

## **SENSITIVE TERRITORIES: PERFORMATIVES RESEARCHERS IN ARTS AND NATURE**

Walmeri Ribeiro, Department of Arts and Culture Studies, Federal Fluminense University, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Email: <ribeiro.walmeri@gmail.com>.

Daniel Quaranta, Department of Music, Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Email: <danielquaranta@gmail.com>.

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### **Abstract**

Inserted in the field of art in dialogue with climate changes research and, particularly, the social impacts in contemporary society, this paper presents the contribution of performative researchers in this area of discussion. It also presents the actions and artistic intervention realized by Sensitive Territories project.

To some researchers who dedicate to the studies on the so-called Anthropocene era, the Arts, with its ability to develop new tools and strategies, can destabilize conventional thoughts about our relations with and in nature [1]. Nevertheless, if the Arts can contribute effectively to the destabilization of the hegemonic thinking capacity of Men's relation with nature and, especially, to the implications of this relationship, the investigation of innovative methodologies, theories, and procedures of creation coming from transdisciplinary research between arts, science and nature is believed to be important. As well as the expansion of those discussions to a wider audience by collaborating with the production of paradigmatic urgent changes in the contemporary world.

However, the urgent nature of the facts that we are facing on a daily basis in our cities, and in our lives, makes us look to art as a field of research that can contribute to the development and expansion of these discussions, and to start changing our way of living and building. An urgent change.

Thinkers from diverse areas of knowledge, with different approaches and opinions, have been discussing the possibilities, on the one hand, of containment the effects of climate change, and on the other, of adaptation of species, especially human, to these changes and their impacts.

For Bruno Latour, "we must create instruments that help us and lead us to think, something I call the "science statistics"

**Fig. 1. Requenguela Beach. Tidal phenomenon. Icapuí, Ceará|Brazil. (© Walmeri Ribeiro)**



and ways of awareness to what they indicate. There is not a lot of people working for us to become more sensitive to what occurs with Gaia. We must rebuild our sensitivity. We must dramatize, consider the end of the world, and then defuse, to analyze critically the issue. In art, we can do both, dramatize and defuse. If we only analyze, not sensitizes, if we just yell "fire", all run away. It takes yelling fire, but getting people to stay in the room and think. In addition, the author points to the need for this awareness so that we can interrupt the continuity of things because "Continuing, today, has a deep relationship with discontinuing, stop what we have done, what is habit. Continuity, today, means discontinue and rebuild entirely" [2].

The Chilean scientists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela [3] says that the survival of an organism depends on the continuous recreation of modes of life, and thus, when we consider the human evolution, including body and environment together, we can see that any biological change in course is completely dominated by environmental and cultural transformations. And, it is extremely important to understand the place of art in this context, because, as says Chantal Mouffe: "it is necessary to enlarge the field of artistic intervention, to interfere directly in the multiplicity of social spaces and capitalism" [4].

But, what is the effective contribution of performative researchers and Performance Art in this context?

According to Brad Haseman [5], performing research aim at a practice that leads to research issues and these are intrinsically experiential. The experiences, emotional and cognitive operations, can lead us to new artistic forms for both the creation and presentation of the research results.

From this approach, we explore investigative processes of creation that have, as guiding axis, the sensitive and in process corporeity, which engenders in the mutual interaction with the space, based on the relationships between body and environment, performance and perception, sensoriality and creative impulses. Proposing that from performing experiences, politics, aesthetic, cognitive and poetic issues can emerge as the field of creative possibilities and the construction of a critical thinking.

Understanding the body as a dynamic system and organizational self, permeated incessantly by the flow of information that takes place in the relationship between body, environment and time, makes us start from performative acts, i.e., the insertion of the body in a performative process of experiential creation.

With the researches developed in our laboratory we also propose a reflection on the own methodology making it an experience and creation device. According with Chantal Mouffe [6] about enlarge the field of artistic intervention, our investigation procedures include both artists as public in experiential and immersive creations.

### **Performative researchers experiments by Sensitive Territories Project**

After a mapping of the coast of the State of Ceará, Brazil, held in 2014, we initiated the research actions in Icapuí, east coast of the State. With approximately 20 thousand inhabitants, Icapuí has as its main economic activity the small-scale fishing of lobster and is composed of 13 beaches with natural landscapes.

On the beach of Requenguela (Fig. 1), with up to 6 miles of retreat, the tidal phenomenon enabled us to an immersion into the environment Sea and the time Tide. The shallow tide phenomenon provided a sensorial body experience that implies in

a spacetime relation, confronting us all the time with the paradox between the microscopic life and the immensity of the sea, with the infinite and the finite, with the full and empty, dry and wet. The fisherman time to fish and to cross this space.

From this research, we started the development of the immersive performing acts. This artistic intervention proposed that the participant/performer may reconnect, from an immersive experience, with natural aspects of specific environments. We inferred that, reconnecting with the natural biosphere, the participant/performer has the opportunity to reconnect with his human biosphere as a sensitive environment, composed of specific landscapes and atmospheres, always moving.

After this first experience, in February 2015, we developed a second research, at the Mucuripe Beach (Fig. 2), located at the center of Fortaleza, capital of Ceará States. Postcard of the city in the past, the Mucuripe Beach, today, keeps a fishing community hidden in town by a siege of trees, but also of invisibility that is established in these locations on the sidelines. “There is a clear rift between beach and asphalt. (...) You do not have to spend a lot of time there to understand the difference between that strip of sand and the rest of the entire beach is precisely the anachronistic survival of that fishing community. (...) A community that is also witness to the transformations of the city and the unbridled real estate speculation, as well as the fishery activity and that sea” [7].

From this performative experience that lasted 3 months, and in the light of the issues we bring to this research, a group of 7 researchers (formed by artists, architects and a biologist) is developing a project that involves performing actions in loco, with fishermen and residents of the place.

### Conclusion

According with Edmond Couchot “The art sharpens our fitness first to create, to penetrate and explore imaginary worlds, as if they had the same thickness of the real worlds, to formulate hypotheses about the direction of the worlds, anticipate their future, enroll in their own temporality and play with the shapes of time” [8].

Thus, by believing that art has the ability to contribute effectively to destabilization of hegemonic thinking of the relation of men with and to Nature and, above all, of the implications of this relation, we intended to show, in this paper, the investigation of procedures, theories and methods from the transdisciplinary research.

With these interventions, we seek to extend, from performing and artistic actions, discussions about climate change and its impacts to a wider audience, in order to cooperate with the production of paradigmatic changes in behavior and in the relationship between men and nature, changes that are urgent in the contemporary world.

In this way, we believe it is possible to transform the look on everyday things through art. The estrangement look at what is given can radically transform our reality and our surroundings.

And so, we go sure that, to continue today, we must discontinue, reflect, propose new directions and, above all, act.



Fig 2. Mucuripe Beach. Fisherman day life. Fortaleza, Ceará|Brazil. (© Fabio José)

### References and Notes

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