DEMOCRACY: A (NON) ARTISTIC INTERVENTION?

Attempts to Perform Democracy Through Art

Carla Cruz

Goldsmiths University of London

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Declaration

The work presented in this thesis is the candidate's own.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

In the light of the contemporary discussions of political theory and philosophy, and current demonstrations regarding democracy, this practice-based research aims to examine the role of art at the dawn of new democratic understandings and practices focusing specifically on the function of the artist as author.

Simultaneously an analysis of current and radical theories around democracy and an exercise of criticality from the practice of art, this project searches for ways of practising, experiencing and understanding democratic values.

The function of the author/artist and its possible re-siting proposes an hypothesis of practising democracy in the 'artworld' that stems from my own artistic practice. Following the proposition of diluting oneself as an artist, this thesis hopes to clarify why we believe that art practices can fulfil a leading role in putting into practice new modes of democracy.

The path outlined by my artistic projects selected for this research suggests a move towards not only the redefinition of the role of the artist, but also what constitutes an artistic gesture. The consequences of the disarticulation of the given triangulation of the art world authorship, artwork and spectatorship that gives an art project its coefficient of visibility and ultimate inscription in the realm of art, are at stake in this research. This particularly holds true for the displacement of the function of the author.

I am looking for new understandings of democracy in art practices, the role of the artist, and her function in the respective projects and the different modes of relationality with either engaged or removed publics. The enquiry into these understandings is motivated primarily by my practice.

My conclusion could lead to an understanding of democracy as a series of encounters with the possibility that the question 'who speaks?' be of no importance at all, opening up a possibility for a different and perhaps more

egalitarian practice and experience of the arts. These conclusions and, subsequently, the types of practice that they might engender can overflow into broader fields and have an effect on different modes of being-together, i.e., the democratic encounter could offer not only a different experience of the arts but also from there be abstracted to a level of experience of other social assemblages.

Contents

Introduction

The initial object of research

What is the connection between the growing interest in participation and collaboration in the arts (practices and institutions), and the decreased participation in civic life? When in 2009 I started this research, I thought I had the answer: participation is a prerequisite for politics and the arts are taking the lead on the path to creating a vision of a more inclusive civic life. I was taking politics merely in the sense of policy and decision-making and democracy was for me its best form, and I thought the arts where the place were an ameliorated form of democracy could be rehearsed. Thus, if I was to correlate participation in the arts, of which I had some experience derived from my previous artistic practice, with citizenship, I had to start by looking more closely at democracy and its problems (what democracy really is and why it seems not to be working), and experiment with different modes of participation, collaboration and cooperation in my practice.

The exploration of research materials was initially devoted to proving the hypothesis that participation, in both spheres, would be the solution to a more robust – i.e. more accountable – democracy and a more democratic – i.e. more inclusive and diverse – artworld.[1] Participation seemed then the solution to the lack of interest in contemporary Western democracy's fundamental institution that of electing representatives. In theory, greater participation would create more accountable governments that would lead to a more dynamic politics that would inspire more people to take part. However, our time has demonstrated that the governments and the institutions we support through them have been deaf to people's demands, especially when they come through unsolicited

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[1] Accountable is used here in the sense of governments being accountable to its citizens and also in its emancipatory sense, as democracy being more inclusive. I will draw a distinction between 'artworld' and 'art worlds' in the following pages.

participation.[2] My assumption was trapped in a double bind. How do we get more participation in the first place and which kind participation is appropriate?

My initial assumption that art practices could be exemplary new forms of participation because there is more liberty, and perhaps more equality, in the arts was also appearing to be a fallacy. As this research developed, I understood that the relationship among participation, democracy and the arts, is more problematic. Participation is not the answer but part of the problem, as I came to understand that disenfranchisement and participation are not the symptom and its remedy, but different manifestations of a more complex notion of democracy.

The reformulated object of research

Thereafter my research question is focused on what democracy is, at its most elementary, and how can artists articulate its vocabulary in their practices. Can artistic practices perform democracy or only represent it?

At the same time that my reflections upon democracy became apparent in practice, i.e., in this research and my artistic practice, from the most diverse places came one demand: 'Real Democracy, NOW!'.[3] The Autonomist philosopher and activist Bifo Berardi describes the 2011 worldwide occupations and fights against capitalism thus:

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[2] An example is the mass demonstrations in the UK in 2003 against the invasion of Iraq that had no consequence on the decisions made by the then UK's prime minister, Tony Blair, who called for war despite a majority of MPs being against it (bbcnews, 2003).

[3] Real Democracy NOW! (¡Democracia Real YA!), is both the slogan from the Spanish political movement of May 15, 2011, and a citizens' organisation, shared among many others around the world, which demands a reformation of democratic institutions through more civic participation part of the global social uprising that emerged from the self-proclaimed indignados (Spanish, outraged). Those engaged in these movements are outraged because as Bifo Berardi describes: '[t]his is a problem of the redistribution of wealth. You have seen the tendency of the last twenty years. Those who have money, have more and more. And those that are poor become a growing army. This tendency has to be subverted. This is the main focus of the movement of Occupy Wall Street […]. It is a problem of redistribution but it is also a problem of cultural change' (Berardi, 2011, no pagination given).

> Right now people are fighting back in many places, and in many ways, Occupy Wall Street inspired a mass mobilization in New York that is extending across the USA every day. In Greece workers and students are squatting Syntagma square and protesting against the blackmail by the European Central Bank, which is devastating the country. Cairo, Madrid, Tel Aviv, the list of the 'movements of the squares' is proliferating. On October 15 cities across the globe will amass with people protesting against the systemic robbery (Berardi et al., 2011, no pagination given).

While protest camps occupied public squares around the world and my research on the essential predicates of democracy progressed, I explored the limitations that art and artists face when incorporating the above criticisms of the current democracy, and I examined the difficulties of implementing democratic values through art.

The embodiment of democracy and its principles of equality and liberty are a crucial legacy of the artworld that all artists (not just the politically committed ones) believe themselves to be the makers and recipients. As critic and curator Andrea Phillips affirms in *Doing Democracy*, a 'structural commitment to participatory democracy crosses contemporary culture, from its institutions, to its practices, to its market' (Phillips, 2009, p.88). Furthermore, '[c]ontemporary cultural productions, particularly in its relational and participatory forms, aim to *produce* democracy' (ibid., my emphasis).

Our contemporary artworld advocates being free and egalitarian by supporting the known maxims: everyone-can-be-an-artist and everything-can-be-art.[4] Moreover, artworld practitioners believe that a better democracy can be articulated through art, and that the artist is a privileged figure in democratic societies – e.g. as a public intellectual (Sheikh, 2004b). Considering the inheritance of the conviction of art's political potential – and its distinct commitment to democracy – and the contemporary struggles for the meaning of

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[4] The legacy of twentieth-century's practices such as those of Joseph Beuys and Marcel Duchamp.

democracy, what democracy consists of is a question that concerns the arts. But, this is not in order to understand which type of democracy cultural production can produce, but rather, as Phillips points out, to verify if democracy can be participated and produced at all. Alternatively, do we need different modes of articulating democracy, not only within the art world but also beyond its supposed borders?

Bearing in mind the political legacy of art, I began this research with the confidence that democratic values are essential to the establishment of a more egalitarian and just society; I am interested in the way my art projects can intervene in this field. This research does not list different types of democracy (e.g. representative, participatory, or cosmopolitan) for it takes as premise that, beyond the different organisational models that democracy can take, there is an essential democratic vocabulary. This vocabulary of democratic values is what I seek to explore. Likewise, I will not look into art projects by other artists that largely discuss an attempt to perform democracy; instead I will only use my own artistic gestures as tools to explore the found vocabulary.[5] This strategy aims not to fall prey to direct transpositions of political procedures to aesthetic ones, which can only seem to lead to the dead-end of total inclusion without any mode of accountability.[6] That is, a version of pluralism that is inclusive as long as real differences are set to the private realm. Aided by a vast range of art theory and art criticism, philosophy, political theory, and four art projects – *State Drawings* (2010), *demoCRACY* (2010), *All My Independent Women* (2005 – ongoing), and *Rastilho* (2012) – that I have realised during this investigation, I will look into the conjunction of radical democratic vocabulary, the artworld and the role of the artist. My attempt will be to solve my investment in a transformative artistic practice that both intervenes in the artworld and the world at large, and

[5] Suzanne Lacy's or Group Material's projects are relevant examples of practices that deal with democratic values.

[6] Antony Gormley's Fourth Plinth project *One & Other* (Gormley, 2009) is an example of the problem of transposing governmental models of democracy to the arts, in this case, participatory democracy. Such a project not only ends up being exploitative of its participants for retaining Gormley's authorship, but also by treating each participant's contribution in the same way without any sense of accountability. As Claire Bishop (2012, p.277) affirms, his is a gesture that does not lead to empowerment but to an endless stream of banality.

the compromises and contradictions an artist will face when attempting to democratise her own practice. The problematisation of each of these three elements will not be circumscribed by a specific chapter; on the contrary, various aspects of democracy, the artistic field and the artist and the complex relationships among them, will appear and re-appear in the following four chapters.

Democracy: an unsurpassable horizon?

Democracy, from any given angle, appears to be troublesome. With that I do not only mean that our contemporary Western democracies have been perverted and are in need of amelioration, but that democracy is in and of itself problematic. My research on democracy in this thesis will cover a vast, but also non-linear, terrain, drawing from ancient Greek philosophy to post-foundational political theory. Democracy is at times understood as a political way to deal with the conflicting passions present in the social terrain and at others it signifies a series of practices and relationships among individuals that correspond democracy with social accountability. The key authors examined in this thesis are the political theorist Chantal Mouffe and the philosopher Jacques Rancière. Both affirm that there are inherent complexities within democracy that are beyond any specific democracy's practices and participatory forms, and they present a different version of democracy to the Western 'post-democracies' we live with.[7]

Besides being engaged in the nature of politics, Mouffe and Rancière also state that aesthetics and politics are not totally independent fields: there is an aesthetic level in politics and a political dimension in aesthetics. That is, there is no *a priori* form of democratic involvement that is prioritised nor is there a specific location for democratic politics. They offer theoretical tools to look for

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[7] Post-democracy should be here understood as what Nick Hewlett has argued as being a form of democracy that 'promotes supposed consensus politics, which is in fact a depoliticised form of government where the people disappears, and one of whose major goals is to keep everyone in their place and not to allow the eruption of real politics' (Hewlett, 2007, p.110).

traces of democratic practices within artistic encounters between artistic gestures and their audiences without recourse to blueprinting existing political democratic models. This approach to political and aesthetic theories has drawn many artists, curators, critics and theorists to appropriate and draw upon their arguments when searching for a meaningful way of producing, presenting and analysing social-political committed practices.

Together with Mouffe and Rancière, I will bring the political theorist Jodi Dean to this debate to challenge our (mine and art's) stubborn affiliation to democracy, for she affirms that affiliation with democratic discourse and solutions avoids being accountable not only for current failures, but also in really engaging in the imagination of a different way of doing politics. Furthermore, I will bring feminist theory and critique and radical pedagogies to enlarge this discussion.

Supporting a myriad of art worlds

My experiences of the democratisation of my practice often face constraints established by the artworld's institutions and structures. In this thesis I will describe and often challenge these structures, I will clarify here what I understand by artworld and art worlds.

We know that the art world(s) is a multiverse rather than a universe, although as producers in the arts we are faced with some conceptual structures that render some of our experiences invisible, un-artistic, amateur, unpaid or forcefully voluntary, marginal, etc., without constituting a sense of belonging to an alternative scene or different one, but more a sense of exclusion from a desired circle – the artworld. I will use two main descriptions to approach this idea of the existence of a hegemonic artworld, i.e. how a singular idea of the artworld is being engendered and the ways art comes to be understood as such within that singular artworld and who can be identified as an artist. Critic Stephen Wright's description that an art work is conjured by a specific triangulation of 'objecthood, authorship, and spectatorship' that gives it its 'coefficient of visibility' (Wright, 2007). Artist Alana Jelinek discussion of the artworld as a social construction

predicated on consensus formation by all of those involved in its activites. Jelinek stresses that although the artworld is supposedly based on accessibility and possibility, i.e., everyone can be an artist and everything can be art, the artworld, she suggests, is actually based on meritocracy, exclusivity, and open market models (i.e. based on prejudice and favour). Jelinek states that:

> In understanding that the definition of art is subject to social pressures and discourse, we see that although no single person or institution has the power to define art, together or collectively we each contribute to its definition. This is an important idea in that it allows us to understand ourselves as agents, not passively receiving artworld beneficence or neglect, but as constituting it (Jelinek, 2013, p.45).

Departing from a notion of individual emancipation, Jelinek affirms her goal is to emphasise 'individual agency within systems of power' (ibid., p.145). Nevertheless, I would suggest that only with the conglomeration of individual practices can it be transformative. In the meantime what can an artist or an aspiring artist do, single-handedly, against the artworld consensus? Artist Gregory Sholette discloses the truth behind the artworld universe fiction: an invisible mass that he calls creative 'dark matter'. However, this mass does not necessarily 'knit together a sustained politics and they are not inherently progressive or democratic' (Sholette, 2011, p.188). Sholette invites us to imagine the potential challenge to the artworld current consensus that this dark matter holds, but he rightly asks: 'What would it take to politicize this dark mass of redundant cultural production and what might this politics look like?' (ibid., p.117).

This singular artworld benefits from an anonymous creative mass. It praises inclusivity, but remains exclusive. It exists by what we affirm and re-affirm through our practices and discourses. It conjures artworks through the triangulation of authorship, spectatorship and objecthood, but also as Wright (2013) affirms, in it today, authorship has 'overtaken objecthood as a monetisable commodity'. It is this artworld that not only defines itself as democratic, but also proclaims holding a privilege position regarding promoting

the right type of democracy.

The curator Charles Esche, after questioning the role of art institutions when faced with having to fight for subsistence funding on the same grounds as 'other forms of consumer entertainment', concludes that '[p]erhaps only as identified and acknowledged spaces of "democratic deviance" can cultural palaces be justified at all in the twenty-first century, not least to the culturally active themselves' (Esche, 2004, p.4). He affirms the locus of artistic exposure as the privileged one for fostering 'democratic deviance' – an inevitable component of a true democracy – and at the same time, deviance, as being the only justification for their existence and support. That is, what makes these institutions critical of state democracy by performing a democracy that exists below and beyond state apparatuses is also what makes them relevant for those apparatuses and thus beneficiaries of state funding. But how are we to understand which deviances he is referring to and furthermore, what is democratic about them?

Challenging the artist as privileged agent

As the position that I embody in this this research is that of the artist, it is important to address some of the preconceived notions regarding that figure.

If traditionally artists have been seen as individuals with specific manual skills, since the nineteenth century, the artist has been seen as a 'special kind of person', with the emphasis less consigned to her skills than her sensibility. As Raymond Williams (1993, p.44, italics in original) affirms:

> From *artist* in the new sense there were formed *artistic* and *artistical*, and these, by the end of the nineteenth century, had certainly more reference to 'temperament' than to skill or practice.

It is from this Romantic conception of the artist as an autonomous genius that artists came to see themselves as 'agents of the "revolution for life", in their capacity as bearers of the creative imagination' (ibid., p.42). This model had

several challenges, from the feminist critique of the artist ideal based on the white male middle-class artist, to postmodernist suspicion of the existence of individual authorship, emphasising the role of the reader against the artist's custody of meaning and agency. Writer and artist Trinh T. Minh-ha poignantly reveals this problematic surrounding the author:

> Laying emphasis on the prestige of the individual and on the search for an explanation of the work in the wo/man who produces it (thereby perpetuating the myth of the original writer), literature remains completely dominated by the sovereignty of the author. On the one hand, the castrating objectivism of the 'universal' writer; on the other hand, the obsessive personalism of the 'singular' writer (Minh-ha, 1989, p.29).

One of the suppositions in this thesis is that a way of addressing this problematic could rise from collaboration. Curator Maria Lind finds that artists involve themselves in collaboration or collective practices because 'for some this offers an alternative to the individualism that dominates the art world, for some it is understood as a way of re-questioning both artistic identity and authorship through self-organization' (Lind, 2009, p.53). However, she also rightly asks, 'to what degree can collaborative practices claim agency against the cult of the individual?' We should not forget that the artworld has the remarkable capacity of incorporating its own critiques and it does not matter how 'obscure or seemingly radical one's creative activity may be there is an avaricious interest at work within the art world's restricted economy, a hunger not only for the new, but for everything' (Sholette, 2011, p.213). Art critic Craig Owens, quotes the artist Michael Asher positioning the artist as just one role among many in the production of his 1977 exhibition at the Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven:

> By clearly distinguishing and specifically presenting the different participants (work, crew, curator, artist) that make an exhibition possible at such an institution, I wanted to show how these necessary but separate functions are equally essential for the constitutions of a work. (Asher quoted in Owens, 1992, p.134)

In this statement Asher is affirming that art production is inherently collective,

nonetheless, Owens stresses, this should not serve to encourage artists to collaborate among each other, rather it should help to defetishise the work of art. So, even if artistic creation is seen as inherently collective and often collaborative, the pervasive imaginary within the artworld is still that the nature of the creative process is singular and individual. Which makes authorship appear as an act of power. The artist Susan Kelly, speaking about authoring projects in the context of social movements, suggests that authoring is appropriating collective knowledge and 'is often experienced as profoundly patronising and alienating for those involved […] and creating divisive hierarchical splits' (Kelly, 2013, p.6), while, as Sholette (2011) highlights, the art world is increasingly unequal and based on the success of a few (individual artists or collectives) because it generates artistic value from scarcity.

Collectively or singularly authoring, the artist as a privileged figure in our Western democratic societies is still a predominant model. Curator Simon Sheikh, for instance, writes that:

> The artist as a producer is thus dependent on the apparatus through which he or she is threaded, through specific, historically contingent modes of address and reception. The artist is, in other words, a specific public figure that can naturally be conceived in different ways, but which is simultaneously always already placed or situated in a specific society, given a specific function (Sheikh, 2004b, p.1).

And that function for Sheikh is dealing with the relationship between the apparatus surrounding art (the discursive frame) and the communicational potential of art's productions. This function is that of being a public intellectual. Based on contemporary readings of the Habermasian public sphere – understood as plural – and on readings of Gramsci and Rancière – that all men are intellectuals. Sheikh asks us to understand intellectuals, as those 'producing a public through the mode of address *and* the establishment of platforms of counter publics' (Sheikh, 2004b, p.2, italics in original).[8] Referring to Michael

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[8] Counterpublic being one that is in opposition to a dominant one, not only in the content but also in the mode of speech (Warner, 2002).

Warner's work (2002), Sheikh believes that the idea of this public intellectual is no longer the disinterested rational figure of the bourgeois literary public sphere (Habermas, 1989), but an affiliated one. Thus the public intellectual of today is not reproducing a rational universal public sphere, but rather, is producing a diversity of publics. Accordingly, creating alternative networks and counterpublics is what Sheikh thinks the function of the artist is.

Wright affirms that more democratic art-sustaining environments would promote a wider range of art practices to emerge and become influential; and Jelinek believes that a more varied production would inaugurate a more democratic art world. For Sheikh, the artist is a key operator that can connect different fields, and moreover, she can also create new and potentially transformative ones. Jelinek and Wright seem to neglect the modes of organisation and solidarity necessary so that different ways of doing and making, individual or collective, can coalesce into new artistic institutions (physical and discursive). As Sheikh states, it is necessary to establish networks outside the arts fields, 'to compare and mediate practices as well as theories' (Sheikh, 2004b, p.4).

Furthermore, however positive the function of opening up new and diverse worlds can be, we must also engage in Gayatri Spivak's project of 'unlearning our privilege as our loss' (Spivak quoted in Trend, 1992, p.26) by realising that positions of privilege are often accompanied by blindness. With this, I intend to point at the paradoxical role of the artist today when what is at stake is the democratisation of her artistic practice, and her involvement in a power game between authorship and authority. In this investigation, through my artistic projects and in different chapters, I will look into various roles taken by the artist and her positions of authority. In the final chapter, I will take a closer look at the problematic of authorship into the possibilities and consequences of sharing authority along with authorship.

My artistic tools

The four projects I will discuss throughout this thesis are all part of my artistic practice. I call them tools instead of case studies, because like the theoretical and philosophical bodies of work used in this thesis, these projects have led my investigation. In using examples of my own artistic practice as tools to unfold the concerns of this research I do not attempt to make them models of good practice. The specificities of each work and my approach in them are related to the development of this research, and again their relationship to the thesis is not that of practice to theory but rather how they constitute one facet of the materialisation of this research project. This is better described as praxis, in the sense that pedagogue Paulo Freire uses the term as connoting simultaneous action and critical reflection. (I will bring Freire's work into Chapter Four to help me discuss the privilege of the artist as author). At times it was difficult to gain a critical distance from these projects, especially when looking at the position of the artist within them; but on the other hand, and exactly for this reason, I have a privileged position to understand the role of the artist in the production of new democratic encounters and the problems that arise from such endeavours. It is difficult to analyse how a project sits in a web of social-political relations, while at the same time being in the middle. Moreover, it was particularly complex to experiment with my practice knowing that the development and analysis of a project directly influences my subsequent activities as an artist. However, as tools in the making, I could adapt them to my own research purposes and through them push some of the suppositions to their limits.

The four projects, *State Drawings* (2010), *demoCRACY* (2010), *All My Independent Women* (2005 – ongoing) (referred to as AMIW), and *Rastilho* (2012) articulate in a quite distinct manner, as I will argue in the following four chapters, the relationship between democracy, the artworld as a field of democratic practice and the artist as a potentially democratic operator.

The four chapters

The first chapter examines democracy through the perspective of Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière aided by *State Drawings*, a series of drawings I produced in 2010 that were used to negotiate different visions of how to organise society politically. Through juxtaposing both Mouffe and Rancière's ideas and my attempt to draw political constitutions, I will extract notions from the democratic vocabulary and make a case for democracy as something other than our existing post-democracies. Simultaneously, I will ask if art can only represent democracy or if it can also perform it. This chapter begins by looking closely at Plato and Aristotle's ideas of the perfect political organisation of the social, analysed through my drawings of those same ideals. Using the same tactic, I look at the difficulties encountered when drawing Mouffe and Rancière's democracy and simultaneously explore their propositions on how to conceive the political and politics against stable models such as the Greek ideals. Conflict, pluralism and accountability emerge as key disputes in all models, and the modes of addressing them constitute the main difference in these authors' thoughts and reveal potential uses and/or misuses of art and politics.

In the second chapter*,* I will explore the democratic notion of conflict through Mouffe's belief that art has the capacity to create agonistic encounters, and thus, in its critical guise, it can contribute to the emergence of 'real' democracy. Following Mouffe's argument that art is political precisely by the way it maintains or challenges the symbolic order, my art work *demoCRACY* is here utilised as a tool to understand if art can reveal the different levels of opacity of the symbolic order, i.e. the current democratic consensus. *demoCRACY* is the installation of an electoral device in which participation is twisted to evoke a false sense of efficacy. *demoCRACY* is composed of a ballot box, and ballots that pose the following question: Would you like to participate? The audience could select one of three responses: yes, no and none of the above. Mimicking the models of participation in the arts and in democratic governance, the piece invited the public to vote, but their action was frustrated, for when they actually attempted to deposit their ballot they found that the box was closed. It questions the

possibility of art dealing with conflicts and opening up an agonistic public space. Through the use of the logic of Mouffe's hegemonic processes, or how a symbolic order is established and naturalised, I will examine the emergence of dialogical public spheres as a necessary democratic divisive principle in pluralist societies. Furthermore, I will not only look at the possibility of revealing consensus around notions of democracy, but also the consensus of art itself. Can *demoCRACY* be critical regarding art world consensus, or will it reveal a complicit participation within it instead of presenting itself as an alternative?

The third chapter looks at AMIW to understand the democratic notion of difference and the problematics of attempting to present an alternative model to the artworld. Taking the 2010 AMIW's exhibition project as a model, and its particular relation to a 1972 Portuguese feminist book, the *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (*New Portuguese Letters – NPL*), I attempt to understand how art can actually contribute to the plurality of the art world(s), and if being in difference – i.e., not just different from but different as to propose an alternative – can constitute a democratic instantiation in the arts.[9] AMIW is a feminist exhibition project that through its invitation strategy, which is based on friendship, has woven a community of over ninety internationally based artists. The *NPL* served AMIW as a cartographical strategy to navigate the artworld with a feminist ethos, looking for different ways of doing and making. Through their juxtaposition in practice, I challenge AMIW's initial agenda of visibility and recuperation, and search for new modes of emancipation and accountability.

The fourth chapter takes the democratic notion of accountability and the art project *Rastilho* to investigate if democratic encounters are located in practices of equality. Democracy is here understood as a Rancièrian radical recognition of equality, and the art project attempts to perform this idealised form of democracy. I will be departing from the following hypothesis, that collective artistic practice is more egalitarian than individually authored practice. Based on

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[9] I use instantiation here as Andrea Phillips does: 'democracy is not a format into which we participate, but one that we *instantiate* through the continual assertion of equality' (Phillips, 2009, p.97, my italics).

that belief, I want to explore collaboration in a very specific form of relationship, the one between artist and non-artist participants. I will examine if collective practices, established between artists and members of the public, could question the privilege of the artist within those specific practices. For this, I will use *Rastilho*, Rancière and Paulo Freire's radical pedagogies as my main critical tools. In *Rastilho* ('fuse') I engaged with former employees – mostly women – of the textile industry from the north of Portugal, in conversations about the socio-economical condition of workers in their region. *Rastilho* aimed at exploring issues related to the demobilisation of industrial production, the weakening of labour and the consequent feminisation of poverty and, through these issues, to create a collective artistic gesture. In this project I collaborated with an already existing group, based at a textile factory in Pevidém Portugal. In the end, the outcome was the emergence of a community group, RASTILHO which reclaimed an empty public building to be used as a cultural centre.

The broader context of this research

Contemporary debates around democracy in the visual arts have, in the past two decades, developed through questions of participation. In those debates, participation in the arts and citizenship are closely linked. Of the art work, it is asked if it is for 'the people', or if it encourages participation, and more generally of the arts it is asked if it relinquishes elitism and if it is accessible to various publics (Deutsche, 1992, p. 36).

However, as aforementioned, that democracy is primarily expressed through the theme of participation is a problematic account. Rancière asserts that:

> The idea of participation blends two ideas of different origins: the reformist idea of necessary mediations between the centre and the periphery, and the revolutionary idea of the permanent involvement of citizen-subjects in every domain (Rancière, 1995, p.60).

Rancière critiques the mixture of mediation and engagement that creates a democracy that merely fills in 'spaces left empty by power' (ibid.). He questions

if democracy isn't rather in the capacity to 'shift the sites and forms of participation?' (ibid.).

Participation, thus, appears as part of the democratic problem rather than the answer; and if participation has been equated with inclusion and diversity, we have to be as suspicious of its panacean nature in politics as in the arts. Architect and writer Markus Miessen reminds us that we need to question the 'innocence of participation' and 'challenge the idea that – in general – people have good intentions' (Miessen, 2010b, p.27). Miessen further asserts that:

> Conventional models of participation are based on inclusion. They assume that inclusion goes hand-in-hand with a standard that is the democratic principle of everyone's voice having an equal weight within an egalitarian society. […] Usually, through the simple fact of proposing a structure or situation in which this bottom-up inclusion is promoted, the political actor or agency proposing it will most likely be understood as a 'do-gooder', a social actor or even a philanthropist. In the face of permanent crisis, both the Left and the Right have celebrated participation as the saviour from all evil, an unquestioned form of soft politics (ibid.).

In Britain, it was under the New Labour government (1997-2010) that 'participation became an important buzzword in the social inclusion discourse' (Bishop, 2012, p.13). Art critic Claire Bishops argues that:

> for New Labour […] to be included and participate in society means to conform to full employment, have a disposable income and be self-sufficient. It is tempting to do an equation […] between the value of a work of art and the degree of participation it involves, turning the Ladder of Participation into a gauge for measuring the efficacy of artistic practice.[10]

For Bishop, New Labour is valuing art projects and institutions alike by the numbers it can engage. However, as aforementioned, models of democracy in society do not necessarily translate into models of democracy in arts, and vice-

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[10] Bishop is here referring to Sherry R. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, where Arnstein presents eight types of participation, subdivided into non-participation, tokenism and citizen power.

versa. Moreover, in many cases democracy appears in the arts as thematic content rather than as methodology. For this reason, I choose to support my research by using Mouffe and Rancière's focus on democracy, on a political and aesthetic level, instead of articulating my arguments through the discourses of art theory and its focus on participation.

To be sure, this research is situated in the context of debates related to relational, participatory, community and social art. Thus, to demonstrate the complexity of arguments in this field and the relevance of my contribution to it, I will now focus on the particular discussion of the autonomy of the art work and the sovereignty of the artist qua singular individual. According to Claire Bishop there is a social turn in the art world, that is, a 'recent surge of artistic interest in collectivity, collaboration, and direct engagement with specific constituencies' (Bishop, 2006a, p.179). Maria Lind (2009) have also identified collaboration as a growing trend in the art world(s):

> Collaboration is […] a central method in contemporary art today. Artists groups, circles, associations, networks, constellations, partnerships, alliances, coalitions, contexts and teamwork – these are notions that have been buzzing in the air of the artworld over the last two decades (Lind, 2009, p.53).

However, Tom Finkelpearl (2013) affirms that collaboration has not become paradigmatic of contemporary artistic practice. Collaboration is too far-reaching, and in Finkelpearl's view, in most artistic gestures, 'not all of the participants are equally authors of these projects' and even 'the projects on the de-authored side of the spectrum involve a self-identified artist who can claim the title of the initiator or orchestrator of the cooperative venture' (Finkelpearl, 2013, p.6).

These practices have existed, however marginally, since early modernity; thus it would be more correct to affirm that there is an interest of the art mainstream in these practices, and together with it, more analysis and categorisation.

> This expanded field of relational practices currently goes by a variety of names: socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogical art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based, or collaborative art (Bishop, 2006a, p.179).

Grant Kester concurs that there is a 'renaissance' of collaborative and collective practices, however, because these projects differ considerably from object-based art practice, 'existing art theory […] oriented primarily towards the analysis of individual objects and images understood as the product of a single creative intelligence' (Kester, 2006, p.10) fails to analyse practices in which there is no pre-conceived object/event produced by an artist.

The terms have been discussed widely, especially what can be understood by participation, collaboration and collective authoring and their relevance to the aesthetic experience and/or activism. Participation has been extensively problematised by Marcus Miessen (2007) and David Beech (2008). The participation of people as matter in art works – as in some of the 'relational aesthetics'' (Bourriaud, 2007) projects where the audience appears as part of the technical description of an intervention – as a social gathering free of conflict and instrumentalisation is questioned. Collaboration has been widely discussed by Johanna Billing and Maria Lind (Billing and Lind, 2007) and by Doug Ashford (2006, p.17) as a 'call for non-normative models' of artistic practice. Collective authoring, as the usage given by the audience, is celebrated by Stephen Wright (2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2008a, 2008b); as the collaboration between artists and individuals and groups from other social and political subcultures discussed by Grant Kester (2004, 2006); and as the appropriation of one member of a collective on its own behalf by Susan Kelly (2013); and finally as a social construction of the art world(s) we are engaged with by Gregory Sholette (2011).

The particular disagreements between Bishop and the art critic Grant Kester, who has contributed largely to the analysis and discussion of collaborative art, highlight some of the core issues surrounding collaborative practices. These

issues are, to name just a few, authorship, participation vs. collaboration, agency, aesthetics, quality vs. equality and ethics.

The well-known argument about utilitarian art and art for art's sake stands as the ultimate horizon within this discussion. Where Bishop's arguments stand as concerned with the disappearance of critical art due to the rise of authorial renunciation, Kester's arguments welcome such experimentation in favour of challenging the status quo, or the consensus around autonomy and authorship. To summarise some of the arguments, Claire Bishop's focus regarding these practices is on the lack of analysis of their effects – that is, the reception of the work, its aftermath and aesthetic relevance. Bishop states 'that most participatory art disregards spectatorship' (Bishop, 2012, p.9) and criticises that '[t]here can be no failed, unsuccessful, unresolved, or boring works of collaborative art because all are equally essential to the task of strengthening the social bond' (Bishop, 2006a, p.180). Indeed, she argues, that the social turn has produced an ethical turn. Where these practices are measured in terms of their well-doing, Bishop turns to Jacques Rancière, to claim that 'aesthetic does not need to be sacrificed to the altar of social change, because it always already contains this ameliorative promise' (Bishop, 2012, p.29). For her, the danger of the ethical turn is a rejection of the art world's own standards and definitions of what an artist is, what art is and where is the right place to experience it. So, whilst Bishop is interested in authored art works that seek to provoke the audiences, Grant Kester differentiates between collaboration and participation of scripted encounters. Kester questions Bishop's concern regarding the lack of discussion around the artistic and aesthetic or for not maintaining a sufficient degree of 'ironic detachment' (Kester 2013, p.120). He argues that there are different ways of producing critical insight, and that 'the conventional avant-garde technique of an artist-administered ontic disruption is only one of them' (ibid, p.121). His main interest is how collaborative practices break down the artists' 'custodial relationship to the viewer' (ibid, p.123). Dialogical art processes might have physical forms, but these don't necessarily have a privileged role as a locus of aesthetic significance. Moreover, Kester examines

how the figure of the singular 'auratic' artist remains the consensual template for most of arts' discourses, and he is interested in creative tendencies that complicate notions of authorship.

I distance myself from Bishop's arguments because she fails to acknowledge that just as the practices in this field reach out towards the social they are also criticising the art world(s) and experimenting with different ways of doing and making. As such, the lack of standards she identifies in collaborative practices could be seen as a radical proposition. That is, spectatorship not being disregarded, as she claims, but challenged by different possibilities of engaging with art that are not spectacular. Thus, instead of acknowledging, as Kester does, that spectatorship is radically shifted through collaboration, Bishop wishes art and artists to retain a custodial relationship with viewers. However, the political potential of art can also be reactionary and not only ameliorative. However, as a practitioner, my main disagreement with Bishop regards her idea that art within this field uses people as medium. I am more interested in Kester's propositions of challenging the authorial function, and I will give more attention to his arguments in Chapter Two.

Methodology

My methodology has been to investigate my own practice in terms of the debates exposed in this introduction. Whilst there have been important art projects that directly or indirectly deal with democracy, which inform my practice, I will not refer to other artists or art project in this research.[11] Instead, I will build on my experience of working with different situations and conditions, from being a commissioned artist in international exhibitions, represented by a

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[11] For example, and just to mention a few, Mierle Laderman Ukeles' (1977-80) *Touch Sanitation*, Suzanne Lacy's (1987) *The Crystal Quilt*, Group Material's (1981 and 1988) *The People's Choice* (*Arroz con Mango*) and *Democracy: Education*, Martha Rosler's (1989) *If you Lived Here*, Park Fiction's (1994) *Park Fiction*, Minerva Cuevas' (1998-) *Mejor Vida Corp.*, WochenKlausur's (2000 and 2002) *Civic Participation in Public Space,* and *Voting systems*, Colectivo Cambalache's (1999-2002) *Museo de la Calle*, Oda Projesi's (2000-05) projects in a flat in Galata, Jeanne van Heeswijk's (2005) *Blue House*, Ricardo Basbaum's (2012) *(Re)projetando* all deal with instantiations of democracy.

commercial gallery, to being a curator and producer, working with local communities and diversified audiences, and in self-organised projects. It is this diversity of experience and proximity to the participants, which constitute my fieldwork that allowed me to push the limits of my interrogations (for example, the question of the role of the authorial function in legitimating the work of art and dividing people into active and passive roles). Furthermore, this methodology emerges from an awareness of the necessary impact that a practice-led research has on the researcher's art practice. Examining my practice and putting it forward as a tool of inquiry consciously promoted this *affect*.

Chapter 1: Drawings of Political Constitutions and the Democratic Trouble: Contemporary Thought on Democracy, Contrasting the Theories of Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière

This chapter proposes considering democracy through the perspectives of Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière, which will be interwoven with the analysis of a series of drawings I made throughout 2010. In so doing, I will be looking at democracy as less a matter of fact (an actual organisation of the political based in a fundamental equality and the sovereignty of the people and its historical manifestations), and more as a matter of substance. From the study I will extract democracy's basic predicates to foster an argument for the role of art in the exercise of democratic encounters.

I will begin by looking closely at Plato and Aristotle's ideas of the perfect political organisation of the social, which is to be analysed through my drawings. Using the same tactic, I will later look at the difficulties encountered when drawing Mouffe and Rancière's democracy in visual terms and simultaneously explore their propositions on how to conceive democracy beyond the actual existing one.

Prologue

While reading Aristotle's *Politica* (1921) at the start of 2010, I began to give shape to some of the propositions of a 'good' state and other forms of government that I was engaging with through political theory. The result was the production of a series of drawings in various shades of yellow-coloured pencils that depict a geometric solid for different types of political systems. The way in which Plato's republic differed from Aristotle's polity is one of the questions that animates these constructions. Is the organisation of the 'good' state vertical or horizontal? Who is a part of this state, even if this part does not mean citizenship? Are there privileged members and, if so, where do they stand? Are

some groups excluded? If so, how and why? How is conflict among different parts, visible and invisible, managed? These questions appeared and materialised through the comparative reading of political theory and philosophy but also through the exercise of drawing. Thus, the drawings are here used to negotiate the different visions of how to organise society politically, but also to observe the potential and the limits of art practices when faced with representing and re-imagining those same organisations.
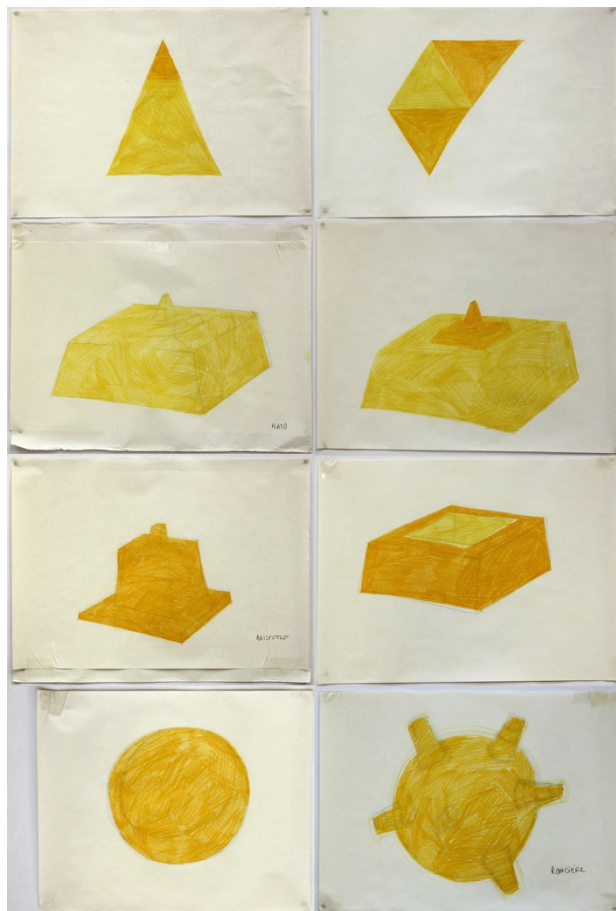
Fig. 1 *State Drawings* 2010, clockwise from top left*: Untitled #1, Untitled #2, Plato's Republic #1, Inversion of Plato's Republic, Rancière's Democracy, Chantal Mouffe's Democracy #1, Aristotle's Perfect State* and *Plato's Republic #2*.[12]

In the *Republic,* Plato (1997) transcribes a supposed conversation between Socrates and some young Athenians in which they seek to define the 'good city', one that can unify all citizens under a just governance. This city is

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[12] See detailed reproductions of *State Drawings* in appendix one*.*

discussed by the party as a living body; and in their reasoning, the appetite is the largest element in an individual, followed by courage. As both appetite and courage are governed by the smallest element, the individual's reason, likewise the city, should be ruled by a few wise men or by a king, helped by soldiers and a larger amount of auxiliaries. Accordingly, in the drawing *Plato's Republic #1* (Fig. 1), the polyhedron has a large quadrangular base topped by a smaller and thinner square-based level with a tiny truncated square based pyramid on its top. Plato defends this political structure, one with no place for social mobility, mainly through what has come to be called the myth of the metals:

> You are doubtless all brethren, as many as inhabit the city, but the god who created you mixed gold in the composition of such of you as are qualified to rule, which gives them the highest value; while in the auxiliaries he made silver an ingredient, assigning iron and copper to the cultivators of the soil and the other workmen (Plato, 1997, pp.106-107).

Through this ontology we are led to believe that individuals are essentially different, and that according to their essence children would be provided with a specific education which would mould their bodies and minds and, in time, their future positions in society. Furthermore, Plato affirms that for the city to be a good one, each man should conform to perform the single task – be it shoemaker or philosopher – that is assigned to him according to his gifts (the metal in his soul) and training (dependent on the metal of the soul). Even though for Plato this soul's essence is not hereditary, once identified, the way someone is assigned a role is irreversible. The rulers are the only ones that watch the nature of children and identify the metal mixed in their souls by the gods. If Plato's solution for political conflicts resides precisely in each individual acting according to his assigned role, subsequently, each individual is also giving away his sovereignty to a social order that bases its logic in a transcendental right. Just as the individual accepts his given nature and performs his assigned task, as a cog in a machine, the drawing defines the different geometric solids that compose the *Republic,* not only through different sizes and shapes but also with different shades of yellow. The purpose is to highlight the stationary aspect of this particular political organisation.

The sense of duty and participation in the happiness of the city (polis), and in one's own well-being, appears to be what keeps the different castes in place and thus keeps at bay the spectre of democracy (which is, according to Plato, a corruption of the 'good' state). However, to repel democracy, not only the logic that keeps everyone in place needs to be of a transcendental order, but something quite particular that Plato finds threatening to the goodness of the city needs to be banned: poetry. As Rancière (2004) widely analyses it, it is not only poetry that is banned, but also politics, or the ban is an initiative to depoliticise the polis, to erase conflict. It is not merely poetry that is problematic in the eyes of Plato, but the poetry that possesses a performative character, theatre. As Rancière notes:

> The same partition of the sensible withdraws a political stage by denying to the artisans any time for doing something else than their own job and an 'artistic' stage by closing the theatre where the poet and the actors would embody another personality than their own. The same configuration of the space-time of the community prevents for both of them the possibility of making two things at once, putting the artisan out of politics and the mimetician out of the city. Democracy and the theatre are two forms of the same partition of the sensible, two forms of heterogeneity, that are dismissed at the same time to frame the republic as the 'organic life' of the community (Rancière, 2002, no pagination given).

The actor embodies the dramatic or the comic aspects of other people's lives as well as revealing the *Republic*'s political construction – that people are innately different. The duplicity of voices and the contradiction of passions that the actor embodies and the duplicity of theatre/poetry goes against Plato's division of the society according to a transcendental order. Plato affirms that for an actor (or a poet, in his illustration) to write well, he must 'possess a knowledge of his subject, or else he could not write at all' (Plato, 1997, p.328), but at the same time the poet is an imitator, depicting only the appearance of what subjects might be or feel, which in Plato's perspective is completely removed from truth and can only excite in the region of the soul of the that is removed from reason.

But what for Plato is a meagre representation of truth is understood by Rancière as the subversive disposition of someone who can perform the equality underlying the nature of king, craftsman and soldier. Poetry causes disagreement regarding the legitimacy of the roles played in society, and accordingly, to avoid such strife, Plato excluded politics from his republic (Rancière, 2009a). Politics should here be understood as Rancière does, as being the conflict between different parts of society and society's self-representation which excludes parts of it. The conflict is the insertion of parts of the social that where once invisible to the given representation of society; politics is thus an act of emancipation.

Reacting to Rancière's reading of Plato, I made a new version of *Plato's Republic* (Fig. 1). If the first version was coloured in three shades of yellow according to the different parts – with an underlying paper with the graphite drawing of the outlines of those parts, stressing their water tightness – the second version needed to be coloured in one single shade of yellow (Fig. 1) to represent Rancière's presupposed equality. By equalising the surface the emphasis is placed on the lie that is underneath – the same graphite drawing of the outlines of the partitions of the social. As Rancière notes, 'the conventional logic has it that there is a particular disposition to act that is exercised upon a particular disposition to "be acted upon"' (Rancière, 2001, no pagination given). This leads to the distribution of the sensible according to a particular disposition of the soul. Experienced together, both versions of *Plato's Republic* (#1 and #2, Fig. 1) interact with one another; they represent and contest Plato's vision. However, when compared with the capacity Rancière attributes to theatre – making visible the contingent nature of the different parts counted in society (drawn in the underlying sheet of paper with graphite) – could the *State Drawings* pose the same danger? Or are they inadequate when compared with what theatre can do?

Following the same method, Aristotle's (1921) 'good' state produces a different shape. Aristotle's perfect 'polity' has a much bigger central section that could be

identified as the middle class, which according to him, should be the bigger part of society, for as he argues, in a city composed of equals, the tendency to plot against each other is reduced. This middle class is supported by a base of slaves who perform the mechanical work and crowned by a small class of rulers (Fig. 1). According, to Aristotle, a society is called a state when it has a collective aim and when it aims at the highest good. If this good is of the state itself and not of each citizen as individual, then the state will be a good one. It is natural, says Aristotle, that this state will have rulers and subjects and be governed in a way 'where every man can act best and live happily' (Aristotle, 1921, Book VII2-1324a), and the rulers are the citizens:

> He who has the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of any state is said by us to be a citizen of that state – a state is a body of citizens sufficing for the purpose of life (ibid., Book III1-1275b).

Is then my depiction correct by including the portion of slaves, who contribute to the functioning of the state, but who, according to Aristotle, are not part of the state? Happiness is once more the goal of the state, which is bound to wisdom and not to material possessions, and to be peopled by wise citizens who need not to be solely engaged in day-to-day survival; the later is achieved by having property. Here, a vicious cycle becomes visible: those who are wise will be entrusted with property, and those with property and free time will certainly be wiser. So, citizens are entrusted with property, which is maintained by the labour of slaves, and ultimately property ownership is the condition to rule. Therefore Aristotle's aristocracy is, in fact, an oligarchy, which is, as in Plato's ideal state, in control of a selective education. Thus, the structure of the state is, as in Plato's model, ossified. The corresponding drawing, *Aristotle's Perfect State* (Fig. 1), follows the second version of Plato's republic, the drawing presenting the two-dimensional representation of the ideal geometric solid, coloured in one single tone of yellow. This is underlayered with the outline of the solid, which again, intends to make visible the segregated nature of the different parts.

The two ideal constitutions put forward by Plato and Aristotle are supported by a strict geometry and a belief that individuals would obey reason and wish for themselves nothing except the happiness of the state. For Plato and Aristotle, dividing society into clear castes and relating individual happiness to the fulfilment of one's specific and naturalised role, would have the power to eradicate society's conflict and maintain state's peace. However, as will be defended later through Mouffe's recuperation of Carl Schmitt's (2007) notion of the political, conflict is unavoidable and the geometry of the perfect state is fated to be destabilised.

That the managing of social conflict cannot solidify in an ideal edifice is what post-foundational political theorists demonstrate.[13] The Platonic and Aristotelian models of social conflict management is criticised by both Mouffe (2000) and Rancière (2006a), who do not envision the state's common good as a solution, but propose democracy as political inter/action. Hence, I will now explore what happens when we try to understand how democracy as a model for political interaction should be drawn? Or for what is at stake in this research, can art inform new possibilities for dealing with conflicting passions?

Contemporary post-foundational thought on democracy: conflict, pluralism and representation

Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière have different approaches to what democracy means and how it operates. Succinctly, for Mouffe democracy is a regime; it is more than a type of government as it also concerns a set of rules,

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[13] Post-foundational political thought identifies a strand of political thought and titles a book, both by Oliver Marchart (2007). In this book, Marchart connects the works of Claude Lefort, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Alain Badiou and Jean-Luc Nancy, specifically in the way these authors make a difference between 'politics' and 'the political', in the sense that politics is a sort of managerial aspect of the political. The political is then understood as being a notion that rests in power and conflictual understandings of the world and cannot be exhausted in the realm of governabilities. A special focus for post-foundational political thought is the contingent nature of social constructions that is based in Lefort's (1988) notion of the 'dissolution of the markers of certainty' which determine the absence of a transcendental order. Rancière is not mentioned because he does not distinguish between an ontic and ontological order; for him the distinction is between 'politics' and 'police'.

social and cultural norms and the symbolic ordering of social relations. Her democratic project is grounded in contemporary liberal Western democracies and how they suffer from an unbalance between liberty and equality. Mouffe, throughout her work, undertakes a sharp analysis of contemporary politics and delivers an acute critique on liberalism in an attempt to resolve what she calls the democratic paradox. She describes the paradoxical nature of democracy as being on the one hand, the incompatibility between liberal and democratic values, and on the other, democracy's inherent contradiction, 'since the very moment of its realisation would see its disintegration' (Mouffe, 1993, p.8). In the latter sense, democracy is a horizon. She advises awareness of that fact and acceptance of democracy's paradoxical nature. Mouffe's proposition, 'radical and *plural* democracy' (ibid., italics in original) is nothing other than the consequence of her endeavours to ameliorate our role as citizens and bring back the political into life. Rancière, on the other hand, conceives democracy in totally different terms. Democracy is neither a form of government nor a form of social organisation and at best, we will always live under oligarchic regimes or other types of government ruled by the specific interests of a few. For him, democracy is a rare event that happens beneath and beyond the state apparatus. Democracy is about the radical recognition of a fundamental equality – it is beneath any type of constitution – and it brings about equality when and where it is not recognised, or it adds a part to those who have no part in society. Furthermore, because it is also a struggle against state's tendency to privatise and depoliticise the public sphere, Rancière (2006a) states that democracy is beyond the state.

Building through drawing Plato and Aristotle's dominions helped me to understand their thought as I realised how different players were constructed and distributed in the social. However, when it came the moment to give shape to democratic ideas the flat and opaque surface of the paper and the rigidity of the coloured pencil seemed to offer no similar rendition of the profusion of those ideas, especially, when thinking how contemporary notions on how to govern men and women's passions can be brought into shape. Furthermore, the very

condition of form seemed unsuitable. Is this resistance to representation significant? Why is the synthesis of the thought of Mouffe and Rancière's allocation of positions/bodies in the social and rendered by drawings, more unsatisfactory than Plato and Aristotle's? A discussion of Mouffe's notion of antagonism and Rancière's notion of disagreement will shed light on the difficulty of drawing their versions of democracy.
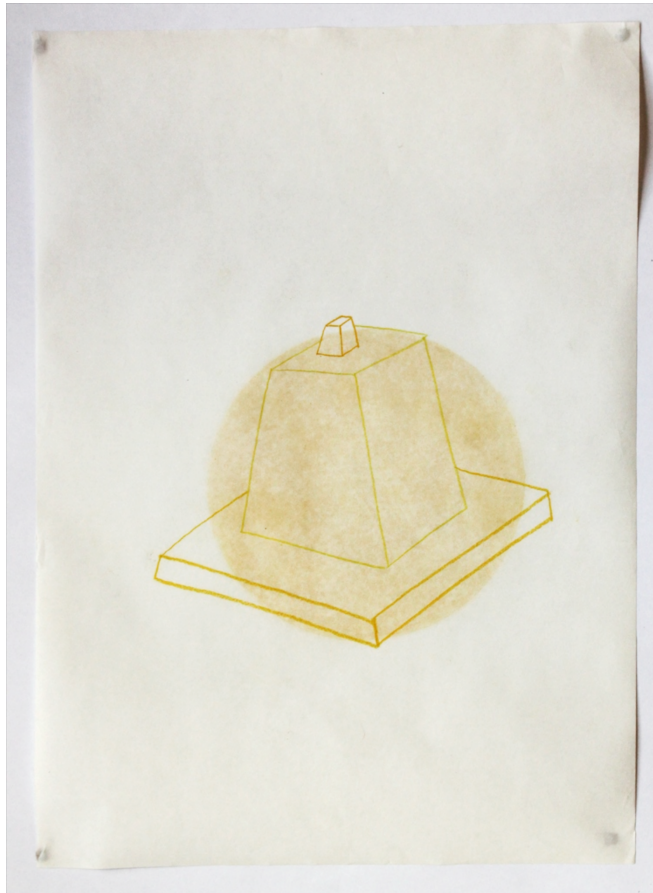
Fig. 2 *Aristotle's Perfect State over Democratic Shape*

PASSIONS

For Chantal Mouffe, supporting the moments of political instantiation means to accept the antagonistic nature of humanity. Dissension or, in her terms, antagonism, is an element impossible to eradicate in society. This dissension, even if tamed or relegated to a private sphere, will always eventually arise, and when not channelled through politics, it results, says Mouffe, in unproductive

strife and meaningless violence. So, the idea of a perfect state, and the attempt to transform it into a solid figure, starts to emerge as inadequate (Fig. 2).

The need to accept the fact that men and women are driven by passions is defended by Mouffe via a twentieth-century political theorist, with Nazi involvement, whose views on the political she sought to recuperate: Carl Schmitt. Schmitt (2007) sees the idea of man leaving behind his natural state – when assuming a civic status – as the exempting of man's political status. If previously, in the foundations of political philosophy based in the idea of the social contract (Held 1996), the natural state of man is war of all against all, i.e. war between individuals, then with Schmitt, in affirming the inescapably bellicose nature of man, repositioned the war as one between political entities. In this sense, war is never between individuals, because individuals, in Schmitt's concept of the political, have no enemies, thus the enemy is always a public enemy.[14] Schmitt's notion of the political is exactly the moment of definition of an enemy in that conflict, so when a collective entity defines another as repressing its way of living it defines it as its enemy, defining also itself as 'friend' in the process. Only through this friend/enemy relation is the political established.

For Mouffe, following Schmitt's thinking, the friend/enemy distinction is of extreme importance and she points out the danger of refusing this coupling – the establishment (or recognition) of an other – as two fold: one is assuming that we all share the same qualities and interests; and the other is the danger of speaking for humanity, not granting the other a political entity. This problematises the choice, in my drawings, of covering the surface of the geometric solid with one single tone of yellow to stress people's intrinsic equality (which will be discussed in detail later). Assuming the position of humanity means the exclusion of the other as non-human and therefore allows

[14] There is no contemporary word to express Schmitt's definition of enemy. In Latin, Schmitt (2007, p.28) explains, one would use 'hostis' for public enemy, an enemy in war, in opposition to 'inimicus' an un-friend, or a private enemy. In the first we fight against, in the second, we hate.

its extermination outside any political frame, for, in Mouffe's view, the end of difference is then also the end of politics.[15]

By stressing that we do not have an option of no politics (Held, 1996) and that we cannot escape antagonism, the remaining question is about how human passions can be directed towards democratic values. Thus, Mouffe, instead of understanding the relation between the conflicting pair as trying to eradicate or repress the other, she proposes that they need to find a common ground.[16] For her, the enemies would 'agree on the ethico-political principles that inform the political association, but they disagree about the interpretation of those principles' (Mouffe, 2007b, p.39). In this sense enemies meet as adversaries, and the institution of their conflict would, on the one hand bring back the sphere of the political, and on the other prevent conflict to erupt elsewhere in the social. Mouffe theorises that this conflict, when not tamed by democratic institutions, will give rise to extremism.

This conflicting character of sharing the common is as important for Rancière as it is for Mouffe.[17] In Rancière's case it can be seen in notions such as the fundamental 'wrong' (Rancière, 1999); this is not an 'in the wrong' type of situation of doing an injustice. The Rancierian wrong belongs to the way politics operates, the way it recounts the miscounted parts in society. This wrong is 'to identify with the whole of the community through homonymy' (Rancière, 1999, p.9), which he illustrates by discussing Aristotle's definition of who possesses

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[15] Judith Butler (2009) in *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* exposes the same problem referring to Guantanamo detainees and Iraqi civilians as examples.

[16] 'Other 'is here used to signify something that is different from the same and, in Mouffe's usage, as a different that 'begins to be perceived as questioning our identity and threatening our existence' (Mouffe, 2002, p.7).

[17] I use here common as Rancière does when he describes worker's emancipation: 'In order to state themselves as sharing in a common world and as able to name the objects and participants of that common world, they had to reconfigure their "individual" life, to reconfigure the partition of day and night that, for all individuals, anticipated the partition between those who were or were not destined to care for the common. It was not a matter of "representations" as historians would claim. It was a matter of sensory experience, a form of partition of the perceptible' (Rancière, 2011, p.7).

(and who does not) the logos in the community: that is, who is in the base, middle section or the top of *Aristotle's Perfect State* (Fig. 1).[18] Rancière affirms that in Aristotle's *Politica*, 'the slave is the one who has the capacity to understand a logos without having the capacity of a logos' (Rancière, 1999, p.17). Rather the slaves can have only voice and therefore they are at the base of *Aristotle's Perfect State*.[19] Both ruler and ruled can utter the same sounds but each will have different understandings in the common. That is the basic disagreement in society and from a re-articulation of the positions of who has only voice springs politics. Hence, Rancière (ibid., p.10) states, '[t]here is politics – and not just domination – because there is a wrong count of the parts of the whole.' For him, the disagreement is not on different interpretations of what is being said (as Mouffe might argue that is the contention of adversaries), but the conflict over the very meaning of speech, about who can be meaningfully heard and what is perceived as mere noise. Thus, for Rancière, adversaries, or political subjects, do not exist before the conflict itself, but emerge together with the conflict – their emergence is the reason for conflict to exist. So, if for Schmitt the political can only exist between recognisable public enemies, for Rancière, politics only exists, or is in fact, the conflict between visible and invisible, and the conflict that leads to the emergence of political subjects; resulting in the recognition of their existence:

> The 'discussion' of wrong is not an exchange – not even a violent one – between constituent partners. It concerns the speech situation itself and its performers. Politics does not exist because men, through the privilege of speech, place their interests in common. Politics exist because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account, setting up a community by the fact of placing in common a wrong that is nothing more than this very, confrontation, contradiction of two worlds in a single world: the world where they are and the world where they are not […] (Rancière, 1999, p. 27).

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[18] Aristotle understands logos as reasoned discourse, i.e. rhetoric.

[19] Rancière expands this notion by stating that even a discriminatory relation has its foundation on equality, which for him is the intellectual capacity.

Thus, when those with mere voice manage to position themselves as in possession of speech, they simultaneously constitute themselves as political subjects and add a part where it did not count before, consequently enlarging the very notion of logos, or as Rancière would put it: of the sensible.

The conflict, in Rancière, is a reaffirmation of equality between members of the common – the community. However, as Mouffe states, there is no constitution of a common, a 'we' without the definition of a 'them'. It is then, for Mouffe, that the 'potential' of the natural state – passions – should be brought to the fore if the political is to be brought forward as well. It is because the political is a basic characteristic of human life – to quarrel for what is important – and because every man thinks the other should live as he lives, that different visions of what is important become conflicting.[20] Then, Mouffe's project of politicising what has been seen as the mere competition of rational opinions in contemporary liberal democracies is of extreme importance. Again, Rancière (1999, p.27) envisions the political conflict in a very different way – not between conflicting visions of the world but between the existence and status of those who are not accounted for as speaking beings. In his perspective, conflicts between already existing parties is mere policing, but which does not dismiss the paramount function of conflict. Rancière would state that by naming the conflict they are counted as parties, but while for Schmitt the actuality of the political is in that pairing position toward one another and of possible annihilation, for Rancière the actuality of politics is in mutual recognition, in the verification of equality.

By now, conflict has arisen in my argument as paramount for the construction of Mouffe and Rancière's notion of democracy; conflict, which is exactly what Plato and Aristotle endeavour to tame in their perfect states. This unceasing conflict must then be a fundamental element in the visual representation of both theorist and philosopher's notions. I will now look more closely at Mouffe's and

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[20] '[E]very individual wishes the rest to live after his own mind, and to approve what he approves […] reason can […] do much to restrain and moderate the passions, but […] the road, which reason herself points out, is very steep […]' (Spinoza, 1951, p. 289).

Rancière's democratic propositions and the double role of the drawings as tools to analyse their thought and consider it as possible speculative tools.

Toward a de-depoliticisation

The contemporary contention around democracy seems to be between liberal democracy and what both Mouffe and Rancière would argue to be 'real' democracy. As previously argued, Mouffe's project is rooted in the attempt to reconcile the paradoxical nature of liberal democracy – the coexistence of equality and individualism – and transforming it into what she calls radical and plural democracy. If the aim of liberalism is to augment liberty and individualism by restraining the state's field of operations, democracy for Mouffe, needs a homogeneous community, as equality among people is its fundamental principle, which might leave little place for diversity.

Modern democracy, according to the philosopher Norberto Bobbio, is a natural extension of liberalism and not in opposition to it:

> Modern liberalism and ancient democracy have often been regarded as antithetical. The democrats of antiquity were ignorant of both the doctrine of natural rights and the idea that the state had a duty to confine its activities to the minimum necessary for the community's survival; the liberals of modern times, for their part, were from the outset extremely suspicious of all forms of popular government […] (Bobbio, 2005, p.31).

Therefore, we have to understand democracy in a more procedural sense than in a substantial one, i.e., to take it more as government *for* the people than a government *by* the people. In the tradition put forward by liberalism, individualism and liberty are to be defended at all costs, and especially (Mouffe highlights) at the cost of equality. As Mouffe points out, to defend liberty it is 'legitimate to establish limits to popular sovereignty' (Mouffe, 2000, p.4), which creates what she calls a democratic deficit (democracy conceived merely as 'state law' that effaces models of popular sovereignty); likewise to defend equality, it would be legitimate to establish limits to individual liberties. Bobbio (2005) also argues for the common benefit of liberalism and democracy from

mutual association, but he envisions it as accepting equality as being solely equality in liberty:

> There is only one form of equality – equality in the right to liberty –which is not only compatible with liberalism but actually demanded by its view of freedom. Equality in liberty means that each person should enjoy as much liberty as is compatible with the liberty of others, and may do anything which does not distrain on the equal liberty of others (Bobbio, 2005, p.33).

It is this actual existing liberal democracy, or post-democracy that Mouffe and Rancière dispute, and what they propose are tools to re-think democracy and find a way out of this impasse. Mouffe's vision proposes a solution to overcome depoliticalisation, while Rancière gives no hint of how a democratic society could be, or should be organised, or even how it could be sustained; he simply gives account of what democracy is.

Imagining new democratic formations or organisations also proved to be a rather speculative task when done through the geometric solids, as it can be seen in *Inversion of Plato's Republic* (Fig.1). Here, I re-think Plato's ideal by sinking the privileged section of the geometric solid, which opens a negative form, a void that nonetheless forms the mass that contains it. What does really happen to that part of society that becomes invisible and that I represented in a depression? What kind of invisible influence does it operate? Is this inversion popular rule, i.e. democracy? Or a democratic fiction? Thinking about the new meanings of a simple inversion of what gives shape to Plato's ideal generated in me an awareness that shaping new ideals could not be what my drawings propose, i.e., that my practice is not about reshaping democracy. But then, the question of the role of art in the current rethinking of democracy becomes more urgent. Nevertheless, I carried on using my method. When the time came to draw Mouffe's radical and plural democracy trying to return truly conflicting positions to the public sphere – and to demonstrate their 'ineradicability' that should be argued between adversaries instead of enemies (Mouffe, 1993 and 2000); and Rancière's verification of equality, the task became doubly

problematic. Because their positions regarding democracy are based on an inherent contingency, attempting to capture, from one point of view (as the drawings are restricted due to their flatness) what should be seen as continuous movement is always inadequate. A further complication is the ambiguous status that the drawings begin to acquire as artefacts situated between academic and artistic tools. But before exploring the dimension of the obstacles to the representation of both Mouffe and Rancière's ideas and if the drawings will survive their initial function, I will further consider Mouffe's discussion on the conditions for supporting a radical and plural democracy.

DIFFERENCE: HEGEMONY AND AFFILIATION

If Norberto Bobbio saw the foundation of liberalism in individualism that is supported by the affirmation of liberty in the bill of human rights, Mouffe (2000) suggests that popular sovereignty has mainly been restrained under the same flag. She emphasises that human rights are read differently in each epoch and consequently become an expression of the prevalent hegemony.[21] Hegemony, normally associated with the idea of state domination, should here be understood through the concept brought forward by Ernesto Laclau as appearing when 'a political project has been partially successful in universalizing its particular set of political demands and values, thus naturalizing its vision of social order and rendering invisible the tensions and contradictions it contains' (Laclau quoted in Howarth, 2004, p.260), i.e., the sedimentation of the political:

> Hegemony is obtained through the construction of nodal points which discursively fix the meaning of institutions and social practices and articulate the 'common sense' through which a given conception of reality is established. Such a result will always be contingent and precarious and susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic interventions (Mouffe, 2008b, no pagination given).

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[21] Human rights have been the object of contention for many theorists, including Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler and Giorgio Agamben, and the subject of great and lengthy debate which is without the scope of this research. Nonetheless, it is relevant to mention this debate because human rights are the one thing, according to Mouffe, that seems to be today outside any political discussion.

Because liberty in liberalism is almost untouchable, the possibility of more equality, for Mouffe, is always put into check. Popular sovereignty is seen as impossible to increase in our social context. As a counteraction a new hegemony is in need of implementation. First of all, Mouffe (2000, p.9) proposes accepting the clash between liberty and equality. Then, within the social there will be different interpretations of liberty and equality (as seen before through Bobbio's vision). Instead of securing political consensus about the interpretations of such notions, what Mouffe proposes is 'an "agonistic confrontation" between conflicting interpretations of the constitutive liberal-democratic values' (ibid.). This is the ground that different political actors will share, even if they do not agree in its interpretation. They become, in the public sphere, adversaries not enemies. Hegemony as a force that animates and legitimates different practices needs to be put to work in favour of this 'real' democracy – Mouffe's agonistic one. For Mouffe:

> What we need is a hegemony of democratic values, and this requires a multiplication of democratic practices, institutionalizing them into ever more diverse social relations, so that a multiplicity of subject positions can be formed through a democratic matrix. It is in this way – and not by trying to provide it with a rational foundation – that we will be able not only to defend democracy but also to deepen it. Such hegemony will never be complete, and anyway, it is not desirable for a society to be ruled by a single democratic logic. Relations of authority and power cannot completely disappear, and it is important to abandon the myth of a transparent society, reconciled with itself, for that kind of fantasy leads to totalitarianism. A project of radical and plural democracy, on the contrary, requires the existence of multiplicity, of plurality and of conflict, and sees in them the *raison d'être* of politics (Mouffe, 1993, p.18, italics in original).

Mouffe is thus building an argument for a counter-hegemonic democracy and pluralism can be seen as the possibility for equality and liberty to coexist. Nevertheless, Mouffe claims that this co-existence of different passions needs an 'allegiance to democracy and belief in the value of its institutions' (Mouffe, 2000, p.97), and she draws on Wittgenstein language theories to bring the

notion of allegiance to the fore and to construct a hegemony of democratic values:[22]

> Procedures always involve substantial ethical commitments. For that reason they cannot work properly if they are not supported by a specific form of ethos (Mouffe, 2000, p.69).

And she continues:

> Viewed from such a standpoint, allegiance to democracy and belief in the value of its institutions do not depend on giving them an intellectual foundation. It is more in the nature of what Wittgenstein likens to 'a passionate commitment to a system of reference' (ibid., p.97).

This commitment to certain concepts would make us appropriate them as our own. For Mouffe, democracy needs that sort of 'irrational' allegiance that makes one believe in certain things.

If the myth of the metals is what keeps Plato's republic in shape; then for Mouffe, society takes on a democratic shape via the commitment of the people to democratic values and a continuous usage of those values. Thus, instead of transcendental legitimacy, a democratic hegemony is made by common usage and fidelity to its values. As everything is continuously in motion, it begins to appear what this democracy must be shaped like: Mouffe's democracy shall have a spherical shape.

In her project, Mouffe recuperates the instantiation of the political in the distinction of an 'us' against a 'them'. Nevertheless, Mouffe wants to demonstrate that it is possible to have an 'us' or to have unity (community) of the people without dismissing every antagonism and division (pluralism), which she claims to be a false dilemma (Mouffe, 2000, p.54). The 'us' needs its

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[22] Wittgenstein claims that 'agreement [of meaning in language] is reached through participation in common forms of life' (Mouffe, 2000, p.12). In language and in order to use it, interlocutors need to agree on the meaning of a term as well as its use, and this usage comes from an ensemble of practices. Mouffe, thus, uses Wittgenstein to escape the necessity of the rational approach, for reaching consensus.

constitutive outside to be constituted as an identity; it is defined by its difference from the 'them'. To support this claim, Mouffe draws on the Derridean notion of the 'constitutive outside' (ibid., p.12), a concept that the subject is constituted also by what it is not. Consequently, if identity, is perceived in opposition to something outside itself, and that outside is what makes it perceptible, identity is contingent:

> In order to be a true outside, the outside has to be incommensurable with the inside, and at the same time, the condition of emergence of the latter (Mouffe, 2000, p.12).

Difference is thus not mere difference but that constitution of an 'us/them' pairing, which is inherently political, for it was conflict (such as is seen in Schmitt) that engendered them.

According to Mouffe, modern liberal democracies accept pluralism in the spirit of a peaceful co-existence of different interests. However, these interests are taken as marginalised and relegated to the private sphere where they become little more than facts of difference. But Mouffe argues, pluralism is not a fact, but a valuable principle that should be enhanced and not hidden. Difference supports a pluralism when it is not relegated to the private sphere, but instead, openly celebrated. Nevertheless, pluralism has limits, in Mouffe's opinion, because an exaggerated heterogeneity would lead to the impossibility of power and thus the impossibility of political formations. She proposes a continuous challenging of the relations of subordination, but not their extinction – for the relations help us build the 'us' which is the construction she claims as holding the political dimension.

This pluralist representation can be seen as 'the end of a substantive idea of the good life' (Mouffe, 2000, p.18) that has been seen as the goal of a community or political constitution, as in Aristotle's (1921) terms when he affirms that a state (a society with a common goal) aims at the highest good and that this good is of the state itself and not of each individual citizen. This disappearance

of a common good is, according to Mouffe, theorised by Claude Lefort (1988) and marks the moment of inscription of pluralism in our modern societies. In our contemporary democratic societies, the social appears separated in different spheres: the political, economic and judicial. This was not always the case; democracy arises from the collapse of aristocracy, from a unified social body: which according to Lefort is seen as united in the body of the king and able to combine within a symbolically partitioned sovereign body earthly and divine law, knowledge and power, and thus confer a spiritual and secular legitimacy to that particular organisation of the social. With the fall of the king, society loses its body and the locus of power becomes an empty space. The role of the king's body is precisely to legitimate the institution of the social, which, as Mouffe (2000) states, in the aristocratic regime is of a transcendental order. Power, according to Lefort, after the dissolution of the double body of the king, is in fact not distributed by the *demos*, and with people becoming the sovereign, but rather, it seems to belong to no one:

> The political originality of democracy is […] signalled by a double phenomenon: a power is henceforth involved in a constant search for a basis because law and knowledge are no longer embodied in the person or persons who exercise it, and a society which accepts conflicting opinions and debates over rights because the markers which once allowed people to situate themselves in relation to one another in a determinate manner have disappeared (Lefort, 1988, p.34).

Society had to come to terms with its own division, and accept that power is not transcendent but it is rooted within, and moreover, the exercise of power is subject to periodical redistributions. 'This phenomenon implies an institutionalization of conflict' (ibid., p.17), what he calls the 'dissolution of the markers of certainty'. The markers between legitimate and illegitimate; real and imaginary; possible and desirable (ibid., p.102) are subject to change and constant discussion, no longer subject to natural or transcendental determinations. So, if in an aristocracy, positions in society are fixed and naturalised, in democratic societies there is never full legitimacy and solidification of hierarchies (Fig. 2).
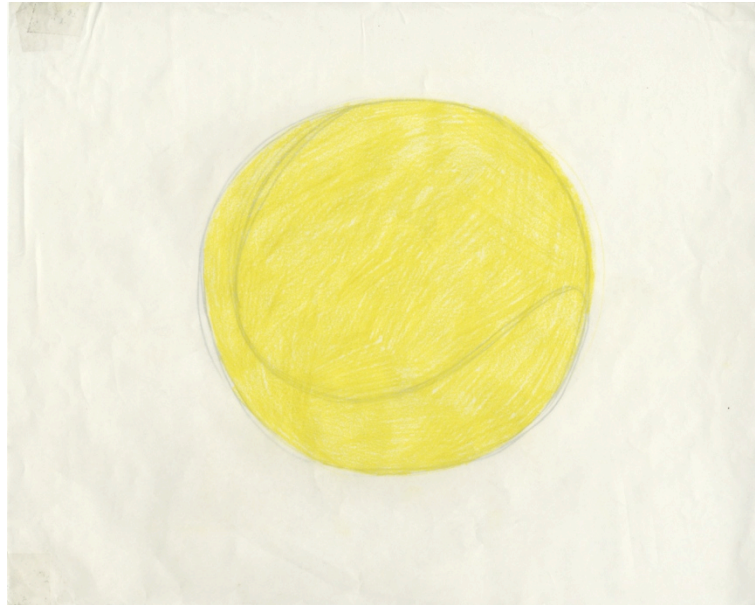
Fig. 3 *Chantal Mouffe's Democracy #1*

For Plato ideas had shapes, and a way to think democracy is through visualisation. However, a depiction of a democracy that fosters a multiplicity of views without falling into heterogeneity, which for Mouffe would mean doing away with both power and the political, seems to resist a two-dimensional rendition. Democracy is here a fight for the institution of hegemonies by different political players without ever becoming established. It is a horizon that by its very nature is never reached, at the risk of being disintegrated (Mouffe, 1993), and thus problematising the notion of petrifying an ideal state. When drawing Mouffe's type of society, the best synthesis for my drawings appeared to be the shape of a sphere and again the use of double-layered drawings – such as in *Plato's Republic #2* (Fig. 1) – in an attempt to complicate the depiction. I must note here that I am using the term depiction, and not representation, quite deliberately. As In the case of the drawings we are facing an attempt to visualise a set of ideas, presenting them through shapes, however the drawings do not aim to stand in for those ideas. The surface appears as homogeneous even though the rough yellow colouring exposes an inner turmoil in the bottom layer, which is depicted firstly as a ball of wool (Fig. 4) and a second time as a sort of tennis ball with its embracing halves (Fig. 3), as if one hegemony is

trying to overpower the other, to be in time overpowered as well. But, can a static medium such as drawing affirm the instability of Mouffe's notion of democracy, its contingency? Could other media represent it better? Even more so, is it not actually the attempt to represent, and representation in and of itself, the problem we face here? Would the actual staging of conflict, or more specifically, agonism, be a better way for me to question the role of art in the maintenance of this continuous movement of Mouffe's radical and plural democracy? These questions will be explored in depth in Chapter Two, where my art project *demoCRACY* will be analysed as a Mouffean case study.

ACCOUNTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

If power, after the collapse of the princely body, constitutes an empty space that no particular person or entity can claim for its own benefit (Lefort 1988), Rancière argues that there is a privileged subject in democracy – the demos. For Rancière, the people are those who had no part in the account of the parts, in the representation of the common itself.

For Lefort, the beheading of the king's symbolic double body signifying coming to terms with the irreconcilable division of the social body and its lack of foundations. For Rancière (2006a, p.40), there is no need for regicide to have this confirmed. Democracy (or likewise politics) instituted itself a long time ago in ancient Greece when those who had no title to govern nevertheless claimed the right to do so. In Plato's account of the qualifications to govern he identified seven types (such as birth, wealth and knowledge), the seventh characteristic which is not an attribute: 'the drawing of lots, i.e., the democratic procedure by which people of equals decides the distribution of places' (ibid.). It is, as Rancière (ibid., p.46) affirms, the qualification to rule that is based in no qualification at all, 'the title specific to those who have no more title for governing that they have for being governed.' This is highlighted in my drawing *Plato's Republic #2* (Fig. 1) with one hue, which followed this argument of a fundamental equality.

Rancière has a particular perspective on democracy (or politics) as something that happens along the forms of governance and it is mainly about the radical recognition of a fundamental equality. It brings about equality when and where it is not recognised, it adds a part to those who have no part in society. Politics is a rare moment of subjectivation.

Politics, for Rancière, is not the exercise of power, but an account of the social that adds a supplementary part for those who had not part before. The distribution of the sensible as an empirical account of the parts is what Rancière calls the 'police'. This can be seen as similar to what Mouffe calls a given hegemony – even though the result of politics upon the policing and hegemonic conflicts are different in both authors' theories. Politics is a struggle between different accounting logics and different representations of the social. Politics is what disrupts that order of things, the 'models of government and practices of authority based on this or that distribution of places and capabilities' (Rancière, 2006a, p.47), re-distributing those coordinates. When this system is disrupted a specific subject is constituted, which adds the part of those who had no part in society, thus this subjects is 'a supernumerary subject in relation to the calculated number of groups, places, and functions in a society' (Rancière, 2004, p.51). An account that disturbs a distribution of the sensible and manifests a distance of the sensible from itself is what Rancière calls dissensus: dissensus makes visible what could not be seen or heard as speech before. This relationship engenders a subject that partakes in action but was not constituted beforehand; the political subject. This political subject is the operator that connects and disconnects different areas, regions, capacities, identities and functions (Rancière, 1999).

These rare moments of deviation operate through dissensus, which should not be seen as rational struggle between different debates, but as a conflict between two sensory worlds, two regimes of sense, as a confrontation of what is perceptually established (Rancière, 2009a). It is then a conflict between a given distribution of the sensible and what remains outside it. This conflict

ultimately enlarges the recognition as equals those who have been excluded from the public domain, and their penetration in the police order is done through their own subjectivation. But, as the translator Gabriel Rockhill summarises in his introduction to Rancière's *Politics of Aesthetics*, this '*emancipation* is a random process that redistributes the system of the sensible coordinates without being able to guarantee the absolute elimination of the social inequalities inherent in the police order' (Rockhill, 2004, p.3, italics in original).

What democracy is really about for Rancière is more than an affiliation to a set of common ethico-political principles. It is the affirmation and establishment of the people, or those who have no part in the social. To read this otherwise would be to excise those people from the whole Mouffean agonistic conflict for not even being understood as a part in it – or not having logos. Even though, Mouffe also affirms that:

> politics does not consist in the moment when a fully constituted people exercises its rule. The moment of rule is indissociable from the very struggle about the definition of the people, about the constitution of its identity (Mouffe, 2000, p.56).

This is not very different from the disagreement that Rancière defines as conflict. For conflict to exist both parties have to be in possession of logos; if one of the parts is not acknowledged as one, then its speech is only understood as noise. Thus, Rancière (1999) affirms that parties do not exist prior to the conflict that they name. The existence of conflict is already recognition of their part, and that confronts society with its own representation. Rancière understands the social as being represented by a numerical account, or a certain distribution of the parts, the 'police'. As Rockhill succinctly puts it:

> The *police* […] is […] as an organizational system of coordinates that establishes a distribution of the sensible or a law that divides the community into groups, social positions, and functions. This law implicitly separates those who take part from those who are excluded, and it therefore presupposes a prior aesthetic division between the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the sayable and the

unsayable (Rockhill, 2004, p.3 italics in original).

This distribution also establishes the dispositions or qualifications proper to certain individuals or classes in society. This could be seen in the myth of the metals from Plato's *Republic*, which Rancière takes as one of his examples to verify an a priori equality among people. For Rancière the disruption of the logic that there is a particular disposition to rule and the affirmation of the power of everyone, of anyone at all that is what democracy is about:

> The power of the people is not that of a people gathered together, of the majority, or of the working class. It is simply the power peculiar to those who have no more entitlements to govern than to submit […] the government of societies cannot but rest in the last resort on its own contingency (Rancière, 2006a, pp.46-47).

Rancière reminds us that there are multiple constructions in operation simultaneously, and that the depiction of democracy as a sphere is as utopian as the stratified construction of Plato's *Republic.* It is reminiscent of Jorge Luis Borges' story *On Exactitude in Science* (1999) about a map that is so detailed that it ends up covering a vast part of the territory that it maps.[23] Borges' story draws from an earlier tale by Lewis Carroll (1889), in which cartographers make a chart that maps the 'real', but due to the difficulties of using it, citizens decide to use 'the country itself, as its own map', proclaiming that, 'It does nearly as well'.[24] Both stories describe the attempt to grasp the totality of the social, to not leave anything out, and the difficulty of doing so. The most perfect representation might not be useful at all. Or perhaps that rationality, in its totalising attempts, as Mouffe (2000) claims, is to be distrusted. These two fictions serve to highlight the difficulty of my own drawings in representing democratic models. Could it be that the engagement with Mouffe and Rancière's notion of the irrepressible presence of conflict needs to be performed through different media and modes of engagement? Is it really certain that we do not need new cartographies to convert conflict, even if only

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[23] Read full story in appendix two.

[24] Read excerpt in appendix two.

temporarily, as Mouffe would state? Moreover, if the elimination of cartographies entails the disappearance of cartographers, which role can artists perform in the types of uses of 'the country itself'?
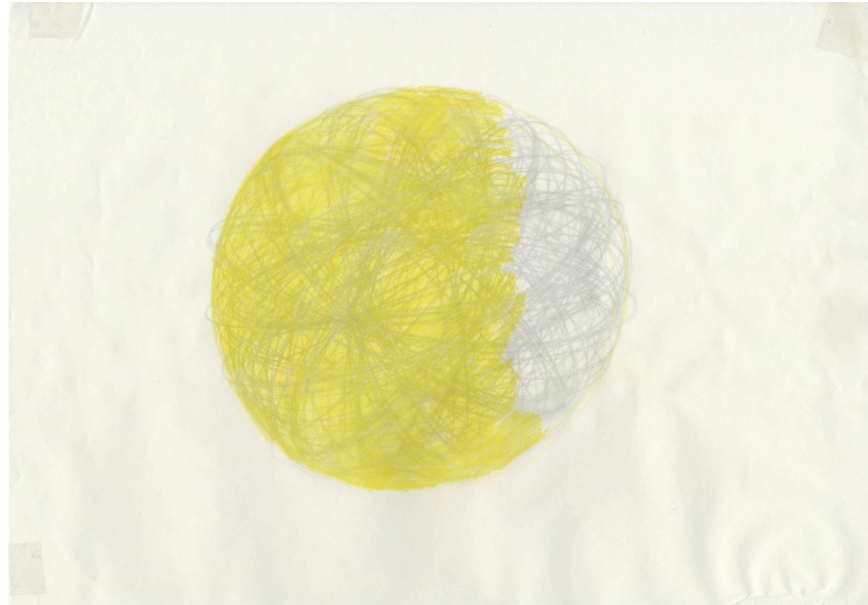
Fig. 4 *Chantal Mouffe's Democracy #2*

Perhaps these drawings do not belong to the cartographic category, being neither representations nor models. Would the problem on how the depiction in the form of a drawing represent the democratic paradox of being simultaneously one yellow tint and the immeasurable, visible and invisible, colour spectrum, still prevail? How can the drawings give account to the definition of 'us' groupings that on the one hand exclude a 'them', and on the other maintain with 'them' a relation of interdependence? Even more so, how can it give account of the plurality inherent to the subjects of that very same 'us' that are faithful to one or another grouping according to different circumstances? There is clearly a limit to what these drawing can illustrate, thus, what can the acceptance of limitations and failures produce in relation to accountability?

Following Mouffe's argument, we understand that the common good is then always something unattainable. It is: 'a vanishing point, something to which we constantly refer when we are acting as citizens, but that can never be reached'

(Mouffe, 1992, p.379). And this is what reveals democracy as always 'to come' or performative (in the sense of an articulation of discourses) – and necessarily in need of maintenance. Here is not the position of the political players, or the distribution of the players in the social sphere that is depicted, but how these social players attempt to occupy and defend a position which can never be ossified unless at the risk of losing its spherical shape and falling back into a more polyhedral shape; meaning the destruction of democracy *per se*, for these globe-shaped constructions refer to the performativity of democracy. Is it to this performativity that art can contribute to as a methodology?

The same can be seen in Rancière's arguments that see politics as the verification and establishment of egalitarian relations 'that are traced here and now through singular and precarious acts' (Rancière, 2006a, p.97), and always in need of constant reiteration. Although their positions seem comfortably intertwined, Mouffe believes that change, even if precarious, can be achieved through governance, while Rancière alerts us to look at all that we consider today as democratic achievements, and how they were actually achieved outside the state framework, through people's struggles and isolated acts and therefore always outside the state's polices.
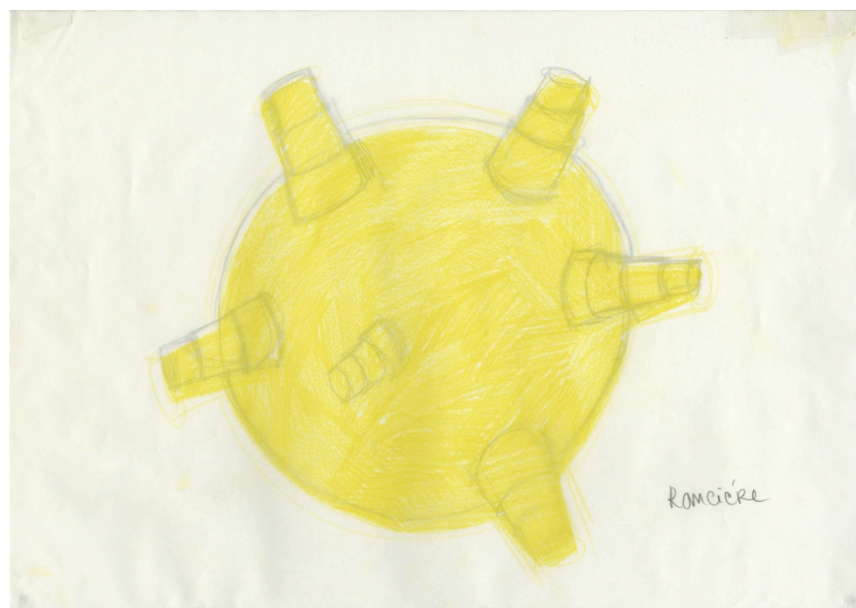
Fig. 5 *Rancière's Democracy*

Rancière's perspective on democracy is also drawn on a spherical surface but with extendable and retractable arms like a submarine's periscope that appears and disappears on the sea's surface (Fig. 5). Although, in the case of Rancière's democratic moments, there is no conscious operator beneath the surface and, as he does not understand democracy as a form of governance or a type of society, there are no democratic institutions to mediate conflict as in Mouffe's case. The spherical surface might not be the best base for these retractable arms, but instead something similar to the Aristotelian model should have been the surface from where those arms emerged (Fig. 1). However, Rancière believes that equality is a precondition – a given – and not something to aim for; thus below any state apparatus or political constitution is equality. Democracy is then about those moments of establishing and making equality visible, of verifying it; the rare and momentary bursts of democracy that change the visible irremediably operate under and above a spherical surface. But how could I portray the rare political event of redistribution of the parts in the common? Perhaps the depictions should attempt to operate as subliminal stimuli that burn an image of equality into the multiple representation of the visible stratified into a complex polyhedron and by doing so smother the sharpened edges of our oligarchies.

The inadequacy of the drawings presents their limitation both as analytical tools and as speculative ones. Or, contrariwise, are the drawings suggesting that democracy is in and of itself limited when it comes to participation and representation? The question of setting democracy against a participatory ideal is explored lengthy in Chapter Two. In the meantime, in the way of conclusion of this chapter I will now present some thoughts on democracy and processes of subjectivation.

Some concluding thoughts on democracy

Mouffe's vision of democracy is a regime where the foundations of the political – which establish the social – are absent. This establishment is always

contingent; it depends upon conflict among different parties. The debate among the parties has to be staged on various democratic institutions. Just as elections are democratic institutions that stage conflict, we would today – given the depoliticisation identified both by Mouffe and Rancière – need to re-invent different democratic institutions to, as Mouffe (2000, p.103) argues:

> [Provide] channels through which collective passions will be given ways to express themselves over issues which, while allowing enough possibility for identification, will not construct the opponent as an enemy but an adversary.

For Mouffe, these agonistic encounters lead to an establishment of a temporary consensus, where the parties involved make a provisional decision, but do not give away the undecidable nature at work, i.e., always accept that '[e]very consensus appears as a stabilization of something essentially unstable and chaotic' (ibid., p.136).

In contrast, Rancière suggests that consensus is exactly what cancels politics, that it destroys the account of the sensible towards itself and it reduces politics to policing. From his perspective, this will be what happens with agonistic platforms if they do nothing more than propose a stage for the caring presentation of antagonistic views. If they do not simultaneously expose a different and more egalitarian way of accounting the sensible, they are merely 'policing'. The stark difference between Mouffe and Rancière's thought can be seen that while she believes that the spherical shape can be achieved through a dynamics of institutionalised agonism, Rancière (1995, p.84) states '[no] matter how many individuals become emancipated, society can never be emancipated.'

What interests me the most in both their ideas, is that they both propose that democracy happens between 'people' in singular actions either to form temporary consensus or redistribute the sensible. From this perspective, new forms of relationality could lead to a critique of the given hegemonies and contribute 'to the formation of political subjects that challenge the given

distribution of the sensible' (Rancière, 2004, p.40), i.e., they can contribute to the emergence of different modes of subjectivation. According to Rancière, the political subject is she that 'by working the intervals between identities, reconfigure the distributions of the public and the private, the universal and the particular' (Rancière, 2006a, pp.61-62), and this is why politics is for him always about this 'process of a perpetual bringing into play, of invention of forms of subjectivation and cases of verification [of equality]' (ibid., p.62). Subjectivation for him means the production of capacities that were before inconceivable for certain members of the social. By claiming these capacities those individuals are made visible and this action has the potential to reconfigure the way society accounts for them, and ultimately the way society perceives itself (Rancière, 1999, p.35).

The *State Drawings* as a tool to understand the different theoretical views were helpful and accomplished their initial function. They experimented with the representation of how the social is partitioned – in different models of political organisation – in search of answers regarding what democracy is. But, it is also implicit that they could serve as a method to find new models of organisation. In this sense, the drawings are on the one hand too synthetic (they can only offer fractional views), and on the other they are always in danger of falling prey to a Platonic idealism, solidifying what has been demonstrated to be absolutely and necessarily transient. The possibility that representation is limited and a more active approach would be more suitable will be explored again and again throughout this research.

I will now move to the analysis of a project, which simultaneously tests Mouffe's counter-hegemonic strategies within the arts and looks for a differently performative mode of being in the arts and in politics.

Chapter 2: The Paradigmatic Case of *demoCRACY*

As discussed in Chapter One, agonistic encounters bring a radical and plural democracy into play. Chantal Mouffe believes that art should be a performative arena that allows for such agonistic encounters to occur. Mouffe (2010) states that agonistic encounters have not only to happen at a macro-level (where they might be most desired) but also on a micro-level in every social sphere, art included. In this chapter I will test the capacity of critical art to create these agonistic encounters (and their place in the public space) using my project *demoCRACY* as a tool.

demoCRACY is an art project I created for the collective exhibition *The Unsurpassable Horizon,* that was curated by the Portuguese duo Filipa Oliveira and Miguel Amado for No Souls For Sale: A Festival of Independents (NSFS), Tate Modern, London. NSFS was a festival of independent art initiatives, organised for the first time in 2009 at the not-for-profit space X Initiative in New York.[25] In 2010 it was held at the Turbine Hall for the three-day celebration of the tenth anniversary of Tate Modern. *demoCRACY* is an electoral device in which participation is twisted to evoke a false sense of efficacy.

Following Mouffe's argument that art is political precisely by the way it maintains or challenges the current symbolic order (Mouffe, 2008a, p.11), *demoCRACY* will be applied here as a tool to understand if an art project, or this one specifically, can reveal the different levels of opacity of what can be seen as a consensus representation. That, on the one hand, we can see as the representation of democracy *per se*, and on the other, of what art is, in and of itself. If we believe that *demoCRACY* could question our understanding of what democracy is, it follows that we need to examine if by doing so it also questions the current neoliberal hegemony and creates an agonistic public space. If so,

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[25] The X Initiative is a not-for-profit art consortium founded in 2009 in New York, to program and present exhibitions (advised by art professionals) that address relevant issues pertaining to the changing landscape of contemporary art (x-initiative).

we might categorise it, following Mouffe, as a critical art practice and a valuable contribution to a radical and plural democracy. But is *demoCRACY* also questioning the consensus of its immediate context, the consensus of art itself?

Consensus, counter-hegemonic processes and the public space

Notice regarding the use of Mouffe's theory

First of all it is important to state that Mouffe would not agree to the transposition her democratic concept – of hegemonic dynamics – to the art world, as I do. Mark Hutchinson (2008) has drawn attention to the fact that Mouffe would consider such transposition to be a category mistake. Art contributes to hegemonic struggles of agonism, but a hegemonic model of the arts is never conceivable by Mouffe. Art plays a role in what could be seen as a broader hegemonic struggle, but is:

> not considered as either something determined by hegemonic struggle nor as something that could be the site of […] social division and struggle: something both produced by and producing social division (Hutchinson, 2008, p.8).

Thus, for Mouffe, the social and economic production of art, its modes of circulation, reception and valorisation, are not questioned and perceived as constructions that are the product of hegemonic struggles and consensus sedimentation. How things become art or how art gains agency, especially in its critical guise, appears in Mouffe's conception as unambiguous. Such an untroubled relation to art and such optimism on its potential are part of, I would argue, a generalised consensus in the arts that did not come to be without its antagonisms.

Double-edged consensus

To examine *demoCRACY* as critical art in a Mouffean sense, we must remember that there is a double understanding of consensus in Mouffe's theory; a desired one and one that she disapproves. The consensus that Mouffe

condemns is what she would refer to as a universal and rational consensus, as opposed to the necessary temporary agonistic consensus.

Consensus reached through rational discussion is a central strategy of liberalism to do away with social conflicts. This rational separation between private affairs (such as religion, moral, economy) from the common good has been the liberal ideal of pluralism to reach universal and definite agreement. Consensus is also fundamental for Mouffe, but in her view 'it must be accompanied by dissent' (Mouffe, 2002, p.10). According to Mouffe:

> Consensus is needed both about the institutions which constitute democracy and about the ethico-political values that should inform the political association. There will always be disagreements, however, about the meaning of these values and how they should be implemented (Mouffe, 2002, p.10).

To be sure the necessary consensus must always be provisional (for Mouffe a final agreement can never be reached). The illusion of universal consensus, reached by rational debate (Habermas, 1989) is in Mouffe's perspective fatal for democracy. This is so 'all the different and multiple views [present in the social] cannot be reconciled' (Mouffe, 2010, p.125), and as these will always be fuelled by private passions, eventually they will appear as antagonism in spaces not supervised by democratic institutions. Accordingly 'such an illusion [of a final agreement] carries implicitly the desire for a reconciled society where pluralism would have been superseded' (Mouffe, 2000, p.32) and politics is transformed into mere procedural decisions (Bobbio, 2005), i.e., it does away with the political. Mouffe affirms the necessity of consensus but in its temporary form, or more precisely, the acknowledgment of its necessary contingency. This contingency reveals, according to her, that the expression of a given hegemony is 'a crystallization of power relations' (Mouffe, 2000, p.49).

Necessarily, consensus should be both *a priori* and what is subjected to contestation. For example, we can agree on the necessity of democratic institutions but disagree on what those institutions should be exactly. In other

words, we can agree on party politics but disagree on their conduct or policies. What those institutions end up being is the result of a temporary agreement that excluded some possibilities in favour of others (in face of what she calls an ineradicable undecidability), and is always subject to change. That contestation is in fact what Mouffe (2008b) calls counter-hegemonic processes – or, the disarticulation of the existing hegemony departing from its constitutive elements to rearticulate them in new meanings and practices:

> In our post-democracies where a post-political consensus is being celebrated as a great advance for democracy, critical artistic practices can disrupt the smooth image that corporate capitalism is trying to spread, bringing to the fore its repressive character (Mouffe, 2008a, p.13).

For Mouffe, art is part of hegemonic processes, in the sense that it can unveil or reinforce what is represented/repressed by the present consensus. Concurrently I would emphasise that agonism is itself a form of consensus, and it can also be contested, as will be exposed further on when discussing Jodi Dean's critique of democracy.

Hegemonic processes

If for Mouffe art is political by the way it relates to the current symbolic order, it can only be critical as long as it functions as dissensus, i.e., 'that makes visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate' (Mouffe, 2007, p.4). Thus, to examine later on in this chapter if *demoCRACY* can be considered an example of critical art we need to acknowledge the 'dynamics of democratic politics' (Mouffe, 2008a, p.7) and recognise:

> the hegemonic nature of every kind of social order and the fact that every society is the product of a series of practices that attempt to establish order in a context of contingency (Mouffe, 2008a, p.8).

Hegemony is the fixing of meanings and social practices that construct a conception of reality that must be seen as dependent upon the possibility of being challenged and therefore change (Mouffe, 2008b). If we believe, as

Mouffe does, that passions are key in the creation of forms of identity and that antagonism cannot be eliminated from the social, then agonism is a central process to tame these ineradicable conflicts in society and offer a possibility for staging passions under democratic vigilance.[26] Only when we understand the dynamics of democratic politics as the struggle between different hegemonic processes that endeavour to institute themselves as 'social order' can we understand the role Mouffe ascribes to critical art.

Let me now return to art to ask whether in this context too we encounter a capacity for generating spaces that are agonistic in Mouffe's sense. How is it possible to analyse and conceive a kind of practice that positions itself as dissensus, i.e., a practice that attempts to 'disarticulate the existing order so as to install another form of hegemony' (Mouffe, 2007a)? That would mean opening up an agonistic 'public space', because for Mouffe 'the public space is the battleground where different hegemonic projects are confronted' (Mouffe, 2005, p.806). Such a position (Mouffe, 2007a, and Deutsche, 1992) contradicts the popular idea that the public space is a terrain for consensus building and reconciliation between different parties. This challenge to the liberal construction of the public sphere, its role and emergence, plays a fundamental role in Mouffe's understanding of democratic processes and art's critical capacity. Therefore, an art project can establish itself as part of a counter-hegemonic project only to the extent that it simultaneously generates a public space for its occurrence. I will follow Mouffe's critique of the liberal public sphere further in order examine *demoCRACY*'s potential to position itself as a counter-hegemonic project and explore Mouffe's thinking in relation to the political capacity of art of fomenting dissensus.

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[26] Antagonism for Mouffe is conflict in the form of a struggle between enemies, while agonism is a struggle between adversaries. 'Agonism is a we/they relation where the conflicting parties recognize the legitimacy of their opponents, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict' (Mouffe, 2005, p.805).

The public space is a battleground

The multiplication of agonistic public spaces, where what is supressed by the dominant consensus can be exposed, is part of what Mouffe believes critical art can promote. In order to analyse if *demoCRACY* opened up a public space of dissensus, I will now look at what is the function of the public space in democracy.

Public space should not be taken as a given, or an already existing space, but one that needs constant reiteration by the public. Public should be understood here as both what is opposed to private, i.e. common, and as the totality of different groups of people that put forward their interests, and by doing so, as Warner (2002) states, address strangers.[27] The reiteration of the public is a common perspective of the authors used in this chapter: Deutsche (1992), Fraser (1990), Habermas (1989), Marchart (1999), Mouffe (1993), Rancière (2006a), and Warner (2002).[28] Public spaces are plural and, reiterated, because they refer less to spatiality and more precisely to a forum or a gathering that does not necessary require corporeal presence. To put it in other words, there is no privileged location for the political: it emerges throughout the social space and it is through its manifestation that public spaces appear. Not all of the aforementioned thinkers would concur on this. Habermas and Mouffe, share a belief in the construction of democratic institutions where politics can happen, but, for Habermas, there is a privileged public space of political constitution: the rational and consensus seeking one.

The concept of the public sphere as a dialogical space and as the dominion of civil society has gained prominence through Habermas' writings (1989). By identifying the heyday of the public sphere in relation to the eighteenth-century liberal model of the bourgeoisie, Habermas argues that the function, use and

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[27] To be sure, the border between private and public is always historical, and subject to evaluation and to the possibility of being redrawn.

[28] Public, which is seen by Habermas as rational people engaged in common affairs; by Mouffe as the 'us' of a radical citizenship; by Rancière as the people in their fundamental equality; is understood by Warner as a group of strangers coming together through the concatenation of discourses.

importance of the public sphere had become abstracted. The dissolution of the power of the king (Lefort, 1988) had given space to a vacuum impossible to fill, which simultaneously opened a gap between private and public. Thereafter the notion of 'public' started to be associated with public authority – the state – and the idea of the 'private' became associated with individual initiative (in terms of the capitalist economy). This partition has a significant effect on an epistemological level. In fact, this separation triggered the emergence of civil society, which transformed the subjects of the king into reasoning subjects (Habermas, 1989, p.26). Through rational and egalitarian debate about the common good, these subjects come together and started to identify themselves as a 'public', that is a concrete audience of state's activity, which is able to both control and contest public authority.[29] The public sphere's political function is then the influencing of state authority and putting that authority in touch with the needs of society. Although Habermas is conscious that this public was somehow exclusive – the uneducated, women, and property-less were excluded – he, nonetheless, finds in the bourgeois public sphere the conditions for a genuine inclusiveness and equality. As the independent use of one's own reason, the unique condition for the engagement in rational discussion is, theoretically, open to all. So, there would be no motive why franchise within the public sphere could not be expanded. Conversely, as Nancy Fraser (1990, p.63) has highlighted in her critique of the Habermasian notion of the public sphere; the bourgeois public sphere did not create equality but only 'bracketed' inequalities. Moreover, the equality within this bracketing is also contested, because for Fraser, alleged equality always works in favour of the existing dominant groups. It is even more important to observe, as she does, that the bracketing of social, cultural and economical inequalities works in favour of the liberal ideal that 'societal equality is *not* a necessary condition for political democracy' (ibid., p.62, my italics). Moreover, the belief that the public sphere only thrives through the division between state authority and civil society would

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[29] According to Habermas, this public emerged, and rehearsed its critical faculties, from the realm of literary critique. The public institutions of the eighteenth-century bourgeois public sphere were the British coffee houses and the French salons. After a while, the literary public expanded its concerns from cultural production to the common good and to the regulation of state's control over individual initiative (Habermas, 1989).

mean that any attempt to rejuvenate a truly public sphere, in a Habermasian sense, is to reaffirm the liberal ideal.[30] This is again contentious, for as Fraser (ibid., p.65) argues, a laissez-faire government does not promote, nor will ever foster, the necessary equality required for a public sphere to exist in that sense. Moreover, this camouflage of inequalities and passions runs the danger of cancelling out the political (Mouffe, 2002, p.1), i.e., the unavoidable antagonism that lies beneath every social construction.

Pluralism, according to Mouffe, is one of the liberal legacies we should praise. Nonetheless the notion of plurality for Mouffe always requires the presence of antagonism: of the existence of truly different positions and perspectives. This is very different from the kind of pluralism that liberalism secures, one that has as an ultimate goal a harmonious society where conflict and contestation disappear. Pluralism in its radical, or agonistic form implies the possibility of putting into question the existing relations of power. What Habermas (1989) defends, and what concerns us here, are spaces where plurality can be transformed into consensus building through egalitarian dialogue under the measure of universal interests – which Habermas defines as the guarantee of a concordance of public concerns (Habermas, 1989, p.135). This excludes pluralism and does not acknowledge, as noted by Fraser, that matters of common interest are in itself subject to contestation.[31] As Fraser (1990, p.72) affirms:

> In general, there is no way to know in advance whether the outcome of a deliberative process will be the discovery of a common good in which conflicts of interest evaporate as merely apparent or, rather, the discovery that conflicts of interests are real and the common good is chimerical. But if the existence of a common good cannot be presumed

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[30] In Habermas' view, state and society became increasingly intertwined throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which led to the public sphere ceasing to be an exclusive part of civil society (Habermas, 1989, p.181) and thus losing its original function of exposing 'political domination before the public use of reason' (ibid., p.195).

[31] Fraser's own example is quite clear: domestic violence against women was not seen from the beginning as a matter of common concern, but only later after the formation of a feminist counterpublic, which struggled for the dissemination of such concern, did domestic violence became an *ipso facto* issue for the common concern (Fraser, 1990, p.71).

in advance, then there is no warrant for putting any strictures on what sorts of topics, interests, and views are admissible in deliberation.

This faith in objectivity and in the common good of Habermas' ideal public sphere is surely responsible for the notion that the main role of public space is consensus fabrication; which confuses the important postfoundational assertion (Marchart, 1999) that it is not the public space that creates a space for politics, but rather it is political intervention that creates its own space. Moreover, for Mouffe, Habermas's vision is not only objectionable, as for Fraser, but also impossible. The liberal model requires consensus without exclusion and does not acknowledge 'the hegemonic nature of every form of consensus' (Mouffe, 2005, p.807). This consensus is always the crystallisation of power relations, and as she furthers, there can never be a final decision on what is or not legitimate, therefore that political frontier must remain contestable (Mouffe, 2000, p.49).

The illusion of arriving at a definite consensus depoliticises the public sphere. Mouffe has diagnosed this as a lack of 'properly "agonistic debate"' (Mouffe, 2002, p.1), which under neoliberalism is weakening the political public space and leads her to affirm the importance of counter-hegemonic processes that could make democratic life 'robust' again. For that reason, in Mouffe, the dialogical dimension of Habermas conception of public widens as to encompass the possibility of agonism to take place on a 'multiplicity of discursive surfaces' (Mouffe, 2007a, p.3). A point specially underlined by Michael Warner (2002, p.62) on the prevalence of an understanding of public as based on the sender/receiver model.[32] For Warner, the public is created by 'the concatenation of texts through time' (ibid.), so what generates a public sphere can be separated in time as well as space. This deflects the anxiety of the single act

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[32] Warner (2002) discusses what constitutes a public in an understanding close to that of readership, familiar to Habermas, i.e., a social space that emerges through the reflexive circulation of discourse among strangers. Nonetheless, he is very sceptic about the direct agency attributed to publics and public opinion and for that reason his work is here a particularly interesting tool to examine the Habermasian rational public sphere.

that could be identified as counter-hegemonic, in favour of a chain of corresponding acts (Mouffe, 2007a).

Following Warner, these publics require pre-existing forms and channels of circulation: they need a shared (agreed) social space, something that takes us back to the Mouffean double-edged consensus and equally to refute the necessary absolute separation between civil society and public authority. Warner (2002, p.75) affirms that:

> The magic by which discourse conjures a public into being, however, remains imperfect because of how much it must presuppose. And because many of the defining elements in the self-understanding of publics are to some extent always contradictory by practice, the sorcerer must continually cast spells against the darkness.

Thus, some agreement has to be already in place, such as to which institutions we affiliate. But, such as in the case of counter-hegemonic processes, an extension of its circulation and more precisely of its transformative – more than replicative – character must be performed (ibid., p.88). The transformative character for Warner is less of a capacity for change, or the locus of agency, and more the space for different forms of subjectivation. He is in fact very sceptical of the possible volition of a public. This is so, because contrary to Habermas, he does not understand 'the ongoing circulatory public discourse' (ibid.) as decision-oriented. This is not a weakness in his perspective, but rather an activity that opens up the possibility of understanding their transformative nature – particularly through the idea of counterpublics as offering different ways of imagining membership, circulation and affects. Counterpublics do not possess persuasion but poesis (ibid., p.82) because they advance a different way of public address that with it, potentially materialises a new public.

What is important to retain here, for further analysis, is that the public sphere is constituted of several and different public spaces as terrain for contestation; challenging what has been sedimented and naturalised within public space. This means that no particular public space is more important or relevant than

any other, and also that the relations established between different public spaces, publics and counterpublics is to be constantly reimagined and contested. Finally, the public space is not the space where consensus is built, but rather it is the space that emerges when consensus breaks down, for this reason temporary alliances need to be rearticulated between them again and again (Marchart, 1999). Then it becomes clearer that the public sphere is not a space at all, but as Oliver Marchart affirms it is a principle: the principle of reactivation, the principle of the political. This reaffirms its importance in the understanding of democracy in its radical/Mouffean sense; the public sphere is then not the space where people come together but the principle that divides them.

demoCRACY an archetype of critical art

Following the discussions in the previous section, I will expose the consensus regarding democracy that is revealed by *demoCRACY* through an exploration of the mechanics of the project, specifically in relation to the participants and the conflation of the notion of democracy with elections. I will later explore Grant Kester's orthopaedic notion to question the shock technique as canonical for so-called critical or politicised art. Finally, I will examine if *demoCRACY* is counter-hegemonic regarding the consensual operations of the artworld.
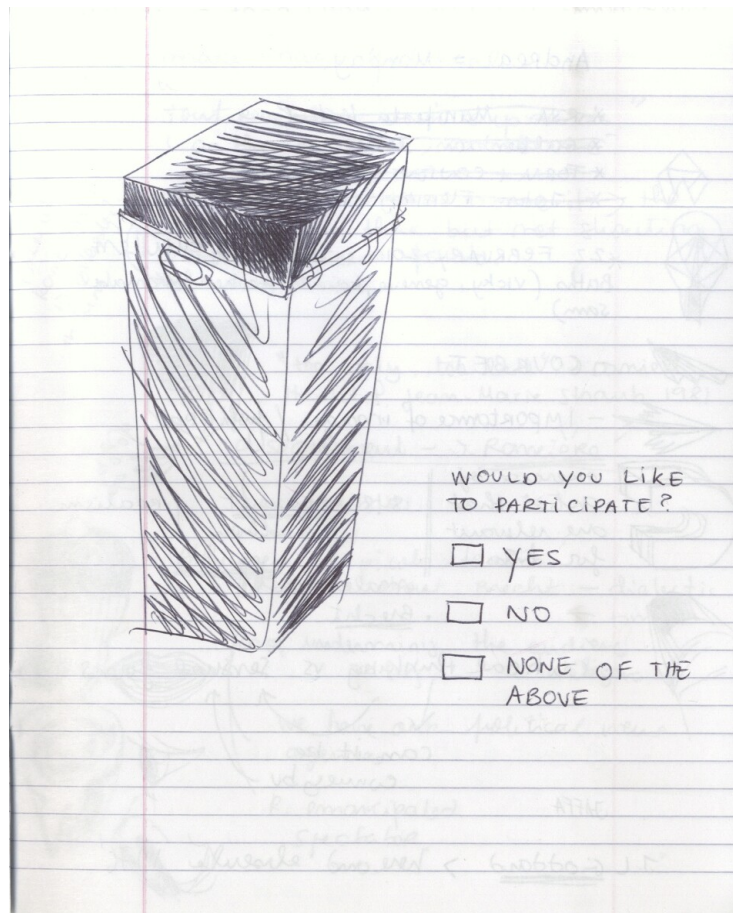
Fig. 6 *demoCRACY* preparatory drawing

My project *demoCRACY,* which comprised of a voting scene, presented the visitors of NSFS with a single question: 'Would you like to participate?' Printed on a slip of paper similar to the ones voters are given at actual elections.[33] Three possible options were given as answer: yes, no, and none of the above. But, on going to cast their ballots, my would-be voters were thwarted. The ballot box slot was blocked, preventing the participants from fulfilling the task.

Taking the opportunity created by the event and a political moment (NSFS happened one week after the UK's General Election of 2010), I staged some of the concerns of my research at that particular time about the nature of democratic participation. I was interested in participation within art, i.e., the participation of the public as audience; and within politics, participation of the

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[33] See ballot in appendix three.

public as citizen. *demoCRACY* was then simultaneously the response to an initial question – Why isn't there more participation? – and the suspicion regarding the validity of that question. Consequently, another question is produced: What are 'we' participating in, or refusing to participate in?
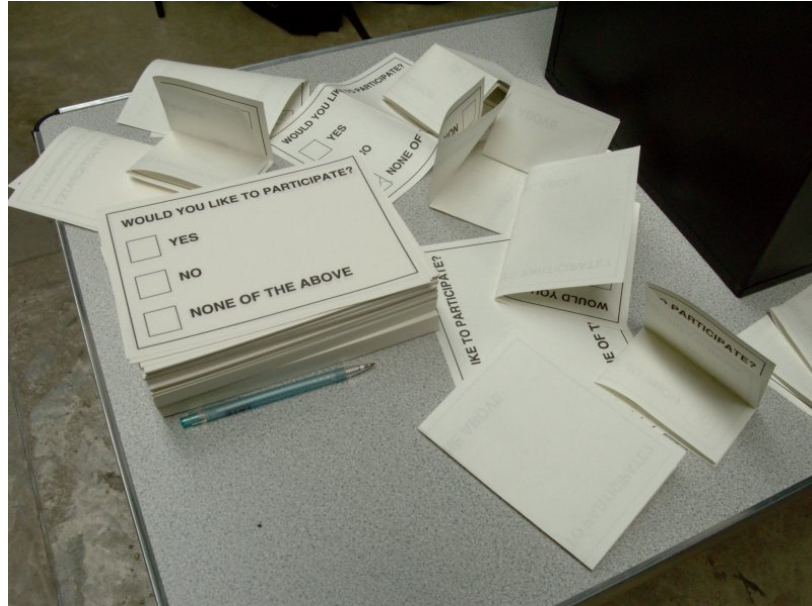
Fig. 7 *demoCRACY*, installation view

The expectation of participation as the panacea for the 'democratic deficit' (Mouffe, 2000, p.4) both in the arts and in our contemporary neoliberal democracies, appeared to be an increasingly ineffective starting point to think about civil disenfranchisement. To be sure, participation appeared as the answer to an undefined question, and the more I sought the question, participation appeared less defined as the answer; *demoCRACY* was the research into the very limits of participation. The aforementioned deficit can be identified, according to Mouffe, in our liberal democracies where the importance given to individual liberty puts in check the 'exercise of the sovereignty of the people' (Mouffe, 2000, p.4), which is still the core of democracy's imaginary. Putting in check the important role popular sovereignty plays in our allegiance to democracy has a negative impact on our current Western democracies. This rationale underlies both my intentions with this piece and Tate Modern's reasons for hosting NSFS. Tate, as an institution that celebrates the highest

accomplishments in modern and contemporary art, for three days hosted an event that brought together the newest art venues and with them yet-to-be-acclaimed art projects that were neither selected by Tate nor corresponding to Tate's standards. In that sense NSFS is Tate Modern's democratic imaginary of participation and inclusion; *demoCRACY* was the perversion of my own democratic imaginary of total participation. In this double mirage full and universal participation would bring about a real democracy in government, such as the inclusion of independent art initiatives would democratise the arts as symbolised by Tate.

Fig. 8 *NSFS*, installation view

But *demoCRACY* was already a perversion of that ideal democracy, because the atmosphere of participation of my voting scene at NSFS, in all its stages, simulated the disempowerment within liberal democracies, and more dramatically so, by not accounting for the actual voting. The answers on the

ballot paper did not matter: there was never an intention to collect them, let alone to count them. The ballot was not designed to be translated into a regulatory voice. Not only because there was no desire to do so, but precisely to expose the very impossibility, as Warner (2002) argues, of publics constituting a deliberative public opinion. That impossibility through indifference was to be evident through the closed postal slot and participation exposed as a placebo. Implying, as Rancière (2006a) would stress, that the ballot serves to legitimatise the process itself more than constituting an actual inquiry to determine collective decisions.

During the three days some visitors missed the ballot completely in the middle of the overwhelming display of NSFS. Some visitors just ignored it or patronised it; others engaged with it and filled the ballot slip (possibly aiming to subvert it by answering no) and even attempted to vote. For those participants who engaged with *demoCRACY* on all levels, the 'violence of participation' hit them hardest.[34] *demoCRACY* became a condensed version of the emotional turmoil of democratic participation with its expectations of change and unwelcome failures. Frustration, humiliation, recognition, identification and reassurance are responses that spring to mind when recalling *demoCRACY* in operation; nonetheless a question lingers: What is the importance of those who did not vote? What is the role of resistance? When all that seems to exist are spaces for consensus building and acclamation, what is the significance of voting no or not voting at all? Is it in this refusal that we can problematise, on the one hand, the notion of participation and, on the other, reaffirm the difficulty of thinking the emergence public spaces of contestation? *demoCRACY* relates very clearly, in this mode, to concerns with the agency of refusal by symbolically demonstrating that it is useless to chose in a ballot. For as we have seen in the above public sphere discussion, the function of the liberal public sphere is to make the state accountable to society via 'publicity'. In the Habermasian public sphere,

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[34] I use the title of Markus Miessen's 2007 project and publication, *The Violence of Participation*, because the idea of participation presupposing violence exposes the current criticality surrounding notions of participation and art's instrumentalisation in social ameliorative projects; and because it points to some critical positions regarding the virtual need for constant attention to be able to participate fully in democratic politics (Held, 1996 and Warner, 2002).

publicity meant a certain transparency on behalf of the state apparatus so that the public could have a critical opinion; according to Fraser (1990, p.58) it means the transmission of a general opinion via free press, free speech and representative governmental institutions. Accordingly, *demoCRACY* can be understood as parable of publicity deficit.

UNVEILING DEMOCRACY

demoCRACY is quite literal in relation to the problems of juxtaposing the ideal of democracy and the experience at polls and also the role of withdrawal from the process. Universal suffrage is one of the modern democratic institutions that subjects power to periodical redistribution (Lefort, 1988). However, Mouffe (2010) points out that such institutionalisation is desirable to create equality among participants but there should be no privileged location for the political. In such a perspective, the political is not bound to legal frameworks such as suffrage. Furthermore, universal suffrage is not a natural consequence of democracy or the exclusive way that people as citizens makes its voice heard, but it is a need that some minorities 'have for consent and to exercise power in the name of the people' (Rancière, 2006a, p.54). The minorities that Rancière is referring to are the property owners who pushed the system of representative democracy as the solution that would suit the enlargement of the modern city's population. However, this pseudo-numeric problem is not the real foundation of the actual democratic system. Representative democracy only reaffirms Rancière's belief that we will always live under some kind of oligarchic regime:

> Our governments' authority thus gets caught in two opposed systems of legitimation: on the one hand, it is legitimated by virtue of the popular vote; on the other, it is legitimated by its ability to choose the best solutions for societal problems. And yet, the best solutions can be identified by the fact that they do not have to be chosen because they result from objective knowledge of things, which is a matter for expert knowledge and not for popular choice. (Rancière, 2006a, p.78)

This critique of our post-democratic neoliberal societies, whose governments are concerned mainly with technical decisions and forfeit political ones, appears

to be tied with a suspicion that participation is perhaps democracy's stumbling block which is keeping us from imagining different possibilities. Thus, the exposure of the current hegemony regarding democracy would not only be that people's sovereignty is limited to participation in periodical suffrage, but also that democracy as the democratic deficit's own remedy is also an insurmountable contemporary hegemony.

Jodi Dean argues that '[w]hen democracy appears as both the condition of politics and the solution to the political' (Dean, 2009, p.18), we fail to imagine different forms of equality and solidarity beyond democracy. Moreover, she highlights that the 'sense that *there is no alternative* is a component of neoliberal ideology' (ibid., p.49, italics in original). As illustrated through Habermas' conception of the bourgeois public sphere, the goal of governance is to 'construct responsible subjects whose moral quality is based on the fact that they rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to alternative acts' (ibid., p.52). Accordingly, and precisely because we already know what needs to be done to improve democracy – 'critique, discuss, include, and revise' (ibid., p.94) – we can neither accept the current failures, nor envision other politics. For Dean there is no improvement to democracy – it is what it currently is.

There are two critiques Dean (2009) puts forward that I would like to highlight here. One relates to the notion that there is an extraordinary potential in the Internet in regards to information and participation; and this is tied to the common notion that the democratic deficit lies in a lack of (people's) information on governmental issues (secrecy) and on the lack of channels for universal participation (publicity). The other criticism is the current call for more democracy, i.e., the call to institute a 'real' democracy. Those calls she analyses by comparing democracy to the discourse of the hysteric (she draws on Lacan for this comparison). Dean identifies the very problem of addressing a master figure as the inability to imagine beyond a legitimating figure, which is

not 'we'.[35] Rancière on the other hand, points out the fallacy of understanding democracy either as a form of government or as a type of society. There is no possibility of constituting that communal 'we', or that radical citizenship, or the rule of the multitude. To be sure, for Rancière, there will never be a single principle of the community, but rather the multitude of egalitarian relations, and that constant instantiation of that equality is what we can call democracy (Rancière 2006). That is to say, democracy is the struggle to simultaneously extend and reaffirm equality and also to resist the state's appropriation of the public sphere.

Opening the argument here for a suspicion that democracy, even in its radical and plural form, might not be the horizon we are aiming for, how can we reassess *demoCRACY?* The given possibility of 'none of the above' in *demoCRACY*'s ballot offers a space of criticality, where the participant could evade the decision and perhaps even state a non-compliance on the issue being polled. Moreover, the 'none of the above' introduces a question regarding representation and its failures, and creates a space for an active withdrawal with a possibility of producing a sense of solidarity. However, it most likely operates as a pressure valve for an overall dysfunctional system of representation of the plurality of passions present in societies at large, ultimately resulting in an un-transformative experience. Nevertheless, *demoCRACY* also proposes time and space to consider the function of 'publicity'. That is, holding the state accountable to society through necessary transparency of how the state functions in order to be able to be subjected to public scrutiny and public opinion. In this sense, *demoCRACY* refuses to constitute itself into a deliberative voice and hence retains a critical position.

Henceforth we can say that the processes of legitimation that generally occur by voting are part of the democratic consensus that *demoCRACY* revealed.

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[35] 'Lacan identifies four different models of the social bond: discourses of the master the hysteric, the university, and the analyst' (Dean, 2009, p.63). According to Dean, in the new claims for 'real' democracy, the demonstrators behave like the hysteric, addressing their claims to a master. By saying: '*we need democracy, democracy is not what we have*' (Dean, 2009, p. 83, italics in original), they submit to the master's authority.

Recapitulating using a different lens, *demoCRACY* uses strategies of addressing the audience – heirs of the techniques of *Verfremdungseffekt* formulated by the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht (1964) – that at first glance make a given situation look familiar but on a deeper encounter disrupt the participant's expectations.[36] This, hopefully, would create a new angle that would allow the participant to view her own role in the event itself and ultimately in society at large. The recognisable setting – the voting scene – on an unfamiliar atmosphere – a festival of groundbreaking art galleries at the art museum. The overlapping of the two is instrumental to engage the participant in the discussion of individual accountability – the supposed higher and ultimate aim of *demoCRACY.* The piece, such as in Brechtian plays, has a twist in the supposed normality of what is referring to; the ballot box was closed, which prevented the participant to fulfil her task: to vote.[37] The impediment together with the introduction of the option to vote for 'none of the above' revealed not only the irrelevance of the act but also the indifference of the proponent. It did not matter what one was voting for, or if one actually voted for anything. It did not matter if the ballot box was even encountered. This was true, not only for the active participants but for all NSFS visitors, because it did not matter if the audience took part in the survey, for they were already, as in Warner (2002), its public. Everyone was all already participating in NSFS.

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[36] The Verfremdungseffekt or alienation effect has as its object 'to alienate the social gest underlying every incident. By social gest is meant the mimetic and gestural expression of the social relationships prevailing between people of a given period' (Brecht, 1964, p.139).

[37] Brecht and his theatrical strategies have inspired many politically committed art practices and, according to Grant Kester (2004), have dictated an approach to the arts and politics that became at some point canonical. The potentialities and limitations of Brecht's approach would give rise to a lengthy debate that I will not discuss thoroughly here.

Fig. 9 *demoCRACY*, installation view

From this perspective *demoCRACY* is a perfect Mouffean example of critical art, by the way it disrupted the participant's 'smooth' understanding of the very last bastion of the democratic society: universal suffrage. Additionally we need to keep in mind the voting occurred inside Tate Modern during a pluralist event: NSFS. Whether it was the right type of pluralism (agonistic in Mouffean terms) or liberal (where all differences are absorbed regardless their divergences), will be discussed further on.

However if we look at *demoCRACY,* and its possible estrangement technique, through Grant Kester's critique there might be a different outcome. Kester (2004 and 2011a), who focuses his work on the discussion of dialogical art practices and the problematisation of the creative and receptive roles, is critical of the use of antagonism in relation to art production. He critiques the use of an agonistic model as canonical and orthopaedic; an action of correcting deformities of the audience's body (and soul). The notion that art can provoke the audience to act consciously outside the gallery space has as its standpoint that there is something wrong with the people that art can correct. Because the agonistic model has the goal to cause discomfort and rupture in the viewer's understanding of a particular situation that the artist chooses to address, it

'places the artist in a position of adjudicatory oversight, unveiling and revealing the contingency of systems of meaning that the viewer would otherwise submit to without thinking' (Kester, 2011a, p.33). This attempt to raise awareness of the audience about something that we, the artists, think we have a clearer understanding of, is orthopaedic behaviour.

Kester, thereby, exposes a notion of the artist as a privileged provocateur who by shock and/or disruption techniques awakens an audience from a soporific state so that it can effect change on its social constructions. Thus, the same audience composed of people, whom the artist does not believe that under present circumstances can be able to think for themselves, becomes, through the mere encounter with the artist's production the source of all political potential. Likewise, *demoCRACY*'s proposition that elections should not be the sole sphere of publicity is not at all surprising; that elections are unfulfilling is a commonly held belief. Moreover, even if an art project effectively raises awareness in relation to a social construction, such awareness does not naturally lead to change of subjectivities, let alone to social change.

TATE AND NSFS: PLURALISM, *LIES* AND CONTEMPORARY ART
Tate Modern with its famous dramatic entrance, the Turbine Hall, where NSFS was held, has as its mission:

> to promote public knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of British, modern and contemporary art by facilitating extraordinary experiences between people and art through the Collection and an inspiring programme in and well beyond [its] galleries (Tate, 2011, no pagination given).

Vowing to keep up with the times and offering the visitors – of our multicultural and plural society – meaningful experiences, the Tate organisation has created a vision that envisages more openness and collaboration 'by being more inviting to all people, within and beyond Tate' (ibid.). Tate wants more ethnic and social diversity, to reflect its awareness of the plurality of the British society. The gallery aims to position itself globally by 'connecting the UK to the world and the

world to the UK through Tate's programmes and Collection' (ibid.). However, the discourse behind this rationale of accessibility reads both as artistic and institutional evangelism – through Tate's duty of perpetual expansion – and at the same time as mere branding. Together with this, Tate aims to be more entrepreneurial and sustainable; sustainability and entrepreneurism are the key concepts of Tate's labour and environment policies. It was in this auspicious context that NSFS was held:

> NO SOUL FOR SALE celebrates the people who contribute to the international art scene by inventing new strategies for the distribution of information and new modes of participation. Neither a fair nor an exhibition, NO SOUL FOR SALE is a convention of individuals and groups who have devoted their energies to keeping art alive. With free entrance and a rich program of daily activities, NO SOUL FOR SALE is a spontaneous celebration of the independent forces that live outside the market and that animate contemporary art (nosoulforsale, 2010a, no pagination).

In response to the fact that no financial support was given by Tate and the seventy-two initiatives had to fundraise to be able to join the festival, NSFS curator Cecilia Alemani stated that:

> What matters is how resources are distributed and who they support: the participants in "No Soul for Sale" can do a lot with very little, creating new spaces, and new, possible art worlds for other people to participate in. Rather then being about money or selling […] is about hospitality and generosity (Alemani in Ward, 2010, no pagination given).

But what happens when an institution such as Tate, which has a powerful effect on how British people look at art, behaves in an altogether non-institutional way and presents a 'cheap program' that engages in the further precarisation of artists and cultural producers?[38] Should Tate be setting the model for more sustainable practices?

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[38] Stephen Jones affirms that Tate Modern has 'transformed the British public's attitudes to the visual arts' (Jones, 2010, no pagination given). Wolff Olins, Tate's branding consultant company affirms: 'From the day it opened, Tate Modern was a huge success, attracting double its target

The curator Charles Esche questions the role of art institutions when faced with having to fight for subsistence in the same ground as 'other forms of consumer entertainment' (Esche, 2004, p.4). Affirming the locus of artistic exposure as privileged for fostering 'democratic deviance', an inevitable component of a true democracy, and at the same time, deviance, as being the only justification for their existence and support. What makes these institutions really democratic is that they perform a type of democracy that is critical of existing models, mainly those in use by state apparatuses, consequently making them relevant for those very same apparatuses and thus, by being useful, beneficiaries of state funding. Still, and on the role of art institutions, Simon Sheikh defends that it is crucial that we start to understand 'art's spaces – institutions – as "public spheres"' (Sheikh, 2004a, p.1). That should be understood as multiple, i.e., 'conflictual and a platform for different and opposionary subjectivities, politics and economies: a "battleground"' (ibid., p.2). This sphere, inspired by Chantal Mouffe's agonistic public sphere, is where consensus is not the main goal but the diffusion of public passions (Mouffe, 2000). According to Sheikh that is the role art institutions should take: to be places for democracy, for the staging of conflicting positions, or in Mouffe's terms a place for the conflicting establishment of different hegemonies, which establishment is always provisional. This everlasting agonism implies that different interpretations of what is a common ground for the different parties engaged – that in this case might even be different definitions of what art is, how should it be perceived or valued – is what is at stake.

In this sense we can perceive the staging of NSFS as a demonstration of pluralism, hopefully a radical one, by Tate. The opening up of an agonistic space, where the presentation of a festival in the guise of an anti-capitalist fair is in antagonism with the supporting policies of art institutions, like the Tate, which see most of their revenue coming in through sponsorship by big corporations

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visitor numbers, and becoming the most popular modern art gallery in the world. After a year, Tate's overall annual visitor numbers had risen 87% to 7.5 million' (wolffolins).

and merchandising sales.[39] Consequently promoting the encounter of different modes and magnitudes of engagement in the art world. But if we follow Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello's (2007) study of the current form of capitalism, there is nothing more in tune with late capitalism than the self-entrepreneurial mode of engagement found in NSFS festival. NSFS, where exactly what was claimed to be not for sale – one's soul – is actually the core of capitalist exchange. For as Bifo Berardi (2009) argues, intellectual labour is today's model of valorisation. Capitalism, or as he refers to it in its current form, semiocapitalism, 'takes the mind, language and creativity as its primary tool for the production of value' (Berardi, 2009, p.21). Thus, even if no money was exchanged, and apparently no labour invested – in its alienated form, as pure distribution of time materialized in value – our souls were exploited, and as paradoxically as capitalism always is, in our own behalf.[40]

NSFS attempted to avoid the normal capitalist infrastructures and procedures but, as I have demonstrated, its approach was actually ingrained in new capitalist procedures, which ended up by attracting protests and anger by groups such as Making a Living (MAL) and Liberate Tate.[41] To focus only on the first, in the midst of a festival where no other exchange was made but symbolic ones, MAL asked everyone to address the 'elephant in the room', and discuss the fact that the artists were not being paid for their labour. Together with the welcoming of the protest by the group of curators as institutional critique, the sympathy that MAL received from the participants (rather than true solidarity) confirmed the consensus surrounding the support of the arts, and the expectation that young artists should work for free while they build their

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[39] 'Today only 40 percent of Tate's total income (£157.8m in 2012–13) comes via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Grant in Aid. The remaining 60 percent is self-generated and includes admissions, Tate Enterprises revenue, sponsorship, and donations' (Milliard, 2014).

[40] The soul is to be understood as being-with, as the capacity to weave a world through our imaginary, affects and attentiveness (Berardi, 2009).

[41] Making a Living is 'an anonymous grouping of national and international artists who campaign on the working conditions of artists in the UK' (malorganise, 2010). Liberate Tate is 'an art activist collective exploring the role of creative intervention in social change. [It aims] to free art from the grips of the oil industry primarily focusing on Tate, […] and its sponsorship deal with BP' (Liberate Tate, 2010).

reputations.[42]

Together with this we might state that if participation and people's sovereignty is democracy's imaginary, NSFS is Tate's democratic imaginary: the aforementioned participation and inclusion. These imaginaries are necessary for our affiliation with the institutions and our recognition of Tate as a validating institution within the arts. Tate, thus, needs to reaffirm its potential openness, and expose that at the very base of what it displays and what constitutes its 'Collection' lies a network of grassroots movements and small initiatives, which represent a true plurality of what art is. This could be seen, according to Marchart's discussion on the public space, as revealing what lies beneath the naturalised conception of what is understood as art, and placed in Tate's collection. In other words, revealing that what becomes understood as art is the fruit of disagreement. This revelation, and according to Marchart, constitutes the emergence of a public sphere. To take this juxtaposition to its final consequences, we need to examine if the small initiatives at NSFS were proposing a practice of art that was in antagonism to the one Tate symbolises. I would argue, taking my own project as example, that the only consensus that was revealed by *demoCRACY* was symbolic and not a matter of fact. *demoCRACY*, like NSFS, did not propose radically different models of production, distribution and experiencing of art. The consensus revealed, and in part through the protests by MAL, was the one that NSFS is part of: the hegemonic consensus of art.

DISCLOSING THE ART WORLD CONSENSUS

I mentioned before that *demoCRACY* revealed a democratic consensus based on a correspondence between democracy and the ballot. However we can ask whether *demoCRACY* in itself promoted and reaffirmed a whole new set of consensus, specially regarding how a critical art project should behave within and in relation to art institutions.

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[42] 'As for the impact of the letter at "No Soul For Sale" itself, curator Cecilia Alemani said that she hadn't been aware of any on-the-ground protest. She added, however, "I think that letter was simply a welcome version of institutional critique"' (artnet, 2010).

There is according to Mouffe, Rancière, and Dean a certain hegemony regarding democracy. This can be seen as geared towards consensus building in its liberal guise (Mouffe, 1993), or inspiring a particular type of hatred from the whole spectrum of politics: there is either too much licence in democracy, which leads to depravation; or too little, which leads to authoritarianism and bureaucratisation (Rancière, 2006a). Plus, the ultimate consensus that prescribes more democracy to the 'democratic problem' revealed by Jodi Dean (2009). However, and consciously distorting Mouffe's hegemonic principle, how does *demoCRACY* operate if we consider that there is also a particular hegemony in the art world? Can we still understand it as counter-hegemonic? Did it also offer a position of dissensus? In order to examine these questions we need to first understand which consensus might be currently in operation in the art world.
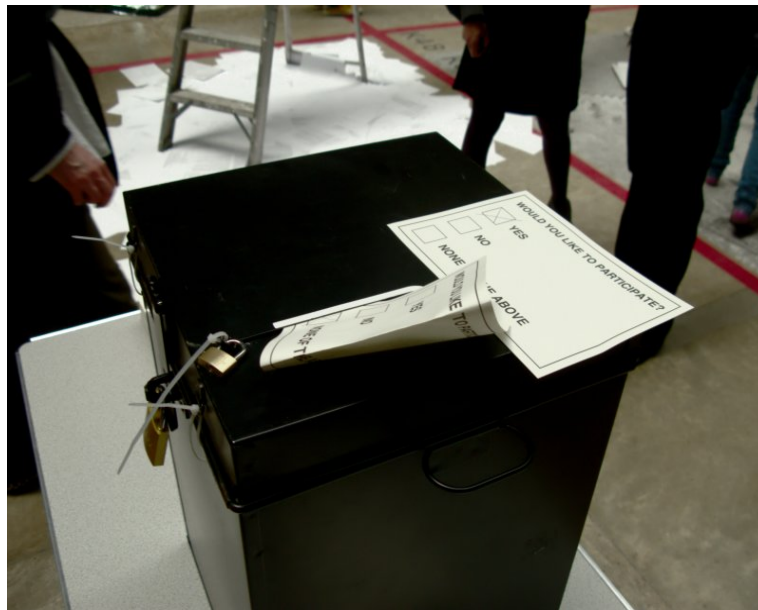
Fig. 10 *demoCRACY,* installation view

The work of Stephen Wright can be very useful as a starting point. In his search for an ontology of art, Wright (2007) argues that the art work is summoned to the centre of a powerful triangulation: authorship, objecthood and spectatorship. This is the frame that enables art to appear as such. This frame is performative

for it has the power to transform common objects into art (e.g. the readymade), i.e. operating an ontological shift. The coefficient of visibility of an artwork, its existence and perception as such, is possible nowadays regarding its relationship to these three vertices. For Wright (2008b) the elevation to the status of art – of either newly constructed things (or events, gestures, etc., for art's field is currently absolutely inclusive) or their appropriation – has also a limiting character; those things become 'merely' art and obstruct art's 'transformative potential'.

For Wright (2007) it is essential to focus on the modes of reception, to question the figure of the spectator as a contemplator – a passive figure. He proposes positioning ourselves as users instead of spectators. This position is quite different from the Brechtian model of animating spectators into actors; different as well from a Rancièrian (2009a) perspective, which views spectatorship as already potentially active. The latter, dilutes the political function of art, i.e., being neither in the specific agency of the artist (as in Brecht), nor in the specific content/form of the artwork (as in Mouffe), but in what happens between 'narrator' and interpreter through the thing – artwork. In the footsteps of Rancière, Wright (2008c) argues that the political potential is in the use one gives to art, and that will determine what is and is not art, how art will circulate and be preserved.[43] Usership has the capacity to break down 'obsolete binaries between authorship and spectatorship, production and reception, publishers and readers' (Wright, 2007, no pagination given).

What is useful here is the use of Wright's proposition as defining the current hegemony in the arts, i.e., what is commonly understood as the mainstream. Hence it is against this triangular model – where art work, author and spectator perform their designated roles to validate a practice as art – that I am going to

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[43] For the sake of the argument I am ignoring here what divides Wright and Rancière, which is that Wright ends up being prescriptive on what 'good' art is – the one that lowers its coefficient of visibility in favour of the user – a position criticised by Rancière as he affirms in conversation with Wright: 'art can contribute to produce new changes in the configuration of the sensible, in the cartography of the visible and the sensible, but it cannot anticipate and calculate its own effect' (Wright, 2008d, no pagination given).

examine *demoCRACY* as counter-hegemonic manifestation.

DEMOCRACY'S COUNTER-HEGEMONY

Regarding the above discussion, *demoCRACY* was created within and reaffirmed a specific art hegemony, which is the conjunction of the autonomy of the art work and the authority of the artistic personality (Kester, 2011a, p.15). To demonstrate it, I will focus on one of Wright's angles: authorship. *demoCRACY* is the product of the invitation to an individual artist by a curatorial team, which in turn is responding to the project that a second curatorial team proposed to an art venue that is itself under the direction of a curator. By revealing its genealogy, what is also visible is how each step of the process functions as a legitimating device to the previous one. Where I, as the creator of *demoCRACY,* gain legitimacy as Carla Cruz, the individual artist, by being invited to the *Unsurpassable Horizon* project by Amado and Oliveira, who in turn gain their legitimacy as independent curators by being invited to the NSFS, which in turn confers legitimacy to its curators, for they host their event under the seal of approval of one of the most important art institutions in the world – Tate.[44] I will explore this argument further by looking at the function of authorship in Chapter Four.

demoCRACY's question – 'Do you want to participate?' – did not only refer to democratic elections but was also self-referential. It questions what is at stake when an artist chooses to participate in a system she is in disagreement with. *demoCRACY* intends to question my role as an artist and the tactics used in relation to the audience, all the time recognising that the artist, still retains the custody of the meanings of the work by pursuing specific outcomes –

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[44] Ana Dias Cordeiro affirms that 'Carla Cruz is our emissary at Tate Modern's party' (Cordeiro, 2010, my translation, no pagination given), and although I described the event as a fashionable car boot sale that happened to be in the Turbine Hall, the myth is that Carla Cruz exhibited at Tate. In 2011 Miguel Amado was appointed as curator of Tate St Ives and in 2012 Massimiliano Gioni appointed curator of the 55th Venice Biennale. Can we say that they are collecting the fruit of years of symbolic cultural capital – both monetary as intellectual – investment from which NSFS was a small part of it?

awareness of the fallacy of participation in politics and in NSFS – and focused on an immediate response to the particular contexts, which overlooks proposing an alternative.
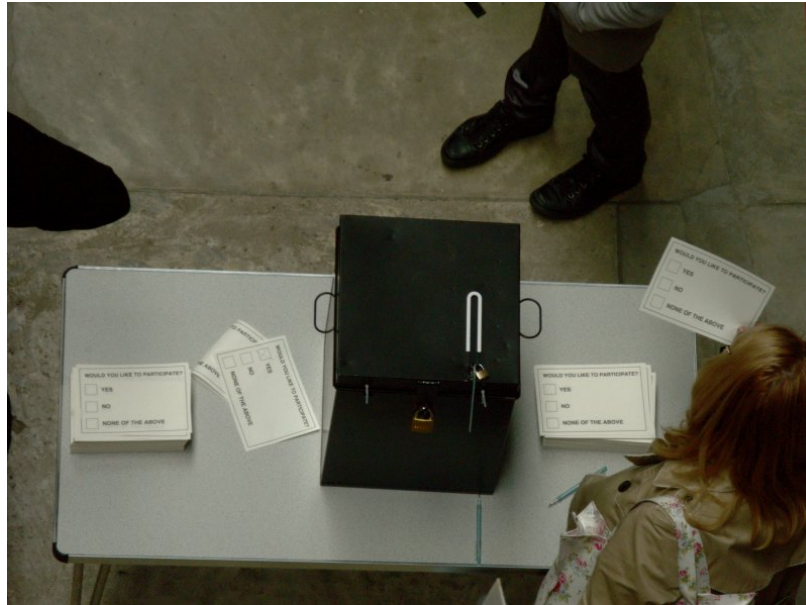
Fig. 11 *demoCRACY,* installation view

demoCRACY revealed a certain consensus, the consensus around democracy and participation. In accordance to what Mouffe's believes critical art can do, *demoCRACY* is exemplary; but I would argue that because it did not present a *de facto* dissensus it falls short of generating a true public space.

Taking the theory of the hegemonic processes to its last consequence as a practice capable of opening up a public sphere through its mode of address that could call itself counter-hegemonic and dissensual would need to position itself as a counterpublic in Warner's definition. It would need to position itself in defiance to what is currently understood as art, and to propose a different mode of being together – challenging the borders and notions of what an artistic gesture, an author, and a participant is. It would need to be actually antagonic rather than merely symbolic. In this sense, neither *demoCRACY*, nor NSFS generated a true alternative to what Tate – as a normality reference in the arts –

is presenting. That public space, that Marchart believes to emerge when consensus breaks down, and that is truly divisive, would only emerge in the following perspective: through a disagreement in practice of what the current interpretation of art is. Finally a counter-hegemonic process would only be in practice when it attempts to replace the given hegemony rather than merely revealing it.

Chapter 3: Feminist strategies in *All My Independent Women*

In the previous chapter, I looked into the capacity of critical art to create public spheres in the sense of proposing alternatives to the status quo and of opening a space for disagreement on the interpretation of what art is. In this chapter, I will look at the feminist art project *All My Independent Women*'s (2005 – ongoing) development over eight years of existence and seven exhibition editions to further understand if art can perform democracy by promoting difference. I will use the Portuguese feminist book, *New Portuguese Letters*, as a tool in this exploration, with special focus on questions of emancipation, representation and visibility.

All My Independent Women (AMIW) is an exhibition project rooted in feminist/gender debates that aspired to bring to light feminist practices underrepresented in the Portuguese context, and to establish a discussion about feminist practices and methodologies. Furthermore, the project aims to challenge the idea of feminine art – and even feminist art – and that of a universal artistic subject. In 2005, I initiated AMIW in response to a growing concern about the under-representation of women artists in Portuguese institutional exhibitions and collections. In 2005 AMIW was a collective exhibition that represented simultaneously the artists that were part of the context of my art production and who, through their practice, either problematise gender constructions and the hierarchy present in sexual difference, or work from a feminist perspective/methodology.[45] I use AMIW in this research as an instrument to examine if art can perform democracy by creating difference, i.e., as the alternative to the artworld that *demoCRACY*, despite its critique, failed to be.

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[45] In spite of being titled *All My Independent Women*, the project was never a woman-only show.

In 2010, I used the *New Portuguese Letters* (*NPL*) as a model to analyse and transform AMIW's project of inserting feminist practices into the mainstream. The book is itself a project of recuperation and difference questioning what it meant to be a woman in the 1970s in Portugal and lays the foundations for future modes of understanding of what being a wo/man can be.[46] In this sense, it became the cartography used by subsequent AMIW's projects both to question its project of inscribing women's practices in the artworld and to propose AMIW's network collective practice as a feminist and artistic project; that not only wants to position itself as truly feminist but also as democratic.

I will briefly explain the relationship between AMIW and feminism before I move on to the analysis of the *NPL* in terms of the desire for emancipation, its contemporary relevance and how it became a guide to reaffirm AMIW's feminist cause. Afterwards, I will discuss AMIW's desire for visibility and look in detail at the 2010 exhibition. This will be followed by an analysis of what changed after the encounter with the *NPL*, the questioning of visibility as an ultimate aim and the selection criteria as a way to subvert canonical strategies of exhibition making. The *NPL* became the cartography used to navigate the artworld with a feminist ethos.

All My Independent Women: a feminist project

In 2005, I believed that the artworld in Portugal did not acknowledge artistic practices that dealt with gender and feminist critique, especially when produced by women artists. I organised AMIW in order to fight for the recognition of these practices.

Fifteen artists and art groups took part of an imagined private collection that was present at the gallery of contemporary art from the Sociedade Martins Sarmento, Archeological Museum – Guimarães. Through their work I intended to show the works and the artists that directly influenced my practice and that

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[46] The term wo/man (Minh-ha, 1989 and Braidotti, 2008) is used here to highlight that this feminist project of the redefinition of sex and gender constructs is not only a question for women but also for men.

were working from a feminist perspective. Moreover, I thought these works and artists were not receiving sufficient public recognition. For the most cases I selected specific artworks and used the *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista* (Amaral et al., 2005), as the guiding thread of the exhibition, associating dictionary entries such as femininity, fairy-tales, Eve, and Amazons to the each artwork.[47] These entries connected different artworks and expanded the readings and meanings creating paths for feminist critiques of each one.

Feminist theory and critique informs the way I position myself in the world and in the art world(s). In 2005, sexual difference appeared as a defining and, for most, quite definite fact. Feminist views coming from a non-essentialist perspective that perceive gender as culturally constructed, might want to overcome those definitions and promote gender neutrality. However, more complex sociopolitical understandings of those constructions and their hierarchical dispositions in our culture, with arguments fuelled by Butler (1999) and Braidotti (1994), lead us to recognise the inevitability and importance of affirming sexual difference and understanding new gender constructions in our contemporary 'gender regimes' (Walby, 2011).[48]

In order to promote discussions around sexual difference in the arts, it was important to present art works that were created from the premise that our embodiment as sexualised and gendered bodies is generating difference, and to investigate the fact why exactly those who did work in such a manner were not only neglected by the art institutions but also scorned by the cultural milieu at large.

From its conception phase, AMIW had to assert itself against those who claimed the feminist political project as outdated, exaggerated, self-victimising,

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[47] This dictionary looks at the essential concepts for the understanding of feminisms and feminist theory in Portugal, and brings terms that were mainly in use in the academic domain into broader contexts.

[48] Gender regime is similar to the notion of patriarchy, but acknowledging it as a progressive concept, and not as something historical, essentialist and immutable (Walby, 2011, p.104).

aggressive, man-hating, and so on, and try to drop some clichés about art with feminist readings that could be anecdotally described as: 'amateurish depictions of vaginas, menstruation woes and other topics culled from everyday life of women' (van der Linden, 2009, p.37). This excessively formulaic description serves to demonstrate the contempt in which art with feminist constructions is held, denigrating its historical importance and influence on contemporary art – which is another expression of anti-feminism common from the late 1980s on (Faludi, 1992). Such clichés have not always been successfully discarded: at times artists, in trying to recuperate a lost genealogy (the one of feminisms in art), have tended to over-identify with what generally has become known as feminist art, by assuming that there is a given feminist style. However, as I will demonstrate, the relationship between feminisms and visual arts can be found much beyond certain thematic and aesthetic strategies. Furthermore, in this chapter, feminist strategies prove to be fruitful to shed light over my examination on the attempt to perform democracy through artistic gestures.
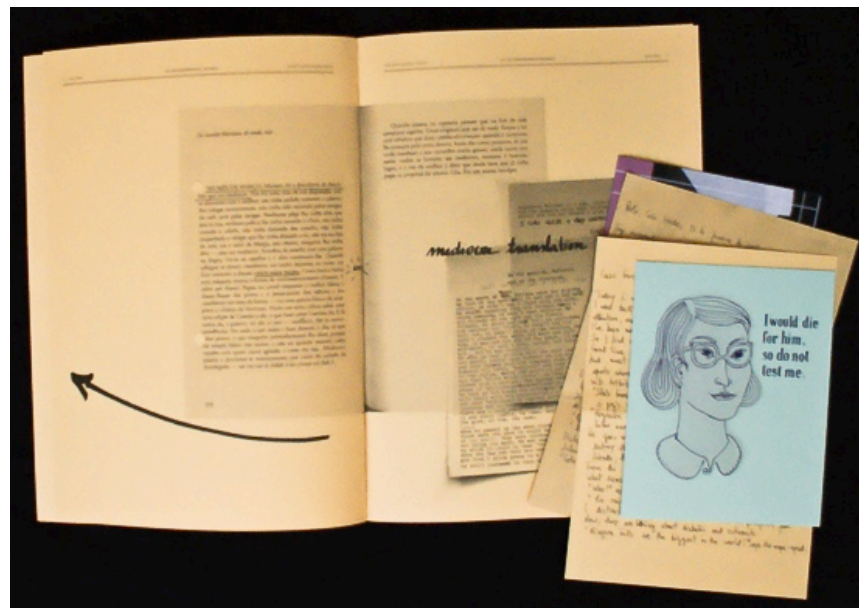
Fig. 12 *AMIW and the New Portuguese Letters* publication and inserts, 2010

The *New Portuguese Letters:* a project of emancipation

The *New Portuguese Letters* is an epistolary book written in the last years of the Portuguese dictatorship by three women writers, Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa.[49] The authors wanted to respond to what they considered to be the inferior situation that women were reduced to in Portugal – economically, sexually and culturally (Vidal, 1974). For this collective enterprise, they took as point of departure another book dating from the late seventeenth century: *Letters of a Portuguese Nun* (*Lettres Portugaises* in the original, [*LP*]).

Rereading the *Letters of a Portuguese Nun*, 1669

The *Lettres Portugaises* (Letters of a Portuguese Nun – *LP*) is composed of five letters, supposedly written by the Portuguese nun Mariana Alcoforado from a convent in Beja to the French soldier Noël Bouton, the marquis de Chamilly. The letters were found in France and translated from the Portuguese into French by Gabriel-Joseph de la Vergne, the comte de Guilleragues and published in 1669 by Claude Barbin (Kauffman, 1986, p.92). There is considerable controversy surrounding the authorship of the letters (it is most likely that the translator himself was the author) and whether they belong to the Portuguese or the French literary tradition. It is an acclaimed literary work, widely translated, discussed and appropriated since the seventeenth century.[50]

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[49] Installed in 1936 by General António de Oliveira Salazar and continued by Marcelo Caetano until the military coup on 25 April 1974 (the Carnation Revolution), the Portuguese dictatorship (known as Estado Novo) kept the country in a state of isolation, poverty, illiteracy and war. The Portuguese Colonial War between the Portuguese military forces and the nationalist movements in Portugal's African colonies (Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea today the Republic of Guinea-Bissau) between 1961 and 1974.

The three authors had already acknowledged literary work. Barreno had published *Outros Legítimos Superiores* in 1970, Horta *Minha Senhora de Mim*, in 1971 and Velho da Costa *Maina Mendes*, 1969; these are books that have a strong political significance (Amaral, 2010, xv).

[50] E.g., the book was translated by Rainer Maria Rilke into German in 1913, and was so strongly respected as a masterpiece of literature that it was compared to Ovid's *Heroids* (Kauffman, 1986, p.93).

In 1969 it was re-published in Portugal in a bilingual edition and came to mythologise notions of passion, love and femininity in Portugal. It was, according to Anna Klobucka (2000, p.107), the perfect material for the three authors to take in 1971 as starting point to reclaim a different role and dignity for Portuguese women.

The book portrays:

> the stereotypical abandoned woman, supplicant and submissive, alternating between adoration and hatred, and practicing a discourse of overwhelming passion for a man (the cavalier) who was once in love with her [Mariana], but who left, to never return (Amaral, 2010, xvi, my translation).

Just as the above description by the poet (and editor of the 2010 *NPL* edition), Ana Luísa Amaral, I read the *LP* as an hysterical monologue of the disturbed imagination of a cloistered woman. I could, on the one hand, identify with the socio-religious constructions present in the Portuguese society that made the passion of that religious woman an offence, and on the other, I could not identify with Mariana's passion, which seemed like an over-constructed femininity.[51]

Recuperating Mariana in the *New Portuguese Letters*, 1972

What was the significance that the three authors found in Mariana's passion that led them to write the *NPL*? Mariana, in the five letters, appears submissive to an uncontrollable passion that she seeks desperately to rekindle, writing to an addressee who never replies; materialising for me, a feminist reader, an inconvenient archetype of femininity, which I was attempting to overcome with AMIW's projects. However, in the *NPL* the three authors reconstruct Mariana's passion as being just an excuse, an exercise without an object; it does not matter if the French soldier never replied to Mariana, or if he ever loved her, or

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[51] I am referring here not only to my socialisation in Portuguese society, but also to my Catholic upbringing, which sees the impossibility to control one's passions as ultimately feminine and reprehensible, except when devoted to God.

even if he ever existed. What matters is that Mariana is taking control over her passion, exaggerating it or cooling it down to her own desire. The three authors wrote in the *Second Letter* of the *NPL*, embodying Mariana:

> And if in my heart of hearts I do not believe in love as a totally genuine feeling apart from my imperative need to invent it (in which case it is real but you are not) […] you are scarcely more than a motivation, a beginning, a garment in which I envelop you, a garment woven of my much greater pleasure at feeling myself moved by passion than in loving you, a cloak for involving you in my much greater pleasure in saying that I love you than in really loving you (Barreno et al., 1975, p.14).

Here the ultimate aim is not the soldier's love but the invention of love, through writing. Despite the limitation of her condition, both as woman and as a nun, Mariana creates for herself a passion that can overcome the walls of the convent. For the reader, it matters little if Mariana is fictional or not. The three authors assume her both as real and fiction. Just like the nun, they have used writing as an instrument of emancipation, or as they often write: as an 'exercise'.

Consisting of letters in the form of poems, essays, and fragments, all dated but not signed, the *NPL* by centring the plot in Mariana's passion decentred the preconceived image of the Portuguese woman. As Linda Kauffman affirms '[t]hey see their writing as a process of restoration and recuperation' (Kauffman, 1986, p.284), where the stereotypical disappears and Mariana emerges in all its different guises and epochs. Just as Mariana does, the three authors take control of their context, their position as women in 1970s' Portuguese society – bourgeois city women, it is true, but nonetheless oppressed (Barreno et al., 1975, p.303). It is through their experience of oppression that they wish to be in solidarity with all other exploited people: the soldiers in a war that no one but the state supported; working-class women and men; men that migrated and their women left behind. This would lead into a path of self-discovery and self-construction, which was not without perils, as we can observe in the *Third Letter I*:

Whether it be in Beja or Lisbon, whitewashed walls or paving stones, there is always a cloister awaiting whoever proudly defies custom and tradition:
a nun does not copulate
a woman who has borne children and earned a diploma writes but does not overcome obstacles
(and certainly not in a sisterhood of three) (ibid., p.16).

Just as Mariana recreates herself by writing love letters, the three authors recreate the woman in Portugal in the 1970s. Predicting the response of a fascist state, they are aware of the uncertainty of their enterprise, and of the fact that their experiment of writing collectively could make them more conspicuous to the state's censorship.
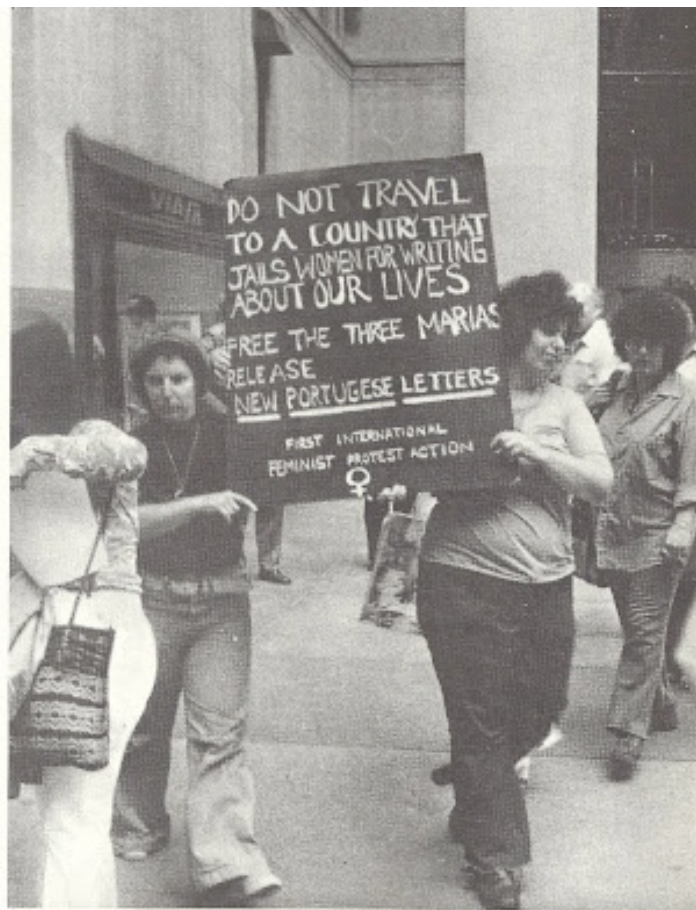
Fig. 13 *Demonstration in New York City for the end of the Three Marias Judicial Process,* photo by Flama's magazine *reporter,* July 1973

The Significance of the New Portuguese Letters

The trial of the Three Marias

The *NPL* had a galvanising immediate impact on Portuguese society. Three days after it was published, it was confiscated by the police, accused of being pornographic and an outrage to public decency. The authors were put on trial in 1972. This only ended in May 1974.[52] The defence attorney of Barreno, Carlos Vidal, exposes in court that the true reason to persecute the *NPL* is its political content or better, its political potential:

> Persecution, that is of a political character, for this is a political book, not in the immediate sense of the term but in the sense of affirmation of civic and moral values. It is true, moreover, that the work, in relation to women's inferior position, referred to other aspects of the national reality, related to women, that must have upset the authorities – references to emigration, war and other problems. So these are the real causes that brought the book to court, but there was no courage to criticise it on those terms (ibid., p.70, my translation).

This lack of courage from the Portuguese state to charge the book for its subversive political character was due to the extreme pressure the state was already under (among other reasons, the growing opposition to the war in the Portuguese African colonies), thus it was easier and more discreet, to charge it as pornographic. However, quickly after the criminal process started, a feminist movement of outrage across Europe, North and South America was mobilised, which gave an extraordinary international visibility to the case and the book.[53] Consequently, the book is known due to the criminal process and the authors

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[52] The director of the publishing house Estúdios Cor, Romeu Melo, was also put on trial.

It is noteworthy that although the Carnation Revolution occurred on 25 April 1974, the authors still went to court *after* the revolution to hear their sentence, which in the light of the new political scenery, could not have been any other than not guilty. Nonetheless, as Kauffman states this is why the authors claim 'that revolutions come and go, but women remain oppressed; this is why they maintain that they owe their freedom not to the coup but to the concerted effort of the feminist movement throughout the world' (Kauffman, 1986, p.281).

[53] Translations in various Western countries followed almost immediately, e.g. in France with a translation and introduction by Monique Wittig, Vera Alves da Nóbrega and Evelyne Le Garrec (1973).

labelled as the Three Marias, thus reduced into the anonymity of a mythical figure that is three in one, a three-headed woman, i.e. a monstrous troublemaker.

The book reduced to a legend

The *NPL* became a legend, belonging to the Portuguese collective imaginary, but without being thoroughly read, without a real knowledge of its existing contents. As Amaral states:

> its due importance has yet to be recognised, given that the book has often been misread and taken for an outdated vision or an out-of-fashion feminist manifesto (Amaral, 2010, xx, my translation).

That was the vision I also shared until 2009 when I decided to read the book. Because of the legal process that the book had been subjected to, and the media attention that the case gained, especially abroad, the publication had earned a reputation as a feminist manifesto and an anti-fascist, rather than a literary work, and dated as a product of the 1970s.

The neglected progressive content

The *NPL* effectively question and subvert Portuguese patriarchal structures. Moreover, as Kauffman affirms, it transgresses gender construction, for the three women 'are sexually explicit, frank about their sexuality' (Kauffman, 1986, p.281) they dare to write like men. The *NPL* is absolutely original and contemporary from the point of view of literature, from the style of writing that is dispersed and polyphonic. Using a well-known device, that of the epistolary book, the authors create a non-linear story (regardless of the chronology of the letters); and they venture outside their own expertise, appropriating different stylistic modes of writing. Some of these modes are recognisable, for instance, Portuguese acknowledged poets such as Gil Vicente and Luís Vaz de Camões. Moreover, as Kauffman points out, they speak from a multitude of voices and to

multiple addressees.[54] Regardless of its groundbreaking character it is not considered a masterpiece of Portuguese literature (as the *PL* are). Amaral defends the *NPL* progressiveness by affirming the fact that it can be read in the light of contemporary feminist and queer theories or that even forty years after its publication it still connects to some most urgent political agendas: such as the femininisation of poverty (Amaral, 2010, xxi). It is not only *NPL*'s groundbreaking critique of gender constructions that will later inspire AMIW, but also its critique of authorship in the use of polyphony and the anonymity of particular parts of the text. As Craig Owens affirms, it is the production of 'an illegitimate work, one which lacks the inscription of the Father (Law)' (Owens, 1992, p.125) and as such is a radical feminist gesture.

NPL's embryonic character

Of extreme importance is also its careful focus on the Portuguese experience, its situatedness. Kauffman (1986, p.282) writes:

> by focusing on politics and history, the three authors make explicit what was implicit in the nun's original letters – the parallels between the colonization of Portugal and of woman, between the country as colony and woman as conquest.[55]

We can trace here Braidotti's (1994, p.23) project of a situated politics, which affirms that through our location and our embodiment we can resist the hegemonic views of subjectivity, and escape the construction of the feminine. In its specificity it weaves the past and future, recuperating cloistered voices of past women, and wo/men yet to come. The three authors took over the notion of the woman, muse or matter to be transformed, and reinstate it as the fictional Mariana, the living author. It is a matter of urgency that the *NPL* be read by Portuguese women in particular for the above reasons, but also by women and

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[54] Maria Teresa Horta is a poet, Maria Isabel Barreno a sociologist (even when writing fiction her work has always a social-political background that makes it very specific and almost essayistic) and Maria Velho da Costa is a novelist. In the NPL, Horta (2011) affirms, all of them attempted prose, essay and poetry alike.

[55] The French soldier was in Portugal to fight on behalf of the Portuguese in the Restoration War (1640-1668) that ended the Spanish rule.

men in general. In 2010, I decided to revisit the book through the AMIW exhibition/political projects. This was because, in deconstructing the concept of the mythical Portuguese woman (symbolised by Mariana), the three authors have opened the path toward new understandings of what is to be a wo/man. Moreover, this critique opens up questions of what is to be for both women and men. Although, the path has not been exhaustively followed. I wondered if AMIW could contribute to different understandings, for today we can still reassert what Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, who wrote the preface of the 1984 edition, already affirmed highlighting the necessary relation between our critique and our practice, '[a]nd what about the practice, sisters, the everyday practice?' (Pintasilgo in Barreno et at., 2010, xli, my translation). Pintasilgo writes that:

> The collective strength of women, as the most discriminated social group and simultaneously the most international, is one factor that history cannot yet account for. Steps, such as the *New Portuguese Letters*, have helped this strength to be aware of itself. It is now in motion, in the discovery of new values and different ways of being in the world, in the practice of a freer and more committed life. If such strength is able to bring to all spheres of social life new human qualities, the difference that leads to oppression will have been reduced, to allow the widening of the difference that is affirmation of identity. The land will have been worked such that it will give rise to the only necessary revolution: that of the oppressed consciousness that knows that is itself also oppressive and wants to be freed from both forms of subjugation. (ibid., xlviii, my translation)

The present and the future of feminisms

Forty years have passed and the *NPL* still needs to fulfil its destiny of becoming actual *cartas,* in the sense of cartographies, of becoming what Kauffman saw in them: '*Novas Cartas* is a charter of human rights, a weaving of women's voices that enables to read back and forth in history' (Kauffman, 1986, p.310). What in fact failed both the Three Marias and every Portuguese woman was that the revolution came, and with it, a democratic system was instituted, but the true revolution is yet to be made – the revolution of behaviours. The *NPL* is, as cartography, of extreme importance today, when what separates us from the *NPL*'s epoch and the authors' struggle against a gender regime where women

were excluded from the public sphere, is that women today appear in the public realm, but mainly as consumers (McRobbie, 2009, p.28). That path of new and different understandings of what is to be is today just as important to follow. There are significant differences between the immediate period surrounding the publication of *NPL* and the trial of its authors and the present day. Unlike the 1980s backlash, traced by Susan Faludi (1992), against tangible feminist achievements in the public realm, what is now transpiring is the recasting of feminist struggles and ideals in the mould, writes Angela McRobbie, of a 'mild, and media-friendly version of feminism' (McRobbie, 2009, p.31) that is deemed to have been already accomplished and ipso facto, now unnecessary. As McRobbie ironically affirms:

> She [the contemporary young woman] has benefited from feminism, and can now afford to wave goodbye to its values, in favour of pursuing her own personal desires (ibid., p.78).

We are currently witnessing a post-feminist wave, what Nina Power identifies as a one-dimensional feminism. Today, a multiplicity of feminisms (liberal, radical, black, libertarian, environmental, etc.) appear reduced to a lifestyle and anything that 'celebrates individual identity' (Power, 2009, p.69), or being chosen and performed consciously is a form of feminism.[56] This liberal empowerment of women through an aggressive individualisation of the self plays, in McRobbie's view, a vital role in undoing feminism, and undoing it as a political potential, for what is being undone is:

> the possibility of feminism remaining in circulation as an accessible political imaginary, a means of collectivising what have now otherwise become mere privatised and individualised experiences (McRobbie, 2009, p.42).

For feminism to affirm itself within that potentiality it needs to reconnect to current critiques of labour (Power, 2009) and capitalism and imperialism

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[56] Binge drinking, the revival of nostalgic fantasies that equate femininity to the domestic sphere, maternity and good housekeeping, can all appear today as feminist activities in a depoliticised way.

(Fraser, 2009) as the *NPL* did, rather than let it dwell solely on the critique of patriarchy, which is not disconnected from the other forms of dominance.

The *NPL* as a cartography

The power of the Three Marias' 'trialectic method' (Kauffman, 1986, p.300) is a model for AMIW. The polyphony achieved in *NPL* could not have been reached in any other way. Every week each of them would write a text that was then submitted to the purview of the others, each one was author and reader, each Maria a critic 'of the theories of the other two' (ibid., p.287). The result is that no voice sounds louder than any of the others, and 'all points of view, all "isms" and "ologies" are continually being decentered' (ibid., p.300). Furthermore, the letters are not signed and the authors have always refused to confess or claim authorship over any individual piece of writing.[57] The *NPL* is an exercise in experimental writing. It tries out different literary genres; it assumes different characters and multiple addressees to its letters, its texts deal with explicit sexual matters and it overthrows taboo themes. In doing so, the *NPL* subverts the 'authorial mastery' and the hierarchies between writer and reader, reality and fiction, politics and poetics (ibid., p.288). As Pintasilgo (in Barreno et at., 2010, xxxiv, my translation) affirms:

> It would have been enough that experience of common creation, enough that the 'choir' would have remained decidedly 'anonymous' for the *New Portuguese Letters* to have appeared figuring in one of the central theses of contemporary feminism: the 'sisterhood' of women as a new social formation, the energy of their solidarity as collective strength.

It would have been enough to acknowledge the *NPL* as a feminist masterpiece from the single fact that they dissolved the 'eternal' myth of individual artistic genius. However, today, more than simply praise it we can to use it as cartography to recollectivise our practices.

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[57] Since the criminal process, when the authorities interrogated the writers separately to identify who was responsible for the particular pornographic and offensive sections of the book, until today, the authors have never confessed, suggested or claimed authorship of any specific part of the book, even though at times the reader may seem to recognise styles and motifs.

To further examine the role of art in proposing and promoting new modes of being together in the art worlds and beyond, and AMIW's different experimentations within and outside the artworld, I will now briefly expose AMIW's development from 2005 to 2010. This will be followed by an examination of AMIW's aim of visibility. To then analyse how the project AMIW can use the *NPL* as actual *cartas* (charts) to navigate the current artworld and search for different ways of being in the art world(s), collective and in solidarity, and to propose different representations of women. Moreover, how the *NPL* questioned our project of visibility and recuperation and transformed it into a quest for feminist modes of emancipation, again not only through our embodied positions in the world and the arts, but also through the ways we operate as organisers of exhibitions and artists. Finally, could this quest for difference reveal a relation between art and democracy?

Fig. 14 Front of flyer for *All My Independent Women* 2005 by Alfaiataria Visual (Christina Casnellie and Rui Silva)

AMIW 2005-2012 exhibitions: a brief account

If, in 2005 AMIW was affirmed as the show of an individual artist, the project was subsequently presented seven other times with me as its organiser. At

each iteration the project takes a different guise and the initial group of participants is enlarged, becoming more international in its staging. In 2005 I invited artists and art collectives that had either collaborated with me in art projects or with whom I had previously exhibited, studied, or shared a studio. This was not only a group affiliated through feminism and art, but also through friendship. I associated entries from the *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista* (Amaral et al., 2005) to the artworks to influence specific feminist readings of these works. The 2006 and 2007 editions were organised as a touring exhibition, adapting to different venues, counting on the artists' interest in showing their work again (which was not always the case), coping with transport difficulties and the intention to enlarge the group or the need to shrink it.[58] In 2006 AMIW was at 100ª Página bookstore in Braga at the invitation of Ana Gabriela Macedo for the launch of her *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista* with the same artists from the 2005 edition – with a few exceptions.[59] Here, the exhibition, took a form similar to a *wunderkammer*, which as curator Catherine de Zegher defines, is a form of exhibiting, in which the works contaminate each other and appear as a 'personalized collage of reality, [the exhibition] though reflective of the mainstream, authoritarian systems of communication, is also a locus of puzzlement' (de Zegher, 1996, p.36). In the bookshop, with the art works closer to packed bookshelves than other exhibits, the exhibition appears even more to be my personal collection, as the 2005 exhibition intended to be. In the same year the show was presented at Eira 33 space for contemporary dance, Lisbon, at the invitation of João Manuel de Oliveira. The dance studio is based on the assembly room of a fire station. Together with nine artists from the previous editions, ten new artists were invited to be part of this instantiation. The exhibition coexisted during a month with different Eira 33's rehearsals. In 2007, at the invitation of director Antónia Serra, AMIW travelled with a delegation of eleven artists to Casa da Cultura, Trofa Portugal, occupying the exhibition

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[58] See appendix four for detailed information on *All My Independent Women* 2005/06/07.

[59] Carla Filipe's work was not included because she did not want to show in a bookshop; others were not there either because there was no suitable space (especially the works designed for public toilets) or because of curatorial choice – Unknown Sender's seemed inappropriate. Later I understood my decision as censorship, and corrected it by including it in the 2006, Eira 33, exhibition.

space, the toilets and Internet room. Every time the show was supported by the good will of the participants (and friends) who lent equipment, provided transport and produced new work without any monetary compensation. The venues were largely responsible for providing the space, invigilation and publicity. By 2007 it had become such a strenuous project for me, physically, emotionally and financially, that I announced it was its last edition. Nevertheless, AMIW returned in 2010, associated with the cultural Space Casa da Esquina in Coimbra, in collaboration with its co-organiser Filipa Alves, and with the *NPL* as the common denominator of the exhibition and the *All My Independent Women and The New Portuguese Letters* (Cruz and Valente, 2010) publication.[60] In 2011, together with Nina Höchtl at the invitation of Rudolfine Lacker, I presented *AMIW – Or Rather, What Can Words Do?* at the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ) in Vienna, where we questioned the promotion of individual artists, attempted to position AMIW as a vast network based on friendship, and questioned the reason why AMIW was then, still, presented in an exhibition format. Could AMIW become a moment of exchange between its members without predefined format? Do AMIW's members still need AMIW as a platform to exhibit their artistic gestures? In 2012, in collaboration with Althea Greenan, I organised another edition of the project at the Women's Art Library /Make (WAL), in London, exploring the different forms of distribution, promotion, and preservation performed by the archives represented at WAL in search for new modes of accountability and circulation within the arts based on dialogue with a potential for re-invention.[61]

AMIW: a quest for visibility

Visibility was a central question when I initiated AMIW in 2005, especially when acknowledging that a latent type of discrimination was in operation in the

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[60] Detailed information on *All My Independent Women 2010* available in appendix four and AMIW's publication available in appendix six.

[61] Detailed information on and *AMIW – Or Rather, What Can Words Do?* And All My Independent Women 2012 available in appendix four.

Portuguese artworld: the 'glass ceiling' – or invisibility.[62] The term concerns the 'barriers women in intermediate command positions are faced with and that obstruct their rise to positions of leadership' (Amaral et al., 2005, p.107, my translation), and for AMIW it meant the muddy waters of the progression of women artists' careers. Research proves the discrepancy between men and women working in the arts in the Portuguese context, but this is not an isolated case.[63] According to Ben Davies' review of the North American art scene:

> while women are deplorably underrepresented as art-producers, as curators and scholars, they make up a clear majority of the field (Davies, 2007, no pagination given).

It can be said that women have come a long way, and as curator Helena Reckitt writes, 'it's really hard to take ourselves back to pre-feminist days when the presence of a successful woman artist – or any other professional – was considered exceptional' (Reckitt, 2006, p.41). Nonetheless, I felt I needed to contribute to the inscription of the works I chose for the exhibition in the artworld and to name the artists and inscribe them in the visible. For me, this visible was the mainstream and ultimately art history. With AMIW, I hoped, we would change the unequal gender ratio in the arts. It was only after the 2010 exhibition that the prospect of our feminist discourses being peacefully absorbed by the mainstream art discourse, without bringing any real change, became manifest. As bell hooks states (1984, p.15):[64]

> As long as [...] any group defines liberation as gaining social equality

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[62] Glass ceiling is listed in the *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista* as an invisibility 'related to social discrimination of women, by the way through which the patriarchal society strategically relegates women to invisibility – that which one cannot see, does not exist' (Amaral et al., 2005, p.107, my translation).

[63] Even though the majority of students in artistic higher education in Portugal are women (56% in 2008), when we look into the number of artists being shown in galleries or museums the numbers are entirely different. For example the online platform that represents living Portuguese artists [Anamnese] has only 37% women; of the artists represented by seventeen commercial galleries in Porto, only 24% are women; and only 18% the artists shown in Serralves Contemporary Art Museum between 1999 and 2010 are women, (Fonseca, 2013).

[64] I am following here bell hooks wish to have her name typed in small letters so it does not have primacy over the content.

with ruling class white men, they have a vested interest in the continued exploitation and oppression of others.

Braidotti (1994, p.95) asked a similar question a decade later: 'what is the exact price to be paid for "integration"?'. In 2011, in Vienna, I asked, what meant to want to inscribe feminist art practices in 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.

If visibility was AMIW's initial political project, I have to acknowledge that AMIW is also more than a collection of artworks by individual artists and collectives. Thus, to clarify the relationship between visibility and emancipation and the various critiques AMIW can put forward in relation to what gets acknowledged as art, and is relevant to exhibit, to collect and preserve by the artworld, I will now discuss AMIW's 2005 additional agenda: overthrowing simplistic notions of femininity.

AMIW and the *NPL*: a project of difference

AMIW 2010: a new critical awareness

By 2010, aware of the contemporaneity of the *NPL*, the book became the reason to gather AMIW's artists, writers, performers, musicians, activists, and critics – all of those who have been part of the previous editions and others we have met along the way and would affiliate with the project. To be sure, the members of AMIW come from various fields of interest, produce and show their work across multiple platforms and have different degrees of public visibility. I asked them for contributions to an exhibition project from the (re)reading of the book. Thus, AMIW re-initiated the debate (started in 2005) about feminisms and feminist art in Portugal. It asked, just as the *NPL* authors had earlier. 'What can literature do?' (Barreno et al., 1975, p.210). What can artworks do in the face of a Portuguese society, which is still oppressive for a large section of the population, as it was in the 1970s, that it is cast to the margins due to their sex,

gender and sexual choice; the margins not only of the art world as AMIW may focus on particularly, but also the margins of society at large?

Wo/man's representations at AMIW 2010

Over forty individuals and collectives responded to the challenge, and in May 2010 we open the project to the public at Casa da Esquina with works that traversed visual and performative languages, audio and writing, and in the most diverse supports.[65] Each artwork became as the letters in the *NPL,* addressing first other AMIW's participants, and afterwards an unknown other, at times referring more directly to the text, at others addressing more generic themes.

AMIW 2010 questioned once again the representations of wo/man in the arts. In Amarante Abramovici and Tiago Afonso's work, a video installation titled *A Colher* (2010) composed of a video projection inside a tent made of flowery bedsheets, a couple's relationship and expectations of a life shared in common is exposed (Fig. 15). Overlapping the image of a man and a woman's naked body, through video-work, while telling us, telling each other of their desire and frictions, where they come together and stand apart; Abramovici and Afonso repeat and subvert the Portuguese popular saying, '*Never* get between a man and his wife', but transform it into, '*Get* between a man and his wife.'[66] Relating directly to the exposure, in the *NPL*, of the construction of the Portuguese family according to a patriarchal system of social organisation; that is in some letters more explicit and in others subtler. In the video, through a transformation of everyday life speech/action into poetry, the fact that the artists are indeed a couple, that it is their bodies that are represented in the video does not make it more truthful, as the poetics of the voice makes it less real. Another example, and using the same symbol – the spoon – Ana Pérez-Quiroga presented the 1998 installation *Eu Não Sou Uma Mulher Colher, Eu Não Sou Uma*

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[65] The project had support of Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Direção Regional da Cultura do Centro, República Marias do Loureiro and Câmara Municipal de Coimbra. (For more information see appendix four).

[66] In the original: 'entre marido e mulher mete a colher.'

Reprodutora.[67] It was composed of eighteen cardboard boxes, as coffins that confine in a plaster bed, and eighteen spoons. The installation resonates with a sentence taken from the *NPL* and painted on the skirting board at the entrance of Casa da Esquina: 'Is it possible to be a woman without being a fruit? [sic]' (Barreno et al., 1975, p.43).[68] Pérez-Quiroga replies to the Three Marias, eighteen times as in a litany, as we ascend the staircase to the upper floor of the residential building that today houses the Casa da Esquina, saying: 'I am not a spoon woman, I am not a breeder'. By doing that she is simultaneously saying, I don't bear fruit but nonetheless I *am* a woman, as she is questioning the patriarchal and Catholic interdependence between sex and reproduction, between reproduction and heterosexuality.

Fig. 15 *A Colher* (2010), Amarante Abramovici and Tiago Afonso, installation view, AMIW 2010, photo by Adriana Oliveira

As in Braidotti's nomadic politics these works involve 'both the critique of existing definitions and representations of women and the creation of new

[67] *I Am Not a Spoon Woman, I Am Not a Breeder*. Once again the spoon, perhaps playing with the double meaning of the homograph words colher/colher, which in Portuguese means the noun spoon or the verb to harvest or to reap respectively.

[68] The translation by Helen R. Lane from 1975 reads as reproduced in the text: '...without being a fruit?' but the meaning should be understood as: without bearing fruit.

images of female subjectivity' (Braidotti, 1994, p.158); these new images will be in constant re-invention thus resisting congealment. Pintasilgo believes that the *NPL* constructed a woman who can:

> speak of her inner world and simply about the world. She can live the intimacy of the unsaid and the exteriority of the action. She can make poetry and politics (Pintasilgo in Barreno et al., 2010, xlvi, my translation).

AMIW 2010, following the *NPL*, supported nonconforming female and male subjectivities that can question gender normativity and proposed different representations. However, if it wants to truly follow the *NPL*'s radical political achievement, beyond the specificity of each artwork and how it resonates differently for each reader/viewer, AMIW as a whole has to be more than a collective exhibition of potential feminist utterances. At this moment there is a curatorial shift, where the *NPL* taken as a thematic discourse become cartography, i.e., a methodology for curating and commissioning new work. Feminism is no longer a subject matter but the impulse to re-organise authorship. AMIW, to become itself a truly feminist project, has to propose a different way of 'doing and making' in the arts – a feminist way. It is this attempt that might bring light to the relationship between the arts and democracy.

NPL: the seeds of change.

Visibility – or/and recuperation of women artists back into the canon – is an important task, but at times, and if not accompanied with more radical approaches, it can also be a counter-productive, and tangentially a post-feminist act. That is, reclaiming a form of visibility that is not really transformative or, the danger of being absorbed into the visible – 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 (Mouffe, 2000).

It is here, that the collective recuperation of the nun Mariana becomes exemplary, because it is transformative. In creating multiple Marianas in the *NPL*, each unique, sexualised, socially located, with a given age, history and voice, the authors create a split in the representation of woman and love that can no longer be unified.

In 2010, AMIW associated with the *NPL* produced a stronger awareness of itself and its role by asking, as the *NPL* authors did, 'What can [art] do?'. In so doing it raised broader political questions about the relationship of artistic practices and feminisms.[69] But it was only in its aftermath, through the preparation of the 2011 AMIW exhibition in Vienna, and equipped with a greater awareness that the authors' of the *NPL* had (much ahead of their time) contributed to the dissolution of the 'eternal' myth of individual artistic genius, that that key concern of AMIW, visibility, was challenged. The *NPL* were instrumental in re-thinking AMIW's feminist and democratic endeavours, for they remind us that the struggle, for AMIW, should not be to have more women represented in private and public art collections, which is in fact only a symptom of women artists' inequity, but that our struggle should 'have the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives' (hooks, 1984, p.26), i.e., the very modes of presenting and collecting artworks.

Then, we asked if AMIW is a nonconforming project, and how it looks at different ways of operating in the artworld. How did the example of collective writing from the *NPL* affect AMIW? How did the subversive character of the anonymity of the letters challenged AMIW's desire to inscribe individual names in the visible?[70] To explore these questions I will now discuss a major challenge for AMIW, the move from selecting artist and specific works for an exhibition by

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[69] The original *NPL* text, which I converted into 'What can art do?', reads:
'My Sisters,
But what can Literature do? Or rather: what can words do?' (Barreno et al., 1994, p.210).

[70] It is noteworthy that this anonymity irritated particularly the Portuguese authorities in 1972 that wanted to sentence one single author as an example for every woman, but could not deal with the three-headed author (the fear that the three represented all women as subversive, thus impossible to dominate).

an individual artist (2005) to organising exhibitions with a community of artists related by friendship.
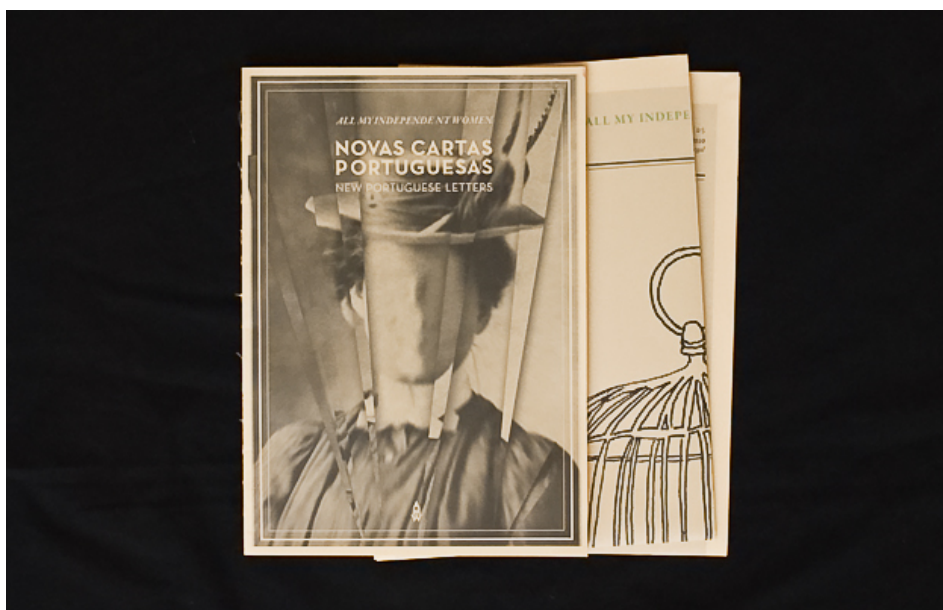
Fig. 16 *AMIW and the New Portuguese Letters* publication cover and posters, 2010

Exhibiting Artworks / Exhibiting Artists

AMIW, in 2005, was an exhibition by an individual artist that presented works by other artists, which used a recognisable curating device: a temporary collective exhibition of contemporary individual and collective artistic practices.

By selecting specific artworks I was interested in the possible feminist readings raised by different combinations of works. This control over the outcome, and individualisation of AMIW as a Carla Cruz's project, became an issue on subsequent editions (i.e., if taken for an artwork instead of the artistic practice of an artist, AMIW can get perverted into the idea that the work of other artists is being used as raw material).

Selecting artworks: what would feminist criteria look like?

The selection of art works implied clear criteria, and in my attempt to insert those works in the visible I was also attempting to subvert the logic of the mainstream art world's quality criteria. I am here reminded of what curator

Maura Reilly typifies as the normal answer given when a curator is asked about the disparity in numbers of women and men represented in an exhibition: '[a]ny discrepancy is due to the quality of the art' (Reilly, 2007, p.22). Reilly implies that curators feel that male artists make higher-quality work. Thus, as artist Ingelis Vermeulen (2009, p.65) affirms, if quality is understood as a male concept then women need to redefine it for themselves. To question quality within AMIW's selection criteria I chose not to apply any criteria. After 2005, even if the presentation of newly produced work was never a demand, total freedom was given to the invited participants on what to present on any AMIW projects, and seldom I suggest/request the presentation of an existing work. This avoided the need to judge individual art works. But the lack of criteria, or its reinvention, can bring yet another problem: it just creates 'an alternative method of appreciation – another way of consuming art' which leaves 'intact the very notion of evaluating art' (Pollock et al., 1987, p.210). Thus for AMIW the criterion became: progress (selection) through a network of artists that affiliate with its aims.

Selecting artists: what would feminist criteria look like?

But the invitation through friendship did not exclude the dilemma of maintaining a selection through reputation. Reflecting on AMIW's past I can say I never chose artists because of their 'symbolic value' (Graw, 2010), and AMIW did not progress in such a way.[71] Nonetheless its initial goal was to make the artists visible, therefore eventually enhancing their reputation in the art discourse and subsequently in the art market. The feminist project of emancipation, of being equal to and of gaining access to, stumbled, as hooks (1984) clearly demonstrated, on the fact that feminist women run the risk of equalising the struggle for a different relationship, not only between the sexes but also between each being, with the liberal commandment of each individual for herself. A feminist emancipatory project, such as AMIW, could run the same danger and become the struggle for the promotion of a model of production that

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[71] According to Graw (2010) the symbolic value of art implies a double attribution of significance and commercial value.

reaffirms the supremacy of the individual artist and its monopoly over artistic agency (Wright, 2008a); instead of diffusing and promoting diversified models. Moreover, running the danger of further ghettoizing wo/man's practices. These are the contradictions that AMIW is faced with; but if I want it to be a radical feminist project, AMIW cannot be about merely visibility.

BEING IN DIFFERENCE

AMIW wants to fit into a larger political project that may be not only feminist but also democratic. In the sense that emancipation in AMIW is asserted through sexual difference as the 'rejection of the imitation of masculine modes of thought and practice' (Braidotti, 1994, p.175) but also difference as the rejection of the imitation of procedures within the art world. Necessarily, to perform democracy, and in continuation to what I have argued in relation to *demoCRACY* in the previous chapter, AMIW has to position itself as difference.

Braidotti affirms that the feminist struggle will necessarily go through a contradiction already suggested by Pintasilgo (in Barreno et al., 2010, xxxi, my translation):[72]

> The contradiction of having to go through equality to achieve difference and discover their [women's] identity.

Braidotti (1994) suggests that, on the contrary, equality can only be achieved through difference. In this sense woman has appeared as different from man, and equality as equality with men. Braidotti (1994) affirms that, women are different among themselves, and furthermore, if one wants to deconstruct one's identity, it has to be first established. (This position counterposes certain reasonings that ideally we could all, men and women, progress to a position where sexual difference would not be relevant, because there are so many things distinguishing us anyway). Thus women need first to assert a notion of

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[72] Braidotti affirms that projects, such as the Deleuzian one of doing away with sex-specific identity in order to accomplish 'the dissolution of identity into an impersonal, multiple, machinelike subject', even though very seductive, are dangerous for women, for she believes 'one cannot deconstruct a subjectivity one has never controlled' (Braidotti, 1994, p.116).

woman beyond the existing stereotypes, and (differently from Braidotti) I believe men, such as those in AMIW, can also be part of that enterprise. Women, feminist women particularly for Braidotti, need to propose a different 'figuration' that establishes women 'no longer *different from* but *different so as to bring about alternative values*' (Braidotti, 1994, p.239, italics in original). For Braidotti 'the question of sexual difference is political in that it focuses the debate on how to achieve transformation of self, other and society' (ibid., p.178). The specific political project of Braidotti's nomadic subjects is the one of making difference into a positive category instead of a deviation. Difference, which has been associated with the other-than or the different-from, should be transformed into the different-so-as to propose alternatives. The nomadic subjects intervene as political fictions (figurations) that can help us subvert conventions and being in between – between categories and experiences – without being pre-defined. These figurations do not want to constitute hegemonic formations; on the contrary, their nomadic character resides exactly in that refusal to settle, which for Braidotti is a form of resisting the constant recuperation by 'molar' forms of subjectivation.[73]

The Portuguese public already knew the *NPL* authors in the 1970s when they published that book, in one sense they were not invisible, each one had at least a work published, and their collectively written novel was not an attempt to cement their reputations. Their truly ground-breaking exercise, collectively writing a novel, which deconstructed notions of femininity and of authorship – as a singular and recognisable style – is what definitely disrupted the 'sensible' (Rancière, 2009b) and inserted more and richer possibilities for future women authors to become.[74]

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[73] The molar can be here associated with the ossified, the traditional subject position. The molar position would then be, according to Braidotti's (2003) reading of Deleuze and Guattari's definition, as the majority and sedentary position; it is opposed to a fluid, nomadic and minoritarian, molecular position. Thus, identity and fixity, belong to the molar, whereas to the molecular belongs subjectivity and becoming.

[74] Note that the criminal process, insisting in the authorship of the book claimed a reactionary notion of visibility that, without cancelling the book's potential, jeopardises its legacy.

Likewise, we need to substitute molar strategies with molecular ones if we want AMIW to affect the artworld in a similar way – not by expanding its borders and assimilating everything indifferently, but by dividing its influence into more diverse art worlds. This is, of course, a paradoxical struggle, because one knows that the lack of resources or wages for artists is one of the reasons why many women withdraw from the art scene, and resources seem to come with visibility in the mainstream artworld.[75] Nevertheless, we have also observed in NSFS that aligning ourselves with the artworld mechanisms of reputation does not necessarily bring better conditions for artists – operating individually or collectively. Thus, together with the struggle for fair pay, we need to explore other modes of engaging in the arts. The collective and partially anonymous strategy of the Three Marias can here be a model.

Marginal Places

AMIW was always the result of the encounter with a specific person connected with a cultural space and never the endeavour to look for a space. The fact that it never interested art institutions or artist-run spaces could be understood both as a lack of initiative from my end and also as a misfortune (for not having yet been picked up by the art scene), but, in fact, it is because AMIW deals with such a specific and unpopular subject (in the Portuguese context) such as gender relations and in such an amateuristic way that it does not appeal to the established and aspiring art spaces. Only those with a similar commitment to feminism are willing to nurture it. The places where AMIW has presented its exhibition/projects are marginal spaces; marginal even for the artworld with its tradition of alternative spaces. But let us not forget that the idea of alternative is, as Simon Sheikh (2007, p.180) suggests:

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[75] This is clear in the 2012 results of the WAGE survey reviewed in *Art Monthly*. 'The survey revealed an interesting gender discrepancy: while 45% of male respondents reported that they didn't incur any travel expenses, that figure jumped to 69% for female respondents, suggesting that women artists were more likely to exhibit with local organisations. Furthermore, of those who did incur travel expenses, 50% of the men received some compensation while only 10% of the women did.' (*Art Monthly*, 2012).

'Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) is a New York-based activist group that focuses on regulating the payment of artist fees by non-profit art institutions, and establishing a sustainable model for best practices between cultural producers and the institutions which contract their labor' (wageforwork).

infused with a large degree of symbolic capital within the arts, and is potentially transferable into real capital, thus making the 'alternative' into a stage within artistic-economic development, into a sphere placed on a time line rather than a parallel track.

The places that AMIW collaborated with are not part of that 'alternative' art world represented by NSFS (2010); a bookshop in a small city, a choreography studio inside a fire station in the capital city, a local house of culture in the suburbs of Porto, a cultural space in a residential house in a small town, a little known women's association in Vienna, a women's art library (AMIW 2012). It is this marginality that becomes their strength and opens up of a field of potentiality through which AMIW can question its role in the art world from an already transformative position. Larger or more established art institutions generally treat feminism as an historical and concluded art movement rather than as another way of 'doing and making' and prefer to organise exhibitions of historical surveys.[76]

COLLECTIVISING OUR PRACTICES

Curator and critic Paul O'Neill (2007b, pp.15-16) states that:

> Exhibitions are […] contemporary forms of rhetoric, complex expressions of persuasion, whose strategies aim to produce a prescribed set of values and social relations for their audiences.

Simon Sheikh reinforces this perspective by affirming that exhibitions not only represent certain concepts that they also represent on another level, they represent an audience, they create that public by the modes of address. For Sheikh 'the historical role of exhibition making was to educate, authorise and represent a certain social group, class or caste' (Sheikh, 2007, p.179) and he

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[76] There are many examples of blockbuster feminist exhibitions in the last ten years, such as *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* (Nochlin, 2007),*WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Butler, 2007), *Elle@CentrePompidou* (Morineau, 2009) *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe* (Pejić, 2009), *Rebelle: Art & Feminism* (Westen, 2009) among many others, and although a detailed examination of these exhibitions and a comparison to my own project is of interest and has been made, its outside the overarching scope of this thesis and has been left out of the above discussion.

questions who is being represented in contemporary exhibitions. And in his perspective if we want to question that collective formation being addressed and represented by contemporary art exhibitions/curatorial projects, which AMIW did, we need to reconsider the modes of production and the modes of address; in the same sense of Michael Warner's (2002, p.83) counterpublics, i.e., how they are engendered by imagination (poetic function of the public) and participation (attention).

Can the move from exhibiting artists and their artworks to be a network of artists be the answer to a different way of being in the art world(s)? Furthermore, is this alternative way of 'doing and making' the contribution AMIW can give to the contemporary discussions around democracy?

AMIW 2011: affirming its genealogy and AMIW 2012: becoming the network

In *AMIW – Or Rather, What Can Words Do?*, 2011, and in the footsteps of many other collective projects, I wanted to take on the *NPL* challenge of anonymity to contradict the original AMIW's visibility aspiration. By not highlighting the particular artists who were presenting their individual practices, but instead by naming all and everyone that has ever been involved in the project since 2005 – in other words, exposing AMIW as a vast network that grows by giving account of its path.[77] I wanted to understand what could happen to AMIW if we would focus less on its individual participants and more on the collective endeavour. This investigation turned out to be unachievable; the VBKÖ kept demanding, for the sake of pragmatics, a clear separation of roles for the invitations and programme (Fig. 17).[78]

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[77] By 2011 AMIW's participants amount to seventy-nine (with twelve new participants just from VBKÖ instantiation). See the full list in appendix four.

[78] Unable to produce a less hierarchical disposition of all the participants, and because an exhaustive list was of extreme importance to me, we settled for a programme that gave account of each participant's role, in the example of the credit lines at the end of a film production. See reproduction of both sides of the invitation in appendix four.

Fig. 17 *AMIW – Or Rather, What Can Words Do?*, 2011
flyer by Carla Cruz and Nina Höchtl

In AMIW 2012, experimentations with gender constructions and visibility were dropped in favour of a feminist examination of archiving. Exploring the different forms of distribution, promotion, and preservation performed by archives that were once living networks, AMIW investigated new modes of accountability and circulation within the arts that are based on dialogue with a potential for re-invention.

AMIW: an artists' network

As we have seen in Chapter One, our modern liberal democracies accept difference in as the co-existence of multiple interests but only when expressed as private interests. However, a real democratic pluralism is not relegated to the private sphere, but rather, openly celebrated. Moreover, this is what challenges 'the substantive idea of the good life' (Mouffe, 2000, p.18) or in what can be argued here, the substantive idea of relevant art.

Fig. 18 *Conjugar no Plural*, 2012

Today, AMIW continues to revise its aims and tactics. It questions what remains of curation in its modes of production, and a more curatorial (Rogoff, 2006, p.132) understanding of its procedures.[79] That is, being less about a set of activities related to putting on exhibitions, and more about framing AMIW's activities through a series of feminist principles and possibilities.

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[79] 'For some time now we have been differentiating between "curating", the practice of putting on exhibitions and the various professional expertises it involves and "the curatorial", the possibility of framing those activities through a series of principles and possibilities. In the realm of "the curatorial" we see various principles that may not be associated with displaying works of art; principles of the production of knowledge, of activism, of cultural circulation and translation that begin to shape and determine other forms by which art can engage. In a sense "the curatorial" is thought and critical thought that does not rush to embody itself, does not rush to concretise itself, but allows us to stay with the questions until they point us in some direction we might have not been able to predict (Rogoff, 2006, pp.131-132).

AMIW's continues its relationship with the artists that compose it, stressing its interest in investigative models based on solidarity. AMIW by re-instantiating itself, its discourse, preserves its counterpublic and cements its position. Performing what Sheikh refers to as continuity, by 'literally doing the same to produce something different, not in the products, but in the imagination' (Sheikh, 2007, p.184).

Just as the Three Marias, McRobbie and Power have clearly stated, we need to recollectivise our struggles. By the same token, AMIW needs to understand the paradox of its involvement in the arts and valorise its situatedness in what can be perceived as the margins of the artworld, but nonetheless the centre of its counterpublic. Just as Sheikh proposes, it needs to cement its work not only through continuity, but also through 'articulation' and 'imagination' (Sheikh, 2007, pp.183-184). It needs to articulate its 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. At almost in the end of the book, one of the Three Marias writes:

> What do we have left after all this? But for that matter, what did we have left before all this? – A bit less, it seems to me; much less, even.
> […]
> And in all sincerity I say to you: we shall go on alone, but we will feel less forsaken (Barreno et al., 1975, p.317).

In this sense, AMIW's solidary network can perform democracy if it revises its desire for visibility, by demanding a visibility according to its own terms, in what can become a different art world.[80]

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[80] Being conscious that the Three Marias in their time, according to Kauffman, 'manage to avoid celebrating phallic dominance without shunning power or abdicating history. Their laughter deprives the phallus of its power as signifier, but they simultaneously take pains to bring the silent, underwater woman to the surface. [They did not need to fall into invisibility, nor flee] 'from everything phallic, and valorize the "silent underwater body, thus abdicating any entry into history"' (Kauffman, 1986, p.307).

Chapter 4: RASTILHO 'there are no superior or inferior arts'[81]

In the previous chapter I looked at *All My Independent Women* using a specific lens: the *New Portuguese Letters.* The *NPL* functioned as a blueprint to navigate the current artworld with a feminist ethos. AMIW, by challenging its initial agenda of visibility in search for news modes of emancipation and accountability, demonstrates that there can be different ways of doing and making. Some of these modes necessarily involve collective production and networks of affect. Therefore, I want here to explore the questions concerning the collectivisation of artistic practice and the dissolution of individual creation as its radical consequence.

In this chapter I will be departing from the following hypothesis, that collective artistic practice is more democratic than individually authored practice. Based on that belief, I intend to explore collaboration in a specific form of relationship, the one between artist and non-artists participants. I will examine if collective practices, established between artist and members of the public, could question the privilege of the artist within those specific practices. For this, I will use a project I initiated in 2011 as my main critical tool.

Rastilho (a Portuguese word that translates literally as 'fuse') is a project that aimed at the collective creation of an artistic gesture.[82] It engaged former employees – mostly women – of the textile industry, from the north of Portugal, in conversations about the socio-economical condition of workers in their region. The project resulted in the constitution of a collective, that called itself Rastilho – after the initial project's name – and which reclaimed a public building for the collective use of the community to produce cultural/educational/leisure

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[81] (RASTILHO, 2012a).

[82] Rastilho (fuse) is the title of the project I proposed for the international exhibition *ReaKt – Views and Processes* (2012), but is also the term used in the textile industry jargon to refer to the piece of fabric (of a lesser quality or with imperfections) that is sewn to the fabric one wants to print (or add finishing touches).

events. To differentiate my initial proposal of its outcome, the collective, I will use *Rastilho* to refer to the proposal, and RASTILHO to refer to the collective that emerged from this proposal.

I am trying to put forward through *Rastilho* a practice that goes beyond the paradox that is analysed by Grant Kester (as seen in Chapter Two) in which practices that are attempting to be transformative fall short of actually being democratic, e.g. by privileging the artist's perspective on the understanding of the artwork.

All human activity is inherently collective even when singularly authored. Authorship comes then as an act of power that can fall into authoritarianism. Looking for new modes of being and making in the artworld, which might promote a collaborative ethos, we need to come to terms with the way that reputation based on authorship, and especially of single individuals but also of collectives, is creating symbolic capital in the art world.

In this sense, the relationship between the artist and the participants of her collaborative project could be an oppressive one, i.e. authoritarian. But, if the artist's privilege is oppressive or not is also at stake, feminist pedagogue Kathleen Weiler points out that we must be aware of the possibility that an exaggerated concern with impositions may be condescending to others. 'Are teachers really so powerful? Are students really so impressionable and passive?' (Weiler, 1995, xvi). The concern with the authoritarian role of the artist in collaborative projects can emerge as a symptom of artists' difficulty in letting go of their own presupposed agency.

First, I will briefly discuss the current art world consensus and the fact that although the art world's imaginary is of inclusion, its reality is very different. Followed by the description of *Rastilho* as a project, its elaboration and outcome as the group RASTILHO, I will then raise questions regarding authority, authorship and autonomy that have appeared over the development of *Rastilho*, from its initial plan, to its outcome as RASTILHO. This will be followed by an

analysis of the process and my role within it as an artist using the figure of the teacher in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996) and Jacques Rancière's *Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991) as my critical tools. Specifically in what regards their argument concerning the relationship between student and teacher in oppressive contexts, both Freire and Rancière believe in education as an emancipatory process and in an *a priori* equality between teacher and student. Furthermore both advocate the importance of the guidance of the teacher in that relationship. Nevertheless, they disagree about the outcome. For Freire, the pedagogy of the oppressed will ultimately become the pedagogy of freedom in an emancipated society, whereas Rancière theorises that the democratic method of the ignorant schoolmaster cannot be institutionalised, i.e., we can emancipate each other, but society will never be emancipated. I will then address the same questions when seen from a broader spectrum of culture. Finally I will address the role of the art work, or more precisely its fate in this particular project, and what we can conclude of this process.

Should all artistic practice be collective?

> To argue that artistic production is collective production is not to encourage artists to collaborate with other artists; rather, it is to *defetishize* the work of art. (Owens, 1992, p.134, italics in original)

Following from the same imaginary present in Chapter Two, that democracy is about total participation, not only in theory but also in practice, the same democratic imaginary is present in the art world. Visible in the following well-known maxims: everyone-is-an-artist and anything-can-be-art. That such can be true, even if only potentially, disguises a harder reality of which we had a glimpse in Chapter Three with the example of the systemic exclusion of women artists from the art world. Furthermore, with AMIW we have recognised that inclusion *per se* is not enough, for that would only further expand the field without questioning its parameters. In Chapter Two I have also affirmed that for art to be political it has to open up a public space, and for that to emerge the consensus of what art is has to be disrupted by a counter-hegemonic process

that would attempt to replace the given consensus. As Chantal Mouffe (2013, p.2) puts it:

> things could always be otherwise and every order is predicated on the exclusion of other possibilities. Any order is always the expression of a particular configuration of power relations. What is at a given moment accepted as the 'natural' order, jointly with the common sense that accompanies it, is the result of sedimented hegemonic practices. […] Every order is therefore susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices that attempt to disarticulate it in an effort to install another form of hegemony.

Hence, which hegemony are we talking about?

The artist Alana Jelinek presents in her book *This is Not Art* (Jelinek, 2013) an analysis of how, in Western societies, art is understood as such. Jelinek defines art as a discursive discipline, that it is understood as such through a social process, a process of consensus: 'anything that the artworld says is art *is* art. There are no criteria other than artworld consensus' (Jelinek, 2013, p.55, italics in original). In this perspective, all of us, engaged in the artworld, together, through our practices, narratives, discourses, etc., produce and reproduce a certain understanding of what art is. Thus, as Jelinek argues, although the artworld has been promoting the ideas that 'everyone is an artist' and 'art can be anything', in fact it monitors and polices who can be an artist and what can be art. Furthermore, as the artist David Trend (1992, p.87) points out:

> rather than a singular entity, the art world is both a constellation of diverse groups […] and the labyrinthine relationships among them. At the putative center of this universe stand artists, the mythically valorized and materially pauperized assembly-line producers of the aesthetic-economy.

It is in this sense, and in this artworld that we maintain, that, on the one hand, artists come to believe that they are privileged – the pervasive notion of the enlightened genius – and on the other, that artists' careers come to depend on the maintenance of the system, in the aspiration to be recognised as such.

Trinh T. Minh-ha discusses the same cult of the author with reference to the literary world:

> The image of God alone making sky, earth, sea and beings, transposed into writing, has led many of us to believe, […] that the author exists *before* her/his own book, not simultaneously *with* it (Minh-ha, 1989, p.29, italics in original).

Furthermore, Gregory Sholette argues (Sholette, 2011), that in the current artworld system, even if multiple, there can only be a few successful artists and a vast majority of semi- and amateurs. The artworld in such a view reflects the 'ultra-competitive rules of business, as opposed to the collaborative networking of culture' (Sholette, 2011, p.117). This understanding of the artworld, and the fact, as Sholette points out, that 'the growing surplus art producers apparently prefer to survive by helping to reproduce familiar hierarchies, the same symbolic and fiscal economic system that guarantees most of them will fail' (ibid., p.119), maintains an art world structured on neoliberal values (Jelinek, 2013, p.21) and based on 'making contacts' and reputation (Malik, 2010).[83] Authorship thus appears as an over-valorised mechanism of accreditation of what can be understood as art.

In *Rastilho* I have departed from the need to question the artist's privilege. I proposed a project in which my authorship would be shared between the artist and participants from a presupposed audience.

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[83] 'The artist is at the centre of the art system; it is he, his social value that gives art added value, its artistry. Art can't get out of Capital if it deals with added value, or with artiness' (Malik, 2010, no pagination given).

Fig. 19 *Rastilho*'s working session, March 2012

Rastilho / RASTILHO

Never does one open the discussion by coming right to the heart of the
matter. For the heart of the matter is always somewhere else than where
it is supposed to be (Minh-ha, 1989, p.1).[84]

THE PROPOSAL

In 2011 I was invited to be part of the exhibition project: *ReaKt – Views and
Processes* (2012), (*ReaKt*), curated by Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro for Guimarães
2012, European Capital of Culture.[85] The project I proposed, provisionally titled
Rastilho, aimed to explore the issues related to the demobilisation of industrial
production in Portugal, the weakening of labour and the consequent
feminisation of poverty and, through these issues, to create a collective artistic

[84] Trinh T. Minh-ha's description of a village meeting in her book *Woman, Native, Other*, echoes
my approach as *Rastilho*'s initiator.

[85] *ReaKt*'s 'aim was to produce an encounter of different artistic approaches to the very idea of
context, of the transference of meaning, of the possibilities of positioning artistic practice in the
contemporary world' (reakt.guimaraes2012). Read the call for participation in appendix five.

gesture. The project required the participation of people from Guimarães who were unemployed at the time.[86]

I found most of the participants within the local group Tecer Outras Coisas (Weaving Other Things – TOC), a group of skill sharing, composed of eight people, mainly women, based at Coelima, a textile factory in Pevidém-Guimarães.[87] The local visual artist and teacher, Max Fernandes, who initiated TOC in 2010, introduced me to the group. To these eight participants, five other women connected to the textile industry in the Vale do Ave joined.[88] The project was initiated in December 2011 and happened throughout 2012 in a series of group meetings. After a first meeting with the group of voluntaries to confirm their interest in participating in my project, I devised four concrete working sessions. My goal with these sessions was not only to discuss the proposed themes but also to look for a common language that we would create as a group and that would allows us to arrive at a common artistic gesture. The project aimed at promoting a growing autonomy of the group of participants, ideally, to merge my contributions with the group's to allow for a collective creation. Accordingly, in my proposal, I would not be the author of the final

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[86] The call for unemployed people to take part in this project was both a matter of availability to take part full-time, and because unemployed people play a very important role in the matters proposed for discussion.

[87] Tecer Outras Coisas is constituted by seven women and one man, all of whom were unemployed or retired from the textile industry; its goal is to create a platform for the transfer of skills and know-how between its members to find work within the field of garment production for fashion, crafts, theatre and the arts (teceroutrascoisas).

[88] The group, later enlarged, is composed of: Adelaide Guimarães, Adriana Prazeres, Alexandre Moreira, Amanda Midori, Carla Costa, Carla Cruz, Eduarda Costa, Fernanda Assunção, Albina Leite, Elisa Ferreira, Fernanda Freitas, Goretti Esteves, Lurdes Oliveira, Margarida Moreira, Maria José Novais, Max Fernandes, Tomás Lemos. The visual artist Max Fernandes joined the group from the beginning as a second moderator. During the process two students joined the sessions. Margarida Moreira, who was finishing her secondary education in graphic design came to design the Logo with the group and Amanda Midori, an MFA student researching on art and the public space, came, through the programme of volunteers, in the late stage of my pregnancy, when I was prevented from following the process in situ, to help the group to deal with *ReaKt*'s production team. Vale do Ave is a sub-region integrated in the larger North Region, Portugal. Organised around the city Guimarães, this sub-region is densely populated and one of the most industrialised areas of the country. Nowadays, Vale do Ave is also one of the most affected areas in terms of unemployment; the unemployment rate in the region in 2012 was 16.4% (Anon, 2008).

public gesture, in collaboration with the group of participants; my name would be just one among others.

FROM PROPOSAL TO PRAXIS

The group

In December 2011, together with Pedro Silva from *ReaKt*'s production team, I met the eight people from the local community and members of TOC, seven women and one man, as well as Max Fernandes. When TOC confirm the interest of taking part of the project proposed to *ReaKt* we collectively decided how to distribute the money allocated for participants' fees, and decided to enlarge the group to twelve participants.[89] They invited five other women from their local community to join the group taking into consideration that everyone was being paid, i.e., they invited women they knew, who they thought would be interested in the process and available, but fundamentally women that would need the money.[90] TOC is in itself composed of a dynamic group of unemployed and retired people who volunteer on numerous local associations, and which have been, together with Max Fernandes, involved in projects with fashion design students, artists and local institutions in the production of garments and theatre costumes.[91] With the intention to foster an atmosphere of collective practice, the main task was to integrate myself and this five other women in TOC's existing dynamics.

The plan

The suggested title for the project, rastilho (fuse), is a term from the textile industry jargon, which refers to a off-cut about 20 meters long which is permanently in the machines and to which a new piece of fabric to be worked upon is sewn to. Due to the complexity of the textile machines, and the

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[89] Because the main theme I proposed to discuss was labour and its conditions, I requested that all participants should be paid. Considering the original budget of €7,500 for production, together with *ReaKt*'s team, I decided to use 60% of it in participants' fees.

[90] These women were either unemployed and at the end of their benefits period, or had a meagre pension.

[91] The home-textile factory, Coelima, provides the fabrics, workspace, and equipment.

adjustments needed at the beginning of every working session, the fuse makes the beginning of a working session quicker and it saves that same amount of good fabric. This off-cut stays in use for a very long time and bears the marks of different prints and colours. My interest in that term is related to the possible analogies between its function and the situation of middle-aged women in the textile industry in Portugal. They were once useful actors within the industry and just like the rastilho, they have been discarded bearing the traces of their experience and knowledge, which does not count as transferable skills.[92]

In addition, I suggested the themes for the first sessions to initiate the dialogue that would lead us to explore what could be our common interests and from there to be able to create an art work collectively. The first exploring the notion of rastilho as multi-layered and as a conductor. The second session explored ideas around work. The third session brought to the table the issue of gender divisions present in the work place and in the private domain. The fourth session discussed issues of circulation: of commodities and people.[93] By the time of the fourth session, the flow of conversations did not need my prescriptive directions anymore. The group was generating its own dialogue remaining focused on the aim: the production of an artistic gesture for *ReaKt*. Throughout the process I kept insisting on the theme of the world-of-labour, but the group was very resistant to it. Some of the participants refused to be framed merely as unemployed, or former workers of an industry in decline. They refused to be taken for the token of the Portuguese financial crisis. However, the alternatives they suggested did not reflect the variety and richness of the group's experiences; consequently were very superficial. While I was attempting to explore a process of shared practice I was not prepared to let them go in the direction of what I thought might result in a simplistic gesture. The power

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[92] Due to, among other reasons, the displacement of production to other parts of the world where labour is cheaper, it is upon these women that the worst face of unemployment falls. Being close to retirement age, without being too close, leaves them, on the one hand, with no prospects of finding a new job, and on the other, without the possibility of obtaining long-term benefits.

[93] Sessions were of three and a half hours each with a thirty-minute break for tea, biscuits and fruit. Detail of sessions' plans in appendix five and full *NPL* letter 'Duties' (Barreno et al., 1975) which was used to discuss gender divisions in labour.

relations at play in this divergence ended up being the productive motor of the process, as will later be explored, and opened up the space of reflection on my own role in the process.

The deviation from the plan

As many parallel conversations that at anytime became the centre of discussion throughout our sessions, during a lively debate on which theme should the group address, the collective creation should address, a lateral idea became the centre of our attention. An individual expressed her sadness at seeing the old primary school empty. The village's old primary school that had been offered by a local industrialist to the community was closed in 2009, and remains unused.[94] After the initial expression of outrage towards the council's plan to house the existing public library in the building without public consultation, the group voiced the desire to make use of the building. This desire gave our search for an end result for *Rastilho*'s process a shape, and we all gathered around an idea, that was to make use of the building to create a space for teaching and learning, where everyone could be both teacher and student: a space for culture.

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[94] The school building is located right at the heart of the locality of Pevidém. Donated by the local industrialist, Francisco da Cunha Guimarães, the school opened in 1934. The children were relocated to a bigger school, with better facilities in 2009. The building, after planned renovations, will host the local public library, which is currently housed in a small space design for commercial use.

Fig. 20 The School, Pevidém, September 2012

The change of plan

In an attempt to problematise issues around individual authorship I proposed a project of collective creation of an artwork; but when the process made the group to focus on itself, i.e., in its self-constitution as a group instead of the creation of a collective artwork, my role within the group changed. The group took the same name as the proposed project, RASTILHO (which as previously mentioned, I have written in capital letters to better differentiate it from the initial project proposed). Within it, my role as an artist became more the role of a facilitator, the one who holds the keys to the institutions of art, the one who could use her privileged position in the artworld to grant the group access to the public building. The initial request to use the school building, made by RASTILHO, on an independent basis, to the local authorities, was denied. It was only when mediated through *ReaKt*'s production team that eventually we got hold of the space for the duration of the exhibition.[95] RASTILHO used the

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[95] On March 2012, the group had a meeting with the responsible for the municipal libraries responsible for Pevidém's School building: Francisca Abreu, councillor of Guimarães Education and Culture department. In this meeting we requested the use of the building while the future works for the new library where still on hold. The request was denied. It was only due to the negotiations by the production team of *ReaKt* that the space was officially granted and the keys given to the group in September 2012. The loan came with a very specific deadline, the end of *Guimarães 2012*.

fact that it could be confused as the artwork, by being its substitute, to negotiate with the council, through *ReaKt*'s production team, using the empty primary school before it is turned into a library.

The withdrawal attempt

Having a dual status as a group and community space and intervention in an international exhibition, I decided that my name, as individual artist, should be removed from all communication material, and substituted by the newly formed collective's name: RASTILHO. I asked *ReaKt*'s production team to take my name off the press release, invitation and catalogue and replace it with RASTILHO's, because from that moment on, the authorship of what would become public – the group's activities at the school – was not mine. This decision was my initiative, and I wanted it to be a radical one, i.e., not give information about the process of becoming RASTILHO in *ReaKt*'s communication material and documentation centre. This action, on the one hand, would question the very notion of cultural production based on the model of the individual artist, and on the other it would prevent the group's activities being watched instead of being participated. However, the group wanted to keep the genesis of its formation as my initiative and although RASTILHO substitutes my name as the author of the final artistic gesture performed for *ReaKt*, the biography that appears in the catalogue is still that of Carla Cruz.[96]

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[96] In the catalogue, and in spite of my request, RASTILHO appears as the proponent of itself – RASTILHO the occupiers of the public building – and disclosing my participation in its genesis, but the biography in the final pages of the catalogue is of the artist whose name is Carla Cruz. At that time, and experimenting the boundaries of my own disappearance in the project I could not imagine the author being: Carla Cruz and Rastilho in a similar manner to Tim Rollins and K.O.S. See communication material in appendix five.

Fig. 21 Folk dance session, October 2012

The outcome

The first action, after the group has decided to become RASTILHO, was to create its charter of principles.[97] Based on other collectives' examples and a conversation, at my request, with Oporto-based communitarian and self-managed group ES.COL.A da Fontinha, RASTILHO defined itself as an organic, horizontal group: '[w]ith no set duration and not-for-profit that aims to promote the collective production of culture' (RASTILHO charter of principles).[98] At this moment, they left behind the fact that they were volunteering in the production of an art work by an artist to seize the production of culture according to their own definition, and I left behind my desire to lead them, as a group, towards emancipation as art producers.

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[97] Read RASTILHO's *Charter of Principles: June 2012* in appendix five.

[98] ES.COL.A da Fontinha is the Self-managed Collective Space of Alto da Fontinha. Its goal was to 'create a space that is autonomous, self-managed, free, non-discriminatory and non-commercial, and open to different activities. These were the guidelines that lead the project Es.Col.A. […] It was born with and for the neighbourhood, with and for the community'. The group occupied a vacant school in the Portuguese city of Oporto, which, after several negotiations and even a verbal agreement of use of the space by the municipality, was evicted by force in April 2011. In June 2012 five members of ES.COL.A came to Pevidém to talk with RASTILHO about their experiences. The talk, which was mainly to be about the practicalities of running a community led space, ended up by being about the righteousness of occupation of public buildings; with heated debate, for RASTILHO's libertarian ideals are state affiliated whereas ES.COL.A's are more anarchic.

On 20 October 2012 the group opened up the space to the community. They wrote about it in their journal:

> The population turned up in large numbers, socialising and remembering the school that many of them attended. There was a lot of folk dancing and entertainment. By coincidence, on that same day, Pevidém's Marching Band, who celebrated their anniversary, stopped in front of the school, playing for all of those who were there (Rastilho, 2012b, p.4 my translation).[99]

From then on, and on the main room: Mondays were reserved for IT sessions, and the organization of RASTILHO's journal; Tuesdays were dedicated to the learning of Guimarães' embroidery; Wednesdays to crafts, such as floral displays; Thursdays to folk dancing and singing. Due to the high demand by the community, the space was also open on Fridays with drop-in sessions. On the adjacent room, the group organised thematic displays, such as 'The History of the Bee and the Honey', or paintings by local artists. Together with that the room was also where people (in fact, exclusively men) could engage in card and board games.[100]

The desire, to give a community-use to an empty public building, catalysed the emergence of RASTILHO, but, more precisely, what generated its process of becoming were the continued exchanges between all the members of *Rastilho*. RASTILHO – the community group – emerged when the members of *Rastilho* – the group volunteering in an artist's project – generated an autopoiesis of a third order – the social system type – generating with it, its own modes of doing and

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[99] By request from *ReaKt*'s team, the opening of the school had to coincide with the opening of all other *ReaKt*'s public art projects. Thus, the opening of the school had the special presence of the artistic caravan – a special bus going around every project. Read the journal in appendix five.

[100] The group that used this space was exclusively male, and composed by men who already engaged in such activities outdoors in the public square. Being previously subject to the weather conditions, these men were assiduous users of the space, but I could not say they contributed much to the maintenance of RASTILHO.

relating.[101] Thus, the production of the collective, RASTILHO, became intrinsic to the production of the self. As written in their journal:

> The school's living space is managed by the community, and was set in motion by this initial group. The space, of multipurpose use, is modified according to the activities – programmed or spontaneous. Nonetheless, we must highlight, RASTILHO is not the space, it is the group; it is the movement that goes from one to the other, the movement that searches to understand, and share with, the other (RASTILHO, 2012b, p.2 my translation).

The group here stresses exactly that it is through the production of itself, as a group, that they exist, not by the fact that they use the school building as a community space. Throughout the process of becoming RASTILHO, we (Max, Amanda Midori, an MFA student, who joined the group when RASTILHO was formed – and I) wanted to promote the full autonomy of the group, as a community cultural group. Thus, we tried to be like any other member of the group, taking and sharing responsibilities, but eventually being only honorary members.

The remainder

RASTILHO used two of the four rooms of the school between September 2012 and January 2013, when the local council, because of the end of the Guimarães 2012, demanded the clearance of the space.[102] During three months, the group transformed the vacant school into a communitarian space where they promoted and hosted cultural and educational events. The group was only a legitimate user of the space when it was still seen as a contemporary work of

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[101] Autopoiesis, term coined by the Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1987, 52), literally meaning self-production, is what defines a living being/system. A living being in such understanding is an autonomous unity that simultaneously produces itself and its boundaries, i.e., it specifies its own laws, what is proper to it and defines with what/whom establishes relationships. The autopoiesis of a social system entails the realisation of the autopoiesis of the individuals that compose it.

[102] After the grandiose expenditure of Guimarães 2012 – European Capital of Culture and the creation of new infrastructures to be managed, the local library project is perhaps even further away from being accomplished. Of the €111,050,000 budget, Portuguese institutions had to raise €41,000,000, and of that the municipality itself had to contribute with €4,000,000€ (Strategic Plan 2010-2012, 2009).

art. Subsequently, even after proving the interest of the larger community in their activities, when they requested a continuation of the lease, it was denied on the basis that they had no institutional body. They were not a recognised association.[103] But this is precisely what the group always refused to be and to become. RASTILHO does not want to be institutionalised. They refuse, even for the purpose of negotiating the space with the municipality, to be defined in such a fixed way.[104]

In the meantime, the school remains empty; at the time of writing this thesis, the group – enlarged with new members from the community – is liaising with a local association that will give them the legal status necessary to re-negotiate the use of the public building.

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[103] In Portugal, to be recognised as an official not-for-profit association, the group would have to have: a name; a designated minimum number of associates; write their own statutes; define an hierarchical internal structure – with president, vice-president, etc.; have a first meeting which would be recorded on the minutes book; apply to be considered and identified for tax purposes as a collective person; finally register within the civil registry and receive the 'collective person' card. From then on, have at least one annual members' meeting, recorded on the minutes' book; declare for tax purposes their annual revenues.

[104] Although the municipality claims the reason why they could not let them use the space is the lack of an institutional body, i.e., a bureaucratic one, this is a scapegoat. ES.COL.A, went through the same process with Oporto's municipality, constituting themselves as an official association. Nonetheless, they were violently evicted and the building destroyed to the point of being unusable. Without the space, ES.COL.A nowadays organises events in the local public square.
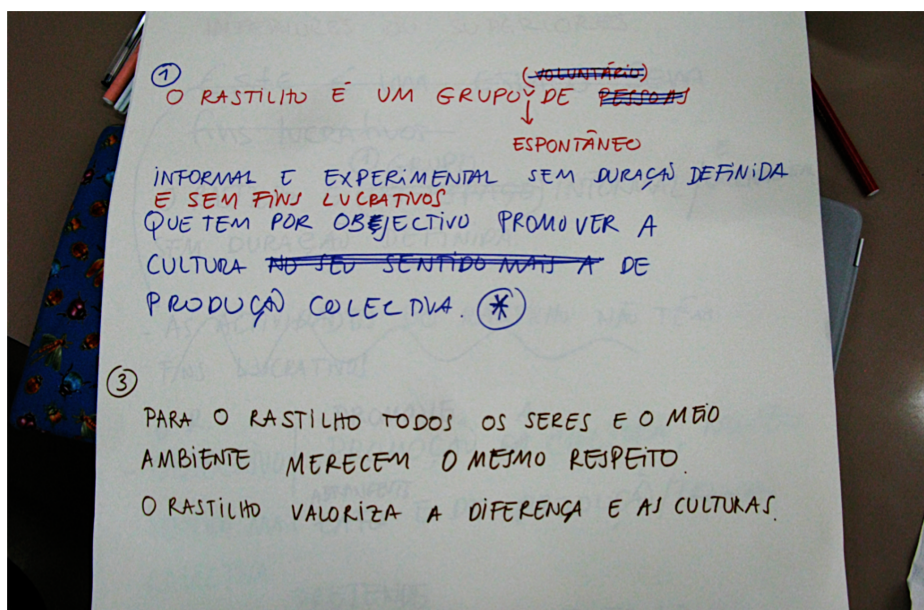
Fig. 22 RASTILHO's charter of principles in progress, June 2012

The problematic of authority/authorship in projects of collective creation

I will here consider the notion of authority and its potential repressive character within *Rastilho*/RASTILHO through the notion of authority in two radical pedagogical approaches, Paulo Freire's and Jacques Rancière's. Before doing that I will describe briefly the background of both the pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1996) and the method of the ignorant schoolmaster (Rancière, 1991).

Some preliminary notes: Freire and Rancière, two democratic pedagogies
Paulo Freire's work emerges from his empiric knowledge of poverty and how that affected his academic potential as a schoolboy. Determined to change the economical conditions of his fellow man living in poverty, he realised that a major impediment to challenge the established order was the 'culture of silence' of the dispossessed (Freire, 1996). The educational system was, for Freire, seen as a major instrument in the maintenance of this culture, and his experiments and perspective on education respond directly to Brazil's concrete reality. Freire believes that given the right tools anyone can break the circle of

oppression. We should also note that Freire's pedagogy is openly post-colonial, i.e., a practical and theoretical device that questions the Western educational canon – rational, universal and humanist – and the power relations within schooling, transmitted, in what were once called peripheries by the colonial powers, to produce predefined and 'adapted' subjects.[105] Henry Giroux (1993) warns us of appropriating Freire without engaging with his political project, which issues a challenge to the Western politico-pedagogical neo-liberal device. In using Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to analyse *Rastilho*/RASTILHO, I am aware of the specific context in which Freire was thinking and acting.[106] I will not be looking at how can I apply his pedagogy to my own practice to bridge the gap between artist and participants, but taking his pedagogy to look critically at my role as an artist and to analyse the problematic of the intervention of an individual artist in the promotion of a model of collective artistic production.

Just like Freire, Rancière departs from an analysis of the importance and the problematic of the alphabetisation of the destitute. Thus, in Rancière's pedagogy there is a similar process, where the emancipated leads the oppressed to believe and verify her own equality. Rancière, is interested in questioning the pedagogical myth that affirms the teacher as the depositor of knowledge on the empty vessel that the student is supposed to be. This myth, for Rancière, divides the world in two, or more precisely, in two intelligences, one inferior and the other superior.

AUTHORSHIP/AUTHORITY

Although, artistic creation is inherently collective and often collaborative, the pervasive imaginary within the artworld (or better, maintained by the artworld's main manifestation: the market oriented art world) is that the nature of the

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[105] In what Freire called the 'banking' education, the goal is to produce individuals that can easily adapt to the world; 'a manageable and adaptable student who becomes passive' (Freire, 1996, pp.54-55), in order to better serve the oppressor.

[106] Freire wrote the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in exile soon after the 1964 military coup in Brazil, which saw in power a liberal government aligned with the USA. This government instituted a climate of censorship and arrested many intellectuals, such as Freire, for their left-wing positions.

creative process is singular and individual, i.e. solitary. *Rastilho* follows Grant Kester's interest 'in collaborative or collective practices that start to break down the artist's custodial relationship to the viewer' (Kester quoted in Finkelpearl, 2013, p.123). According to Kester (2012b, pp.15-16) the:

> disruptive and critical capacity remains the province of the solitary artist acting on a generic viewer, while collective and collaborative practice is the domain of a simple 'pastoral' sentimentality that serves merely to mask hidden forms of domination.

Furthermore, the desire to collaborate with a potential audience, as in *Rastilho*, is based in the following idea; art production is always the product of a collective spirit. Rancière seems to infer this in *Aesthesis* through reading of Winckelmann's notion of style. Rancière (2013a, p.14, italics in original) affirms:

> What matters instead [for history of art] is to think about the co-belonging of an artist's art and the principles that govern the life of his people and his time. […] The style manifested in the work of a sculptor belongs to a people, to a moment of its life, and to the deployment of a potential for collective freedom. Art exists when one can make a people, a society, an age, taken at a certain moment in the development of its collective life, its subject. The natural harmony between *poiesis* and *aisthesis* that governed the representative order is opposed to a new relation between individuality and collectivity: between the artist's personality and the shared world that gives rise to it and that it expresses.

Then, authorship comes as an act of power. The artist Susan Kelly says exactly that authoring is partially appropriating collective knowledge, and in many cases comes from the demand of using one's proper name in order to keep operating under institutional conditions, being those in her case the academia and the art world. Kelly adverts us to the fact that the:

> authoring of texts, artworks or projects in the context of social movements comes at a cost: it is often experienced as profoundly patronising and alienating for those involved in collective work, functioning as an appropriation of collective knowledge and creative divisive hierarchical splits between those who 'do', and those who write *about,* make work *about*, and so on. (Kelly, 2013, p.6, italics in original)

Kelly affirms that in that specific context, authorship can be experienced as authoritarian. I would suggest that all art is also collective even when individually authored, and in that case would it not every authoring instance be always an authoritarian experience?

My initial aim for *Rastilho,* was to form a group of collaborators for a project of collective artistic creation, and present the result, authored by all of those involved, at *ReaKt.* Thus, through *Rastilho* I wanted to question the model of single authorship based on the individual artist – that constructed figure whose profile is still bonded to notions of geniality, individuality, and masculinity. The initial plan was to generate a creative process that could be co-authored by all of those involved, and for that I imagined a breakdown of hierarchies where the group would slowly start to cohere. However, I was faced with the fact that attempting to share authorship did not necessarily remove me from a position of authority. One of the stumbling blocks to generating a horizontal environment, or what I thought then that would be an environment of equality, was my position both as artist and initiator within the group. That is, both the generator of the collective process and the supposed specialist in arts that was called upon for the final decisions. The fact of also being considered the author of the project by *ReaKt*, enhanced the inequity. Authorship and authority seem to go hand-in-hand. Thus, not only did I promote conversations that could lead to a shared concern that could be translated into an artistic gesture, but I was also promoting the autonomy of the group, so that the final decision on that gesture could be truly collective and not dictated by the artists (Max and I). Conversely, even if my desire, as an artist and as a citizen, might be to promote, and be part of, an autonomous community space, this could only be achieved through the praxis of the community itself; that lobbied, organised, liaison, promoted, set up and animated the space, and finally enlarged the initial group. Here our roles, and possible hierarchical positions, become complicated. Nonetheless, the fact that the artists initially managed the process brought about a particular paradox.

LEADERSHIP

In *Rastilho*, I had to deal with the double bind of leading a process of autonomy. That is, the paradox where I as an artist attempt to lead a group in creating an artwork to prove that they could have done it, in principle, without my intervention. Here Freire and Rancière's pedagogical models are particularly helpful to analyse the artist potentially repressive role. Freire (1996) affirms that given the right tools anyone can look at the world critically in dialogue with others. This sums up the task of the teacher, to initiate dialogue and lead the student to create the tools for both their emancipation. The problem of leadership, in Freire's pedagogy (1996), as in my own artistic approach within *Rastilho*, is a matter of having authority to emancipate, or to initiate it. However, Freire affirms that leadership is necessary in the process of liberation.[107] And the fact that a leader is necessary is that, according to Freire (1996), and based in Frantz Fanon's writings, the oppressed has a relationship of attraction-repulsion with the oppressor, and liberation in such a context might mean becoming themselves oppressors of others. Freire, points out, that the oppressed thinking structure is shaped by oppressive relationships; therefore, the oppressed is either afraid of freedom and the responsibility attached to it, or views liberation as an individualistic development. Freire (1996, p.27) affirms that '[t]heir ideal is to be men; but for them to be men is to be oppressor. That is their model of humanity'.[108] It is due to the difficulty of breaking free from oppressive structures that the figure of the teacher is fundamental, in Freire's perspective, to initiate the process of emancipation. But, for Freire this does not

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[107] It is important here to remember that for Freire, both oppressed and oppressor are being liberated simultaneously.

[108] This problematic, of mistaking emancipation with acquiring a similar status to the oppressor's, has already been highlighted in Chapter Three through the discussion of bell hooks on women's emancipation. In that case, the danger of rewarding individual women that have obtained a status similar to middle-class white men, lies in the replication of the structures of oppression instead of challenging them. bell hooks' reflection is itself based on a feminist rereading of Freire's work: '[w]e cannot enter the struggle as objects in order to later become subjects' (hooks, 1993, p.147).

seem to be a paradoxical role, because the teacher is in true solidarity with the people for both their liberation.[109]

The teacher (revolutionary leader) has a very specific and special role: to arouse in the student (oppressed people) conscientização (Portuguese in the original, meaning critical consciousness), i.e., the necessary perception- and action upon by the student/people of their oppression through a deeper understanding of the world and its contradictions.[110] The teacher leads the student in the discussion of a 'problem' – and that problem is necessarily found within the concerns of the group of students. The 'problem' is the object of dialogue and the object that mediates them. In practice, a theme, subject of study, is transformed into a 'problem' that needs discussion; the discussion will be about the students' and the teacher's points of view.

Many times during our meetings, members of the group participating in the project *Rastilho* expressed the desire that I, as the artist, would imagine the final product alone and just tell them how they could help me achieve it. Freire identifies this resignation in his work with the communities in South America, and he explains: 'self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalisation of the opinion that the oppressor hold of them' (Freire, 1996, p.45). They do not believe that they too can engage in an artistic process, and moreover, when this is a collective endeavour and one of its members is an artist.

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[109] What Freire is asking from the revolutionary leader/teacher is to be willing to renounce his/her class to be with the people. 'The revolutionary leadership group […] is made up of men and women who in one way or another have belonged to the social strata of the dominators. At a certain point in their existential experience, under certain historical conditions, these leaders renounce the class to which they belong and join the oppressed, in an act of true solidarity' (Freire, 1996, p.144).

[110] I am using the original term, as used in the English translation of Freire's work. This is a word that did not exist in the Portuguese language until it was introduced by Freire by adapting Frantz Fanon's term 'conscienciser', which appears in his 1952 book, *Black Skins, White Masks.* Furthermore, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, some sections refer to the development of this pedagogy by the figure of the teacher, and others by the revolutionary leader; I will focus on the teacher.

In a similar manner to Freire, Rancière sees the role of the teacher as the one that can reveal the fallacy of self-depreciation. The 'ignorant schoolmaster' (Rancière, 1991) does not tell the students what to do, what to think, but presents them with the fact that they too can think, they too can narrate their thoughts. Thus, for Rancière '[t]he problem is to reveal an intelligence to itself' (Rancière, 1991, p.28), and it is by dealing with this problem that the hierarchical relationship between teacher and student, can be ruptured. Just as in Freire's pedagogy, and despite their equality, we need teachers. Similarly, in Rancière the question of authority is not problematic, i.e. it does not fall into authoritarianism. This is so, because Rancière sees intelligence as separated from will, and in the relationship between the student and the teacher, the first might submit her will to the teacher's will, but not her intelligence. The teacher will make sure the student is on the right track, but still the student's intelligence is obeying only to itself. This means that what the teacher is checking is not the knowledge acquired, but the level of attention of the student, regardless of what she will find. In spite of this, having the initiative, within collective artistic projects, can still resonate as authoritarian, i.e. it puts the artist at the outset in a privileged position when the expected outcome is to be identified as a work of art.

To be sure, we should be aware that the goals of Freire's teacher and an artist's are quite different. The goal of Freire's ideal teacher is always to humanise the people. My goal, as an artist, when I engaged people from the local community to participate in *Rastilho*, was still, initially, to create an artwork. That is, even if in the process of questioning the status of the individual artist through the collective creation of an artistic gesture the group emancipated itself and constituted RASTILHO, we cannot forget that it was the artist who set the initial goal and that this is done within the context of an international exhibition. My emancipatory project had an end result in mind: to transform all the participants into artists.[111] However, the pedagogy of the oppressed, just as the method of

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[111] Read the excerpt of *Rastilho*'s first session discussion, December 2011 (my transcription from recorded material for *ReaKt*'s catalogue) in appendix five.

the ignorant schoolmaster, does not want to transform the student into a teacher, it will be up to him/her in end what to do with the knowledge of his/her equality. The goal is to help the other becoming fully human.

AFFIRMATIVE AUTHORITY

If, for Freire, liberation is initially done through conscientização, the process of emancipation cannot be summed up to this critical awareness, but needs action through critical reflection, and if the teacher is there to initiate the process, this has to be taken upon by the people. 'They are both responsible for the process in which all grow. No one teaches the other, nor anyone is self-taught' (Freire, 1996, p.61). The fact that this process is done through dialogue, which challenges the traditional hierarchical position of teacher and student, creates, in Freire, two new figures: teacher-student and student-teacher. Authority starts in this way to break down, because people teach each other and all are responsible for the process. However, for Freire, teachers are still organising the process, and without imposing their 'word' they also do 'not take a liberalist position that would encourage license' (ibid., p.159). Authority (not authoritarianism) and freedom (not licence) need to go hand in hand. This becomes clearer if we see it through Rancière's idea that the student follows the will of the teacher, but does not surrender her intelligence. Consequently, '[a]uthentic authority is not affirmed as such by a mere *transfer* of power, but through *delegation* or in sympathetic *adherence*' (ibid., p.159, italics in original). In this sense authority is conceive in Freire as a positive thing, where the teacher has 'authority-with', rather than 'authority-over' the group (Gore, 1993, p.120). In his writings Foucault (quoted in Jelinek, 2013, p.83) states that wherever there is power there is resistance, and 'this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' but in interdependence to it. Power is not seen as property but as being relational. Consequently, we have to be careful with identifying productive power to be always good, as at times Freire's pedagogy seems to suggest. The notion of authority when seen through Foucault's notion of power is more complicated and perhaps impossible to overcome. Similarly, Trinh T. Minh-ha, questioned if knowledge could circulate

without a position of mastery. 'Can it be conveyed without the exercise of power?', she asked (Minh-ha, 1989, p.41). Coming to the conclusion that on the one hand, no, because there are always power relations at play, and on the other hand, yes, because there are always interstices and failures in every system. Mastery, according to her does not need to coincide with power. Authority then should be seen both as repressive and productive, and just as power is discontinuous so must authority be able to be exercised simultaneously by artist and community. Thus, the question may be how can we reveal its mechanisms, rather than attempting to abolish it – as this would only hide what cannot be eradicated. Feminist critiques of pedagogical theories (Gore, 1993; Hernandéz, 1997; Jackson, 2007; Weiler, 1995 and 2001), stress this problematic by noting that the teacher cannot simply abolish her authority. Moreover, Freirean romantic ideas of 'class suicide' (Lewis, 2009, p.295), where the teacher is in solidarity with the oppressed by disinvesting from her own background, as well as 'the oppressed' being seen as a unified category without gender, age, race, creeds, location, and sexual orientation, is in and of itself problematic. Our class, age, gender, and identification as artists cannot be relinquished.

Back to the paradox, where in an attempt to relinquish power in order to empower others, I am retaining power. Following the educational theorist Jennifer M. Gore (1993), in her discussion of the paradoxes of the feminist pedagogue, what I am trying to do is to challenge my authority as an artist, but considering the notion of power as property. That is, imagining power to be in my possession, and as such, potentially divided or given to others. However, as Foucault (1995) argues, power is dispersed, fractured, and not constructed in good and evil binary; it can be both and simultaneously repressive and productive (discussed in Gore, 1993; Jelinek, 2013; Trend, 1992).[112] This 'em-

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[112] '[T]he power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy […] its effects of domination are attributed not to "appropriation", but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings; […] In short this power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the "privilege", acquired or preserved of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions – an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated' (Foucault, 1995, pp.26-27).

power-ment' (Gore, 1993) is problematic, not only because it implies an agent that empowers, but also because it has, already, an end state in mind. In my case, with *Rastilho,* the creative community that produces art works.[113]

The artist's authority: back to authorship

Feminist pedagogical critique rethinks the problematic of authority by looking at it as authorship, because in authorship the focus is on truthfulness rather than truth.

> Truthfulness can be judge only in a common language to be found in the connectedness of sharing stories, and based on particular attachments and affiliations to the world and to each other (Pagano quoted in Gore, 1993, p.71).

In this sense, 'authority refers to the power to represent reality, to signify, and to command compliance with one's acts of signification' (ibid.), a power that both teacher and student can exercise. In this sense, teacher and students' narrative are both as relevant and rightful to be accounted for. Attempts to 'share' authorship, and authority – reflected in the tactics that emerged during *Rastilho*'s sessions – have to be replaced by a continued recognition of the differences present in the participants of a collective process, and by looking for ways to monitor power's repressive potential. In this sense not only we, artists, must recognise our participation in the power relations that are being built, but also the participants of a project like *Rastilho* will have to.

Nonetheless this practice – of monitoring our participation in power relations – is difficult to maintain, the process of *Rastilho* proved it, due to presupposed hierarchies, resistance by the group, and my own desire to organise the group to create a meaningful artistic gesture; practice, which was partially sustained when RASTILHO emerged and I could try to place myself on the margin, and demand to be, just another member of the collective. I say partially, because

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[113] Rancière would define such an aspiration, 'of a society of artists', as one that 'would repudiate the division between those who know and those who don't, between those who possess or don't possess the property of intelligence. It would only know minds in action: people who do, who speak about what they are doing, and who transform all their works into ways of demonstrating the humanity that is in them as in everyone' (Rancière, 1991, p.71).

when we used our position of participants in an international art exhibition in order to negotiate the use of the school building, we in fact used my role as guest artist. It this context, it is a contradiction to proclaim the end of a privilege through the use of this privilege. However, the attempt to be equal to any other member of the group did not challenge the repressive potential of my authority, as explained, but rather the recognition, with RASTILHO, that each one of us played a different and important role within the collective that at any moment might become a position of authority. The artist in this sense is more an organiser than a leader. That is, *Rastilho*'s dialogical process to reach a common concern that allowed us to create a collective artistic gesture was only initially organised by me, and after taken by the collective. However, from the beginning, the members of the community made the most part of the contributions to the conversations, and I, as an artist, filtered these conversations continuously, in search for something that could interest a future audience. For, whatever the result, the project would always be part of *ReaKt*. Later, with RASTILHO, I retained my identity as an artist and as the initiator of the collective endeavour, but without this position of authority being static. Different members of the group brought different specialisms, and became the primary motor of the process, or of activities, at different moments of becoming RASTILHO and of, legally, occupying the school.

Authority, seen as 'authority-with', questions my hypothesis that we could find democratic encounters in artistic processes through the abolition of the categories of artist and audience; in *Rastilho*, it seems to be there in that particular encounter between one and the other that the process became fruitful both for the community as for me as an artist/individual. To be sure, in this process the participants of *Rastilho* were never an audience but co-authors from the very beginning, which helped to make the artist position more complex, even though it does not explore fully the relationship of the audience to an artwork. Nonetheless, the attempt to abolish the categories of artist and audience by inviting the latter to become participants unveiled the fact that hypothetical synthesis of the artist and participant does not necessarily dissolve

authority and, moreover, that very attempt is vain. Thus, if it is not in the indistinguishable roles of artist and participant that a democratic praxis is located, could it be in the re-valuing of both their contributions?

I wanted to disinvest myself of the role of individual artist, to investigate if it is in the horizontality of relationships at the very base of creation (not only in the participation/reception) that not only a critique – in practice – of authorship resides, but also the possibility to promote democratic encounters. However, RASTILHO can still be perceived as the result of an artist's practice. The artworld is willing to accept it as such because its genealogy can still be traced back to an artist and to an art institution, but to whose benefit?

It is also quite difficult to imagine maintaining such an art practice, which is both collective and based on the belief that what matters are the products of our creativity and not authorship, within the current mechanisms of the artworld. If, on the one hand, it remains within the art world's borders, to which extent can we prevent it from being co-opted, as numerous examples of collective practices that end up circulating in the same way as individually authored practices in art's symbolic capital? If, on the other hand, it continues its actions outside, how can it propose an effective difference to art's current paradigm?

Highbrow culture vs. applied arts or culture vs. art

The movement from *Rastilho* to RASTILHO, where the latter became the praxis of the community, highlights the fact, as Sholette points out, that there are other 'cultural values being produced and shared outside the borders of the formal art world establishment' (Sholette, 2011, p.42). The reason that some are celebrated as culture and others are diminished as popular culture is based on conventions that privilege one over and against the other. Furthermore, that these are watertight categories is a fiction. As David Trend (1992, p.72) states:

> Whether discussing culture generated in the act of interpretation, or culture negotiated in daily events, or the stories and images made as cultural objects, it is important to recognize that these are not artifacts

that come from elsewhere. Culture is something that citizens shape just as it shapes them.

Trend (1992, p.21) highlights that culture cannot be reduced to a single narrative to which all groups subscribe. In this sense RASTILHO wants to open up a space where the community can engage in cultural activities that are not unidirectional, i.e., of a proponent group organising events for the community, but where user and producer merge. As Freire's collaborator, Ira Schor, affirms 'everyone has and makes culture, not only the aesthetic specialist, or the member of the elite' (Schor, 1993, p.30). Raymond Williams, referring to the constructed division between elite and popular culture, or rather working-class culture and bourgeois culture, affirms:

> The body of intellectual and imaginative work which each generation receives as its traditional culture is always, and necessarily, something more than the product of a single class. […] even within a society in which a particular class is dominant, it is evidently possible both for members of other classes to contribute to the common stock, and for such contributions to be unaffected by or in opposition to the ideas and values of the dominant class. (Williams, 1993, p.320)

That is, it is always the product of everyone involved, even if these contributions might be uneven.

What RASTILHO stands for, is that what can be found around us is the dynamic interdependence of both mainstream and local/specific cultural activities with no discontinuity between one and the others.

By becoming RASTILHO, the participants of *Rastilho* opened a space of subjectivity in which a group of unemployed or retired people – who at best were expected to participate in the production of culture, by being part of an artistic process generated by an artist – demonstrated themselves to be capable of producing culture according to their own terms. My initial desire may have been to demand that RASTILHO's products and activities, and not RASTILHO itself, in the context of *ReaKt*, should be understood as art. The

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challenge is not so much that RASTILHO's production should be elevated to the category of art, but its allocation as lowbrow culture as opposed to high culture is what needs to be challenged.

Fig. 23 RASTILHO's self-portrait

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON AUTHORSHIP

If the divide between artist and participant, just as student and teacher, can become complicated under the notions of power and equality and be seen as being both and simultaneously privileged and limited positions, the notions of the subversive/repressive natures of the margin and the mainstream – seen in Chapter Three – become likewise complicated once we take the discussion to the broader field of culture. My critical attempt to disinvest the artist of her authorial/authoritarian position to subvert the mainstream version of art, stumble upon the fact that art is just a manifestation of the diversity of culture and not its sole representative. Thus, a subversive act within the field of art becomes a dominant gesture in the field of culture – the community does not need my intervention to produce culture, they are always and already producing it, despite my contribution to secure a venue for such production to happen publicly. On the other hand, and as Sholette affirms, 'the art world is at once

more global and yet less varied, more visibly diversified and yet neither porous nor malleable in its aesthetic range' (Sholette, 2011, p.121), thus proposing 'popular culture' within the heart of high culture – *ReaKt* – opens up a space to question art and high brow culture as intellectual edifying against popular culture as demeaning. Centre and margin are in fact constitutive of each other, in the same way that the outside in Rancière's notion of the police order is not an outside *de facto* but rather an 'outside that denotes a way of acting and being that cannot be conceived within a particular order' (Biesta, 2011, p.149): the outside was always already there. In this way we can understand that both margin and centre are the result of the institutionalisation of the arts. We need to do away with lower/higher definitions of the so-called 'categories of culture'. The real challenge, according to Williams, is 'to ensure the means of life, and the means of community. But what will then, by these means, be lived, we cannot know or say' (Williams, 1993, p.335).

Alana Jelinek (2013) points out that because the art world has been operating under neoliberal values it is susceptible to reproduce inequality and limit freedom and diversity. My collaboration with RASTILHO enabled such diversity to take place in alignment with what Adriana Hernandéz (1997, p.57) points out:

> The importance of respecting difference and plurality in democracy is that subordinate groups can develop their voices and articulate their needs if they have their own spaces rather than if they're absorbed in a consensual overarching public space.

Nonetheless she warns us that we need to go beyond a mere celebration or romanticisation of difference. That is, that these cultural experiences and practices should not be accepted unproblematically, but also called into question, interrogating their particular forms and content. RASTILHO was here celebrated for its autonomy, for the fact that the group, in collaboration with three visual artists managed to secure a public venue, and programme for the benefit of, and with, their local community. However, with the end of *ReaKt* and the Capital of Culture, our own – the artists' – engagement with the project significantly diminished, both because of geographic location (Max Fernandes

being the only artist to live locally), and also because we believe that the group should operate autonomously. This raises questions regarding our responsibilities within the group, not only of offering possibilities to liaise with different institutions, artistic or otherwise, but also of continuing to be in the position of the other to the community group (as Freire's teacher), which allowed them, on the one hand, during the process to question their own assumptions and models of culture, and on the other to benefit from a different network. We cannot refuse the domination of high culture by making a eulogy of popular culture. If it was in our encounter – as visual artists; people who were curious to make and learn music; people that want to learn and make paintings; people who want to organise festivities and learn new recipes; people who want to teach/learn embroidery and lace-making; people who want to entertain children or have their grandchildren occupied; etc. – that RASTILHO became fruitful for everyone, we, artists, should not have discarded a more committed and continued engagement with the group. RASTILHO needs external members, artists or not, that would articulate their praxis with that of others, that would allow them to be part of an extended network of art and culture.

To bring about a networking art world based on equality, we need to rethink our tactics when attempting to challenge the politics of representation, i.e. whose narratives and feelings (Rancière, 1991, p.70) are being represented, are being counted. If originally, with *Rastilho*, what was at stake for me was undermining artists' privilege, I start to understand that the belief in such privilege – transmitting meaning – is the testimony of wanting to hold on to it. That there is no such privilege is exactly what Rancière (2009a) claims. Rather than attempting to make of his students potential masters, Rancière's (1991, p.28) 'ignorant schoolmaster' exposes that what is at stake is to 'reveal an intelligence to itself', that is where the democracy lies, in their relationships. Everyone is already involved in the practice of culture without necessarily having to be promoted to the category of artist, as the maxim everyone-is-an-artist seems to infer. If with this project I arrived at an altered version of authorship that is founded in a version of authority-with, instead of an abolition of the author, what

seems in fact to have disappeared with Rastilho/RASTILHO is the artwork. This concern was already evident in AMIW. There I have defended that, although it started as a one-woman-show in the guise of a private collection, it was not an artwork, but an artistic practice. Similarly, *Rastilho* is my artistic practice, and as I have argued, I could have claimed co-authorship of RASTILHO as a situation where I have applied my artistic skills and strategies.

Conclusion(s)

In this investigation I proposed to look at different ways of understanding democracy, and posed the question of whether it could be performed by the arts. I began by searching for the basic predicates of democracy so I could examine how these could be articulated by my practice. Contrasting and comparing Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière's ideas, democracy appears as always to come: it is performative and in need of maintenance, i.e. constant re-instantiation or verification. I emphasised that democracy is what happens between people in singular actions either to form temporary consensus (Mouffe, 2000) or to redistribute the sensible (Rancière, 2006a). Through this investigation, I argue that passions, difference and emancipation, or in other words, conflict, pluralism and accountability are at the core of democracy.

My project *State Drawings* helped to extract these notions and began to question the role of art in representing and performing democracy. However, the drawings, as discrete units, could only offer partial views of the different organisations of the social. They cannot be full representations or models for democratic forms of organisation, but are tools to complicate the notion of democracy. The inadequacy of the drawings to fully account for democracy's different aspects, presents their limitations both as analytical tools and as speculative ones; and questions the limitations of representation itself when it comes to give account of any totality. In this sense, the drawings suggest that democracy is in and of itself limited when it comes to fully represent people's diversities. Given the limitations of the drawings, I wondered if the problem was in their medium and if a differently performative mode of being in the arts and politics would be more suitable to investigate the relationship between art and democracy. Can art only represent democracy (partially) as the drawings did, or can it also *do* democracy?

I explored the possibility that democracy needs to be 'performed' rather than represented by staging an acknowledged democratic institution, in the form of a voting scene. *demoCRACY* (the project I staged at NSFS Festival of Independents) presented voting as a method to democratically institute conflict, while at the same time it also questioned the privilege given to this method and its consensual role in signifying democracy. In my analysis of the basic predicates of democracy, disagreement proved to be impossible to eradicate if true pluralism is supported, i.e. in the form of truly different positions. For example, radically different positions in relation to which art should be publicly funded. However, as democracy is inherently contingent, what is favoured by public money today might and will change tomorrow. The struggle to change what is considered a priority is what Mouffe calls counter-hegemonic processes. *demoCRACY*, as a Mouffean critical art project, revealed the consensus that corresponds democracy with elections and argued, in agreement with Mouffe, that we need to create other democratic forms of staging different opinions and interpretations.

However, the project failed to look into its own immediate context, the artworld and particularly, NSFS. I claim that NSFS, although presenting itself as an independent festival of alternative art initiatives, did not present a different version of what art is. In that sense, although critically involved, *demoCRACY*, promoted and reaffirmed a consensus about how a critical project appears within and in relation to art institutions. *demoCRACY* represented a shortcoming of democracy when it comes to deal with different passions (by stressing that elections cannot be the sole moment of displaying antagonisms), however to do democracy, my project would have to not only reveal the conflicting notions around what critical art is, but also to present itself as a truly different example.

My quest was to understand if my artistic practice could perform democracy. But, after the contradictions and constraints presented by the arts experienced during the performative event of *demoCRACY*, my investigation was eventually confined to the artworld. How could my projects, and by the same token those

belonging to other artists, be democratic if they leave unchallenged the oppressive operations of the artworld? This in spite the fact that promoting inclusion and diversity the artworld is, as we have seen (and according to Jelinek) exclusive and pluralist in a neoliberal way. That is to say, the artworld is based on a meritocratic value system that transforms pluralism into an exclusionary strategy.

With AMIW I tried to articulate this conflict through a feminist exhibition project that positions itself not only as critical art but also as a different way of doing and making. AMIW, which was after 2010 guided by the *New Portuguese Letters*, endeavoured a transformation of itself from being a collective exhibition of artistic practices done under feminist influence, to becoming a truly feminist artistic project – where feminism is no longer a thematic but a methodology. This was accomplished by reviewing the desire for visibility according to the mainstream art world canon, and by installing itself as a network of artists based on solidarity and affiliation to feminisms that allows us to produce and present our practices to a concerned counterpublic – i.e. venues, friends and audiences also interested in feminism and networks of affect. In this sense, AMIW, as a network, presented itself within the arts (art worlds) as a different way of doing and making; performing a notion of pluralism that is in contradiction to the neoliberal pluralism present in the artworld, where differences are celebrated under a free market principle and the emphasis is placed on the individual artists.

At the same time that I rejected a compliant recuperation of women artists into the canon, I was wondering if the function of the artist was a limitation to performing democracy in the arts, and speculating that authorship was ultimately authoritarian. My first hypothesis was that the radical consequence of challenging the artist's authority was the abolition of the figure of the artist. That is, to imagine a new art paradigm where the common denominators artwork/artistic gesture and artist would not be necessarily and immediately privileged in regard to others, such as participant, audience in the exchange of

the products of our 'intelligences', thus making the figure of the artist qua (nameable) author redundant.

The 2012 project *Rastilho* (and its result as RASTILHO, a community group) allowed me to investigate this possibility. Would the performance of democracy be able to create an alternative regarding the artworld, and to abolish the notion of the artist as a singular individual in favour of collective creation? *Rastilho*/RASTILHO revealed the complexity of authority-with others. However, arriving at democratic forms of organisation in the arts is not without difficulties and contradictions. As we have seen, relations of power will always be at play and in the context of an international exhibition within a European project that aimed to brand Guimarães as a cultural city we had to make compromises for RASTILHO to occupy a symbolic public building. Moreover, according to the current hegemonic model the discrepancy between the necessary time to mature a project and the given (or funded) time inevitably impact our modes of engagement.

Setting up my projects for the development of this research, I realised how the quest for democracy complicated the notion of art world, artist and artwork. Although the projects do not constitute a model of good, or democratic, practice, through them this thesis maps the difficulty of democratising artistic practice. This difficulty is at the core of this thesis, because in it is reflected the problem of democracy itself.

State Drawings revealed the difficulty of fully depicting democracy, and suggested that democracy is itself limited when it comes to representing pluralism. On the one hand this pluralism is the end of a substantial idea of what is 'good', and on the other the complexity of accounting the diversity of views and opinions that cement our social constructions. The problem is representation in and of itself.

Of the four projects, *State Drawings* uses the more conventional artistic medium to tackle representation in its double meaning: as visibility and action. That is a bringing into view and acting on behalf of, further complicating the previous use of depiction and representation. *State Drawings* simultaneously renders the double meaning of representation of the social organisations that this thesis explores through drawing and questions whether the drawings can be considered as action – such as Plato considers performative poetry to be. However, the drawings refuses any form of visibility beyond that which is required for this research project. In this sense, it questions the participation in forms of representation of the art world. How does art and who is an artist come to be named and recognised? How can this visibility inform/disrupt/change the 'sensible'? (What can art do?). If we understand pluralism as the acceptance of ineradicable conflict, and the presence of true plurality, alterity, and diversity, how can individual artistic practices coalesce into a pluralist understanding of the arts?

A conflicting and isolated position in the artworld might lead not only to invisibility within this world, but also to the isolation of the individual(s) engaged in cultural production who may ultimately cease to practice. Stephen Wright has written about practices of withdrawal where those once known as artists are performing activities unrecognised as art, such as home decorating, with a conscious use of artistic tools and strategies. Why is Wright still interested in making these practices relevant to the arts (as Wright does by repatriating these practices back to the art worlds with his lectures and articles)? What is there to learn from the example of self-exile? What is at stake when we abdicate from the artworld altogether?

Alana Jelinek has proposed a strategy of withdrawal from neoliberal values in the arts, but realised within the artworld. By this we could understand her to mean that we need to negotiate and change the art world's commonly held values because, there is too much at stake to recreate other forms of being in the arts in altogether new worlds. I agree with Jelinek and Gregory Scholette,

that we must avoid being 'dark matter' to the successful few; we must change the artworld. But how do we negotiate the regulatory frameworks that currently exist? Jelinek's Rancièrian strategy is predicated in singular actions by individual artists or art collectives that together would form a counter-hegemony. This is bound to each one of us changing our desire, and to the confidence that there will be enough of us to bring actual change. My experience suggests that without building networks of solidarity the most likely outcome of such gestures is isolation. Rancière's own examples of singular actions – Rosa Parks refusing to change seat in the colour segregated Alabama bus, e.g. – show on a closer look, a context pre-disposed for change where that seed can grow.[114]

Rastilho demonstrated the impasse of withdrawing, that in the long run neither benefited the artist nor the community. AMIW, in that sense, is exemplary, for it forges a place to withdraw to, either partially or totally, but nonetheless, together with others. Moreover benefiting from institutional (artworld) funding. AMIW deals thematically with the representation of women as w/oman through the art works that are presented in its exhibitions, and uses curatorial strategies to question the (in)visibility of wo/men artists in the artworld. Here again representation appears both as aesthetics, as depiction – in a Rancièrian sense, as occupying a place in the sensible – and as a claim for difference – i.e., difference that proposes an alternative, that acts. AMIW attempts to create a space where the 'coefficient of visibility' is no longer measured against a centre.

Furthermore, AMIW reveals the benefit of operating internationally as well as locally. AMIW is an international network of artists, based on friendship and a common interest (different forms of artistic practices informed by feminisms) nevertheless its exhibitions are always situated. In the north of Portugal, Vienna or London, AMIW always related to the local feminist scene and adapted itself

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[114] Rosa Parks' action was in fact not isolated; it came out of and was supported by a community movement. Moreover, according to bell hooks, Rosa Parks was not the first black, working woman to refuse to give up her seat for a white man, but she was an ideal vision of a black woman: married, neat, respectable in all senses of the word. 'Rosa Parks was chosen by bourgeois, heterosexist black men to be the representative of radicalism' (hooks, 1996, p.48).

to the local concerns. Its situatedness affirms that it is through our location and our embodiment that we can resist the hegemonic views of subjectivity, and escape reducing constructions, in the case of AMIW both of what is to be a man and a woman and what 'good' art is. Moreover, it operates on a temporality of its own, thus producing a discrete continuity, which, as Simon Sheikh highlights, can produce something different in the imagination.

In this project, I have described a set of situations, and from them produced a set of ideas for the future of the artist researcher, which are alternatives to the pervasive possessive individualism of the arts. Stephen Wright's imperative focus on the role of the viewer/user and his prescriptive examples of good practice – of withdrawal – foregoes the possibility of creating sound alternatives to the 'spectacular' mainstream. Jelinek's proposal is unable to let go of the individualism of the artistic gesture, supported in notions of exceptionality of the political in Rancière's theories. What my experience has proven is that these theories are not adequate. The confidence in individual change as a catalyst for systemic change is in reality untenable when it is not supported by chains of solidarity and collective action.

As with the *State Drawings*, I have attempted to visualise a set of ideas, using my projects as opportunities to bring them into view; however these projects cannot stand in for forms of democracy, and cannot become exemplary of how to practice democratically. I have asked in the first chapter if we need cartographies to understand our social constructions. Later, in the third chapter, I suggested that the most useful maps would be methods to navigate the unknown. The *NPL* is an exemplary map, charting dangers but also the benefits of working together. Towards the end of the NPL, one of the Three Marias wrote to the other two an analysis of the outcome of their project: '[a]nd in all sincerity I say to you: we shall go on alone, but we feel less forsaken' (Barreno, et al., 1975, p.317). *Rastilho* takes this method a step further, and suggests that to perform democracy, in whatever platform, we also need to create forms of solidarity and of collective representation that can still give an account of

singularity. RASTILHO's call for the sharing of authorship recognises both the differentiated position of the artist in the social and at the same time renounces any privilege pre-given to that role.

The 'un-learning' of our predetermined privileges takes time. It demands that we acknowledge that it is in the recognition of difference and embodiment in the modes of self- and collective representation that, in turn, truly pluralist forms of democratic representation will be cultivated.

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Appendix 1

State Drawings, 2010: individual reproductions.
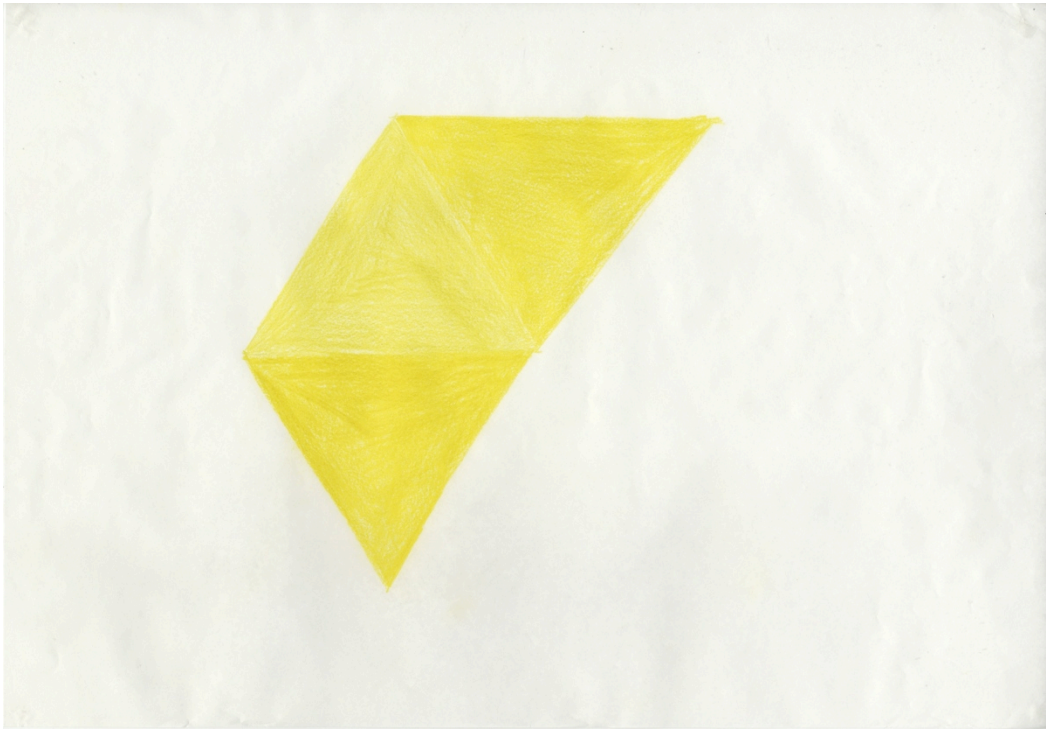
Fig. 24 *Untitled #2*
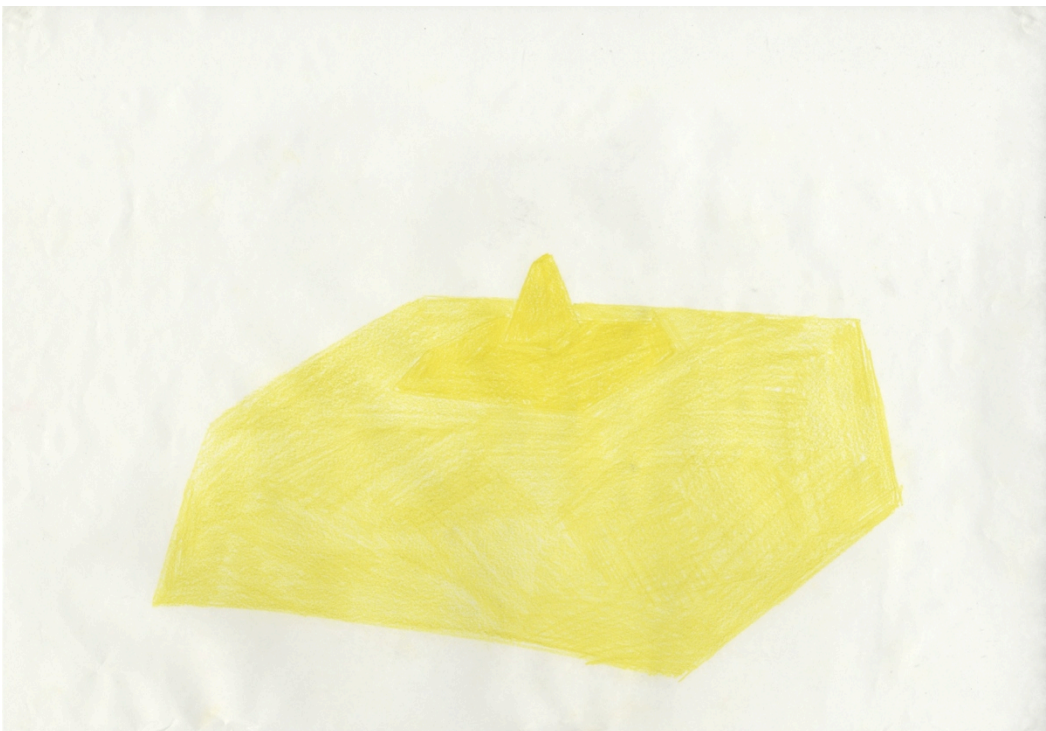
Fig. 25 *Plato's Republic #1*
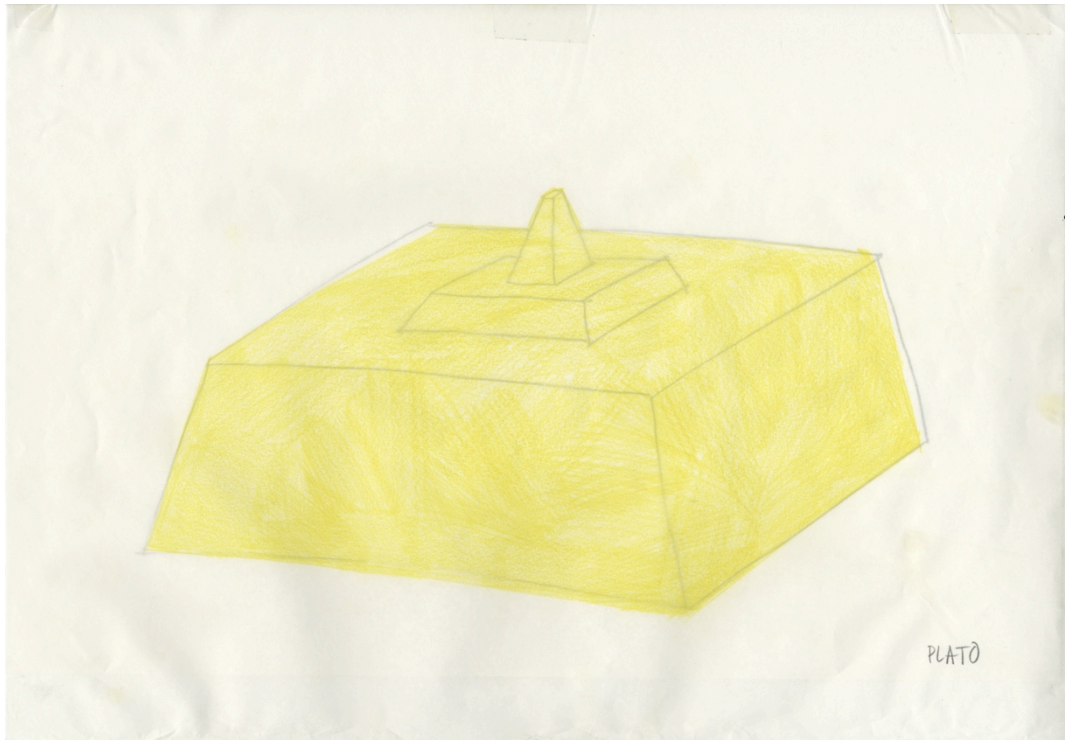
Fig. 26 *Plato's Republic #2*

Fig. 27 *Aristotle's Perfect State*
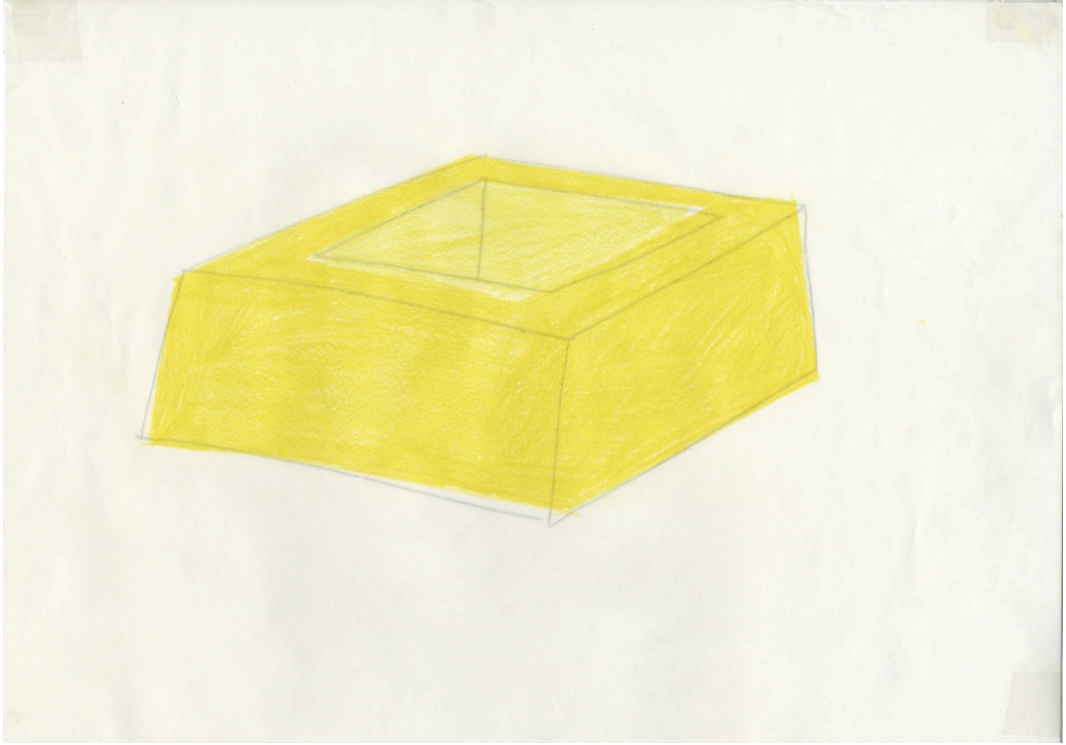
Fig. 28 *Inversion of Plato's Republic*
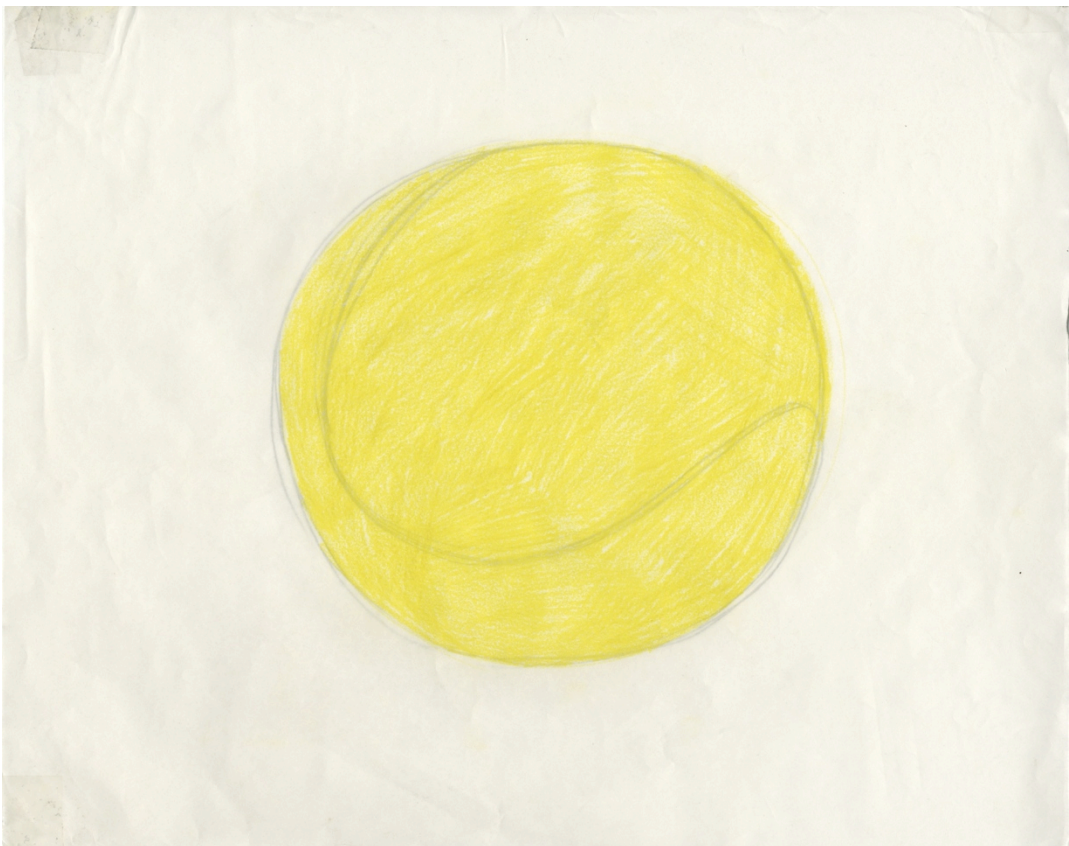
Fig. 29 *Chantal Mouffe's Democracy #1*
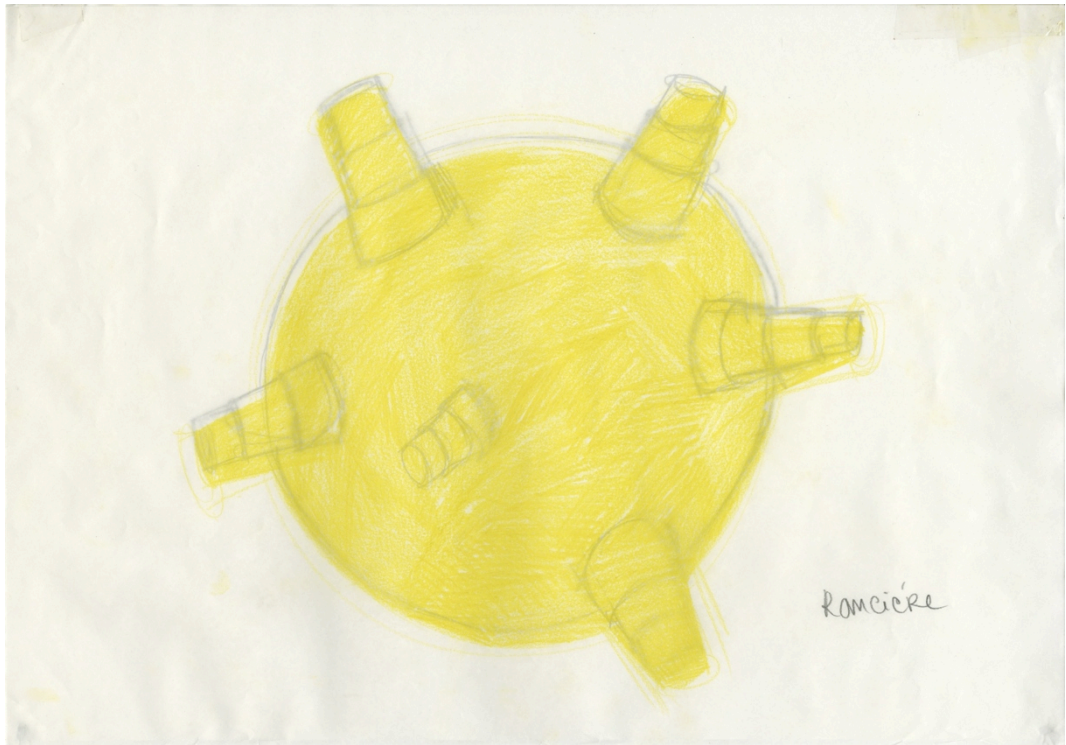
Fig. 30 *Rancière's Democracy*
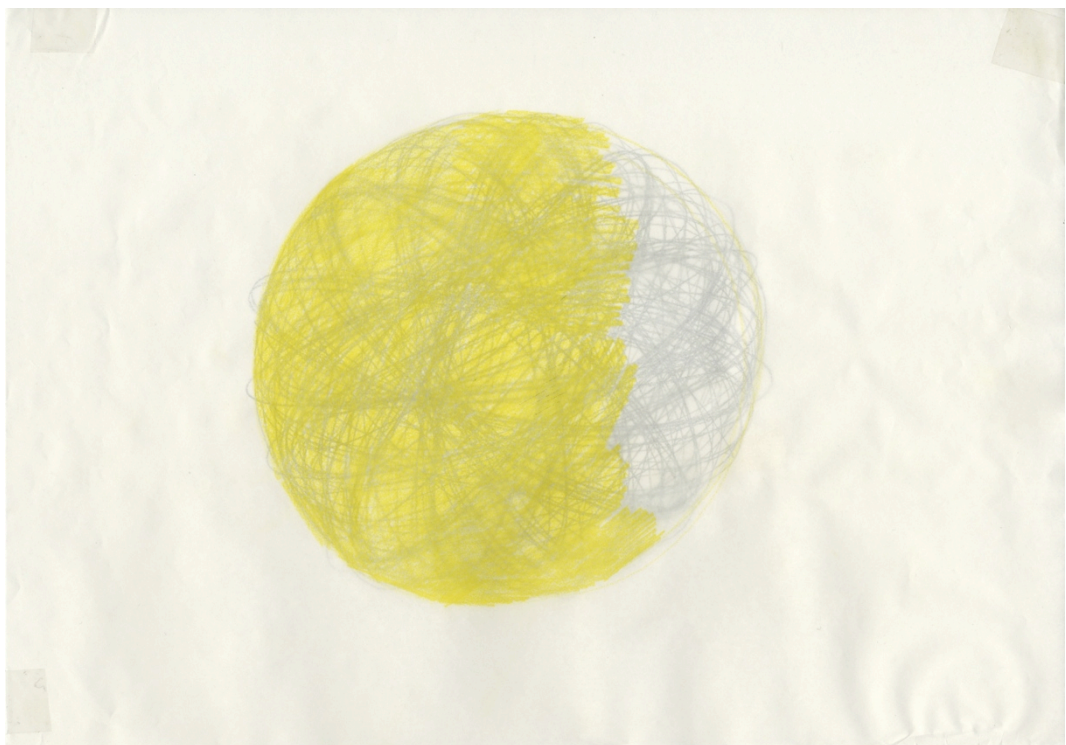
Fig. 31 *Chantal Mouffe's Democracy #2*

Appendix 2

On Exactitude in Science: Jose Luis Borges

'[…] In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography. *Suarez Miranda, Viajes de varones prudentes, Libro IV, Cap. XLV, Lerida, 1658.*'

The Man in the Moon, Lewis Carroll (excerpt)

"'We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of *a mile to the mile*!'"
"Have you used it much?" I enquired.
"It has never been spread out, yet," said Mein Herr. "The farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.'"

Appendix 3

Fig. 32 *demoCRACY's ballot*

Appendix 4

AMIW network, on the date of writing this thesis:

Amarante Abramovici, Daniel Abrantes, Tiago Afonso, Lucía Aldao, André Alves, Filipa Alves, Ana Luísa Amaral, Lígia Araão, As Aranhiças e o Elefante, Inês Azevedo, Maria Isabel Barreno, Rui Bebiano, Maria Graciete Besse, Miguel Bonneville, Ana Borges, Lisa Bolyos, Genève Brossard, Mariana Caló, Catarina Carneiro de Sousa, Ele Carpenter, Ana Maria Carvalho, Isabel Carvalho, Christina Casnellie, Maria Filipe Castro, Mauro Cerqueira, CES, Hyun Jin Cho, Rogério Nuno Costa, Carla Cruz, Manuela Cruzeiro, Beatrice Dillon, Said Dokins, Anna Drdová, Elfriede Engelmeyer, Phoebe Eustance, Luís Eustáquio, Alexandra Dias Ferreira, Carla Filipe, Mónica Faria, Laura García, Alice Geirinhas, Projecto Gentileza, Althea Greenan, Stefanie Grünangerl, Karen Gwyer, Mika Hayashi Ebbesen, Risk Hazekamp, Nina Höchtl, Maria Teresa Horta, Haydeé Jiménez, Anna Jonsson, Lenka Klimešová, Rudolfine Lackner, Maria Lado, Roberta Lima, Catherine Long, Cláudia Lopes, Marias do Loureiro, Ana Gabriela Macedo, Micaela Maia, Alex Martinis Roe, Cristina Mateus, Cátia Melo, Susana Mendes Silva, Vera Mota, Adriana Oliveira, Márcia Oliveira, João Manuel Oliveira, Sameiro Oliveira Martins, Open Music Archive, Paradoxal, Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Lara Perry, Rita Rainho, Flávio Rodrigues, Alex Martinis Roe, Suzanne van Rossenberg, Erica Scourti, Stefanie Seibold, Unknown Sender, Antónia Serra, Eileen Simpson, Ângelo Ferreira de Sousa, Evelin Stermitz, Linda Stupart, Manuela Tavares, Paula Tavares, Transgender Platform, Virgínia Valente, Maria Velho da Costa, Francesco Ventrella, Lenka Vráblíková, Hong Yane Wang, Bettina Wind, Ben White, and ZOiNA.

List of AMIW exhibition projects and participants by year

All My Independent Women 2005

Venue: SMS Gallery – Archaeological Museum of Martins Sarmento Society – Guimarães, Portugal, curated by Ligia Araão.

With: Andre Alves, Miguel Bonneville, Catarina Carneiro de Sousa, Isabel Carvalho, Maria Filipe Castro, Mauro Cerqueira, Carla Cruz, Carla Filipe, Nina Höchtl, Paradoxal, Suzanne van Rossenberg, Paula Tavares, Transgender Platform, Unknown Sender, and ZOiNA.

The *Dicionário da Critica Feminista*, by Ana Luísa Amaral and Ana Gabriela Macedo (Afrontamento, 2005) was the common-thread of the exhibition.

Fig. 33 *All My Independent Women,* installation view, SMS Gallery, 2005

Art works by author:

André Alves: *Fairy Tales* – drawing (2005) and *Amazons – National Omi –* mixed media (2005); Miguel Bonnevile: *Quem Sou #2* – video/performance (2005); Catarina Carneiro de Sousa: *Mais Vale Ser Uma Cadela do Que Uma Galinha* – mixed media (2001) and *Desenhos Menstruais* – drawing installation (2001); Catarina Carneiro de Sousa & Carla Cruz: *Lavagem a Seco* – mixed media (2004); Isabel Carvalho: *Unleashed* – photograph (2003); Isabel Carvalho & Mauro Cerqueira: *Susy* – mixed media (2005); Isabel Carvalho & Carla Cruz: *Homage to rRose Selavy* – photography (2003); Maria Filipe Castro: *Mon Petit Boudoir* – mixed media (2001); Carla Cruz: Transvestite/Feminine – mixed media (2002); Carla Filipe: *Contador de Histórias* (2003); Nina Höchtl: *To My Independent Friend, Naima When She*

Was Five – T-Shirts (2005); Suzanne van Rossenberg: *Science-Fiction Story in Three Parts* – Text/Poster (2005); Paula Tavares: *O Meu Corpo Pertence-me* – Slideshow (2004); Unkown Sender: *Nice & Easy* – photography (2005); ZOiNA: documentation of *Zona Lúdica* – photography (2000).

AMIW 2005 press release, written by Carla Cruz, July 2005:

> ALL MY INDEPENDENTE WOMEN is a collection of feminist art […] a collection I did not acquire but that nonetheless belongs to me because it is part of my artistic imaginary. Women and men that question their position in the world, and in the art world, through the specificity of their gender (in a culture that is in fact based in gender dualities one cannot be 'gender neutral' – Susan Bordo), and by doing so, question what is this of being a woman in our society, what does it mean to be considered feminine and masculine.
> The artists (I use the feminine as opposed to the convention of using the masculine as the mixed plural or the generic, for although there are men included in this collection it is mostly of women artists) I chose are closely connected to me; I have worked in some way or another with almost all of them [...] I follow their careers closely, so I can say that their artwork is part of what mine is [...].[115]
> If through Simone de Beauvoire's (1949) statement 'one is not born a woman, but becomes one' we gain awareness of the construction of the female role against the idea of natural, nonetheless our greatest desire might be to 'transcend the dualities of sexual difference'; not have our behaviour categorized in terms of 'male' or 'feminine'. But whether we like it or not, in our present culture activities are coded as 'male' or 'female' and act as such in the prevailing system of power relations between the sexes (Bordo, 1990). It remains, therefore, current the need for a feminist movement whose purpose is not to deny the difference, but to recover the feminine in sexual difference, to generate a woman's imaginary of herself, beyond the existing stereotypes of women (Braidotti, 1994).
> Driven by the recent publication of a Portuguese dictionary of feminist critique (Ana Gabriela Macedo and Ana Luisa Amaral) I decided to make

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[115] In Portuguese language words are gendered masculine and feminine, and the construction of the plural is done through the masculine form unless one is referring to a group totally constituted by individuals of the female sex. So the denomination *os artistas* (Portuguese for *the artists*), was transformed in my text into: *as artistas*. The same happens throughout the text when referring to the collective. In doing so, I wanted to emphasise the discrimination that in Latin languages is always already present in the way we express ourselves.

this small collection using entries from that dictionary such as: Abortion, Androgyny, Bisexuality, Cyberfeminism, Fairy Tales, Body, Stereotype, Femininity, Gender, Image, Masculinity, Motherhood, Patriarchy, and Prostitution; being these entries red thread, and leitmotiv of the collection, they will allow a reassessment of feminism in Portugal, and, through the exhibiting artworks, will reopen the discussion of feminism in the visual arts.

All My Independent Women 2006 #1

Venue: 100ª Página bookstore*,* Braga, co-organised with the scholar Ana Gabriela Macedo for the launch of the *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista* (Amaral and Macedo, 2005).

With the same art works as the 2005 edition, except for Carla Filipe and Unknown Sender's.
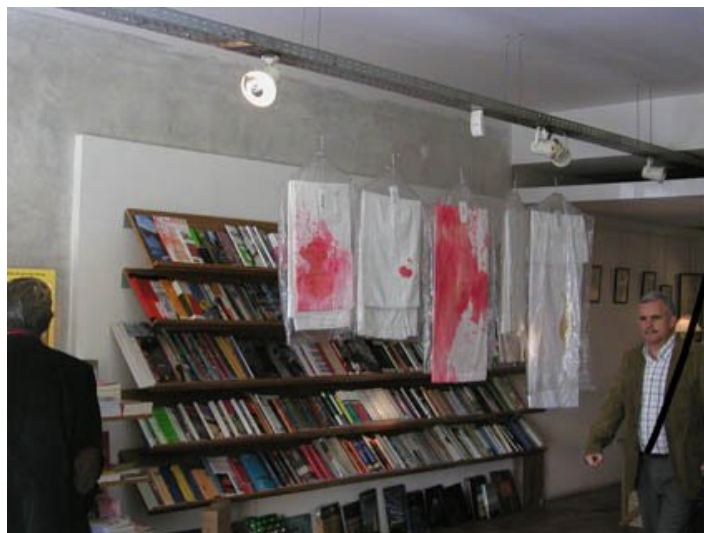
Fig. 34 *All My Independent Women*, installation view,100ª Página bookstore, Braga 2006

All My Independent Women 2006 #2

Venue: EIRA 33, Lisbon.

Co-organised by the Psychology and Gender Studies researcher João Manuel Oliveira

With: André Alves, Inês Azevedo, Miguel Bonneville, Catarina Carneiro de Sousa, Ana Carvalho, Isabel Carvalho, Christina Casnellie, Rogério Nuno Costa, Carla Cruz, Alexandra Dias Ferreira, Mónica Faria, Ângelo Ferreira de

Sousa, Nina Höchtl, Vera Mota, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Suzanne van Rossenberg, Paula Tavares, Bettina Wind, Unknown Sender, and ZOiNA.

Fig. 35 *All My Independent Women,* installation view, Eira 33, Lisbon 2006

Art works by author:

André Alves: *Abort More Christians* – drawing (2006); Inês Azevedo: *Untitled* – mixed media (2006); Miguel Bonneville: *Paris* – video (2006); Catarina Carneiro de Sousa: *Mais Vale Ser Uma Cadela do Que Uma Galinha* – mixed media (2000) and *Quero Sentir o Teu Peso* – mixed media (2006); Catarina Carneiro de Sousa & Carla Cruz: *Lavagem a Seco* – mixed media (2004); Ana Carvalho: *Diaries Book* – website (2006); Isabel Carvalho: *Wanda* (2006); Isabel Carvalho & Carla Cruz: *Homage to Rrose Selavy* – photography (2003); Christina Casnellie: *Cry Baby* – fanzine (2006); Rogério Nuno Costa: *Esboço Plástico* – video (2006); Carla Cruz: *O Primo da Geni* – mixed media (2006); Alexandra Dias Ferreira: *Untitled* – sculpture, Vila Viçosa Marble (2006); Alexandra Dias Ferreira & Bettina Wind: *Some Women's Activities Between Vienna and Sofia* – poster (2006); Mónica Faria: *Meada* – video (2006); Ângelo Ferreira de Sousa: *Maria* – installation (2006); Nina Höchtl: *To My Independent Friend, Naima When She Was Five* – T-Shirts (2005); Vera Mota: *Can* – Performance (2006); Ana Pérez-Quiroga: *Odeio ser Gorda, Come-me Por Favor* – photography

(2002); Suzanne van Rossenberg: *Interview with Martin Riley* – Text/Poster
(2006); Paula Tavares: *Instruções para Super Mulheres* – drawing (2006);
Unknown Sender: *Nice & Easy* – photography (2005) and ZOiNA:
Documentation of *Zona Lúdica* – photography (2000).

All My Independent Women 2007
Venue: Casa da Cultura da Trofa, Santiago de Bougado.
Co-organised by CC Cultural Director, Antónia Serra.
With: André Alves, Miguel Bonneville, Ana Maria Carvalho, Christina Casnellie,
Carla Cruz, Mónica Faria, Nina Höchtl, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Suzanne van
Rossenberg, and Paula Tavares.

Fig. 36 *All My Independent Women,* installation view, Casa da Cultura da Trofa, 2007

Art Works by author:
André Alves: *Citação de Inês Azevedo* – drawing (2007); Miguel Bonneville:
Paris – video (2006) and [title unknown], drawings (2007); Ana Maria Carvalho:
Diaries Book – website (2006-7); Christina Casnellie: *Cry Baby* – Fanzine
(2006); Mónica Faria: *Casas #1* – sculpture (2005) and *Casa #2* and *Casa #3* –
sculpture (2006); Nina Höchtl: *To My Independent Friend, Naima When She
Was Five* – drawing (2005); Ana Pérez-Quiroga: *Amo-te, Não Te Amo* – mixed

media [date unknown]; Suzanne van Rossenberg: [title unknown]Text/Poster (2007); and Paula Tavares: *Playground Love* – mixed media (2005).

All My Independent Women 2010

Venue: Casa da Esquina, Coimbra

Co-organised with the Women Studies researcher and co-organiser of Casa da Esquina, Filipa Alves

With: Amarante Abramovici, Tiago Afonso, Lucía Aldao, André Alves, Filipa Alves, Miguel Bonneville, Ana Borges, As Aranhiças e o Elefante, Rui Bebiano, Maria Graciete Besse, Mariana Caló, Catarina Carneiro de Sousa, Christina Casnellie, Carla Cruz, Manuela Cruzeiro, Elfriede Engelmeyer, Luís Eustáquio, Mónica Faria, Alice Geirinhas, Projecto Gentileza, Risk Hazekamp, Nina Höchtl, Rudolfine Lackner, Maria Lado, Cláudia Lopes, Marias do Loureiro, Ana Gabriela Macedo; Micaela Maia, Cristina Mateus, Cátia Melo, Vera Mota; Adriana Oliveira, Márcia Oliveira, João Manuel Oliveira, Sameiro Oliveira Martins, Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Rita Rainho, Flávio Rodrigues, Suzanne van Rossenberg, Ângelo Ferreira de Sousa, Evelin Stermitz, Manuela Tavares, Paula Tavares, Virgínia Valente, windferreira, Umar, and Unknown Sender.
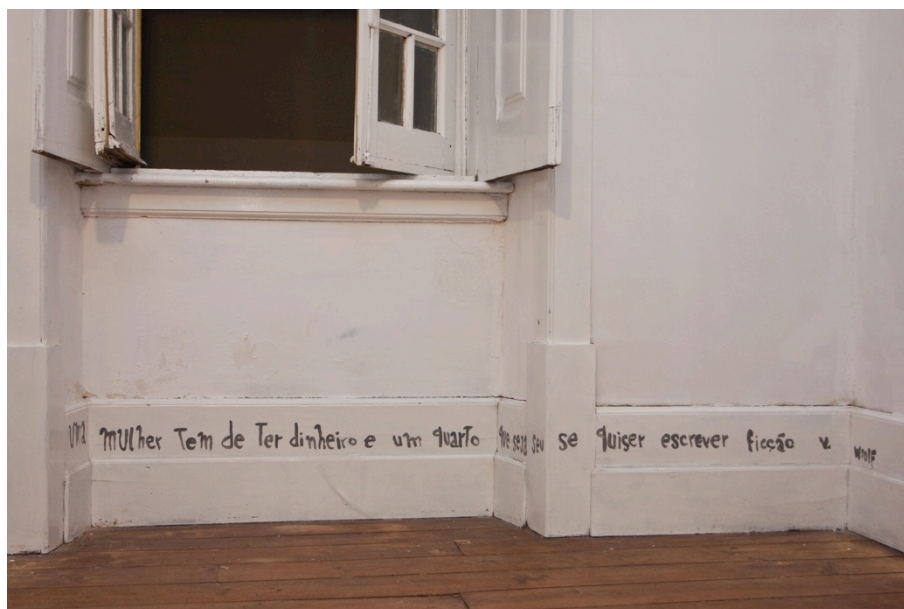
Fig. 37 *All My Independent Women 2010*, Casa da Esquina, Coimbra

Works by author:

Amarante Abramovici & Tiago Afonso: *A Colher* – video installation (2010);
André Alves: *Deprived Meanings* – performance (2010); Miguel Bonneville &
João Manuel de Oliveira: *Facing Monsters: Temporary subtitle for Dialogues
Between Miguel Bonneville and João Manuel de Oliveira* (2010); Ana Borges:
Instântaneo Repetido ou a Minha Mãe Diz que sou Igualzinha ao Teu Pai –
photography/mixed media (2010): Mariana Caló: *Feras* – pen on canvas (2010);
Catarina Carneiro de Sousa & Sameiro de Oliveira Martins: *De Maria, de
Mariana, de Madalena* (2010); Christina Casnellie: (2010); Carla Cruz: *May
Those Who Are Wounded Seek No Refuge But Shed Their Blood In the World*
– performance (2009); Luís Eustáquio: *My Left Side* – photography (2010);
Mónica Faria: *Expiação* – video (2006); Alice Geirinhas: *God's Names* – collage
mural (2010); Projecto Gentileza: *Biting Song* – concert performance – video
(2010); Risk Hazekamp: *Sisterhood* photography (2010) and *Hands* – video
(2010); Nina Höchtl: *The Questions of the Three Marias in Three Voices* –
sound piece (2010); Cláudia Lopes: *Nostalgias Adormecidas* – mixed
media/installation (2010); Micaela Maia: *Ela Só Queria Ser Arrebatada* –
performance (2004-10); Cristina Mateus: *O Meu Corpo Centrífugo* – video
(2010); Vera Mota*: Série II, III, IV* (2010); Adriana Oliveira: *Apropriando* – mixed
media (2010); Ana Pérez-Quiroga: *Eu não Sou Uma Mulher Colher, Eu não
Sou Uma Reprodutora* – mixed media (1998); Rita Rainho: Flex*ão I.
QUEEremos* – performance (2010); Flávio Rodrigues: *Até ao Fim/Parede* –
video (2010); Suzanne van Rossenberg: *Letter To My Friend* – text/poster
(2010); Ângelo Ferreira de Sousa: (2010); Evelin Stermitz: *Blue House* – video
(2009); Paula Tavares: *Minha Senhora de Mim* – photography (2010);
windferreira: *A Small Cartography For Art Workers* – Poster (2010); Unknown
Sender: *Love Letters* – mixed media (1995-2010).
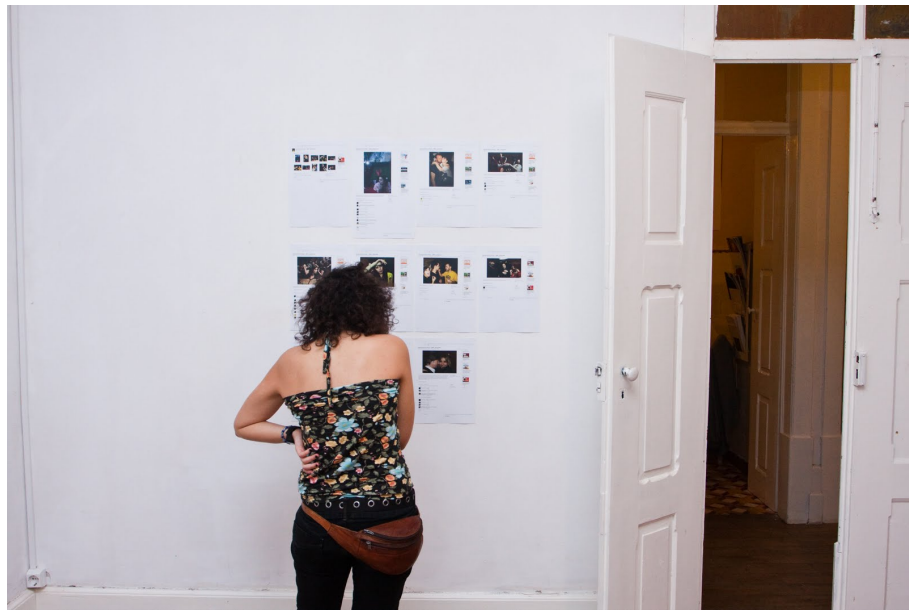
Fig. 38 *All My Independent Women* installation view, Casa da Esquina, Coimbra, 2010, photo by Adriana Oliveira

Events:

21 May – CASA DA ESQUINA 21:30, Carla Cruz: *Que Quem Esteja Ferido Não Se Recolha, Antes Despeje o Seu Sangue no Mundo*, performance. 22:00, Rita Rainho: *Flexão I. QUEERemos*, performance.

29 May – TEATRO DE BOLSO 21:30, Projecto Gentileza: *Biting Song*, film Projection.

5 June – CASA DA ESQUINA *Women and Resistance, a conversation* with Vanessa Almeida, Shahd Wadi, Margarida Viegas (República Rosa Luxemburgo) and Fátima Cavalho. TEATRO DE BOLSO 21:00, Micaela Maia: *Ela só queria ser arrebatada*, performance. TEATRO DE BOLSO 21:30: André Alves, *Sentidos Privados, performance.*

17 June – CASA DA ESQUINA, *Women and Resistance in Coimbra's students' Movement*: a conversation with Rui Bebiano, Manuela Cruzeiro, and Cátia Melo, organised in collaboration with the 'República Marias do Loureiro'. Casa da Esquina, Coimbra. Projection of 'Brick Lane' by Sarah Gavron. Casa da Esquina, Coimbra.

18 June – CASA DA ESQUINA: *Poetry: AMIW at Casa da Esquina* with: As Aranhiças e o Elefante and Maria Lado and Lucía Aldao.

19 June – ESPAÇO GESTO, PORTO, André Alves: *Sentidos Privados* (2010), performance.

Fig. 39 *All My Independent Women* installation view, Casa da Esquina, Coimbra, 2010, photo by Adriana Oliveira

The fifth edition, in 2010, emerged from the readings of the book *New Portuguese Letters* (NPL) published in 1972 by Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa, and the encounter with Filipa Alves. Because some proposals would benefit by being in a different format, together with the graphic designer Virgínia Valente I edited a small publication: *All My Independent Women: Novas Cartas Portuguesas,* which accommodated the important 1984's NPL edition preface by Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo and several other essays, comics, postcards, posters, illustrations and a collective biography composed with suggestions by all participants.[116]

Excerpt of AMIW 2010 Press Release:

[…]

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[116] Pintasilgo's 1984 pre-preface and preface was left out of the1998 Dom Quixote edition which left the NPL and the new generations that read it bereft (until Amaral's 2010 annotated edition) of its historical-political context.

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From the meeting, on the one hand with CASA DA ESQUINA and on the other with the book *New Portuguese Letters* by, Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa came the desire to present for the fifth time **All My Independent Women** project, an artistic project that attempts to problematize gender. The desire to work once again with those who receive the project with open arms and nurture it as their own, and [the desire to] collectively reread this book – a feminist cornerstone in Portugal – has, therefore, taken us to the recovery of the collective experience of *New Portuguese Letters*; here in Coimbra, and with about 40 participants we are venturing to build a new subjectivity. The project takes the path of passion, passion that will be its own object and exercise, *because the object of passion is just an excuse, an excuse of in or through it, define, and in what way, our dialogue with the rest*. […]

AMIW project is more than an exhibition. It is a platform for feminist thinking that shapes itself irregularly throughout the country. Most of the projects will take place at CASA DA ESQUINA, but others will happen 'outside' or, even, in the virtual environment: Second Life. The exhibition will have a strong international participation with artists from Austria, Germany, Italy and The Netherlands.
[…]

AMIW – Or Rather What Can Words do? 2011

Venue: the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ), Vienna.

Co-organised with Nina Höchtl with support of the of VBKÖ's director Rudolfine Lackner.

With: André Alves, Filipa Alves, Miguel Bonneville, Ele Carpenter, Lisa Bolyos, Carla Cruz, Mónica Faria, Laura García and Said Dokins, Projecto Gentileza, Alice Geirinhas, Stefanie Grünangerl, Risk Hazekamp, Nina Höchtl, Anna Jonsson, Rudolfine Lackner, Roberta Lima, Cristina Mateus, Ana Pérez-Quiroga, Rita Rainho, Flávio Rodrigues, Suzanne van Rossenberg, Stefanie Seibold, Ângelo Ferreira de Sousa, Catarina Carneiro de Sousa and Sameiro Oliveira Martins, Evelin Stermitz, Lenka Vráblíková, Angela Wiedermann, and Yan María Yaoyólotl.

Fig. 40 *AMIW, OR Rather, What can Words Do?*, view of the collective activity Embroidered Digital Commons by Ele Carpenter, *VBKOE, Vienna, 2011*

List of works by author:

André Alves: *Deprived Meanings* – performance (2010); Miguel Bonneville*: Quem Sou #2* – video performance (2005) and *Paris* – video (2006); Ele Carpenter: *Embroidered Digital Commons* – event: facilitation of the embroidering of the term: Heterogeneous (2011); Mónica Faria: *Expiação* – video (2006); Projecto Gentileza: *Biting Song* – concert/performance (2011); Alice Geirinhas: *God's Names* – wall collage (2010); Risk Hazekamp: *Under Influence (Catherine Opie)* – photography (2007) and *Hands* – video (2010); Anna Jonsson: *Perdón* – video (2010); Roberta Lima: *Into Pieces* – video and photography installation (2008) and *Rewriting Love and Pain* – photography (2004); Cristina Mateus: *29.5.1971 (version 2)* – video (2010/11); Ana Pérez-Quiroga: *SD+APQ* – photography (2007); Rita Rainho: *Shaving Myself* – video (2009), *Tribute to Itziar Okariz* – video (2011) and *AS nato. as NATO* – video (2011); Flávio Rodrigues: *14 November 2010* – video (2010), Suzanne van Rossenberg: *Dear Lover* – text/poster (2011); Stefanie Seibold: *a visual archive* – posters (2006); Ângelo Ferreira de Sousa: *Ma Femme (Google Curated Series)* – photography (2009); Catarina Carneiro de Sousa & Sameiro Oliveira

Martins: *Meta_Body* (2011), Evelin Stermitz: *Blue House* – video (2009); Lenka Vráblíková: *Interpretation of VALIE EXPORT: Tap and touch Cinema* – video (2008); and Yan María Yaoyólotl: *Sor Juana Lesbiana I* – illustration (1996) and *Frida Lesbiana I* – illustration (1995).

List of events:

3 November: *A READER* performance by Stefanie Seibold and *Biting Song* performance/concert by Projecto Gentileza.

4 November: Collective activity *Embroidered Digital Commons*. A project by Ele Carpenter, moderated by Carla Cruz.

5 November: *How can AMIW be, simultaneously, an exhibition and a platform for relationality?* Presentation of the publication: All My Independent Women and the New Portuguese Letters with Carla Cruz and Filipa Alves. Performance *Deprived meanings* by André Alves. *How can the desire for visibility be transmuted into a different experience of equality and accountability?* A roundtable discussion with Stefanie Grünangerl (collaborator of grassrootsfeminism.net) and Lisa Bolyos (feminist and anti-racist activist and artist).

Excerpt of *AMIW – Or Rather What Can Words do?* Press Release

> […]
> AMIW was initiated in 2005 by the artist Carla Cruz to expound the question of gender and to question power relations in the arts. It wants to affirm itself as a political platform; to let go of the desire of belonging to a discriminatory art world in an attempt to figure out new ways of giving account of hu'wo'man art production.
> At the VBKÖ AMIW asks together with the '3 Marias' (Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta, Maria Velho da Costa): 'Sisters. What can [art] do? Rather, what can words do?' AMIW thus refers to the conscious 'New Portuguese Letters' that addressed the age-old oppression of Portuguese woman and provoked, in 1972, during the Salazar/Caetano dictatorship, the biggest literary scandal of Portugal.
> […]
> The exhibitors take passion as excuse for engaging the world. At the core of their works they intends to question how the desire for visibility

can be transmuted into a different experience one of equality and accountability as to evoke a feminist practices that functions as a 'counter-hegemonic intervention' in the arts in particular and in society in general?

[…]

All My Independent Women 2012

Venue: the Women's Art Library/Make, London and Café OTO.

Co-organised with Althea Greenan and Mika Hayashi Ebbesen.

With: Miguel Bonneville, Genève Brossard, Ele Carpenter, Catarina Carneiro de Sousa, Hyun Jin Cho, Carla Cruz, Beatrice Dillon, Mónica Faria, Althea Greenan, Karen Gwyer, Mika Hayashi Ebbesen, Risk Hazekamp, Nina Höchtl, Anna Jonsson, Alex Martinis Roe, Cristina Mateus, Susana Mendes Silva, Sameiro Oliveira Martins, Lara Perry, Rita Rainho, Flávio Rodrigues, Eileen Simpson, Evelin Stermitz, Francesco Ventrella, Lenka Vráblíková, and Ben White.

Fig. 41 AMIW Video Lounge, Women's Art Library, London 2012

Excerpt from press release:

[…]
All My Independent Women 2012 will bring together visual art and

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experimental music over a seven-week programme held at the Women's Art Library/Make in Goldsmiths University of London.
[…]
Two talk/workshops on artist research and archives with visual artists Nina Höchtl and Alex Martinis Roe. Höchtl will present her collaborative project (with Julia Wieger) on the archive of the Austrian Association of Women Artists and re-writing 'herstories'. Martinis Roe, whose work focuses on feminine genealogies - which attempt to problematise normative subjectivity and its relationship to authorship – will approach the production of archives and the historicisation of women's practices.

A conversation on feminist curation, genealogies and archiving with Dr Francesco Ventrella from the University of Sussex and Dr Lara Perry from Brighton University; which will facilitate a public discussion on the current curatorial approaches of feminist exhibition projects such as AMIW and potential future developments.

A special guided tour by Althea Greenan, artist and director of the Women's Art Library, on the WAL and Women Revolutions Per Minute archives, its genesis, uses and accessibility.

A conversation with Ele Carpenter, Goldsmiths University of London – scholar and curator in social media – and Eileen Simpson and Ben White, initiators of Open Music Archive, about creative commons and the arts.

16 November 2012

In collaboration with the Open Music Archive, AMIW will present the newly music commissions, remixing the 'Brilliant and the Dark', an OMA's archive piece, by Karen Gwyer and Beatrice Dillon.

Interested in understanding and supporting feminist modes of production and circulation of artists' practices that deal with issues around gender, this project marks the coming together of three important archives: the Women's Art Library/Make, the Open Music Archive, and the AMIW Video Lounge.

The programme combined a series of talks, workshops, roundtable discussions, and viewings hosted at Goldsmiths University of London over a three months period, and two music commissions to be premiered on the 16 November at Cafe OTO.

Exploring the different forms of distribution, promotion, and preservation performed by these archives that were once living networks, All My Independent Women 2012 searches for new modes of accountability and circulation within the arts that are based on dialogue with a potential for re-invention.

[…]

AMIW video lounge 2013

Venue: Brotherton Library, Leeds University, between 8 March and 8 April 2013.

Organised by Lenka Vráblíková.

With: Miguel Bonneville (*Paris*, 13'19'' 2006 and *Who Am #2* (video clip), 14'24'', 2005); Genève Brossard (*Studio Training*, 5'48'', 2010); Catarina Carneiro de Sousa & Sameiro Oliveira Martins (*Meta_Body*: *Project Presentation,* 2011-12, *Meta_Body Derivatives: Virtual Photography*, 2011 and *Meta_Body Derivatives: Machinima*, 2011); Carla Cruz (*May Those Who Are Wounded Seek No Refuge But Shed Their Blood in The World*, 7'55'', 2009 and *The Ropes*, 2'58", 2004-05); Tânia Dinis (*Sweatpants* and *Female/Femmes,* 2012); Anna Drdová (*Cluj-Napoca*, 7'45", 2011 and *Den-Zen*, 2010); Phoebe Eustance (*In & Out*, 5'47", 2012); Mónica Faria (*Expiation*, 16mm transferred to DV PAL, 3', 2006); Risk Hazekamp (*Hands*, digital video 2'30'', 2010); Anna Jonsson (*Perdón*, DVD 3'49'' 4:3, 2010 and *Oh, a Pig He Needs Me...*, DVD 3'47", 2009); Lenka Klimešová (*Mimesis*, 1'34", 2012 and *Beautiful is when at Least Two People Find it Appealing*, 1'34", 2009); Catherine Long (*Breast Meat*, 4'52", 2012); Cristina Mateus (*29.5.1971* [version 2], 18'50'', 2010-2011); Susana Mendes Silva (*Did I Hurt You?*, 3'31'', 2006);

Ana Pérez-Quiroga: *Inventory-Diary #1, Phales*, 1'53", 2009, *Inventory-Diary #2, Don't Stop Me*, 1'11', 2010 and *Inventory-Diary #3, To Make Right the Step*, 58", 2010); Rita Rainho (*Shaving Myself*, 2'07'', 2009, *AS nato. as NATO*, 4'23'', 2010 and *Tribute to Itziar Okariz*, 1'23'', 2010); Flávio Rodrigues (*14. November 2010*, time, 2010); Erica Scourti (*Screen Tears*, 3'52", 2008, and *Woman Nature Alone*, 10'18", 2010); Linda Stupart (*Untitled [footage, cuts]*, 8'21", 2010); Evelin Stermitz (*Blue House. Dance improvisation performance*, 25'18'', 2009); Lenka

Vráblíková (*Interpretation of VALIE EXPORT: Tap and touch Cinema*, 2'42'',
2008); and Hong Yane Wang (*Seating Code*, 2'31'', 2010).

Additional information on All My Independent Women:

<u>The Name</u>:

All My Independent Women is also the title of a song by the North American
girls-band Destiny's Child, from the 2001 album *Survivor,* which inspired the title
of the project.

<u>Not Women Exclusive</u>:

In spite of being titled All My Independent *Women*, the project was never an all-
women show; male artists such as André Alves and Miguel Bonneville were part
of the very first instantiation. Their work questions the construction of
masculinity, and I had been especially impressed by one of Bonneville's
performance (*Strip Me, Dress Me*, 2003), thus their work fitted the project
perfectly.

All My Independent Women's invites:

Fig. 42 Poster for *All My Independent Women* 2010 by Christina Casnellie
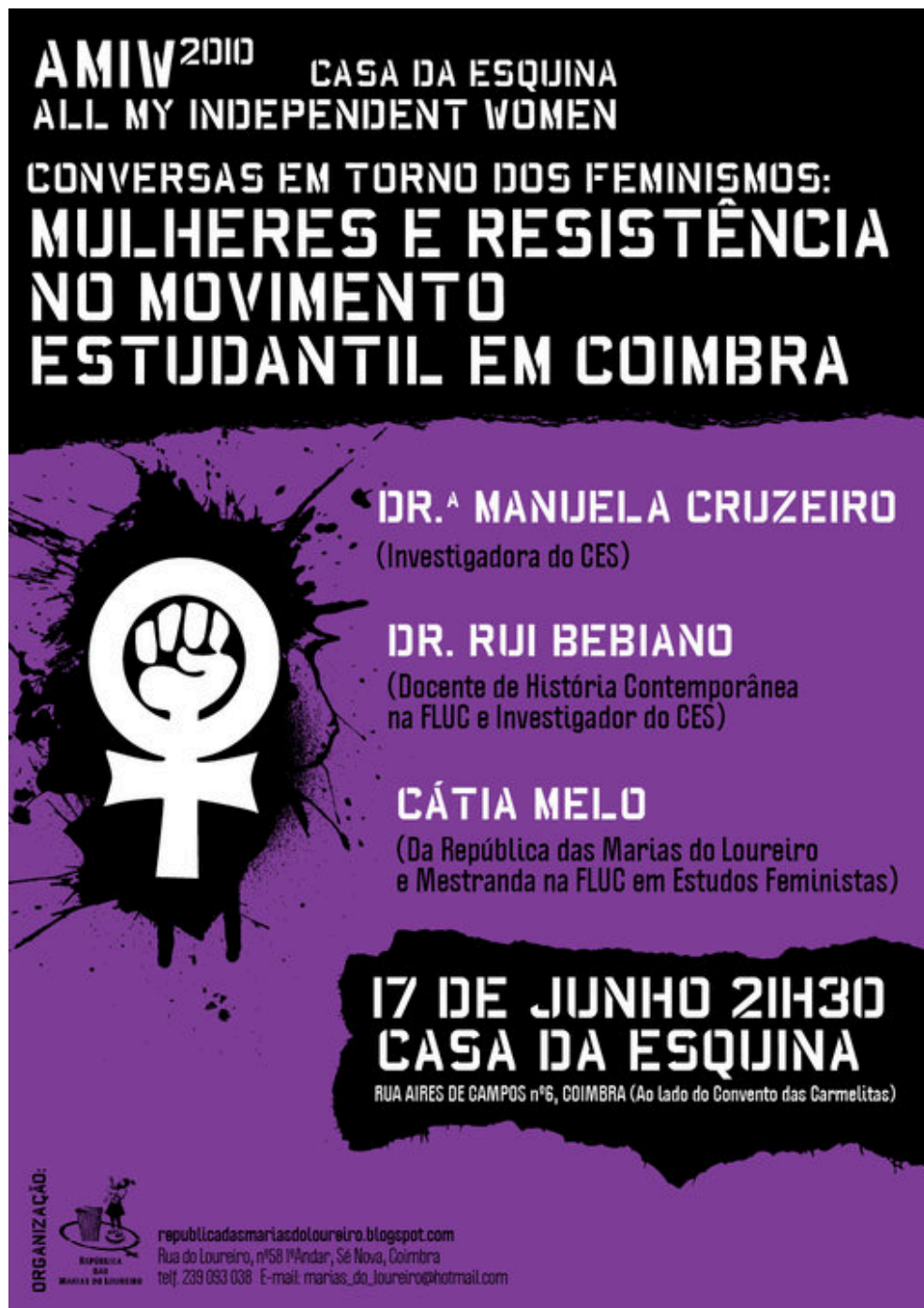
Fig. 43 Poster for *All My Independent Women* 2010 event *Conversas em Torno dos Femininos: Mulheres e Resistência No Movimento Estudantil em Coimbra*, by República das Marias do Loureiro

Fig. 44 Front of flyer for *AMIW – Or Rather What can Words do?*, Vienna, by Carla Cruz and Nina Höchtl

Fig. 45 Back of flyer for *AMIW – Or Rather What can Words do?*, Vienna, by Carla Cruz and Nina Höchtl
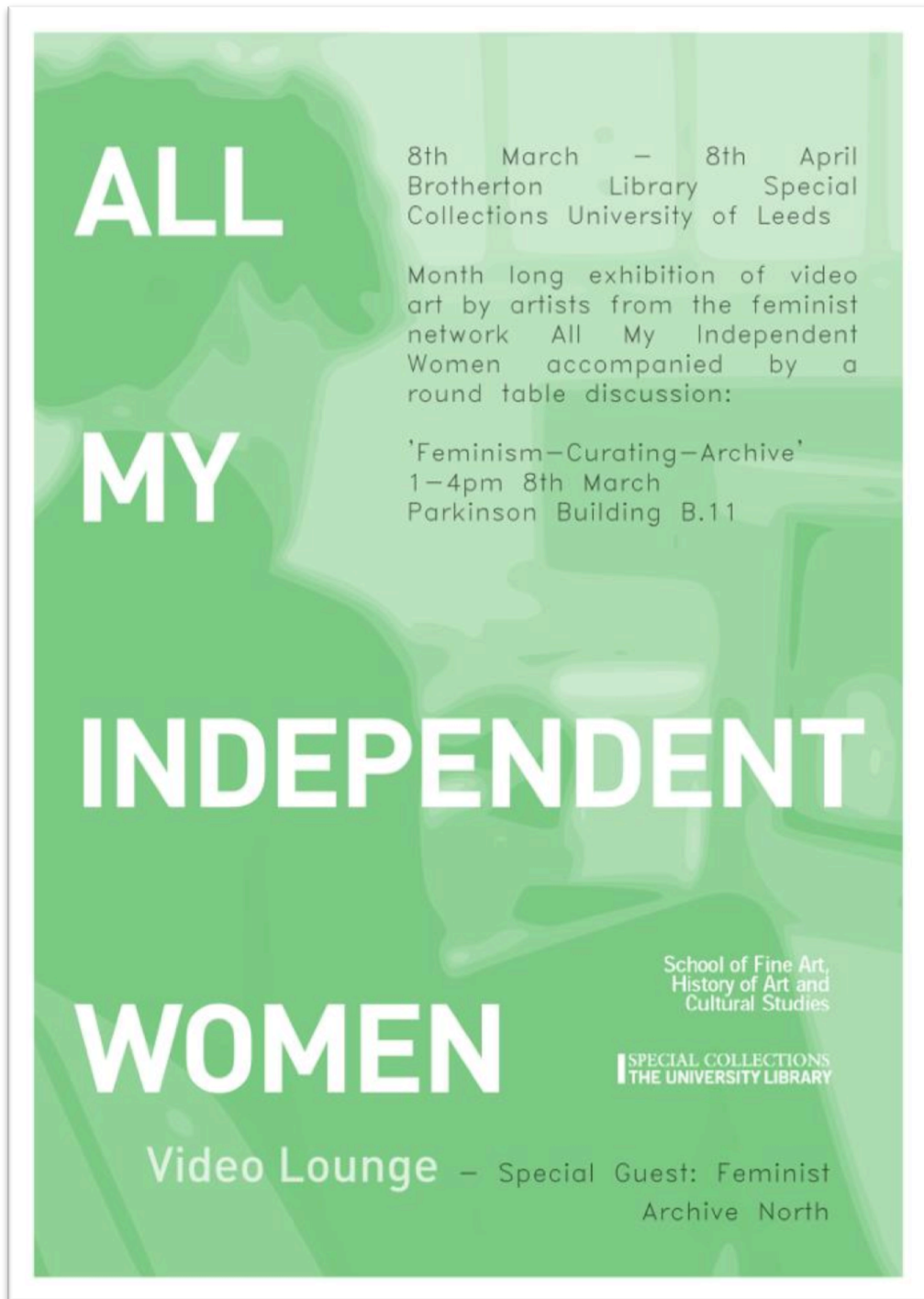
Fig. 46 Front of poster for Leeds' exhibition, by Lenka Vráblíková

AMIW Video Lounge is a collection of video art by feminist artists belonging to All My Independent Women network, with video works from 2005-2013 by

MIGUEL BONNEVILLE, GENÈVE BROSSARD, CATARINA CARNEIRO & SAMEIRO OLIVEIRA MARTINS, CARLA CRUZ, ANNA DRDOVÁ, PHOEBE EUSTANCE, MÓNICA FARIA, ANGELIKA FOJTUCH, RISK HAZEKAMP, ANNA JONSSON, LENKA KLIMEŠOVÁ, CATHERINE LONG, CRISTINA MATEUS, ANA PÉREZ-QUIROGA, ERICA SCOURTI, SUSANA MENDES SILVA, LINDA STUPART, RITA RAINHO, FLÁVIO RODRIGUES, EVELIN STERMITZ, LENKA VRÁBLÍKOVÁ, AND HONG YANE WANG.

ALL MY INDEPENDENT WOMEN

Initiated in Portugal in 2005 by Carla Cruz AMIW is an international artist project that supports, hosts and distributes artwork,with feminist approaches.

allmyindependentwomen.blogspot.co.uk

Fig. 47 Back of poster for Leeds Exhibition, by Lenka Vráblíková

Appendix 5

Call for participation, October 2011:

RASTILHO – COLLECTIVE ARTISTIC CREATION with Carla Cruz
Mobilization of a Workgroup

WANTED: women, former workers of the textile, footwear, tannery and cutlery, industry, interested in exploring creatively (visual, poetic, expressively) their relationship with the world of work.
GOAL: create a group of collaborators for a project of artistic creation to be developed with the visual artist Carla Cruz during Guimarães 2012 – European Capital of Culture

The purpose of the establishment of this group is to explore issues related to artistic creation and the demobilization of manual work forces from the Portuguese Industry.

The artist Carla Cruz has focused most of her practice on issues that concern women and the specificity of their position in society, at work and even their intimacy. Matters that the artist does not dissociated from the political representation of women, their needs and desires. Thus, Carla wants to understand and work with the group of former industry workers specific issues such as precariousness, feminization and devaluation of labour in Europe.

The intention is to create a production model based on the professional experiences of the group; whose product, methods of production and circulation, etc., will be discussed and decided together on a series of workshops.

Women, essential working force in the industrial processes of the twentieth-century, are today the biggest victims of the relocation of European industry to other parts of the world, the automatization of industrial production, the flexibilization of working hours and wage depreciation.

Thus the group would ideally consist of Vale do Ave former industry workers. In particular women who are unemployed or doing training.

GROUP: ca. 8 former workers of Guimarães industry.
    3 Volunteers

The creative project will be <u>distributed by modules of collective and individual work</u>, in sporadic sessions with the artist and with other volunteers, scattered between <u>February and June 2012</u>.

<u>All work will be paid</u>: initially paid per session (7h), but during the production process itself, through collective decision, the form of compensation may change and adapt to the various stages.

TIME LINE

DECEMBER:
     Introduction.
     Formation of the working group.

FEBRUARY:
     70 hours of work – ca. 10 sessions with the artist and voluntaries.

MARCH:
     35 hours of work – ca. 5 sessions with the artist and voluntaries.

APRIL / MAY / JUNE:
     35 hours collective work with the voluntaries / and individual.

     Final Session with the artist and voluntaries.

JULY:
     Public exhibition.

Rastilho sessions' plans

Although, I intended to share these detailed plans at the beginning of the sessions with the participants, in the first session I felt that I would be creating an unwelcoming pressure, thus they served to guide me through the first four sessions.

RASTILHO – COLLECTIVE ARTISTIC CREATION with Carla Cruz
22 February 2012 – Wednesday: Day 1: **Rastilho**: 3.5 Hours

In case there is anyone from the documentation team in the sessions they will be requested to take part of the activities.
The documentation of the sessions will be of the responsibility of a different individual (from the group) in each session.

00:00 Rastilho: What does it mean?
    Word association / Ideas / stories / histories
    (Post-its / markers)

Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

00:45 Rastilho: explore the idea of the multiplicity of layers.

    Each on@ of us will make a visual composition / write a word / find an image – which will be transposed to the marking paper with one single colour (each composition will have a different colour – and the one that composed it cannot transcribe it, it has to be done by someone else) / which will then be placed on top of each other. First without trying to make sense – then trying to combine the compositions.
    (Tracing paper / pens and pencils / magazine cuts)

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

01:30 Rastilho: explore the ideas of fuse as a conductor
    One thing leads to another – the production – life / not being able to stop
    Make an exquisite corpse:
    1º textual. Nonsensical, in a relaxed way.
    2º visual. Organic machine.
    (A4 paper / pens and pencils)

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

02:15
BREAK
(Kettle / mugs / tea / instant coffee / sugar / cookies / fruit)

02:45 GAME

What does each one fell about work.
Make a circle and hold hands. One is in the centre. Pass a signal on,
the one in the centre has to figure out here is the signal being passed.
When this person finds out who passed the signal can ask a question in
relation to work to that person. The one that answered goes to the
centre of the circle.

*Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key
words will be posted on the wall.*

03:30 tidy up the room

RASTILHO – COLLECTIVE ARTISTIC CREATION with Carla Cruz
24 February 2012 – Friday: Day 2: **WORK**: 3.5 hours

In case there is anyone from the documentation team in the sessions they will be requested to take part of the activities.
The documentation of the sessions will be of the responsibility of a different individual (from the group) in each session.

00:00 WHO WE ARE?

Using a ball of wool each one of us will introduce her/himself. Who are we?
Name / Age / Family relations / Why am I here? / My relationship with work / my expectations / my fears / **my first job.**
(Ball of wool)

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

00:45 WORK

Discussion on what changed in the last 20 years in the sphere of work, the differences from today to when we started working.
Make diagrams
First: 2/2
Second: Condense these diagrams in a single one that represents the group
(A2 paper / pens and pencils)

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

01:30 WORK: its gestures

Each one, in turn, places her/himself in the position that it assumed when it was working. With her/his eyes closed, try to remember the physical actions and repeats them in silence for the group.
In the end we discuss what we saw, and if we recognised the function that person had, which type of work did she/he do. We will discuss as well the relationship between MIND and BODY. If the action corresponds to what the mind was thinking of.
Or the opposite, if the concentration is more mental and the body behaves mechanically.

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

02:15

BREAK
(Kettle / mugs / tea / instant coffee / sugar / cookies / fruit)

02:45   CIBORGS

Imagine our fusion with the machine, with the instruments of our labour, in groups of 2 or 3 we will make a larger visual composition that represents that mutant body.
(Paper / paper cuts / glue)

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

03:30 tidy up the room.

RASTILHO – COLLECTIVE ARTISTIC CREATION with Carla Cruz
28 February 2012 – Tuesday: Day 3: **GENDER FEMININE**: 3.5 hours

In case there is anyone from the documentation team in the sessions they will be requested to take part of the activities.
The documentation of the sessions will be of the responsibility of a different individual (from the group) in each session.

00:00

Read the NPL letter 'Tasks' discuss, actualize / read more letters from the book.
Talk about the sexual division of labour and domestic chores.

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

00:45
Think about what we would like to see different in our society.
Make diagrams

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

01:30
Plasticine – create with modelling clay a model, abstraction of the ideal society.

02:15
BREAK
(Kettle / mugs / tea / instant coffee / sugar / cookies / fruit)

02:45
Write a non signed letter to another participant / random. That letter should be sent by post (I will post them all). Each one will receive a letter. The content shall not be revealed.

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

03:30 Tidy up the room

'Composition by a Little Girl Named Maria Adélia, Born in Carvalhal and a Pupil in a Convent School in Beja.

DUTIES

There are many sorts of duties and everyone must do his duty. There are tow main kinds of duties: men's duties and women's duties. Men's duties are to be courageous, to be strong, and to exercise authority. That is to say: to be president, generals, priests, soldiers, hunters, bullfighters, soccer players, judges, and so on. Our Lord gave the man the duty of watching over others and being in command, and even Jesus Christ was a man and God chose to have a son and not a daughter to die in this world to redeem our sins which are many, and in the hour of his death He said 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' So it is men who organize wars in order to save the world from perdition and sin (the Crusades, for example), fighting to save the Fatherland and defend women, children, and old people.

Then there are the duties of women, the most important of which is to have children, protect them and take care of them when they are sick, teach them good manners at home, and give them affection; another duty of the woman is to be a teacher and other things such as seamstress, a hairdresser, a housemaid, or a nurse. There are also women doctors, engineers, lawyers, and so on, but my father says that it's best not to trust them because women were meant to keep house, which is a very nice duty because it is a pleasure to keep everything neat and clean for when the husband comes home to rest after work hard all day to earn money to support his wife and children.

Since the cost of living is very high and it's so hard to make ends meet, my mother says that the woman ought to help her husband, but I wouldn't like to help my husband and I won't marry anybody except a rich man who can buy me nice dresses and a car, take me to the cinema, and keep two maids, and my mother says you're right to think that way, daughter, don't ever marry a good-for-nothing like your father, who doesn't earn enough for us to keep soul and body together: we left our land and moved down here because he's such a fool, but he's your father and you must respect him. We moved here and there's hardly anything to eat because nothing comes out of the ground except stones and I'm here in this School. Where my mother came from, there was always my grandfather to help out, and more things grew out of the earth to keep from going hungry. But my father decided to move to this part of the country to work as a stone-cutter, and since one of the duties of the woman is to obey the man, that's what my mother did, and what helps keep the family alive is that she does day work for a rich lady, the relative of another rich lady who had her daughter here in the convent, because once upon a time one of the duties of women was to enter a convent and maybe it's still one today, but nowadays a woman isn't forced to enter one. The Father Superior, says that it's a vocation but I don't know what that means and so I call it a duty because it sounds nicer. One day the rich lady asked me if I didn't want to become a nun (in her family the girls can hardly wait to become nuns) and I said thank you, Senhora, and stood there looking down at the floor the way my mother taught me, and she said what a charming little girl and patted my head and I saw the sparkling rings in her fingers. Rings with beautiful precious stones, and I thought that being a rich

lady ought to be one of the duties for women; I wanted to be a rich lady then I kissed her hand all of a sudden, just to see what the rings felt like when I touch them with my lips, and she thought it was because I was fond of her and said poor little thing and gave me five *escudos*, but when I wanted to go to the shop to buy lollipops with the money, my mother took it away from me, screaming don't waste money like that, that's enough to buy a little rice and potatoes, and I gave the *escudos* to her because children also have their duties and one of them is to obey their parents, but I thought to myself that I'd never tell her anything about my life again or show her anything that anybody gave me: people have to watch out for their own interests in life and it's their duty to be smart, and one of a woman's duties is to be deceptive, the way I see my mother being with my father. Once she even said to me listen, daughter, a woman has to know lots of tricks to get what she wants, because we're all weaker than men, so men make fools of us, that's simply the way things are, but we have to look out for ourselves. So one of the other duties of a woman is to lie.

We must not be led into temptation, the Father Superior says. I don't know exactly what he means but I don't see anything like that here in the convent school, and all I know is that when I'm grown up I'm never going to be unhappy like my mother, always having to clean up the messes my father and the rich lady leave. But at least the rich lady keeps on giving us leftover food and old clothes instead of throwing them in the dustbin. Because there are also duties of poor people and duties of rich people. One of the duties of rich people is to be charitable and that of poor people to beg and to accept what's given them and show their gratitude.

The world has always been like that, the Father Superior preaches in his sermons, some people with everything and others with nothing, it's God's will. Doubtless it's because He was never hungry like us, but the Father Superior said no, that wasn't the reason, it was because you have to be poor in order to go to heaven, and then he told a story about a camel that went through the eye of a needle and I thought it was funny and started to laugh, so he punished me. Because it's one of the duties of children to be punished, just as it's one of grown-ups' duties to punish children so that they will learn to like punishing others, since punishing someone is a rather frequent duty and a necessary one in life.

Just last week my father's boss punished him because he was going around telling the other men that work with him that they ought to ask for more money because the wages they were getting weren't enough t buy food and pay their rent. And my father's boss laid my father off for a week and I was the only one who had anything to eat, if you can call it that, because I was here at the school, except that I don't sleep here.

And my mother wore herself out scolding my father and crying and saying listen, you, don't get mixed up in things like that, just look what happens, here we are dying of hunger when other people have full bellies, since you were the only one the boss punished because you were the one who got ideas in your head.

Because one of the duties of bosses is to punish their employees, and it's the duty of employees to work for their bosses so that they can get richer and more powerful. Maybe I'll marry a boss some day.

But that wouldn't really help much, because when my father gets drunk and beats my mother up, he always screams: I'm the boss around here! And she shuts up and begins to cry very softly.

And this is about all I0m going to write, because if I were to list all the duties there are in the world it would take me the rest of my life. I just want to mention one more duty though – that of the woman of ill-repute who is said to lead a bad life. But I don't know what's meant by a bad life because my mother and all women like her lead a bad life.

The Father Superior says in his sermons that such a thing is a great sin and that any woman who fulfils that duty will go to hell.

The Father Superior says that one of a woman's duties is to be virtuous. But even though I don't know exactly what being virtuous means, I don't imagine it gets you very far.

I like duties very much.

Maria Adélia
20.06.71'

(Barreno, et al. 1975, pp.237-240)

RASTILHO – COLLECTIVE ARTISTIC CREATION with Carla Cruz
29 February 2012 – Wednesday: Day 4: **Circulation**: 3.5 Hours

In case there is anyone from the documentation team in the sessions they will be requested to take part of the activities.
The documentation of the sessions will be of the responsibility of a different individual (from the group) in each session.

00:00

      Diagram: How does a product circulate?
      e.g. pillowcase: From the raw matter to its disappearance
      Alternatives

Discuss the results. Make a summary of what was said in bullet points / the key words will be posted on the wall.

02:45
BREAK
(Kettle / mugs / tea / instant coffee / sugar / cookies / fruit)

03:30 Tidy up.

Fig. **48** Having a break after a *Rastilho*'s session with group ES.COL.A

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Rastilho's charter of principles

RASTILHO is a spontaneous, informal and experimental group, with no set duration and not-for-profit that aims to promote the collective production of culture.

Culture is for the group RASTILHO, the knowledge, customs, traditions and local knowledge, and everything else.

For the group RASTILHO all beings and the environment deserve the same respect.

RASTILHO values difference and cultures.

In Rastilho there are no higher or lower arts.

For the group RASTILHO everyone has the right to share their knowledge freely.

The group RASTILHO defends the 5 'Rs': rethink, reduce, reuse, recycle and respect.' (RASTILHO's Charter of Principles: June 2012).

Raqs Media Collective
The Fruits of Labour

O coletivo **Raqs Media Collective** explorou a ideia de resto, o *post-mortem* da indústria e do trabalho, e as conotações imaginativas e sensoriais que a frase "frutos do labor" pode gerar. Abordando o sentido de exaustão e desalento próprio do final do ciclo de vida de uma fábrica, os artistas estabeleceram uma ligação entre uma chamada publicada num jornal de Faridabad, um subúrbio industrial de Delhi, incitando a que os trabalhadores mudassem as suas condições de vida plantando pomais em fábricas abandonadas e os laranjais de "Madame Bovary" de Manoel de Oliveira. O momento final desta proposta é plantar um laranjal público na cidade de Guimarães.

Árvores de fruto, ventoinhas, jornais emoldurados. Dimensões variáveis. Instalação. Estamparia, Fábrica ASA.

Raqs Media Collective · Estamparia
Visitas guiadas a cada hora com início
na Nave Central junto ao Info Point.
Primeira visita · 11h / Última visita · 18h

Rastilho

A artista **Carla Cruz** trabalhou com o grupo 'Tecer Outras Coisas', sedeado nas instalações da fábrica têxtil Coelima – Pevidém, ao qual se juntaram outras mulheres maioritariamente com ligação à indústria têxtil do Vale do Ave, formando assim o grupo **RASTILHO**. O projeto tem como objetivo explorar questões relacionadas com a desmobilização da produção industrial em Portugal, a precarização do trabalho e a consequente feminização da pobreza, e a partir destas questões criar um gesto artístico coletivo.

Espaço com diversos equipamentos e materiais. Instalação de cariz relacional. Escola Primária, Praça Francisco Inácio, S. Jorge de Selho.

Ricardo Basbaum
re-projetando (guimarães)

O projeto relaciona-se com pesquisa do artista **Ricardo Basbaum** em torno dos limites da forma enquanto ferramenta de mobilização coletiva e construção do jogo político-participativo na arte contemporânea. Está em questão uma releitura de traços do modernismo, assim como a implantação de um momento que envolve ações diversas, a partir de grupos de trabalho. O projeto é composto por uma construção temporária de exterior, e acontece em vários momentos pela cidade, possuindo ainda uma componente expositiva que se transformará ao longo do período de exposição.

Tijolos e cimento, vinil, instalação sonora. Dimensões variáveis. Construção temporária, intervenção áudio e instalação. Campo desportivo das Piscinas, Posto de Turismo na Alameda de S. Dâmaso e Setor I, Fábrica ASA.

Rastilho

Vasco Barata
Os Nossos Ossos: Ariadne

A obra de **Vasco Barata** é constituída por uma projeção vídeo e um conjunto de objetos (escultura), que, por um lado, registam o presente para referência futura e, por outro, revelam locais específicos da cidade que encerram uma memória temporal particular. Se a Fábrica ASA representa a indústria portuguesa, a modernidade de Portugal, no século XX, a Citânia de Briteiros e o Novo Cemitério de Monchique, bem como o Centro Cultural Vila Flor, são outras formas de invocar uma memória da cidade ligada ao país e ao mundo (civilização, identidade, arte, cultura).

MDF e diversos materiais. Dimensões variáveis. Projeção vídeo. Duração 34". Instalação múltipla e projeção de vídeo. Setor I, Fábrica ASA.

Vasco Barata

ReaKt – Views and Processes departed from invitations to a number of artists who were asked to direct their working practices to the County of Guimarães, approaching the local context from an angle of their choice.

Departing from the cultural landscape found in Guimarães, the aim was to produce an encounter of different artistic approaches to the very idea of context, of the transference of meaning, of the possibilities of positioning artistic practice in the contemporary world.

From their artistic residences rose several new proposals or, otherwise, previous work was reconfigured, in the process absorbing local conditions that, for the most part, are also significant to other geographic and cultural contexts.

ReaKt attempted to understand, on one hand, how each culture may cross-over, through the artists' work and voices, multiple meanings in which a larger sense of humanity may be inscribed, and on the other, how contemporary art may be the privileged place for the ideia of a "transculture", in the process of investigating and reconfiguring new modes of production that react to the lived experiences, to technology, to memory and to its possible futures.

Fig. 49 Inside page of *ReaKt*'s information leaflet

Transcript for *ReaKt*'s catalogue, Pevidém December 2011.

Carla: This is the process that I would like to work on with you, we do not have, we also have no idea of what we want to do in the end, uh… What I thought maybe would be important… to discuss… I had said the other time, are the issues, the issues of labor. The issues of… how the work has been changing in the last 50 years, uh…how there has been a restructuring of production, essentially…each time there is less production…in Europe. That is a question that maybe is worrisome, there are increasingly more services in Europe, more issues about selling, or about doing things that are less about production. All that is now gone, is it not? To Asia, to China, to Africa, to all other countries, is it not? They have…

Adelaide: Labor

Carla: lower wages. Also to think about how is that feasible. Even, up until when will that be feasible, up until when can we continue to explore…

Adelaide: people!

Carla: the hand labor of other people, uh, then other issues I think are important, … we are also in a moment of crisis, which is what can be called the femininization of poverty. That is, in which women after a century, uh, of struggling, have not reached a certain…

Adelaide: to have a certain status, and now… a lot is being lost!

Carla: … yes, who also suffer the most from the crisis, therefore, let0s also think about how women still have much work at home, they have dependents … the children or the parents. Uh, … think about these things, how do we carry on in the world today and in the special situation of this region? Which is seeing its industry…

Adelaide: fade!

Carla: …and then there is this pressure, which is always strange, which is of trying to see the positive side in disgrace, right? Ah, yes, now people are going to turn around and create other forms of employment, and they will get round it, … but at the same time I think there is a complicated side to it, uh, of not making an investment in the industry that has bee her for so long, so these are things I think you have a close knowledge of, we could discuss and that we could take to a larger audience, because this work is for the European Capital of Culture. This is what we would do, similar to what happened here (refer to 2009 collective artistic gesture: *Utopias Cyborgs and other Three Houses*), the piece has only to be ready in September 2012. We have many months.

Max: Oh, we already have two projects for September. That is the parade, and this…

Carla: this is what we could make.

Adriana: What we need is to divide the group, and have the ideas.

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Max: this is great!

Adriana: What is needed now is to have ideas.

Carla: we could be making small workshops, so we work a week here and there, not intensively from now until September. We will keep thinking about what we can do together, with our knowledge. I can not really say that I want something specific, what interests me here is that all of us, together, will make something grow with our conversations, right? We do not need to know now…

Adelaide: By ourselves!

Carla: Yes! Not to now what we will do, if we will use the fact that we are in a textile factory, and have these specific qualifications, it may or may not be. We will find out.

Mª Elisa: We are plyvalent (laughs).

Carla: Right!

Adelaide: That's it!

Carla: We will find later in the end …

Adelaide: if we are artists (laughs)

RASTILHO

1ª Edição
Dezembro de 2012

RASTILHO é um jornal gratuito organizado pelo grupo com o mesmo nome, a funcionar de Outubro a Dezembro de 2012 na antiga Escola Primária do Bairro, em Pevidém. O jornal, de periodicidade indefinida, é utilizado para informar a população em geral das actividades decorridas nesta escola.

Fig. 50 RASTILHO's Journal, page 1/21

Inauguração do espaço Rastilho

No dia 20 de Outubro de 2012, inaugurou o espaço Rastilho. A abertura aconteceu às 15h. A população apresentou-se em grande número, convivendo e recordando a escola aonde muitos cresceram.

Houve muita dança popular e animação. Por coincidência, nesse mesmo dia a Banda Musical de Pevidém que festejava aniversário, parou em frente à escola, tocando para todos os que ali se encontravam.

Fig. 51 RASTILHO's Journal, page 4/21

Segundas-feiras de informática

As segundas são para a informática. No dia 29 de Outubro, várias pessoas trouxeram os seus computadores e criaram um endereço eletrónico pessoal. Depois começaram a trocar correspondência entre eles. Desde lá para cá, para além das dúvidas retiradas e exercitação, o Rastilho esteve a organizar o seu jornal.

Fig. 52 RASTILHO's Journal, page 6/21

Abertura às sextas-feiras: tema livre

Devido aos diversos pedidos da população que frequenta o espaço, decidiu-se abrir o Rastilho também às sextas-feiras, pois antes abria-se apenas de segunda a quinta-feira.

Todos os dias da semana: jogos tradicionais

Temos uma sala reservada para os jogos tradicionais, com predominância do jogo da sueca, no qual participam tanto homens quanto mulheres. Este tem sido um espaço importante para todos aqueles que participam, porque encontraram um sítio de acolhimento face ao frio e chuva, sentidos nesta estação.

Fig. 53 RASTILHO's Journal, page 10/21

Festejar o São Martinho: magusto

No dia 8 de Novembro, festejou-se o magusto. Apareceram alguns voluntários para assar castanhas. Quando as castanhas estavam prontas, homens e mulheres vieram e enquanto comiam e bebiam toda gente se divertiu e dançou ao som da música.

Foi um dia memorável que será lembrado durante muito tempo.

Fig. 54 RASTILHO's Journal, page 13/21

Appendix 6

All My Independent Women and The New Portuguese Letters publication.
Edited by Carla Cruz and Virgínia Valente, 2010 (inserted).