

Publish to share - Publish to gather

Text published in the framework of [Fernanda Branco's PhD thesis at KHiO](#).

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The meeting

I met Fernanda exactly one year ago. In a short time we understood that our paths were crossed. Not only because we are neighbours in the Global South, but also because we are both crossed by displacement. We travelled from south to north. We moved our bodies, followed our desires and found new paths.

To migrate is to explore in a radical way the change of point of view that Merleau-Ponty spoke of in "Phenomenology of perception". According to the author, space does not exist in itself, but in relation to the subject and the phenomenal field of consciousness. The body is an attitude in view of a present or possible task and space is the medium for this possibility.

When migrating, the body, as the centre of our existence, learns to look with eyes on its back. Everything known becomes memory and the new invades every experience. We recognise a smell that reminds us of spring, but we look at the calendar and the month tells us that in our hemisphere it is autumn. We are told that summer is near and we think backwards. The body recomposes, reconstructs, reformulates all the time. The point of view is nourished, amplified and rarefied. We try to identify ourselves, but it is difficult. We are from there and we are also from here. There is a kind of third dimension of time and space that opens up with migration.

How to put words to this experience?

How to share it and make it collective?

From different paths, for both of us, writing, reading and books allow us to name, to play with language, to open up meanings and to do something with that strangeness that movement provokes.

The books

To read is to move. It is to move your eyes, to move your hands, to pay attention to your body posture in order to be comfortable and to sustain this practice for as long as possible. Reading is also thinking, chaining, imagining, relating.

To read is always to place the body.

The act of writing shares the same idea, moving to unfold an idea, pressing on a pen or on the keys of a keyboard, moving the fingers, the hands and arranging the body.

The body is always a measure.

The images, however, are fixed. Once captured, they remain static, still at a precise moment. It will be the task of those who look at those images to move over them in order to make sense of them.

Books contain the possibility of all these movements. It brings them together. It puts them in relation and gives them a very concrete spatiality. I like to think of books as devices. As entities that have a life of their own. That as well as containing histories, theories, ideas, reflections, they propose systems.

What is a book? asks Ulises Carrión at the beginning of his text “The New Art of Making Books”.

A book is a sequence of spaces.

Each of these spaces is perceived in a different moment - a book is also a sequence of moments.

A book is not a box of words, nor a bag of words, nor a carrier of words.

(...)

A book is a sequence of space-time

(...)

I believe that a book is the possibility of an encounter.

The practice

Fernanda sustains a performative practice that defies the logics of time and space. She filters with the body and registers with movement. Her writing and publications as a support, keep some of these actions, not to close them but to, eventually, open them, to unfold them.

One of Fernanda's lines of work is writing. Her own and that of all those with whom she decides to collaborate. It is not only a performative act in her practice, but also a gesture of sewing. It is articulating with words, it is bringing distances closer, it is communicating and sustaining links. Migration demands a dialogue with our homeland, a continuation of thinking from there, Fernanda proposes a kind of epistolary communication. Colleagues, artists, think with her, from her work and for her work through writing. Many hands, from many different latitudes, come together in a series of publications that give body to her artistic research.

She puts her body and gives body to the publications. She puts them in space, unfolds them and turns them into independent entities, into creatures that can be approached from multiple angles, that can be read in different directions, that can be chosen in order, that can be manipulated. Fernanda's work materialises ideas and reflections in these editorial objects-devices, in an attempt to align content with form. For Fernanda, publishing is one more tool in her artistic research process.

An investigation that is sustained from many perspectives, that is made up of actions, reflections, the body in movement and processes.

If a book is a sequence of space-time and at the same time a possibility of encounter, Fernanda manages to articulate these dimensions in a complex editorial device. A system that in form and content displays the traces of her artistic practice.

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