at the time. The National Museum of Contemporary Art/ Chiado Museum, which had been set up in May 1911, would only reopen, after several setbacks, in 1994. However, in 1976 an important institution in this context was founded in Porto, the Centro de Arte Contemporânea (CAC), which between 1976 and 1980 was located at the Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis directed by Fernando Pernes. According to the historian and art critic José-Augusto França, CAC was “the best creation of the 25 April regime” (1983, 409). As for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation’s Centro de Arte Moderna (CAM), after many years of waiting, it was finally opened in 1983. This points to a structural stagnation that was not immediately solved by the 1974 Revolution.

However, there can be no doubt that the fundamental democratization of the country was, as expected, a special space for artistic possibilities. The 25 April Revolution brought about a serious militant approach by a substantial number of artists. There was an intense commitment to the notion of culture “at the service of the People” (Chicó 1984, 20-21). This was the time of slogans and counter-slogans: “Fascist art is a visual fart” (Marcelino Vespeira) – a proclamation at the event organized by the Movimento Democrático de Artistas Plásticos, at Foz Palace on 28 May 1974 (MDAP 1974) –, “Against aggressiveness, creativeness” or “Aesthetical quality is progressive; mediocrity is reactionary” (Salette Tavares). This was also the

era of mural paintings, many of them anonymous and spontaneous, which unexpectedly invaded the public space.

Despite the difficulty, or even the inability of the State, to devise a structuring and coherent cultural policy, there was an investment in cultural promotion campaigns capable of bringing together the State, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), the National Salvation Junta, the people and the artists. As mentioned earlier, collective actions in the public space were a characteristic of the moment. Therefore, I shall pay specific attention to those which best qualify as artistic and performative processes of creativity, and even of Celebration and sharing at a historical moment that brought together political and social issues and artistic and aesthetical questions, especially those linked to the generic movement of the international neo-avant-garde. That is the juncture in which we can locate some of the most particular and significant artistic production of the period and even of the 1970s.

At this moment of mutation and intense and novel experiencing of the public space, I would like to highlight the collective actions of two important groups of artists who sought freedom of intervention and creation: Grupo Acre (“Art for everyone”, between 1974 and 1977, including Alfredo Queiroz Ribeiro, Clara Menéres and Joaquim Lima Carvalho, among other collaborators) and Grupo Puzzle (“Counter-current”, between 1975 and 1981, including Albuquerque Mendes, Armando Azevedo, Carlos Carreiro, Dario Alves, Graça Morais, Jaime Silva, João Dixo, Pedro Rocha and, later on, Fernando Pinto Coelho and Gerardo Burmester).

In their own way, both were carriers of a plastic-performative language with a conceptual bent and a concern for social and artistic intervention, which was innovative in the Portuguese context. Regarding Grupo Acre and their actions, Ernesto de Sousa wrote in 1975: “Grupo Acre was built after 25 April as a serene and conscious *attitude*. [...] The two ‘actions’ carried out by the group so far (painting the pavement of Rua do Carmo, in Lisbon, and rolling out a strip of plastic from the top of Torre dos Clérigos, in Porto) required collaboration and, in the second case, complicit participation. [...] Grupo Acre is a project, and only projects are consistent. Today. Like the revolution. Everything else is outdated. When Grupo Acre rolled out a strip of plastic from the top of Torre dos Clérigos it was the dazzling body of Clara Semide that extended out... As well as [the body] of other companions. And our own, as we start to understand all this. Extended (by the invented appropriation) of Nasoni’s architecture, of Porto, of the City, of the Country, of Dream, of Utopia. And this is worth as much, or more, than painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel” [Sousa 1975, 41).

As for Grupo Puzzle, it was born in Porto, in December 1975, presented in early 1976 at a dinner/intervention at Galeria Alvarez (Porto) and disseminated at the 3rd International Art Encounters (August 1976) in Póvoa de Varzim. In 1977, Egídio Álvaro wrote about the group:

I think that underneath the whole activity of the Group there is a polemic attitude [...]. It is polemic because they choose difficulty, and by doing so belong to the counter-current that shuns the facility, be it more or less official, more or



Acção dos Círculos – Guerrilha Urbana [Action of the Circles – Urban Guerrilla]
Rua do Carmo, Lisbon, August 1974. Intervention by Grupo Acre / Photograph: Clara Menéres

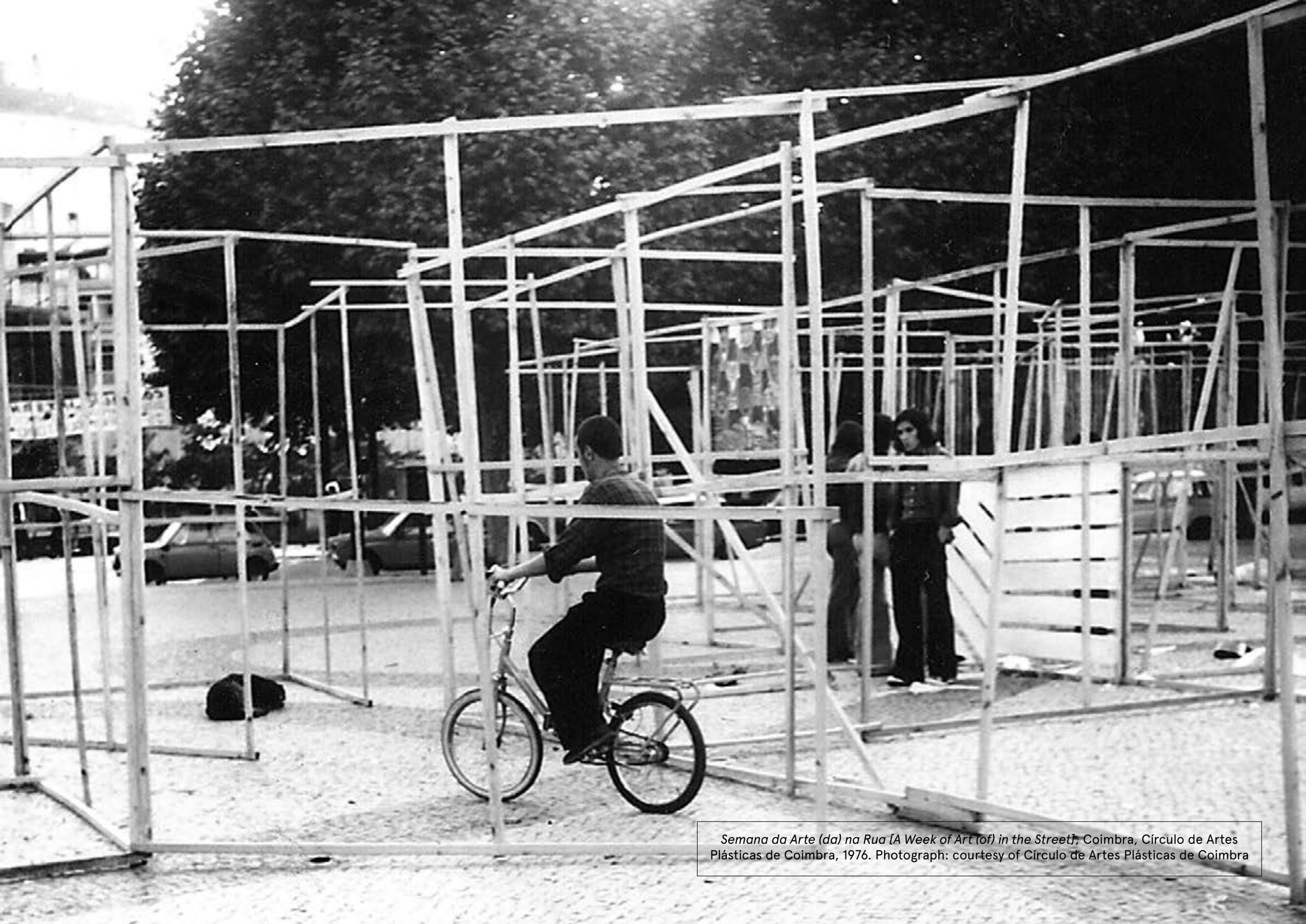
less academic, more or less opportunistic, that was offered to those who are more apt and ambitious at walking the corridors of power. [...] While in the last two years the stress has been exclusively on political intervention, Puzzle dare to talk about themselves, about family and everyday problems, about the problems of art, about current myths and taboos (the national flag is just one among many) and even, and also, about politics, which is seen from an ironic, critical, dangerous point of view [...]. The primacy of ideas over technique [...]. The intense desire to establish an open dialogue with the components of our culture and with the masses that are removed from art [...]. For all this it seems to me that Grupo Puzzle occupy a position at the avant-garde of the art field.

(Álvaro 1977, 18-20).

In this period, an event that stands out specifically was the International Art Encounters, promoted mainly by critic, curator and gallerist Egídio Alves and by the Galeria Alvarez (and amply disseminated by *Revista de Artes Plásticas*), which began in 1974 in Valadares (Casa da Carruagem) and continued in the following year in Viana do Castelo, then in Póvoa do Varzim, in 1976, and in Caldas da Rainha in 1977 (Gonçalves 1977a; 1977b; 1992). The primary intention of these events was to gather national and foreign artists – Alfredo Queiroz, Alberto Carneiro, Ângelo de Sousa, Carlos Barreira, Espiga Pinto, Fernando Lanhas, João Dixo, Christian Parisot, Pineau and Serge Oldenbourg, among others – in a series of round tables, debates, interventions and exhibitions focusing on such questions as “art and revolution” and “new trends and the avant-garde” (Álvaro 1975).

Founded in 1958, CAPC was also remarkably active in that period. With the aim of promoting contemporary visual arts and raising public awareness regarding their fruition, they promoted experimental, performative and pedagogic programmes and activities. To a great extent, this experimental activity became intertwined with that of Ernesto de Sousa, a central catalysing figure of many of the most important activities and exhibitions of the 1970s. The first or one of the first contacts between both took place in 1972 at the Galeria Ogiva, in Óbidos, which celebrated its second anniversary. Ernesto de Sousa showed and spoke about the images he had brought from *Documenta 5* (where he had met and interviewed Joseph Beuys) and Darmstadt in a conference that saw the intense participation of the elements of CAPC (Diniz 2005, 3). As for Ernesto de Sousa, the episode spurred the first text that he wrote about the Coimbra collective: *An intervention-like-the-name-of-Joseph-Beuys [Aggression with the Name of J. Beuys]*, which could have turned sour. But that is how it can go when one finds valid interlocutors instead of a passive, masochistic audience which even applauds and pretends to feel insulted. The Círculo de Belas-Artes (is this really their name?) de Coimbra were present, and their presence enlivened a DIALOGUE that was exceedingly more important than many *ex cathedra* pedagogical flights. “A dialogue that perhaps promises a whole future” (Sousa 1973, 4).

In fact, a fertile joint work space had formed between Ernesto de Sousa, Alberto Carneiro, António Barros, Armando Azevedo, João Dixo, Rui Órfão, Tília Saldanha and others (Nogueira 2005a; 2005b). The activities of CAPC extended to exhibitions, aesthetical interventions/operations and performances,



Semana da Arte (da) na Rua [A Week of Art (of) in the Street], Coimbra, Círculo de Artes Plásticas de Coimbra, 1976. Photograph: courtesy of Círculo de Artes Plásticas de Coimbra

including *A Floresta* (Porto, Galeria Alvarez, 1973; Lisbon, Galeria Nacional de Arte Moderna/*Alternativa Zero*, 1977), *Homenagem a Josefa de Óbidos* (Óbidos, Galeria Ogiva, 1973), *Minha (Tua, Dele, Nossa Vossa)*, *Coimbra Deles* (Coimbra, CAPC, 1973), *1 000 011.º Aniversário da Arte* – Ernesto de Sousa developed this work jointly with CAPC based on Robert Filliou’s original idea – and *Arte na Rua* (Coimbra CAPC, 1974), *Semana da Arte (da) na Rua* (Coimbra, CAPC, 1976), *Cores* (by the CAPC Intervention Group, Coimbra, Caldas da Rainha, Lisbon, 1977-1978) (Sousa 1980; Azevedo 2005).

In Ernesto de Sousa’s opinion, the group was “the only ‘arts society’ in the country with a workshop spirit” (Sousa 1976, 70). This idea is also reflected in a text by the same author on the activity of *Guerra das Tintas* [War of Paints] with the title “The avant-garde is in Coimbra, the avant-garde is in you”:

CAP or C.A.P. these are the letters to keep in mind by readers travelling to Coimbra and wishing to talk under the “pretext of art” with “art people”. Action arts, fine arts, dark arts of freedom: to meet oneself and others. [...] What matters is not the whole dreariness of techniques and alienation, a convolutedly pre-built and pre-established beauty, that path leading to all the Academies (and, of course, to market economy). What matters is that discovery, which can only be achieved in a full exercise of body and mind, hands and head. Such exercise is the everyday practice of CAPC.

(Sousa 1974, 4,6)

On the subject of another activity by CAPC, *Arte na Rua* [Art in the Street] (Coimbra, 1974), Ernesto de Sousa wrote: “[Notice] the exaggeration. For instance, to live in Coimbra, to be from Coimbra, ‘our city that belongs to them’, and to dare a (visual) activity that may go beyond the limits (of the City, of the street) and returns people to the lost dimension (to Paradise Lost)... to Celebration [*Festa*] – that is the example of the most complete exaggeration, of the clearest modernity, [...] ‘ART can be LIFE’” (Sousa 1976, 70).

Experimentation went hand in hand with a new path strewn with new approaches and appropriations in a context of live celebration – *Festa* – in a totalizing, encompassing and performative sense. This experience and clear sense of experimentation, particularly in the collective public space, and nurtured by the democratization of the country, was the hallmark of the Portuguese 1970s. Indeed, in parallel with the Portuguese political and social moment, artistic supports (such as video, 8mm film, performative body work and the “actions” of “aesthetical operators”) expanded, were recreated and gained a new operability and consistency. Modes of expression contaminated one another freely and assertively. The Portuguese 1970s, especially in the wake of the creative freedom brought about by the Revolution, were therefore determining and defining of a rich and intense time, unique in the broader context of Portuguese and even western art (Nogueira 2005).

However, it is also important to reflect upon an event that was encompassing and far reaching. The exhibition *Alternativa Zero: Tendências Polémicas na Arte Portuguesa Contemporânea*

Círculo de Artes Plásticas de Coimbra at *Alternativa Zero*:
Tendências Polémicas na Arte Portuguesa Contemporânea [Alternativa Zero:
Polemical Trends in Portuguese Contemporary Art], 1977
Photograph: courtesy of The Estate of Ernesto de Sousa, Lisbon



[Alternativa Zero: polemical trends in Portuguese contemporary art], organized by Ernesto de Sousa in 1977, in Lisbon, was the most significant and broadest group exhibition¹ of the 1970s. Its aim was to analyse the concept of the avant-garde and its issues (Nogueira 2007; 2008). In fact, *Alternativa Zero* was accompanied by three smaller exhibitions, also organized by Ernesto de Sousa, which took place alongside the main exhibition. These were *A Vanguarda e os Meios de Comunicação: O Cartaz* [Avant-garde and the media: the poster], which evoked several “avant-garde” shows abroad, namely by Fluxus; *Os Pioneiros do Modernismo em Portugal* [The pioneers of modernism in Portugal], a photographic and documental exhibition focusing on the first Portuguese modernism and the figures of Almada Negreiros, Eduardo Viana and Santa Rita Pintor); and *A Floresta* [The Forest] (a walk-in paper strip installation by CAPC, which worked in tandem with pieces by Albuquerque Mendes, Armando Azevedo and Túlía Saldanha). The core references of the exhibition were laid out as being the international (neo) avant-garde, the first Portuguese modernism and some “avant-garde” collective actions in Portugal at the time. The artistic and conceptual trajectory of the exhibition curator, in terms of the connection to the avant-garde,

¹ Alberto Carneiro, Albuquerque Mendes, Álvaro Lapa, Ana Hatherly, Ana Vieira, André Gomes, Ângelo de Sousa, António Lagarto, António Palolo, António Sena, Armando Azevedo, Artur Varela, Clara Menéres, Constança Capdeville, Da Rocha, Ernesto de Mello e Castro, Ernesto de Sousa, Fernando Calhau, Graça Pereira Coutinho, Helena Almeida, Joana Rosa, João Brehm, João Vieira, Jorge Peixinho, Jorge Pinheiro, José Carvalho, José Conduto, José Rodrigues, Julião Sarmiento, Júlio Bragança, Leonel Moura, Lisa Santos Silva/Lisa Chaves Ferreira, Manuel Alvess, Manuel Casimiro, Mário Varela, Nigel Coates, Noronha da Costa, Pedro Andrade, Pires Vieira, Robin Fior, Salette Tavares, Sena da Silva, Túlía Saldanha, Victor Belém and Vítor Pomar.

was crucial to the event’s purpose (*Alternativa Zero* 1977; *Perspectiva: Alternativa Zero* 1997).

For Ernesto de Sousa, the purpose of the exhibition was to fight the isolation of Portuguese artists and critics – both those living abroad and those living in Portugal – and to foster a critical perspective and a commitment to moving away from commercial interests and the dogmatic attitude of *salon* critics (*Alternativa Zero* 1977). The benchmark for selection was the formation of a group that represented “only itself”. The artists came from previous experiences (deliberately mentioned earlier in this text), such as *Do Vazio à Pró-Vocação* [From void to pro-vocation] (AICA/SNBA, 1972), *Projectos-Ideias* (AICA/SNBA, 1974) and *Semana da Arte (da) na Rua* [A week of art (of) in the street] (1976), as well as from individual activities. Looking at the names of the participants one finds members of CAPC, Grupo Acre, Grupo Puzzle and Quatro Vintes, but not the regular participants in the International Art Encounters. As for José-Augusto França, here is how he wrapped up his column in *Diário de Lisboa* newspaper: “To start from zero is extremely hard and dangerous. To begin with this, because it is dangerous and hard to reach Zero, set as a point of departure, and which often, if not always, is everything but zero... However, the truth is that my friend Ernesto de Sousa has no other alternative” (França 1977b, 3).

The vast number of participants and the specificities of each work enhanced the artistic and aesthetical possibilities of the exhibition. Among disparate works, leaning towards an international neo-avant-garde, eventually with a temporal dis-

tancing from the events at major artistic centres and the foreshadowing of post-modern issues that Jean-François Lyotard would begin to voice in 1979, *Alternativa Zero* defined a moment. There were also music events – with Constança Capdeville, Jorge Peixinho, Lídia Cabral, Pedro Cabral, Grupo de Música Contemporânea de Lisboa, Grupo ColecViva, Grupo ADAC and the Porto group AnarBande and Jorge Lima Barreto (França 1977a) – children workshops, performances, interventions by the audience, conferences – the most notorious was probably André Gomes’ lecture *O culto da vanguarda... or the importance of being Earnest* [The cult of the avant-garde...or the importance of being Earnest] –, the presence of the Living Theatre in Belém and their actions at Museu de Nacional de Arte Antiga or São Miguel Square in Alfama, dinner parties, etc. (Sousa 1977). This wide range of activities can be justified by Ernesto de Sousa’s defence of the “open artwork” (in the wake of Umberto Eco) as anti-academic, anti-elitist, unfinished and participative.

As to the reaction of the critics to the exhibition, what could be garnered of *Alternativa Zero* in 1977? Firstly, the undeniable significance of the event (Coelho 1977; Porfirio 1977a; 1977b). Despite a discontentment regarding the lack of critical reflection – as Ernesto de Sousa observed in an overview – the exhibition garnered supporters and opponents. By and large, all the commentaries tended to accept the unusual nature of the event, which was atypical in Portugal. Some saw it as a milestone and a challenge within the Portuguese artistic milieu (H. Silva 1977); others criticized it for the real lack of alternative that it proposed, since allegedly the public did

not intervene, and the event was restricted to an intellectual and elitist class (J. Silva 1977; Listopad 1977; R. Sousa 1977). As an example, Heitor Prato (1977, 5) wrote that the exhibition remained at the level of the accessory, the facile and the superficial and “[...] judging by the public at the opening, only snobbish freaks will visit”.

To conclude, the selected events, and particularly *Alternativa Zero* – for its intensifying and unifying character regarding the experiences of the decade constituted privileged spaces – at times polemical – for the mixing, interaction and overcoming of language boundaries – theatre, performance, painting, sculpture, video, photography, music, intermedia – that were to a certain extent new in Portugal, especially when experienced within a context of freedom, in the Celebration [*Festa*] welcomed by the public space. The art of the 1970s must be understood as carrying its own language. Like all art it is naturally influenced by the past and in some cases, it casts predictions (post-modern, referential, ironic) about the future. However, it does so by clearly *affirming* the present in its political, social, cultural and artistic complexity.

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To trade everything

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HERE I EXTEND THE PRESENTATION OF “TROCO TUDO” [TO TRADE EVERYTHING],
ONE OF THE MANY ACTIONS FEATURED IN THIS BOOK. FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION ON THE PUBLICATION, CF. ELEONORAFABIAO.COM.BR.

Eleonora Fabião

PROGRAM:¹

To approach strangers and ask: “Will you trade something with me? I give you something of mine, something I’m wearing or carrying, and you receive it. You give me something in exchange, and I receive it.” The action is only finished when I have traded everything I had in the beginning.

156 I want this yellow inflatable balloon, said the man in the shadow of Capistrano de Abreu’s statue. In exchange, I’ll give you these brand-new shorts. No way, I won’t trade anything that is on my body. Is it because of religion? I can see you have a R\$ 2.00 *reais* bill; do you wanna trade it for this bra? Take my shorts, they’re sweaty but they’re new. I do not trade anything, my dear. Not interested. Don’t want to. I want this yellow inflatable balloon, said the man in the shadow of Capistrano de Abreu’s statue. But what is this? Why do you do this? What for? Is it a theatre play? I have this nail polish. I can trade this tiny calculator; it works marvellously. I have a duster but it’s no good for dusting, is that all right? Why loss? Isn’t your business to trade everything? Here’s the deal: first you should ask the price of the thing next to the one you really want, as if you were interested in that thing; only then, you’ll ask for the price of what you truly want to buy, get it? Let me ask you something: do you re-trade what you’ve traded before? No, I take it home and I use it; and, if it is something to eat, I eat it. What about a pen? Wait, let me check if it works. Do you want a bit? It’s really tasty. Where’s the bin? There is no bin here, just throw it there. I want this yel-

low inflatable balloon, said the man in the shadow of Capistrano de Abreu’s statue. I’d like to trade my health but there’s no way to do it. Listen, I want the jacket you traded with her over there. So go over there and try to trade it with her. Joana, come over here, you’ll like this! Capistrano de Abreu was one of Brazil’s first great historians; he also worked with ethnography and linguistics. He believed in sociological determinism and his research was aimed at discovering “the fatal laws that rule Brazilian society”. Come back early tomorrow and bring more stuff. Wait, sit here for a while, let’s exchange ideas. Do you want to trade your two small earrings for a big one? I lost its pair. Check in your purse. What do you really want? What do you want from me? What do you want in exchange? Here, take a stone. Give one, take one. Give-and-take. A t-shirt for a t-shirt. Fits perfectly. A bit tight, but ok. It squeezes me, it is suffocating. Not today, thank you. Nowadays things are not like they used to be. Nothing is worth anything. This is priceless. Everything has a price. Everything, no matter how small, has its value. Where is that green t-shirt, did you already trade it? Do you think it’s a fair trade? Listen darling, there’s no justice. I have never seen it, I have never found it, there’s no such thing. I have to warn you that this watch tends to run fast. But how fast? About fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes doesn’t make much difference.

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¹ I call the compositional procedure which I have been developing and practicing for the last ten years “performative program”. On this subject, cf. Fabião (2013).



Ação Fortalezense #3: troco tudo [Fortalezense Action #3: to trade everything] – Lagoinha square and vicinity, Fortaleza (International Ceará Dance Biennial/De Par Em Par, 2010) / Photograph: Victor Furtado



Ação Rio-Pretense #3: troco tudo [Rio-Pretense Action #3: to trade everything] – Dom José Marcondes square, Rodoviária and surroundings, São José do Rio Preto (Festival Internacional de Teatro, 2019) / Photograph: André Lepecki





Precarious Series: to trade everything – Concordia University campus and Viger square, Montreal
(IX Meeting of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, 2014) / Photograph: Sky Oestreicher



It was in São José do Rio Preto, with a woman, at a bar. After a long conversation about value, values, valuing, we made the following trade: I gave her a R\$ 2.00 *reais* bill and she gave me a R\$ 1.00 *real* coin.

Two bracelets for a banana, a t-shirt with a pineapple for a plain t-shirt, a denim skirt for a white skirt, a pair of shades for a green sarong, a white shawl for a red felt brooch (symbol of the student strike in Quebec against tuition increase in higher education in 2012), a wristwatch for the image of a Catholic saint, a kiss for a kiss, US\$ 3.00 American dollars for an orange juice, a childhood story for a childhood story, short panties for pantyhose, a colour bead necklace for a little black handkerchief with tiny yellow flowers that belonged to her mother and still has her scent (...).

166 We reached the conclusion that he no longer needed that lucky coin he kept in his wallet for so many years. The passage was done, the union strengthened, the house demolished, the swimming pool buried and, in the end, the important thing was to pass that amulet on. End of a cycle. Thus, the coin with a golden star – “Republica de Cuba / un peso / 1987 / Patria o Muerte” – was traded for a hair clasp as a gift to his wife. I also asked him to kindly take an additional gift from me to her: another hair adornment with details in green and white mother-of-pearl.

Duration of the action in Montreal on 27 June 2014: 5 hours and 56 minutes.

Forty-three years earlier, in May 1971, Yoko Ono wrote: “[Artists] don’t know whether they are doing something that still has value in this day and age where the social problems are so vital and critical. I wondered myself about this. Why am I still an artist? And why am I not joining the violent revolutionaries? Then I realized that

destruction is not my game. Violent revolutionaries are trying to destroy the establishment. That is good. But how? By killing? Killing is such an artless thing. All you need is a coke bottle in your hand and you can kill. But people who kill that way most often become the next establishment after they’ve killed the old. Because they are using the same method that the old establishment used to destroy. [...] Artists are not here to destroy or to create. Creating is just as simple and artless a thing to do as destroying. [...] The job of an artist is not to destroy but to change the value of things” (2015, 215).

A year later, in 1972, inspired by Yoko Ono, Hélio Oiticica wrote: “To create is not the artist’s task. [The artist’s] task is to change the value of things” (Oiticica 2009, 108). No more, no less. Thus, what conventionally has a small value will come to have a great value; and what supposedly has a great value will come to have a small value. But not only that – to invert established values is important but not sufficient. What is at stake is the trans-valuation of values, the Nietzschean legacy – the refusal of absolute values, absolute beliefs and morality, be it Platonic metaphysics, Christian morality or market-capital totalitarianism. A trans-valuation of values performed through the recognition of the historicity and relativity of supposedly universal values, through the courage and impetuosity of overcoming, through the valuing of the body and of immanence for life’s potentiation. The valuing of the body and of immanence for the potentiation of life as emphasized by performance art. An art that is not simply visual but is the *art of giving to see*. Giving to see bodies, circumstances, assemblages, values.

Today, in November 2016 – in times of advanced neoliberal capitalism, of widespread terrorism, of rising far-Right movements, of alarming ecological crisis –, I retake Ono and Oiticica’s radically up-to-date ethical-political poetics. As they suggest, the work of the artist is not to create nor to destroy, but to change, to

modify, to transform values. That is the experimentation at stake. And yet, how to do this? Acting reactively does not seem to be the best answer for me. To change values is a propositional task, not a reactive one. Let me explain: a reaction, by definition, is an action in the opposite direction from the one that caused it. Thus, it mainly operates by inverting the direction of the force that it reacts against, but it does not change its quality, pattern or mode. It is a retaliation, not a subversion; a revenge, not a promise. Only strategic insubordination (instead of impulsive retaliation) will allow for new modes of action to be conceived (or even be conceivable). In other words: it is absolutely legitimate, certainly, to act reactively against what weakens, corrodes, kills, but perhaps this might not be sufficiently efficient. After all, to react to something is to recognize the existence of that something, while overcoming a logic by proposing another logic is to surpass it, to delegitimize it. The proposal is to conceive non-escapist escapes, to activate strategic lines of flight; to create fighting instruments that enable combat in ways that matter, to fight subverting the logic of violence; to operate changes of values in propositional, vitalist and experimental ways so that body and performance continue being born, one through the other.

I am searching and I will continue to search. By means of each action. In accordance with the scale and the reach of each action. By means of each encounter. Through different kinds of encounters. From trade to trade, from thought to thought, one day after another. And another.

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FRICTION

POINTS

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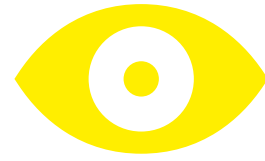
CHOREOGRAPHING RESISTANCE IN TURKEY'S GEZI PARK MOVEMENT, 2013

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I would like to thank Mika Lior for sharing her knowledge and making comments on the first drafts of this essay.

Sevi Bayraktar



For more than a decade, Istanbul has been an epicenter of neoliberal policies that have been forcefully implemented in the city. These policies, including commercial gentrification of urban spaces, dislocation of their inhabitants, and revitalizing a consumerist material culture of Ottoman heritage, have created spatial segregation based on capital and income. Increasingly during the last decade, real estate development has been accompanied by a large-scale demolition of historic areas and the removal of marginalized communities in Istanbul. In particular, the Pera/Beyoğlu area, a historic European district where Taksim Square and the adjacent Gezi Park are located, has become a tumult of neoliberal transformation: Several nineteenth-century European style buildings have been recently torn down to build shopping malls and luxury hotels, and consequently, low-income inhabitants of the area have had to leave due to increasing property prices. Similarly, many classical theatre buildings and cultural centers have been con-

verted to wedding venues or simply shut down and abandoned. Affordable living became impossible after several urban transformation projects were launched in this area. As a result, marginalized communities living in Pera/Beyoğlu, whose members are subject to ethnic and racial discrimination in addition to systemic poverty, such as the Roma, Kurds, documented and undocumented immigrants, mostly from the recent war zones including Syria and Iraq, have been dislocated. These neighborhoods have since been marketed to upper classes by private companies that were involved in the “renovation” of downtown Istanbul. At the same time, many grassroots organizations that had flourished in Beyoğlu, such as feminist and LGBTQI+ communities, alongside left-leaning political groups, had to move out of their offices due to dramatic price increases in real estate. As such, Pera/Beyoğlu has been a major site of urban transformation in which contested discourses are revealed and implemented through strategic attempts of spatial re-organization.¹

¹ Since the eighteenth century, modernity has become the dominant discourse in state institutions and urban architectural trends as well as in everyday life of the middle- and upper-class citizens living in Istanbul under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. In particular, Europeans and the non-Muslim Ottoman citizens in Pera were considered conveyors of the modern taste and secular values. Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Pera and the larger Beyoğlu district became the city’s modern public hub, famed for its entertainment venues, Western-style shops, and theaters in the 1950s. Pera/Beyoğlu later became a popular place for rural-urban migrants and new Turkish entrepreneurs to congregate, after the non-Muslim communities abandoned the area due to heavy taxes, pogroms, and policy regulations related to citizenship. In the 1970s, social and political movements, led by student and labor organizations, claimed Taksim Square and the surrounding area for political demonstrations. The *coup d’état* in 1980 not only banned protest movements in these urban hubs but also brought new driving forces in the areas of economy and culture. The city thus “opened up” to liberalism and globalism (Çelik 1994). After the electoral victory of the Islamist Virtue Party (RP) in Istanbul in 1994, a “selective nostalgia based on Istanbul’s past cosmopolitanism” (İgiz 2008, 453) was followed by the revival of the historic Ottoman buildings with a new culture of consumerism.

Having changed the economic and cultural fabric of the city, these recent attempts at spatial transformation resulted in the Taksim-Gezi Park resistance, which was sparked in Gezi Park at the end of May 2013 and spread to seventy-nine cities all over Turkey by the end of the second week, involving two and a half million citizens.² On May 27, a small group of activists occupied Gezi Park in Beyoğlu to stop bulldozers from razing it to the ground. The demolition was part of a government redevelopment plan that included construction of a shopping mall and the remaking of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Artillery Barracks, which were to serve as a luxury residence. Gezi protesters were decrying the lack of transparency about plans for the area's redevelopment. When local authorities sent riot police to disperse those gathered in Taksim-Gezi Park and authorized the use of water cannons and pepper spray, a significant number of people joined the protesters. In the early hours of June 1, between five hundred to one and a half thousand people marched to Taksim by crossing the Bosphorus Bridge from the Anatolian side of the city.³ The protests resonated not only in upper-class districts of Istanbul such as Nişantaşı District and Bağdat Avenue, but also in labor class neighborhoods such as Gazi, Okmeydanı, and Bir Mayıs. The movement turned into a nationwide resistance against neoliberal urban policies and the authoritarian political practices of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government that has been in power since 2002. The protests met with extreme

² Cf. Sardan (2013).

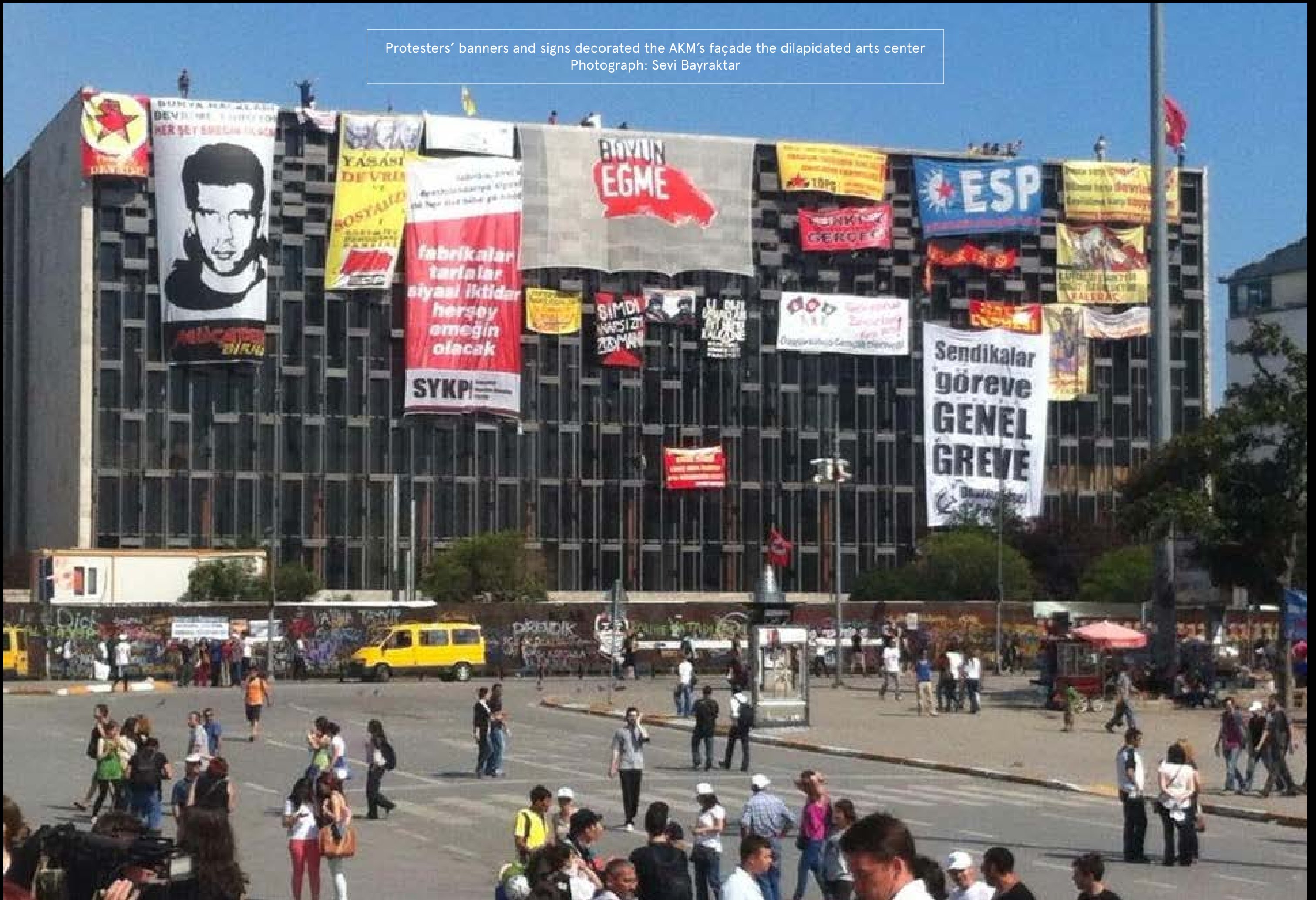
³ A popular newspaper, *Radikal*, reported the number of protesters as one and a half thousand (Radikal 2013), whereas independent news agency Bianet noted five hundred participants (Bianet 2013).

police violence, resulting in the death of eleven people and thousands of injuries.⁴

Meanwhile, dance and performance gained a significant role in the Gezi Park movement in opposition to the commodification of the city and institutional enforcements aiming to control bodies in their everyday life spaces. Multiple forms of performance were registered during Gezi protests, such as couples dancing tango, yoga practitioners leading meditation, musicians playing their instruments in front of a barricade or a police vehicle, ballerinas and mime artists performing their routines, and a whirling dervish spinning in the park and its surrounding area. In most cases, performers were wearing gas masks, as were their audience members. As the month of Ramadan began, a group calling themselves Anti-Capitalist Muslims organized a collective dining performance to break the fast. This collective practice of fast-breaking dinner, called *Yeryüzü Sofrası* [Earth Table], consisted of a seemingly endless line of people sitting on the ground along the most crowded pedestrian street of Istanbul, İstiklal Street. Moreover, several popular artists performed in solidarity with the protesters, strumming their instruments

⁴ Some scholars argue that the Gezi movement was mainly a middle-class movement targeting the principles of neoliberal capitalism (Tuğal 2013; Keyder 2013; Wacquant 2014). Others point to surveys conducted during the resistance to elucidate the pluralistic, multi-class composition of Gezi even though middle classes were more visible due to their access to social media. This second group of writers has argued that if we look at the particularities of the Gezi resistance we see an uprising against the then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government (Yörük and Yüksel 2014; Ertür 2014). Konda (2014) surveys showed that 51% of the Gezi protesters were participating in a social movement for the first time in their lives, and 49% decided to join the movement after seeing the police violence against protesters in the park. Although the resistance included a considerable amount of individual participation, left wing and revolutionary groups also have gained visibility during the protests (Furman 2013).

Protesters' banners and signs decorated the AKM's façade the dilapidated arts center
Photograph: Sevi Bayraktar



THE NATIONAL BODY AND CORPOREAL AGENCY

as skillfully and as technically as possible in the midst of police violence. Feminists occupied public spaces and painted over gendered and sexist graffiti, or transformed it through verbal and visual manipulations. The relationship of protesters with urban space required both mobility and immobility because they were constantly moving from one location to another while simultaneously occupying the Park (Gambetti 2014). The Gezi Park resistance demonstrated the ways in which performance can be used to re-configure and reclaim urban space through its peaceful occupation. It also introduced new sociabilities and novel forms of bodily interaction. The protests showed that performance art in public space is a powerful tool to negotiate violence through non-violent methods of direct action.

Recent social movements, such as the Arab Spring in several countries in North Africa, the Occupy movements in the US, and the *Indignados* in Europe, followed by the uprisings in Turkey and Brazil, have inspired an extensive literature in Dance and Performance Studies to look at forms of embodiment in political protests. Among those scholars, Anusha Kedhar (2014) examined the gesture of “hands up don’t shoot” in the United States and showed that choreography, movement, and gesture were not peripheral but central to the politics of protest. By looking at the Occupy movements in New York City, André Lepecki (2013) developed the terms “choreo-politics,” a kinesthetic struggle for freedom, and “choreo-policing,”

as a restricting, oppressing, disciplining, surveilling, and controlling force upon bodies. In this fashion, SanSan Kwan (2003) demonstrated how a traditional sitting meditation was popularly performed in protest movements in Hong Kong.

In Turkey, historian and Performance Studies scholar Arzu Öztürkmen (2014) examines the wide use of traditional and non-traditional performances during the Gezi Park resistance. Öztürkmen claims that “unexpectedness” has been the key to the way we perceived and remembered Gezi. She further argues that performances between authorities and Gezi Park protesters and their supporters were dialogic and open to surprises. This surprise effect turned everyday occurrence into a performance in Gezi Park (idem, 41). In addition, performance artist Marina Abramović, who has explored long periods of stillness in her embodied art beginning in the 1970s, offers a specific definition of performance as an energy-dialogue between the performer and audience members (Abramović 2015). Due to the nature of this ever-changing energetic dialogue, there is always the potential and possibility for change in performance art. Therefore, the performative character of social action allows for the potential for such change and magnifies it through the moments of surprise.

The question then arises, how could we analyze the spontaneous assemblies and surprising interactions of the Gezi resistance by using the methods of dance and performance studies? Also, how does choreographic thinking help us demystify the surprise effect and render multiple iterations of the gesture/movement possible? In this regard, focusing on choreography

to understand individual and collective agencies in social movements, dance scholar Susan Foster (2003) examines diverse protests in the United States from the mid- to late twentieth century and theorizes social, individual, and corporeal identities in these social movements. Her analysis sheds light on how distinct bodies work together, how they read each other's movements, and how they create new meanings through acting collectively and tactically against the *status quo*. Foster argues that tactical movements of protesters often involved rehearsed and cultivated techniques through which people learned how to move coherently. Therefore, physical training and learned bodily techniques including quotidian movements are the basis of spontaneous collective actions. In contrast, Danielle Goldman (2010) claims that social movements happen spontaneously without requiring any previous training of the body. Goldman examines social actions performed by the U.S. Freedom Riders in the 1960s to address similarities between political protest and contact improvisation dance techniques. According to Goldman, how to move and how to connect with other moving bodies in protests entail a constant awareness of social norms because collective moving is a spontaneous act requiring a series of ongoing and improvisational gestures that are negotiated *freely* at the moment of social action.

I argue that neither of these arguments in Dance and Performance Studies scholarship adequately explains how participants were mobilized and moved in Turkey's Gezi protests. First, moving and performing in the immediacy of the protest require the knowledge of certain bodily techniques and development of new skill-sets within collective action. Through the

repetition of these acts, protesters train themselves at the moment of the resistance, and they master their bodily intuitions. Repetitive acts of performance create a pedagogic process in which embodied action can be collectively learned and practiced in a precarious urban space where violence has been formative, particularly for the members of dissenting populations.⁵ Second, in the process of interaction, certain cultural meanings are reproduced or rejected. As such, social choreographies can be used both to affirm and contest power. Particularly in the Gezi resistance, protesters tactically deployed and transformed some disciplinary gestures and oppressive choreographies to provoke corporeal agency and mobilize participation within the public. During the resistance, the city was converted to a rehearsal space, in which new forms of moving and interacting were constantly and repetitively practiced and mastered.

In the following pages, I will examine two performances widely adopted in Gezi, both of which mobilized large groups and created powerful affects in society: *Standing Still*, an act of stillness in the public sphere as a form of civil disobedience, and the *Mother's Chain*, a human chain performed by women, which eventually turned into folk dance as a political statement for

⁵ Judith Butler's theory of "grievability" (2009) explains normalization of violence by emphasizing the reiterability of coercion for certain populations in society. She explains that whose bodies are disposable and whose lives are counted as mournable and grievable in the contemporary era of war-on-terror also define whose bodies are continually violated. Butler states that violence operates through bodies via iteration, and in each iteration, this violence becomes the normative condition of some bodies whose lives do not register as having value. Other scholars in dance and performance studies have analyzed how bodies use iterability, enactment, physicality, kinesthetics, and spectatorship, providing tools to think of corporeal agency under the conditions of violence (Taylor 1997; Morris and Giersdorf 2016; Giersdorf 2013; Martin 1998; Lepecki 2000).

solidarity and dissidence. The standstill gesture motivated sporadic, individual bodies to move in their own pace, time, and space; whereas the human chain of women encouraged coherent and harmonious ways of moving together in collectives. I will unpack each example and analyze their components at the movement level to elucidate the ways in which a corporeal vocabulary of resistance has been practiced in Gezi.

STANDING STILL

THE EMERGENCE OF A NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT

On June 17, when the governor of Istanbul suspended the right to public assembly, one person began standing still, by himself, in Taksim Square. He faced his body towards the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM), closed since 2008 due to its long-lasting process of “restoration.”⁶ The image of this young person standing still for eight hours in Taksim Square was spread on twitter and Facebook in the same evening. The young man, a contemporary dance performer named Erdem Gündüz, soon became known as “Duran Adam”, “Standing Man” – although another accurate translation of the term would be “stopping

⁶ The Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) is the first opera hall of Istanbul, established in the 1960s. The AKM was used as a multi-purpose cultural center located in Taksim Square but has become dilapidated since it was decommissioned in 2008. The functionality and simplicity of its architecture reflect the Republican ideals of Western modernism, which make the building wholly disparate from the image of the Ottoman Empire that has been reproduced by European orientalist (Bozdoğan 2001). After a decade of dilapidation, the AKM came to the public agenda in November 2017, through a publicity meeting in which President Erdoğan introduced “the new AKM” as a multi-functional opera hall “not for the elite but for the public”; it is projected to open in 2019 (Milliyet 2017).

man”. The following day, a standing woman, Yonca, stood still for thirty hours in Ankara, next to the site where police had killed 27-year old Ethem Sarısülük during the protests a few days earlier. The movement multiplied immediately in various locations, including shopping malls, TV and newspaper outlets, courthouses, and in front of trees and embassies. *Standing Still* quickly reiterated, multiplied, and became a well-accepted form of resistance in Turkey.

Standing in stillness as a modern performance technique was developed by Steve Paxton, a dancer and social rights activist, in the 1970s. Paxton’s dance technique of contact improvisation offered stillness not as passivity but as a “small dance,” in which the body is in full vibration. As opposed to the modern conceptualizations of the body that is always in motion towards “progress” (Lepecki 2000, 344), a still body emphasized the quotidian power of the “other” body. Similarly, by standing in stillness in a central square in which everything is expected to be in motion, the performer called our attention to question the problem in the public sphere. Gündüz’s intention in stillness was to prompt people to ask, “Why is this guy standing in Taksim?” (Mee 2014, 79). Regarding the idea of progress reproduced through bodies in constant motion, standstill gesture is also understood as a response to the ideals of capitalism. As opposed to the idea of a continuous progress in capitalist societies, this gesture manifests that people are capable of radically bringing activity to a standstill, converting the motion to a still image (Gronau 2016).

In Turkey, as a historical and cultural phenomenon, people have long been choreographing standstill gestures through



Standing still quickly reiterated, multiplied, and became a well-accepted form of resistance in Turkey. Photograph: Sevi Bayraktar

national memorials and social events. For instance, on every November 10 at 9:05am people stand still for a moment of silence in order to pay homage to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, who died on that day in 1938, fifteen years after the inauguration of the Republic. On this date and time, people standstill for two minutes wherever they happen to be at that moment: Some people, if driving, pull their cars over to the side of the road and get out in order to stand still; some others stand inside shops and houses; and many stop working momentarily to present their standstill bodies before one of the ubiquitous images of Atatürk as the embodiment of national values on this day of mourning. Until recent years, students had also been performing this standstill gesture in schools every morning as they were reciting the national oath all together. In this sense, standstill gesture has been reproduced not only to show the alignment with national values of the early republicanism, but also to unite individuals as the body of the nation. As such, a malleable and disciplined national body has been performed reiteratively by the majority of Turkish citizens.

Standstill is integral also because it serves as a central performative gesture defining Turkey's culture of the "military-nation."⁷ On the one hand, fulfilling the military service is compulsory

⁷ In her comprehensive study, Ayşe Gül Altınay demonstrates how militarism and culture work together in Turkey to support the discourse of nationalism. She explores the term "military-nation" to elucidate the ways in which militarism is often considered inherent in Turkish culture, and its ways of operation define institutions and everyday conduct in society. In this regard, for instance, the popular saying, "Her Türk asker doğar" (every Turk is born a soldier) "is repeated in daily conversations, school textbooks, the speeches of public officials and intellectuals, and is used as a drill slogan during military service" (Altınay 2004, 13).

for all male citizens, and it applies from twenty to forty-one years of age. Such compulsory military service is considered a “key rite-of-passage for hegemonic masculinity” in Turkey (Açıksöz 2012, 7), as male citizens are considered to become men after fulfilling their national duties by serving in the military. Fostered through this assumed link between militarism and Turkish nationhood, a national body is cultivated as a heterosexual, masculine, and disciplined body. As a result, other bodies distinguished from this body of the nation through their culture, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality have been marginalized and considered non-national. Therefore, violence against these non-national, and even un-national, other bodies has been legitimized and normalized. Overall, stillness has long been deployed to cultivate docile bodies through institutional mechanisms. In Turkey, *Standing Still* as a reiterative, performative gesture has been reproduced in innumerable ways and institutionalized mainly through public mourning, the education system and compulsory military training.

However, in Taksim-Gezi Park, the Standing Man’s stillness seemed laid back and natural in contrast to earlier representations of bodies in standstill postures. His casual outfit and bodily mode displayed ordinary movement qualities: bent knees, a deflated torso, and relaxed arms with his hands thrust in his pants pockets. His eyes were soft yet decisively looking forward towards AKM, the dilapidated arts center. Not only did his body claim space in the forbidden topography of Taksim Square, but also his ordinary standing rejected the angular movement vocabulary of institutionalized forms of standing and celebrated the quotidian qualities of life against robotic

qualities of martial stillness. The ordinariness of this gesture facilitated its spontaneous interpretation. Diverse bodies manifested their opposition to uniformity and homogenization by multiplying the standing gesture creatively in diverse locations and periods. Some people interpreted this gesture as a silent respect to Mustafa Kemal, whose immense portrait then decorated the AKM’s façade after the building had been cleared of the protesters’ banners and signs. Others performed the standing gesture to convey their own ideas using individual interpretations. “Men-Standing-Against-the-Standing Man” later appeared in the square, clad in uniform white t-shirts with a red-painted hand making a “stop” sign at the center, apparently against the Standing Man and social diversity manifested by standing people. Nevertheless, the standstill gesture continued to multiply and migrate to other cities inside and outside of the national borders.

The success of the gesture lies behind its power to summon people together once again after the Gezi Park occupation had been dispersed. Moreover, this achievement not only proves that ordinary stillness of vulnerable bodies is a powerful act of resistance, it also perfectly demonstrates how performance creates confusion and dismantles the power of authority. For instance, in Taksim Square, the police were unable to read the standstill posture for about three hours – *Was he performing one of those standings in homage? Had he gone crazy after being exposed to so much police violence in Gezi Park? Was he just waiting for someone? Was he dangerous while standing in Taksim Square?* When the police were searching his backpack on his back he did not move at all. When his pockets were being searched, Standing

Man moved for the first time, still without showing any facial expression or emotion. When he moved, he began to unzip his pants, and the police hastily shouted, “No, no, no! What are you doing?!” Standing Man then went back to his casual standstill posture, yet his long-sleeved white shirt became untucked on the left side and his backpack ended up on the ground in front of him (Get the news 2013). After about five hours since he had begun to stand in silent stillness, a few individuals came and began standing with Gündüz, together igniting a nationwide protest. After a few among the other standing people were arrested by the police, the performer ended his performance and left the square in silence. However, the movement continued its life in other bodies. The ordinary iterations of the silent standing act by a multitude of individuals rendered the gesture illegible, and thus, state officials and representatives could not determine the legal status of the act of standing in stillness.⁸

Since the standstill movement became part of Turkey’s social movement repertoire, the gesture has been reenacted in several cases. Ways of standing are still being explored and enacted individually and collectively in various social protests.⁹ The primary technique was grasped and mastered in each practice of *Standing Still* during the Gezi resistance, and the movement has been reinterpreted constantly in the aftermath of the protest.

⁸ Responding to standstill protests, the then Turkish Deputy Minister Bülent Arınç confirmed that standing still was a peaceful and legal method of protest; nevertheless, he suggested that citizens stand still only for eight minutes instead of eight hours as the latter might be harmful to their health (Verstraete 2013, 3). Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan also interpreted the gesture as opposed to the progressive ideals of the government. In his public speech in Kayseri, he states, “We say, there is no stopping, we will continue on our path; what are they saying? Standing Man!...They stood still for decades...They are the best at standing and stopping [others]” (ArafKltrSnt 2013).

MOTHER’S CHAIN FROM A HUMAN CHAIN TO A CIRCLE DANCE

Particularly since 2007, the government institutions have implemented policies that aim to discipline women from diverse political and cultural backgrounds. These policies and misogynist official statements are based on the regulation of gender and sexuality in everyday life and include the demands that women have at least three children, not laugh out loud in public, and not walk around while pregnant without a man accompanying them. Physical and legal vulnerability has come to define the existence of women and girls both in the street and at home, especially after the attempted anti-abortion law in 2010, the abolition of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs in 2011, the reduction in penalty for honor killings in 2013, and recent bills that are about to open a path for child marriages. These attempts aim to regulate women’s everyday life through imposing a restrictive corporeal regime. In opposition to such discourses, women have occupied the front lines in political

←⁹ Dissenting citizens continued occupying public spaces using subtle variations of the standstill technique. For example, the standing woman in Ankara, Yonca S., went to Diyarbakır, a predominantly Kurdish city in the southeastern Turkey, to meet Fahriye Yıldırım, the mother of Medeni Yıldırım, a 17-year old killed during protests against the construction of a colossal police station in June 2013. The two women, holding each other’s hands, stood still facing the police station. Similarly, just before the general elections in June 2015, a group of women in Iğdır city protested the Prime Minister during his visit by collectively standing still, turning their backs, and making the “victory” sign with their peace fingers. When they were accused by the authorities for their “improper” standing, other women reproduced the gesture, took photographs, and shared those images in social media (SonDakika 2015; Ecem 2015; HurriyetDailyNews 2015). Although turning one’s back was a protest technique from the 1960s civil rights movements, Turkish and Kurdish women performed the gesture reproducing new cultural codes and connotations referring to the contemporary political context.

protests and have become prominent in grassroots organizations. During the Gezi resistance, the national and international media circulated images of women resisting in the streets: jumping over a gas canister, constructing barriers by hanging banners and Turkish flags, and standing still for long hours.

One of those examples occurred when the then governor of Istanbul, Avni Mutlu, called for parents to urge their children leave the Gezi camp on June 13 (Gezer 2013). This directive was not only infantilizing protesters by calling them “children” but also reminding parents, particularly mothers, of their assigned duty of managing and promoting certain moral values in the family. In fact, mothers have frequently been called on by the state officials to perform the duties of reproducing morality and encouraging docility in their households.¹⁰ It was also an implicit announcement of a new wave of coercive power that would be exerted to “clean” the park from the protesters. Following this call, about a hundred women came to Gezi Park in the evening to “protect their children” and joined the protest. Women formed a “human chain” shouting, “mothers are here” and “everywhere mother, resistance everywhere” (Tuna and Ekin 2013). They set this human chain between protesters and the police, and so that they first separated the two parties. Next, their choice of alignment reflected their intention of protecting the protesters because they were mostly facing towards the police. When they walked around the park, the women held each other’s hands and created a big circle.

¹⁰ The Gezi was not for the first time that the state officials told mothers to prevent their children from participating in street action. In 2010, Kurdish mothers were also urged to take their children away from the streets (T24 2008; Cumhuriyet 2010; YeniAsir 2014).

Their mobile, circular human chain soon turned into a *halay* dance, a generic name of traditional circle dances common in eastern Turkey. Having linear and circular group formations similar to Balkan *(h)oros* and Near Eastern *dabkes*, *halay* is performed within a group, holding hands or shoulders, and executing movements with a particular focus on footwork in unison. National and international media shared news about the “mothers” occupying Gezi Park to protect their children over the following few evenings. The “mothers” were depicted in the press as superheroes, who appeared out of the clouds of pepper spray to rescue their children.

Diana Taylor (1997) examines how Plaza de Mayo Mothers in Buenos Aires have carried on a continued protest through displaying photographs of their children, who were disappeared during the military junta regime in the Argentina’s Dirty War (1976–83). The activist mothers in Argentina reproduced dominant discourses about proper motherhood while simultaneously subverting those discourses through their public demonstrations. Likewise, in Turkey, motherhood as a form of political agency has been politically activated through street demonstrations of the mothers of the disappeared since the 1980 *coup-d’état* (Aslan 2007; Karaman 2016). Over the past two decades, Kurdish and Turkish mothers have been carrying photographs of their disappeared family members and demanding a trial for the perpetrators. Recently, the Gezi Park mothers, who lost their children to brutal police violence during the protests, have become visible through their public mourning. They also demanded in-depth investigations of their cases and a trial for the perpetrators. In addition to these examples,

women who went to the park in response to the governor's call on the evening of June 13 introduced another mother-subject position through their choreographies in the public sphere. "Mothers" were in the park at night during the time that they were assumed to be at home. As they were quickly circling the park, dividing the space through their alignment, and wearing goggles, gas masks, and hardhats, women both resisted and affirmed prescribed qualities of an idealized Turkish mother, such as morality, responsibility, and self-sacrifice (Bayraktar 2014). Through converting a human chain to a traditional line dance circle, they were also practicing collective kinesthetic knowledge and an alternative embodiment of motherhood as cheerful, dynamic, and spontaneous.

The human chain practice resembles with Muslim women's protests in Turkey in the 1990s for their right to wear headscarves in state institutions, such as public offices and universities. The headscarf was banned in Turkey's public institutions from the early twentieth century until the ban was lifted in 2013. In 1998, against the headscarf ban at Turkish universities, a group of students from Istanbul University formed a human chain. Their chain has been expanded with the participation of secular activists, particularly women from feminist and grassroots organizations. The human chain performance, called *Özgürlük için El Ele* [Join Hands for Freedom], met police violence and several students were arrested. Therefore, at a quick glance of the recent social movement repertoire of Turkey, the human chain protest has been developed and powerfully practiced at least for a couple of decades before it was re-interpreted in the Gezi resistance.

Similarly, *halay* dances have been also used as a pervasive form of protest in the Kurdish cultural rights movement since the late 1990s in major cities. In the 1930s, folk dances, presented as the purest form of Turkish cultural expression, were prioritized to promote national values and create the aesthetic principles of modern Turkish citizenship. In the mid-twentieth century, folk dances, intended to cultivate a disciplined, youthful, and homogenous collective of the modern nation, were popularly expanded among the young urban audience. Until the 1970s, these dances were collected and repurposed, and all existing or perceived non-Turkish elements in the forms (non-Turkish names, narratives, costumes, and props) were replaced with Turkish counterparts or substitutes. In this context, beginning from the 1990s, *halay* dances play an essential role in the Kurdish struggle for political acknowledgement and cultural identity (Karakeçili 2008; Nyberg 2012). Although folk dances were used in public political gatherings such as Mayday celebrations in the mid-1970s, they have not been attributed political meanings identified with oppressed and marginalized groups until recently. In this sense *halay*, as a popular traditional dance genre, emerged as a political gesture against homogenization and gained the potential to unite dissenting citizens from diverse backgrounds.

Demonstrating such a capacity for resistance, a certain level of technical knowledge can be gained through practicing certain dance and movement forms in social and political demonstrations. In this sense, the city provides activists with a rehearsal space for additional training to be used in further assemblies. The immediacy and spontaneity of protests allow pedagogic

process to be only fragmented and partial. Each new technique and movement vocabulary are mastered gradually over time as a person continues to join street activism and grassroots movements. As part of this activist pedagogy, experienced protesters often lead such corporeal alignments and choreographic configurations in the space. Improvisation and experimentation are also encouraged because bodies always prove their competency and intelligence through engaging in new forms of interaction and creating new meanings through their bodily acts. When there is no music providing a common rhythm, bodies find their own rhythm to synchronize movements just as the women did when they converted their human chain, a form of nonviolent direct action, to a line dance, another form of nonviolent action. In these ways, they demonstrated the capacity to operate and navigate in a leaderless organization, which is a significant ability required in contemporary forms of mass protests. By rehearsing their chain-dance in consecutive evenings, Gezi mothers were equipped with a powerful tool through which to move together. During each evening of rehearsal, they demonstrated their resistive potential as they enriched their movement vocabularies and polished their styles of execution, despite the vulnerability of the rehearsal space.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the 2013 Gezi protests, dance and performance brought people together for social action, forced authorities to dialogue, subverted dominant discourses, and transformed precarious spaces into familiar ones. The gestures of the resistance have since been circulating globally and continue to inspire people in several countries. Since then in Turkey, the constitution has been changed toward a presidential system, two million Syrian war refugees have been trapped at the borders of Europe after crossing through Turkey, several ISIS attacks on peace rallies and other social and political gatherings have caused hundreds of fatalities, and once again violence and death has swept bodies away in public spaces. Women keep struggling against misogynist policies under the impact of the recent state of emergency decrees. Despite the impossibility of social movement, dance and performance manifest a political stance and support life against death, ecology against the neoliberal privatization of land, and ethnic and cultural minority rights against the homogenizing discourses of nationalism and militarism.

The two examples that I examined above, *Standing Still* and the *Mother's Chain*, are inspiring social performances as they are learned, rehearsed, and interpreted through repetition of various similar practices and embodied in protests to create alternative meanings and mobilize resistance. Such collective execution of particular gestures and movement sequences create new ways of negotiating existing cultural and political identities in public space. Activists add these performances into their social movement repertoire, master them over time, and intro-

duce them in other protests to incorporate these techniques with other forms of improvised movement. Such dynamic qualities of performance, with its emphases on iterability, enactment, physicality, kinesthetics, and spectatorship, provides us with tools to mobilize dissenting gestures towards collective corporeal agency in contemporary social movements.

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THE HOUSING CRISIS, ART, AND PERFORMANCE

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Jen Harvie



PROLOGUE

In autumn 2015, at East London's red brick Toynbee Studios, performance artist Poppy Jackson¹ performed *Pose*: she sat straddling the front apex of a second storey rooftop, naked, for four hours at a time, with occasional breaks.² *Guardian* newspaper theatre critic Lyn Gardner argued that the work was “beautiful, disturbing [...], disruptive”, and “moving to behold”, and that it invoked ancient quasi-erotic pagan building embellishments such as stone carvings of Sheela Na Gig found in Ireland (Gardner 2015; Sheela Na Gig Project 2015). Lewis Church wrote that Jackson sat “quietly, dignified and statuesque” (Church 2015).

¹ Jackson performed *Pose* Friday 30 and Saturday 31 October, 2015, as part of Spill Festival of Performance (Cf. Jackson n.d.).

² *Pose* caught the scandalized attention of tabloid newspapers the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Mail* (Marshall 2015; Linning 2015).

Jackson's embodiment in *Pose* simultaneously evoked strength and vulnerability: she looked strong; her pose was undoubtedly uncomfortable. As Gardner noted, her positioning right on the edge of, and looking back at, the financial centre of London proposed an urban counter-narrative to the priorities of the City's gleaming towers (Gardner 2015). Jackson specifically straddled part of Toynbee Hall, a building established in 1884 as a residential headquarters for volunteers intervening in the enormous poverty of Victorian East London and still operating today as an anti-poverty charity in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, where 44 per cent of residents live in poverty (Toynbee Hall n.d.). In the siting of *Pose*, Jackson not only faced down the corporate City, she acted as a herald for anti-poverty, and she performed the precarity of a woman today in relation to a domestic-scale, residential architecture. *Pose* staged a young woman both vulnerable and powerful in relation to housing in a time and place where access to the basic human right of decent, affordable shelter is increasingly precarious.³

³ The United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* notes in Article 25: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control”. (United Nations 1948).

INTRODUCTION

I start with this example because it encapsulates some of the pressing social and political urgencies and performance responses I address in this essay.⁴ My context is the contemporary United Kingdom, though many of the ideological and social conditions are much more widespread, geographically and historically. Since 2010, the UK has been led by a Conservative party committed to austerity economics and neoliberal capitalism, to supporting individual and corporate pursuit of wealth, and to eroding wealth re-distribution through taxation and structures of social welfare and cultural funding.⁵ The results have been materially and socially devastating.

Thankfully, people including artists have not simply succumbed to these massive political, structural, ideological, and crucially social changes. The work I look at here responds particularly to being part of a new class known as Generation Rent. Facing what critic Lauren Berlant has influentially termed the “cruel optimism” of desiring something which actually inhibits their flourishing (Berlant 2011, 1), the artists whose work I discuss stage desire for but exclusion from the kind of “good life” that might take them out of profoundly constrained conditions of

⁴ I first presented a different version of this paper at the 2015 conference of the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR), *Debating the Stakes in Theatre and Performance Scholarship*, which invited participants to address “new pressing political urgencies” (ASTR 2015).

⁵ The government’s arguments for its strategies are classic neoliberalism; as David Harvey puts it, this approach assumes that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2009, 22).

living. Using strategies of urban intervention, poetic architectural distortion, narrative, embodiment, performance style, collaboration, affect, and more, these artists trouble relationships between property, propriety, the private, the public, and precarity. In the case of the performance makers I discuss in particular, they “optimistically” stage alternative kinship and support networks; and perhaps angrily, they perform semi-comic scenarios perhaps more akin to situation tragedies than sit coms.⁶ These artists stage current problems but only partial “solutions”, emphasising how solutions to our current socio-economic impasse must be social and systemic, not simply the individual acts of some of those people whom this impasse most profoundly disempowers.

My essay is organised in three parts. In the first part, I outline some of the detail of the housing crisis in the UK – in London in particular – and some of its effects. In the second part, I survey a range of urban art interventions which respond to this crisis. In the final part, I examine two recent performances by young, London-based feminist performance art/theatre companies which respond specifically to this crisis.

⁶ Berlant suggests that conditions of cruel optimism generate new genres such as situation tragedy (2011, 6).

PART ONE: HOUSING CRISIS

I live in the United Kingdom, in London, where the devastating and widespread conditions of the UK housing crisis are becoming painfully familiar. From 1980 until 2000, in a tsunami-like policy change initiated by Margaret Thatcher, two million homes owned by Local Authority governments were sold off.⁷ To contextualise that, the UK has a strong history of providing social housing, much more so than Portugal. According to the research network *Housing in Europe*, in 2010, social housing made up only 3.3 per cent of housing stock in Portugal (Housing Europe 2010b), but about 18 per cent in the United Kingdom.⁸ Between 1997 and 2010, the number of households in England waiting for social housing rose by 81 per cent, to 1.8 million households (Shelter n.d.c.). One consequence of those conditions is that, since 2001, the proportion of housing that is privately rented has skyrocketed by 69 per cent. Accountants PwC have predicted that, from 2001 to 2025, private rental accommodation will treble, with “7.2m households... in rented accommodation [in 2025], compared with 5.4m [in 2015] and just 2.3m in 2001” (Osborne 2016). Within ten years, one quarter of households will rent privately, but over half of 20-39-year-olds will do so (Osborne 2016). Rental housing is, in itself, not a bad thing; but it is bad when the housing is substandard, overpriced and insecure. Sadly,

⁷ These homes were sold at a discount of approximately 50 per cent of market price (Harvie 2013, 129; Lowe cited in Harvie 2011, 125).

⁸ “Social housing accounts for 17.5% of the total homes in England, while it is about 24% of the total housing stock in Scotland, about 17% in Northern Ireland and about 16.4% in Wales” (Housing Europe 2010a).

over a third of privately rented homes fail to meet the decent homes standard (Shelter n.d.b.). And over 12 per cent of the UK population lives in households where housing costs more than 40 per cent of income (Connolly 2015). This is a consequence of not only property price inflation but also wage deflation: between 2008 and 2013, hourly earnings decreased by roughly 65 pence (or one US dollar or 76 Euro cents) in real terms (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2015). Between 2010 and 2013, homelessness increased by a breathtaking 37 per cent (Johnston 2015). By 2013/14, more than 81,000 households were homeless (Shelter n.d.a); at the same time, more than a million homes in England and Wales were empty (Owen 2014).⁹ In the area in and around Liverpool in 2010 for example, there were 13,000 empty homes and simultaneously 23,000 people seeking housing (Mendoza 2016).

Among other things, these conditions have spawned Generation Rent, a large young generation unable to escape the overpriced and often substandard private rental sector because they cannot secure mortgages in an inflated housing market where prices significantly outpace wage growth.¹⁰ In summer 2016, home ownership in England reached its lowest level in thirty years (Osborne 2016). A mapping tool produced by the *Guardian* indicates that for a would-be homebuyer on an average income in 2014, 93 per cent of properties in England and

⁹ Many of these were foreign-owned and/or holiday homes, but many were social housing targeted for “redevelopment”, often into price brackets outside the means of the “decanted” former residents.

¹⁰ Research shows “71% of people born in 1970 were homeowners by the time they were 40; for those born in 1990 the figure is likely to be just 47%” (Osborne 2015).

Wales were unaffordable (*Guardian* 2015). A 2015 pan-European housing report showed that, of eight European capital cities, London fared worst in house purchasing price to income ratios (Connolly 2015).

By no means do I think widespread property ownership is the best social solution; for many anarchists and socialists, following Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, all property is theft (Proudhon 1840). But the private rental sector in the UK is profoundly under-regulated and, so, often substandard and unstable. Furthermore, in a wider neoliberalising economy where young people are accruing greater debts from education, interest rates on savings are virtually negligible, and pensions and public healthcare are being eroded, property investment is increasingly not just investment in stable *current* living conditions, but insurance for older age. Home-ownership offers an increasingly crucial security, the likes of which are no longer guaranteed by the UK's formerly strong post-war commitment to care for its citizens from cradle to grave.

Crucially, the housing crisis I have outlined destabilises not only housing but households – the people who live there. When people's housing is insecure, so is their schooling, work, leisure, and healthcare. The housing crisis destabilises a sense of place and belonging, feelings of security, and a sense of self. Most dangerously, the housing crisis destabilises relationships and networks of friendship, kinship and care. And it does so across a huge range of people. The worst affected are those with the least wealth and the least security. But even fully employed middle-aged middle-class parents and adult children are po-

tentially negatively affected when those adult children cannot afford to move out of the family home. On that note, by way of comparison, a 2015 European report recorded that “the numbers of young adults aged between 18 and 34 who are living with their parents is now at an all-time high [in Europe]”; 55% in Portugal.¹¹

The housing crisis is a crisis in democracy and the public sphere because it is both a symptom and a cause of ever-growing social deprivation and inequality. The housing crisis is desecrating democratic access to what Henri Lefebvre called the “right to the city” (Lefebvre 2003). Urban access becomes a privilege of class; urban eviction or marginalisation becomes a condition of low income or poverty. This is specifically neoliberal gentrification, where public spaces and housing are passively and actively eroded, and takeover by privatised entrepreneurial spaces is actively encouraged through preferential legislation.

Two important questions follow for me: what needs to be done about this crisis? And, what are art and performance doing about this crisis?

In answer to the first question, we need more and better housing market regulation, with rent caps, limits on multiple property ownership, prevention of non-occupied ownership, restrictions on occupation density, and properly enforced housing quality requirements, including a kind of Hippocratic Oath for ethi-

¹¹ “The situation is worst in Slovenia, where 74% still live at home, in Italy it's 66% and in Portugal it's 55%” (Connolly 2015).

cal landlord behavior. We need greater housing supply, which means building more new homes, reviving underused homes, and filling empty housing. We need support for communities and community sustainability, rather than the kind of passive or active erosion of existing communities that neoliberal gentrification fosters. Fundamentally, we need changed ideological, political and material commitments. Instead of existing ideological commitments to neoliberalism, privatisation and individual wealth-creation, we need to prioritise a shared responsibility to universal, decent, humane living conditions, including decent housing.

So to my second question: what are art and performance doing to contribute to these necessary material, social and ideological changes to shift the housing crisis? Many things. In autumn 2016 at the London School of Economics, I took part in a long table discussion on the housing crisis and art activism.¹² Speakers there argued that art activism can resist the housing crisis by supporting community strength and cohesive resistance; documenting problems; showing and enabling aspirations; raising awareness; countering and undermining propaganda and mystification; facilitating communication; and challenging housing hegemonies.¹³

¹² "What Can Art Do for Housing Activism: A Long Table Discussion", organised by Dr Katie Beswick, *Resist Festival of Ideas and Actions*, London School of Economics, 29 September 2016. The long table format for public engagement in discussion was developed by Lois Weaver (Weaver 2013).

¹³ Such challenges are visible in the art work, performance and design of, for example, Jordan McKenzie, Marcus Coates, the Space Hijackers, Focus E15, and 2015 Turner Prize winners Assemble.

There are many things art and performance can do for the housing crisis. I concentrate here on what I see as two of the most important things art and performance do: (1) raise the visibility of housing precarity, and (2) expose its damaging social and emotional effects. Although the housing crisis is geographically and demographically widespread, and although it is widely recognised, its deeply damaging effects are often experienced in isolation and in private. When its effects are emotional – which they often are – they can effectively be invisible. Furthermore, neoliberalism's biopolitics obfuscate the systemic, structural failures that produce the housing crisis, and encourage people in insecure housing to feel personal failure and shame. These feelings not only further damage wellbeing, they can also inhibit rage and collective action. The causes and effects of the housing crisis, including its emotional effects, need to be shown as collective – and a collective responsibility – and they need to be made public. These are important things art and performance can do.

In what follows, I next survey a selection of city-sited visual and sculptural art works that make visible, in particular, current housing precarity and the negative, sometimes devastating feelings it provokes. I then focus my analysis on two performances by young London-based feminist performance companies: *Number 1, The Plaza*, first produced by GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN in 2013; and *Letters to Windsor House* by Sh!t Theatre, which premiered at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in summer 2016.

The examples I look at here, mostly from London where I live, use a variety of artistic strategies to comment on Britain's current insufficient housing provision and its over-competitive, over-inflated, class-dominated private housing markets. The aesthetic strategies I focus on are: principally visual and aesthetic, posing current housing as dystopian. In one instance the strategies are textual, narrating the crises. Routinely, the strategies are spatial, occupying public spaces to disrupt the flows that naturalise catastrophic urban change. Most of the examples I look at I call "mutated homes". These examples portray homes as insecure, absurd and *unheimlich* or unhomely by using materials and structures that mutate, are themselves insecure, or somehow disturb their contexts.¹⁴

In London, the iconic debut in this story is Rachel Whiteread's 1993 *House*. She and important arts commissioners Artangel poured concrete into a disused Victorian three-storey house on Grove Road in East London's Tower Hamlets, about two miles east of Toynbee Hall. They then effectively peeled off the house to reveal the space inside made concrete. According to a recent commentator, it was "an impenetrable inversion of domesticity, a machine for not living" (Warde-Aldem 2013). It famously divided opinion. Some saw it as patronising and/or

¹⁴ One of the most important predecessors in this strand is Gordon Matta-Clark's 1974 *Splitting*, in Englewood, New Jersey. In likely the most famous instance of his anarchic interventions in architecture, his "anarchitecture", Matta-Clark cut two parallel slices from the wood frame house and removed the cut-out material, leaving a home literally split apart, fundamentally disrupted and rendered unusable while barely changed and entirely recognisable.

ugly. Others saw it as both a prescient and a haunting evocation of changing patterns of life in London's rapidly gentrifying East End adjacent to massive corporate developments at Canary Wharf that were then recent in a barely post-Thatcher era (Harvie 2013, 138-9).¹⁵

Fast-forwarding fifteen years, for his 2008 work *Seizure*, originally produced on a disused housing estate near Elephant and Castle, Roger Hiorns, again with Artangel, filled a small flat with copper sulphate solution, and then drained it to reveal the entire flat covered with brilliant blue crystals. The work did not dispute the principles of social housing, but for Hiorns and many visitors including me, its claustrophobia, darkness and literal spikiness highlighted the small flat's insufficiency as a human environment, and thus the insufficiency of its realisation of some of the most important principles of social housing (Harvie 2011).

More recently, Argentinian artist Leandro Erlich, hosted by the Barbican art centre, built 2013's *Dalston House*, also in East London. Horizontally on the ground, he laid a life-size three-storey Georgian house façade, complete with brass door knob and knocker and interior lighting and scenes. That house front faced a tilted, suspended mirror. Visitors were welcome to move on the horizontal façade, appearing in the mirror as though they were hanging from the door frame or sitting on upper window ledges, apparently placed in unlikely positions or locations (*Metro News Reporter* 2013). In some cases, this pro-

¹⁵ See also work by Michael Landy in Harvie 2013, 139-40.

duced strong images of physical precarity, suggesting housing precarity. Other times, people took the opportunity to articulate aspirational – or optimistic – visions rather than dystopian realities by making strongly proprietorial images – for example, with a couple, dressed as though for a date or a celebration, holding flowers and holding hands, and floating near the top of the front door. The mirror also invoked this kind of housing security as a mirage, a phantasm of Berlant’s cruel optimism.

British sculptor Alex Chinneck has made several mutating buildings and homes (Chinneck n.d.). 2013’s *From the Knees of My Nose to the Belly of My Toes* took an unused three-storey house in Margate, Kent, and created a slipping façade for it that appeared to warp into the front garden and exposed the interior of the top storey. In the same year, for Bankside’s Merge Festival, his *Under the Weather* but over the Moon changed the façades of two adjacent three- and four-storey properties at the south end of London’s Blackfriars Bridge so that the buildings appeared to be upside-down. For the 2014 Merge Festival, on the site of a former candle factory in London’s Southwark Street, Chinneck built a two-storey Georgian house, apparently solid red-brick but actually made of wax. Titled *A Pound of Flesh for 50p*, the house was gradually melted over thirty days (Merge 2014), perhaps literalising the overheated market in housing.

All of these examples disorient audiences’ relationships to urban space, urban architecture, and human spaces of living in the city. They speak with poetic urgency to the insecurity, precarity, and insufficiency of housing now, performing housing that is largely unwelcoming, inhospitable, and disturbing. At the same

time, they stage the fantasy of a house and a home. Cultural critic Lauren Berlant might identify these as examples of what she calls cruel optimism, “the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object *in advance* of its loss” (Berlant 2006, 21; emphasis original; see also Berlant 2011). In these art works, despite deteriorating social and economic conditions under neoliberalism which corrode lives and might, for example, prevent home ownership, people tenaciously hold on to fantasies of the “good life”, fantasies such as that of home ownership.

My final example of visual art features not allusive imagery but explicit critical commentary. In artist Rebecca Ross’s 2015 *London Is Changing*, she solicited online comments and posted them on electronic billboards in central London locations. Comments included, “Our studio complex is being redeveloped into flats”, from a printmakers based in South London; and “London is miserable unless you’re rich” by an artist “relocating from Hackney [in East London] to the United States” (Lewis 2015). The campaign made explicit the gentrifying, displacing conditions experienced by respondents.

These examples interrupt public space with their visible differences and counter-narratives and challenge increasingly accepted and naturalised urban norms such as the prioritisation of profit, capital and business over the social needs of people. Even more so than in the case of works I discussed above, Ross placed her testimonies of housing crisis in the flow of urban traffic. They occupied not just traffic corridors and the sightlines of passers-by, but the very billboards usually deployed to advertise things for sale, including property, in this western

capitalist city quite typically dominated by consumerism. For me, all of these works made powerfully visible housing precarity and its painful, sometimes traumatising effects.

I start with these art works to demonstrate how prominent and urgent the housing crisis is as an issue for contemporary artists in the UK, how its visibility is increasing too for audiences in public space, and how it is specifically articulating feelings in response to the crisis, feelings of precarity, loss, displacement, and disturbance.

I turn now to look at how the housing crisis, its stories and its feelings have been addressed in recent performance by two young feminist companies: GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN and Sh!t Theatre.

GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN'S NUMBER 1, THE PLAZA

GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN is artistic director Hester Chillingworth, and performer-makers Lucy McCormick and Jennifer Pick (GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN n.d.a.). Since about 2008,¹⁶ THEVAN has made raucous, playful, sometimes aggressive, direct address, theatre/live art installations and performances that cast a fascinated and disgusted eye on the warped values of contemporary culture, especially its sexual politics. Shows

¹⁶ Stewart Pringle notes the company has been making work together for seven years in his review of *Number 1, The Plaza* (Pringle 2015).

are usually performed by McCormick and Pick, who refer to each other by their real names, as personae who may well be versions of their actual selves. In the pair's established onstage dynamic, Pick is more rule-bound and sardonic and McCormick is, apparently, cheerier, and given to wild excess (Pringle 2015). This dynamic is captured in a publicity still for 2013's *Number 1, The Plaza*: in a bright, white loft apartment tastefully furnished with select antique furniture and plants, Pick sits tidily, legs demurely crossed, hair pulled tight back, looking with possible disapproval at McCormick, who leaps in front of her in a bright pink, black-fringed sort of cheerleading outfit, her midriff and panty crotch exposed and her face obscured by long blonde hair.

The title *Number 1, The Plaza* locates the pair in a suggested luxury accommodation; it is number one, in a location so special it can abandon banal suffixes "street", or even "avenue" for the distinctive prefix "the". (Reviewer Matt Trueman observes its resemblance to a show flat at Number 1 The Avenue in East London's Bow. [Trueman 2014]). Set in both "their" home and a show home, the show, though staged sparsely, features two gleaming chrome bar stools, references to a breakfast bar and the invitation, "*Red front door. Gold number 1. Tiny peephole. Take a look around. GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN want to open up and let you in. Right in. So you can really get a feeling for what it's like on the inside*" (GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN n.d.b.). McCormick and Pick wear tight, low-cut, glittering cocktail dresses, long hair extensions, and large mics, their battery packs strapped to their thighs like garter belts... or the strap that secures a weapon to the leg of action heroine Lara Croft (see figure 1). They



FIGURE 1 Jennifer Pick (left) and Lucy McCormick (right) in GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN's *Number 1, The Plaza*, directed by Hester Chillingworth. Photograph: Ludovic des Cognets

carry drinks; wine for McCormick and whisky for Pick. They chat with the audience and sing musical numbers from Willy Russell's 1983 musical *Blood Brothers*, about twins separated at birth, one raised in wealth, and one in poverty. They give us a tour of their flat. They argue, wrestle, and throw and smear copious quantities of a substance that they present as shit – and that looks like shit – all over the stage and all over each other. Their dresses ride up and they are not wearing underwear (see figure 2). Reviewer Stewart Pringle observes that, though the show is billed as “an evening with”, “it’s more like a night in, one that’s gone on too long and devolved into karaoke and re-criminations” (Pringle 2015). According to THEVAN’s own publicity, “Someone’s left a passive aggressive note on the kitchen table; it’s about entitlement, property and privacy. Welcome to the show home, everyone. *Number 1, The Plaza* is a souvenir album from a joyride through extravaganza, cabaret, reality, live art, theatre and filth” (GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN n.d.b.).

Number 1, The Plaza presents a fantasy of urban “good life” featuring a swanky address, stylish design, dressing up and cocktails. But this is definitely a fantasy, at best only partially realised, more likely nowhere near achieved. In the dichotomy of those who have and those who have not invoked by this show’s references to *Blood Brothers*, McCormick and Pick are have-nots who fantasise about a better life. They wear party dresses, but their diets reportedly feature the inexpensive, carbohydrate-rich staples of children and students: pasta and pasties. They carry their “shit” in Tupperware, one of the most important tools of the thrifty household. Their flat is literally shitty. And most importantly, though their relationship has elements of af-



fection, camaraderie, and collaboration, Pick repeatedly puts down McCormick, the women fight, verbally and physically, and they smear each other with shit. There is affection here, but also dislike and punishment. Why do they live together? This is not the fun-times flat-share imagined in the NBC TV sitcom *Friends* that ran for a decade from 1994. This is the hard times of the situation tragedy of young women's urban lives in the UK in the twenty-teens.

Number 1, The Plaza is not a bleeding-heart plea for pity; Pick and McCormick's aggressive self-exposure, shit-slinging, and clear preference for alcohol leave no room for tea and sympathy; as much as it is the performance personae who fail to achieve the good life, it is the audience who are positioned to feel uncomfortable. However, the show does stage a metatheatrical exposé of the pressures on and in this pair's relationship and on whatever hope they might have for conventional fantasies of a good life that neoliberal contexts have put so far beyond the means of so many. *Number 1, the Plaza* playfully and aggressively makes public so much that would be private; it reveals how these women interact behind closed doors, it exposes their bodies, and it displays their shit. In so doing, the show explores the troubled dynamic between propriety and its near-namesake property, between public and private in contemporary culture.¹⁷ These performers work hard to take charge of those public/private dynamics but these dynamics ultimately do not advantage people such as these in contem-

FIGURE 2 Lucy McCormick (left) and Jennifer Pick (right) in GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN's *Number 1, The Plaza*, directed by Hester Chillingworth. Photograph: Ludovic des Cognets

¹⁷ I am grateful to Lynne McCarthy for her work on property rights that informs my thinking here.

porary neoliberal culture. The uncomfortable affect the show produces places performers and audience within these failing, unstable conditions that fail nothing so much as they fail social reciprocity. Reviewer Billy Barrett concludes, “The sight of two performers pretending to be in a luxury London pad while actually rolling around in sewage is a pretty grim sign of the times” (Barrett 2014).

SH!T THEATRE’S LETTERS TO WINDSOR HOUSE

Letters to Windsor House premiered in summer 2016 by London-based Sh!t Theatre and also addressed the housing crisis, particularly its effects on so-called Generation Rent and on the friendship of the Sh!t’s two members, Louise Mothersole and Rebecca Biscuit. This show too made visible the precarity of housing now, but its narrative and performance forms especially allowed for detailed exploration of some of the emotional damage caused by housing insecurity. Sh!t Theatre describe the show in their typical semi-ironic style as a “Detective show for Generation Rent” (Sh!t Theatre n.d.). For me, the show is funny and ironic but also painfully revealing about how the headline-grabbing but abstract “housing crisis” actually manifests in acute, traumatising, and tragic personal pressures, especially on friendship.¹⁸

¹⁸ Sh!t Theatre’s Rebecca Biscuit and Louise Mothersole describe making *Letters to Windsor House* in detail with me in my podcast *Stage Left with Jen Harvie*, episode 1, “Sh!t Theatre” (Harvie 2017).

Sh!t Theatre replace the “i” in Shit with an exclamation mark. Duo Mothersole and Biscuit have been making work together since at least 2010 (Sh!t Theatre n.d.). They perform as “themselves”, use direct address, and mix comic style with sequences of song in a kind of vaudeville, addressing political issues such as underemployment head on. They perform in partial drag, always appearing in full-face make-up that often makes Mothersole look surprised and Biscuit slightly displeased. They usually wear matching cheap and unglamorous costumes – shirts, shorts and bandanas in *Letters to Windsor House* (see figure 3).

As the opening sequence of *Letters to Windsor House* makes clear, Windsor House is the actual and quite run-down ex-local authority flat Mothersole and Biscuit live in in a poor area in north London, though this building once had illusions of grandeur, being named after a royal castle, as are its neighbours, Buckingham House and Holyrood House (Sh!t Theatre 2017, 19-20). The show’s opening sequence is accompanied by slide images and illustrates how Windsor House is surrounded by poverty and deprivation: a psychiatric hospital, the visibly poorly resourced St John’s Deaf Centre, a homeless encampment, and a hotel with bedbugs rated “1.5 out of 5 on TripAdvisor” (idem, 23-24). Also nearby are two new luxury housing developments on the site of former social housing, “55% of which have been pre-sold to investors in Singapore”, notes Mothersole (idem, 24).

Letters to Windsor House features slide shows, comic action with cardboard boxes and a bouncy sofa, brass instruments, a disco light, and harmonised songs, many from Lionel Bart’s 1960 musical *Oliver!* based on Charles Dickens’ 1837-9 novel *Oli-*



FIGURE 3 Sh!t Theatre's Louise Mothersole (left) and Rebecca Biscuit (right) in *Letters to Windsor House* / Photograph: The Other Richard

ver Twist. Through the evidence presented by previous tenants' mountains of accumulated mail, the show narrates Biscuit and Mothersole's investigation into the lives of those many previous tenants. What emerges is a picture of people "hailed" by their mail as would-be tax-payers, precarious workers, debtors, and consumers, as most mail is from advertisers, former employers, and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs – the UK's tax-collecting agency. Eventually, Mothersole and Biscuit open some mail and extrapolate from it to concoct former tenants' life stories marked by underemployment and comparatively minor league tax evasion amongst a class of Generation Renters who live in housing insecurity. The Sh!ts' treatment of other people's mail ultimately points up not their disrespect for other people's property but rather the cruel displacements, acute instability and often undesired hypermobility that are experienced by so many in the unregulated commercial rental sector. Here, personal communications – and implicitly, personal identities – literally become part of the collateral damage, where rents rise frequently and rapidly and tenants are forced to move even faster in search of affordable accommodation.

Eventually, Mothersole and Biscuit discover that their landlord is illegally subletting his council flat to them, implicating Mothersole and Biscuit who are nevertheless trapped. They cannot afford to move, though in many ways they would like to: the flat is small, with little privacy and no social space besides the kitchen. They are trapped in a rental limbo that is not only potentially criminal but developmental. One previous male tenant receives leaflets for baby formula. Speculating why, they ultimately conclude that it is for his own consumption:

L[ouise]: Simplest explanation –

B[ecca]: Rob Jecock was receiving baby milk,
Rob Jecock is an

Resigned nods:

B & L: Adult baby. (idem, 54; emphasis original)

It is a reasonable conclusion in an economy which inhibits independent adult living, infantilising its citizens. Biscuit and Mothersole, too, play dress-up, jump on the furniture, and build shelters out of cardboard (idem, 31, 60). They present a slide from Stephanie Polsky's book *Ignoble Displacement*:

There are many similarities between the Victorian liberal agenda and the neoliberal agenda of the present-era Cameron government concerning the housing of low-income people. The logic of contemporary Conservatism is truly Dickensian: their main concern is to prevent the poor from making demands on society.

(cited in Sh!t Theatre 2017, 46)

Mothersole and Biscuit are certainly neglected by the state, and likely abandoned by it. In these circumstances, they have become mutually dependent, over-attached, and unable to separate: Biscuit responds to Mothersole's private messages (idem, 32); neither can move out or on. "You feel responsible for my welfare", says Mothersole; "I feel trapped", says Biscuit (idem, 52-3). Their relationship is mutually sustaining, but also, in the circumstances, mutually constraining (see figure 4).

It is not only citizens who cannot mature in these contexts. Britain itself has regressed, as the show makes repeated resonant references to the pre-Welfare State of Victorian London depicted by Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Oliver Twist*. An audio bed of the song “Consider Yourself” from the musical adaptation *Oliver!* reminds audiences how the character Fagan traps vulnerable children in his exploitative criminal enterprise by giving them something approximating love: “Consider yourself at home! Consider yourself one of the family” (idem, 30). *Letters to Windsor House* stages Fagan as commensurate with the Sh!ts’ criminal landlord; hateful, inescapable but also himself a victim of disadvantageous circumstances, possibly himself also a Generation Renter.

Repeatedly, the show poses contrasts between fantasies and realities of British life. The fantasies are posed most audaciously by a promotional video for the new private development coming soon near Windsor House, a video which visually implies that the location is near Harrods department store and a branch of Marks and Spencer – it is not – and claims the area is a sort of rural idyll, “a beautiful piece of rural England”; it is not (idem, 40). To semi-occupy these fantasies of bygone British leisure and plenitude, the Sh!ts do Morris dancing and play Rule Britannia (badly) on brass instruments. As I discuss below and as illustrated in figure 5, they literally inhabit red pillar box post boxes, a British design icon spread throughout its empire. The Sh!ts wear “Ladies Printed Country Blouses” from a “really upmarket Scottish clothing company” (idem, 69) that their flat has received promotional post for; the blouses are tastefully patterned with animals such as grouse and pheasant, animals



FIGURE 4 Sh!t Theatre’s Louise Mothersole in the arms of Rebecca Biscuit in *Letters to Windsor House* / Photograph: The Other Richard

“where the plural is the same as the singular”, and animals “you can shoot” (idem, 70). In contrast to those fantasy pseudo-memories of British/London life hinting at bucolic and leisured rural living, the Sh!ts show locally-recorded videos and photos of squalid dumped garbage, homeless housing encampments, drug-taking in a phone box, and atrocious housing conditions. *Letters*’ set is crowded by cardboard boxes, which signify as the playthings of their childlike selves, but also as homeless housing and discarded, accumulated rubbish (see figure 1). They show the fantasy precisely as fantasy. They jump on the furniture, “as though trying to grab for something just slightly out of reach” (idem, 46; italics original in stage direction).

Caught in a situation tragedy, Mothersole and Biscuit cannot prevent themselves repeatedly imagining tragic, even melodramatic conclusions to the previous tenants’ stories. They imagine that a new mother dies (idem, 55); a man gets caught up with the Turkish mafia and becomes so stressed, he suffers a debilitating stroke (idem, 48-51). The real tragedy that unfolds is that of Mothersole and Biscuit’s friendship, which strains under the pressure of their housing insecurity. Mothersole fantasises that they are a family; Biscuit wants more independence.

In one of the most poignant sets of sequences of the performance, Mothersole and Biscuit stand on far sides of the stage and don cardboard constructions shaped and painted in loving detail as red pillar box post boxes, with Queen Elizabeth II’s E II R insignia replaced with a carefully crafted B & L for Becca and Louise. They alternate peering and speaking through the postal slots (idem, 32-3; 52-3; 81-2; see figure 5). Each of them

has one hand accessible through a side of the box, enabling them to hold and read letters. With physical and verbal awkwardness, they read these letters to each other, confessing their strong but conflicting feelings about living together: Mothersole wants to sustain the mutual dependence; Biscuit wants to, but cannot, move on; they love each other; but it is not easy. These are parts of what the housing crisis does: inhibit movement, inhibit expression, restrict development, and put acute, potentially traumatising pressure on friendships.

CONCLUSIONS

This work by artists of Generation Rent indicting the conditions they are living in is a lo-fi theatre of economy with a narrative which explicitly addresses the attractions of a better quality of independent living and the limitations of living without that as well as the restrictions to achieving it. The work narrates the particular pressures on relationships that current conditions produce. Especially in the case of GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN, the work is unabashedly scatological, not politely smoothing over the conditions of oppression, but proliferating, smearing, and spreading them. Both companies transgress conventional proprieties, THEVAN physically and the Sh!ts in stories about their sex lives and relationships and in opening other people’s mail. These revelations put pressures on conventions of propriety, privacy, and privacy’s putative opposite of publicness, all in an underlying context of compromised property and social relations. Both companies’ performance of the double act dem-



FIGURE 5 Sh!t Theatre's Louise Mothersole in *Letters to Windsor House* / Photograph: The Other Richard

onstrates strong homosocial, possibly queer, mutual support as well as the acute, needling pressures that these dark times put on all forms of kinship networks. The duo form also allows both companies to present ambivalence, encapsulating outlooks both more “optimistic” or hopeful – personified by McCormick and Mothersole – and “pessimistic” – in Pick and Biscuit. And though these works are playful, funny, energetic, surprising, amusing, and visually rich, they are also dark, un-optimistic situation-tragedy cabarets. They feature shit and beat-up cardboard boxes. Their women are powerful but they are also infantilised and suffering. These shows are savage, uncomfortable indictments of the impasses these young women of Generation Rent – and so many others – find themselves in in this awful age of neoliberal austerity. These performances and the artworks discussed above show the housing crisis and show its discomfort and pain, things we need to see more clearly to be motivated to act for change.

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Hit, Hit Maker, Hit Parade

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A SERIES OF PERFORMANCES USING MICROPHONES AS PERCUSSIVE INSTRUMENTS TO SOUND A SPACE. REPETITIVE AND PERSISTENT BEATS THAT ENTWINE SOUND, SPACE, AND TIME THROUGH A LOGIC OF LABOUR AND ENDURANCE. THE PERFORMERS ARE LIKE STUBBORN AUTOMATONS SEEKING TO TRANSPIERCE THE MATERIAL THEY ARE HITTING. AS SOUND FACTORY WORKERS, THEY LEAVE THEIR MARK. THE COLLECTION OF OVERLAPPING CHAOTIC BEATS RESULTS IN A RESONATING RUMBLE THAT RESEMBLES THE DULL ROAR OF URBAN ACTIVITY. A LIVE RHYTHM MACHINE MADE UP OF ARMS ARMED WITH MICROPHONES USED AS HAMMERS. THE PERFORMANCES PUNCTUATE SPACE AND PARCEL UP TIME. WHAT IF EVERY MOMENT OF OUR LIVES WAS A HIT?

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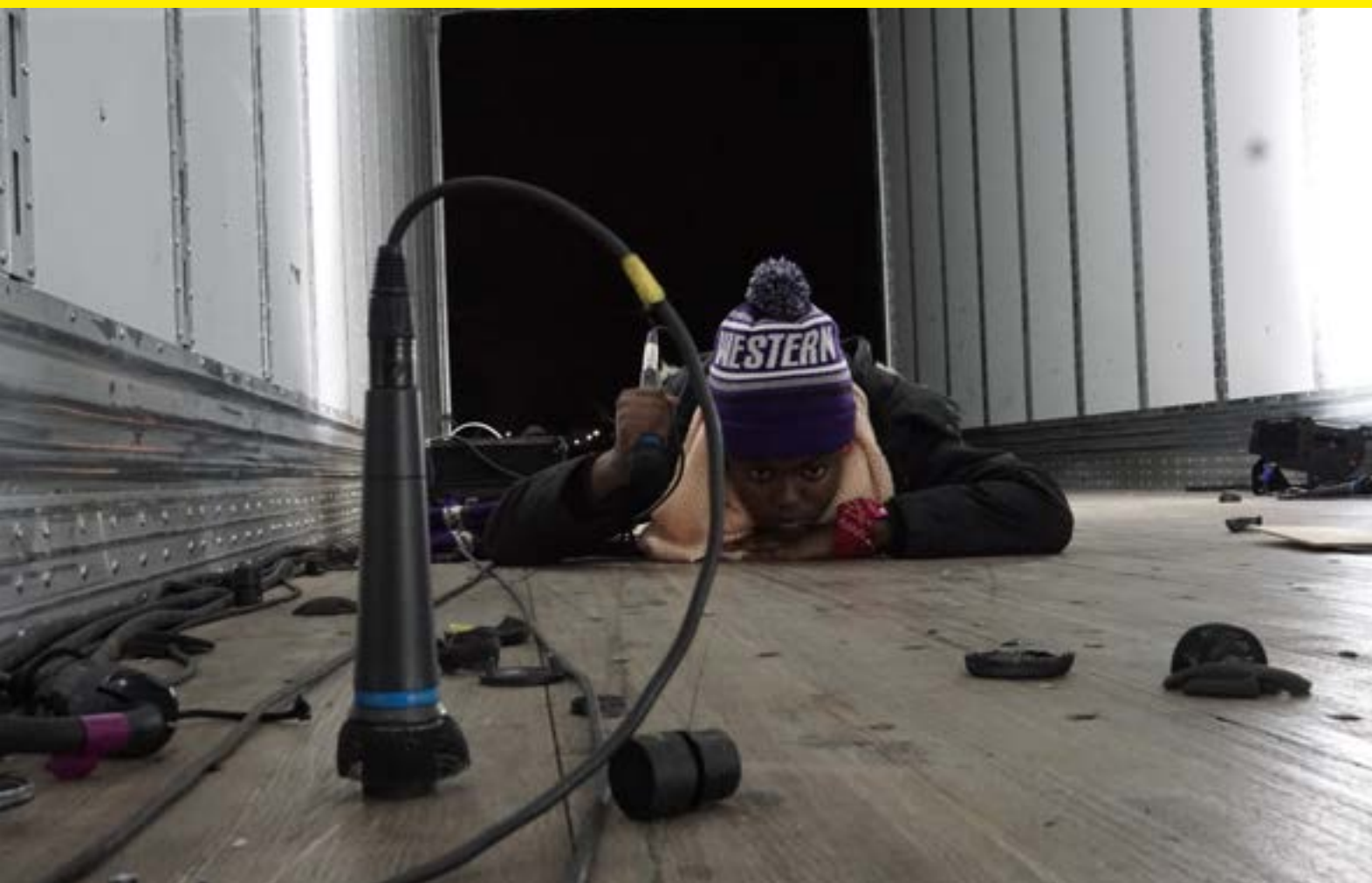
Christof Migone

HIT

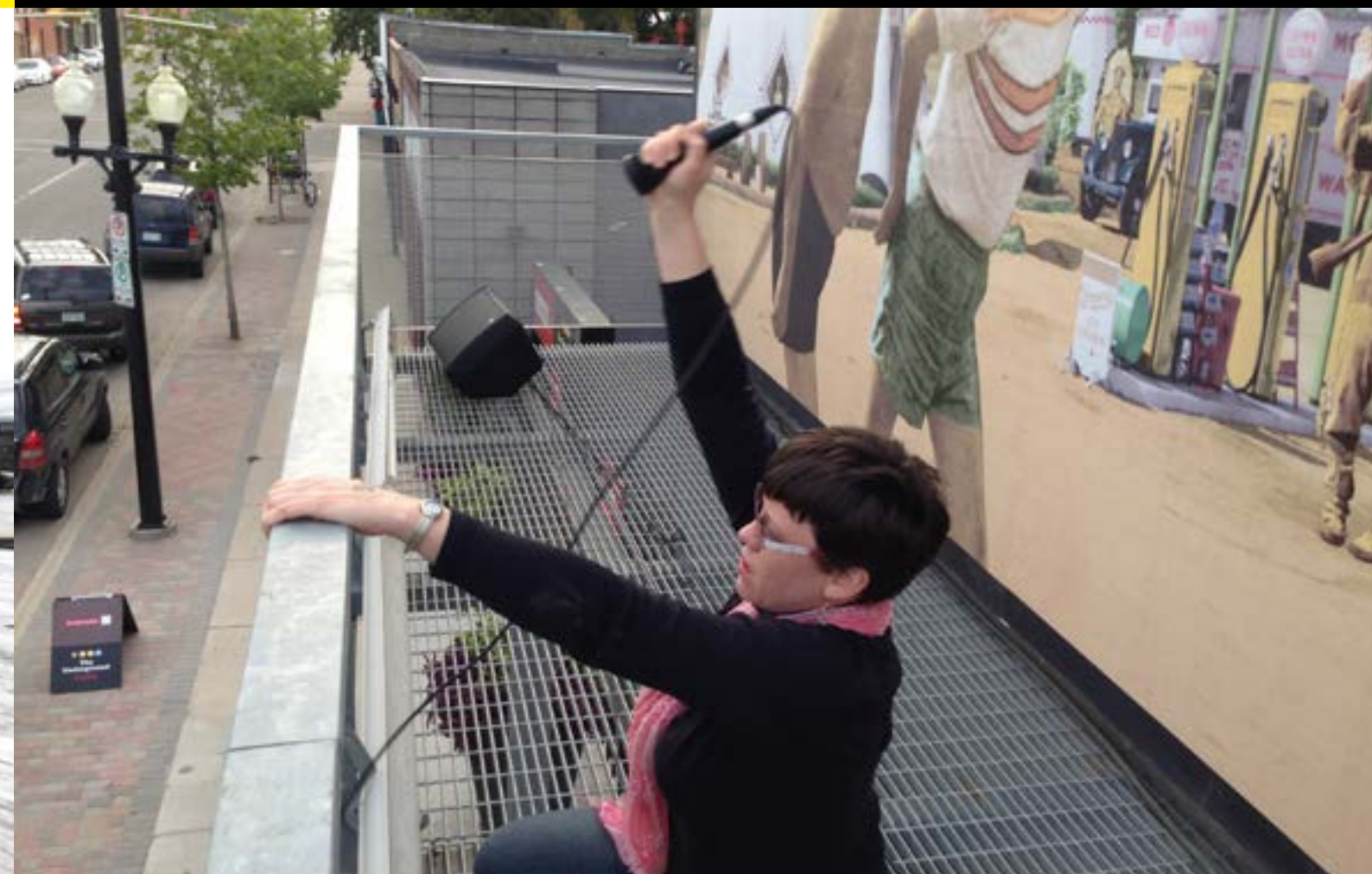
Performers hit various surfaces with the microphones. The rudimentary rendering can be heard as a lulling meditative murmur or a grating aggravating noise; the volume ebbs and flows as the organic collective apparatus expends its energy. The piece lasts as long as the event it is a part of. The sound they produce is heard acoustically, but is also amplified and, in the case of the Nuit Blanche version, transformed into a live composition over an array of speakers.

Hit (Nuit Blanche). Twenty-five participants performing up to thirteen at a time. Part of the zone curated by Christine Shaw under the exhibition title: *The Work of Wind*, for the 2015 edition of Nuit Blanche in Toronto, sunrise to sunset, October 3-4, 2015.

Hit (Sounds Like). Seven participants performing two at a time. Part of the Sounds Like festival, Saskatoon, 18h30-22h, July 27, 2013.



Hit (Nuit Blanche) / Photograph: Marla Haldy



Hit (Sounds Like) / Photograph: Christof Migone

HIT MAKER

Ten participants are sought throughout the city and are asked to hit a surface with a microphone one hundred times. The sound of each person's actions is amplified. Each person can choose their own rhythm and intensity. Hit Maker, unlike Hit and Hit Parade, is less of a happening or an event, and functions more as a surprise, a little moment of noise, a strange little gesture, a sonic capsule of labour, a marker of time at work or out in the city.

Hit (Porto). Part of the Trama Festival, October 15, 2011.

Hit (Sudbury). Part of the FAAS 3 (Fore d'art alternatif de Sudbury), organized by the Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario, May 10-11, 2012.



Hit Maker (Porto), Bernardino Pereira, 82 years old, retired, Batalha Square (bus stop)
Photograph: Christof Migone



Hit Maker (Sudbury), Terri McTembsey, 12 years old, student / Photograph: Christof Migone

HIT PARADE

Participants lie face down on the street or ground where they occupy a sidewalk or atrium or public space and proceed to pound the pavement or floor with the microphone one thousand times. The sound of hitting is amplified. Each person has their own amplifier.

They have to reach to one thousand. Because each performer chooses their own rhythm and intensity, the ending is staggered. As the activity dwindles the public is unsure when or if it has ended.

The ambiguity is welcome.

The parade is static, it does not go through the city but you hear it from blocks away. Hit Parade announces itself through the ears well before the eyes. Part-celebration, part-protest, part-noisefest.

246 Instructions are simple, no skill required. Count as you hit, stop when you get to 1000. As the piece has evolved, certain additional parameters have been inserted into the score. At first it was just the inclusion of open-ended pauses at key moments in the count. Then each performer received one the following: Hit as slow as possible for the first half and as fast as possible for the second; Hit as fast as possible for the first half and as slow as possible for the second; Make each pause twice as long as the last one; Alternate each section between pauses between hitting softly and hitting hard; Hit increasingly fast and loud; Start fast and loud, finish slow and quiet; Ignore my instructions about pauses and take them whenever you feel like it; Don't take any pauses; Make each hundred opposite of the preceding hundred (up to you to interpret); Within each block of one hundred ramp up and then down (could be in terms of speed or intensity or both); Follow the score and nothing more; Hit hesitantly sometimes; Take longer than others to start; Try to finish first; Try to finish last.

Hit Parade (Seoul). Ten participants. Part of SFX SEOUL, September 8, 2007.

Hit Parade (Montreal). Eleven participants. Part of the Suoni per il Popolo festival at the Sala Rossa on June 9, 2008.

Hit Parade (Quebec). Fourteen participants. Part of C'est arrivé près de chez vous at the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, curator Nathalie de Blois, January 17, 2009.

Hit Parade (Dundee). Twelve participants. Part of Kill Your Timid Notion, presented by Arika at Dundee Contemporary Arts, February 27, 2010.

Hit Parade (Winnipeg). Fifteen participants. Presented by Plug In for the Send+Receive Festival, October 7, 2011.

Hit Parade (Porto). Twelve participants. Presented at the Trama Festival on October 14, 2011.

Hit Parade (New York). Thirteen participants. Part of Arika's programming for the Whitney Biennial titled A survey is a process of listening, May 3, 2012.

Hit Parade (Toronto). Seventeen participants. Part of the 7a*11d International Festival of Performance Art, in the lobby of the Ontario College of Art & Design, October 27, 2012.

Hit Parade (Rotterdam). Ten participants. Part of the International Film Festival Rotterdam, part of Signals: Sound Stages curated by Edwin Carels, at the Schouwburgplein, January 28, 2013.

Hit Parade (Kitchener). Fifteen participants. Part of the Between the Ears portion of CAFKA 13 in Kitchener City Hall, May 31, 2013.

Hit Parade (Milan). Twelve participants. Presented in the context of the Cildo Meireles exhibition Installation. Curated by Pedro Rocha, at HangarBicocca in Milan, July 10, 2014.

Hit Parade (Melbourne). Thirty-nine participants. Presented by the Liquid Architecture Festival in the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria, September 28, 2014.

Hit Parade (Zagreb). Twenty-four participants. Presented as part of the Expanded Cinema section of the 25fps festival, September 27, 2015.

Hit Parade (Cagliari). Twenty-two participants. Presented at the MEM – Mediateca del Mediterraneo, November 20, 2015.



Hit Parade (Seoul) / Photograph: Jean-Pierre Gauthier



Hit Parade (Montreal) / Photograph: Alexis O'Hara

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The Performance is the Message

Rui Mourão



Artist performance OS NOSSOS SONHOS NÃO CABEM NAS VOSSAS URNAS [OUR DREAMS DON'T FIT IN YOUR BALLOT BOXES], 2014 / Photograph: Madalena Ávila



Artist performance *OS VOSSOS SONHOS NÃO CABEM NAS NOSSAS URNAS* [YOUR DREAMS DON'T FIT IN OUR BALLOT BOXES], 2014 / Photograph: Ricardo Castelo-Branco



Artist performance *OS VOSSOS SONHOS NÃO CABEM NAS NOSSAS URNAS*
[YOUR DREAMS DON'T FIT IN OUR BALLOT BOXES], 2014
Photograph: Ricardo Castelo-Branco

ARTISTIC MAKING AS REVELATION PERFORMANCE

Despite becoming what we do, we are what we dream. We are what we do with dreams. We find ourselves in between what we continue to dream, what we no longer dream of and that which we turn the dream into, which is never a crystalized thing. In this trajectory, we are all the narratives through which we constantly create and recreate ourselves. We are a changing narrative, a narrative that we structure as much as it structures us.

In my case, the dream and the narrative always involve art. Although I have been working intensely in visual arts since 2005, especially with video, my artistic trajectory began in performing arts. However, I did not want to interpret the worlds of other artists. I wanted to interpret the world as an artist. Video art has allowed me to engage in that search, as I record situations from reality, which I then isolate and link in representations that go beyond it. Shot composition, the grammar of editing, the polysemy afforded by video installations and the diversity of subjects of analysis (artistic, social, cultural, economic, political or sexual issues) have allowed me to try to understand the other, while I understand and position myself in relation to the subject of analysis.

In fact, I have never left the performative realm. It is just that I am no longer others. I move towards others. Capturing and interpreting their performativity, I seek to give them a voice. And I find my own voice in theirs. The relevance of anthropology to my work emerges precisely as an interpreter of the other. It is as if the situations that I shoot, and in which I also somehow participate, are recombined in a specular way, in a contemplative stepping back by which everything is dislocated from its original context. Everything is reperformed to reveal itself; to reveal myself.



Artist performance *MORREM LENTAS AS URNAS ONDE NÃO CABEM OS SONHOS*
[BALLOT BOXES WHERE DREAMS DON'T FIT SLOWLY DIE], 2014 / Photograph: Rui Mourão

POLITICAL ACTION AS PERFORMANCE ART

Although actions are not always consciously performative or political, from the perspective of Performance Studies all human action is performed, in the same way that from the perspective of Political Science all human action is politicized. Playing with these notions, interconnecting the political as performative and the performative as political, in 2014 I conceived an “artist troika” (both artistic and activist), consisting of: a book (*Ensaio de Ativismo: Video e performance* [Essay on Activism: Video and Performance], multichannel video installation (with ten image projections of activist performances in Portugal) and a live performance (in three acts that I shall briefly explain). Act I happened unexpectedly both for the audience and the staff of the Chiado Museum – National Museum of Contemporary Art. During the opening of the video installation and the book launch session, a supposed spectator (singer Ana Maria Pinto) started to sing “Acordai [Wake up]”, composed by Fernando Lopes-Graça, and walked towards the chaise longue on which Antigone (actress Joana Freches) lay asleep, to awaken her spirit fighting for ethics. Dozens of guests pulled sleeping bags and posters from the chaise longue. The posters contained slogans against the privatizing of the museum, against the disinvestment in the arts and for a democratization of the access to Culture). I read the activist manifesto and the museum was occupied for the night. Act II followed one month later, with seventy-three people dressed in black mimicking the statues and paintings at the National Museum of Ancient Art (evoking the right to Culture in article 73 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic) and repeating over and over: “We are art, in front of art, mourning for art, fighting for art”. Act III took place the following month, with a choreography at Ajuda Nacional Palace – the seat of public power overseeing Culture in Portugal – including anthropomorphized pigs, umbrellas, poetry and a drone filming the event from above.

Act I was titled *OS NOSSOS SONHOS NÃO CABEM NAS VOSSAS URNAS* [OUR DREAMS DON'T FIT IN YOUR BALLOT BOXES], Act II *OS VOSSOS SONHOS NÃO CABEM NAS NOSSAS URNAS* [YOUR DREAMS DON'T FIT IN OUR BALLOT BOXES], *MORREM LENTAS AS URNAS ONDE NÃO CABEM OS SONHOS* [BALLOT BOXES WHERE DREAMS DON'T FIT SLOWLY DIE].¹ This veritable artistic and political lab involved the participation of over one hundred people and was strategically mediatized on the Internet, press, television and radio, thus proving that it is possible to create artistic forms that engender political actors with a voice in the public sphere.² Subverting the status quo with low economic resources and high ideals generates empowerment through art, breaking the paradigm of "art for art's sake" in favour of "acting art" and questioning injustices, inequalities and poor public choices.

Unlike large street demonstrations, which rely on the largest possible number of people for impact, the force of activist performances in the public space is more qualitative than quantitative, imparting them with a vocation for counter-power and counterculture.

THE REVELATION OF THE MEDIUM AS TRANSFORMATION PERFORMANCE

For Richard Schechner, a reference in Performance Studies, in both theatre and ritual there is a passage from the everyday into the performative dimension, but the actor who is aware of the character is "transported" by the performing experience, while in ritual performance the agent is "transported" by the experience, incorporating an inner condition from which he/she will not return unchanged. Drawing a parallel between

¹ Online videos of the three acts: vimeo.com/119287387; vimeo.com/120016187; vimeo.com/120014664

² I analyzed the subject in depth in Mourão (2015).

ritual performative experience and performance art, we realize that both require an attitude of commitment without masks to create a transforming potential.

That was the potential that I experienced, in a much deeper way than I had expected, in activist performances. I experienced it through a true surrendering to ideas, but also through the relational dynamics with the supporters and detractors of the three acts, whose positions echo both in the museum and the public cybersphere of social networks.

Despite the support of several artists, activists and patrons of the arts, I met with the opposition of the official mediators of the art that I wanted to defend. The curator of the exhibition herself, Emília Tavares, staunchly opposed my political-artistic act despite having written, in the wake of Léger: "Works like Rui Mourão's suggest the possibility of resilience in the face of dictums that the art system expects from artists, i.e., 'produce constructive criticism of the system, but do not threaten public institutions, hierarchical classes and other legacies of bourgeois liberalism; intervene on culture, but do not appear aggressive or ready to fight for political equality'" (Tavares 2014, 17).

Once the mediating discourse that expects a separation between ethics and aesthetics is emptied, all that is left is the rhetoric that turns art into an instrument of power relations linked to an elitist cultural capital. Therefore, how not to question the meaning of the art of my time, seeking for the value of art beyond the frame of successive times? Which is to say, I went into the Chiado Museum with convictions and left with doubts. I went in defending a system that I subverted and left subverting my place within that system. I went in as an artist and left as a person.

Where, when and how artistic production occurs tells us as much about the creator as it does about the medium that defines

presentation conditions. Taking into account that “the medium is the message”, Marshall McLuhan’s famous formula, it could be deduced that the form and place in which performance is expressed is in itself a message about the place occupied by the artist. The economic, institutional and political constraints of the art medium that I subverted, by exposing them, revealed a message: their limitations are in place to generate creations that fit the respective mould. Artists must choose between turning art into a medium moulded by the validation of the dominant sociocultural group, which thereby perpetuates itself, or turning art into a medium of inner and outer transformation that would ideally allow everyone to evolve. Even if the process means to destabilize, stir and question.

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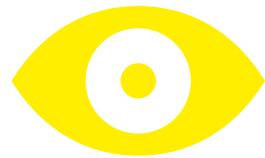
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WHEN PERFORMANCE MEETS THE MUSEUM: A DIALOGUE WITH CATHERINE WOOD

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Liliana Coutinho



In the last few years, we have witnessed an increasing hosting of performance arts in large-scale institutional contexts, such as the museum and the academy, both of which with their own projects and historiographic missions, reflexive analysis, conservation or exhibition of the contemporary artistic experience.

In this interview with Catherine Wood, curator in charge of Tate Modern's Performance Department, we will look at an institution that was paradigmatic in bringing the performance into the museum. The themes examined here range from the relationship of the artistic practices of performance to the Tate

Modern collection, to the construction of archives and documentation, to the transformation of Art History narratives when seen in the light of performance, to the migration of forms of artistic making into different institutional spaces, to spaces for performance in the museum and the museum as public space.

>>> Harvie p.211

>>> Phelan p.290

>>> Raposo p.421

>>> Schneider p.34

>>> Nogueira p.145

>>> Bayraktar p.180

Wood is clear in the definition of her programming field, linking it clearly to Tate Modern's mission – i.e., to collect and construct a historical perspective for modern and contemporary art –, as well as for the physical and social space that it occupies in the city of London and in the international contemporary art panorama. This dependence on the mission is a prolific intervention space at various levels. On the one hand, the presence of objects as singular and diverse as the objects of performance art allows for a rereading of our understanding of what constitutes an art object, while clearly transferring the focus from the object-material to the object-relationship. The entry of this practice into the contemporary art museum opens up space for an increasingly clear understanding of the art object as an object that is constituted through a process of *relations* rather than remaining a *timeless icon* – in Wood's own words –, whose formal and signifiatory configuration could well be already defined before being given to the spectator's experience or placed *on stage* in the museum and in the discourses that it constructs. We will also see that, within this perspective, to gaze at the art object leads to a revaluation of both the material objects (in the context of performative practice, the one to be conserved in a collection, depending of their place and function in the artistic experience to be activated or evoked) and the historical narratives that articulate their meanings.

Furthermore, from the point of view of the relationship between her work and Tate Modern's mission, Wood's curatorial approach privileges the relationships between artistic practices, relating performance to painting, sculpture and installation and promoting a concrete, transformative dialogue able to shed

a new light on art periods and works. Within these relationships there is a possible definition of performance art, valid in the context of this interview: a collection of artistic practices that concern not only the presence of the body, but are based on the creation of events, or live situations, which share imaginaries and modes of production with other arts, where the pictorial or sculptural dimension is more present, adding to them the temporal dimension. Instead of being presented as a new medium, or artistic discipline, performance art also emerges as a way of reflecting on museological practice itself – see, for instance, what is mentioned about the piece *Musée de la Danse*. This intersection between artistic fields is sometimes hindered by the organization of artistic production structures, with discipline-divided services and departments. For this reason, performance seeks other allies within the institution, reformulating social relationships and hierarchies within the museum by providing visibility to services and activities that, important as they might be to its daily life, are often still seen as secondary, or as mere supports, to the departments which are considered crucial to implementing the institution's mission (conservation and curatorship departments). These other allies operate precisely within the scope of the relationship with visitors and, therefore, form the structure of the museum as public space (visitor experience service, educational service, etc.). A creative relationship with these departments demonstrates that the entry of performance into the museum interferes with the regime of production of knowledge of the contemporary art museum, also acting on its social hierarchy system by positioning areas formerly considered as support structures on the plane of production of conditions of experience and meaning for the artwork.

This potential repositioning of internal hierarchies through a creative relationship with public related services also leads to another reflection in the interview: to consider the museum as a public space to test social relationships and experiment with possibilities of relationship between collective behaviours, typical of places dealing with large numbers of visitors (and with wide public exposure, such as in the case with the Tate Modern), and more intimate experiences of cohabitation with the artwork. Could the museum be a place to test both the possibilities for conciliation and for conflict between these two dimensions of human experience in the public space?

PERFORMANCE AT THE MUSEUM

INTERVIEW WITH CATHERINE WOOD,
HEAD OF PERFORMANCE AT TATE MODERN

Tate Modern has an extensive collection of modern and contemporary art. Can you let us know, in broad strokes and from the start of your work at Tate, what is the role of performance relative to the collection and the exhibitions?

In the early 2000s, after undertaking research on the cross-disciplinary experiments of 1960s New York – in particular, looking at the relationship between minimalist sculpture and dance at the Judson Theater in New York, and the work of Yvonne Rainer – I became, in parallel, very interested in a new generation of artists who were working with “performance”. But it wasn’t “performance art” in a body-centred sense. It was about initiating situations that were live or event-based, sharing constructions that were pictorial or sculptural in nature but often composed of moveable elements, gestures and images and unfolding through time. An emerging interest in an expanded notion of “moving image” was beginning to interest a younger generation of artists, and I began at Tate by trying to find a space to present this. Historically, Tate had occasionally – since the 1970s – programmed performance works as part of a secondary programme, for special patrons events or as educational activities. Artists including Cesar, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Rose English and Joseph Beuys had been part of this. There were also performance-related works in the collection, by Bruce Nauman, or Mona Hatoum. But, in looking at a new generation of artists – including Marvin

Gaye Chetwynd, Mark Leckey or Carlos Amorales, to name a few – and how they incorporated “performance” into a broader practice that wasn’t necessarily anti-gallery or anti-museum, I wanted to reflect contemporary practice in our programmes and collection displays. It was from there that I began to draw out the histories that were influencing these artists too, and began to try to join them up. These narratives are not medium-specific, but set painting and sculpture in dialogue with actions and events.

Is there any cross-departmental or cross-disciplinary work, involving other curatorial departments?

Not exactly, in the artistic “cross disciplinary” sense. Before Tate, I worked at the Barbican Centre which had a theatre department, a music department, an art department and, ironically, despite my desire it seemed to be almost impossible to work cross-departmentally because everybody had their “medium” and related budget in their own discipline. This was sad.

Conversely, at Tate, it’s only visual art, yet my projects – more than most exhibitions or commissions often touch dance or theatre or music and we have collaborated with other institutions in London such as Sadlers Wells or the National Theatre. But in terms of the museum’s own departments, most projects have involved intense and productive collaboration with Visitor Services, the Information assistants, the Learning department, the Community department. The life of the museum that is in theory not the “art specialist” part has been incredibly important – their skills and experience essential, in fact – and artists have often brought this human infrastructure or architecture into the frame of visibility, deliberately, and found new ways of working into it.

Do you think that the presence of performance in the museum challenges the art history narratives put up by the Tate collection?

Yes, absolutely.

“Performance” is much more than an event programme or a medium for live art works. It can be considered as an attitude, and a perspective on the entirety of the museum’s holdings. Its expansiveness in drawing attention to the many active elements of a situation in which art is encountered is significant for all forms of art production and presentation.

Taking the point of view of performance as an attitude, it can inflect our reading of the status and meaning of any of the works in Tate’s collection. I see many of our collection objects as pauses or moments in an ongoing artistic dialogue, or prompts towards action as much as valuable artefacts per se. This is something I attempted to stage in the show I did titled “A Bigger Splash: Painting after Performance”, looking at icons of the collection by Pollock and Hockney in terms of what they opened up for choreography and theatre. And subsequently in the opening programme of the Switch House galleries: in “Between Object and Architecture” displays, and in the Tanks where we showed Charlotte Posenenske, Robert Morris and Rasheed Araeen as score-like, objects as performances. But it is also part of an ongoing strategy as regards collecting and considering how the “uncollectable” can be woven into a collection. What do we value? What do we keep?

In 2015 you worked with Boris Charmatz’s proposal *If Tate Modern was Musée de la Danse?*, a project that proposed a transformation of the art museum through the lens of

dance. This makes me think about the significance of the discipline of dance in its relationship to the museum and the way museum spaces are venues for the presentation of artists who also present themselves in major theatre venues – I am thinking, for instance, of Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker or Alexandra Bachzetsis’ work. What kind of reflection on the museum did Charmatz’ proposal allow for within Tate Modern, and how do you approach this connection between the museum experience and dance?

There has been a lot of debate about “dance in the museum” in recent years and lots of traffic across the boundaries between theatres and museum or gallery spaces. But it’s been a two-way traffic, in the sense that many visual artists in the past decade have borrowed ideas of “choreography”, “theatre”, “dance” in their work from a non-disciplined point of view, at the same time that curators have invited those trained in the above into their spaces. I think this process of exchange has been healthy, if not always mutually sympathetic: the visual artists often borrow forms from other disciplines as “readymade” formats and styles, putting them in quotation marks, deliberately “cutting and pasting” or displacing outmoded forms into the world of their work. The gallery situation offers both freedom and friction for professional dancers and choreographers: the lack of audience/performer set-up or other technical infrastructure can be liberating, but the lack of provision (sprung floors, dressing rooms, showers etc) can make it tough. Practical issues aside, I feel that within visual arts we have gleaned a lot of nuance and complexity from the craft and sensitivity of those practiced in theatre and dance seen within our spaces. It might be (and is) the case that this work can be seen down the road in theatre, but the proximity of practices in

the same space opens up better potential for dialogue and positive “cross-contamination”.

Boris Charmatz is one choreographer who has been fascinated with and working on the dialogue between visual art and dance for a long time. His projects such as *Brouillon* or *Expo Zero* radically reimagine what an exhibition format might be, incorporating live action. Distinct from other artists such as Tino Sehgal or Xavier Leroy he has specifically investigated the material object artwork in relation to danced gestures. His *Musée de la Danse* project as a “mental space” was something important that I thought we should bring to bear upon our thinking at Tate, to challenge the fundamental basis of what we value, what we show, and how we think about the museum as an institution: prioritizing less the building, perhaps, and more the human infrastructure. I was fascinated by how this proposed transformation could initiate a shift from the fetishistic choreography of “care” around a static permanent collection into a living set of relations and movements that put people and things into a state of equivalence.

What kind of spaces for performance exist at Tate Modern?

Actually, because we had no space for performance for the first decade of programming, we had to use any spaces we could find: the collection galleries or corridors, the turbine hall or the lawn outside. Even the façade of the building or the café! This “parasitic” relationship of the apparently minor form of performance to the major formats of the museum (exhibition and recreational spaces) was not easy, but it made for a creative approach to inventing the situation for the work to appear in each time. It also meant that we treated the publicness of the building – the given

fact that it’s always full of people – as a part of its character to work into, rather than an afterthought (artists were rarely imagining a project in a blank white space or black box).

It also meant that the entirety of Tate Modern became inflected with a theatrical or performative quality, because the work might erupt anywhere.

However, now that we are able to inhabit the Tanks spaces – two beautiful round concrete chambers on the lowest basement level of the building, plus a concrete foyer area and two square galleries, plus a small “drum” space – we have a real anchor point in which we can programme this kind of work with more generosity of time and infrastructure, and – importantly – set it into dialogue with film, sculpture and installation.

Did the opening of the new Tate Modern building prompt any transformations in Tate’s performance curating strategy?

When we opened the building, we wanted to do a few things as regards performance. Firstly, I was concerned that we didn’t make performance into a “ghetto” activity confined to the Tanks. Or an “after-hours” event programme. What we wanted was to show that the increasing interest in performance since the 1950s was fundamentally related to shifting attitudes to the encounter with the art object, the deconstruction of painting, installation art and art’s relationship to a broader situation or architecture being made explicit. So one of the approaches I took was to display sculptures of the pivotal 1960s period – by Charlotte Posenenske, Robert Morris and Rasheed Araeen – in the South Tank, and also position these artists works in the “Between

Object and Architecture” display in the upstairs galleries on level 2. Down in the Tanks, the works were displayed in the interactive form they were intended: manipulated, rearranged, phenomenologically moved with. They were also, here, displayed alongside performance works by Alexandra Pirici and Manuel Pelmus, and Tarek Atoui. Upstairs, works by the same artists were set in dialogue with sculpture by artists from many different places internationally who, between the 50s and the 1990s, were making work that directly addressed the body of the viewer or the space in which it was positioned. Between these two modes of display, the overriding concept of “when art became active” with which we worked for all of the Collection Displays in the new building came into focus. In combination, we also used the opportunity of the new building to showcase five important performance acquisitions made in the past decade: by Tania Bruguera, Amalia Pica, Tino Sehgal, Roman Ondak and David Lamelas. These were in different spaces throughout the building, rather than in the Tanks, and thus naturally in dialogue with other kinds of work, as is appropriate to all of these artists’ practices.

Museums are places for exhibition and public relationships, but they are also places for conservation, collection and documentation. What kind of objects can we find at Tate Collection related to performance practices and how, in this context, does the practice of art collecting intersect the practice of archive-building?

This, for me, is an essential point as regards the kinds of programming of performance work that we’re doing at Tate. We are defined, as a museum, by being a “collecting institution”. Our collection forms the spine of all the museum’s activities and its identity.

In this sense we are distinct from an “ICA” or kunsthalle model. However, this area of practice has led me to question the nature and ideology of collecting, its possibilities and its values: why do we collect and what is collectable? Collecting and preserving artworks opens up the possibility of being able to access art from different periods of time, and different locations in a single space: the heterotopia that Foucault talked about. But the drive to preserve art’s history and encounter it in the present is also to do with valuing a reflective, memorializing process of considering where we are in the present in relation to those pasts, or those “other places” than where we are standing. Collecting favours certain kinds of art (in material form, or with material traces) and confers one kind of value and status and builds a certain narrative: we know that the museum’s foundation is a vast warehouse of works that form its underlying language and belief system, elements of which are continuously brought to visibility in display: exhibited. But performance or live work, as well as temporary installations, prompt the question of how memory functions in a different way: the impact of Olafur Eliasson’s Turbine Hall commission, or of the transformation of Tate as musée de la danse, or Trisha Brown’s man walking down the side of the building: these highly affecting experiences, witnesses by our audiences, become part of the collective memory in ways that are not to do with whether there is a physical trace of the project lasting. These experiences increasingly come to be understood in productively entangled dialogue with the collection narrative. I try to consider how repeat visits to a familiar work (the famous Rothko Seagram murals for example) might have an asymmetric parallel in the repetition of live works at intervals: how memory builds experience that is a different order of “permanence” than owning its material form or trace.

In practical terms, the past decade has been an exciting journey, working with Frances Morris and previously Jessica Morgan, as well as our then-Time Based Media conservator Pip Laurenson, who were all very open to and encouraging of an adventure to acquire live works: Tino Sehgal, Roman Ondak, Tania Bruguera, David Lamelas and others. We set out new parameters for collecting that enabled us to acquire a script or even a verbal set of instructions, and we worked across departments and with other institutions (the police in Bruguera's case) to realize these works. The acquisition of Suzanne Lacy's *The Crystal Quilt* was also a challenge, because the work took the form of an "archive", but it did not seem appropriate for it to be placed in the Tate archive since it was a fully realized artistic parallel for a live work: and more than that, the "documentation" had always been imagined by Lacy as a strategic amplifier of the live action that had taken place in Minneapolis in 1985: via both press photography and live broadcast on TV. The precedent of having acquired Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave*, itself taking the form of archive, enabled Tate's collection committee to understand Lacy's "archive" as a work, and also the influence of Lacy's generation of feminist artists making social practice and their impact on the 1990s generation: demonstrating that often it's through the lens of the practice of younger artists that we revise our understanding of what is valuable from history.

I am currently working on a deeper strategy related to "collecting the uncollectable": to push further for the inclusion and representation of performance and ephemeral works within the main body of works that Tate acquires and displays. But performance is represented in many and various ways, whether as scripts,

scores, photographs, video, installations of props or sets, and also – I would argue – as a kind of "secret history" within the traces of many action paintings or interactive objects, whether a painting by Nikki de St Phalle made by shooting, or a "revolving vane" sculpture to be walked through by Charlotte Posenenske. Dorothea Von Hantelmann rightly says that there is no art that is not performative, in the sense that every artwork "performs" its meaning within a language and system of meaning and space. But I take the idea of performance slightly more literally: how does a viewpoint that acknowledges the inclusion of actual live action, and the reminder that live action has underwritten many of the objects we show, inflect our understanding of what artistic form is? If we begin with the idea that art is not a timeless icon, but a relationship, to where do we get?

Some of the historical performances that you have already worked with, such as Hélio Oiticia's *Parangolé* or Kaprow's happenings, point very clearly to art as a relationship. Those works also have a very powerful strong relationship with the public space, establishing a continuity between aesthetic experience and everyday life. This relationship with the everyday and the public sphere is often a challenge to museum conservation and exhibition. How do you approach the relationship between the museum, the wider public and the sphere of everyday life?

When I first visited Tate Modern, when it opened in 2001, I was troubled by what appeared to be the vast "void" at its heart: the Turbine Hall. Somehow, initially, there was a sense of emptiness there, and that the art had been squeezed into the galleries on the north side. This impression has entirely turned around as

Tate Modern has evolved and grown since then: the Turbine Hall is always, now, a space for people. It is an extraordinary kind of public space: part public square, but part gallery, so that whatever activity takes place there – which when there is no art on display is often very free, with kids running around, people eating their lunch – is somehow “framed” by the awareness that we are in a visual art museum.

Tate is a very popular museum. It’s big and it has a mass public. Whilst on the one hand, the performance (and film) programme has allowed us to foster micro-communities of interest that come together for certain things in a more intimate way, something I think has been important for artists especially. One of the things I wanted to do at Tate was to work with the “given” fact of its mass-ness: to consider people’s presence as much as the architecture when it came to commissioning projects and interventions. So as well as the projects you mention, which worked perfectly in our populated spaces, artists including Jiri Kovanda, Carlos Amorales, Nina Beier and Marie Lund, or Dora Garcia have worked on the public spaces at Tate Modern: whether inviting the intimacy of *Kissing Through Glass* in Kovanda’s case, transforming the entire museum into a sports arena in Amorale’s, or initiating an action that instigated mass-clapping throughout the levels of the building by Lund and Beier. I think that this borderline between private and public, not just economically but also in terms of how subjectivity is formed and shaped, how people understand themselves as individuals or as part of networks, is one of the key questions of our time, and somehow the very spaces of Tate have allowed us to test this boundary in active ways by working on both a small intimate scale, and with a mass crowd.

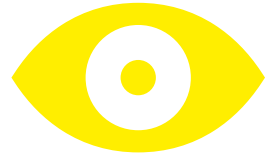
I do not believe that we are “upscaling” artworks to fit our spaces, but rather following the logic of Tate’s potential for mass experience as one of the few opportunities to look at and understand what public space is and how it might be imagined in this age.

APPEARING IN PUBLIC AS PUBLIC

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Peggy Phelan
in conversation with
Ana Pais and Ana Bigotte Vieira



This conversation took place through email during the course of seven months, from January to July 2016, across three cities: Lisbon, Palo Alto and Salvador da Bahia. We discussed concepts and practices related to how performance art intervenes, enacts and performs (or not) the public sphere and to how performance studies can be helpful to understand its processes and implications. We drifted, moved on, switched to, came back and round to burning issues in politics, activism, performance art, philosophy and the media that the events occurring in that period of time, though not exclusively, raised for us: the refugee crisis in Europe, the Occupy Movement in the US, the global circulation of images, Dilma's impeachment act in Brazil, the presidential campaign in the US, the Brexit referendum in the UK. The collected emails have been edited to make the argument more concise. References to dates indicate the duration of the conversation, rather than historical events.

Ana Pais

PEGGY PHELAN

The timing of the topic performance art and the public sphere is uncanny, given that we write surrounded by a heart-rending series of performances about space, location, and life. I am referring of course to what is called here in the United States “Europe’s refugee crisis”. This naming eliminates the word *war*, the word *survivor*, the word *witness*, the word *victim*. It fails to name the United States, Syria, or any country in the Middle East. The grammar of the phrase suggests that the crisis is possessed by Europe. Curiously, however, the media here often implies that war survivors, especially those from Syria, have absolutely possessed Europe. Thus the phrase “Europe’s refugee crisis” enacts several things simultaneously:

1. The complete displacement of the many effects of the current crisis – the starvation, impoverishment, physical and emotional ruin, as well as the fatal danger caused by bombing and war.

2. The question of the proprietary relationship between Europe and the displaced people who now seek shelter and refuge: Europe, the presumably stable entity in the world, seems to author the crisis at the same time as being the victims of it.

3. The disowning of the role of powers outside of Europe, especially the United States, in the crisis itself. Thus, by constantly invoking “Europe’s refugee crisis” those outside of Europe are able to evade responsibility for the humanitarian crisis as a whole.

Given the complexity of these geo-political events, it may seem somewhat beside the point to raise questions about the role of art, especially performance art, in the public sphere. First, is there any such thing as “the public” anymore? Or have we become so fragmented and torn that we must resist using the definite article altogether and say only “public spheres”? What, in particular, can Performance Studies and performance art offer those who seem to clarify, provoke, or illuminate issues of collectivity and (dis)unity in this crisis? Let me begin with the local circumstance of our own correspondence and relationship.

In your recent email, you described the PSi cluster you organized along with Ana Bigotte Vieira and Ricardo Seïça Salgado under the title “Generative Indirections”. You said you were moved by “the practices of hospitality” to generate and create encounters throughout the gathering¹. Perhaps it can be illuminating to think about those practices in relation to “Europe’s refugee crisis”. In drawing these two disparate things together I am not trying to equate one with the other. I am only trying to find a floor secure enough for us to begin approaching the complexity of the crisis in public space dramatized by the traumatic displacement of the refugees.

¹ Generative Indirections was organized in Portugal, in 2013, taking practices of hospitality as a means of promoting encounters between the 55 participants gathered in Espaço do Tempo for four days. This was the first Performance studies international (Psi) event in Portugal. Cf. generativeindirections.wordpress.com/curatorial-vision/

ANA PAIS

Indeed, hospitality was crucial not only to fuel the debate regarding the potential directions to be taken by the field of Performance Studies outside the Anglo-Saxon context (even outside academia) but also to open up a space built collectively during the event. The event was both hosted by PSi international and by Espaço do Tempo, in Montemor; in turn, we also hosted participants during those four days. Thus, hospitality came about as an important practice to bring people together. This idea was also explored in the opening dinner which the performer Chefe Ro (aka Rogério Nuno Costa) organized for the event. In a playful twist of the concept of “haute cuisine”, “Hôte Cuisine” (as in host or parasite) was a performance-dinner prepared by both hosts and guests.

Yet, circumstances and contexts can radically change the terms of receiving and being received and that has to do with the conditions and the desire to host. On the one hand, hospitality is supposed to be temporary: you visit friends for a couple of days, you are a visiting scholar for a couple of months, you visit a country on vacation and so on. When the stay or the guest risk being permanent, the specter of the parasite rises motivated mainly by a territorial fear. As the parasite lives at the expense of its host, the exchange becomes unbalanced. I guess this primary survival instinct could be the main resource of the emotional manipulation around the refugee crisis for political advantage as well as at the base of engrained social preconceptions that challenge a continent historically used to conquering, occupying and colonizing.

The “refugee crisis” brought more than a million migrants and refugees to Europe, escaping from war and dictatorial political regimes, the largest since World War Two. Just recently, Scandinavian countries announced severe measures to restrict hospitality to refugees (Danish law enabling police to confiscate cash and valuables, Swedish deportation politics and German restriction measures). I share the same anxieties: can performance art intervene, participate, subvert, recreate public spaces and make a difference in the world?

ANA BIGOTTE VIEIRA

Reading Ana’s remarks made me think not so much about performance art *per se*, but how “performance thinking” lead us, in Montemor, to address issues of hospitality as a kind of performance. How do we host “a field of research”? And, at the same time, how would we host our guests arriving to town? How would we share those days with them? How would we live together? What set of relations are we putting forth and proposing? How are these relations changing over time, and how do they change us? In this sense, hospitality would go beyond the temporary/definitive opposition to become something like a contingent and contextualized openness to the other and an ability to share.

Curiously, one of my favorite projects concerning the so-called refugee crisis in Europe is precisely one related to hosting. I am speaking of City Plaza, The Best Hotel in Europe², a squatted hotel in the center of Athens which provides food, home

² Cf. website of the project best-hotel-in-europe.eu and the introductory video vimeo.com/169673037

and healthcare to 400 guests (among them 185 children) from countries such as Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. It is a project very much worth following, especially at a moment when hospitality seems so out of the European agenda – I am thinking of the agreement with Turkey, or of this Brexit nightmare... As they say: “City Plaza has no pool, no minibar, no room service, but it is still the Best Hotel in Europe”.

PEGGY PHELAN

Thank you so much for bringing The Best Hotel in Europe to my attention, ABV. I was unaware of this interesting and admirable project. And I also appreciate your attention to a sometimes-forgotten distinction between “performance thinking” and performance art *per se*.

Certainly, The Best Hotel in Europe can be analyzed from a Performance Studies point of view: that is, its actions can be seen as a series of performative interventions designed to be both practical and symbolic. Calling it performance art, however, may put at risk something vital about its mission to link health care to human rights. Emphasizing, indeed theatricalizing, the connection between human rights and health seems to be the main motivation for the work of The Best Hotel in Europe.

Nonetheless, considering the project as performance art raises illuminating questions about what counts as action. The person who seeks shelter in The Best Hotel in Europe is engaged in a radically different action than the person who donates the

cost of “a double room” on The Best Hotel in Europe’s website and to call both “performers” seems to flatten those differences too much. This project, in other words, immediately makes clear both the limits and the benefits of bringing the discursive and actual tools of performance to a discussion of the public sphere/s. With the exception of ACT UP and other activists’ work around HIV and AIDS, health care activism in the United States is relatively tepid. President Obama has done much to advance access to health care here, but it would be inaccurate to say that we have a national health care system. And I think that The Best Hotel in Europe proceeds from an advanced ethical and political understanding of the need to create a global health care system that simply cannot be matched by activists here.

Before I consider other specific artistic responses to the crisis there that have registered here, I want to respond to your interesting reference, AP, to the *parasite*, a term that has been discussed and employed for several decades now in performance theory. When you invoke the word parasite here, I recognize that you are not necessarily thinking about speech acts as proposed by J. L. Austin in *How to do Things With Words* (1962). Your use of the term seems to suggest that hospitality is, fundamentally, temporary. A guest who does not leave, the logic goes, loses the rights of a guest and becomes a parasite, an unwelcome bug who threatens the stability and health of the host. What I think we are beginning to grasp in recent months, however, is that the hitherto clear boundary between host and guest is much more porous, indeed parasitical, than we realized. “The history of the oppressed,” Walter Benjamin observed, “teaches us

that the “state of emergency” in which we live is not the exception but the rule” (1968, 257). Globalization, climate change, and terrorism, using different means, may each be dramatizing the temporary nature of our position, not only as parasitical guests but also as hosts. Clearly, humans have not been good stewards of the planet or the environment generally. Thus, we may be engaged in addressing a public sphere at precisely the moment it has ceased to exist at all.

Having just re-read the above paragraph, I now think that my account is too dour. Certainly, my argument seems too rapidly apocalyptic. (And yet the acceleration of geo-political events makes me think we have all been much too slow in our thinking). Maybe we can draw a dotted line between performance and the public sphere if we break down each unit of the compound word, “para-site”. If we think of performance as akin to the “para”, that which sits a bit to the side of the site, or sphere, then the “para” can be understood as an enactment of the creative re-framing of the public sphere generally. If the public sphere is more than a concept, it must be activated by human performance in order for it to make meaning and have an effect on art. In other words, maybe it is only by resorting to that which sits outside the public sphere as such that its force can become politically infectious and “parasitically” generative for art.

ANA PAIS

Thank you for these stimulating thoughts about performance and parasites. Performance as the encompassing force that shapes, configures, subverts or cracks open public sphere is

an inspiring way of thinking the role of art in complex times. Activation is, I believe, key to investigating performance art's role. To activate means to trigger the action of something that is already in place or on the side of the place, as a potentiality of unrevealed affect. In this sense, could the function of performance art be one of rearranging connections between existing materials, matters, objects, people in the public sphere precisely because it infiltrates from the side of the site? Perhaps performance art activates the public sphere through an injection of "side-affects" undermining prevalent public feelings set in circulation by the media. Sarah Ahmed argues that emotions shape our contact with the world insofar as they mark the bodies of others negatively or positively. This happens through the repetition of ideological narratives that shape the surface of individual and collective bodies, intensifying social spaces (2014, 10). Thus, by disturbing public feelings through sparks of solidarity, empathy, generosity and kindness, is performance art able to reshape, reconfigure and change social spaces?

PEGGY PHELAN

Hannah Arendt's remarks on the public sphere are also relevant to our discussion. In *The Human Condition* Arendt speaks of the public sphere as "a space of appearance"³. This phrase, and the logic underlying it, prompts us to reconsider the role of *action*, or indeed performance, within the public sphere. Politics, for Arendt, is the mobilization of action – imaginative, rhetorical, physical, symbolic, ideological, philosophical.

³ Cf. also Arendt (1998, see especially pages 199–219).

Thus, whatever else the link between performance and the public sphere entails, at a minimum performance activates the public sphere as a (para)site for action – and even more precisely, as a site for staging the appearance of action.

Let me try to specify: here in the US many conversations about the Occupy Movement hinged on the location of the activists. In New York, most slept in a privately-owned park and thus the police had relatively little power to move protesters out of the park⁴. In Oakland, most of the activists were staying in public space, near the town square. So the police had an easier time, legally, moving them out and hosing down their dwellings and essentially evicting them. In both locations, though, different activists called their protests "art," and more specifically, "performance art". Assuming for the moment that those are valid claims, we then must observe the irony that claims to free speech and the right to protest in a democracy are more protected in private space than in the public sphere. And we must also ask: how does the distinction between New York and Oakland illuminate the crackdown on activism in Tahir Square or Hong Kong?

I would describe Arendt's definition of the polis as "the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose" (1998, 198) as a theory of political or social performance. It is through performing together that people develop the desire to appear as a public – to appear coherent, ar-

⁴ For a fuller discussion of the Occupy Wall Street protest in New York, cf. Phelan (2014).

tistic, loving, queer, intelligent, black, religious, conservative, leftist or what have you – for each other and for themselves. The collective desire for the staging of this appearance is precisely what allows the polis to come into being. Like any staging of appearance or disappearance, it requires space between people (and within oneself) so that both the appearance and the disappearance can be registered, observed, felt. And it is in this ongoing staging of appearance and disappearance that human life finds purpose and force.

ANA BIGOTTE VIEIRA

Precisely. And with people eating, sleeping, reading, playing, praying in the public square, all the issues of housing, learning, healthcare, appear organized – kitchen, library, drum circle, sofas, stands. As Judith Butler wrote, all these issues (housing, food, education) emerge as something we have to think about and organize together, something we have in common, something we build together, with our skills and our work, and not as something we must pay for, or get indebted in order to have access to (2012).

As regards Zuccotti Park as the site for OWS to take place, I must say it felt quite important to me for it to be there and not somewhere else in NYC. In other words, OWS was about occupying Wall Street and not about occupying New York City, even if it was *also* about that. Thus, for me as a foreigner being in NYC in the Fall of 2011, at a moment when rating agencies such as Fitch and Moodys were rating Portugal and Greece economies as “junk”, and the intervention of the *Troika* (In-

ternational Monetary Fund/European Central Bank/European Union) as a consequence, it felt very appropriate for the protest to be held there – right in the middle of the financial district, some blocks away from this very rating agency’s headquarters. Approaching protests like OWS through a Performance Studies’ perspective requires, in my opinion, understanding them as localized performances on a multi-scalar level.

The square movement and OWS in particular made crystal-clear how the contemporary metropolis is a terrain for struggle. The proximity to banks, rating agencies, and the stock market made these institutions stand as practices – concrete decisions taken by concrete people in concrete places, global cities in this case – and not as some sort of distant power arising from some hidden nowhere. The very fact that the New York Police Department could not intervene earlier due to the weird status of Zuccotti Park as a Privately Owned Public Space⁵ which would place this square outside NYPD jurisdiction made the composite nature of the metropolitan “public space” seem very obvious. Personally, it struck me to see how close everything was. To give you an example: In 2012, right after OWS got evicted, part of the camp moved to Wall Street 60, an indoor square inside the Deutsche Bank Headquarters, one of the indoor POPS in the Financial District area. In the midst of a cold winter, Wall Street 60 was a warm place, therefore food distribution was set up there.

Later in the year, the camp reappeared in Union Square (Affect Group 2012). Interestingly enough, the camp in Union

⁵ Cf. apops.mas.org/about/

Square felt much more like *Acampada do Rossio* (Lisbon, June 2011). Its demographics became automatically more diverse (OWS was often accused of being mostly young and white), but in my opinion, it moved away from the Financial District and lost a bit of its symbolic status. In other words, I suppose OWS would have been quite different in terms of global imagery if it were located at Union Square and called Occupy New York City.

ANA PAIS

I am now in Salvador da Bahia (Brazil) and the public sphere here is focused on Dilma Rousseff's possible impeachment. Since the process started, millions of people have been demonstrating in Brazil against the political *coup d'état*. "Não vai ter golpe" is the repeated watchword on the left against the conservative "Fora Dilma/Fora Lula". Salvador is quite a different historical, economic and social landscape from Rio or São Paulo, where demonstrations are taking place on a daily basis and, from what I hear from friends, people are resorting to violence and aggression on a disturbing scale. The divide between rich and poor people seems to me even wider than in Rio or São Paulo, which is rooted in racial and educational differences: although the majority of Salvador's population is Afro-descendant, the majority of university graduates is white, for example. Communities do not mix in their daily lives (nowhere in Brazil really) and in a way, days go by without much being said or heard about the political crisis, except after the impeachment vote. But every public opportunity is welcomed as a chance to voice political concerns and felt injustice.

On the anniversary of the city of Salvador, Bahian musicians Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil gave a concert at Farol da Barra, an iconic lighthouse by the sea known as the first to be built in Brazil in the 17th century. Before the show, the "anti-golpe" watchword ("não vai ter golpe"/there will be no *coup d'état*) was voiced when the local journalist was talking to the cameras introducing the show. When Caetano sang the song "Odeio" [I hate] soon enough the audience added the name "Cunha" (the president of the deputy council that opened the impeachment process against Dilma) to the chorus... ("I hate you, Cunha"/"Odeio você, Cunha"). The anti-golpe slogan came back and Caetano couldn't help smiling at the crowd. This response created a mixed atmosphere: the aversion carried by the word "hate" was transformed into *complicité* fueled by Caetano's reaction. I am surely not implying that this was performance art. I am simply drawing a parallel between the power of protest (as performance) and the power of performance art in activating or redirecting circulating affects in social spaces.

Both Gil and Caetano have been overtly against the undemocratic process of Dilma's impeachment. Both Gil and Caetano lived in exile during the dictatorship in the 1960s/1970s. The context of their exile was, however, different in terms of the extent of media power in influencing public opinion. Today, information travels in a second through cable TV, online newspapers, and social networks. If TV Globo had not supported the carefully planned *coup d'état* actively campaigning against Dilma Rousseff since the impeachment process started, the result would have most likely been different.

PEGGY PHELAN

Pretty much all I know about Dilma's situation and the European refugee crisis comes from the media, and journalism here is increasingly imaged-based. The literature on "atrocities photographs" makes clear that there is a deep connection between ideological attitude and image selection – which images get printed where – stems from a prior discursive frame that includes an ideological orientation toward the event itself (Batchen et al. 2012). Thus, it is not for nothing that the image of the drowned child did a lot of political lifting in the international debate about the crisis. This is because there is a pre-existing framework of "the (innocent white) child" that frames the circulation of the image of that particular boy, Aylan Kurdi, half-buried in the sand. The corpse of a Rwandan child, conscripted into war as a child soldier, simply would not and did not motivate the conversation about "action" in the same way. The photograph of Kurdi, taken by Nilüfer Demir, a photo-journalist employed by Turkey's Dogan News Agency, washed across oceans of print, video, and broadcast journalism. While the boy died, the image did not. Interestingly, the image's power came from its enunciation of a general "call to action", rather than a resonantly particular narrative of Kurdi's life and death. And indeed, the shallowness of the narrative of the boy's life was part of its appeal as a kind of grief-stone, a marker for all the lost life stories. The image offered a stage for others to fill in and embody.

Prior to the digital revolution, a photograph called our attention within an aesthetic framework, now photographs are powerful in relation to their capacity to be embedded and reframed within other communication streams⁶. Re-editing, re-framing,

cropping, and all other tools of visual iteration and citationality became part of the performative force of the photograph. Demir's photograph staged not only the fact of Kurdi's death but also created a space for the public to express our feelings about the crisis generally. Memes and re-stagings appeared and disappeared as the image "went viral"⁷. Indeed, the photograph became a kind of visual parasite that included this performance staged by Moroccan activists who restaged the image in a way that gave collective life to the image. It was as if the photograph "planted" a garden of gigantic humans, in the manner of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, who all drowned.

One of the activists, journalist Rachid el-Belghiti, explained the group's motivation: "We are here to say that the Mediterranean should remain a space for sharing and exchanges, not a barrier for those who are victims of dictatorships, civil wars and terrorism." (quoted in Stanton 2015) Thus, the re-staging of the photograph is also a reclamation of the sea as itself an open public space.

It is this kind of performance response that interests me when we talk about performance and the public sphere in the digital age. The Occupy Movement inspired and was composed by specific local actions, and the images of these actions joined a stream of images and discourses that exceeded each performance. Indeed, the images were embedded in financial journalism, anti-racist discourse, and sociological texts about class and income.

⁶ Cf. Ritchin (2008) for a fuller discussion of the distinctions between digital and analog photography.

⁷ This action is akin to creating a digital parasite.



Performance by Moroccan activists paying homage to Aliyan Kurdi, in Rabat / Photograph: Senna Fadel /AFP



Alyan Kurdi, three-year-old Syrian boy drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, September 2 2015. Photograph: Nilüfer Demir (DHA)

ANA BIGOTTE VIEIRA

I did not know Moroccan activists restaged this image. Actually, knowing that the image comes from Morocco makes it even stronger, as 2012's February 20 Movement (M2OF) can be said to signal not the fall of the Moroccan regime – which perhaps even got stronger – but the fall of the fear of politics, as Hugo Maia states (2015).

It is amazing to see activists in Morocco, a politically repressive country which often gets paid by the EU to “contain” migrants, not being fearful of coming to the public sphere in performance, denouncing a border control system in which Morocco (as Libya some years ago, or Turkey nowadays) plays a central role. And they did it through performance. Due to the dissemination capacities of the internet, Rabat beaches become the site for a performance response producing a counter image, or an image other than the one we got from the media.

Working on border issues, with *Jogos Sem Fronteira*/BUALA⁸, I felt the need for images other than the ones being broadcasted. Not only tragic images in which the migrant is depicted as a desperate Other, but also testimonies of solidarity and self-organization, for so many people travelling together surely forge intense bonds. When Germany opened the borders for a brief while in the summer 2015 and thousands of people were marching across Europe, border activists talked of a “March of Hope”, reasserting the “social movement” character of the refugees’ collective action. “Movement” it is for sure, and

⁸ Cf. buala.org/en/games-without-borders

I would agree on its “social” character, for it has an immense social impact. Of course, in the summer 2015 this seemed powerful enough to suspend the Schengen border system control in a positive way, which is very different from what is happening now... We have a need for images other than the ones we receive, either addressing the issues from another point of view (such as calling the refugee march a “March for Hope”) or creating performance responses which produce powerful counter images (such as the one created by Moroccan activists).

The latter work employs a performance strategy (something like a “multiplication by empathy”) that has been largely present in the activist repertory since, at least, the “we are all illegal/no one is illegal” slogan from the No Border movement in the early 2000s. By wearing a bright red T-shirt and shorts, similar to those worn by the little boy Aylan Kurdi who was lying face down in the Udayas beach in Rabat, Moroccan activists made Aylan Kurdi’s death not only present but common, banal, alive and contagious, as it got multiplied by different bodies, bigger bodies, male and female bodies.

ANA PAIS

Images of Dilma’s impeachment vote were broadcasted live, on a Sunday evening, by TV Globo/GloboNews (strongly connected with the dictatorship), replacing regular entertainment programs, in a clear manipulative operation to reinforce the general belief that the “no” was inevitable. Brazilians have called it “the show of the impeachment”... Right after the vote, an image went viral across social networks. It listed the key justifications

made by each deputy in an exhausting and supposedly open declaration of vote: the ones who voted YES alleged: “for my family, for my children, for my wife, for my mother”. The ones who voted no stated: “for black people, for women, for LGBT, for indigenous people, for people with disabilities, for working people”. You could guess by the way they introduced their vote how it would go. At the Farol da Barra, supporters of the NO gathered during the afternoon, after a long day of concerts and speeches and after a one-day camping demonstration of the Sem Terra movement (MST). All sorts of people could be found in front of the screen streaming the vote. Predicting such sad result, Yemanjá (the orixa of the sea) cried a heavy rain from the moment the vote began. People fled gradually, frozen-hearted.

PEGGY PHELAN

We have not yet discussed the rise of Donald Trump in the US presidential campaign or racism and police killings, or any number of other crises now embroiling the public sphere in the US. But even in our modest way we are close to assessing what Arendt described in *The Human Condition* as “the peculiarity of the public realm” (1998, 200). Arguing that the unity between speech and action defines and stabilizes the public realm, Arendt insists that the dismantling of that unity is what broadly leads to the fall of civilizations. Arendt’s argument does not consider the role of television or the media-scape and when we speak today of the public realm, we cannot ignore the range and force of these transmitters of “speech and action”. Globo TV and News may be far more powerful political forces than either Lula or Dilma.

The ubiquity of cable news and other platforms in the US have made this particular presidential campaign unusually explicit about the interrelationship between political power and media coverage. Trump’s success on television forced those broadcasting companies interested in hosting debates (debates that had bigger audience numbers than previous recent campaign debates) to accept some of Trump’s terms. After the one debate he refused to attend, polls showed his support had weakened. Thus, one cannot simply say Trump controlled the press; rather, the synergy between Trump and the media has brought to light the ways in which one needs the other. If the media landscape, including social and broadcast media, has effectively become the public sphere then we need to think about that rigorously. And it seems ever clearer that the media, like the presidency itself, is essentially a mode of performance.

In this context, it is useful to consider Trump’s explicit acknowledgment that he separates his performance during the campaign from what he calls “being presidential”. Trump insists on a distinction between the “realities” of the campaign and the theatre of the presidency. Taking a page from Ronald Reagan, now the revered saint of the Republican Party, Trump underlines the force of performance in the age of the celebrity president. While Reagan said that he could not imagine someone without acting skills being successful in the White House, Trump’s campaign is a continual “a wink and nod” to an electorate that wants change but will settle for a good show: Trump is wagering that the world is (once again) ready for an entertainer as world leader.

So far, the left has not really countered this understanding of politics in the media age and I am not so naive as to suggest that Arendt's warnings will be heeded. Trump's campaign makes clear that we have failed to provide the public with good primers for reading performance – indeed, for accepting that politics is a mode of action, as Arendt argued, and as such must be read and interpreted in those terms. Such an analysis must begin with the recognition that political action is the appearance of action, an appearance designed to be broadcast and interpreted as action.

ANA PAIS

The ambiguity between acting to make an appearance and to appear as acting in the public sphere seems to be one of the most baffling aspects of contemporary society.

The Brexit referendum and the victory of the leave vote comes to mind. It is hard not to mention the possibility of the disintegration of Europe not only as an economic alliance but also as a cultural identity that has been hardwired in European citizens for those who were born around and after 1974. Building a common identity has been sponsored by the EU through an array of mechanisms. I am European and I feel European. If the EU disintegrates, will its cultural identity disappear too? Will we stop being European? Paradoxically, it seems that Europeans themselves want to leave Europe while thousands of non-European migrants want to stay. If that is the case, we might as well make room for new guests and allow them to become new hosts.

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TENSION

LINE
S
OF
TENSION

LINE

Love is in the Air

Ana Borralho & João Galante

PARTICIPATIVE SOUND PERFORMANCE
Ana Borralho & João Galante, 2017

PERFORMERS

Any anonymous person with or without performative experience

ACTION

Recording and public or private broadcasting of real
sounds of people making love/having sex

DURATION

Indefinite

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Ana Borralho and João Galante after sexual intercourse, 21 June 2002
Photograph: Ana Borralho & João Galante



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PERFORMANCE SCRIPT

1.

RECORDING/PERFORMANCE

Choose a/the partner and record the sound of your lovemaking/sex session. You can record a session with one or more partners ~~at the same time~~. The point is for the recording to be as realistic as possible, i.e., we are not interested in a pornographic fiction of the sexual act. You can, if you so wish, record other people making love/having sex (such as neighbours, friends, ~~strangers~~, family, etc.). You do not have to aim at any specific sound quality. You can repeat the recording of the act as many times as necessary to feel happy with the ~~sound of~~ the final object.

2.

EDITING

You may edit, ~~cut, paste~~ the sound, if you so wish. There is no need to use the whole duration of the recording ~~of the sound of the act~~.

The intended aesthetical effect will depend on the performers.

3.

BROADCASTING/PERFORMANCE

Broadcast the recording in a public and/or private location where there might be people unaware of the nature of the performative act that will be broadcast (such as a bus stop, public toilet, family dinner, subway, taxi, hotel room, elevator, bar, etc.). The recording can also be broadcast via any sound device (such as a smartphone, tablet, computer, PA, CD player, cassette player, MP3 player, ~~boomblaster~~, etc.). The sound volume also depends on you, as well as on the ~~location~~ and the power of the broadcasting device. It is not necessary to warn the prospective audience of this artistic action, but if anyone approaches you regarding it, you can say it is a 2017 performance by Ana Borralho & João Galante called *O Amor Está no Ar* [Love is in the air], ~~in which you are the unpaid performers doing it just for pleasure~~. The performers should also send the authors, Ana Borralho & João Galante, the performance's sound file to email amorestanoar69@gmail.com (you can send your names, remain as anonymous performers or choose a pseudonym). Authors Ana Borralho & João Galante will publish your performances/recordings (~~anonymously or not, depending only on you~~) on the site soundcloud.com/anaborralhojoaogalante. The performers are also free to place the produced sounds online, mentioning that it is a performance by Ana Borralho & João Galante in which they are the performers.

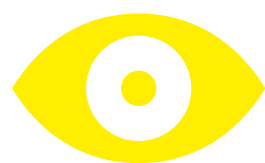
EXILE – DETERRITORIALIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE/PERFORMANCE: TWO RECENT EPISODES FROM THE PORTUGUESE CONTEXT

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Attending to the details of performance is the necessary practice of a responsive empiricism that attends to the micro-events that within each work, makes it work, creates its critical-political action, generates a differential movement. (Lepecki 2016, 22)

Sílvia Pinto Coelho



“Exile – Deterritorialization in contemporary dance/performance” presents an exploratory challenge that focuses on “the will to power”¹ as a common factor of some recent performance art and “experimental choreography”² in Portugal³. I shall analyze two recent episodes, unleashed by proposals from artists linked to the dance scene⁴, taking into account their informal modes of emergence and their consequences in terms of public reception to think how they might reflect modes of deconditioning of crystalized behaviour patterns.

¹ Paraphrasing Nietzsche on “the will to power”, Gilles Deleuze considers that “the will to power does not consist of coveting nor of taking, but in creating and giving. The power as will to power is not what the will wills, but what in the will wills (Dionysos in person)”. (Deleuze 2006, 24, translated by the author).

² Cf. Lepecki (2015, 5).

³ For this text, I interviewed Daniel Pizamiglio (episode#1) and Ana Borralho and João Galante (episode#2). Choreographer Miguel Pereira contributed informally with details on *Nova Dança Portuguesa*. I am profoundly grateful to all of them for their availability.

⁴ For RoseLee Goldberg, the inter-affection of different artistic fields has been present in the history of performance art since what the author considers as the appearance of performance. “Any stricter definition would immediately negate the possibility of performance itself. For performance draws freely on any number of preferences – literature, theatre, drama, music, architecture, poetry, film and fantasy – deploying them in any combination. No other artistic form of expression can be said to have such a boundless manifesto. Each performer makes his or her own definition in the very process and manner of execution”. (1979, 6).

I shall resort mostly to Félix Guattari’s concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization to set in motion a word play that establishes a relationship between “terrain”, “exile” (*des-terro*), “exiled” (*desterrado*), “territory”, “deterritorialization”, “reterritorialization”, with no other explanatory purpose but the aim of sounding a small etymological ritornello, in dialogue with Guattari’s *Chaosmosis*⁵. I shall also resort to some texts by André Lepecki that problematize the critical and political character of artistic proposals in the field of experimental choreography (2004a, 2004b, 2013, 2016).

By questioning whether there currently exist operative modes, styles and relevant forms of integrating art and life in Portugal that may be considered “performance art”, as historiographed by Goldberg (1979), I try to focus on the affections that might echo that legacy and appear in the milieu of dance via different paths. For instance, the affection of New Portuguese Dance for the New York art scene of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s; the affection of Portuguese literature and visual poetry (Borralho and Galante 2016); the affection of street theatre (*idem*); the affection of some music and the influence of discourses such as John Cage’s. From the same perspective, one should note how the affection of the Acarte encounters (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) translated into Portuguese artistic life, alongside such places as Lemauto (of the group Olho), Ginjal, the RE.AL labs

⁵ In *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm* (1995), Guattari starts by speaking of the production of subjectivity and then, in manifesto style, appeals to a new aesthetic paradigm. In the course of this proposal, he recurrently speaks of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization and complex existential ritornellos: the modes of the constitution of subjectivation complexes to break out of repetitive impasses, opening up space for new singularities.

(with their role in bringing people together); or of other spaces, such as ZDB gallery, Capital – Artistas Unidos, Karnart, later Bomba Suicida (and their *Sunday shows*) and the approximations to queer with the events of mente collective at club Lux, the successor to the disco bar Frágil.

If they do exist, the direct influences of many events linked to performance art and the visual arts of the 1970s and 1980s in Portugal on the protagonists of New Portuguese Dance are subtle. On the one hand, there is a generational gap; on the other, the influx of European Economic Community (EEC) money might have accentuated the more commercial side of the visual arts, unlike the case with performance, which lost its protagonism in the 1990s. Curiously, the affection of dance/performance directly linked to Portuguese visual arts seems to have unfolded later, namely in the deliberate search in Vânia Rovisco's *Reacting to Time* (2014-2017), among other projects that dialogue with the notion of reenactment.

As Miguel Pereira mentioned in an informal conversation, although he left for New York with a dance scholarship in the early 1990s, his affinities led him to seek out visual arts and performance related cultural offerings available in the city. During the same conversation, Pereira also mentioned the strong influence of performance in the process of the piece *Shirtology*, in which he collaborated with Jérôme Bel (1997). I speculated on how 1990s New Dance was determined to distinguish itself from the classical and modern dance tradition of techniques and aesthetics as an identitary strategy. Style influence and appropriations—both avant-garde performances featured in Acarte and elements gleaned

from other arts driven by experimentation (visual arts, improvised music, literature and performance, etc.) constituted one of the possibilities of producing differentiation in the dance milieu.

There are pieces that directly convoke the history of art, as well as the public and critical reception of that art. There are also genealogies of affections and common themes, which contain, in different contexts, a more or less disruptive character. The rawness of Édouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863) points to female nudity in the history of painting, but the defying gaze had a disruptive effect in the context in which it appeared. Because of that impact, *Olympia* is cited in the performance by Robert Morris' *Site* (1964) with Carolee Schneeman, and in Vera Mantero's *Olympia* (1993). In performance art, disruptive urges are recurrent and involve scatology and provocations such as on stage urination and masturbation, slashing the skin or even the flesh, and the public consequences of those performances, such as being booed, insulted, persecuted, fined, taken into custody and being arrested⁶. More recent characteristics, like watching a performance being commented on *ad nauseam* online and on social networks, coexist with other more recognizable features of performance art, such as improvisation, randomness,

⁶ Perhaps it is worth highlighting here the paradox of thinking performance and Dadaism as art, with their underlying posture and thought originating from an anti-art perspective, or a perspective of art deterritorialization, moving towards the unknown without symbolic references. Filippo Marinetti's manifesto *The Pleasure of Being Booed* (1911-1915), Piero Manzoni's *Artist's Shit* (1961), Otto Muehl's *Piss Aktion* (1969), Lee Ming-Sheng's *The Artist's Piss* (1988) and R. Mutt's (Marcel Duchamp) *La Fontaine* (1917) are crucial references to the reflection proposed here. Some reactivations and reenactments of historical performances seem to carry a will for reterritorialization that conserves the subjectivity of performance, rather than the will to re-singularize an activity that appears with a desire to deterritorialize. In the "arrangement of history" the place of performance is paradoxical.

public provocation, manifestos and context variation. Certain characteristics of performance are shared by some experimental choreography, but that is not enough to predict whether the deterritorialization possibility is contained in the proposals themselves or if it is contingent upon the activation of a singular relation of relations to produce *in situ* deterritorializing effects.

EPISODE # 1

Muito atento a tudo o que está a passar

[Keenly attentive to all that goes on]

(Pizamiglio/Furtado, 2016)

Desterro (literally: “exile”) is the name of a Lisbon district around the Nossa Senhora do Desterro convent, the old Desterro Hospital (closed and for sale since 2007), involved in the on-going process of gentrification of the Intendente/Almirante Reis axis. The context is crucial to understanding the range of layers that must be dealt with when focusing on critical areas undergoing a profound transformation. The word “desterro” carries a somewhat poetic affective tone. *O Desterrado* [The exile], by António Soares dos Reis (1872) is a fascinating sculpture of a naked body inspired by Alexandre Herculano’s poems “Tristezas do desterro” [The woes of exile] (n/d). It is easy to associate the exiles in classic epopees with the word “exile”; however, the resonance that might be pertinent to explore in this essay is “deterritorialization”, not linked to the loss of “terra” [land], but as it is described by Félix Guattari in *Chaosmosis: A New*

Aesthetical Paradigm (1993), i.e., as a “deterritorializing potency”, which I propose here as a power of performance art itself.⁷

The name might be pure coincidence, but the “open wound” that Desterro revealed is not. For a long time, Intendente was a place to avoid because it was associated with the selling and using of drugs, with muggings and prostitution. Today, Desterro is also the name of a cultural association in that district, coordinated by Jari Marjamäki, a musician who has worked with various choreographers and performers, such as Meg Stuart and Miguel Perreira. The association’s ground floor and basement host mostly concerts and music lessons. *PA! Gabinete de Curiosidades Artísticas* [PA! Cabinet of Artistic Curiosities],⁸ an informal public event that took place in January 2016, was a proposal launched by former students of the *Programa de Estudo, Pesquisa e Criação Coreográfica do Forum Dança* (PEP-CC – Forum Dança Study, Research and Choreographic Programme) to the small community of artists potentially interested in presenting works in progress. During the discussion of proposals the potential as a showcasing device of a window was recognized, and it was used to display Daniel Pizamiglio’s and Henrique Furtado’s performance *Muito atento a tudo o que está a passar* [Keenly attentive to all that goes on].

⁷ Deterritorializing subjectivities problematize reality through the force of the event and not through an explanatory logic or the reification of a new logical territory. In this regard, it is interesting to take into account the enumeration of the following singular powers by Lepecki (2016,14): ephemerality, corporeality, precariousness, scoring, performativity and performance of the affective labour.

⁸ “PA! is the desire to bring people together, to pull artistic proposals together, to experiment. PA! is an invitation to share wishes and questions, and to create outside institutional spaces. [...] performance art, dance, installation, video, music” [January 2016: facebook.com/events/540765309431912/]

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
ATENTOS PARA FALAR
COM VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
PREPARADOS PARA FALAR
COM VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
PERTO PARA FALAR COM
VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
LONGE PARA FALAR
COM VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
NUOS PARA FALAR
COM VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
DESPROTEGIDOS PARA
FALAR COM VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
AMOROSOS PARA FALAR
COM VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
AGRADECIDOS PARA
FALAR COM VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
VULNERÁVEIS PARA
FALAR COM VOCÊS

NÓS ESTAMOS MUITO
SUJOS PARA FALAR
COM VOCÊS

Post-its in *Muito atento a tudo o que está a passar* [Keenly attentive to all that goes on]
Pizamiglio/Furtado, 2016

We are very keen to talk to you / We are very ready to talk to you

We are very close to talk to you / We are very far to talk to you

We are very naked to talk to you / We are very unprotected to talk to you

We are very loving to talk to you / We are very grateful to talk to you

We are very vulnerable to talk to you / We are very dirty to talk to you

On the day of the event, the performance was scheduled to start at 9 pm, lasting around one hour and including other simultaneous interventions. The action consisted of covering the windowpane in post-its put up by the performers. On each post-it the performers wrote a sentence about the desire to communicate and the impossibility of doing so. A relationship with passers-by was established through the gaze, through the sentences written for the onlookers and through the proximity offered by the window. A few lights softly changed the ambience and served to draw attention, creating a voyeuristic relationship between the window and the street and exposing the fragility of the naked bodies.

It was possible to establish a parallel with a red-light district window. Then, a neighbour walks by with her 11-year-old son, who remarks: “Look, two naked men.” Visibly disturbed by the presence of the naked bodies, the neighbour returned later to have a word with the space’s manager, Marjamäki, who reassured her that it was an artwork and that it would soon be over. The fact that the manager was unable to stop the performance and because the “artwork” argument did not reassure the neighbour, she called a friend who was a policeman. On his day off, the friend left a dinner party to come and talk with Marjamäki. When he arrived, the policeman joined the argument and shouted “This is shameful!” The argument became increasingly heated and people began gathering around, so the off-duty policeman decided to call the “police”. The performance was hence interrupted. Already dressed, the performers also talked to the policeman, who said: “I’m not gonna talk with you, you’re a pseudo-man.” Threatening

them, the policeman threw his jacket on the ground and asked Pizamiglio to take off his glasses, all along deliriously describing what he had seen: “You were rubbing yourselves against the glass and the wall”, “you turned around to show your asses”. Pizamiglio replied that he had no intention of shocking anyone. Furtado also addressed the policeman, calling him “man”. “Don’t call me man!” “But you also called me man...” “But I’m a policeman.” In the end, the policeman asked Furtado to come with him to the station, but everyone went along.

At the police station, they started to feel uneasy. Pizamiglio, Furtado and Marjamäki did not know how to get out of the situation. No other policeman talked to them. Everyone else waited outside, talking to the first policeman, who decided to collect a girl’s data and bring her into the station as well. According to him, she had refused to talk with a policeman who was not wearing his uniform. Her side of the story was different. However, he went into the station to put on his uniform, thereby proving his identity as a police officer. “Ok, I’m a policeman, do you respect me now?” Meanwhile, Marjamäki talked with another policeman in a different room, which did not result in any solution. In the room with the performers were also the neighbours: the woman who had initially complained, a friend and another girl. They could not have predicted that the situation would go this far, but were unable to control the policeman who was the neighbour’s friend. Pizamiglio talked with the woman who had complained. She told him of her son and of the things she did not want him to see. For many years, the street had been very dirty and she could not bear the fact that it was getting dirty again. It was not the kind of upbringing

ing she wanted for her son. Pizamiglio was sympathetic, but he was also aware that the unexpected result was part of their performance proposal. He tried to get her to also understand his position. There are no answers, just the will to be able to work with nudity in Intendente, while accepting that it may bring back some memories of the recent past among residents. After listening to her, Pizamiglio apologized, which really calmed her down. Inside the station, the policeman now in uniform said “If you’d like to press charges, these two will sleep here and go to court on Monday”. A plainclothes policeman who had just come in started a humiliating speech: “If you’d come across a more aggressive cop...if it was me, walking by with my daughter...” “You can’t do this, it’s a crime against decency... we’ll let you go, but I’ll take this personally and as far as I can”, he threatened Marjamäki and the association. But there was no formal complaint, nor any basis for an accusation.

Here, there is a confluence of different levels of “gaze”: the gaze of the policeman, who saw far more than what the performers were actually doing; the neighbour’s gaze, who wanted an image for Intendente-Desterro other than the drugs and prostitution underworld connotation that the neighbourhood was trying to overcome; the gaze of those who watched the performance; the gaze of projection in the experience of the performer “keenly attentive to all that goes on” within a site specific practice and context. Anyone outside the “territory” may feel even more surprised: Pizamiglio is Brazilian, not European; Marjamäki is European, but Finnish; Furtado is Portuguese, but he lives in France. Is no one from this land, the exile (*desterro*) of no one? Could they have actually been detained during this episode?

The ludicrous facts that set off deterritorializing strangeness cannot be disregarded. Without clothes, naked. Without uniform, “non-policeman”. “Man” as a form of address unconceivable by the “authorities”, even off duty; a jacket thrown on the floor and a threat of direct physical contact (“take off your glasses”). Could the imminence of physical battery have been fuelled by a bit of alcohol and territorial affront?

Another hypothesis is that the short moral sermon by the residents might have arisen from a feeling of deterritorialization caused by an invasion of territory as a “place of belonging”, bringing the cartography of that “place” into close proximity with the ethology convoked by Guattari (1993). Some residents welcome the gentrification that cleanses the neighbourhood’s image (which they defend as their “land”), but they are suspicious of the new population whom they do not know, that proposes events, risking the confusion between cleanliness and a past they want to overcome. Desterro, a cultural association within a multicultural area in the centre of Lisbon (the Martim Moniz/Almirante Reis axis), may go unnoticed in the territory, it may host events that are camouflaged in the landscape, it may add on more layers of exiles (*desterrados*). On the other hand, each proponent of this event, Romain Teule, Flora Detraz, and others, are also not “from there”, either because their culture of departure is different or because they do not inhabit certain local routines. There is a “there” that varies between the concrete terrain and the experiencing of those passing through, a place in the city between the *ethnoscape* (Appadurai 1996) and the *relationscape* (Manning 2009)⁹ in which being “from there” has different meanings for those living there, for those who

were born there, for those who settled there, for those who plied their licit or illicit trade there, for those who prostituted themselves there, for those who bought drugs there, for those who used drugs there, for those who run a grocery store and do not speak the language yet, for those who did not legalize their food establishments yet, for those who have recently opened tourist knickknack stores, for those who want to bring a different life to that part of the city, for those who frequent the various meeting and sharing places, the cultural street events, the concerts, the organized debates and other activities – all of this certainly brings affective, cultural, ethnic and racial tensions. This list offers a few cosmopolitan examples which now characterizes an axis of the city that, in the 1980s and 1990s, was called a “drugs supermarket”. In the end, perhaps no one is “from there”, or for that matter from any place else, until they become, for instance, a *lisboeta*? A Portuguese?¹⁰ We can think of belonging as an aspect of subjectivity production, looking at it from the ethologic perspective proposed by Guattari: “The simplest examples of refrains delimiting existential Territories can be found in the ethology of numerous bird species. (...) Each time this involves marking out a well-defined functional space”. (1995, 15)

←⁹ Although I do not explain these concepts here, it seemed pertinent to use the neologisms created by Manning and Appadurai to connect “terrain” to “landscape”.

¹⁰ Appadurai, for instance, points in that direction: “These complex, partly imagined lives must now form the bedrock of ethnography, at least of the sort of ethnography that wishes to retain a special voice in a transnational, deterritorialized world. For the new power of the imagination in the fabrication of social lives is inescapably tied up with images, ideas, and opportunities that come from elsewhere, often moved around by the vehicles of mass media. Thus, standard cultural reproduction (like standard English) is now an endangered activity that succeeds only by conscious design and political will, where it succeeds at all.” (idem, 54).

We could think of a “Portuguese body” – to recuperate a theme belonging to national identitary constructions – as an exercise of reterritorialization against the grain, as if launching a challenge to build a paradoxical discourse containing its own antidote, an antidote to the conservative reterritorialization of subjectivity. Simultaneous absence and presence of a “body”? How so, “national bodies”?

PORTUGUESE BODY?

In a 1993 chronicle, after watching the young dancers Vera Mantero and Francisco Camacho, Alexandre Melo asked himself whether the “Portuguese have a body” (Melo 1995, 174). Considering “the innovative use of the body by these artists as a positive point of departure for a critique of contemporary Portuguese culture” (Lepecki 2004a), Melo resorts to a series of episodes simultaneously ludicrous and serious (involving sexual discrimination, the contamination of haemophiliacs in Portuguese hospitals and the AIDS campaigns that went mostly unnoticed) to talk about “a system of implicit tolerance by omission” in place in Portugal (Melo 1995, 174). “The body has no place in the current and dominant discourse in Portuguese society and that is why everything happens as if the Portuguese indeed do not have a body (idem, 175). Mantero’s *Perhaps She Could Dance First and Think Afterwards* (1991) is read by Melo as a programmatic declaration. Referring to this choreography, he writes: “Moments like these do not crystalize as clichés, rather, they are constantly dissolving and reconfig-

uring according to a cadence of flows. As if dancing was like going down the street with the body set at the highest level of intensity” (idem, 177-8). While this description of a body which does not crystalize would suffice for an approximation to Guattari’s (1993) idea of deterritorialization, *O Rei no Exílio* [The King in Exile], by Francisco Camacho (1991), is the illustration of an exile both in terms of what is proposed and in terms of execution. A Portuguese king, the exiled Manuel II, is the figure of an exiled body staged by Camacho in 1991.

The last piece quoted and described by Melo, *Our Lady of Flowers*, also by Camacho (1992) is – for the style of dance it expresses, and along with *Perhaps She Could Dance First and Think Afterwards* and *The King in Exile* – another case of an interval between “paradoxical bodies” (cf. Gil 2001, 57-79) in constant deterritorialization and reterritorialization: “A body that Francisco Camacho’s analysis, decomposition and re-composition reveals, deconstructs and reconstructs in the different modelling of his postures vis-à-vis power and sexuality” (Melo 1995, 178). The deterritorializing power of these bodies in performance is understood by Melo as a desirable potency to transform the “ideology of loss of the body” into an “innovative use of the body as the positive point of departure towards a critique of contemporary Portuguese culture” (cf. Lepecki 2004a), and it points to the desire for a new decolonized identitary existence.

In his doctoral thesis, *Moving Without the Colonial Mirror: Modernity, Dance, and Nation in the works of Vera Mantero and Francisco Camacho* (1985-97) (2004a), Lepecki establishes a relationship between Melo’s text and the then still recent emer-

gence of *Nova Dança Portuguesa*. It starts by problematizing the action of the historical force field on a country’s national identity – seen by Lepecki as undergoing historical negation – and hypothesizing whether those forces manifest through performance and choreography as memories of what had been lost (an empire, a “megalomaniac national body”?). In turn, Raquel Ribeiro’s (2010) article for the “Ípsilon” supplement (of the daily newspaper *Público*) titled *Os Portuguese Já Têm Corpo e os Criadores Encontraram-no* [The Portuguese already have a body and creators have found it], relates to Melo’s chronicle insofar as it calls together artists and researchers from various fields to reflect on the theme of sexual ambiguity, which seems to echo the issue “of the body and the Portuguese” raised by Melo. Because of its deterritorializing character, it is justifiable to once again evoke “this Portuguese body”, unabashedly leaving behind the melancholy of the body’s absence in *sebastianismo* and *fado* (cf. Lourenço 1992) and the consequences of a recent colonial and post-colonial body, to finally ask what is happening today out there. What is the origin of this need to talk about a Portuguese body from time to time?

Although we do not know exactly who the “Portuguese” were that seemed not to have a body in the early 1990s, and who such people might be now that, in contrast, can convene a corporeality as “the point of departure towards a critique of contemporary Portuguese culture” (cf. Lepecki 2004a) – there are nevertheless bodies, performances and movements of thought with a public echo, linked to a latent *Portugueseness*, in which the designation of a Portuguese language and body mirror each other in a localized and contextualized manner.

And although it is not enough to speak of a national body, our imaginary is taken over by this body that has installed itself, which perhaps makes it impossible to ignore.

Indeed, some paradigms of performance art and the visual arts are reflected in the work of Vera Mantero and Francisco Camacho – in what they summon as desiring, visceral, carnal, or, as Lepecki says paraphrasing Melo: “blunty physical body – desiring, sexualized, visceral, carnal. Rare examples of positive bodies” (Lepecki 2004a) – characteristics that also appear in some work by João Fiadeiro, Clara Andermatt, Paulo Ribeiro, among many others. However, this posture of challenge and deterritorialization of patterns and conventions is not exclusive to performance art, or to the “Portuguese body”, and it was generalized internationally, in the context of experimental dance, along with more conceptual characteristics with affinities with the ready-mades and other provocations by Marcel Duchamp, or with Allan Kaprow’s happenings, among others.¹¹ João Fiadeiro and other artists linked to RE.AL also provided an important contribution to stabilize the connection between Portuguese dance and a certain performance art “flavour”. Fiadeiro often mentions the conceptual influence of Trisha Brown and Steve Paxton, but also of John Cage and Merce Cunningham, Duchamp, post-modern American dance, Zen Buddhism, Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy, complex

¹¹ Some of Jérôme Bel’s works would be the most immediate translation of what a ready-made can be on stage, generating a theme that brings into play ontological questions in Dance Studies, especially in the reception and programming of shows: “This is not dance, I want my money back.” See, for instance, the piece *Jérôme Bel* (1995) (cf. Lepecki 2006, 45–64).

systems, etc. These are references that he has been integrating in a most singular manner in his artistic work processes and in research workshops. The concrete influence of the people with whom he collaborated throughout the years is patent in his discourse. Equally important is the fact that RE.AL was for many years a meeting point for artists with different backgrounds and interests. From the 1990s until their recent and complete disappearance (to make way for other kinds of experiments), the *Lab*¹² attained the status of “accidental school” for multi-talented performers and artists.

Many of the works of *Nova Dança Portuguesa* artists, along with their legacy, could be included simultaneously within the framework of the two fields: performance art or dance.¹³ However, dance has been leading the reflection on them, and it is the proposals of dislocation of that referent which may, or not, produce a degree of deterritorialization.

¹² The designation *Lab* gradually transformed into variations of laboratory processes, involving various artists and researchers until 2014.

¹³ As in the example of works by Ana Borralho and João Galante, but also by Cláudio da Silva, Rui Catalão, Gustavo Sumpta, Cláudia Dias and many other artists from different generations, who feature in dance programmes, making incursions into styles of presentation that many audiences do not accept as “dance” and which are sometimes placed “between areas” or in the area of performance art. It is relevant to mention the ephemeral launching of a series of events more recently proposed by such collectives as Demimonde, ADDK, or baldio, which are open to the community and have made possible new approaches between areas and the post-media, as demonstrated by the events *Ora bolas há espaço vamos usá-lo* [Damn it, there is space let’s use it] (2012), *Demimonde na Galeria da Boavista* (2013), *5 minutos, 2 Ideias* [5 minutes, 2 ideas] session 1 (2013) and session 2 (2014) (cf. baldiohabitado.wordpress.com/primeiro-encontro-baldio). But also the collaboration proposals of O Rumor do Fumo with other groups, in *Oferecem-se Sombras* [Shadows on offer] (2013), *Mais para menos que para mais* [More towards less than more towards more] (2014), or even more recently the regular programming of performance events at Galeria Zaratan and other informal spaces that have popped up outside theatre venues.

Art Piss, On Money and Politics**Borrvalho/Galante and guests (2012)**

Ana Borrvalho and João Galante worked together for the first time in the context of the group Olho, coordinated by João Garcia Miguel, within which the inter-affection of people from theatre, dance and performance was intense and important. After an education in the visual arts, Galante recognizes that he approached activities which seemed more open to different worlds, such as dance, performance art and theatre in the late 1990s (cf. Borrvalho and Galante 2016). At the time, the visual arts had taken a commercial turn, and the subversive legacy of performance art seemed more alive in dance (and theatre). Galante recalls performances by street theatre groups such as Canibalismo Cósmico, Netos do Metropolitano (linked to Olho), and many others. Felizes da Fé were often detained by the police. At Olho, frequent visitors included Alberto Pimenta, Alface and Gustavo Sumpta. Together with Olho and Festival X, RE.AL labs were the first stage, and also a meeting place, for the exchange of ideas and experiences. Meanwhile, the initial Olho project gradually disintegrated and was over by 2000, the year Ana Borrvalho and João Galante debuted their first collaborative work. MissMasterMiss, with Miguel Moreira and Jorge Bragada, was created at a time when their work was artisanal but resorted to a new methodology, in which the proper formulation of a question, or concept, was crucial before it was put into practice. In other words, the structuring of a performance became preponderant vis-à-vis improvisation,



Antonia Buresi in *Art Piss, On Money and Politics*, Lisbon, 2012. Borrvalho/Galante and guests / Photograph: Sofia Tri and Vítor D. Rosário



Ana Borralho in *Art Piss, On Money and Politics*, Lisbon, 2012. Borralho/Galante and guests / Photograph: Sofia Tri and Vítor D. Rosário



Elizabete Francisca in *Art Piss, On Money and Politics*, Lisbon, 2012.
Borrvalho/Galante and guests / Photograph: Sofia Tri and Vítor D. Rosário

which generates a lot of performative material and, therefore, calls for a great deal of selection, as it is difficult to fit in the same piece in its entirety.

The process of *Art Piss* started with a series of photographs of the artists in different situations, taken as travel photographs that accumulated over time: whenever they wanted to pee, they would stop and take photographs. They suggested including those images, titled *Art Piss*, in the publication of text “O Mundo Maravilhoso de Ana Borrvalho e João Galante” [The wonderful world of Ana Borrvalho and João Galante] (Catalão 2010) proposed by Teatro Maria Matos. The project did not come to fruition, but this led to the possibility of a performance with the same title. This was at the peak of political discontentment in Portugal in 2011: there was a demonstration on 12 March, and a large 25 April march in Avenida da Liberdade, in Lisbon. In Spain, protests and acampadas [encampments] started on 12 May and, soon after, included Lisbon’s Rossio Square. Galante and Borrvalho invited some people to be filmed urinating at the door of such emblematic buildings as the Parliament or the Bank of Portugal. After much group debate, the project was put on hold. The idea for *Art Piss, On Money and Politics* re-emerged after an invitation by – mente association for the event Criativa – mente. Done with merely symbolic funding, the idea was humorously presented at a meeting of performer friends (Tiago Gandra, Cátia Leitão, André Uerba, Francisca Santos and Antónia Buresi). As the performance was confined to the space of the event Criativa-mente (Trindade Convent, Lisbon, 8 December 2012), the idea of urinating on public buildings was abandoned. Instead, they created a carpet

made with photocopies of banknotes and images of politicians targeted by criticism after the International Monetary Fund and *troika* were called to intervene in Portugal, leading to the implementation of a harsh austerity plan. The performers arrived at the space, a room inside a small palace in Rua da Trindade, and meticulously arranged the photocopies on the floor. A subtle ambient music gave them time to choose a photocopy, approach it, pull down their pants, open their legs and pee, each in their own way and at their own pace. Some people in the audience joined in, especially colleagues and friends who participated in the event, but also a few outsiders. Some people left, others were shocked, and many remained silent. No one could have anticipated what happened. Some were amused, “others never looked at us in the same way”, Ana Borralho commented.

The video was immediately made available online, but it took a year for someone to criticize it. At first, with the discussion that it generated and the sudden visibility it brought, the succession of comments amused them. At a certain point the discussion no longer had anything to do with the event itself; instead people were attacking one another. The text generated by the successive comments gradually built up despite the event that had originated it. The “scandal” spread online. In fact, online comments questioned the subsidy that Associação Casa Branca had received from the State and even whether public money should be used against the very system that makes it available. “The money for that event was only enough for a group dinner”, Galante commented. One of the most intense polemics that emerged out of the online comments was the fact that the artists had been financed to urinate in public. While on the

one hand an unknown group in Brazil decided to launch an online survey to answer the question whether the event could be considered art (“yes” won), on the other hand there were unpleasant threats and emails filled with nonsense (some of which merited replies from Ana Borralho and Rui Catalão). About a week later the controversy had died down, diluted within the unstoppable torrent of new cybernetic scandals.

But what is this online scandal phenomenon? Is it related to issues having to do with performance? Perhaps the Internet amplifies the discussion – between those who saw, those who did not, and even those who never see anything anyway – and the reaction, in time, well beyond the event. The questions that emerged included: public money, whether it was art or not, the accusation of Leftist intellectualism, and the way it spread across the Internet like a rampant virus. In *Art Piss*, the online video was the main cause of the deterritorializing disturbance. If “They cannot do that”, what then can they do? A vast number of people that post comments would never watch the performance live, indeed would never put themselves in that context. In their personal computers, they are able to watch the video repeatedly, out of its specific, site specific time and terrain. The context is dislocated from the frame of performance art, a sort of private space opened to the public without prior notice. Dislocated from a meaningful discharge (to urinate) to unload severe frustrations on their political targets expressing revulsion at the path Portugal was taking with the situation generated by the intervention of the *troika*. The fact that public institutions did not fund the event, and that it was organized with full freedom of action, is also part of the sensorial relief of passing water.

To become aware of the echoes of a performance that could have gone unnoticed, and whose online visibility derives only from evoking a recurrent theme in performance art (political protest via indecorous provocation) tells us much about the contextual and current pertinence of performance. Is performance still worth it? Does it still produce deterritorializing effects? By the sheer fact of being online, the reception reached unexpected proportions, seeming to contain its own singular power. There is an expansion of the potential public audience, beyond the specialized community; in online time and space; there is someone who watches, sheltered from the world, in their private space, and wants to have a distanced voice. Online and media discussion itself becomes performative. It is a discussion fed by individual frustrations, anxieties, a measure of delirium and the claim to a public voice. To each the right to their opinion, due to the simple fact that they can express it immediately, thus participating in a public sphere that is accessible to all. But to talk about what if they have no access to the proposal in itself? Can they talk without listening, about that which they do not listen to? Yes they can, but perhaps the answers are not answers, when a question was not posed. Moreover, the project was not conceived as a video to be watched online; the video was a mere recording. However, that recording led to some delirious comments possessing a certain Dada nonsense quality, an a-critical, quasi-performative cacophony. Improvisation, a certain randomness, the fist fights that followed the Dadaist salons, seem to reverberate in this chaos that is easily produced by, and remains inscribed in, the Internet. Perhaps then, from a distance, there will be a possible reading of the moment of its appearance on the “net”.

In the future, it will be worth looking into the extemporaneous comments of online communication, which comes very close to total randomness, because it is no longer enough to establish axes, or rather, nexuses for gifting and counter-gifting.

The question of deterritorialization and its dependency on the “terrain” in which it occurs – because it is the outcome of a series of co-incidental relationships that allow for the discovery of fractures in that terrain, which signify a larger number of possibilities – demonstrates how *Muito atento a tudo o que está a passar* could have gone almost unnoticed if nobody had felt offended and voiced their anger against the nudity in the window. Just like *Art Piss*, it remained under the radar until it was viewed and commented on online. The two performances consist of the execution of apparently very simple tasks, which open up the terrain to a dislocated and unexpected audience. Unexpected, or merely hidden in the obvious, these terrains could perhaps be fractured territories that enable a thinking of other subjectivities, based on the deterritorialization and reterritorialization as performance proposal.



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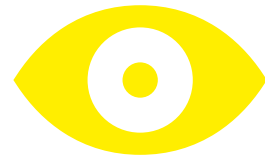
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**THE AVANT-GARDE
FRONT TO BACK:
PORTUGUESE MUSICAL
RETRO-PERFORMANCE
AND COMMUNICATION
FROM THE 1980s
TO THE 1910s–1920s**

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João Macdonald



TIMES AND TECTONIC PLATES

The on-going historiographical record of Portuguese performance art tends to divide the topic into blocks consisting of pairs of decades of the twentieth century: 1910-1920, 1960-1970, 1980-1990 (with 1940-1950 consisting of the actions by Mário Cesariny and the surrealists – a more distinctive block, engaged with a specific school and thus also more homogeneous). This division (emanating from academic, non-academic and artistic fields) has been consensual although it does not consider these blocks in isolation.

In this same sense of referential utility, I suggest an ad hoc classification of those blocks by resorting to three notions, namely instruction, deconstruction and dissolution. In brief: 1) instruction 1910-1920 – with a focus on the actions of

Almada Negreiros, who was bent on *instructing* the public against the detractors of the “new”; 2) deconstruction 1960-1970 – initiatives geared towards the dismantling of the traditional artistic space and language (Ernesto de Sousa, Egídio Álvaro, E.M. de Melo e Castro were some of the most active individuals), which was also the product of coeval social convulsions; 3) dissolution 1980-1990 – a period that detonated and, in most cases, turned what had been the history of Portuguese performance art into a blank slate.

However, the universe of performance art operates in tectonic territories with varying degrees of impact, some of them circling around larger territories to reach others that are smaller, more distant in time and not as easily identifiable. This is apparent in the threads of communication between the 1910-1920 block and what could be considered as a sub-plane of 1980-1990: a certain field of Portuguese pop-rock music of the 1980s. This proximity is rooted in the appropriation, by some of those musicians, of modernist movements, incorporating their methods, updating and quoting them.

Its identification and characterization as a branch of the genealogy of performance art was established in recent years by the researchers Paula Guerra (2013) and Sandra Guerreiro Dias in the context of their doctoral theses. In the case of the former, in the chapter “1984-1990: entre os refinamentos e as derivações da música moderna portuguesa e da afirmação do pós-*punk*” [1984-1990: between the refinements and derivations of modern Portuguese music and on the affirmation of post-punk] (Guerra 2013); and in the case of the latter in the

chapters “Revolução pop em Portugal: sinergias experimentais de uma estética performativa” [Pop revolution in Portugal: experimental synergies of a performative aesthetics]” and “Neodadaísmo e cabaretismo urbano para uma homeostasia feliz” [Neodadaism and urban cabaret-ism for a happy homeostasis]” (Dias 2016).

I shall take that filtering of the 1980s as the point of departure and deepen it conceptually, but not without first placing into context the post-punk universe – a term that agglutinates positions, rather than a musical trend – to which belong the performer-musicians under scrutiny.

PLUNDERING THE PAST

In 1967, in *Traité de Savoir-vivre à L’Usage des Jeunes Générations*, the situationist Raoul Vaneigem popularized the “perfect” notion of nihilism conceived by Russian thinker Vasily Rozanov: “The show is over. The audience get up to leave their seats. Time to collect their coats and go home. They turn round... No more coats and no more home.”¹ Rock critic and historian Greil Marcus recovered the image in *Lipstick Traces* (in which he laid out the thread linking Dadaism, situationism and punk; Marcus 2007,65-67) to synthesize punk, demonstrating it with a 1977 song by British band The Adverts, “One Chord Wonders”, from the album *Crossing the Red Sea*: “I wonder what we’ll do when things go wrong./When we’re halfway through our favourite song./We look up and the audience has gone/[...] we don’t give a damn.”

To paraphrase another rock historiographer (Simon Reynolds in *Rip It Up and Start Again: Postpunk 1978-1984*), the immediate reaction to punk, and to those nihilistic outbursts, by a certain class within the contemporary music community was the anti-intellectual intellectualizing of music. It was carried out by musicians who were more concerned with keeping a startled audience in the room than with startling them out of the room.

¹ Although he does not mention it, Vaneigem most probably used, in his book (1967, 181), the translation of Rozanov’s (1865-1919) work by Vladimir Pozner and Boris Schloezer, *L’Apocalypse de Notre Temps: Précédé de Esseulement* (1930, Paris: Librairie Plon), in which that definition of nihilism appears in a passage titled “La Divina Commedia”, alluding to the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917. The translation of Rozanov’s quote we use here is the one by John Fullerton and Paul Sieveking in their English version of Vaneigem’s *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, according to the online source (library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/61).

Reynolds book is a celebration of those who devoted themselves to filling in “punk’s uncompleted musical revolution, and explored new sonic possibilities” – i.e., the “post-punks”, most of whom had attended fine arts schools, an aspect that is relevant to this case. Reynolds specifically highlights how they “plundered” early twentieth century avant-gardes:

Those seven post-punk years from the beginning of 1978 to the end of 1984 saw the systematic ransacking of twentieth century modernist art and literature. The entire period looks like an attempt to replay virtually every major modernist theme and technique via the medium of pop music. Cabaret Voltaire borrowed their name from Dada; Pere Ubu took theirs from Alfred Jarry. Talking Heads turned a Hugo Ball sound-poem into a tribal-disco dance track. [The] techniques of collage and cut-up were transplanted into the music. Marcel Duchamp, mediated by 1960s Fluxus, was the patron saint of No Wave. The record-cover artwork of the period matched the neo-modernist aspirations of the words and music, with such graphic designers as Malcolm Garrett and Peter Saville, and labels like Factory and Fast product, drawing from Constructivism, De Stijl, Bauhaus, John Heartfield and Die Neue Typographie. This frenzied looting of the archives of modernism culminated with the renegade pop label ZTT – short for Zang Tuum Tumb, a snatch of Italian Futurist prose-poetry – and their conceptual group the Art of Noise, named in homage to Luigi Russolo’s manifesto for a Futurist music.

(Reynolds 2006, xvii–xviii)

Reynolds analysis opens with a quote by Pere Ubu’s Allen Ravenstine in a 1978 interview: “The Sex Pistols sang ‘No Future’, but there is a future and we are trying to build one.” This non-punk, but advanced, kaleidoscopic march went on to contaminate spaces outside the Anglo-Saxon spectrum. In Portugal, from the late 1970s onwards, it resulted in a volume of records, concerts, video clips, happenings, performances and manifestos generated by entities and subjects who had (and still have) their main platform in music. The affiliation in early twentieth century and modernist engagement was similar, and while some adopted onomastic traits in line with it (bands such as K4 Quadrado Azul – which carried the same name as Almada Negreiro’s famous 1917 modernist text title –, Ezra Pound e a Loucura, Mler Ife Dada), all were exploratory. Terminology places them under the category *Música Moderna Portuguesa* (MPM – Modern Portuguese Music –, which does away with such terms as *post-punk*, *new wave* or *no wave* to classify the phenomenon). And they emerged in a social-political context comparable to “those of *Orpheu*”².

² Reference to the Portuguese modernist magazine published only twice in 1915.

The modernist instruction phase in Portugal consisted of shock-effects led by Santa Rita Pintor, Almada Negreiros, Raul Leal and Amadeo de Souza Cardoso, and took place in the highly turbulent society that followed the 1908 regicide. In 1915, five years after the establishment of the Portuguese Republic, the modernists truly came on stage openly in conflict with the republican intellectuals, who zealously guarded an aesthetical programme that was broadly speaking based on a more or less romanticizing and more or less historicizing type of naturalism – the artistic expression of social consciousness both in the visual arts (painters Luciano Freire, Carlos Reis, Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro and Veloso Salgado were among the most prominent) and in literature.³

From the attack on conservative writer Júlio Dantas to the political hostility of the text “O Bando Sinistro” [The Sinister Gang], distributed by Leal in an operation devised by Santa Rita (a “call on Portuguese intellectuals” against prime-minister Afonso Costa and the “Jacobins”), republican artistic purity was targeted by modernist public operations (and suffered a counterattack: of the 107 articles that appeared in the press in 1915 on the two issues of *Orpheu*, only nine were favourable and most were printed in republican newspapers).⁴

³ In 1919, shortly after his election as president, António José de Almeida eulogized naturalist writer Teixeira de Queirós, in whose books “always emerges a moral foundation [...] the purpose of which is to fight against the crisis of characters [sic] that plagues the Nation today and that we all are committed to quell” (1919, 6).

⁴ Calculated from data in Hilário (2008), Dix (2015) and Sá-Carneiro (1915).

The progressive regime of 1910 was not in a situation to – nor was it their intention to, in line with their purpose – not mete out aesthetical discipline. Nor was the modernist front in such a situation.

“As usual in periods of pre or post-revolutionary political turmoil the more orthodox political apparatuses strive to simply life; many artists and cultural practices were co-opted by the most primary, anachronistic and absurd ideological manipulations.” This comment was made by art critic Alexander Melo, in 1998, when writing about the post-25 April 1974 Revolution. “From Maoism to Guevarism – via Stalin and Trotsky – all the ideological corpses showed up for the festive historical parade of models and period costumes” (Melo, quoted by Dias 2015, 82). When the MPM in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s emulated the stamina of 1915-1918, preferring acts of provocation to acts of catechism, it was made up of a generation of recent musicians reacting to the abrasive effect of “protest song” and its corresponding artistic space, in the face of a new revolutionary purity (preceded by the dictatorial New State “policy of the spirit” and by that of the First Republic).

In the intellectual arena, our original socialist path becomes narrower and narrower, suffocated by the so-called national reaction or by the very skilfully advertised culture of the international bourgeoisie. The disagreeing critic must be a “pure reader”, i.e., he must transcribe every work that somehow is a binary capable of altering the inertia of undesirable traditions. [...] As we know, the current musical panorama in Portugal is less than brilliant. [...] [There is]

a warped notion of democratization of culture that seems to interpret it so as to make it impossible for everyone, instead of widening it to the very limits of possibility.

This was written by music critic Adriano Luz in 1978, as he introduced *Anar Band*, the album by the eponymous project of Jorge Lima Barreto, which also included Rui Reininho. “The record *Anar Band* is absolutely at the avant-garde of Portuguese music and maybe it is a thorn for those living in the reactionary mediocrity of its current panorama” (Luz 1978, 26).

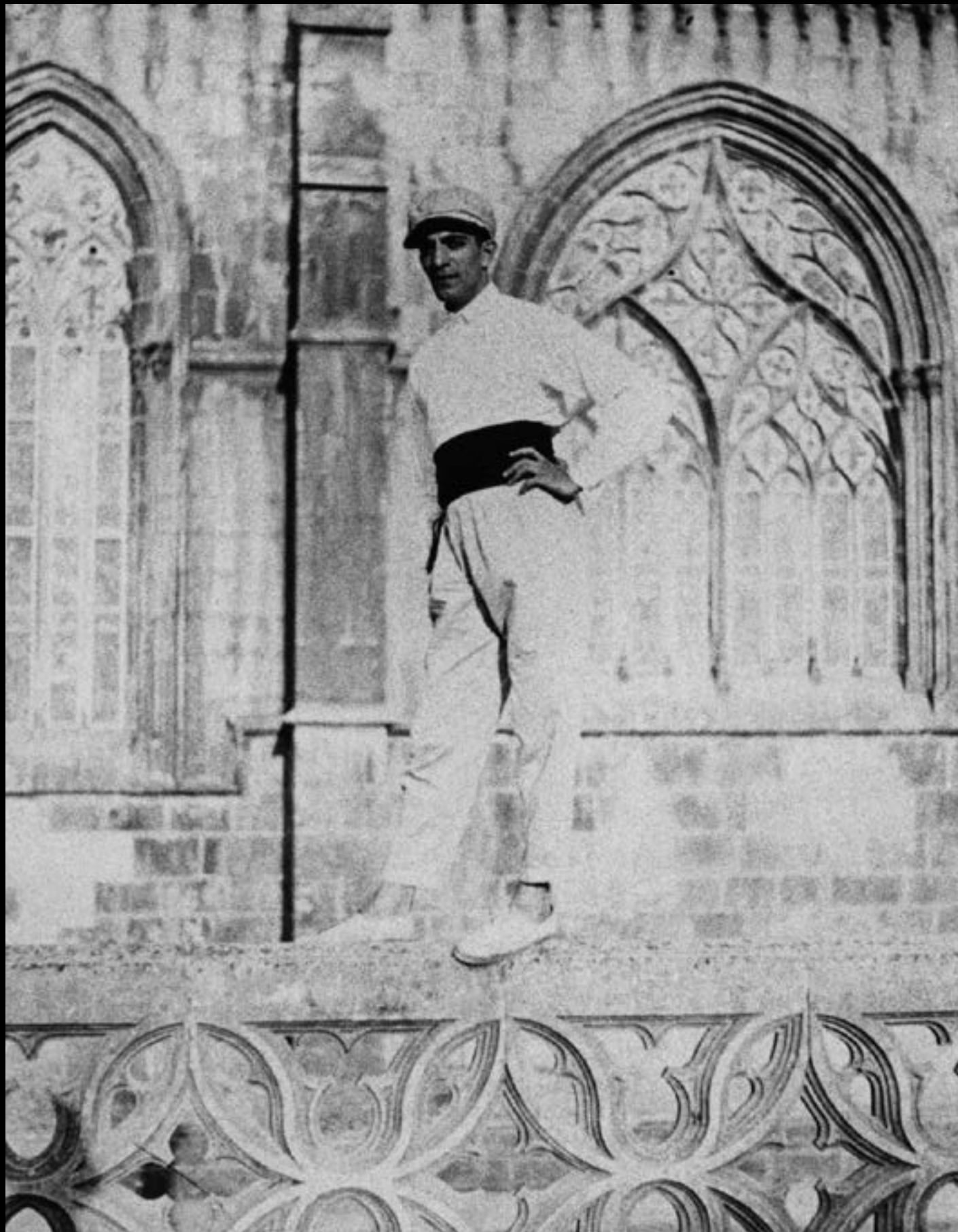
“COURAGE, OH PORTUGUESE”: POP-OUTBURSTS, AN OVERVIEW

In the opposite camp to the post-protest song (elsewhere it would be interesting to discuss the exception of José Afonso and his connection to surrealism) was manifesto music. Lima Barreto’s text for the *Anar Band* vinyl, while not a manual to instruct the new generation, displays some of its outlines.

The record *Anar Band* is an aesthetical statement within the panorama of avant-garde music. [...] [The] work [belongs] simultaneously to jazz aesthetics [...], contemporary pop [...], erudite electro-acoustics [...]. The work reveals the aesthetical nature of the Third World, in which the avant-garde forms a dialectic alliance with the more unconscious forms of mass music. [...] The aesthetics of *Anar Band* is turned to revolution [...] The pleasure of creating music is the communication of universal senses, which express the sensuality of rebellion and cosmic desire.⁵

The 1977 statements of a quasi-situationist Lima Barreto were not terribly different from the “urges”, the “Universe, The Infinite”, the “Spirit” exalted by Raul Leal in “The Sinister Gang” of 1915, which aimed at realigning Portugal.

⁵ Cover text on the vinyl *Anar Band*. The cover art, an oil painting titled *Science Fiction*, is by Abel Mendes, one of the members of the group VideOPorto, a seminal structure in Portuguese video-art.



José de Almada Negreiros at Mosteiro da Batalha, in the 20s
Photograph: unknown / courtesy of The Estate of Almada Negreiros



Heróis do Mar
Photograph: Francisco Graça / courtesy of Universal Music Portugal

In fact, the high benchmark set by Lima Barreto (who participated in the project Telectu, together with Vitor Rua, in the programme of *Performance Portugaise*, organized by Egídio Alves at the George Pompidou Centre, in 1984) launched a desacralizing path on the margins of the somewhat belated punk phenomenon in the country. In 1979, even the proletarian pioneers of Portuguese punk rock, the band Aqui d'El Rock, realized what was happening: "We were told that [punks] are bands that want to give back to rock what it had in the beginning, strength, spontaneity, which has now been perverted by intellectuals" (Ferreira 1979:33). It was doubtlessly a widespread desacralizing, from the popular authority of composer, singer and born performer António Variações (himself another form of "Third World aesthetics", to expand Lima Barreto's expression) to the performatic impact of the band Heróis do Mar, with their neo-Pessoan quality. In the words of one of the founders, Carlos Maria Trindade: "Heróis were in fact 20 years ahead in terms of their concept of recovering the humanist values of Portuguese past. The country would only truly redeem itself with Expo 1998, successfully and unabashedly displaying its historical soul to the world" (Cardoso 2010). An incontrovertible eclipse points back to Almada Negreiros' 1917 *Ultimatum Futurista às Gerações Portuguesas do Século XX* [A Futurist Ultimatum to the Portuguese Generations of the Twentieth Century]: "The complete people is those who have bound together all their qualities and all their faults to the maximum. Courage, oh Portuguese, you only lack the qualities." And at a certain moment in their career, Heróis do Mar's stage wardrobe seemed in fact to replicate one of Almada Negreiros uniforms.

The neo-modernist performance of MMP was abundant. Lima Barreto's original desacralizing followed various paths. MMP multiplied and trans-multiplied, came together and came apart. Much of it recovered the "manifesto", so dear to early twentieth century avant-gardes. An example is the manifesto of Bastardos do Cardeal, a band from Viseu, published in the newspaper *Blitz* in 1985. This band was anti mass culture, anti-intellectual, anti-hippie, anti-themselves: "Bastardos do Cardeal should not be allowed to play, because Bastardos do Cardeal do not play music: the band of this name does nothing but accumulate various amplified and electrified noises according to various sequences and they do not wish to be stuck" (Bastardos do Cardeal 1985, 12) (a small set of videos available on YouTube shows the performances of Bastardos in the 1980s, especially the persona of its lead singer Luís Morgadinho). Other names worth mentioning and examining include Boris Ex Machina, Bye Bye Lolita Girl, Croix Sainte, Entes Queridos, Lucretia Divina, Mão Morta, Melleril de Nembutal, New Wave Atitude, Moeda Noise, PSP, Repórter Estrábico, Santa Maria, Gasolina em Teu Ventre!, Uru Eu Wau Wau – a complex and incomplete list (YouTube documents rather well these scenic-musical machines).

Capable of launching disorder among the audience, at least a disorder of awe, three other names deserved a solid reception during the 1980s in their enactment of "cabaretism": Ocaso Épico, with their protagonist Farinha (the artistic name of Carlos Cordeiro); Mler Ife Dada, brimming with the ingenuity of Nuno Rebelo and Pedro d'Orey (and Anabela Duarte, a sort of projection of Valentine de Saint-Point); and João Pes-

te's Pop Dell'Arte. Founder of label Ama Romanta, a magnet for unique cases of the topic at hand, Peste used the first compilation released by the label, *Divergências* (1986) to launch his manifesto. The record includes a vote "of confidence in the future" (instead of "no future") by sociologist Paquete de Oliveira, based on Pier Paolo Pasolini's concept of "new fascisms": "The illusion of the 1980s is that of a fight to enable everyone's personal freedom. The equality of all is a myth, but the guaranty of the difference of every one is another".⁶ Through this and more Peste in Pop Dell'Arte updated the radicalism of the twentieth century: "An identity of libertarian values, a musically vast identity, with influences from the pop-rock scene, but also from jazz, contemporary music and even from other type of movements such as futurism, surrealism, Dadaism or names that never belonged to any movement, but were always a reference to us, such as Marcel Duchamp" (Lopes, quoted by Guerra 2013, 262-3).

⁶ Recording included in the album *Divergências*.

ENA PÁ 2000 "DO NOT EXIST"

The critique and history of the *Movimento Homeoestético* ([Homeoaesthetic Movement] Fernando Brito, Manuel João Vieira, Pedro Portugal, Pedro Proença, Xana, between 1982-1989) have been done and documented in great detail (6=0Homeoestética 2004; Almeida 2008). Attached to the movement, the band Ena Pá 2000 (founded in 1984) was a concept by Vieira, with the occasional collaboration of Brito, that went beyond the movement: the translation onto the stage of homeoaesthetic tenets brought their neo-Dadaism (a term that they adopted) to audiences beyond the milieu of the visual arts. The disguise reached almost extemporaneous proportions.

But the disguise is an action in permanence. In 2015, Vieira said the following in an interview:

Not even I know who I am [...] When I created Ena Pá 2000, I created a fiction in the sense of confronting myself with something between Monty Python and Frank Zappa, it was a hodgepodge of culture and post-PREC [the so called On-going Revolutionary Process] disillusionment, but it was also a critique of pop-rock language. So I preferred to ridicule, to create characters, and that opened the door over other horizons. Although these were surrealist, they were simply other, never the same. [...] Basically, we created fictitious bands that were a seed of the ones that exist now, which in fact are fictitious. Ena Pá 2000, Irmãos Catita, do not exist.

(Branco 2015)

This very national modernist way of being-other-than-oneself creates an ellipsis that points to one of the disconcerting acts of Santa Rita, the continuous-performer, at café A Brasileira (according to journalist Reinaldo Ferreira). Some characters who wanted to physically assault him, looked for the artist outside the café; Santa Rita told them “You gentlemen are misinformed... Someone must have played a practical joke on you... Santa Rita Pintor does not exist...[...] This that you see here it nothing but clothes... Santa Rita’s overcoat, jacket, shirt and pullovers exist... But Santa Rita himself, does not” (Ferreira 1929, 37). In their deconstruction to zero, in the edification of performance art as occupation of the public thing (both the public space and the concert hall) the modernist and the homeoaesthetical musicians coincide in the need to transform self-derision into an artistic intervention.

When in 1989 a branch group of homeoaesthetics, Ases da Paleta, organized an “anti-art exhibition/performance with a dada-formal matrix” at Galeria Quadrum, in Lisbon, that self-derision, in an outlandish dialogue with the modernists, was once again set in motion: the members signed with the pseudonyms Amadeo de Sousa Veloso (Pedro Portugal), Palmada (Fernando Brito), Maluca (Paulo Feliciano) and Sanita Pintor (Manuel João Vieira).⁷

⁷ The pseudonyms, except for Maluca, which refers to painter Maluda (1934-1999), mock the modernists Amadeo de Souza Cardoso, Almada Negreiros and Santa Rita Pintor.

THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE REININHO*

Probably the most consensual *maître de cérémonie* of MMP as performer, Rui Reininho has kept that attitude until today, even considering the album *Valsa dos Detectives* (1989) as the last chapter in the golden period of his GNR – Grupo Novo Rock (it should be noted that the album’s art cover was by painter Carlos Carreiro, of Grupo Puzzle, >>> a structure responsible for some events between 1976-1981).

In 2016, Reininho shed new light on his paramusical trajectory before having been invited to join the band in 1981. Below are the transcriptions of two episodes that reveal the artist’s acting matrix. The recent public sharing of these two testimonies shows how Reininho acknowledges the importance of historiographing them to better understand the performatic substance of his (and GNR’s) career:

We shall never forget Kronstadt! Artur the Leftie attacked us and we returned the threat: – We shall never forget Kronstadt! [the 1921 rebellion of soviet sailors, disillusioned with the revolutionary trajectory, against central communist power]. We, the anarchists of [café] Majestic; them, the commies who used to hang out at [café] Piolho. We challenged them on their own turf and put on the skin of the Trotskyite sailors killed in Stalin’s first great purge. Maybe the time for revenge had come. Little Artur was an icon of Porto. We challenged him. We were against everything. Before and after the revolution [of 25 April

* TN – The original Portuguese reads “O rei morreu, viva o Reininho”, a play on the word “rei” (king), which is contained in the musician’s surname: “Reininho”.

1974]. Like the Dadaists, who rushed to the streets when Paris was liberated, to salute the Nazis in a fit of total eccentricity. Porto saw some very *cultural*, very *avant-garde* stuff, in which we participated [the “anarchist group” Reininho belonged to] as *agents provocateurs*. When the great Iannis Xenakis played at Cinema Trindade one Sunday afternoon, all the bearded architects came to listen to him. We also went, bringing with us portable radios. As he spoke about avant-garde music... – Braga [stadium] here! Goal! Goal by Leixões! – Shhh!... – The live [football] commentary. Luigi Nono was regaled with the same reception. [...] The ideologue, the mentor, was Jorge Lima Barreto.

(Torres 2016, 221-2).

This attitude was transferred to GNR (the same self-consciousness appears in a commentary about the 1982 Vilar de Mouros Festival: “I’ve got a few photos: me coming out of a dumpster wearing a diving mask; it was me who did the keyboards for [the song] “Avarias”. It was a performance.” [69]; it appeared in literature as *Sifilis versus Bilitis* published by &etc in 1983 and in the lyrics for the songs in *Come On e Ana – Líricas – 1982-2006* (Ermida 2009).⁸ Any hesitation in linking Reininho to the avant-gardes of the early twentieth century is eliminated by looking into a short, but essential, study by Fernando Guerreiro published in the magazine *Vértice*: “Do ‘Bar da Morgue’ à ‘Turbina e Moça’: o cabaret-circo dada-futurista de Rui Reininho e dos GNR” [From ‘Bar da Morgue’ to ‘Turbina e Moça’: the Dada-futurist cabaret-circus of Rui Reininho and GNR] (Guerreiro 2012).

⁸ For a detailed analysis of this work cf. Ermida (2009).

PERFORMATIC AND MUTANT

The phenomenon brought about by those agents of MMP between the late 1970s and 1980 caused shifts in the tectonics of Portuguese performance art and was practically diluted before the 1990 dissolution, which relocated performance into more filtered spaces, and directed it to a narrower audience. Reacting above all against the cultural apnoea (as they had stated at the time, but also retrospectively) issuing from the politicization of the arts in the immediate post-25 Abril, they referred to the avant-gardist mechanisms of the 1910s and 1920s to launch actions based on a post-punk attitude. These actions always targeted a wide audience, were not exclusive to the art world and unabashedly resorted to all means available – from music concerts to television appearances (including shows for the masses). In other words: like the early modernists (who had explored using the media and popular theatres), they realized that subversion would only have the desired effect if and when applied without hesitation to universal media.

Actualizing instruments from the past that had not yet been fully used, they did not have, and did not need, a programme. They preferred to de-programme. For that reason they were kaleidoscopic, their only pattern being the constant disturbing of the pattern of their constructions. These were performatic and mutant artists, who worked as a network, not as a school, and they are a segment of the last batch of creators to introduce disturbance in Portuguese culture.

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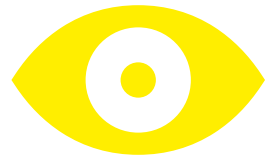
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THE POLITICAL
REENACTMENT OF
PERFORMANCE AND
ITS MICRO-ACTIVISM
OF AFFECTIONS

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Christine Greiner



Since the late 1990s, two movements have brought about significant epistemological reverberations in performance art (henceforth called performance). The first concerns the strengthening of digital technologies and the expansion of zones of indistinction between online and offline life proposed by the new generations of users known, among other labels, as digital natives, generation Z, post-internet generation, *otaku* and floating generation. In conceptual terms, these navigations between cyberspace and life beyond the screens have gradually destabilized the distinctions between materiality and immateriality, public and private, real and fictional, among other dichotomies destined for extinction. This constitutes a logical change that has reshaped the meaning of many terms and concepts. Immateriality, for instance, is now understood as a plunge into concreteness (regardless of whether analogical or digital), as proposed by Antonio Negri (2012). As for the zones of intersection between public and private, they signal the indistinction between

inner and outer environments, announcing the recognition of an increasingly intense flow of spatialities that are singular but never absolutely distinct. Flows and environments, as much as places (house, street, city), are considered sign systems rather than mere geographical territories.

As for the second movement, which has intensified more explicitly in the last decade, it relates to urban events that are resistance networks, such as the Arab Spring, the Battles for Seattle and the 2013 *passeatas* in Brazil, among many other examples around the world. In these cases, the most serious problem concerns the ambiguous relationship of these networks and collectives with alterity, which either feeds off them, or promotes immunizing actions that set in motion isolationist and identity policies, which are increasingly segregationist.

This essay does not aim to analyse the sociological, economic and political issues that ensue from these movements, but rather at questioning how performance has been reinventing itself with a view to identifying a sort of ontological reenactment. The aim is to revitalize its political ability towards sharing through a *microactivism of affections*.¹ The most relevant public aspect of these microactions is geared towards the construction of the *munus*, as it appears in the etymology of *communitas* (community) and *common*. Roberto Espósito (2011) explained the complexity of this Latin term, remarking that it should not be mistaken for the *res publica* (the public thing) or for the public space. Moreover, it is not similar to the sociological definition

¹ This term was coined for a lecture I gave in June 2015 in Germany, in the context of the event *The Body in Crisis*, organized by curator Bettina Masuch.

of public sphere. *Munus* is close to the loss of boundaries and to a sort of spasm and void of the subject and its modes of collective undoing, thus reminding us of performative acts that pointed to and sought to destabilize the devices of power. As Fischer-Lichte (2008, 27) observed, performative acts are always non-referential because they do not refer to pre-existing conditions as inner essences, substances, stable identities or anything that could be “expressed”. In fact, expressivity would be the very opposite of performativity, because it would imply something that already exists and, therefore, could be expressed, while the performative act would be that which constitutes itself as a possible, immanent reality. If the *munus* is constituted in the collective, in the dilution of boundaries that challenges the notion of a pre-existing and ready subject, it is also the materiality of the performative action that emanates from the body and turns identity into a processual singularity instead of a ready and individual reality.

When performance started to be recognized as a specific language, some models and procedures became recognizable and recurrent, as is usually the case in the evolutionary process of every language. This was also when a market for acting, closely linked to museums and galleries, appeared within which the great names are celebrated.² In these institutional contexts, there is a stability that is incompatible with the notion of performative action. This is not a value judgement, but an acknowledgement of how neoliberal devices of power impact ways of thought, action, creation and circulation.

² The most often quoted example is Marina Abramović, a major reference in the history of performance, who has circulated in major museums, such as MoMa in New York.

Therefore, the type of political-philosophical reenactment this essay refers to does not concern the re-staging of historical performances, but the reenactment of a certain cognitive trait. As Rebecca Schneider (2011) explains, the term reenactment began to be abundantly used at the turn of the twenty-first century, when it had to do with the practice of re-making or re-staging a previous event. However, it did not always relate to the reconstitution of works or events, because such re-staging has always and unavoidably implied a new experience, a new body and a new environment. The ontological reenactment of performance asks about the *munus* of performer subjects who are not immunized and are non-subservient to the market; who demonstrate an aptitude to a radical exposure to that which is not the same, i.e., who reactivate, in a certain way, the function-performance of operators of destabilization. As proposed by André Lepecki (2006; 2010), reenactment actualizes the virtual and concrete that is present in the work and can still act, not as a reproduction of past experience, but as something that can come to being.

But what would this come-to-being look like in political terms? Should we surmise that the contexts emerging between the 1990s and the 2000s set in motion statements to engender performative actions that were non-subservient to the immediatist logics typical of neoliberal art circuits? Would it be possible to break away from the managerial logics that administer deadlines and money; and from the neoliberal governmentality that prioritizes the preservation of the rules of the game rather than the players?

In a tacit way, some of the main issues in this debate emerged in Ancient Greece. Aristotle used to differentiate *poiésis* (to produce in the sense of acting) from *praxis* (to make in the sense of acting). At the core of *práxis* (accentuated here as it is translated into Latin languages) there was a will that expressed itself immediately in the action. And at the core of *poiésis*, there was a production in presence, i.e., the production of something that did not exist and began to exist only at the moment it appeared in full light, without concealment. Therefore, *práxis* had a practical aspect, of production and action in the world. As for *poiésis*, although it was implied in production, instead of producing something palpable, it was a mode of truth, a non-concealment. Based on these presuppositions, Aristotle concluded that *poiésis* was a characteristic of the human. It would reside within human making, while *poiésis* would lay out the human condition as a living being, as an animal, and would constitute a sort of principle of movement or will (appetite, desire and volition).

Throughout the centuries, these distinctions were obscured, as Giorgio Agamben explained in his first book *The Man Without Content*, written in 1974 (2012). *Poiésis* was translated into Latin as *agere*, i.e., something like “put-to-work” or *operari* and no longer as being in the presence. For the Romans, this became *actus* and *actualitas*, also translated into the plane of *agere*, as the voluntary production of an effect. With political conditions and the new work forces and social needs of the modern period, there did not seem to be the possibility of continuing to

distinguish between *poiésis* and *práxis*, production and action. Man’s making had definitely become an activity that produced a real effect, in other words, an action in the world.

Despite the sovereignty of this modern notion of production and action, the singularity of the different forms of work continued to be considered as a fundamental question with blatant implications on everyday life. It was in that sense that Karl Marx (2011) proposed, in his manuscript *Grundrisse*, the distinction between material work and immaterial work. Material work always produces something other (a car in an assembly line and artefacts, for instance), while immaterial work produces its own process, like a pianist creating music while playing the piano or an intellectual articulating ideas and concepts while thinking, writing or speaking. That which unfolds in processual production is an altogether different result and not exactly the production of that work (the publishing of a book, the recording of a composition, for instance).

Another word that was extensively studied, and already contained the idea of “going through action in action” (with nothing outside action), is “experience”. Aristotle even suggested an affinity between experience and *práxis*, but established a difference between the objects, stating that the object of theory is truth and the object of action is *praxis*. In turn, experience would be closer to a practical intellect capable of such and such particular action. It should be noted that for Aristotle only human beings determined their action and took it to the final consequences. Therefore, experience and *práxis* were part of the same process, while the determinant principle of both

práxis and the practical intellect (experience) is will. A crucial author in this debate that seeks definitions for art, as well as for its function or power in everyday life, is Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Before him, the place of art seemed always closer to *poiésis*, understood as the production of truth and non-concealment, not as the production of an action. With Nietzsche, especially after the first edition of *The Genealogy of Morals* in 1887, art was recognized as a will to power or as something capable of establishing new worlds and new actions. Nietzsche was more interested in creation than in the reception of art, problematizing the Kantian hypothesis according to which art production would be an aesthetical state shored up exclusively by the notion of beauty, innately disinterested and exempt from any social or political implication. Be that as it may, from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century art was reduced to the production of feelings, excluding cognition from the whole creative process. *Poiésis* or poetics continued tethered to the notion of disinterested beauty and a flow of feelings, thereby promoting a conceptual dislocation that ended up overlooking the initial meaning of the term *poiésis*, i.e., action.³

³ It should be remembered that Plato banished art and artists from the *pólis*, precisely because he acknowledged the power of action of art. If art had been considered inoffensive from the beginning (as mere aesthetical fruition) it would not have posed any risk to the Greeks.

PERFORMANCE AS AN OPERATOR OF DESTABILIZATION

The experiences of performance were historically marked by a capacity for action and, above all, for shared action (rituals, collective movements and so forth). Even in autobiographical works there has always been, in one way or another, the action of a memory in *the act of re-presenting it for the other*, promoting the destabilization of the body, and of memory itself, through sharing. For this reason, the recognition of political action or performative action (Austin 1979; Butler 1997), which defies the tendency of performance to irretrievably disappear (Phelan 1993), was always fundamental.

All these questions have been exhaustively discussed, but the aspect that is more pertinent to this essay lies in the fact that, before being considered a language in its own right or becoming a field of studies, performance was an *operator of destabilization*,⁴ the most significant political action of which would be to implode paradigms, models, habits and patterns. In that sense, once the experiences of dance, visual arts or theatre are corroded by performance they do not represent a hybridization of languages, but rather modes of thinking and acting imbued with a radical availability to emphasize the meta-stability of each of these artistic systems rendered irremediably fragile by the exposure to that which is not given a priori, but constituted in action instead.

⁴ This definition of performance as an *operator of destabilization* was proposed by myself, for the first time at a lecture at the Encontro do Instituto Hemisférico (Sesc Vila Mariana, São Paulo, 2010). The idea was then developed in a few essays, which appeared in the anthology *Corpo em Cena* (2013) and *Rivista Danza e Ricerca* (2014).

This mode of acting of performance is only corporeally established from the moment when it opens itself fully to alterity. From this perspective, the public aspect would not be limited to the spectators, nor to public spaces, which they occupy, nor to the ideological networks of discursive practices, but rather to its aptitude to turn alterity into a state of creation, simulating an organic operation that ignites the process of cognition and affectation itself.⁵

BETWEEN ACTION AND PRODUCTION: EXAMPLES OF PERFORMANCES IN BRAZIL

Despite the lengthy trail of debates stating the non-static character of the individual, there is a series of political issues that translate into identities and segmentations of all kinds (racial, social, geographic, etc.). In this very sense, the debates between what constitutes itself as action or production were radically exacerbated in recent years. As far as art is specifically concerned, there is no longer the clash between aesthetical fruition and knowledge: what now matters is whether there is commercial value or not. Thus, the tensions between artwork and merchandise seem to emerge in all debates, and performance is no exception.

⁵ In "Alteridad como estado de creación" [Alterity as a state of creation], a recent essay that I wrote for the book *Componer el Plural* (2016), I explain that, in organic terms, what the brain detects as different from itself generates diversity in the sense of establishing new modes of perception and corporeal states, which would constitute points of departure for processes of cognition and affectation.

In Brazil, there has been a proliferation of research, publications and debates on this subject. At the same time, it seems unavoidable to live side by side with the consequences of what some authors have identified as a new economic system, which could be called "artistic capitalism" (Lipovetsky and Serroy 2015) and a generalized fundamentalism of creativity – the most toxic effect of which is to transform a substantial part of creation into entertainment and show (Gielen 2013).

Against this trend, some recent projects have proved quite powerful as they try to restore the performative aptitude of the radical openness to the other and revitalize the *munus* of performance. These examples are not literally mobilized by street demonstrations or digital networks mentioned earlier in this essay. However, they reflect issues that are covered by these phenomena, referring mostly to modes of rethinking communities, to the relationship between performance and the public, to the strategies involving exhibiting autobiographies and constituting narratives based on the radical openness to the other, among other themes.

A good example was the project *1000 Casas* [1000 Homes] proposed by the choreographer Marcelo Evelin and the collective Núcleo do Dirceu in the city of Teresina (capital of Piauí State). The project organized a performative installation resulting from life-experiences that occurred during the years of 2011 and 2012 as Dirceu participants visited five hundred (of the one thousand targeted) homes in their districts.⁶

⁶ Núcleo do Dirceu participants in this project were Allexandre Santos, Caio César, César Costa, Cleyde Silva, Elielson Pacheco, Humilde Alves, Izabelle Frota, Jell Carone, Jacob →

1000 Casas, Núcleo do Dirceu



The proposal emerged from a concern within the Núcleo as they thought about the place of the spectator in a space other than a theatre seat. The procedure was quite simple: the artists started to go into the homes of the Grande Dirceu district (where the collective are based) to generate interest and what they have termed a “co-responsibility of residents in art”. The interventions consisted of “visits” or “break-ins”; arriving without having been invited preserved the surprise effect. Each participant chose a profile of homes to visit and a performance to do according to a list of criteria linked to the features of the chosen house (such as having tiles), or to the characteristics of the people living there (elderly residents), or also to an event (homes where domestic violence had occurred). Regardless of the choice, the artists’ focus was always on the performativity of the encounter and the dialogue with the other, as well as on the creation of environments that were real (meeting face to face) and fictitious (the narrative built from the dialogue with the resident). One of the intentions was to approach the private place with a public act. As the group explained on their website⁷:

In the actions that we developed, private became public and vice-versa, in an inversion that also blurs the notion of artist and spectator and the meaning of what art and everyday life might be. The public sphere is established politically by sharing what is common. And the private sphere [is defined] because the event takes place in the singularity of the individual,

→ Alves, Janaína Lobo, Layane Holanda, Marcelo Evelin, Regina Veloso e Soraya Portela. For two years the project was supported by Petrobras and the Ministry of Culture, with the sponsorship of Rouanet Law and the Federal Government.

⁷ demolitionincorporada.com/1000casas

in his or her particular universe. With predefined themes for the performances in the homes – such as domestic violence –, the artists generate an interest in art in the residents while proposing a joint participation and performing a public act in a private space, which results in a deliberate blurring of the function of the actor and the spectator.

Aside from the installations that presented fragments of narratives and movements created during the visits, the project was turned into an eponymous book (2012), which gathered different documents on these experiences. In this case, the political reenactment of the actions came to the fore because the “final result” was practically inexistent, forming instead a process in the course of the shared action.

Another example of an attempt to revitalize the sense of community was *A Cozinha Performática* [The Performative Kitchen], a proposal by the Núcleo Marco Moraes launched in June 2013. The methodology of this project consisted of artistic partnerships through which research and dynamic collaborative procedures were developed seeing the artist as an articulator of permanent creative processes.⁸

⁸ The project was supported by two editions of the São Paulo Municipal Programme for Dance Promotion (2014 and 2015) and by the Funarte Klauss Viana Dance Prize, which enable the circulation of some works across various Brazilian cities. In 2014, *Cozinha Performática* was awarded the Denilto Gomes Dance Prize in the special category “collaborative platform”.

Marcos Moraes in Solo dance *O Porco e o Cozinheiro* [The Pig and the Cook] / Photograph: Yuri Pinheiro





Solo dance *O Porco e o Cozinheiro* [The Pig and the Cook] / Photograph: Marcella Haddad

Already in its first year of work, called *Ano do Cavalo* [Year of the Horse] and with the Marco Moraes's solo (*Anatomia do Cavalo* [Anatomy of the Horse]) a series of photographic essays, videos, shows, installations, performative dinners and various combinations were produced which artists usually call "combos". At this stage, more than forty participants took on the challenge of living and creating together. In 2015, the *Ano Digestivo* [Digestive Year], a collaborative research and creation platform was created to organize Performative Dinners inspired by Gordon Matta-Clark's work and his early 1970s Soho restaurant *Food*. According to Moraes, the challenge is to understand what the possible dramaturgies emerging from these encounters are. In these contexts, all artistic work is considered political. The challenge is to set in motion new ways of sharing with the public, which does not actually exist in the conventional sense, because the audience also actively participates in the experience. Perhaps the most powerful performative action in this project is precisely this one: to absorb the spectators in order to break away from the dichotomy between artists and audiences, as well as the distance between private and public.

Aside from the solo, the project generated the book *Cozinha Performática* (2014), coordinated by Ana Teixeira, which gathered essays by professors, researchers and artists; the video *Sabroso*, directed by Osmar Zampieri; and the dinners themselves, held in several cities in Brazil. Although explicitly referring only to Gordon Matta-Clark, it would be hard to overlook a resonance with the notion of anthropophagy, so dear to Brazilian culture. When proposing cultural cannibalism, inspired by the

Tupinambá Indians, the poet Oswald de Andrade laid out the Brazilian eclectic appetite for devouring everything, creating outcomes which are not subordinated to any origins, matrixes or roots. By dealing with multiple languages and people with absolutely disparate histories, Moraes somehow created a dialogue with that early 1920s movement, provoking a reenactment of old issues and metaphors from his performative dinners that challenged the notion of ready-made and narcissistic identities while valuing what is done with and from the other.

A last significant example in terms of radical sharing of the work (and its creation processes) is the autobiographic performance of the Pernambucan artist Oriana Duarte, undertaken since 2002. It began when the artist experienced a strong bout of vertigo while mountain climbing in Faxinal do Céu, near Pinhão city, in the State of Paraná. Hypoxia, or the lack of oxygen experienced by alpinists, also known as mountain sickness, inspired the performer to challenge the limits of her body. Moreover, a series of concurring personal events made her decide to impose the extreme strains, typical of radical sports, on her own body. The objective was to prove to herself that she could go on.

In 2003, the project *EVA* (Experimento em Voos Artísticos [Experiments in Artistic Flights]) put three activities to the test: bungee jumping, rappel and rock-climbing. The transformation of the practice of these sports into performances is apparent in the minimal gestures of territorial demarcation, such as: orchid seeds thrown during the jump, chalk inscriptions on rock surfaces during ascent and descent, and so forth. Her reading of Clarice Lispector's oeuvre also helped the per-

former name the exhibition of the first stage of her research: “Querere Viver” [Wanting to Live].

In 2004, during a jump, Oriana got stuck hanging by her feet and her eyes popped out of their sockets. Twenty-eight days later, reasonably recovered, the performer carried on with the rappel and rock climbing installations of the project. This generated the video *Os Riscos de EVA* [The Risks of Eva], which dealt with physical strength, fatigue, frailty, courage, fear and the formation of the states and sensations of the body from the alterity vis-à-vis natural environments, stones, rocks, woods and, in the end, a major piece of engineering – an iron bridge suspended between cliffs over a river. The project also resulted in an installation composed of a large-scale fan blowing wind into the environment and a small sofa for the public to enjoy a series of artist books, the “Cadernos de EVA” [EVA Notebooks]. It was made up of suspended folders containing drawings, chronograms, medical exams, physical evaluation tables and part of the bibliography researched on sports, cosmetic alterations, plastic surgeries, nutritional medicine, brain functioning, etc. Next to the sofa, an old pharmacy cabinet display contained the clothes used in the performances, protection gloves, chalk, contusion medicine, food supplements, vitamins, etc. On the walls, two photographs, the image of the artist’s biceps tattooed with the inscriptions of the performances and the image of a swollen face with a red-coloured haemorrhaging eye.

The year 2005 saw the production of several works and, in July 2006, the *Plus Ultra* stage was created, the point of departure of which was the lightness and fluctuation of the body.

This time, the project developed as paddling sessions on several Brazilian rivers. The idea was to create imbrications of different landscapes as the paddling constantly flowed from river to river, so as to imagerically connect physically distant territories, gliding across mutating boundaries and landscapes. The river was never the same, nor was the boat, nor was the woman. The body increasingly transformed into a body-boat-river. What is most interesting is that during the process the body became not just the body but the autobiographical story of overcoming hardship through challenging limitations. Strengthening resulted from the sharing with the different communities through which Oriana passed and with which she grew. Gender issues emerged, because the paddling community is mostly masculine; there were the social hardships of the small settlements; and, finally, the communication challenge, which led to the questioning of how to tell these stories in the process, these narratives of the body, not always verbalized, but necessarily collective and geared towards ensuring survival during and after these adventures.⁹

⁹ *Plus Ultra* turned into a doctoral thesis, defended in 2012, within the scope of the Communication and Semiotics Programme of the Catholic University of São Paulo. The objective was to reflect on the aesthetics of existence and the writing about oneself proposed by Michel Foucault.



Plus Ultra frame, Oriana Duarte, Rio de Janeiro

MICROACTIVISM OF AFFECTIONS

For all these experiences to be recognized as modes of thinking, researching and knowing, it is not enough to question processes of creation, but rather to reinforce sharing procedures. As we have seen with Aristotle, experience meant going through action in action. We could then suggest that this *going through action in action* would necessarily imply a movement that dislocates itself from what is of the self, proposing an open, metastable, performative and decentred political action. In other words: for aesthetical experience to be constituted it is important to create networks of creation. Otherwise we would have to admit that creation is just an action confined to a creative subject or genius, which would compromise its most relevant feature, i.e., aesthetics as an action for life.

We are all undoubtedly immersed in capitalism, including artists. There is no instance constituting itself as an “outside”. Relationships of power manifest in the culture space in which we act (university, academy, galleries, museums, cultural centres and institutes) and in the symbolic systems that tacitly affect us, even when we escape the institutions and public power.

Giorgio Agamben often mentions that the problem of the fate of art in our time began being outlined as soon as we considered it as a productive activity, belonging to the “making” of human beings in their context. Every making of a human – an artist, politician or worker – would from this perspective be a *práxis*. And, as we have explained earlier, *práxis* is the manifestation of a will that produces a concrete effect. Acknowledging

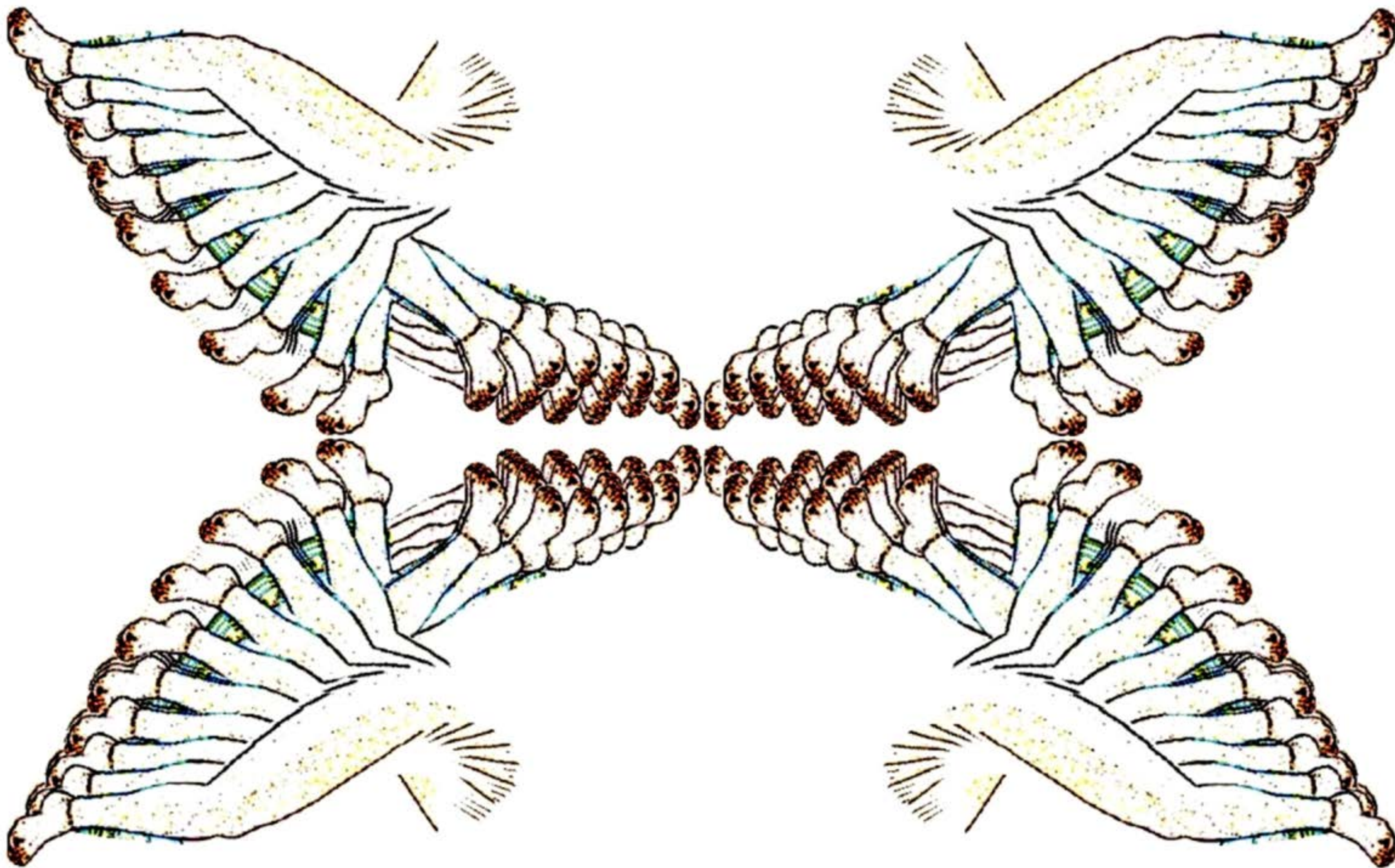
that man needs a productive status changed everything, and brought about a great impasse: how to strengthen the critical power of performance when creation and production share so many market interests and competition makes up their common ground.

Brian Massumi (2015a) suggests that a possible way out would be to recognize a plane of immanence in a capitalist economy linked to modes of perception and actions that are not always conscious and emerge from trans-individuality. Instead of highlighting the nefarious side of capitalism, Massumi's wager is on the power of affections while demystifying exacerbated narcissism and pointing towards a collective instance that could open up new pathways. At stake is not any type of transcendence, but rather a collective action, which does not differentiate between *poiésis* and *práxis*, product and process, action and production, but establishes an undeniable instance of continuity between individual and group. For Massumi (2015b), a certain mode of life that will carry on nurturing possible worlds emerges precisely from the collective and the common.

The role of performance in these networks is fundamental. Especially when it becomes "workless" or "worklessness", a tentative translation of "désouvement", which occurs when a certain inoperativity is internalized preventing any a priori functionality, but never robbing the areas of risk of their power. From this perspective, performance has nothing to do with the inoffensive zone of entertainment. Massumi himself explains that it belongs to neoliberalism, a certain type of movement, which dies because of its own success. Therefore, micro-political suc-

cess is often a macro-political failure, which necessarily calls for a reinvention of collectives. While immunitary processes hinder alliances there is, on the other hand, an aesthetical dimension of life that persists, producing a network of possibilities.

Perhaps we could even think the same of performance, when it relies on a "macro" artistic production coherent with market expectations and everything that is already familiar and prone to good receptivity. However, at the same time there is micro-production, sensitive to destabilizations and to everything that is seen as failure – neither one nor the other, but a negation of this dichotomy itself. The processes of microproduction feed off alterity in the sense of strengthening the ability to destabilize this dichotomy and set in motion the systemic crisis that constitutes them. Neither one nor the other, but rather a trans-individuality operating through microactivisms. The outcome of such cases is a set of processes, subjective networks and the setting in motion of affects. That is what the ontological reenactment of performance as a political action consists of: a counter-device of power that turns creation into the key to survival.



Corpoboca, drawings by Oriana Duarte, *Plus Ultra*

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The ground of the cities – A performanc catalysis

Andrea Maciel

The first time I fell down to the ground of a big city I wanted to investigate first-hand the disconcerting vulnerability of the bodies that surrender to gravity against the daily and urgent march that characterises the productive life of a city. I fell down on Avenida Copacabana and someone leaned over me:

“You alright?”

“Yes, just trying the city from another angle.”

To my pleasant surprise the undecipherable condition of my fallen body was also able to shift both the gravitational centre of the gaze of passers-by and set in motion narratives and meaning creation about the vulnerability of the fallen person. The countless times I fell on the grounds of different Brazilian cities I would enter in my research journals how a falling body is a catalyst of aspects intrinsic to local culture.

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There are also countless stories to tell: plenty of sexual harassment; religious reactions, which linked the fallen body to drug use, deep depression, anxiety, a suicide attempt; plenty of associations with some sort of trick to make money and there were also aggressors, leering at the body that challenges the law of verticality, with accusations of laziness, procrastination, prostitution or ill-intentioned loitering.

In our daily route across the city, we see beggars, mad people, men, women and children thrown on the ground under the stunned, or indifferent gaze of other city dwellers. It was precisely the indifference to these excluded bodies that spurred me to create this performance. The act is simple: surrender body weight to the ground and remain open to the events that follow. Under the contingencies of the fall itself, the body opens up ways for new meanings to touch the routine of going by unaffected, and it also

becomes the catalyst for imaginary formations by the various urban cultures on the issue of social exclusion and vulnerability.

I started by falling on the ground alone, but gradually sought other peers. How many times have other bodies fallen with me in fear or fearlessly? Performance companions, students, partners in that disconcerting vulnerability of surrendering to the pavements and to the movement of passers-by that pierces through us in every possible way. The unexpected does happen: “I should be at work by now. But I am not because you won’t get up. Get up woman. That’s ungodly. We don’t have the right to question the destiny of man.” “Do we?!”

Sharing the fall is a circle of intensities, which multiplies the angles for looking at city scenes while generating complicity around a state of corporeal listening. I have always understood that state of listening as the essential condition to set off the catalysing processes around us.

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O Chão das Cidades taught me that to be on the streets is like leaping into the void. For Yves Klein, “fires burn in the heart of the void as well as in the heart of man” (cited in Safatle 2015, 43). It is not a matter of calculating the fall, but letting oneself be taken by the combustion in the process and learning its transforming powers. The fall taught me the size, height and intensity of an action capable of transforming the spark of surrender into space-catalysing combustions. Performance is a catalyst when it does not focus on the act itself, but instead on that which the action sets in motion, because: “catalysts act by setting off a new relational path, or accelerating reactions with minimal input energy” (Levenspiel, 1974, 33).

In the wake of many experiments, qualities of the senses that stimulate the catalysing effect came to the fore. We always mixed with people in areas of great circulation. We fell one by one, at different times and away from each other to avoid a scene similar to a flash mob or street theatre. We never explained the reason for falling; we avoided any type of plastic or choreographic representation, and let ourselves remain empty and flexible for the manifestation of the other. Remaining empty for the other to come in is to cultivate the immanence and the courage of vagabonds who learn the path at every new step.

We are pierced through by what does not belong to us and creates a heteronomy between the corporeal impulses and the surface of the public space. Urban crises are revealed, as when we mixed with the homeless of Piedade-Barris square, a place of urban violence in Salvador da Bahia, and were attacked by the same private security staff that daily beat up and mistreat those street-dwellers.

On that day, by mere chance, the homeless were with us behind the cameras, observing with detachment their own activity, which we now had embodied. My body had fallen at the foot of some stairs leading up to a street. Had it been the body of a street-dweller, it would have certainly become invisible to passers-by, but because it was the body of a white middle-class woman, daily invisibility became visible at many levels. The security staff – who behaved as if they owned the area – felt targeted by our critical action and made it clear that if it had not been for the clothes and vocabulary they would have expelled us like they do street-dwellers. Meanwhile, at the top of the stairs, the street-dwellers witnessed their daily crisis unfold amplified by the performance.

Revealing crises install themselves between a body in an extreme situation and public space. The polyphony of surrounding voices

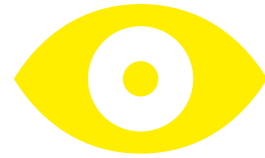
amplifies historical wounds and repressed conflicts. The performer's catalysing body screams, expiates, moulds, reveals and absorbs the powers of marginal dwellers. Public space catalysing performance has always confronted me with the question: "What moves me?" I move because I want to stand in *between* – the unavoidable space of performance –, but above all to generate perceptions and affections in a world that is too fast to integrate our active perception and participation.

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**PERFORMANCE,
ACTIVISM AND
PUBLIC SPHERE:
ARCHIVE, REPERTOIRE
AND REPERFORMANCE
IN THE NEW NEW
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Paulo Raposo



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND MEDIA IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY AND INDETERMINACY

In 2001, *Time Magazine* chose the figure of the Protester for person of the year, which was the cover story and the usual global media circulation.¹ Ted Soqui's photograph, creatively recreated by renowned street artist Shapard Fairey (the same author of Barack Obama's slogan-cartoon "Hope"), was of a woman, Sarah Mason, 25, who belonged to the Occupy LA, but some details were reworked and the anonymously presented face aimed at attaining a collective dimension. In fact, Sarah was wearing a scarf around her face printed with the number "99%", a symbol that emerged during the Occupy movement in the US. The photograph was taken on the same day Sarah was detained while participating in a human cordon opposite Bank of America, Los Angeles, in protest against the financial

¹ Cf. *Time Magazine*, "2011 Person of the Year: The Protester", content.time.com/time/person-of-the-year/2011/

system. Just minutes before, she soaked her scarf in vinegar to avoid the effects of tear gas fired by the police. These facts were avoided in Kurt Andersen's article that accompanied the photograph. Nevertheless, in that same issue *Time* published several photographs (by photo-reporter Peter Hapak) of different activists from across the world. Even despite the aesthetical stylizing of the protest/protester it is possible to find particular elements: a strong presence of women and blacks, which, although intergenerational, included mostly young people, artists, the presence of digital technologies alongside loudspeakers, beaten up bodies and the remains of bullets/tear gas canisters and faces covered in improvised masks.

The media protagonism of the protester, even if sanitized or stylized and absorbed by mainstream media logics in their search for anonymous protagonists or romantic heroes, does not hinder the dynamics of multiplication of "new spaces" of democratization and indignation that spread across the globe from 2009 onwards. This accompanied the cycle of global capitalism's financial earthquakes and accentuated the so-called crisis of democracy or, to be more precise, of democratic representation.

To take the street became a performative movement with a new intensity, on a plane that was refined and intersected, and mediated at the global, national and local scales. Which is to say, *to take the street* became a performative movement because, to a large extent, political forms of protest and resistance grew from performative gestures and actions that took on a very clear performatic tendency, i.e., occupation of public space or buildings, camps, creation of autonomous zones, using the bodies

as protagonists both of violence and peaceful resistance, or for the presentation of political subjects, etc. On the other hand, *to take the street* consolidated as an intensely mediated movement, resorting to the agitprop media and technologies of communication in the digital era. John Downing (2001) had already explained the characteristics of radical media in processes of social transformation and change that expanded the potential for social movements to share and exchange information beyond the space allotted to them in conventional media:

(...) there are also radical formats that are not technologically driven and expensive, such as graffiti, buttons, t-shirts, song, street theater, performance art (...).

(Downing 2001, 51)

Clearly, Downing referred to a whole set of tactics and strategies that emerged in late twentieth century political protest, especially driven by the so-called anti- or alt- globalization movements. In that sense, the Seattle (1990) and Genoa (2002) protests were the apex of that process of combination of “analogic” forms (described above by Downing), so to speak, with digital modalities (creation of independent platforms such as Indymedia, diffusion via fax, telephone, etc.). Julia Ruiz Di Giovanni (2015) underlines this trend of continuity outlined above:

In the years of transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, in the context of the wave of demonstrations of the so-called anti-globalization movement – which were always surrounded by a debate on their efficiency and legitimacy – a new vitality in street protests emerged as an

unquestionable element of the current social and political experience (2015, 14).

For Innerarity (2010), uncertainty is an indicator of the quality of democratic spaces, which curiously has been emptied out of political debate dynamics, confined to parliaments, “closed rooms” or media debates (always peopled with specialists and commentators). And, thus, the new social movements sought, among other dynamics of mobilization, horizontal public meetings that become political performances in themselves and where the distinct narratives under discussion become themselves actions, instead of mere speeches, and are subject to unpredictability and improvisation. The street has, therefore, acquired new meanings, and its landscape and its territory take on another significance. It is now inhabited by those who, apparently, wish to become emancipated spectators – to use Jacques Rancière’s metaphor (2010) – of the political theatre. This performative declaration, under the guise of an assembly or even an encampment, claims the right to reinhabit public space as space for the construction of the public sphere and of the political debate, as well as the production of democracy. And it is more than a symbolic act – it aims at producing reality! Like John Austin’s or John Searle’s performative utterances and speech acts, which are more than enunciations and actually *are* and *do* something, this new landscape of the square also *is* and *does* something.

Citizenship protests, which are considered inorganic, are also clearly marked by indeterminacy, exploring a performative dimension that allows us to speak of a sort of performance activ-

ism, as Richard Schechner² recently suggested, classifying it as a new third world of people that relate at a fundamentally performative, rather than ideological, level. Which is to say, while nineteenth and twentieth century activism had a fundamentally ideological basis, focusing mostly on political rights and economic inequalities, contemporary activism seems to add this radically relational dimension – i.e., a collaborative social process of discovery and creation of new ideas, new roles, new relationships and new activities. A field, therefore, for the emerging of a *milieu de mémoire* (Pierre Nora) or a *repertoire* of incorporated performative practices, as proposed by Diana Taylor (2003), and built by the *indeterminacy* of a performative *here and now*, as outlined by Performance Studies theoreticians.

But precisely for Schechner, this performance activism would be guided by some principles, those, in fact, which are at the basis of his definition of performance. In a 1995 text, outlining the performative dimension of street protests, Schechner considered that “(...) to allow people to assemble in the streets is always to flirt with the possibility of improvisation – that the unexpected might happen” (1995, 47).

Moreover, in the era of digital capitalism we witness the emergence of a digital activism (cf. Joyce 2010) marking the correspondence between the notion of *uncertainty* (generated around the economic crisis narrative) and the notion of (technological) *indeterminacy* in the protests of the new new social move-

² Proposed at a seminar during the 2012 *Performing the World Conference* (cf. [performingtheworld.org/past-conferences/\(2012-2\)](http://performingtheworld.org/past-conferences/(2012-2))).

ments. If we choose visual images and representations of that correspondence mediated by digital technologies, it is likely that we may also need to redefine the agency of that digital activism, in the sense of including a new framework in which causality and indeterminacy, intention and event are not the two sides of the same coin, but rather an in-between interface (cf. Abreu 2013). One of the relevant dimensions was its constitution through Internet resources and applications, namely the use of digital agitprop through postings and images spread through social networks, live streaming of assemblies, meetings, occupations or other forms of protest. Precarious and blurred archives of images were produced very rapidly and for consumption at the global scale. Image-making processes with alternative media were constantly uploaded onto commercial platforms and social networks, but also onto independent platforms. This enabled the assemblies in the squares of Madrid, Lisbon or Athens (Syntagma) to be seen, in real time or not, in São Paulo and Wall Street, and for them to become the rhizomes of global protest. However, we should not reduce this process to a struggle for meaning and sense, but should also try to perceive that new temporality – made of uncertainty and indeterminacy – in terms of technological and media appropriations. To my mind, that new temporality unfolded with the “September 11” effect, when the narratives of threat and terror justified the plate armouring of the future in terms of people’s mobility and citizenship rights (along with the austerity measures to overcome the “crisis”). In fact, based on a projection of a threatening future marked by terror, the uncertainty and indeterminacy of protests in squares, which were repeatedly described as having been created in social networks, also

seemed to materialize a performatic matrix of the revolution; a matrix of the *here and now* that does not shed any light on the roads that led to those squares. Therefore, indeterminacy and uncertainty seem to have contributed to the much-vaunted end of History.³

DIGITAL ACTIVISM: THE *HERE AND NOW* OF A NEW TEMPORALITY

One of the most recurring ideas in media studies of social movements is linked to a boom in the use of information and communication technologies, which supposedly modified the dialogue and relationships between people on a global scale.⁴ In fact, there has been a revolution in media formats and the technologies that lead them, and that has changed our lives. In recent years, global movements have produced new public spheres in which the distinction between “real” and “virtual” seem to vanish. And this is a common utterance to define the relationship between media and social movements in contemporaneity. But in fact, this truism on media revolutions is somehow exhausted because we could go back at least forty years to recognize this trend and reflect (in a critical or optimistic way)

³ A concept developed by American philosopher and economist Francis Fukuyama. It first appeared in a 1989 article that was followed by a 1992 book titled *The End of History and the Last Man*. Looking into mostly Hegelian readings of history, Fukuyama claimed that capitalism and representative democracy were the crowning of humankind’s history in the face of crumbling fascisms and socialisms.

⁴ Together with John Dawsey, I have organized a dossier on digital activism (cf. Raposo and Dawsey, 2015).

on the democratization of technological usage. Communication processes in social movements obviously articulate with a technological framework. Since the early 1980s, thanks to the telefax, the global explosion of electronic mail and the internautic forums of the 1990s, the blogosphere and the creation of Indymedia in the late 1990s, the advent of Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005) and Twitter (2006), all these technical upgrades, together with the expansion of the DIY spirit, had a fundamental impact on our way of relating and communicating contemporaneously and, therefore, on the way in which social movements communicate with, mobilize and nurture political resistance communities.

Dan Schiller (2005) states that the Internet, and the large telecommunications systems on which it is based, is a consequence of an increasing transnational change in economic activity. Capitalism has always been an international system, but, since its globalization in the 1990s, its trends have created a new model for economic and financial flows. Cyberspace has unmistakably been included in those flows, in that new supra-national market, which in fact has been colonized by digital capitalism. Also for that reason, I am quite sceptical as to the cybernetic potential of the Internet as an open and democratic hi-tech paradise for the sharing of information.⁵

Although there has been a growing debate on web activism (or even on hacktivism), as well as on the efficiency of new me-

⁵ On this and other matters, cf. the critical review of the arguments under discussion in McChesney (2013).

dia usage by contemporary social movements, a core idea remains: radical media (Downing 2001), such as Indymedia and other activist hubs seem to play an important role in the emergence of a certain type of counterculture. However, another question prevails: will so-called social networks provide spaces for critical perspectives and for radical or countercultural narratives? What is the role of mainstream media in social movements and how fluid is the interrelation between alternative and mainstream media? (cf. Askanius and Gustafsson 2010).

One of the most famous examples used in this debate is the original adoption of the Internet in the 1990s by indigenous Zapatista movement EZLN in Chiapas, which Castells (1999) or Cleaver (1995; 1999) saw as a “prototype” for other movements. However, although the Internet allowed the new social movements to appropriate the means to produce new expressions of protest, they also remained faithful to traditional tactics that had proved efficient in the past and could be adapted to this new virtual environment (Meikle 2002). Strikes, demonstrations, occupation of the public space or of institutions, mob-protest, pamphlets, posters, radical radio and TV channels, assemblies or rallies are tactical means that prove vital in the political performances of contemporary insurgency. This is true of the recent Brazilian case, with school occupations by high-school students, or the occupation of Ministry of Culture delegations by artists and arts and culture collectives. These bring together mechanisms that were once described as highly dangerous (nineteenth century proletarian and anarchist occupation of factories) and the digital tactics that spread the news of these occupations in real time preventing, hindering or delaying the violent suppression of protests.

Another vector of analysis concerns the computational basis nature of communication between these new social movements. The messages and images of so-called cyberprotest are hyperdynamic, appearing and disappearing without warning, distributed across multiple related or unrelated sites, social network groups, virtual forums or communities. The way that contemporary activism resorts to digital technologies, practices hacktivism, creates networks or physically manifests emerging political ideas could be considered a *blurred genre*, to use the term in the sense of anthropologist Clifford Geertz.⁶

Moreover, contemporary social movements, coexisting in this temporality of uncertainty and indeterminacy, can change shape, name, strategy or appearance, or even vanish without trace. Therefore, cyberprotest is a fuzzy category, a phenomenon that is fluid to the observer and often without clear boundaries (cf. Van De Donk et al. 2004). Juris (2005) examines how these activists use a range of communication resources (email lists, webpages, open editing software) to organize and coordinate actions and share information, reflecting a general growth of a paradigm or model for digital collaboration and sharing:

Indymedia has provided an online forum for posting audio, video, and text files, while activists have also created temporary media hubs to generate alternative information, experiment with new technologies, and exchange ideas and resources. Influenced by anarchism and peer-to-peer net-

⁶ Geertz proposed an anthropology in which the divide between the literary and non-literary, fictional and realist, artistic and scientific genres would increasingly blur.

working logics, anti-corporate globalization activists have not only incorporated digital technologies as concrete tools, they have also used them to express alternative political imaginaries based on an emerging network ideal.

(Juris 2005, 189)

Thus, open publishing, free software sharing and live streaming have become three relevant dimensions of media performance in contemporary social movements. This means that the possibility for shared writing and collaborative commentary on activist digital platforms, the development of software outside the large corporations or the sharing and uploading of information without a password or login are now strong trumps for so-called independent movements. And, last but not least, the spamming of live streaming-produced images in independent or mainstream platforms has become a crucial arena in the struggle for information and “truth”, a true political hashtag or a detonator for constant political reenactments, as we shall see below.

POLITICAL HASHTAG AND REPERFORMANCE IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL PROTEST

>>> Schneider p.38
>>> Greiner p.381
Edgar Morin (1999) would say that if the twentieth century ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the twenty-first century had started in Seattle. Seattle 1999, along with the Prague protests in 2000 and Genoa in 2001, could somehow be seen as the stages and primordial scenes of alternative glo-

balization and of a new worldwide political-economic scenario, or rather, of a collective awakening to its socially fracturing, fragmenting and disrupting effects.

Somehow, the recent revolts across the world, linked to the effects of the financial crisis, particularly after 2009, could be seen as replica of those primordial, turn of the millennium scenes, countering the reading that mainstream media tried to impart of a spontaneous gathering of protesting crowds. This time, however, the technological elements in a digital world have repositioned this reading. Curiously, these revolts have not only been televised in alternative channels and in mainstream channels, but they were also published across the Internet, especially on Facebook and Twitter. The question that seems to take hold of our minds is ironic and paradoxical, and it appeared on one of the posters of Wall Street protesters during the occupation of Zuccotti Square: “The revolution will not be televised, but will it be downloaded?”

As I have mentioned previously, the new new social movements stand out for their recurring use of digital information and communication technologies. The Indymedia digital platform emerged with the 1999 Seattle protests; but the use of Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, not to mention live stream broadcasting and free communication platforms, turned the protests and messages of contemporary activism into a combination of street protests, civil disobedience actions and intense digital activism. Thus, documentation and archive are not separate levels of the performative repertoires of contemporary activism, to borrow Taylor’s (2003) concepts; in fact,

they never were, but now they are and with an unprecedented scale and intensity. For Joyce (2010) the power of the digital code manifests when someone posts a piece of content and uploads it, and a copy (with variations) becomes immediately available and transmissible to the world. Live streaming is one of the branches of this empowerment of the digital code.

And this directs us towards the final question: are we talking about live performance or its mediatization? Or both? What temporality opens up in this digital *here and now*?

At the turn of the millennium, a concept/practice has emerged in the field of performance art: the notion of reperformance or reenactment. Reperformance is the reenactment of a performance that nevertheless requires new enactment conditions (audience, context) for the reinvention of the “original performance”. Reperformance finds itself contaminated by an interpretative or re-interpretative intention. Many performers now resort to it as a significant part of their creative processes. For years, Alan Kaprow, the creator of late 1950s happenings, thought that to re-enact his seminal performances would definitely contaminate their indeterminacy. However, weeks before his death, he authorized Munich’s Haus der Kunst to remake his happenings, namely, *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959), directed by André Lepecki.

Marina Abramović, Yoko Ono and other artists who emerged already in the 1970s have invested in reperformance as a way of leaving a trace of performance events for a wider audience. Abramović claims she is not satisfied with traditional doc-

umentation methods (film or photography), which, according to her, can never recreate what it is to watch/participate in a performance and, therefore, prefers the experiential dimension, the *liveness* (on which Phelan vehemently insisted). But to reperform is not to repeat, reproduce or simulate; reenactment is an invitation to transformation through memory and history, and it generates unique results and resonances. For instance, Yoko Ono’s performance *Cut Piece* was reformed by the artist countless times, each time taking on new meanings and resonances for the artist and its participants. In *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005), Abramović sought to reperform five key artist pieces that she had never watched but which had influenced her own work. She recreated one of her performances and introduced an original performance, claiming that in doing so she was opening possibilities for reinterpretation in the present.

Auslander (2006) clarifies that performative documenting, especially in the field of performance art, has always existed. He suggested two models: documental and theatrical. In the former, performers use means of recording that basically archive the event; in the latter, the recording itself becomes performance. Auslander resorts to two examples, Chris Burden’s performance *Shoot* (1971), for which he invited a friend to shoot him in a Californian art gallery before a small audience, filming and recording the moment (the documentation being all that was left of the performance); and Yves Klein’s *Leap into the Void* (1960), in which the artist leapt from a roof over a Parisian street and was photographed; the photograph itself (although it was a photomontage) becoming the performative object.

It is also in this sense that the notions of documentation (or archive) and performance enactment (or repertoire) of contemporary political protests interlink. They are categorized according to a conceptualization developed by Diana Taylor (2003). She considers the archive as the collection of material traces of objectified culture, such as texts and monuments, while repertoire consists of the performative enactments of embodied memories.

The concept of live streaming is based on the generic real-time broadcasting of any event, but its consumption and viewing may or may not be simultaneous with their enactment. However, the most interesting aspect is that, broadly speaking, with the massive live streaming circulation of pieces or images of political actions, these become viral and replicate in different contexts. They are reinterpreted and, in that sense, re-performed. *Live streamer* has become a profession within the activist community, in the same way that as alternative platforms, peer-to-peer digital environments or free-software multiply and are shared; laptops and mobile phones are a constant visual presence in protests. This urges us to think of cyberactivism and hacktivism as a crucial dimension of contemporary political struggle.

For these new new social movements, digital revolution is about global sharing and calls for reenactment as a key concept of a new form of agitprop. Like the occupation or taking over of streets and squares, the hacktivist notion of open access is not so much of the order of “re-conquest” – a term used by Guattari –, but is instead irreducibly linked to notions of re-

appropriation and caring, re-learning and resisting, which all fall under the expression “to reclaim”. Not to say it is “ours”, not to think of ourselves as victims of lost conquests or of a Machiavellian system, but to enable us to once again inhabit the wastelands of human experience generated by contemporary capitalism. This is what intellectuals such as Slavoj Žižek, Antonio Negri, Zygmunt Bauman, Manuel Castells, Eduardo Galiano, Saskia Sassen and Boaventura de Sousa Santos have in mind when describing the Arab Spring, the *Indignados* Movements of citizens in the Iberian Peninsula or the outbreak of the so-called Occupy movement, as places for experimentation and emancipation.

To end this text, I would like to mention just a few examples of the reformativity effect manifest in the contemporary dynamics of protest, which results in a redefinition of the performative *here and now*. In Portugal, the “Grandoladas” (an allusion to the song associated with the 1974 Carnation Revolution) chanted across the country in protest against members of the government or controversial figures, in the period of severest government imposed austerity (2011-2014), exemplify this phenomenon; generated after the protest in the galleries of the Parliament by members of the collective *Que se lixe a Troika* [Fuck the Troika] during a speech by the then Prime-minister Pedro Passos Coelho, it was replicated in several events across the country whenever members of the government or other controversial public figures spoke or officiated in ribbon-cutting ceremonies. This model is a derivation of the Argentinian *escrache* during the military regime, or of the more recent actions by the activists of 15M in Spain. The encampments of

Indignados in Madrid and Barcelona were replicated in other Spanish cities and inspired events in other cities across Europe and the Americas, while Occupy Wall Street generated a wave in hundreds of US cities. Another example is the solidary protests against police violence and repression that echo in other cities and countries. The arrest of the Russian activists of punk band Pussy Riot caused a multiplication of actions around the world whose key element was their coloured balaclava.

Somehow, this effect is similar to an earthquake, except that the aftershock may in some cases be stronger than the initial tremor. It is an effect that touches on the strategies and tactics of contemporary activism, especially in the case of these new social movements, and which I have been defining as the hashtag effect.

Hashtag is the mathematical symbol (cardinal) used in Twitter in combination with a key word to designate a given subject and the postings that refer to it. The same hashtag connects several authors and allows for the reading, anywhere in the world, of the list of postings linked to it. For instance: #OWS or #queselixeatroika, #15M or #yosoy132 are facilitators of communication. Political digital activism has increased the use of narrative performative strategies to facilitate conversation in what could be deemed a political hashtag operating according to the logics of reperformance/reenactment. But to reperform is not to repeat, reproduce or simulate; reperformance is an invitation to transformation through memory and history, and it generates unique results and resonances. Therefore, if we are dealing, as Schechner claimed, with a performance activ-

ism whose main dimension is relational, we should also include in that process the dimension that represents the digital flow. And, within this flow, performative imponderability and its reperformative fluctuation are made of contaminations and reinterpretations. For contemporary activism, archive, repertoire, performance and reperformance are key words to understand it, as much as indeterminacy and uncertainty seem to be the outlines of its temporality.

Somehow, those key words clarify what Martin (2015) refers to as the possibility of existence of a contemporary political theatre qua public sphere of social experiments, despite the fact that this author is particularly concerned with documental theatre and verbatim.

This was the itinerary of compromise between art and politics that we have laid out here, somehow seeking not to compromise art, or politics, and acknowledging what both can generate in common and what are the flows of concatenation that constitute them.

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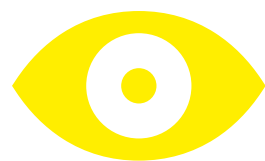
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