

BE MY QUARANTINE MAPPING TIMES AND SPACES OF ISOLATION

*Loneliness is personal,
and it is also political.
Loneliness is collective; it is a city.*

Olivia Laing
in *The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone*

On March 18th, 2020, the President of the Portuguese Republic decreed the first state of emergency due to the rapid spreading of COVID-19. This scenario, common in several countries, forced a large part of the world's population to be quarantined, staying at home, isolated, to control the spreading of the virus.

This quarantine has significantly changed habits and routines that human beings took for granted. New challenges were placed upon society on the act of being isolated, working from home, communicating without human contact, causing not only effects on the economic and spatial dimensions of society, but also in human and mental ones. Some of those effects revealed new socio-spatial paradigms reflected on new rules for public and commercial spaces, remote working and the reinforcing of home delivery services. New rituals have emerged, such as the constant sanitising of the hands or the social distancing of at least two metres in proximity situations; and the domestic space has acquired new meanings and functions, reorganising and adapting itself to new demands.

As a way of promoting the debate on the critical moment that we live in regarding subjects of human and spatial distancing, on April 2020, Space Transcribers launched an open call that encouraged interested people from interdisciplinary studies to critically document, archive, and represent matters on time and spaces of isolation. The participants were invited to map narratives, based on their personal experiences, daily routines, silences, fears and hopes while answering the following questions:

Which are the new patterns of social behaviour and spatial occupation in a state of isolation? What does the concept of collectiveness mean when the physical presence is limited? What are the new relationships that can be traced between public and private spaces? What are the new boundaries? What are the different intimacy and sharing levels in the domestic space? How does the mental space react in a state of physical confinement? What does “global” and “local” mean within this context? How can we represent the private space and time in isolation in the face of new social and physical challenges?

The exhibition *Be my Quarantine: Mapping times and spaces of isolation* gathers 30 multidisciplinary proposals in different formats – video, dancing, artefacts, photography, among others – as an answer to the questions mentioned above. The proposals presented here represent the confinement periods of 41 isolated participants from different geographic points of the world, which share common dialogues despite being distant. The exhibit structures and organises the proposals in five thematic areas that reflect different ways of living and feeling the isolation.

Living together gathers works that reflect situations of sharing and intimacy, where the participants were forced to live collectively and isolated within the same shared space, due to the confinement.

Control gathers proposals based on referential acts, putting the new reality, with theoretical or poetic references, in collision with fictional narratives, which address the loss of freedom, and debate issues of surveillance and control.

Confined body assembles proposals that explore the (un)consciousness of the confined body, strangled and limited within the domestic space, which moves and adapts to its confinement condition.

Correspondence reflects performative practices and acts of correspondence, through the exchange of messages and codes, between isolated people in two different geographic points.

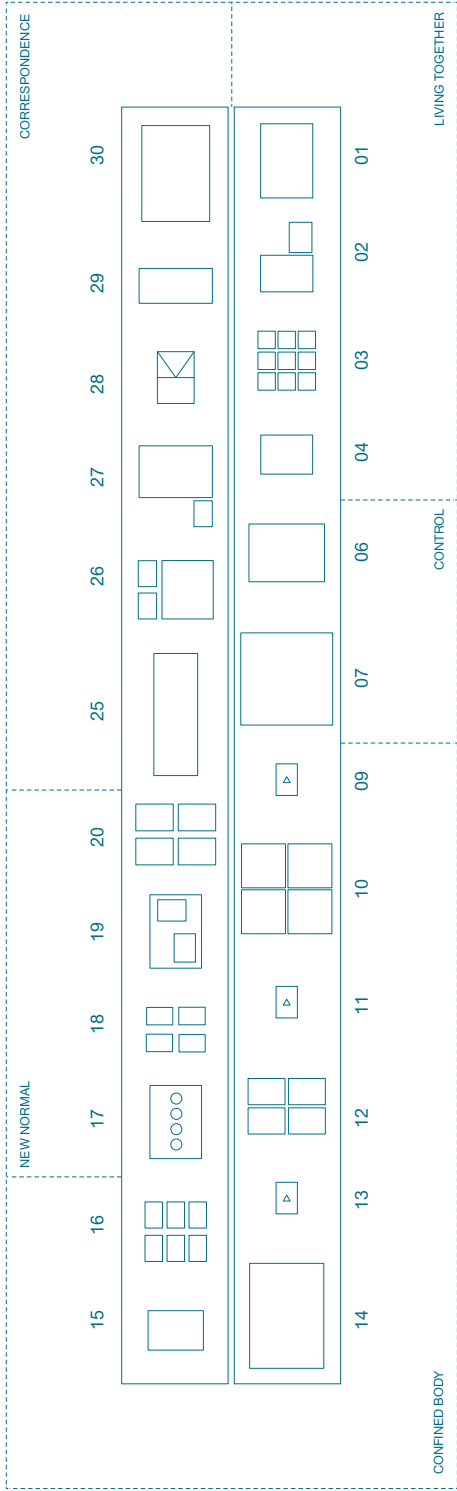
The New Normal connects works that present new meanings about time and space, due to the quarantine's changes. These proposals represent a new awareness of the little details of the everyday life that, up until the quarantine, were imperceptible, proposing new ways of using space and time.

Daniel Duarte Pereira
Fernando P. Ferreira



VIDEO PROJECTION

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THE KITCHEN WINDOW IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

The kitchen window has been the subject of observation and registration for several years. It started appearing through an analogical photographic series in 2016, which began by recording the windowsill's changes occurring over time. As if it was a still life, elements such as fruit, flowers, porcelain or kitchen utensils, appeared on the scene, always highlighted by the outside light, without anything being purposely assembled or implanted for the record.

Due to the pandemic, brought by COVID-19, the first digital photograph appeared in this series under constant construction, evidence of a new daily life reflected in new objects resting on the windowsill.

In a state of confinement, the house residents' presence intensified in the kitchen space, increasing the window's observation more intensely and obsessively. The window elements were being repositioned and altered more frequently through spontaneous acts of annoyance or organization. Even the excessive growth of some plants and grass were living proof that life continued to happen, forcing an ornamental reorganization.

Rapidly photography was no longer able to keep up with the changes that were taking place. These became more frequent and more subtle, and, as such, drawing became the most suitable mean to elaborate a selective and meticulous register that was intended at the time.

This observation and recording experience was synthesized in the translucent piece on display, where the distinct temporal representations of the occupation of the sill of this window are overlaid in serigraphic acrylic layers. The overlaying of drawings and of times allowed for a condensed dynamic, which simultaneously reproduces the inactivity of a still life, and, on the other hand, represents the energy and persistence that we find in a sequence of images from a video.

Barcelos, Portugal | Drawing

OUR TABLE, OUR ANTIBODY

Gently touching the palate, a fresh bite, a healing effect, flowing.

A benevolence from the inside, a protection for the outside.

It is a winning cake.

Many ways a day, weaving a centre.

Different directions, becoming a sum.

Crumbs as traces from being together.

You next to me, I next to her, she next to him...

A little piece, please.

Eating, a garden growing within.

The intuitive map *Our table, our antibody* reflects the quarantine of the COVID-19 crisis as experienced in the spring of 2020 in the Stiegengasse, Vienna, Austria. Here, a nest in the sky, five people, who barely had met, happened to live together as the pandemic unfolded. The map is an attempt to weave together different dimensions, rhythms, energies and spaces of the crisis. What kept us sane, what kept us well, was our kitchen table. It brought and held us together. It was our common ground. Here we gathered, listened, spoke, informed, laughed, cried, fought, nourished and grew. It became our antibody.

Vienna, Austria | Photography. Map

BEL-AIR VILLE

The apartment has become the city. Corridors act now like streets, rooms like buildings. The flatmates suddenly represent the citizens and the whole society. Smart working shapes the routine of this new town; it beats the time for the new private and public activities. Space and functions blur in this unfamiliar temporal conception. While keeping the more private vocation of the house, our five bedrooms constantly mutate into office rooms, without any threshold.

The living room thus literally harbours the living moments of the city. It is now the square – the *piazza* – where people meet, gather together and accept to enter another communal sphere. The chamber walls unexpectedly start to host different degrees of publicness and act as a condenser for social and urban functions, questioning the essence of civic spaces, torn between the peculiarity of the city morphology and the sense of community.

Named after the metropolitan tower in Lausanne, Switzerland, that the inhabitants can admire from their *piazza*'s windows, the Bel-Air Ville is an apartment capable of offering different facilities, thanks to its flexibility of “urban” pieces of furniture.

The plan – the drawing – becomes thus a tool to properly represent this versatility, the polyvalent power that the room assumes – spanning from a *pizzeria*, for a Saturday night, to a gym or a nightclub – at total disposal of the active choices of its citizens.

Locked in their golden cage, will they forget how they once inhabited the urban space?

Lausanne, Switzerland | Drawing

PUNK LIFE BETWEEN WALLS

Nora. Nora and I have been living together for the last three years. She has an incredible flow that needs to be shared with the world. Ever since the pandemic hit Madrid, we live the days playing dress up, playing Catan, having cocktail parties, and eating banana pancakes daily. All of this ended up in my project *Punk life between walls*.

I could describe Nora with a thousand words but to keep it short: she is a Basque but with a worldwide heart, thoughtful, passionate, and cosmic. Nora has breakfast while listening to Einstürzende Neubauten, she takes a shower listening to Nick Cave, and she cooks with Bikini Kill and the Slits in the background.

Nora is “Punk life between walls”.

Madrid, Spain | Photography

RANDOM

The Architecture Their house was built in 2017. It could be roughly described as a metal shed with a series of capsule-like modules inside. Indeterminate spaces flow between both. There is no predetermined space for the family's living room, the master bedroom or the service bedroom; there is no predetermined office or children's playroom. Conversely, the users act as "executors or performers" who will interpret the different spaces and rearrange them according to their multiple specific needs. In other words, the inhabitants become active participants in the architecture, liberated from rigid domestic programs favouring a productive ambiguity.

The Recordings We (filmmaker & architect) asked them (inhabitants of the house) whether they would be interested in recording their regular activities with their phones. We wanted to sneak into their daily lives and glimpse the ways they were applying their creativity to the everyday appropriation and transformation of spaces. The outcome (we said) would be an experimental film. They agreed. The inhabitants of the house saw the project as an opportunity to create a testament of their family. We sent them a series of minimum rules as guidance, and so they started documenting. COVID-19 crisis hit us right after that.

The Format Quarantine aroused new questions and opened up new possibilities. Accordingly, rendering this house's intimacy took a new connotation under these last months' complete reconfiguration of conventional domestic routines.

The video should not present a single narrative (we thought). On the contrary, the recordings should be presented in a destabilized way to deal with fixed meanings through unpredictability.

The randomness of life framed by everyday routines, and even more so during the lockdown, as it is in one of our favourite movies, "The Groundhog Day" (1993, now turned into a visionary piece). In an unexpected turn, the film became part of the contingency

Santiago, Chile | Video, Website

Produção: NLC & (E)Studio Futur@ | one-obstruction.com

MAPPING INVISIBILITY: THE POSSIBILITY OF SEEING, IN THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF BEING

Given the circumstantial context dictated by the pandemic, the model of confinement imposed on us is inevitably compared to the condition of living in the panopticon that Jeremy Bentham conceived in 1785 as a model of incarceration. According to Michel Foucault, the panoptic is characterized by a social and spatial architecture within which surveillance and punishment are indistinguishable. This self-surveillance model resembles the potential and exponential visibility of virtual reality, imposed or voluntarily assumed, due to the impossibility of leaving the place where we are.

As we experience the existential architecture of the panoptic, our ability to see the world is inversely proportional to our ability to live outside it. We live confined, in the paradox between the visible and the invisible, where we only travel through virtual visibility or remain physically invisible within our real social space.

Incapacitated to be physically in space, we look for a new notion of place. Like in psychogeographic situational maps, we can also create the constellations of our possible journeys through virtual space.

The collage we observe results from the mapping of some cultural spaces of Porto and its geographical location, overlapping the images provided virtually to show only what became visible in times of enclosure.

Mapping Invisibility mapped the journey through visible virtual spaces, where we were not permitted to go physically during the quarantine. As observers of this new state, we made the networks, cultural and artistic, visible from the centre of the panoptic, as long as we did not leave it; on the other hand, and as virtual interpreters, we mapped the possibility of seeing, in the impossibility of being.

Porto, Portugal | Collage

SUPEREGO EMERGENCY

This reflection comes as a tribute to our moral unconscious and its consequent extraordinary overthrow, in a challenging and unprecedented context in the temporal space of humanity today: the conditioning of the dynamics of life, based on the emergence of a pandemic. Paradoxically, in a context of forced isolation, where introspective time multiplies, and the expression being the exponent of our freedom, we have never been analytically so free.

The moral values that emerge from the vast sea of our unconscious were the motto for an expressive manifestation of reflections supported on an idiosyncratic referential basis. In an analogy to the human psyche's organizational triptych system, according to Sigmund Freud, composed of Ego, ID and Superego, a subjective interpretation of the unconscious impulses triggered by the pandemic is materialized, translated into an abstract and imaginative representation that is embodied through an architectural lexicon. In the form of a habitable construction, the proposal is designed under an analogical discourse that alludes to the different feelings aroused by the pandemic, from the beginning to the end of the national state of emergency, ending with the exhortation of moral and collective values. Faced with one of the greatest psychoanalytic conflicts of our unconscious, the collective self-denial responds to the call of necessity. Our state has determined the emergence of our Superego.

According to the Freudian psychic apparatus, the subsequent illustrative map, decomposed into nine moments, presents itself as a survey of the parabolic path we all live in subjective representation and symbolic construction. The different images are elaborated in combinations of diverse compositions, having for its components the architectural representations of the basic morphology. Subjectively, an interpretative correlation can be established with the identified moments. Therefore, the illustrations appear as a response to the questions of the state of mind's possibilities in a transformative situation, supported by a personal narrative from psyche's exercises in the context of pandemic isolation.

Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal | Drawing

SINGULARITY IS HERE 1.0

Regarding our current situation – the COVID-19 confinement – virtual communication has reached its peak so far. We are encouraged to stay at home and, to maintain our working and social routine, we are using a variety of digital platforms. There is a paradigm change, where abruptly we are losing physical interaction. This situation led to cyberspace comprehension as an incomplete system, where our bodies are non-existent, and our creativity is limited.

To improve this cyberspace, we need to generate a symbiosis between the entities that coexist in it. Through the increase of cognitive computing communication, we can relate to them and exchange the produced data. This data, shared by all participants, will become the most valuable element: being completely open and shared equally. We need new environments that allow us to be part of this system, that free us from the static body.

Gaming our way through the quarantine, not only as players but as humans with dreams and ideas, it's like entering a portal to another dimension, to someone else's dream. As creatives, we represent our dreams. The same way Salvador Dali held his brushes and painted, we grabbed our 3D programs and engines and embarked on a virtual representation. The manifestation of this act is like entering inside of a living painting full of dynamics.

But who are we in this world, and how do we represent ourselves in a cybernetic reality? One that socially works more as a distributive property than as a feedback loop? Infinite cells lack sense by themselves but work as part of a system that tends to find its homeostatic balance collectively. Each collective is a tissue of this new but local globality, far from holisms, let's find our answers in the microscope.

Amadora and Lisbon, Portugal | Vídeo

DIARIES OF A PANDEMIC

In January 2020, I moved to Porto alone, with the enthusiasm and ambition of those who bet everything on a new beginning. Two months later, I found myself, like so many of us, in a situation of indefinite limbo, with the plans altered by a force that I could not control. We were at the first major peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Portugal and were facing strict confinement on account of an invisible and unknown enemy, whose forms of attack frequently changed.

At the choreographer Miguel Moreira's suggestion, I began to improvise, explore, and register daily the effects isolation was having on my body. For 25 days, I programmed a timer for 20 minutes, pressed "record" on my small video camera and moved freely and intuitively. In this way, the *diaries of a pandemic* were born – unedited videos that I was publishing on YouTube, accompanied by a small written reflection.

Between the mapping of spaces, energies, sensations and feelings, I discovered sadness, anger, frustration, anxiety, detachment, acceptance, joy and gratitude. With the scaling of the health crisis, I ended up returning to my parents' house, in the small village of Valongo do Vouga, where I grew up, and in that new beginning life smiled down on me in ways I could have never planned. The COVID-19 pandemic solidified in me a will to create — one that had always existed, but which I had not been honouring properly. Several months later, I looked at these videos and recognized impulses that I have unconsciously recovered in other creations. Once again, I understand that we are always the same person, no matter how much the world changes.

Porto and Águeda, Portugal | Video dance



BODY/POWER

The Platonic legacy, coupled with the separation of mind and body proposed by Descartes during the 17th century, provided a series of unexamined assumptions that span all social sciences. For example, the Western model of “person” provides a construction of the mind as a non-material place of rationalizing, thinking, language and knowledge, as opposed to the physical expression of irrationality, feeling and emotion. After Darwin, such physicality has been understood as “natural” instead of “cultural”. The survival of our animal from the past. In the Western Christian tradition, the body as carnal is seen as the place of sinful desire, corrupt appetites, irrational passions, often subject to disciplinary practices to transcend itself.

Regardless of this legacy, it is not surprising to find expressions of curiosity and disgust about strange physical practices, excessive gesticulation, exotic rituals, and “wild” dances frequent in the encounters between 19th century explorers and natives. Such facts provided a reason to call non-Western populations primitive and allowed the base of the Other and its stereotype. In general, the society was judged as primitive, if the difference of what was “acceptable” by the Western norm was significant.

During the centuries of slavery, the African body was the embodiment of our culture woven with the music that was also organic. The wombs were not ours, and motherhood was removed from us, such as the bond with our origin.

The hands we carry, the hands are ours. This peripheral span, which inhabited the periphery during the formative years, should not be seen as a mere marginal space, of loss and deprivation, but a place of possibility.

This period of isolation allowed me to turn inward, to what is organic to me, mind and body as one, outside the place of the city, as a subject, turning myself as the referent.

Braga, Portugal | Photography

VERTIGO

How do I fill the space, if not with my body or with the camera that records it?

Silence and solitude become part of the perspective of every corner. I have never missed breathing so much with the Other. I collapsed into vertigo, a future that had never before been reduced to the anxiety of the occult. I don't see the day of being able to have my body touch a stranger's without fear. Until then, I have to endure the hierarchy of introspection. It is a torment to live alone, not to share, except for a screen or a voice network, meditated analysis. Chimeras woven by neurological shocks that awaken me, or not, to (in) significance. Even though I am distracted from myself, I am always in the same body.

When I move through space, I have no choice but to dance it - dancing through space like an unfinished ritual. Life. To live without dancing is like trees without wind.

There are days when I see myself in the desired future, and hope fills my flesh. Feelings pass through my intestines and lift me beyond the top of my skull.

I wanted to share this time and distract myself from the ambiguity of being.

Vertigo is a video dance project born as the challenge of experimental work at FAICC - Intense Course in Interpretation and Choreography – of the Companhia Instável (Porto, Portugal), during the quarantine period. It consists of a video dance, a text and eventually a solo performance.

Lagos, Portugal | Video dance

BEHAVIOUR OF ENCLOSED BODIES

Evoking the relationship between bodies, body language and the physical limits of deprivation

To be in quarantine can be challenging for our bodies. Deprivation brings anger, anxiety and intimacy disturbances. Being stuck inside a space, a house, a building made us reflect about ourselves. When nothing else exists, bodies are interacting with each other. Bodies interact with the architectural elements created by us, bodies fighting with themselves. We saw the body not only as an object that spins around physical structures where sometimes it doesn't fit. But we also saw as a manifest of sadness, irritation, frustration and other uncomfortable emotions.

For our photograph series, we draw on the work of Valie Export, *Body Configurations* (1972-82), where she evoked the relationship between body language and urban environment. She used her body in a nearly sculptural way to underline the lines, the spaces, and the powerful constraints of her surroundings. Her pictures emphasized the failed conformity with the architectural structures and the geometric lines applied, the tension between the individual and the ideological/social forces that shape urban reality.

During our quarantine time, we questioned the lines and spaces of the private sphere, also our bodies in it. As a couple, we had interaction constraints/tensions between our bodies, even between our bodies and the elements surrounding us. Inside all the alienation and distress, we found time to go deep on searching for new possibilities between us and some details with a very defined function, always questioning their purpose and meaning. Are we or do they fit the psychologic forces of enclosure? We propose here a series of tests where emotions and bodies are confronted with themselves and with architectural and domestic elements: mimicking their geometry, fading out their meaning and suggesting new inward relations.

Guimarães, Portugal | Photography

#COVERED20

First world lockdown. First world quarantine started at the end of March everywhere.

#COVereD-20 is a short video of my quarantine days in Porto, Portugal and Patra, Greece. The video documents real scenes recorded in both landscapes, questioning: how quarantine truly affected people's lives? What has changed? Is the virus choosing who is going to live or governments?

Although the pandemic appeared in 2019 and scientists named it COVID-19, it affected our lives in 2020 as a year zero, and therefore I call it COVereD-20.

Porto, Portugal | Patra, Greece | Video dance

PASSPORT FOR A #1 BODY

There are several different ways of mapping moments. I am certain that doing it through body temperature is the least conventional way. But the pandemic situation in which we live shows us that it is inevitable and will accompany us for a long time. Necessity demands it, and circumstance obliges it.

In addition to a preventive mapping, driven by fear, a desire for self-knowledge has been added. A mapping of a body that, by necessity, moved itself in hostile territory in search of a stable circumstance to rest, exploring its limits and making them its normality, understanding patterns, and taking advantage of its systematization. After all, how many of us know, in a non-circumstantial way, at what temperature does our body move?

The proposed piece seeks to explore, graphically, the collected temperature data. It synthesizes the images of a body, for more than 65 days, in two countries, three cities, in moments not always coincident in this timeline. In addition to a systematization of this control, this work is a reminder, in a registered format, reinforced by the memories that the body kept about this troubled history period. It is a passport of my body that, at the time, allowed me to move between borders, making me aware of my temperature in movement and at rest.

Munich, Germany | Porto and Viana do Castelo, Portugal
Graphic performance

THIS LIFE IN A CIRCLE

This life in a circle is a personal interpretation of everyday life altered by social confinement and remoteness. It is a mental image of my routines, gestures, small actions, the new dimension of space and time, and the place where the body occupies it. Here, the body is understood as matter, and as the physical extension of mind and will.

This attempts to understand the limits that this context has imposed on me, conditioning my freedom in the physical sphere and giving it expression only in a digital, almost virtual spectrum. Therefore, the space I occupy has begun to acquire new meanings, evolving from a place of comfort to a place of restlessness, expectation and uncertainty. In this rigid context and few physical stimuli, simple acts have become more and more devoid of intention. The body has become more and more limp and numb, as if it had forgotten movement, placing itself in an automatic and repetitive mode.

What place does the body occupy in this new dimension, far from unpredictability, chaos, exception?

Póvoa de Varzim, Portugal | Drawing

DREAMS IN TIMES OF LONELINESS

End.
Bedroom.
When I wake up and stand up, I feel the freshness that comes from the kitchen.
My body hurts from yesterday.
It smells like damp, and the bamboo curtain starts to get musty.
I go to the window and see the tree from yesterday, but today.
I walk to the amplifier and turn it on.
I say good morning in silence.
I kiss the saint my mother gave me: “son if one day you are sad, close your eyes and smile. Think that our love exists and that I love you very much!...”
I sit down and extend the fasting because hunger only comes at the beginning.
Bedroom.
Remote working.
Kitchen.
I need to make soup. Soup with bread. Soup with bread and cheese. Soup with fruit. Soup with bread. Bread.
Bedroom.
Remote work.
There are no breaks because there’s the fear of losing the sustenance of dreams.
Remote work.

Remote work.
Remote work.
Occupied bathroom.
Urgency. In the bedroom, a water bottle is used as a potty. A bathroom for eight people. What to do?
Accept in 2020. That’s life!
In 1975.
Remote work.
Voice. Warm-up my voice.
Apple. Eating apples to clean the mouth and the pharynx. Dreams!
Aaaaaa...Eeeeeee...liiii...
Oooooo...Uuuu...Nha...
Nhe...Nhi...Nho...Nhu...
Nhra...Nhre...Nhri...Nhro...
Nhru...
Artist’s House.
Beginning.
Training in theatre.
That feeling of a happy child for whom everything is new.
That thirst for learning more, and more, and more...
References...
Sharing...
The body is plasticine.
Soul.
Pain.
Bedroom.
I look at my half.
Everything has become less superficial, and every detail matters.
Masturbation.
So intimate of my being.
Dreams!

Lisbon, Portugal | Photography

FRAGMENTS OF ISOLATION

Thinking about the fragments and the city's layers and their impact on collective memory is the purpose of this project. The city is composed of a series of layers. Some stand out, others are superimposed, others lose their identity, and even those that cease to exist until they are forgotten.

This piece's concept is to reflect how the production of space generates history, memory, and forgetfulness, through observation, mapping, analysis and experimentation to think about public space and its transformations.

The confinement diary takes place through fragments of the daily memories of the quarantine period. *The lemon from the lemon tree in the backyard. The tea, the match, the seeds, the earth, the leaf, the branch, the slime, and the garden's flower. The floor scraping, the wall scraping, a grain.* All layers of life that were shaped during this period of isolation.

The negotiation in the public space is an interplay about mapping and observation and daily records. This piece discusses who may have some kind of public space during times of confinement.

Porto, Portugal | Installation

THE COLOURS OF THE DAYS

Disorganisation. Of thoughts, of ideas, of conceptions; of the way we see the world and ourselves.

Fear. More than the fear of simply not knowing, of giving in to the obsession of searching, there is the fear of not being able to decode and translate everything in time.

The new paradigm of space and time. The time which doesn't know if it is too much or not enough. Capable of transfiguring the perception of what has already passed and what will follow.

The bipolar mind, contradictory. It tries to feel everything; when everything is felt, it wants to empty itself until it is nothing.

Every day is the same, in different colours.

Guimarães, Portugal | Photography

QUARANTINE FLOWERS

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our daily lives and, as a result, several production sectors have been affected. For example, flower producers were forced to throw away tons of plants and flowers due to customers' absence.

Given this, in the first days of April 2020, I started to send letters to several flower producers in the Porto area to obtain a donation of "rubbish flowers". On April 5th, I received an e-mail from the company "Florisul", whose warehouse is located in Maia. This company made itself available for the donation of plant and flower waste.

In the following days, I started to experiment. It was almost two months of constant experiments with flowers, recognizing their materiality, strengths and properties.

Initially destined for waste, this material was transformed into liquid paints, dust, a protective mask and flower embroidery.

Finally, the rejected and wasted plants had the opportunity to express themselves, resulting in visual and tactile poetry.

Porto, Portugal | Artefact

**REPEAT AFTER ME:
WE DO NOT LIVE IN A BUBBLE.
WHAT WE DO MATTERS. STAY HOME.**

A series of posters, posted on Instagram, developed during the isolation period of COVID-19 pandemic.

During this period, I have decided to use Instagram as a form of hypertext, sharing books, movies or another relevant context, relating it to our current situation. "At its most sophisticated level, hypertext is a software environment for collaborative work, communication, and knowledge acquisition. It mimics the brain's ability to store and retrieve information by referential links for quick and intuitive access." ("A grand vision" by Janet Fiderio, 1988).

This project was mostly inspired by Kitty O'Meara poem:

*And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.
And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.
And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.*

Matosinhos, Portugal | Graphic design

DEAR QUARANTINE

Three colleagues, two girls and a boy, locked in their homes by a pandemic in different cities, decide to write a visual letter to the Quarantine as if it were a character. Here the fear of change, the reflections of each one, the true meaning of the word “longing”, the nostalgia felt in this time that seemed infinite, and the curiosity of what is to come are exposed.

Dear Quarantine arises from the course “Death & Documentary”, a collaboration between the School of Media Arts and Design of the Polytechnic of Porto and the University of Texas, in Austin. It exposes three different approaches and ways of dealing with change and the end of the routine, presenting, through the distortion of time, the search for the transformation of voices into objects and spaces, deleting the line that separates existing and being, in this so uncertain period of our lives.

Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal | Esmoriz, Portugal | Porto, Portugal
Video

THIRD REAR

The month of March 2020 was the first I had been working from home, on a boisterous street in Porto. Of the usual sounds only the ambulances and some repair works that could be heard in the distance were left. In the workplace remained the sound of telephones, air conditioning, the printer and people. That is how the sounds of the house and the neighbourhood took over.

Many of us, who live in large urban centres, have witnessed several rehabilitation buildings in recent years. To make these properties more profitable, the flats are increasingly smaller and have poorly defined rooms. At this time, it is clear that such an act breaks with the association we have established between each division and our daily actions – such as dining, sleeping, working, wandering – and, the opportunity for the contamination of the domestic space with workspace is unlimited. Even so, it is possible that for those who are experiencing remote working for the first time, they find themselves taking pleasure from the routines and contemplation of small things.

Most of these dwellings do not have a balcony or garden, so there is greater use of public parks. This change of habits, among other routine changes, leads us to build a new idea of our locality: we are walking different paths and crossing paths with other people.

Particularly at the beginning of the pandemic in Portugal, when road traffic measures were tighter, the noise reduction in these places was radical. In terms of mental health, this factor could have different consequences. On the one hand, it could give us a better quality of life. It could allow our sense of hearing to become more acute, contributing to greater sensitivity and imagination. On the other hand, it could have a disturbing, claustrophobic effect.

Porto, Portugal | Video

DEAR YOU THAT ARE ME

Dear you that *are* me,

Why would I be an egomaniac if I hear more than one of you in my head?

I hear you after lunch and by the time I decide to go to sleep — when my body somehow decays and my mind struggles to bring it back to life. In those times, I worry about my hands, clumsy and fearful, vulnerable to an environment they can't approach with certainty.

I seek refuge in the quiet spaces where I feel protected.

My room is on the 4th floor, the second of my Maisonette.

On the West-facing wall, there is a window, whose sill I've cluttered with a collection of cuttings from my favourite plants. When they grow, I want to leave each one of them on the steps of the front door of the homes of my friends, who are in isolation. On the other side of the window, there's a gutter, where I've put two long, rectangular plant pots. Beyond this, a courtyard with a couple of sour cherry trees and four limes — nothing to do with limes or lemons, as you probably know. On the other side of the courtyard, there's a block of flats before the street, Avenell Road. In one of the flats opposite me

, the lights are always on. It must be a brothel because of the semi-naked women inside, but maybe I conclude this because you, the voices in my head, are extremely sexist. All I can see through the window is a small kitchen. The people are different every day, but their roles are usually the same: a man is usually sitting down, a few women wash up, put on make-up or chat, and an L-shaped counter frames the action.

At night, in my room, you take the floor. I cannot hear anything else, since the inhabitants of the brothel are usually quiet. And their block of apartments protects me from the noise of the few cars circulating Avenell Road. I identify each of you with a different person that inhabits the little space that my skull permits.

The way the brothel works — as I imagine so? — is in the same vein as the way you talk in my head; one is silent, listening, sitting down. Sometimes, the latter, gets excited and starts to chat, to yell, or gets closer to the others, ending up in fighting, caressing or copulating. It's rather unexpected, as many people are if left to their sexual instincts.

Your sexual desire is quite unexpected, as well. As a norm, however, it is latent, showing itself in circumstances that might convey an invitation to intimacy amongst different people.

You, the people in my head, do not usually have a name, or a personality. You take different shapes according to the voices you adopt. You appear and disappear. I know it is quite complicated to understand, but I hope to make it clearer for me.

London, UK | Video

BUILDINGS, BODIES, AND BROKEN HEARTS

Buildings, Bodies, and Broken Hearts is a five-episode Instagram mini-story explored through video, audio, and text. Through each episode, I react to particular quotes found in performance artist Abi Palmer's new book, *Sanatorium* (2020), while reflecting on my own work, quarantine, and my state of being post-breakup. It also draws on the work of architectural historian and filmmaker Anna Andersen. Each episode was posted one day after another, from April 8th-12th 2020. In the spirit of film viewings, a social media campaign was launched to advertise each episode as well as the three Instagram live "Afterparties", which invited conversations from viewers and featured selected guests, including Palmer.

Episode 1, "Multiples of Stupor", is about the spatiality of remembering; Episode 2, "Tsunami", is about heartbreak as an event of trauma; Episode 3, "Mater Ter Admirabilis", is about re-finding spirituality through three female figures (my mother, my astrologist, and the Virgin Mary); Episode 4, "Paracetamol and Botox", is about the corporeal by-product of grieving; and Episode 5, "The Bed", is about control in times of powerlessness. Each episode is narrated in English and features Spanish subtitles. The acts of care shown in each episode unfold in the domestic space, fluctuating between caring for my body and caring for my apartment. Intensely introspective, I allow the viewer occasional glimpses out into the city, from West-facing windows in my 14th-storey apartment in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

San Juan, Puerto Rico | Video and social media
@regner.xyz

THE IDENTITY OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it consequences on a global and individual scale. Human losses, economic impacts and psychological effects, but all related in some way to social isolation.

I have observed and tried to understand how people seek to cope and respond to this change. I made a self-reflection and self-representation about who we are and what we could represent during the period of social isolation.

In this way, I developed the collective project *The Identity of Social Isolation*, which aims to create a visual memory of isolation and reveal a new individual and collective identity within a new reality.

Through a digital invitation, several participants were asked to answer the following questions: “Who am I really?”; “How do I present myself before the world?”; “Will I be the same after isolation?”. From these questions, the participants had to select objects and actions that were in some way, symbolic of the isolation period. These objects had to be photographed in 3x4 format and sent to the Instagram @identidade.jpg account, where they were shared with other participants.

In short, this project seeks to understand how social networks can become a “digital public space”, where people share daily life and collective effects on isolation, in addition to meeting virtually. Simultaneously, the project identifies the singularities of each individual in their true identities.

Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal | Assembly and social media
@identidade.jpg

I WRITE, SHE WEAVES

I

Elsewhere I read that quarantining is not so different from doing a PhD, especially during its writing phase. So, isn't the act of writing a kind of quarantine practice? A lonely, self-imposed burden due to external pressures and deadlines, guided by frustration and guilt? How do we free ourselves from the words that torment us? Yesterday was my 15th day of social isolation. And yesterday, while working for my doctorate, I wrote and thought intensely about a specific word: *web*.

Between thoughts, words and turbulence, I decided at that moment to document all the words that distressed me in the writing process. One word a day. Then each word will be sent to another half of me, a woman with owl eyes. This woman is a spider, a mystical goddess. And her role will be noble: that of coding and weaving these disturbing words. In doing so, the animal-woman will somehow archive the words. But for whom? For which future? Who will decode them? And more importantly, when will I be able to see this woman again?

She

Today is a beautiful word.

Before being literate, she read the plot of life. The web and the weft formed a uniform base, where everyday life unfolded. The closer to the eyes, the more revealed is that which is beyond life. Before knowing the numbering, I already counted the threads of that narrative where a line was (em)braided in front of me, delimiting, counterpointing, enriching, dividing, colouring, multiplying... this wrapping was the song of dream, of laziness, of a task, of ritual, of passage, conquest and frustration. It doesn't happen by itself, and nobody explains it, but it is in the silence that it happens, you know? And the rhythm sets in.

You can't be an animal without being on alert and quarantine has this property: that of being isolated without being alone. The imposition, the obligation and the prohibition are the plots that set the tone for this moment. How can we get rid of this? Tell me things and the *now* will be a memory.

Braga, Portugal | Porto, Portugal | Weaving

THE *BOUNDLESS PERMANENCE OF THE WHOLE*

The Boundless Permanence of the Whole is a graphic performance that seeks to provoke and question the concept of space and time, modified by the contemporary online reality and amplified by the conditions forced by the confinement. With this performance, we intend to break the excessive routine of virtual communication and information tools by adopting postal correspondence exchange.

The dialogue took place between two Brazilian expatriates, living in Lisbon and New York, communicating through postcards and exposing the perspectives of the senders on the unfolding of the pandemic in the two countries of residence, against the background of their afflictions in the face of the Brazilian political response to the pandemic.

A postcard sent in confinement circumstances that carry us on a mental journey, given the impossibility of physical displacement. The communication finds other dimensions and meanings since the postcard's content ends up obsolete at its destination, and the restricted space for writing imposes a selection of the information that can be sent. The postcard institutes a physical, finite and temporal trajectory: no excess of information, no immediate answers. It is a communication that travels and reconfigures the relationship between time and space broken by current virtual reality.

Such communication transcends the private plane and transmits, in the public sphere of its trajectory, the Brazilian position's critical situation in the face of pandemic crisis. A transcript of the current Brazilian president, Jair Bolsonaro, referred to during the pandemic was printed on each postcard. Authoritarian speeches aimed at silencing and erasing science's legitimacy, the right to democracy, and freedom of expression. Words that are carried forward in this protest deed.

We invite visitors to the exhibition to take one of the posters that summarise this graphic performance, and one of the protest postcards, to participate in this performative act. Information is movement, and we see the postcard as the vehicle that allows this mobility, in space and time.

Lisbon, Portugal | New York, United States of America
Graphic performance

PASS, TIME

Pass, time is a project of two friends, each at a different end of the street, who wanted to play without running the risk of contamination.

We started by putting some tic tac toe games on the walls of some buildings that side the paths of our daily hygienic walks so that while we walked them, we could interact with each other without having to share the same space at the same time.

Since we were using the public space as the stage for this activity, we proposed to share this initiative with the local population. We placed these games next to the places of commerce or essential services, where it would be propitious to crowd people in queues, such as supermarkets, bakeries, ATMs, restaurants, stationery shops, among others.

These services are limited in terms of the number of people inside with the inevitable obligation of creating queues. When placing the games near the entrances to these same places, we intended that people continued to respect the recommended physical distance while reducing the social dynamics required by these new conditions. We propose to reinvent the way of human interaction, from a playful point of view when it is limited, to attenuate people's feelings of social anxiety and depression, and to prevent them from being absorbed by technological devices in waiting situations.

Games can be played individually or with a stranger. Or even with the temporary neighbour in the queue. If you don't want to play in that space, you can detach it, take it home, and play with your family.

It may not yet be possible for us to enjoy the proximity with the other, which we so desire, but we must reinvent the act of socializing. And what better way to help time pass than a return to the simplicity of playing?

Anadia, Portugal | Game

OUR DISTANCE IS A COFFEE

When we confess our dreams to someone, we nurture the idea of fulfilling them. Thus we complete the story that began as something far-fetched in the ears of that outsider. Would it still be so?

Our travel and dream partnership knows no greater distance than the time it takes to drink a cup of coffee. Between Gabriela and I there is just a coffee distance. Dessau and Lima. What are the miles? New dimensions are opening up in this entire year zero. Our coffee remains on the agenda with a personal label that fuels our conversation.

[Queens in the morning, Dominical coffee, you name it!]

There's no going back to normal. But what is normal? Ours changed when Gabi left after our last hug at "La Panetteria" to pursue a burning personal vision. There is no such thing as normality, and there never was.

Maybe normality is a friendship suspended within the aroma of coffee. Moments that make us feel, very closely, that to the rhythm of those sips, everything was and will be possible.

Dessau, Germany | Lima, Peru | Performative drawing

TACTILES – TEXTUAE INSULAE

February 1st, 2020. Lisbon. Our smiles are mirroring to the sun, the sun sliding on our skin, our fingers crossed. Between us, only hot cups of coffee to tear us apart.

How could have we known, then, at the height of our shared joy, that 46 days later, we would be confined in our two homes? That we could be deprived of the mere freedom of touching our lips, deprived of each other's bodies, deprived of any horizon of reunion. How could have we known, then, that a remote threat could become ours, that a distant shadow could become ours? How could have we even imagined that an invisible threat could become invisible walls isolating us?

Apartments that were isolated, insular, floating in a less and less tangible public space. Private spaces were devouring everything. Secluded, isolated spaces filled with isolated beings, isolated from you, you isolated from me. How to not disconnect in this great scattering? How to stay united, sharing the same impulse, sharing the same views when only frozen landscapes remain at the verge of our windows. How to bind us? How to knit ourselves together? How to link our insularities in an archipelago? How to touch us through?

March 2020 - May 2020. Paris. 56 days in quarantine. We counted them all. Not one without a shared word, a shared thought, a shared emotion. Little by little, we have found ways to knit ourselves away, to link our islands, to touch our souls, our hearts, our bodies, through time and space. Tactiles, tactile islands, islands of touch, two textae insulae. Made one underwater through thousands of poems and letters, paintings and drawings, words words words, lines lines lines, to bridge the unknown, the void, the unspeakable, the absence. In the stormy ocean of those broken weeks, our islands of love and intimacy, magnificent, remain.

Lisbon, Portugal | Paris, France | Graphic performance

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