

COLLECTION
OF -
PEOPLE

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by

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Raquel
-André

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ANTÓNIO PEDRO LOPES

BERNARDO DE ALMEIDA

GABRIELA CUNHA

CATARINA SARAIVA

MARINA PREGUIÇA

ODETE

TÂNIA RAMOS

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Collection of People
by Raquel André

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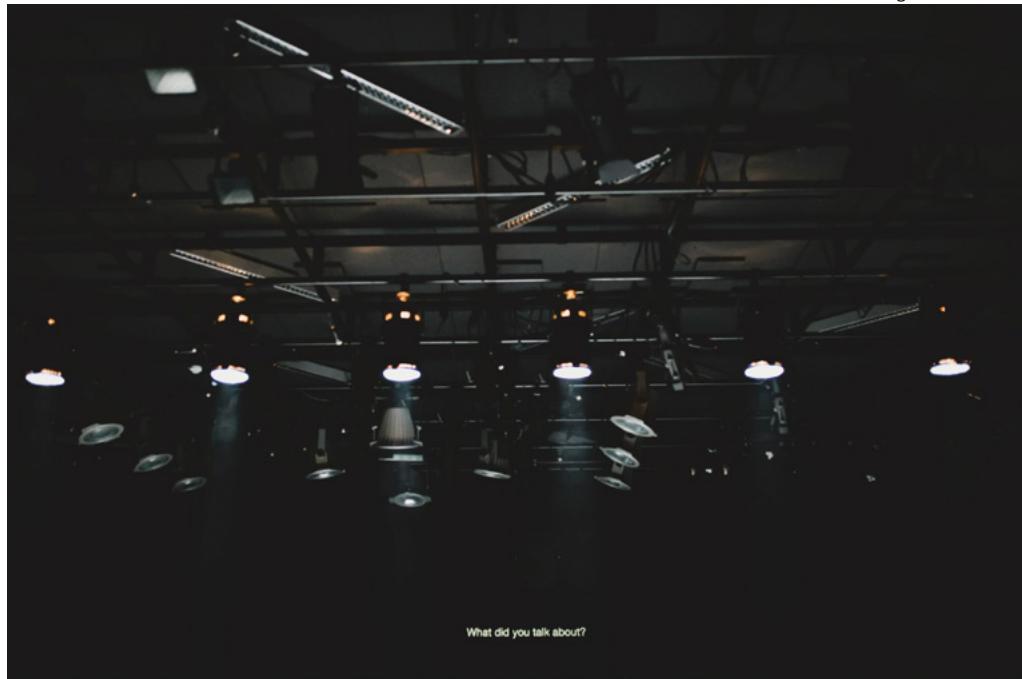
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[IN BETWEEN]

RAQUEL ANDRÉ

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A little while ago, I met one of the first people I collected. It was in Uruguay, eight years after our first meeting. Suddenly, he appeared in front of me and the vertigo of the encounter happened, again and with the same person. I had trouble remembering his name, but when I heard it all came to mind. He hadn't forgotten my name. I told him, now, in 2022, that those encounters changed my life, who I am, how I see the world and how I want to live in it. I told him that the project is called 'Collection of People' and that it has four Collections: Lovers, Collectors, Artists and Spectators. We laughed, half surprised, half happy, half not knowing what to do, *between* an immense desire to talk about who we are now and an equally immense desire to remember what that meeting was like in 2014, in an apartment in Rio de Janeiro. This unexpected reunion was not photographed, it is registered here, in this editorial text of this small publication. I think this publication is just that, another way to keep people, to keep meetings, to give space, time, voice, senses, to so much that each one of us is, live, want. After eight years of meetings, travels, disagreements, ideas, creations, encounters, studies, feelings of touch, I continue in this search for *in-between*, I continue with the same — perhaps sharper — desire to find ways to retain what happens *between* two people. What exists *between* you and me, what happens *between* one thing and another, what is *between* one second and another, what is kept *between*, what lives and dies, lives and dies, remembers and forgets, appears and disappears, is and it's not, and it's gone. For this publication, I invited people who were *between* these meetings, people with whom I work, with whom I think, with whom I met, with whom I collected, with whom I cried and got emotional, with whom I wish futures, with whom I keep stories. Thank you to each one of you. And thanks to all the others — there are so many missing here. I invite you to enter these pages, to browse them, to tear them *between* one thing and another — may it be an *in-between* encounter. I will continue here, *between* you and me, *between* stories and vertigo, *between* who I am and what it is to collect people.



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1 FROM A PLACE OF AFFECTION I ALLOWED MYSELF TO BE COLLECTED

I worked with Raquel André from 2015 to 2021. First, as communication manager, then as artistic co-creator. During these seven years, from the 'Collection of Lovers' to the 'Collection of Spectators', we worked together on the construction of a singular artistic voice and the creation of a close, biographical, fictional, poetic, activist, feminist and politicized voice.

We discovered that Raquel, by starting the movement of encountering others to talk and go through a common experience, gained the double responsibility of keeping and sharing the stories of others. The oppressed, closed, secret stories. The ones that you don't share, that cannot be told. Raquel keeps a big box of stories, stories that she has been accumulating alongside the unfolding of her own personal and artistic history. These stories were being processed through documentary and archival practices, in which biography intersects fiction through lists, statistics, interviews, actions, instructions, giving birth to true human constellations, forever in accumulation.

Artistically, Raquel's home is the theater, but it were the specific programs of each collection of people that informed the means used in the creative process, and their relationship with the shape of the final products. Yes, we always arrived to shows. To living, infinite shapes, to temporary writings that only speak about and until the moment of a certain accumulation and respective composition of

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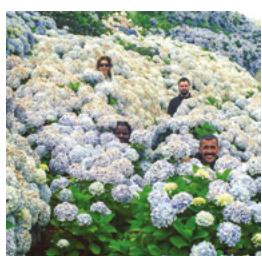
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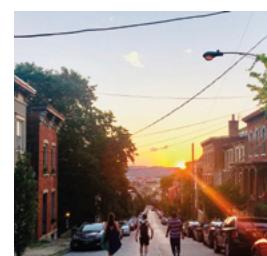
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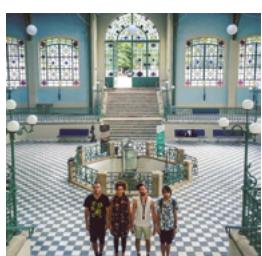
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the material to be shared. But we also “arrived” to performances, exhibitions, publications, conferences, videos, workshops, websites, actions, instructions, television programs. Each shape always exists in relation to another piece, as it stands on its own, although there will be other people to collect and, therefore, more stories to tell. Within each shape there is movement, alterations and new combinations happen, and new questions emerge, keeping the project connected to the foam of the days and the spirit of the time.

Raquel is the collector, the lover, the artist and the spectator. She is the woman, the house keeper, the researcher, the one who collects people and keeps them as elements of a collection. She is the artist who thinks about composition, about telling a story, who lives the precariousness of the cultural sector, who thinks every day about her survival, her family, her team and the children she wants to have. She is the spectator trained by watching, reading, participating, being present. Collecting is a way to stay alive, to gain anchors and have wings, to find a mirror in the other, but also to start from the broken pieces, thinking about a reform or a change of paradigm. And in this performance she is support, she is attention, she is time, she is shoulder, she is a student, she is a director, she is a creator of spaces. That's the performance she keeps. She keeps it with evidences that were passed to her by someone. For her, life is a performance and performance is a proof of life.

Her collections create temporary communities of affection. Community A that participates directly and is collected, and community B that is a spectator, reader, visitor, but is also collected. Anonymous communities, communities with their own name and address, artistic communities, communities of voice, body and entire biographies, that join her on stage and in the writing of projects. With each community, she establishes a clear contract, calls it a “program” and designates what happens at the time of meeting and sharing in the different instances. Each program carries a trigger-question and a common action. Questions about intimacy,

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memory, transformation and otherness. Actions such as photographing together, an interview, giving an object as a gift, learning an artistic routine, rescuing a transforming artistic moment for the present. Sometimes one to one in unknown apartments, sometimes with a team working in houses that keep thousands of objects and memories, sometimes even in studios, universities, theaters or offices, learning from other artists and other spectators. Collecting the other is always a moment of shared attention, a pact of trust, an agreement between parties, a story of consent.

But first and foremost, for me, Raquel André is a love and a friend. The kind that gives and receives. That challenges and takes away the rug. Provoke to build, from a place of affection. I want to share, therefore, a possible chronology of moments that I went through with her, and that I want to keep in my personal collection of the ‘Collection of People’. So that it stays written down and escapes oblivion, seven stories from 2012 to 2020, and a story-not-history that was repeated multiple times over that period.

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PERSONAL COLLECTION FROM THE COLLECTION OF PEOPLE

2012

I got married. I got married in two cities: Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro. In Rio, Raquel found and offered the house for the ceremony, Galpão Gamboa, the place where she worked. Just because. Because one night, by chance, we met on a corner in Lapa. She was the godmother of a party of champagne, peanuts and glitter. She later confessed to me that it was not that corner that introduced us, as she already knew me from the Composition sessions in Real Time, by choreographer João Fiadeiro, at Atelier Re.Al, in Lisbon. She had kept me in her memory as a scary improviser. I scared her. I laughed. After all, without our knowledge, that corner, more than an altar for my wedding, held a shared future, and therefore, a real twist in this story of me being scary.

2014

A funk festival at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro: Rio Parada Funk. A Sunday with one km of walls of speakers, quaternary cacophony and bass. A black party, from the favela, of a musical and artistic movement that characterizes the wonderful city: funk carioca. At this party, an extraordinary artist with two microphones, a cap, blue eyes and an electrifying performance. After this discovery, a dinner in Lapa, at Raquel's house, near the Selarón stairs, with view to the city center. The dinner's program was to understand Raquel's research object in the Master of Performing Arts at UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), and penetrate into the world of the 'Collection of Lovers'. Coincidence, or not, the artist from Rio Parada Funk was a neighbor of hers, and he was the person who triggered the desire to enter other people's houses and inhabit them with the question "what is intimacy?". She then tells this story in the show, proof that we are all connected in a Platonic plot of coincidences. One day, this artist and neighbor sat with us drinking caipirinhas in a

bar in Ipanema, and as far as I know she still hasn't entered his house.

2015

I started giving support to the communication of 'Collection of Lovers', in the wake of the show's premiere at the Dona Maria II National Theater. I am collected by Raquel in an apartment in Bairro Alto, in Lisbon. I am lover 69. I went from communication to creative collaboration, with all the time I shared with Raquel and Bernardo. We went to the Walk&Talk festival, in my city of Ponta Delgada, to collect lovers, jumble the island (and sing it) in a "black car" and present a work in progress. The collection won in number of lovers, between dives in warm waters and the altered state induced by the four seasons that happen in a single day in the Azores. Even before there was a show, the project was already news in the newspaper, and suddenly, Portugal gained the imagery of a woman, an artist who collected lovers. Then we went to the Citemor festival, in Montemor-o-Velho, where Raquel found a house full of people at Teatro Esther de Carvalho. A lot of people with questions, a lot of people wanting to better understand the collector's methods, and more and more people knowing about the collector who collects intimacies.

2016

Raquel won the Isabel Alves Costa grant, from Comédias do Minho, to develop the show 'Collection of Collectors' as an artistic residency. Collecting became a motto to meet more people, and a trip that would have two more collections in the future, one for Artists and one for Spectators. This time, the collectors were people who collected things: objects, plants, art, records, pieces of clothing, Star Wars or Fatima figurines. We moved to Paredes de Coura. In a 9-seats van, and with Vasco's nearly daily company, we entered the collectors houses to interview them, to get to know their collections, and then we presented the Minho show, from August to December, in Valença, Vila Nova de Cerveira, Paredes de Coura, Monção and Melgaço. In the show, the exercise of interviewing collectors was aimed at Raquel. We filmed her. And there, unarmed, just out of the shower, she became the object of her own collection. This material would become part of the

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show, which became an exciting journey through the place of memory in our lives. This is a creative process that is very dear to me. That's when Raquel went from being a mere voice to being the flag bearer of a unique and super human community. We saw Minho burn violently. We announced the shows the old-fashioned way, with a megaphone, in the van, to the various community halls, people's houses and theaters. We visited the entire region, and at each show, Raquel asked the spectators for an object that was special to them and told a story about them. Among money (many coins), lighters, business cards, pieces of clothing, I especially keep in memory three objects: the Daisy's dog tooth, given to me by a cute family who brought their daughters to the theater; the stove lighter that a mother used to light the candles in her daughter's grave when she visited her in the cemetery; the photo of the daughter of a mother who hadn't seen her daughter in over two years. I remember the moment when, in the shows, Raquel, after receiving the objects from the spectators, presented them to the whole audience, always with a lump in her throat, not knowing how to name the trust and generosity of what had been offered to her.

2017

We went to Manaus, in the state of Amazonas, Brazil. We were welcomed by the Silveira Libertini's family: Deuza, Paulinho, Ricardo. A family that opened their arms to us and offered us a home. A home that became a place for the theater, Grupo Garimpo, directed by Ricardo. There, Raquel found lovers, we rested in a tropical garden, watched planes go by, parachutists falling from the sky, and presented a conference about the 'Collection of People'. From there, we set out for the city and the forest, to discover a world of fish and ripe fruits, always with Deuza and Paulinho, Ricardo's parents, who were drivers, producers, spectators, lovers, loves. They were with us in all we did, from breakfast to the end of the hot nights, in that house-theater that hosted the meetings and the presentation. Since the beginning of the collections, there has been a key question: "what is home for you?". In the Silveira Libertini home, home means affection, hug and whatever is needed, and that is absolutely transformative because you are inscribed for life in the history of friendship. In 2021, we learned via Ricardo

that we had lost Paulinho to covid-19, during the lack of oxygen in the city's hospitals, reported worldwide during the health crisis. The Silveira Libertini were getting ready to their visit to this side of the pond, to the "little land", as many Brazilians like to call our garden planted by the sea. We gulped, we cried, but I'm sure Paulinho will live in a lover's story told by Raquel, and that this is one of those items from the collection of life that we will keep forever.

2018

A terrorist attack in Cincinnati killed 7 people in front of the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC). 'Collection of Lovers' had a North American premiere date that day, on the Blackbox. After evaluating a cancellation — the city was in a state of shock — CAC decided to go ahead with the show, after all the artistic proposal highlighted the importance of love and meeting, from the place of the theater. During the rehearsal, smoke from the final scene set off alarms, forcing dozens and dozens of employees to evacuate the building, and there was an intervention by firefighters, dressed as astronauts. But because it was America, and we welcomed every new experience, we received an email from a millionaire who wanted to give his wife an exclusive performance of the show, as a wedding anniversary gift. That's right, a show just for two people. I managed, negotiated the terms, convinced the team, asked Drew Klein (Performing Arts curator) for permission, and that was it. After a heinous crime outside the theater, an extra date. An exclusive show for a moved couple, close and in love, holding hands, and finally, the opening night, for a full house in need to feel the regenerative power of art and culture.

2020

The covid-19 pandemic took the ground away from our feet. Yours too, who have reached this point of the text. I know, we all know. Tours are over, shows have been cancelled, life has been postponed. And after the generalized freezing of everything, an attempt was made to reinvent and rewrite the future, in search of personal survival and continuous artistic inscription. Radical isolation, extreme interconnection, the online experience of distraction, loneliness, and constant interruptions and disconnections have exposed the gray boundaries between the public and private

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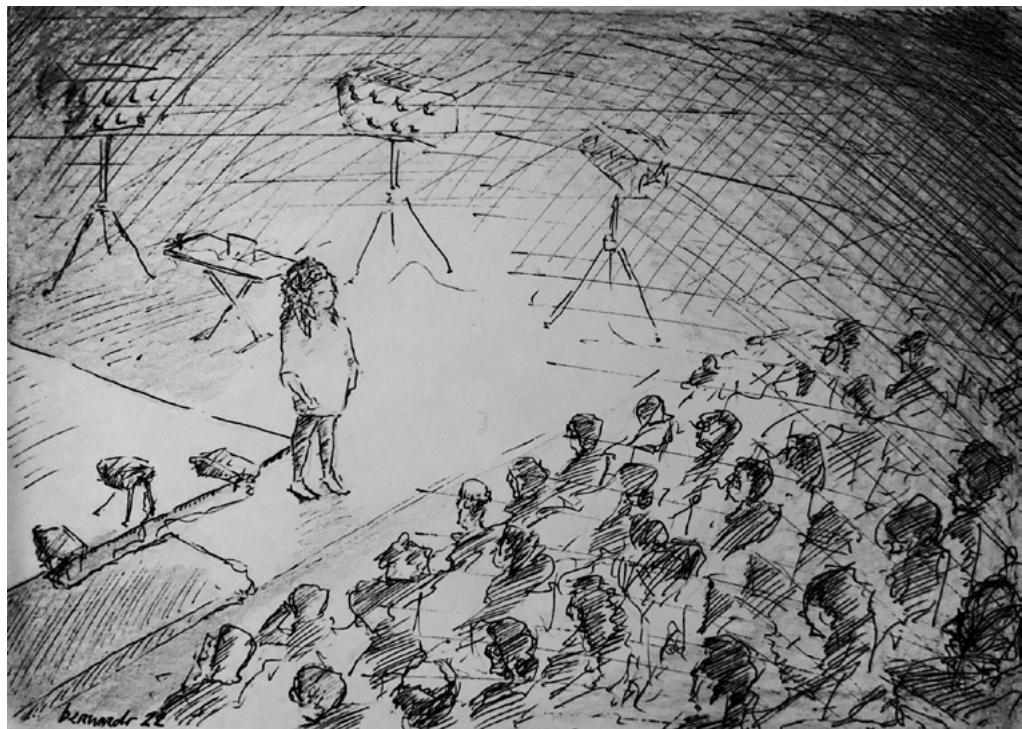
spheres. The house was given new meaning and has become the stage for all shows, framed between what is visible and what is invisible, what is work and what is leisure, what is waiting for life to come back and continue, wherever it goes. We went from sharing time and space, to just sharing time, and we definitely became actors and spectators simultaneously, in all situations. Suddenly, all the questions that guide the 'Collection of People': what is intimacy? what holds an object? what does it mean to be an artist? who is the spectator? were thrown into crisis, because nothing was as it used to be. We are in the midst of creating the 'Collection of Spectators' when Raquel wins a project from the BeSpectative network!, to be the artist who thinks about the European Spectator Day celebrations. We created a project for "the online", and for the Malaposta Cultural Center. We set up a website with instructions, a series of conversations, an exhibition, a workshop, a festival of the Spectator. At this festival, dozens of spectators from all over Europe generously shared transformative experiences with the arts and culture. The experience was moving. The capacity for reinvention and, above all, the mental space to continue talking and keeping alive the desire to meet remained, whatever happened, even if we had to try to do things we had never done before and change the artistic medium in the face of the impossibility of co-presence.

2015–2021

In seven years, we heard all over Portugal and around the world, on tours of the collections and in artistic residencies, multiple stories of domestic violence and the scourge of gender inequality. With each media ad, mainly of the 'Collection of Lovers' in its multiple formats (show, exhibition, television and book), there were countless sexist and misogynistic attacks by trolls with proper name, who sent abusive messages and made offensive comments. This time gap was also what was needed for Raquel to gain strength, courage and the necessary articulation to assert herself as a woman, artist and feminist. I was there countless times, as a mediator, interlocutor or mere ear, which was an important lesson for me and an engine to understand a little more about putting myself in someone else's shoes. Being a woman, questioning and being on the front line shakes patriarchy and the confidence of other women dressed by fear. I also learned that there is nothing that resistance, the practice of love (and loving), and the renewed invitation to be collected through a conversation and an encounter, cannot change. Step by step, forwards and so many times backwards, as an exercise that runs through a whole, whole, whole life changing the language, exposing, discussing, promoting spaces of visibility, telling stories, giving space to other voices, and also what time may teach us that we must learn to do, so that the world is truly fairer and more egalitarian. From her, I learned a lot about it, and I also learned that the pages of this story only started to be written just now.

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BERNARDO DE ALMEIDA



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BERNARDO DE ALMEIDA

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SO MUCH SENSITIVITY

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GABRIELA CUNHA

To meet Raquel André was having the opportunity, transformed into a blessing, to breathe with her another way of life, another way of seeing the world and of living it, through her skin, her breath, her collections and, thus, the humanity that unites us.

When our director, Gonçalo, (TAC — Comédias do Minho [Comedies of Minho]), asked the group, at the beginning of the rehearsal, if anyone was a collector, it never occurred to me to answer yes. I've never been one, and I'm angry with those who are (just kidding... I don't have this anger).

However, after a few minutes in which all of them were unrolling their favorite collections, for example flowers, I remembered that, without voluntarily collecting them, I had actually formed a good collection of Emotional Intelligence books over the years. And that's how I became one of the collectors of collections of the 'Collection of Collectors'. Raquel André, and her fantastic colleagues, visited the house where I lived at the time, we talked through an interview, and I was able to rethink the answers I was giving to the questions that were being asked... It was a pleasure, because when I revisited the collectors, which in this case are not, Raquel allowed us to reframe ourselves from the objects we were feeding. So much sensitivity.

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GABRIELA CUNHA

collectionofspectators.com/pt/instructions/canta-me-uma-cancao/gallery/4/

Gabriela Cunha

Mindelo, Portugal

OM Namah Shivaia



Ver no  YouTube

FECHAR x

THE POLITICAL ARCHIVE OF RAQUEL ANDRÉ

CATARINA SARAIVA

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When I was invited to write this text, regarding the opening conference of the 'Collection of People' at the Vila Flor Cultural Center, in Guimarães, I was on vacation, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, precisely in the same city where it all began for Raquel, Rio de Janeiro. There are no coincidences in life, and this is another wake-up call about the importance of connections. The question I was asked "what can it mean, for you, this gesture of collecting in the performing arts?" was at the heart of a problem that deeply interests me in the performing arts: the act of archiving as one of the ways of exposing the production of knowledge in the arts.



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CATARINA SARAIVA





CATARINA SARAIVA

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The project 'Collection of People' by Raquel André has the potential of what Bojana Kunst describes in her article 'On Potentiality and the Future of Performance', that is, not having awareness of its potential, creates the possibility of it. Raquel reveals the human being as an historical being (a being in time) and, as Kunst says, where we have actuality, we have potentiality.

When Raquel proposed herself to do a play about situations of intimacy, she began, at the same time, an anthropological archive of the human being, something that will certainly be interesting to analyze in the future as a sample of human experiences and experiences in society.

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Raquel certainly didn't think of this when she was creating 'Collection of Lovers', but she felt a strong desire to talk about intimacy at a time when she was questioning it (not knowing that there would be in the future a pandemic where this would be much more questioned). In her various encounters, she experienced different ways of relating as a white European woman with several possible lovers, exposing herself to the possibility of the brutality of intimacy.

At the same time, she created a sensitive archive of feelings and contexts that were brought for every person she collected.

In this case, I see in this gesture and in this desire of Raquel, not only a desire to make a play, but, essentially, the desire to archive an intimate moment — a political act, probably two things that appeared at the same time in the 'Collection of Lovers'.

As she has said many times, the 'Collection of Lovers' gave space to the 'Collection of collectors', because she realized that she was a collector, but more than that, because Raquel is an artist and played with the material she had to make a scenic game, more than an anthropological game. From then, she placed herself in another line of questioning. Being an artist, how it would be possible to collect artists, considering, very seriously, the impossibility of archiving the

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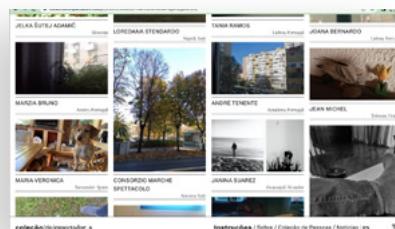
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agora	→ver
Manifesta-te	→participar →ver
Canta-me uma canção	→participar →ver
Guarda uma coisa minha	→participar →ver
Eu quero falar contigo	→participar →ver

coleção/inspetador_a Instruções / Sair Coleção de Pessoas / Notícias: 16



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"E a miúda estava só fixada naquela artista a tocar violoncelo na sua sala de aula. Eu fui lá e eu comecei a achorar computacionalmente." AFONSO ARELLI	"I just love listening to all of the different sounds voices can make. I can hear is something about the tone of her voice." ALEXANDRA COLÓN	"Um edifício de dois andares, com música alta ensurdecedora, que ficava no ar, um sítio aparentemente assustador, terrorífico." RUI SANTOS	"Czechoslovakia was at that time still communist, and actually to be part of something as international as that was something really fascinating!" LUIS FAUTRINHO
"Se bem que não era a primeira vez que era lá Cabo Verde, eu conhecia o Tarrafal, o campo de concentração, mas não dessa forma." MARCO BRUNO	"It was my first experience as a spectator, by my own, like I really wanted to go by myself and I did it." ANNA KOTYNA	"At a moment I was a spectator of myself, I was changing my view to check that it was the right place, with the right pitch, with the right words at the right tone." JEAN MICHEL	"I don't cry very much in the theater but in that show I cried from the first moment till the last one. It was really heartbreakening for me. At the same time, there was joy in it." JOÃO VIEIRA

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ephemeral, but also the need to consider the precariousness of this profession, her condition as a woman, always with the urgency of the moment. And then, inevitably, came the spectators, in a logical sequence of giving voice to those around the project.

This whole project is an immense practice that multiplied itself in different formats, this being also its interesting political side. Instead of moving on, Raquel gave a few steps back to analyze the material she had in her hands, and to think about how it would be interesting to expose all this practice, that is, all the moments that were experienced until the final object; another different way of looking at art,

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not going after the new, not being prisoner of that contemporaneity that makes all the potential that I mentioned above lost, a lot also due to the market game. Raquel chose to expand her project for other media than just the scene: a book, a television program, a game, an exhibition, without fear of repeating herself, always willing to create connections with the context.

‘Collection of People’ is an archive that has a critical attitude of observation. Raquel builds her own archive which is, at the same time, a repertoire, assuming the connection to the context as a practice of non-crystallization. Through a system of inclusion of people, places, and encounters, she creates a theatrical device where the updating of this file is of vital importance, a way of establishing a sociological survey at each context of acting. At the same time, she creates a trail of her archive in each city and each country she passes through, putting into practice what Hanna Arendt argued should be the theater, a space of agora, a political space.

In a conversation about the performing arts archive with the anthropologist Ricardo Seiça Salgado, he drew attention to what would be an archive a la Foucault, who argued that archives reflect the interest and vision of those who hold them. Thus, the potential life of a file emerges, or begins, through an interest situated in a



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specific gaze and lens and, therefore, this is already performative. Foucault turns the archive into a machine for making people speak and see, which he then calls a device. Raquel created several devices that allow presenting a spectrum knowledge from her personal point of view.

Seiça also draws attention to Lepecki's archival body, the one that does not store, that acts. And that's why I read Lepecki's text 'Coreo-politics and choreo-police' again. Even if he talks about dance, I think we can include this work by Raquel in this concept,

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especially when he refers how dance — we will equate it as Raquel's theater — when embodies the world of human actions, inevitably theorizes in that act its Social context.

It is precisely in this act, without awareness of its potential, that the project 'Collection of People' becomes a space for the production of knowledge, because it conveys the urgencies of just a moment. Thus, art also enters into research processes similar to what may be an anthropology or a sociological study, but with completely different ends.

The file is activated by a series of selections that are nothing else than the construction of a dramaturgy, and assuming subjectivity means talking about history and context. 'Retrospective' by Xavier le Roy is a beautiful example of this. Piece designed for museums, in each location Xavier works with local artists the personal history of each one's dance in relation to their career, and in this dialogue each participant explains what their relationship with dance was when Xavier's plays debuted, making the local context known.

In this sense, the construction of this archive is also — within the perspective of subjectivity inherent in document activation — a thought about what is interesting to convey to others. There is in Raquel's



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work a curatorship of memory that is built through the archive's dramaturgy, which also gives her the possibility of creating a fiction.

For many centuries, our history has been archived and disseminated from a Eurocentric perspective, white and male, which was considered impartial. Today, we know how much of the History was hidden — from women, from black people, from the periphery, no one was part of this Universal History...

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With archival practices in ephemeral arts, we have the possibility of rewriting the history of the present from a subjective perspective. But these creations, those that relate with the social, they also have this great potential to mirror a society, such as 'Collection of People' by Raquel André.

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COLLECTION OF SPECTATORS

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MARINA PREGUIÇA

The first time I saw Raquel André, and her work, was in 2015, at D. Maria II National Theater Studio. She presented the 'Collection of Lovers' and I, with no plans for a Friday night, let myself be persuaded by a friend to go see the show.

I remember some projected photographs, the blue pants and the curly hair, but I remember, above all, the two sensations I had at the end: the first was that, one day, I wanted to write a project like that, full of people, stories and intimacy. The second was that one day I wanted to participate in a project of Raquel. Both seemed slightly unattainable goals, the second much more than the first. How would I do to be in a collection of Raquel? I didn't know her, I didn't know anyone who knew her... And here enters the emoji of shrugged shoulders, arms raised and an air that it won't happen.



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MARINA PREGUIÇA



© DR



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However, life is ironic, it gives a lot of turns and suddenly I noticed I had arrived there, I was participating in a Raquel's project. Six years after that night in September, I still didn't write a project like the 'Collection of Lovers', but I was part of the 'Collection of Spectators', that was on stage at Sala Garrett in July 2021.

Probably, it would be more interesting if I had an inspiring story about how, having wanted to participate in a project by Raquel, I had gone after and fought long and hard to achieve it. It could be more interesting, but unreal. The truth is that getting to the stage of D. Maria II [National Theater] with Raquel and my colleagues from the Collection was the result of a series of coincidences. By chance, I happened to be browsing the Instagram feed and saw a post about the instructions that Raquel was sharing. By chance, a friend commented that she was

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MARINA PREGUIÇA

going to have a workshop with Raquel. By chance (or not, Raquel will say), I was chosen for the project. I happened to be unemployed when it all happened and I had the time and attention it was needed.

What doesn't seem to be by chance is the way in which the whole process of construction of the 'Collection of Spectators' takes place. The time it took us to getting to know each other, the time it took us to discover our stories, figuring out whether or not we wanted to share them and how to do it, the time it took to realize that we were going to be on stage, but we didn't have to be characters, we could be ourselves and that was valuable. All this time was never sped up, tense or demanding. It was never a weight on our backs, anxiety that didn't let us sleep, or a stomachache. We had our time and that was essential.

Just as listening and welcoming were essential. When, now, I look back, I see that during the process of building the 'Collection of Spectators' I learned to listen more and listen better. I learned that all people are precious and that the stories they have to tell, in one way or another, are the stories from all of us. I learned to listen to others without making

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MARINA PREGUIÇA

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judgments and without putting me on tiptoe. I also learned, and that is not less important, to listen to myself without judging me.

What drives Raquel, in her work, and I dare say that in life too, is curiosity. Curiosity for other people, for their stories, for what they have to offer you and, perhaps, for the changes that can take place within her after encounters.

This could easily be a self-serving, vampire-like curiosity, a curiosity that only exists to feed a project and fill a room. But it is not. It is a genuine, authentic, permanent and always attentive curiosity. She listens to the stories we have to share and makes us feel that, no matter how silly or banal, they are our stories and, for that alone, they are already valuable. The benefit she takes from us and our stories

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MARINA PREGUIÇA

serves a purpose, of course, there is a performance to be done. But it always seemed to me that the performance was something that came along the way, almost by accident. That everything really starts from curiosity for people and that only later came the idea of turning all this into shows.

Raquel's work feeds off the stories of people, takes them out of invisibility giving them a voice and, in doing so, makes them live forever.

And that is the greatest gift that can be given to anyone.



5

MARINA PREGUIÇA



ABOUT BRINGING MUSIC TO A COLLECTION

OR

COLLECTION OF SPECTATORS SOUND_ TRACK_ EXPORT_

6

ODETE

There is something spooky about the evidence of a recording. In the difficult hearing of a recovered cassette, from a cell phone audio from 15 years ago, on an overused vinyl.

In listening to something that is not afraid to assert itself as the ruin of a past. The material objects have the dust to reveal their suspension of movement, of time. In sound there is an equivalent to the “grain” or “crack” of vinyl, for example. The last more related to erosion, perhaps more so than suspension — still, a revelation of a past. This sound is not from now — *crack crack crack* — this object is not from now — dust.



ODETE

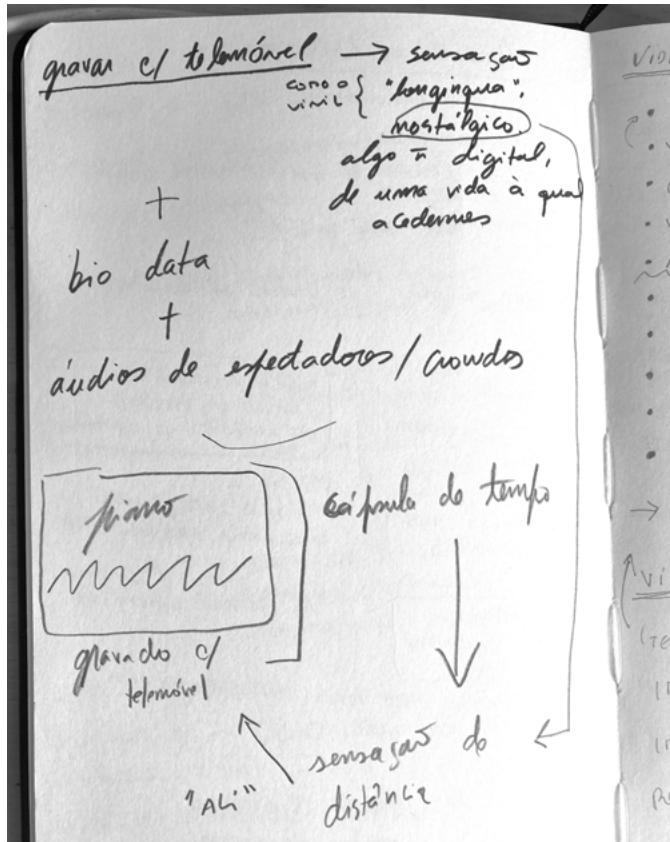
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but how to use it without falsifying
in other words, in a digital work, how to reveal time itself?

how to reveal that archiving is perhaps transforming into matter
what is not always material

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ODETE



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I.

Working on the soundtrack for the ‘Collection of Spectators’ was working, above all, about time. About its passage and its implications. I wanted to be faithful to Raquel’s processes, now that we already knew each other and this was the second piece I did for her. Making music for a show is above all to observe what the artists who direct want, and to try to hear what exists between the words that draw the invitation. I knew it would be necessary that the music lulled the presence of “spectators” who probably never had stepped onto a stage — something that would give them strength, without intruding on their stories. Doing something that was simply beautiful musically could cause feelings in the “real spectators” of the play, who were not called there. I didn’t want the music to be merely contemplative, I wanted to invoke the time of the stories themselves — a past time digested into the present. An extended time, a time of internal change. A metamorphosis time, almost.

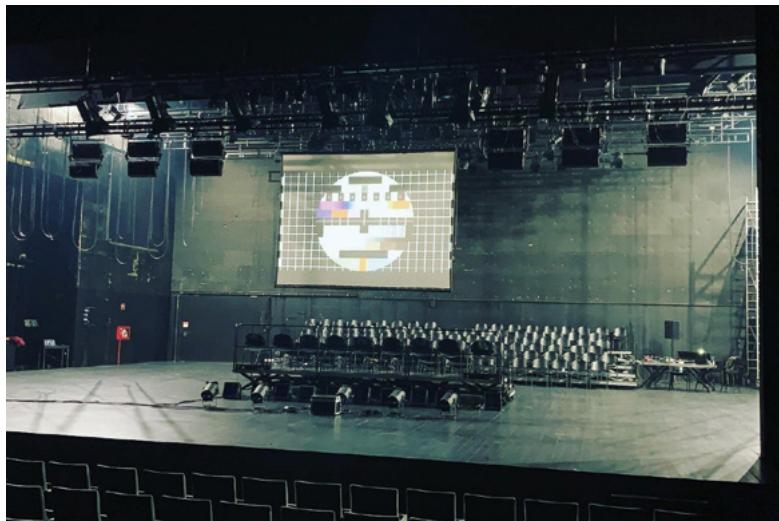
Above all, I wanted the music to speak

ODETE

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of this quality that I attribute to the archive, this quality of something that is no longer, of a time transformed into an object. From this dust that objects accumulate, from this layer that grows almost around the thing itself, allowed to settle.

(I know whoever is reading this might be wondering why I’m talking about this, but I actually feel it’s important to write about making music for shows, because the processes of musical creation go unseen, and happen conceptually as parallels to the “macro-process”, and there are things I don’t want to die — there are things I also want to archive. There are ideas and processes that I want that stay here in this book, and to last, because I no longer trust my memory)



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ODETE

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How can I convey a sense of weariness, of the past, of time when the means I have are digital? Where is there such a thing as digital dust without post-editing it? it was important for me to find this place...

I just looked at my own file
and see me

taking pictures of places and objects
and recording audios

And these audios made it possible to perceive a space other than that of the computer, a space that is non-present tense time invoked here for me that am listening now

(it is so simple that it seems ridiculous to be writing it, but go Ode te go)

Then
What I did
was

ODETE

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composing melodies and recording them in various formats and with different equipment, trying to figure out which recording method allowed time to be felt the most, accepting the sonic mud and testing the limits of sound quality. I ended up opting for the mix recording with an old ZOOM recorder full of White noise and simultaneous recording with my cell phone, also allowing my process to reveal its own media constraints. Not only using these methods allowed me to access the musical place that I wanted from the beginning, but also allowed me a kind of empowerment in accepting the economic constraints of the process. Not having money or a way to access “good” equipment became a conceptual tool.



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ODETE

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In addition to time, a collection of people needs... people. How to collect someone musically beyond the obvious recording of the voice which, in fact, is a recording always incomplete of the person. How to keep someone I don't know and how to turn this time to archive, to collect, as food for the soundtrack. How to do this without crossing ethical limits, of extractivism or appropriation? When I was making the soundtrack for the 'Collection of Spectators', a friend of mine passed away. André, known as the Italian photographer of Lisbon. Feeling lost on how to grieve, I ended up picking up an instrument reading bio-data (which converted information/pulses of a living organism into numerical elements) and linked it to one of his favorite plants, trying to hear echoes of what he was in that plant that was in front of me. I let her sing for me, let her do a ode to André, since I was unable.

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ODETE





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ODETE

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I recorded the plant's music so I could listen to it whenever I needed to, or whenever I wanted to remember Andre. Time passed and the plant's music accompanied me, making me think about how grief had given birth to something else and how my pain and my memories were also being transformed into realities that I had not foreseen. Andre had come into existence beyond his work and what I remembered of him, and had ended up existing as an intermediary between myself and other beings, as a catalyst for my renewed relationship with the natural world.

In between all this, the process of Raquel's play was happening. While I was walking to the first meeting, I thought about the idea of collecting someone and remembered these processes that I was going through. What if I used this device to listen to the spectators' bodies with which we were working? What if I asked them:

if you were music, if you were a musical instrument, what would you be?

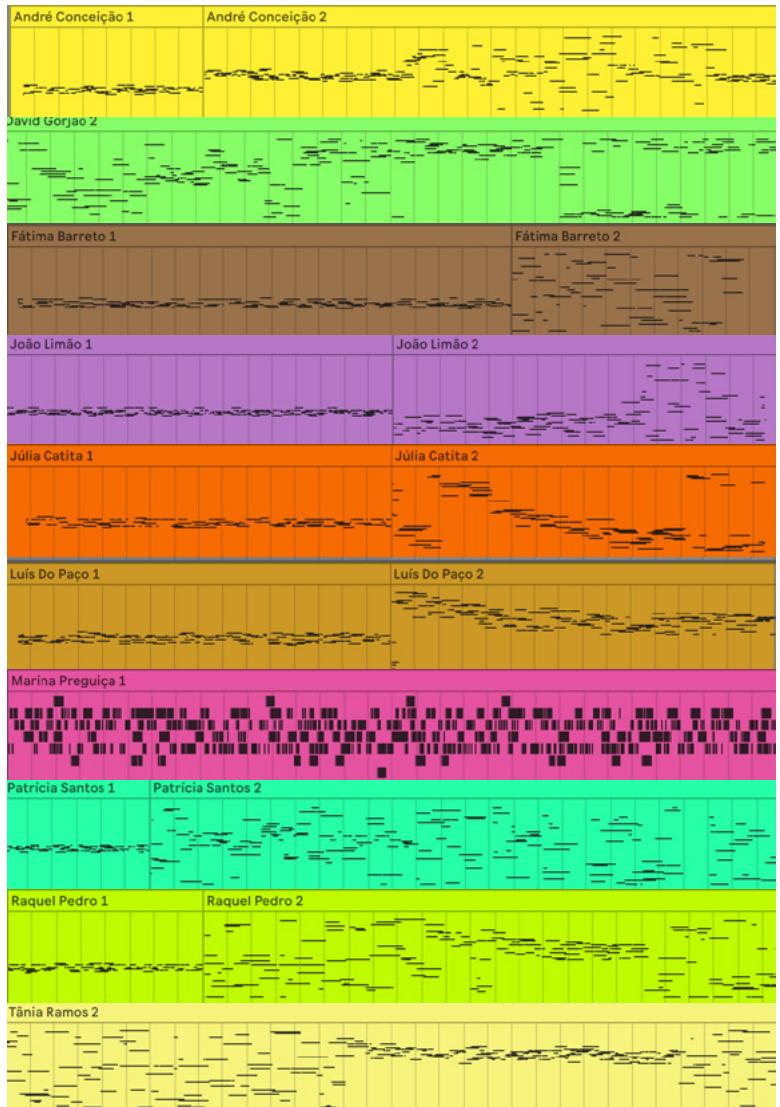
ODETE

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And hear their bodies allowing themselves to be heard through the answer to that question

What would happen?

Here's an image of the MIDI maps of each person I recorded:



ODETE



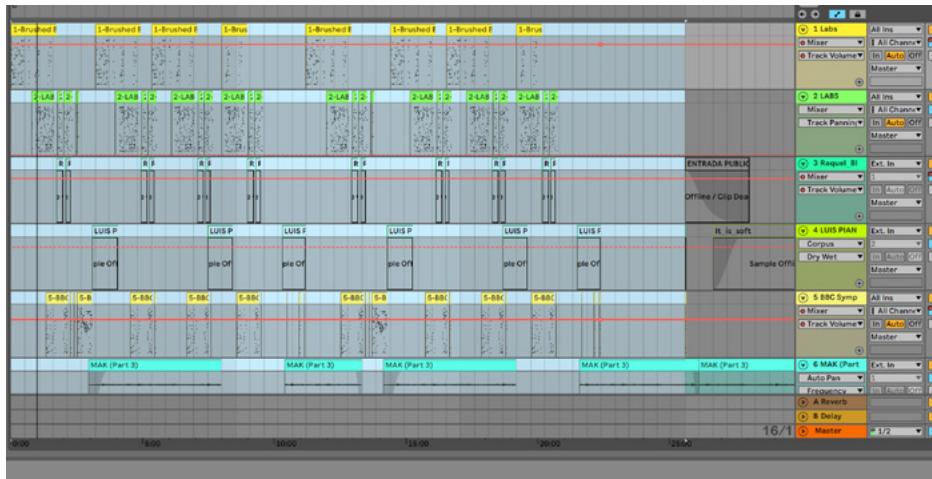
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III.

Everything I recorded became the soundtrack of the show.

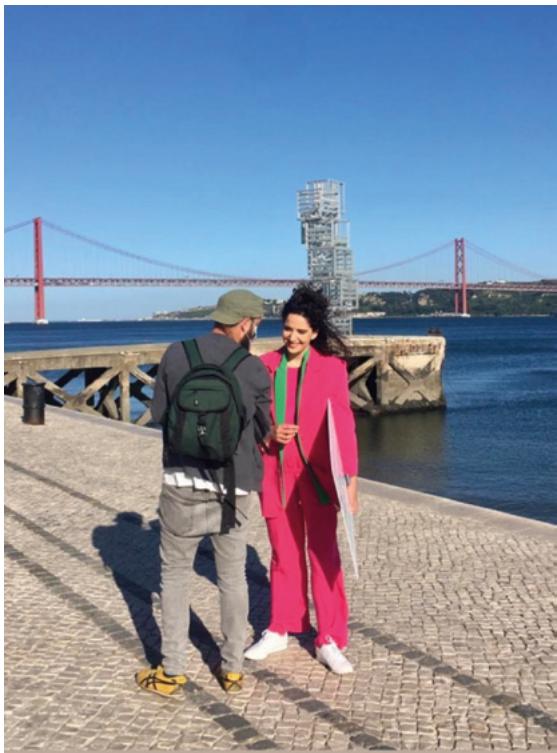


ODETE

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The movement of collecting people was not one of just archiving them, but of enhancing the archiving itself. To transform what they were into something else, honoring their own movement of identity and life: honoring the fact that, when I kept them, what I kept is not who they are today.

And I believe that's what I learned from Raquel. That the file doesn't need to be something watertight, that we can dance with the dust lifting it, and that we can tear the pages of books and draw on them. Because that's what collections are: a continuous ritual traversed by the mourning of what we constantly cease to be.



© José Antonio Tenente

ODETE

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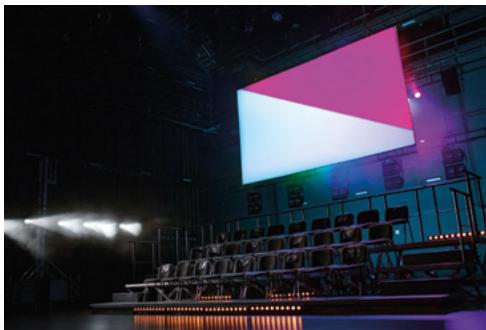
COLLECTION OF SPECTATORS

TÂNIA RAMOS

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The relationship between memory and collection has been something that has been troubling me for some time: if, on the one hand, our memory helps us to collect moments in Polaroid format, the same memory can be treacherous; change that image to another that seems more appropriate, or even hide in some corner of the cortex something that we wanted to remember so badly.

My grandmother.



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© Afonso Sousa



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TÂNIA RAMOS

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There are things that we will never stop collecting and that we will never stop looking for in the ripples of the cortex. But there are also things that we know that, with more or less effort, will be lost.

My grandmother's voice.

When I started watching Tiago Pereira's work around the project 'A Música Portuguesa a Gostar Dela Própria' [Portuguese Music Loving Itself], I realized that there was something magical about it. Some sort of wizard of Terabyte was going to be able to immortalize some things; Some musics. Some grandmothers.

I write here what I have said many times before — I am afraid that one day I will wake up and won't remember my grandmother's voice. I'm afraid I won't remember the way she closed her mouth. The way she peeled the fruit. The way every morning she combed her hair and binded it with a clip.

We are the last generation of grandmothers who wore scarves.

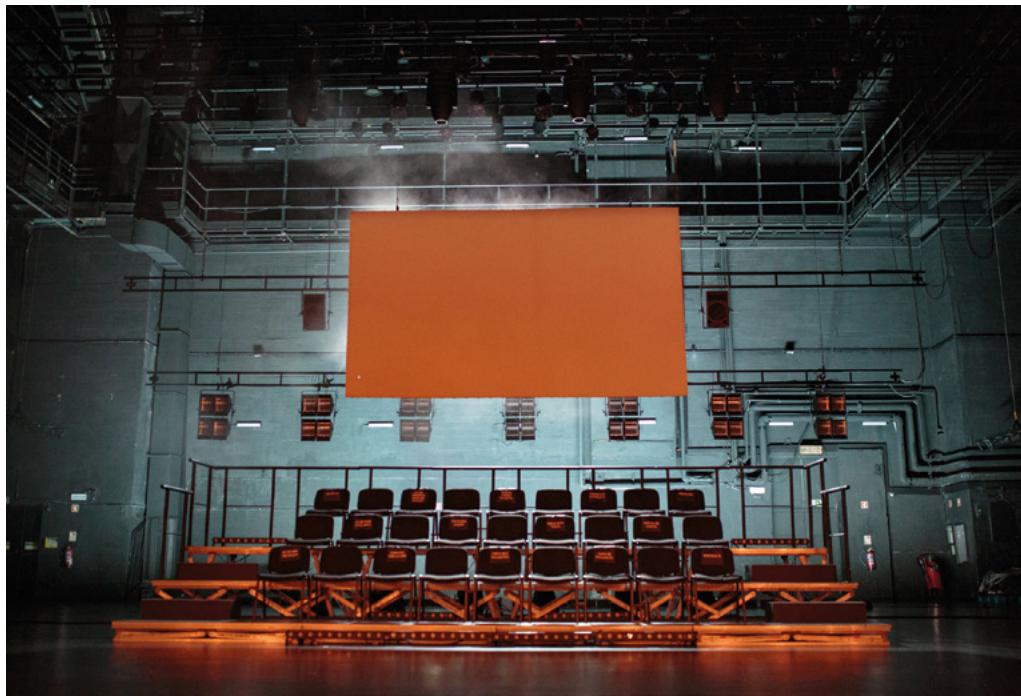
TÂNIA RAMOS

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Of grandmothers who wore black for life — because life became a succession of losses and we couldn't mourn just one. From the grandmothers who wore a overall — but took it off to go outside — the frock was just for walking around the house.

We are, each one of us, the result of all those who came together to create us as we are today.

And so, we carry within us a wealth of collectable information. And it was on this premise that I timidly started to hear about Raquel. First, when I received an email from Vera Marmelo publicizing Raquel's



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TÂNIA RAMOS

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trip to Barreiro. Then, when I was taken to see the ‘Collection of Artists’. And when I heard about these artists, some of them anonymous, I couldn’t resist remembering her.

The grandmother again.

The roundelays, the songs of the harvest. The book ‘Amor de Perdição’ [Doomed Love], which she read over and over again, because it was one of the only books she had when she was young. And, when she was already a grandmother, it would suffice that I read the first words of any letter in the book for her to say it out loud with the precision of any Alexa or Siri.

My grandmother was the first collector I met. She collected friends, cousins, nephews, uncles, brothers, sisters-in-law. She collected family. She had her heart’s closet very well organized, very full, but there was always room for one more. My grandmother collected people. Hers. The ones that made her “her”.

In the first months of the pandemic, we were all more oblivious. Each one became an island, and a castaway, in the urge to free himself from that island. On April 25th, I watched the ‘Collection of Lovers’ in Zoom format. It’s not quite the same thing, but at that

TÂNIA RAMOS

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moment I felt I was reviewing a little bit of Tiago’s work in Raquel. Each one of them, in their own way, puts parts of many people in their scrapbook and creates his/her static memory. Her/His physical memory, almost palpable.

When, a month later, I saw an advertisement for a workshop, I didn’t even read a single word besides — workshop with Raquel André. I want! I want to learn how to see, how to look at, in a different way than I do. Let’s go! And I signed up.



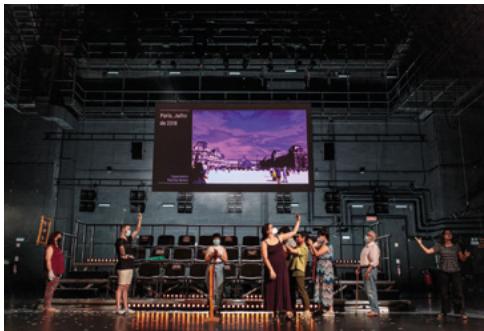
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© Filipe Ferreira



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One day, I met some people at TNDMII [Dona Maria II National Theater], we shared our memories as spectators. I laughed. I was moved by some stories too. And I left.

A few days later, I got a call — “Hello Tânia, it’s Cláudia. We wanted to know your availability until July, you were selected.” I returned to the ad. I went back and read everything (oh the small print of the contracts — and these weren’t even small). And I realized that that day I was collected. I realized that on that day of the spectators’ workshop, I was already a spectator project, but I was also object of observation of the team.

I accepted! Of course, how many more memories would I be able to develop? How many more possibilities to bet on memory as a guiding thread? In the world of the now and the immediate, we seldom slow down to think about before.

Even today it is difficult to explain in words what it is like to be collected. Because that act is never one-sided, and although each of us was being collected by Raquel, each of us was being collected by those around us. Each of us was collecting Raquel.

TÂNIA RAMOS

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We started the preparation sessions as if each of us was an island. Each was a castaway. As if each was isolated. And in a few days we started to find our spaces. And, between them, the initially invisible webs started to appear.

The way we created what would be the final result had a common thread — naturally. But that thread was placed in our hands and we spun it together. And while we were spinning this thread together, we were also unraveling the threads that impede our movements. The things that bother us, that hold us back. That prevent us from moving forward. What would we like to see changed?



TANIA RAMOS

Lisboa, Portugal



TANIA RAMOS

Lisboa, Portugal

TÂNIA RAMOS

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During these almost 12 months I have been thinking a lot about how being collected has shaped me. I don't have a closed answer. I know that being part of this creative process gave me very good tools to overcome some limitations I felt at work — making public presentations, for example. I know it gave me a much clearer idea of the work required to put a play on scene. Of everything that is behind the price of a ticket — and how maybe 12 euros to see a play is not that expensive.

The care with which Raquel treated our memories and personal stories showed me the beauty that exists in looking at the reality of others with eyes full of understanding. But Raquel also made a point of explaining to us that what we see is not just the result of pure and hard vision. It's not just our individual interpretation. It is also the result of what we have learned to see as a society. What we value more, or less, as members of a more, or less, tolerant, more, or less, multicultural community.

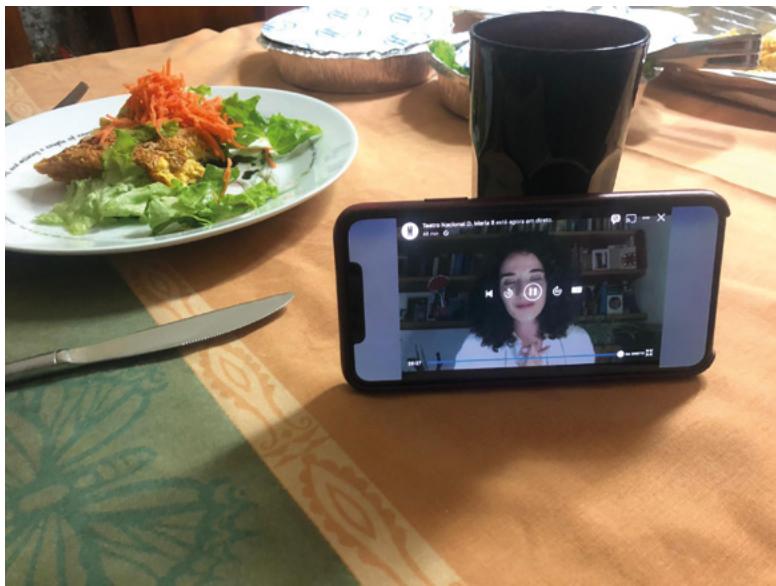
In between our preparation meetings, we still had time and the possibility to attend two plays together. And, already in the role of spectators, it was also interesting to make this journey that in everything was similar to all previous trips to the theater: we were spectators with a purpose — to be a spectator. More than just

TÂNIA RAMOS

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someone watching a play, we were people watching people watching a play. Watching the way the stage infected the benches (I will never forget Maria Júlia from Gil Semedo in the play Aurora Negra [Black Dawn]).

Today, 12 months later, I am still attentive, wanting to collect more. It doesn't have to be better or worse. Or a lot or a little. It has to be what is good for me at the moment in question. Whether seeing a tear of pain or laughter, or a hug of longing or affection.



TÂNIA RAMOS

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In short, being collected has brought me to a place where I like to be — a place where I feel part of something bigger, and at the same time it makes me want to get out of myself to better understand the other.

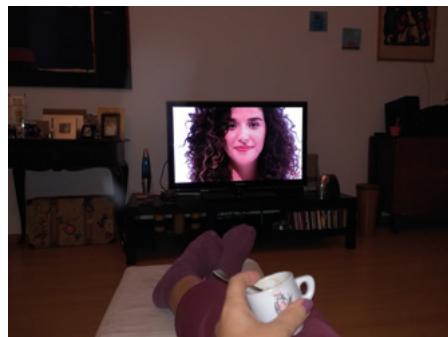
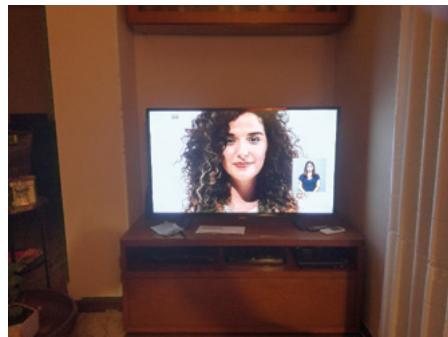
This is “place of speech” [Lugar de Fala]. It is the place that formed me as I am today. The place that began to be designed in many afternoons and evenings with the grandmother. Probably in the kitchen, while she made rice porridge. Probably in the living room, while she made lace.

Definitely with her. With the tone of her voice. With her scent.

My grandmother’s scent.

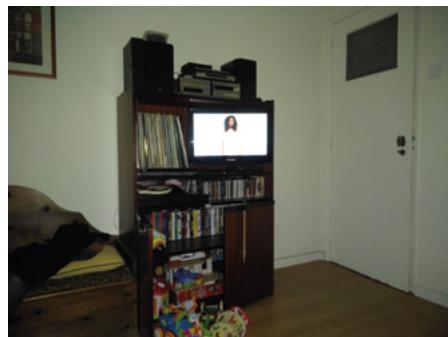
TÂNIA RAMOS

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TÂNIA RAMOS

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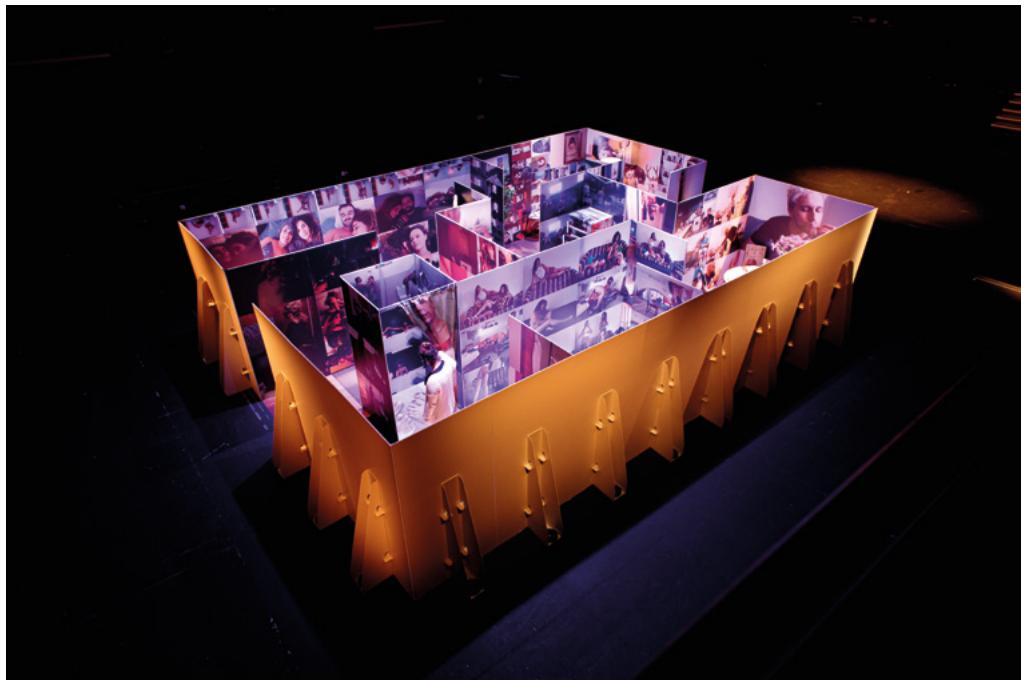


SPHERE AND LABYRINTH

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JOSÉ CAPELA
(EAAD-UM / LAB2PT / MALA VOADORA)

There is much to be said about Raquel André's collections — about the boundary between privacy and public exposure explored in them, about their hybridity as a work of “performing arts”, about the act of collecting as art, about collections of people made by artists (I remember Douglas Huebler, for example), about the relationship



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JOSÉ CAPELA

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between events and recording, and about many other things that this work entails — but I'm not the best person to do it. To respond to this friendly invitation from Raquel, I will limit myself to referring to my experience as the scenographer of the installation 'Collection of Lovers', in which I was accompanied by António Pedro Faria, and above all to the relationship between this installation and architecture.

1. IMAGES OF HOUSES

The images that architects publish of their housing projects are often contrary to the very idea of "inhabiting". The spaces appear emptied of what could be marks of human experience, often even without furniture, and the human figures, on the rare occasions they are included in the images, are reduced to moving, blurred, almost ghostly figures. This fact highlights the antagonism between the way architects think about spaces — desirably aseptic — and the vicissitudes of everyday life, thus relegated to the realm of adversity. Dreams of an unpolluted world, for which unpolluted forms are created.

When Raquel invited me to make a house with the thousands of photographs that she collected as evidence of her encounters with "lovers", I remembered this space/experience dichotomy. Raquel's photographs invariably show domestic spaces, but, unlike the architectural photographs that I was referring to, spaces here are presented as they really are: as supports for what happens in them.

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JOSÉ CAPELA

They are shown being used for eating, bathing, sitting or lying down and talking, for intimacy, for fun. They're behind what happens.

Using these photographs from Raquel to, with them, assemble a house meant, therefore, putting two different types of spaces into dialogue: those of the houses where the encounters took place, represented in the photographs, and the new spaces that we



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JOSÉ CAPELA

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would create to be enjoyed by the installation's audience. Through the latter, people would have access to a visual testimony of the former, meanwhile sent to the field of memories of Raquel and her lovers. Strictly speaking, what resulted from this work was not an "exhibition", but an "installation". A device was not created to show photographs on it; what was created was a house made of images. Walls, floor, furniture, dishes, mugs, napkins, bedding, pillows, the shower curtain, the kitchen counter, the fridge, lamps, sanitary items... — everything was made from photographs.

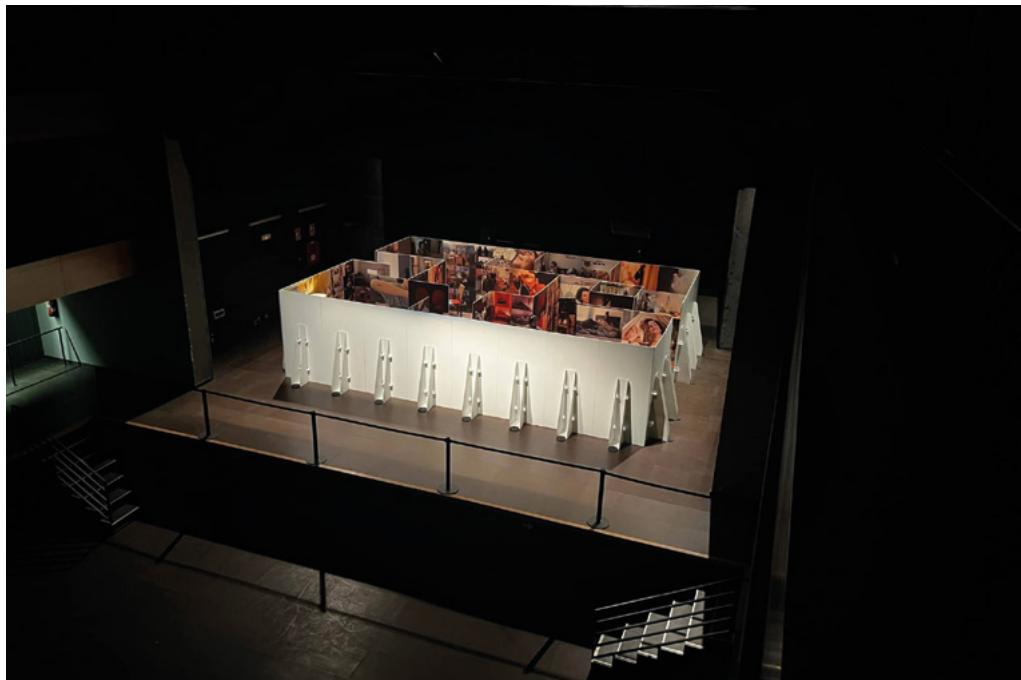
2. CHECKERED AND MEMORY

Although the raw material to build this house is visual (as far as it is possible to separate an image from its support), we had to confront the construction itself — with a type of construction closer to that of the architects. It was important to ensure that it was easy to assemble and disassemble the exhibition, as well as transport it, so we decided to build all the walls using a modular system, that is, a system in which the shapes are composed through the variable combination of elements, like a "Lego". We chose to use panels measuring one meter wide and two meters high, stackable and packable, and linkable on a floor organized into squares measuring one square meter. We resorted to a way of creating spaces with multiple historical backgrounds, including: (1) tatami mats (from the 8th century) from which the shape of traditional Japanese houses can be deduced — a practice that dates back to the 16th century;

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JOSÉ CAPELA

(2) later, in Europe, the adoption of checkered matrices within the scope of the neoclassical systematization of architecture; and (3) industrial-era prefabrication systems, initiated at the end of the 18th century, with a view of creating large spaces and infrastructure in the nineteenth century, and explored by modernist architects in democratic housing programs in the twentieth century.



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These are stories of rationality. It should be noted, however, that the rationality of the modular system did not aim, for us, at the creation of simple, far-sighted spaces, but rather a labyrinth. The panels were used to invent a space that alludes to the traditional functions of a house — kitchen, dining room, living room, bedroom, bathroom and office — which, as a whole, were linked in a continuous and labyrinthine path. The system is mathematical, but the use of the system aimed disorientation. For the ‘Collection of Lovers’, a triangle resulted between the rationality of the modular system, rigorously Cartesian, the emotional quality of the images and, finally, the spatial experience of the labyrinth. At the same time, a parallel can be found between the labyrinthine nature of space and the hundreds of photographs — (1) they also cause some disorientation due to their excessive presence and (2) all of them part of a universe as labyrinthine as the memory.

Although this project cannot be identified as “architecture”, it seems to me more interesting to think of a house from this spatial and emotional complexity, than from any formal purity.

JOSÉ CAPELA

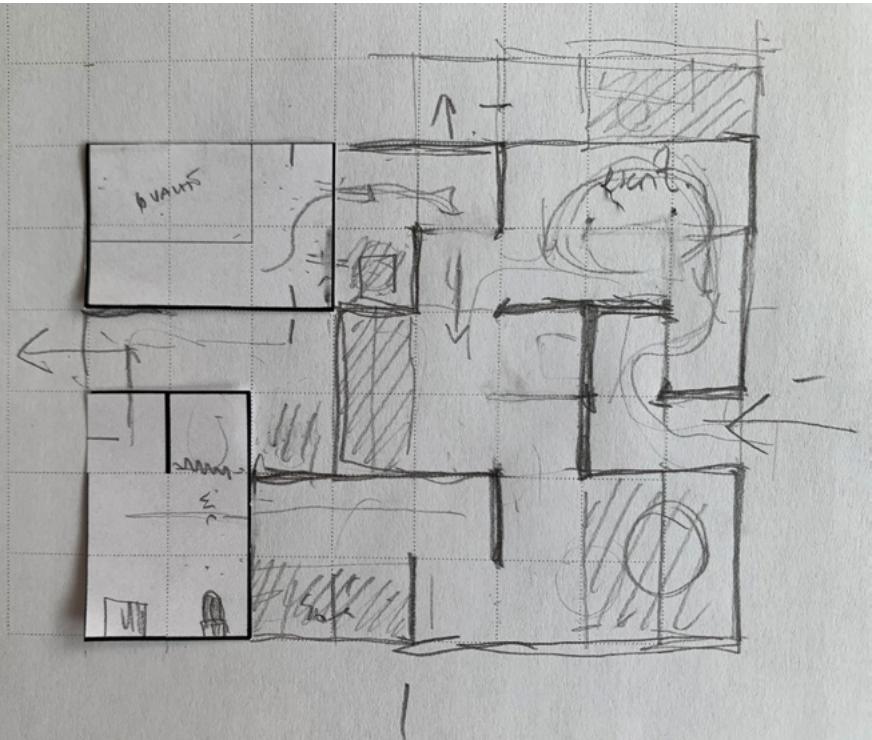
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JOSÉ CAPELA

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JOSÉ CAPELA

3. SCENOGRAPHY

Perhaps as a reaction to the virtualization of photography typical of social networks and image editing programs, or perhaps because digital technology has evolved in the sense that 3D virtual phenomena can be created in space, the discourse on scenography became full, since a few years ago, with the word “immersive”. It is a return to an “entertainment scenography of the senses”, in many ways similar to the height of the scenic illusionism of the Italian stages, that is, a return to what Brecht called “bourgeois theater”. Personally, I am more interested in rethinking images in the face of this new context of virtualization and, namely, in what has been called “post-internet photography”: the return of photography to its material and spatial condition. I think I can inscribe this work experience with the photographs of Raquel and her lovers in a similar scope to this one — that of “post-internet” photography. And that led us to an ambiguous object, made of images (like classical scenography) and, at the same time, immersive.

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JOSÉ CAPELA

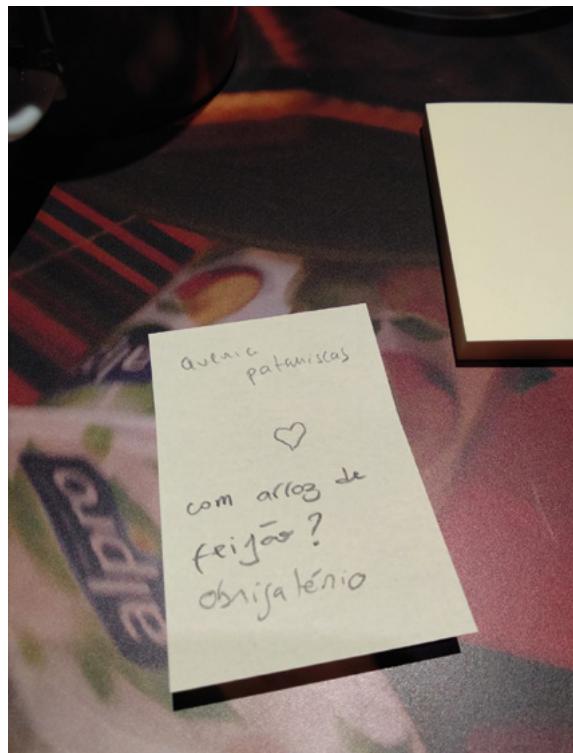


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JOSÉ CAPELA

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WITH BEAN'S RICE



MIGUEL BRANCO

9



MIGUEL BRANCO

9

I was waiting for her to come down the stairs. Anxious, with headphones in my ears, I tried to guess what the first image would be, whether she would wear sneakers, boots, ankle boots, ballerinas — I prayed it weren't ballerinas, I can't explain, I don't like it. I was putting on and taking off my coat at every passing minute. After all, theaters are stuffy places, but that day I couldn't decide if I was cold or hot—maybe it wasn't a matter of temperature. I would have liked to have counted the number of times I unlocked the phone, turned on the data, opened WhatsApp, opened the browser, and then turned it all off again. Nothing came from there, but my hand continued to insist. If I was on the street, I would have smoked non-stop, do I still have time to go upstairs? I was waiting for her to come down the stairs.

Waiting, if given the time, always becomes self-sabotage. Why did she come alone? Why did I want to face the unknown and the uncomfortable? Now hang on, smartass. I always liked having lunch alone, I remembered. If, for many people, the moment of the meal, when there is no company, is a test of effort, a painful crossing, for me it had always been a placid place, with an interior texture. It's not that being alone conferred pleasure, it's not that I was a boat sailing in harmony — it never was, it never is — but with a fork, a knife and a plate in front of me I always felt that I was protected, I always believed that the grains of rice would end up in the right place. I don't know if I was thinking about it at the time, I find it difficult to remember precisely, but for the purposes of this text we will assume that I did. I could only be convincing myself that I was right to go alone.

MIGUEL BRANCO

9

She came down the stairs. She wore boots with a slight heel. She was wearing a green nightgown—I can't say what material anymore. The pants didn't exactly look like bell-bottoms to me, but



MIGUEL BRANCO

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it was noticeable that they flared out at the bottom. I took off my headphones to say good afternoon and tried not to sound agitated. The assistants opened the doors and there I was in front of the stage, on that day camouflaged as a house. There we were. We were the interpreters. As soon as Raquel's voice gave us the first orders, my breath gave me rest. I went in and sat down on a nearby armchair. On a side table, a pencil and a pad of post-its. I hesitated, but I couldn't resist: "I don't know why I'm writing, but I thought I should. Kisses, Miguel. I glued. I looked at the photographs of that hallway, I rummaged through the books, it took me a while to get up, could that be low blood pressure? Although I had already seen most of those portraits, although I had been present on a day of montage of the Exhibition of Lovers, I felt before and after vertigo, that dizziness before the finished painting.

I went on, towards the room. I touched the quilt to feel if it was reliable—we need to trust quilts. The pillows, with pillowcases where Raquel was still sitting, were soft. I didn't dare to lie down despite Raquel's suggestion over the headphones — I think I used the excuse "I'm tired, and a boy annihilated by urban-depressive neoliberalism cannot afford to stretch his back, I could fall asleep here". I passed the bathroom, found the shower curtain beautiful, an object that I opened and closed several times, perhaps to confirm that it remained beautiful. I was alone. I only remembered that I was accompanied when I glimpsed a shadow on the other side of the house. In the kitchen, I grabbed another post-it: "I wanted pataniscas", and drew a heart. I investigated all the spice jars—there's more to it than figuring out how people season. I wanted to swallow all that intimacy. Another post-it that I stuck on the fridge door, I don't remember what I wrote, but I bet it referred to the beer I didn't find inside. On the headphones, Raquel again showed

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me the room. Where was whoever came down the stairs. Keyed up. "Look at the person in front of you for thirty seconds, without looking away", Raquel asked. At that moment, I cursed her, Raquel,



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of course. I mean, I had fulfilled the purpose, I came alone, I wanted to play this game, live the experience in its entirety, but now I felt completely exposed, sweating, noticing who came down the stairs, also agitated, looking away. Did she also like to have lunch alone? Those thirty seconds felt like two years. If it had been a showdown, I think I would have won—the need to win, what for?

“Choose a piece of clothing or an object and take a picture with the person in front of you”, was the next order. I have no idea of my choice. Without taking off our headphones, we recorded the moment with her phone. Then I asked her to move to the shower curtain so I could take my picture there. We looked at the rest of the house together, we both liked to tinker with everything, that was evident. “With rice and beans?” she wrote on the post-it she had left on the kitchen table. “Mandatory”, I wrote underneath. It was as if that was sacred territory, as if we couldn’t take off the headphones, as if the established rules overcame the desire to ask for name, age, maybe sign. Would it be neoliberalism again? The architecture? Or shame? Our lack of daring?

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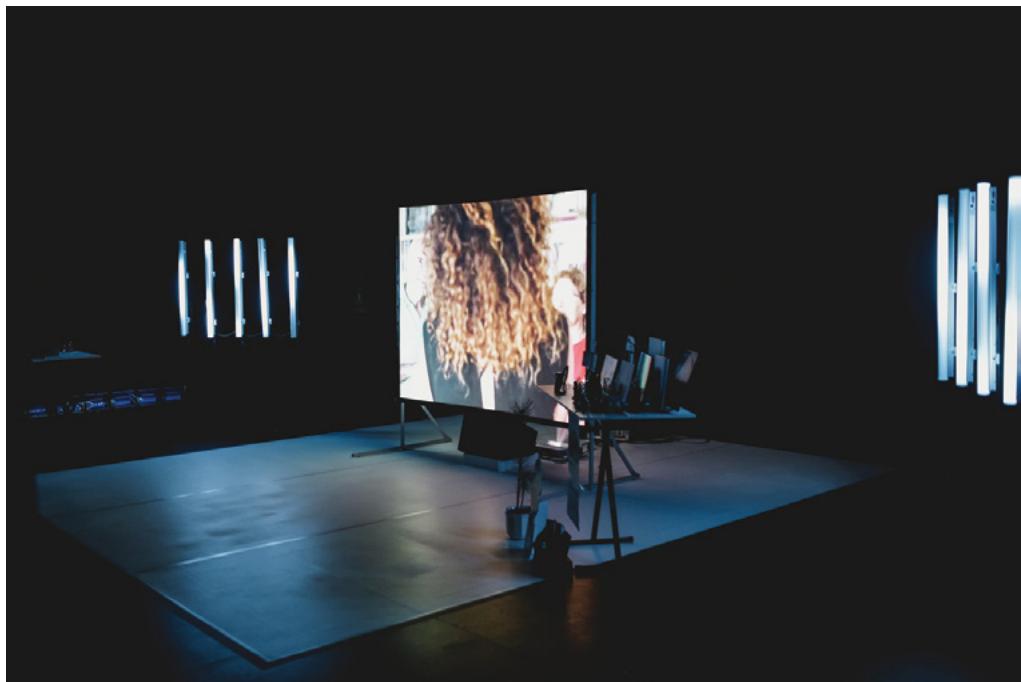
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On the way out, Raquel winks at me at the entrance to the theater, not wanting to interrupt the conversation, a sort of summary of what we both had felt.

- It was her, wasn't it? Over there at the door?
 - she asked me.
- Yes, yes — I replied shyly.
- Yeah, I didn't know, does she usually do that kind of work? — She said half for me, half for a theater worker standing at the door.
- It's better to ask him, he's a journalist — replies the worker, making me blush endlessly.
- Are you a journalist? — she asked.
- No, no, not anymore, but I did — I retorted.

Plotted by the worker, I explained everything. Raquel's work, how I had known her, how her work was important to me, what place the Exhibition of Lovers had in her artistic career. She had only been in Portugal for a short time, and felt some difficulty in knowing which shows to see, which artists to follow, which programs to consult, which theaters to visit. We talked for a while, between cigarettes and suspended thoughts. I didn't know I could be so shy. This idea that I am funny and outgoing. It's possible to be deeply shy and outgoing, I don't know if you knew. She asked me for my phone number, I would be her artistic consultant. She said goodbye.



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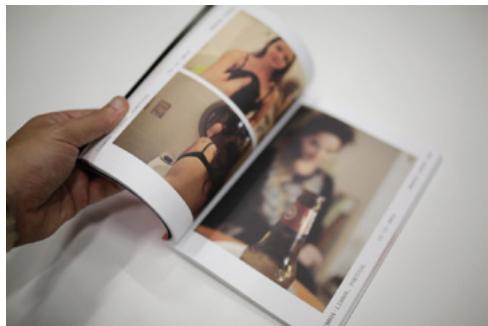
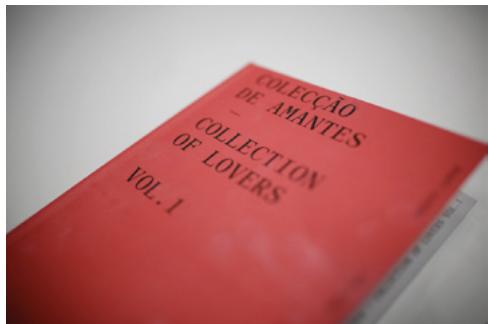
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Raquel came to me immediately, she wanted to know everything. That was it. What had happened was Raquel's work. I've said it a few times and I'll say it again: Raquel's work is a proposal for us to live in another, deeper way. To relate in another way. To look for less comfortable places, which in the end turn out to be so curious and abyssal.

Her name was Flora. A few weeks later, we went to the theater. Raquel was two rows back.

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SEEING HER ARRIVE

ANA VEIGA RISCADO

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INSTRUÇÃO/INSTRUCTION 02

**Guarda uma
coisa minha**

Keep something of mine

info collectionofspectators.com

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ANA VEIGA RISCADO

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Yesterday I've seen a piece from one of my favorite creators. I suffered through the first thirty minutes, because nothing seemed to happen. I thought: Come on, I need you to not disappoint me. I know you're old, but you have to age like the best wines, right? After thinking this, all I remember is the clapping. At the end I said to him: "I really not saw it coming". Those initial thirty minutes were not just the first thirty minutes of a play, they contained all the elements of the theatrical language that would unfold in the following minutes.

Staying close. Raquel André uses this formula for collecting, and this is also the only way to observe and think about her work. Since the time I am close to her is very recent, I still find myself thinking so many times: who, in their right mind, would propose to collect people as an artistic practice? Who would have that much curiosity and faith in humanity? Well, Raquel, apparently. It is true that theater is a community practice and communion, which is a living art, made by people for people, but from there wanting to embrace, and embark on your raft, all the stories of the world, is something else.

We will also never know, like the story of the egg and the chicken, what happened first: if her work, if her way of living artistically. Are those the same thing? Perhaps, at first glance, but at the end of the initial thirty minutes we realize that they are not. We realize that Raquel André, now 36 years old, has a path behind her that reveals that she, since she began to understand herself as people, has jumped out of bed every day to do something related to her work: read one more book, organize another image file, make another budget, another application, another post on social networks announcing the next presentation, call a friend to arrange lunch, see a movie, see an exhibition, think about the next steps. Would those who live entirely in an artistic way be able to activate, experience and document in plays, videos, books, websites, four Collections — of Lovers, of Collectors, of Artists, of Spectators —, which by now represent thousands of stories, ephemeral fragments, questions, places, emotions?



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In her most recent work, the ‘Exhibition of Lovers’, we hear Raquel’s voice guiding us through the labyrinth house lined with photographs, images that crystallized an intimacy she shared with her lovers. She asks us: “Is it really possible to register intimacy? Did it not happen in the moment just before, or just after, the photograph?”. And I ask: “Isn’t this suggestion of what could be, what makes art, Art?”

In this written attempt to once again try to define, grasp, name Raquel André’s artistic work, I have more questions. How do you manage to put yourself at the service of your Art, take care of her and others’ affections, listen to stories of love and success, but also of abuse and violence, applying the collection’s methodology to theatrical scenic creation? How do you manage to do all this work and generously offer what you’ve discovered to the public? How do you feed the curiosity to get to know each other every day, in a virtualized world, where we hide behind screens and are more and more versions of ourselves, and not ourselves? What does Raquel want to tell? What does Raquel want to document? What does she want to prove? An authenticity? The ability to deceive ourselves? The moments when we surrender? The images we build about ourselves? The places we imagine? The people we’d like to be?

I don’t know, “I can not see it coming”, but I know that Raquel is the artist who is writing this story, building this legacy, this community of People, and that what she is doing will serve us all as a lighthouse, in the least hopeful moments and in the moments of celebration, it will be pure joy and pleasure.

Saravá Raquel!



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