



reflecting on reflection

This last chapter was written as an appendix at a very late stage, as the final appraisal of the artistic work manifested on 20 June 2024, with the durational performance installation *environment embodiment - towards poetic narratives* at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

Here is the first moment I speak in the first person. The writings have completed an entire cycle, and I am back where I started. Wondering how the work could speak for itself, I decentralised myself to give space for words to unfold themselves within the works. I walked backwards through the writing, and now, back to the start, I can bring myself into the writings to reflect on the how-about, in which ways I do the work I do, to reflect on the reflection itself and to thank. The PhD final artistic work comprises four installations, a duration performance within the reflection.

As a poet, the use and choice of words have been essential. This artistic research used the word strategy and replaced the word method with approach. Below are some of the strategies and approaches that this artistic research has developed through:

. Approaches

Poetics

Iteration

Durational Performance

Open Dramaturgy

With its profound transformative implications, poetics is not just a tool but a powerful approach to language, style, the imaginary, and aesthetics. It forms the essence of this artistic research, inviting one to immerse oneself in the depth and richness of the poetics.

I write within the frame of contemporary poetry, with a feminist intake where the ordinary of daily life is the thematic, away from proper pompous elitist philosophical elaborations. Considering that the philosophical, the cosmological, the ethical, and the enchanted are in those ordinary daily life wonders, thoughts and choices. The poetic style in the writings involves the concise, fragmented, and obscure to bring in mysterious, enchanted, or metaphorical aspects to explore how to say it without saying it.

Regarding aesthetics, poetics appears in the iteration and cyclical present in various artistic works, including the only single action to be done during the entire PhD project: walking backwards. In this action, the uncanny and the poetics are invited in as it twists a very ordinary action that almost everyone does every day: walking. The uncanny perspective of walking backwards out-of-syncs with the usual walking action. It transforms into an unusual action that brings friction to the environments in which it occurs. Iteration is also on the garment used, which is the same throughout all the artistic works: a water-green dress.

This PhD artistic Research is also about being singular and plural, and the iterations make the singular appear again and again in a metamorphosis, becoming different as it iterates. It is the same, and it is not. It is the same, and it is not again. It is layers of becomings.

The cyclical and the iterations also appear in the film performances of the series *whittling away*. There are four films in which the attentive viewer will detect the differences between four different days. The film performances took place in the same location at Atafona's beach. The weather, the bodies present in the moment, and the interactions vary even if the action and the place are the same. Three of the films were made during the artistic research of CasaDuna in 2023, and the last film was made one year later. The series *redrawing* is also done on Atafona's beach but in a different location. However, the object, a chair found on the beach, is the same in both films.

At the Gallery Seilduken 1, the durational performance *Sympoiesis*, in which most films are installed, also invites cyclical iterations as the performer, the walking backward action and the dress are the same. This iteration between the films themselves and the live performance action and costume is drawn into an extended temporality of a feedback loop. The installation comprises short film projections, a small portion of Atafona's sand, three split pieces of Atafona's house bricks and hung green fabrics, which are extensions of the dress. The performer's body moves in the space and interacts with the fabrics, which are layers in the room. The installation becomes costume, and the performer's body becomes a layer of the installation- in *sympoiesis* – becoming with – the presence of the fabrics, projections, dress, and the performer intertwine into each other.

The durational performance also enters a loop of cyclical iterations. The approach is *instant creation*, which means the work is created in the moment it occurs. The central aspect of *instant creations* is the relationship between the bodies in space, the place, the environment, and the present moment. Yet, because of its long-time span, the created narrative might iterate itself on different occasions until the performance ends. In this way, the approach used is called open dramaturgy here, which means it can only exist after the performance is finished as it is created in the moment. It is also an open dramaturgy for the viewer, depending on when they enter and exit the space. In that sense, the audience – conscious or not – makes their dramaturgy of the performance.

At Gallery Seilduken 2, the installation *Redraw* has the film performance *woodling*, which is projected in a room with several chairs. In a sliced corner of the room, the series *redraw* is projected. In the three films, chairs are part of the interaction. The reeked chair in the *redraw* series was found on the beach. One can think the objects in *woodling* are hibernating as they are dusted by the time they rest there. The iteration of chairs leaves the films and invades the gallery room.

Skylight Gallery has printed reflections and documentation publications. The room is designed with paper and card boxes: seats, tables, benches, selves, and stands. It's an immersive, embodied, and tactile experience of the reflections, works, and documentation. The installation is an invitation to a slowdown embodied expertise that one might feel—the need to return. To iterate the experience, that will be another one. One enters the reflection with one's body. It is a poetic installation.

Thinking about dissemination, the publications are in the informal format of Zines and aim to make the PhD writings easier for the public to encounter the PhD writings. They are in small, condensed formats that can exist as a singular piece or part of a series. The documentation can also be seen as part of the reflection. The several narratives can be seen as one or a collection of sentences.

Each text can be seen as singular and part of a series of texts. The dynamics of focusing on single sentences and in full text is part of a strategy of zooming in and out to condense and expand thoughts and ideas. Singularity and plurality in the iteration are worked throughout the texts to hint, carving deeply into how to say more than display and describe. The writings followed an open narrative, navigating through the spectrum within clarity-obscure, presence-absence and the pallets of persistence, endurance, vulnerability, cycles, and iteration. The reflection is a web with layers of subtleties. The writings have subtle hints that appear here and there and iterate in different ways. The reader makes their own links while going through the writings. It invites stopping, slowing down, wondering, going back backwards, and rereading it.

The publications have been choreographed in an open dramaturgy, and the different Zine formats have hinted forward and back to each other narratives in my texts.

The outside Wall of the Oslo Academy of the Arts also holds the work *Itinerant Words*, a selection of 50 sentences from the reflection. It is a way in which the words bleed out from the sequence of sentences in an ordinary text page, break through the university's structure, invade its outside wall and dance through the city.

Strategies

. Artistic residency

Working in the framework of artistic residencies has been a strategy for relating to places, people and more than humans in those places. Being a short-term resident, which usually includes making food, eating and sleeping at the place, gives a different frame for sharing thoughts, ideas, experiences, practices and exchanges. It can bring possibilities to conversations on the verge of life and art. The residency can also provide a setting for encountering other artists and exchanging ideas and interests with a specific focus, as it has a time frame.

Starting the PhD in an isolated context of the pandemic, I felt the need to create my own artistic residency by inviting one artist at a time to spend a week at my place. We have mainly focused on writing and sometimes sharing practices. I was living on a farm then, and I called it F.A.R.M. Artistic Residency – Fabulations in Artistic Research and More. The artists that took part were Ingivild Isaksen, Luanda Carneiro Jacoel, and the researcher Verónica Pájaro. With Karen Werner, we have done writing artistic residencies together - at the same time - in our own homes, which are located in different cities.

Then, I went for an artistic residency under the Seminar Alkymi – kunst & økologisk økonomi in Bodø, North Norway, in 2021. The following year, I attended the CasaDuna residency in Atafona, Brazil, where my research's main body of work was developed. I participated in the Casa69 residency and the BrisaLab research group in Rio de Janeiro in 2023. Also in Rio, I was one of the guest artists in the Panamérica Transatlântica artistic residency in 2024.

Those artistic residencies have informed my practices in ways that living in a place - even if for a short time - gives opportunities to relate - in a fraction of time-space - to the daily life that exists

there. It can provide access to subtleties that can unfold understandings and relations to the place, people, more than humans and context other than visiting a place can provide.

. Collaborations and friendship

Another strategy this PhD has followed was to work as much as possible through collaborations of various forms. Some collaborations happened with payments, others with exchanges, others by the will to be part of a common interest, and others simply for the care of friendship.

I encountered the PhD fellow Stephan Meidell in one of the first seminars in the artistic research context, and we started a distant exchange through voice messages in a phone app. Our exchange box on the phone is called Con-fabulations. This has been the most extended collaboration with another PhD fellow, where we exchanged thoughts, ideas, questions, topics, and samples of works, which also culminated in Meidell being a musician in one of my artistic presentations, me performing on one of his works. He also made the music for the seven start creatures' soundscapes that are present in my work.

Most people involved in the research were friends or became friends as we worked together. I am deeply thankful for all the care that came from those friends. This artistic research would not have unfolded as it did without the support and engagement of many of my friends, with the simple support of some and with the dedication, professionalism and skills of several other friends involved in this project.

They are - in order of the longest friendships:

Guilherme Mattos
Christina Lederhaas
Hilde Grønner Flikke
Marcelo Lipiani
Ellen Palmeira
Jakob Oredson
Stephan Meidell
Luis Guilherme Vergara
Walmeri Ribeiro
Alyne Costa
Amanda Costa
Fernando Codeço
Julia Naidin
César Migliorin
Karen Werner
María Alejandra Gatti
Alice Vanini
Ernesto Neto
Ruy César Campos

Friendship has the agency of entangling life and art. It can make the process flow in informal ways, where many ideas, understandings, reflections, works, and engagements happen through and within friendship conversations, encounters or friendly contexts of making art together. I realised that friendship is a caring host for creativity and artistic processes.

Through all the people involved in this research, I am immensely grateful to have had Dora Garcia and Rebecca Hilton as supervisors and Gunhild Mathea Husvik-Olaussen, who supervised me for a specific period. I thank the three of them for their support, care, engagement, and work in various ways throughout my process. I am honoured to have had their expertise reflected back into my work, which made me trust, take other directions, be more precise, persist, let it go and sustain what I stand for.

I thank all my distant and close friends who supported me on my journey. I thank my son, Francisco Castelo Branco Blixt, who has been with me on this journey and, at the last moment, brought his talent as an illustrator to contribute to this research. And thanks for the support of my family in Brazil.

Thanks to the exchanges and learnings throughout these years in the artistic research groups Ynterfluxes and BrisaLab.

I thank the Oslo Academy of the Arts for having a high-standard PhD programme and for their excellent work in hosting it. Thanks to the Theatre Academy, which has hosted my position in their PhD department. I also thank the many individuals who have given me great support during this journey: the technical and IT departments, the librarians, the cleaning team, the several professors, workshop masters and the many other encounters in the corridors of KHiO.

The presence of encounters can not be replaced.

Finally, I thank the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills for creating this excellent PhD Artist Program that emphasises the artistic aspect and engages with research as a way to practice art. With their programme, the artistic research field in Norway can be considered the best in Scandinavia and perhaps in Europe. It is certainly a great host a contemporary artist could have for researching their art in the actual artistic contexts. I thank this programme's great people for their engagement, support, work, and various encounters.

In this context, this PhD is a highly privileged position. I am honoured and grateful to have participated in it as a Brazilian artist.

Thanks to art as a way to ritualize life.

Fernanda Branco
Oslo, 24th of June 2024.