



# Choreographing the common: deforming approximations for territories

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Cite como  
American Psychological Association (APA)

Guzzo, M. S. L. (2021, Special Issue, April). Choreographing the common: deforming approximations for territories. *Rev. Gest. Ambient. e Sust. - GeAS*, 10, 1-20, e18438. <https://doi.org/10.5585/geas.v10i1.18438>.

## Abstract

**Objective of the study:** This article seeks to think about art and the common from a process of construction and consolidation of an artistic intervention thought and created based on the approach in a vulnerable territory of the city of Santos (São Paulo, Brazil).

**Methodology / approach:** In this writing exercise, the narrated experience is doubled by the performance entitled Friction, developed throughout the year 2018 in an artistic residence that had as its cut precisely actions of art, territory and community.

**Originality / relevance:** This performance was conceived as a choreographic deformation to inhabit territories based on the articulated presence between a group of artists, chairs and people who are transiting or inhabiting the public space, previously known and determined.

**Theoretical / methodological contributions:** A common choreography is always reconfiguration, uniqueness and difference, which becomes visible from a “community figure”, which is undone by the encounters and new configurations that a creative process arranges.

**Main results:** A new configuration of bodies, times and places crossed by art. Based on cartographic writing, the text discusses approaches between art and the common and how their experiments provide agency between body, affection, aesthetics and politics.

**Conclusion:** Experiences like this are attentive and careful to ethical issues, can provide an expansion in the field of inventive practices and encounter in a territory, and change determined values and perspectives in colonialist cities.

**Keywords:** Choreography. Common. Territory. Friction. Art.

## Coreografar o comum: aproximações deformativas para territórios

### Resumo

**Objetivo do estudo:** Este artigo procura pensar sobre a arte e o comum a partir de um processo de construção e consolidação de uma intervenção artística pensada e criada com base na aproximação em um território vulnerabilizado da cidade de Santos (São Paulo, Brasil).

**Metodologia / abordagem:** Neste exercício de escrita, a experiência narrada se dobra pela performance intitulada Fricções, desenvolvida ao longo do ano de 2018 em uma residência artística que tinha como recorte justamente ações de arte, território e comunidade.

**Originalidade/relevância:** Esta performance foi pensada como uma deformação coreográfica para habitar territórios a partir da presença articulada entre um grupo de artistas, cadeiras e pessoas que estejam transitando ou habitando o espaço público, previamente conhecido e determinado.

**Contribuições teóricas / metodológicas:** Uma coreografia comum é sempre reconfiguração, singularidade e diferença, que se torna visível a partir de uma “figura de comunidade”, que é desfeita a partir dos encontros e das novas configurações que um processo criativo agencia.

**Principais resultados:** Uma nova configuração dos corpos, dos tempos e dos lugares que se atravessam pela arte. A partir de uma escrita cartográfica, o texto discorre sobre aproximações entre arte e o comum e como suas experimentações proporcionam agenciamento entre corpo, afeto, estética e política.





**Conclusão:** Experiências como essa são atentas e cuidadosas às questões éticas, podem proporcionar uma ampliação no campo das práticas inventivas e de encontro num território, e mudar valores e perspectivas determinados em cidades colonialistas.

**Palavras-chave:** Coreografia. Comum. Território. Fricções. Arte.

### Coreografiar lo común: aproximaciones deformativas a los territorios

#### Resumen

**Objetivo del estudio:** Este artículo busca pensar el arte y lo común a partir de un proceso de construcción y consolidación de una intervención artística pensada y creada a partir del abordaje en un territorio vulnerable de la ciudad de Santos (São Paulo, Brasil).

**Metodología / enfoque:** En este ejercicio de redacción, la experiencia narrada se duplica con la performance denominada Fricción, desarrollada a lo largo del año 2018 en una residencia artística que tuvo como corte precisamente acciones de arte, territorio y comunidad.

**Originalidad / relevancia:** Esta performance fue concebida como una deformación coreográfica para habitar territorios a partir de la presencia articulada entre un grupo de artistas, sillas y personas que transitan o habitan el espacio público, previamente conocido y determinado.

**Aportes teórico / metodológicos:** Una coreografía común es siempre la reconfiguración, la singularidad y la diferencia, que se hace visible desde una “figura comunitaria”, que se deshace por los encuentros y nuevas configuraciones que ordena un proceso creativo.

**Principales resultados:** Una nueva configuración de cuerpos, tiempos y lugares atravesados por el arte. Basado en la escritura cartográfica, el texto discute acercamientos entre el arte y lo común y cómo sus experimentos proporcionan agencia entre el cuerpo, el afecto, la estética y la política.

**Conclusión:** Experiencias como esta están atentas y atentas a las cuestiones éticas, pueden proporcionar una expansión en el campo de las prácticas inventivas y el encuentro en un territorio, y cambiar determinados valores y perspectivas en las ciudades colonialistas.

**Palabras-clave:** Coreografía. Común. Territorio. Fricción. Arte.

*"Cities were tired, old spaces, imagined for a life that has not been ours for at least two centuries. We have since been launched into a strange experience of planetary monasticism: the city no longer exists, and what remains of it is a contrasting set of private houses, uneven apartments, shacks. Perhaps we should free ourselves forever from the idea of the city as the original and main stage of politics." (Coccia, 2020)*

#### Choreographing the deformation

Santos is considered one of the 10 best cities to live in Brazil, according to a ranking prepared by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), a UN body. It is the largest municipality on the coast of São Paulo and has the largest port in Latin America, which handles more than half of the country's GDP (IPEA, 2020). Inequality, however, marks this classification, as it is in Santos that we find the largest slums in the country, as well as a port area degraded by exploration, an abandoned historic center and a Municipal Market that

operates with the promise of a future that once sheltered in the coffee cycle. It is in this region, called the Market Basin, that real estate speculation disputes also take place and where cultural and educational facilities are installed and a contemporary art festival takes place, which start to propose and think about actions focused on the territory.

This article seeks to articulate notions about art and the common from the process of building and consolidating an artistic intervention created based on approximation in a vulnerable territory in the city of Santos, São Paulo, Brazil. The text is an exercise in narrating the experience and articulation of thinkers and creators who also blur creation. In this article, the experience narrated is bent by the performance entitled Friction, and is a partnership between the Procomum Institute and the Body and Art Laboratory of UNIFESP - Campus Baixada Santista, developed throughout the year 2018 in an artistic residency that had as a framework art actions and community. The territory where the performance was created and conceived was chosen from the artistic residency in partnership with the cultural equipment and the university, which already operate in the region - enabling continuous and procedural work in the territory. However, it could be - replicated in other territories through immersion, residency and in-depth studies in partnership with local culture, health and education entities.

*Fricções* was thought of as a choreographic deformation meant to inhabit territories from an articulated presence of a group of artists, chairs and people who are moving or inhabiting the public space, previously known and determined. The suggestion to name this experience *choreographic deformation* originates from the work of Fred Moten (2020), who presents it In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition issues about the relationship between art and objects in black performativity. When theorizing, in this essay about the “resistance of the object” that the radical black performance always activates, the author highlights:

Although subjectivity is defined as the subject's possession of himself and his objects, it is disturbed by a dispossessive force exerted by the objects so that the subject appears to be possessed - infused, deformed - by the object he/she possesses (Moten, 2020, p. 1).

The *Fricções* performance arises from colored chairs that were located inside a cultural equipment in a gray territory. These chairs, which were part of the general gatherings and meetings of the artistic residency, served as a device for a game. Through them and with them, this game was intended to rub, deform and perform a territory. The chairs arranged the exit and the meeting with the city.

From a choreographic game previously established among the artists, everyone leaves the meeting point carrying two chairs and form with them a wheel in a place already imagined. A displacement game begins, in which each artist moves at the desired moment,





taking his/her two chairs, changing places, always connected to the group and welcoming people who want to talk. The game has a single rule for this displacement: the individual cannot lose sight of the person who was on his/her right in the circle at the beginning. Thus, the group always moves together, even if at different times, and never disconnects.

With these play rules and displacement, the performance set up has a long duration proposal of at least two hours, in order to establish an event in that place. The proposal takes place in a deformation of the place, its usual actions and flows. There are no chairs or benches in this territory. There are many people who live on the streets, sitting or lying on the floor, talking to each other, and to other people who just pass by, walking hurriedly, to catch the ferry and cross the canal in the port - or to return home, or to go to work. How could the performative-deformative power of chairs and artists unleash vectors of subjectivation that define certain territories and people who exist under submission and resignation in front of the colonialist organization of Brazilian cities, and the controlling and imperialistic force of objects, goods or devices that operate therein?

This deformation (because artists and chairs, supposedly, should not be there) is understood as a choreography from an expanded look at what *choreography* is. If we look at the etymology of the word *choreography*, we see that it comes from the Greek *chorus* (circle) and *graphie* (writing, representation). The circle element is a reference to circular dances and the orchestra, where the Greek theater choir danced. Choreographing in the etymological sense is the drawing, etching of the space with the body in motion.

But choreography is much more than "the art of conceiving the movements and steps that compose a certain dance" (Oxford Dictionary), or describing dances on paper, as highlighted by researcher André Lepecki (2010), who takes up the history of the word again, with its first version, in the dance manual – *orchestographie* (1589) -, it emerges as an "apparatus of bureaucratic-state capture of dancing (...) Above all, an apparatus is created that is disciplined, disciplining and organizing not only movements, but also bodies and subjectivities" (Lepecki, 2010, p. 16). Still according to Lepecki (2010), in 1700, the word choreography - or *chorégraphie* - started to agency writing and movement, body and sign, paper and floor (Lepecki, 2010) With that, and from there, the term *chorégraphie* was established for the writing or notation of dances, thus, confining dances that already happened in public and profane spaces to a specific space, the theater, at the service of the monarchy in the 6th century. We started to design and build, since then, an imaginary setting that dance, or choreography, could only be organized and thought in specific, neutral and privileged places.

In modern times, this is intensified, and dance, in some way, reflects the kinetic ideal of that time, in which the automobile, the city and the constant movement and flow of bodies identifies a developing Western culture. Art becomes part of the city's structure, restricted to

some spaces of privileges and access, usually located in central spaces, with entrance tickets and certain prior knowledge required for fruition. The development of dance as an autonomous artistic form in the West, since the Renaissance, is increasingly aligned with an ideal of constant motility. The impulse of the dance for a spectacular exhibition of the movement is converted into its modernity, as defined by Peter Sloterdijk [...] as a time and a way of being in which the kinetic corresponds to 'what in modernity is the most real' (italics added to the original). As the kinetic project of modernity becomes the ontology of modernity, the project of western dance increasingly aligns itself with the production and display of a body and subjectivity capable of executing this incessant motility (Lepecki, 2006, p. 17).

Many artistic movements exploded this notion, creating other contexts for choreography, inventing the way to relate to different spaces and to the body, proposing different ways of doing dances connected with the city, abandoning the idea of *image* and *representation* to perform. When thinking about the dance produced in the city, on the streets or in spaces not traditionally recognized as stages, one can point out a dance of contexts, provisional realities and allegories from this same city, the choreographic action and performative practice are now conceived as a construction of an experience of being with people and places, creating spaces for aesthetic, ethical and political creation. The proposals made in the city and like the city they do not always resemble the format of what we traditionally know as *dance*. Aspects of performance, visual arts and, mainly, the relationship with the time and flow of movements of the artists as opposed to the city compose in the scenario where the bodies of those who dance play their role.

It is something that gains the name of *intervention*. The popularity of artistic interventions emerged in the 1960s, when artists tried to radically transform the role of the artist in society and, therefore, society itself. They are most commonly associated with conceptual art and performance art, exactly the opposite of art confined to a neutral and specific place. It is art as encounter and risk, with body and city.

French filmmaker and writer Guy Debord may have been one of the founders of this thought. With the movement that was called situationism, he wanted to eliminate the position of the spectator in the arts and made strong criticisms of a *show society*. In 1960, he planned an attack on an international art conference in Belgium. Other gatherings, such as the Artist Placement Group (APG) in London, tried to reposition the artist's role in a broader social and political context using artistic interventions. They acted outside the conventional gallery system, placing artists within industry and government departments to carry out changes. These interventions served as a catalyst for resident artist schemes and community programs. Situationists definitively marked the body's new relations with the city, suggesting new ways of thinking about cartography based on ephemeral games and actions. This movement, although theoretically having ended in the early 1970s with the dissolution of the

group, founded not only theoretical matrices, but new models of action that strained the boundaries between art, politics and cartography.

**Figure 1** – Beneath dignity



**Source:** Brisley, 1977.

This framework was based on *psycho geography*, *drift* concepts and, above all, *situations*, which are structured based on insubmissive wanderings and provocative and humorous disorientation rules, which objective was to bring out the passion and emotions related to the city. In short, playing was its method of intervention.

In his critique of urban geography, Debord (1974, *apud* Jacques, 2003) suggests the construction of the influence maps of nature, climate and the relief on affections - the psychogeographic maps, whose very name preserved a rather pleasant uncertainty, according to his author. As an example of psychogeographic games, Debord (1974 *apud* Jacques, 2003) proposed rules for the occupation of a street, suggesting throwing a party; or, yet, he narrated elementary games that taught the technique of drifting aimlessly.

The city becomes the stage for the promise of settlement and understanding conflicts, the meeting, the partying and the ritual. At the same time, in Brazil, or in a city like Santos, it is on the street that the encounter with violence, with inequality and with the forces that inhabit colonialism takes place explicitly. The artist is not out of this. An engagement in the *now*, in the present and in the *provisional* becomes necessary for the construction of an art



that creates narratives of the present (Foster, 2014). For the critic and art historian Hal Foster, the presence of the provisional, of the narrative of what is present in art, has the effect of "revealing the conventional limits of art in a specific time and place" (Foster, 2014, p. 37). This fragmentation and, at the same time, precariousness of the artistic object would be related to contemporary subjectivity, also crossed by scenarios and contexts equally fragmented from the political and social point of view. This cultural context, which many call contemporary, or postmodern, presents, according to Hal Foster (2014), allegories and not symbols, contexts and not spaces, ephemeral and not solid works:

Postmodernist art is allegorical not only for its emphasis on ruined spaces (as in ephemeral facilities) and fragmentary images (as in appropriations of art history and the mass media), but, above all, for its impulse to subvert stylistic norms, to redefine conceptual categories, to challenge the modernist ideal of symbolic totality (Foster, 2014, p. 92).

Hal Foster (2005) also used the expression *artist as an ethnographer*. What was the site of ethnographic field research has become the site of artistic transformation, which is also the site of potential political transformation. Dance, performance, choreography, as well as other artistic languages, also went through this transition. Several postmodern dance artists disrupt the choreography proposal as a *movement* or *agitation*, which does not establish a dialogue with the proposal for an intensification of the choreographic intervention field. Dance, and the body, as well as art and the city that are in constant motion. Susan Foster defines choreography in an expansive way from then on: "a plan for orchestrating bodies in motion - whether they are employees, military troops or traffic signals" (Foster, 2011, p.15). Dance as discursive and performance art articulates movement, gesture, behaviors in a visible and intelligible way. A materiality that expresses itself through a plan or organization (even if it is disrupted). In this sense, choreography emerges, as an act of "articulation, negotiating the border area between order and disorder, planned and unplanned movement" (Gotman, 2020, p. 263).

Choreographing is a practice to propose the encounter of bodies in the city. It is to create a zone of articulation, of pause, of meaningfulness. At the same time, choreographing also indicates a desire to rethink what a movement policy would be, to exhaust the idea of movement. André Lepecki (2006), in *Exhausting dance: performance and the politics of movement*, identifies as a way to create and exist the pause, or the non-moving body. In the ambivalence of the term *exhaust*, there is, for Lepecki (2006), a dance that also tires us, for always proposing the same movement structure, without thinking or proposing to problematize the present time.

The focus becomes the relationship with time, with pause and encounter. To choreograph the game that is established with the different times where the intervention



takes place: a gallery, a park, a square, a street. The artist leaves the stage, the show hierarchy and creates a relational, ritual and common art. Dance changes place: Jacques Rancière (2012) criticizes a hierarchical authority ethics in the field of the arts, proposing a relationship of game between the spectator and the work, proposing another form of relationship between artists and spectators:

The “game instinct” inherent to experience neutralizes the opposition that traditionally characterized art and its social roots: art was defined by the active imposition to the passive matter in a way, and this effect was consistent with a social hierarchy in which people of active intelligence dominated those of material passivity (Rancière, 2012, p. 58).

Another important proposition to broaden the notion of choreography is the term *choreopolitics* used by André Lepecki (2012a), in which the artists, attentive to their gestures and proposals, place themselves in a “particular and immanent action whose main object is what Paul Carter in his book *The Lie of the Land*, called *ground politics*” (Lepecki, 2012a, p. 47). For Carter (*apud* Lepecki, 2012a), the ground politics is to be attentive to all the elements of a situation, especially its physical particularities, that is, the ground we are standing on, in order to include the ground - with everything it carries as situation knowledge - and the body to compose the story. Visible and invisible entities that inhabit the urban space. The spectators themselves can be human and non-human, who are part of the ground where art takes place.

The participant/spectator, as stated by Rancière (2012), the ethnographer artist, pointed out by Foster (2005) or the issues pointed out by Moten (2020) about hypervisibility based on the radicality of black performance, is not just a passive subject before an artistic object to consume and applaud, but someone who can do things - build references, for example - based on a wealth of artistic, cultural, social and political objects - to make dissent. The spectator in the public space, or also off the stage, can be a passerby, someone who is passing by, a worker who did not necessarily have plans to go to a cultural action, or someone who went to a heritage house, or an abandoned viaduct, to exactly watch or participate in a choreographic action.

The performance shows a careful idea of ambivalence, which forces us to consider, in each specific situation and in several domains at the same time (ontological, political, economic and so on) which is the issue of performance and what, how, for whom and why performance does what it does: embarrasses, regulates, monitors, allows or invents (Cvejic, 2015, p. 30).

Emancipation of this relationship between performance and those who watch it is, above all, the power to choose between "a dominant image and another one built from individual relationships" (Rancière, 2012), and the spaces and times in which it appears. In artistic creation, the issue is not to represent reality as faithfully as possible, but to represent





a certain cartography of reality that does not reproduce it. That is, to move from one perception regime to another.

What art can do is, in a way, change the sensitive hierarchies of thought and apprehension of the city, giving the same experiences to different people, who live in very different sensitive universes. "Changing the value of things", as Hélio Oiticica says (apud Fabião, 2017). The choreographic doing proposes displacements of those who make and those who watch art in a public space, understanding that the spectator, in the city, constantly changes roles, and can also act and propose aesthetic and political transformations, as in the case of the "occupy" movements, which burgeoned in the political scenario as of 2011.

### Deformation approaches

*Fricções* was a performance intervention which was initially conceived for the Market Basin area of the city of Santos during the residence *A Colaboradora 2018*, which took place over a period of four months, with thirteen artists at the Procomum Institute, which is located in that territory, in Santos. In 2018, four choreographic actions were carried out in different spaces in that territory. An action was also taken in the city of Campinas, during the 2019 Dance Biennial, at the city's bus station, with local artists, from a short residence during the festival. The action was inspired by works such as *Jogo da Cadeira (Chair Game)*, by Diego Agulló (2015), and *Converso sobre qualquer coisa (I will talk on any subject)*, by Eleonora Fabião (2008).

The *Fricções* proposal was conceived to bring the territory's artists closer as a choreographic deformation of presence. How to create a common time of contemplation and poetry? What can an artist do to transform a degraded, abandoned territory? How can we transform the people who live here? How to bring worlds together? What can our encounter generate, as a work and as life? How to deform this ground, these objects, these devices and flows already so deeply established by the Brazilian colonial urban policy? How to create a zone of joints and movements, with other possible gestures?

Performance as a choreographic deformation causes the possibility of creating a time and space – a common duration and place. Something like what Harney and Moten (2013) call *undercommons*: a space and time that is always here, in reality and in fantasy, and where we are part of the movement of things - "We are already here, moving. We've been around. We are more than politics, more than established, more than democratic" (Harney & Moten, 2013, p.19). Performance creates this common distortion, opens the possibility of going, as artists and with artists, towards the others and to the place with the intention of looking for a connection, cultivating the included and the excluded from the



regimes imposed by the colonial cities. Deformation generates a cohabitation, in a space that can also be called *undercommons*, an encounter of sensations, or, like Harney & Moten (2013) state to build up the exceptionality (a deformation) could help to multiply hapticality, to raise the already common solidarity, to spread the feeling for others with mutual care. Then, vulnerable territories and people will not be observed, but movements of dissonance, noise, trepidation, disorientation, fugitiveness, dispossession now coexist, which, in turn, can be shaped performatively.

*Fricções* is not a proposal to improve territories, or to decorate them with art and beauty. It is a way of creating alliances and meetings based on the arrangement and displacement of people and chairs, during a set time. In the proposed choreography, the artists leave a meeting point, carrying two colorful chairs and start a game: always being together, moving and sitting around the space, welcoming people who want to be together and talk about life, about art, about being and living there, or just being. The project intended to demystify the figure of the artist for the territory and demystify the territory for the artist, to bring the encounter closer, to color the city, with the possibility of a common time.

The performance was a kind of clinic with artists: we heard stories, we told stories. A choreography proposed to articulate possibilities for new routes, new circles, with new positioning of bodies and institutions, also considering the moments when art and non-art provoke and contaminate, questioning the very existence of a separation between artistic practices and everyday life (Lima, 2017, p.82). A practical attempt to break the binarism between art and life, which, in some way, is sustained in the urban structure social fabric, as a mechanism for the dissolution of collectivities, of the common. Activate a minor gesture, such as opening up of possible experiments created and sustained through lesser know-how, with procedurality as the way to do it. *Fricções* was thought of as choreography from a minor gesture.

In its punctual reorientation of the event, the minor gesture invents new ways of living-a-life. It moves through the event, creates a pulse, opens the way for new trends to emerge, and, in the resonances that are awakened, a potential for difference gets closer (Manning, 2019a, p. 15).

The performance was designed as a program, with monthly sessions and conversations between the participating artists to elaborate, share and propose based on the experience during the *deformation-performance*. The experience was forged, then, as a sequence of practices and reflections, a program - to be lived during a set time, both during the performance outings, and during what was left of them, as bits and traces of the experiences, digested throughout the term of the other experiment.

Thinking and choreographing programs also allow the expansion of the performative experience in its duration - not only of those who do it, but of those who participate, in some



way in the proposal, activating a field of expressions and encounter. Manning (2019a) explains that “in time, in the art of time, what is activated is an expression field through which a difference of experience quality is forged, and not a subject or an object”. And they displace time from what is everyday, to another engagement of the body, of memory, of the sensory-perceptual experience. Performance deformation is a “relational activity between different space-time thresholds. It is the then-with” (Manning, 2015, p. 107).

The idea of forging a program also comes from the reference of Eleonora Fabião, actress and performer at the School of Communication at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. She calls performative actions “programs”, because she understands that this is the most appropriate word to describe a type of methodically calculated, conceptually polished action, which in general requires extreme tenacity to be carried out, and which approaches improvisation exclusively insofar as it has not been previously tested. Performing a program, for the author, is fundamentally different from jumping head on into improvisational games (Fabião, 2008). For the same author, the performer, who in this case is being thought of as an artist in the encounter with the city, does not improvise an idea: he creates a program and sets up himself to do it, even if his program is to invite viewers to activate their propositions, for example. “When performing your program, dis-program both the organism and the environment” (Fabião, 2008, p. 237).

The inspiration for the insertion of a program in the performance theory presented by Eleonora Fabião (2008) comes from the text *How to Create a Body Without Organs for You*, by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, in which it is proposed that the program is an “experimentation engine” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1999, p. 12 apud Fabião, 2008). A program designed as an experience activator. Far from an exercise, a preparatory practice for future action, experience is the action itself. The word *experience*, if thought etymologically, includes the meanings of risk, danger, proof, learning by trial and error, rite of passage. There is an implicit idea of transformation, of passing, of knowledge and recognition in the body, a common recognition. This recognition of itself *as part of something*, which distorts both the territory and own experience of subjectivation, is the main objective of the experience and the program. For both artists and participants. Choreograph the common through ideas and movements that suggest and generate new activations of presences and bodies, which are recognized even within a dissent as shared experiences. The choreographic movement, or the pause - which is also equally important for choreography -, can be thought of as activating and carrying an agency that draws the event, which occurs in the body, but also outside it, moving in new ways of existence (Manning, 2019a).



## Common deformations

*Fricções* was inspired by two artistic works also carried out in urban spaces. One of them was the proposal of the artist-intervener, participant in the edition of the project #Lot2015, the Spanish author Diego Agulló. At his residence, held at Casa do Povo in December 2015, in the context of LOTE OSSO, he brought together 40 artists, allowing an approximation between dance and philosophy, problematizing notions such as dance risk, impermanence and transience

He proposed the discussion of the term *mischief*, invites us to think about power not from the perspective of domination, but as the ability or skill to stimulate the movement and change, generate confusion, hindering, allowing chaos to enter, changing the order of things. In the words of Diego Agulló:

It is indeed more a game of stimulation than a game of domination. Mischievous intentions do not mean being dangerous within a realm of influence and control, preventing things from moving too much. Instead, mischief invites you to travel through a dangerous realm; it invites the projection of transversal trajectories through a domain of power. The power of mischief is the power to go through power. Mischief avoids the temptation to want to appear dangerous, acts more like a secret agent, who is not meant to dominate, but rather to cross a domain and turn things upside down, allowing chaos to appear. The intentions of a mischievous agent are not to dominate others, imposing a control domain, but to encourage others to move. The power of a mischievous agent is to transform any domain into a dance floor and to transform any domination into an invitation to dance. But an invitation to dance can negatively affect you. The mischievous agent is malicious per se and implies an amusing understanding of violence, a bearable version of violence and bad intentions. (Agulló, 2015, np).

Choreography as a game, as a mischief, as a transformation of space. Thoughts of transformation and subversion of power. In this occupation carried out by LOTE, one of the first exercises took place in the public space, in the square that exists very close to Casa do Povo, at the exit of the Tiradentes subway station. There, the participants materialized Agulló's proposal called the *chair game*. In this game, the participants, seated first in a circle, had as a rule only to keep in their field of vision the person who was sitting to their right. Then, different configurations developed through the space. Each of the 40 artists and their chairs (in this case, each took only one chair) positioned themselves, transforming the square. Nothing else happened. The game lasted an hour. Passersby, including police officers in the square, wondered what was that and what was happening - was it a protest, a demonstration?

The presence of artists in the city, their pause in front of the movement of the square, the street, the sidewalks, in some way, denounce a busy, agitated, inattentive city. Agulló's proposal for LOTE, at that point in time, manifested itself as a mischief in the city. For Agulló (2015), the task of a naughty choreography is not to organize domains of influence, but to choreograph an infiltration to gain access to a domain projecting transversal trajectories,



throwing problems through the domain of power, in order to stimulate movement and change the order of things, again, approaching the idea of deformation, yet, in another format.

Another reference work for the *Fricções* performance is *Will talk about any subject*, by Eleonora Fabião (2008). In this proposal, a woman sitting on the street with an empty chair in front of her, hold the following sign: I will talk about any subject. Since 2008, when this action was taken for the first time at Largo da Carioca, in Rio de Janeiro, many people sat in the empty chair in front of the performer Eleonora Fabião, interested in experiencing this unusual experience. According to Eleonora (2014), the idea, not only of this one, but of other performances that she has been developing over the last few years, is to propose and experience a new way of relating with people and the city. The type of action varies according to the need of the moment, but it momentarily addresses a recurring question: "Which actions generate the world in which I want to live and which actions prevent the development of such world? So, I create the world I want from the actions I take "(Fabião, 2014, np). The performance was also performed in Berlin (2008), Bogotá (2009), Fortaleza (2010) and São José do Rio Preto (2012). And other performances have been developed by Eleonora since she completed her Ph.D. in performance at New York University in 2006.

*Fricções* gets close to Fabião's proposal because we have two chairs, we talk to people and we have time in public space as artists, performing. However, the invitation is not made by the poster, but by a group that establishes itself with the chairs in the space, generating the doubt the choreographic deformation, which makes people get close and invite themselves, or ask whether they can sit down

Both *I will talk about any subject*, by Eleonora Fabião, as well as *Chair Game*, by Diego Agulló, served as a reference to create the performance *Fricções*, with its proposals of relationship with the chairs, with the city and with the artist's engagement as a deformer of an experience in the city. *Fricções*, however, presents a program that is developed specifically with the objective not only of creating a common time between the artist and the city, but among the artists themselves who participate together in a collaborative action, as in certain artistic residencies or festivals . The focus of the common, of looking at this common deformation, was the major result of this action. But what common is that?

A common that presupposes practices of collaboration and coexistence in weaving support links guided by democratic, community values and shared power - including the power of the artist. An art that comes close to this concept, as an exercise of contour and definition, means that creating (in its different forms and ways) does not separate the world between us - artists, teachers, producers who investigate, think and make art - and others - students, audience, curators or spectators. Or, as Cohen-Cruz (2020) suggests, given the current context of demanding socio-political challenges, we have to think, how artists and



their propositions can reveal the nuances we have in common, looking for more people to generate ideas about how to manifest the most diverse experiences of the world.

A common art founds a relationship of belonging and interdependence. A community that does and is made by what is common as we move or choose to pause. The common starts, then, from the recognition that “we exist for the things that support us, just as we support the things that exist through us, in a building or in a mutual establishment” (Lapoujade, 2017 apud Moraes & Parra, 2020).

This establishment, or fabrication of the common as a concept that drives the insurgency of new collectives and defined “(doing the common) as an expression of action, of the will to generate the collective” (Rendueles; Subirats, 2016, p. 104 apud Savazoni; Silveira, 2018, p. 11). It is an activation, an idea of building together life possibilities and meanings, which are not only given by the government or by large institutions, but which can be thought of through organizations, meetings, of artists and activists.

Jacques Rancière (2005) leads us to the notion of aesthetics as a dimension interested in the ways of organizing and experiencing relational engagements with the common as a substrate for sharing. Based on propositions in dance that provoked the presentation of bodies for possible elaborations and expressions, we are led to think and propose ways of building a common where women could take part (Rancière, 2005, p. 15) of this aesthetic, ethical and political sharing.

In a more theoretical and historical definition, community art, *dialogic art* or *community-based art* refers to artistic activities based on or created in a specific community or territory. They can be carried out in any language or media and are characterized by interaction or dialogue proposed by one or more artists with a community or population.

The term *community arts* emerged in the mid-1960s, in the United States, as well as in a number of countries in Europe, as Kate Crehan (2011) points out in *Community Art: An Anthropological Perspective*. In this same work, the author mentions that, in practice, what defined community arts as a whole was much more a sharing of ethos than actually an aesthetics (Crehan, 2011). A collective ethos would then be the construction of a common, of something that unites and welcomes us. Aesthetics would be a consequence of this, being, therefore, allied to this. And then we return to Jacques Rancière (2005), for whom aesthetics is at the heart of politics. It is in the aesthetic field that today “the battle previously focused on the promises of emancipation and on the illusions and delusions of history” continues (Rancière, 2005, p.12).

The common is established through the relationships, the meetings, by sharing, and also by rules, games, conviviality, support and presence practices. The common requires constant co-production and cannot be appropriated: it needs to stop being common to be a prospect of exclusive appropriation. Ordinary art does not have a choreographer or director,



it has many. It results from a production among all and at the same time is nobody's. It is a relational domain of entities, not only human, but also objects, institutions, spaces, climate. Common art dances with the wind, with the tide, with the rain. It therefore depends on "a community that sustains and updates it permanently" (Moraes & Parra, 2020).

The proposition to choreograph the common with the *Frictions* performance occurred through a series of previous and necessary actions so that the artistic making would be possible: articulating the care network and public policies, accessing people, analyzing, understanding and managing the work together with those who do it. Art, thought of as an aesthetic experience, was the way in which we went through and investigated the notions of presence, care, body, common and politics. We seek, in the course of this experience, the theoretical grounds of art thoughts through the categories of the author Erin Manning (2016) about the *minor gesture*, an aesthetic and political field oriented in the notion of procedurality as a strategy to new forms of thought and art production, as well as the call for collective insurgencies in the current framework. "It is a matter of emphasizing that art is, above all, a quality, a difference, an operating process that maps trails towards a certain adjustment between world and expression" (Manning, 2019, p.12).

It is important not to romanticize the choreography of the common as something easy, idyllic and of a better nature. Common art, thought of as a process, can also be the perfect legitimization of an action that makes public investments in culture useful, making the benefits of these investments visible to less favored populations. It is also important to be attentive and aware of what Michel Foucault (*apud* Otte & Gielen, 2019) calls *pastoral power*, in which social and cultural workers can help socialize within a hierarchy that does not change at all inequality and exclusion. Obviously, not all community works flow this way, and care and attention are constant and sensitive. The implementation of community art contributes to the idea of integration and socialization based on a dominant culture - one must always be aware of this. For it is we, the practitioners of the cities, who update cultural, urban-political projects and urbanism itself, through the practice of urban spaces (Jaques, 2006).

Urban planners indicate possible uses for the projected space, but it is those who experience it in everyday life that update it. It is the appropriations and improvisations of spaces that legitimize or not what was designed, that is, it is these experiences of space by their inhabitants, passers-by or wanderers that reinvent these spaces in their daily lives (Jaques, 2006, p. 120).

The political and cultural situation of Brazil, and its minorities reality, demand radically different policies and thoughts. Occupations and choreographies in different cities. Although these movements, gestures, practices and actions wish, to some critics, something that is utopian, it is through the diffusion of the discussion about community art or art in less favored



territories that we can learn to deal with differences. Not only that they occur in places other than the theater's neutral space, but that propose ways of doing and articulating, in fact, those who participate in the actions. Artistic processes are not based on consensus or cohesion, but, paradoxically, on a shared dissent (Otte & Gielen, 2019).

It is important to continue risking and subverting the imposed logic, activating escape lines and change values. Inventing, a possible common choreography. Refuse to negotiate or camouflage possibilities of speech, action and encounter. The artist, as a deformer of a common sharing field and experience, can seek to work with established communities with the best intentions of political engagement and institutional transgression, but must also be aware that this work can be recoded by his sponsors as social proselytism, economic development, public relations or affirmative actions (Foster, 2005). The always recognized *social counterpart* of notices and actions that involve sponsorship in art and culture.

It is important to get involved with ethics, poetics and politics that are the radical otherness that this type of action proposes. This ontological attitude, highlighted by André Lepecki (2012b), of distorting the encounter, time and objects, but of placing oneself implicitly in demarcating "an ethics of acknowledgement of the complexity of things and one's allusion to the act of listening, care and attention with its otherness" (Benso, 2000, apud Lepecki, 2012b, p. 96).

Care and attention are also needed to think what is common. The cities and territories built under the colonial logic took care not to leave the space and time favorable for this type of meeting and sharing, and even when they occur - as is the case of an artistic action that involves a community - they are at risk of becoming merchandise, product and advertising. Important to resume with Aimé Césaire (2020), in his Discourse on Colonialism, how this colonial and capitalist structure transforms subjects into objects with use value and exchange value destined for disposal, and the war against racism, colonialism structured in the city and in our life they have to be present in the way that artistic actions are thought and disseminated. These systems are allied with the violence they exert on humans and non-humans, turning them all into instruments, equipment, goods for consumption - also devices and shows to be sold in the form of social action.

So, how to avoid to be caught? Understanding that, with practices and actions, as Suely Rolnik (2018) suggests, we can be like a Moebius tape, without inside or outside, without beginning or end, but inhabiting it and constantly imposing cuts in its landscapes, following paths that can lead both to an already established life (reactive micropolitics/miserable life) and to the one that, with effort and constant thought work escapes this established logic, managing to forge previously invisible and inexpressible curves and interrogations, which present themselves to embody, to create new visibilities and new languages, as a deformation-performance, as a body that is available for the





encounter, that has the power to discover itself happy to move and to be self-conscious (Rolnik, 2018).

A common choreography is always reconfiguration, displacement within a common to insert there what was not common. It is difference and uniqueness. Difference that becomes visible from a *community figure*, which is undone from the encounters and the new configurations that a creative process arranges. What is common appears precisely in the cracks, in the splits, in the fractures, in what is established as new from a proposal, apparently unabated, difficult or unthinkable. A new configuration of bodies, times and places crossed by art. This is not an equal art for equals, it has no perfection no virtuosity. It is an art that deals with singular encounters, producing differences, dissent, joy and a lot of struggle-poetic. An articulation zone. Or a choreozone (Gotman, 2020).

Common art and its experiments provide agency between body, affection, aesthetics and politics. We also put in front of a territory, a public space, and we expand in the field of inventive practices people who, in principle, did not belong, nor knew this complex universe of knowledge, movements, and who, when entering this field, acquire visibility and enunciation power.

The common appears in the interstices of a fabric of dissent, when new figures of feeling, doing and thinking, new relations between them and new forms of visibility of this rearticulation are demanded and generate new forms of subjectification. Politics is thus the establishment of new relationships between meanings, meanings and bodies, bodies and their modes of enunciation, places and destinations (Cesar, 2007, np).

A sharing between the invisible, the intangible-sensitive, which Manning (2019b) and Massumi (2002) call immediacy. To think of a policy of immediacy is to start from where things are still being formed and categories are not yet given. "Cutting in half, moved by the future force of the presentification of the past, and of the present of the past. Immediacy does not seek structure, but compositions" (Manning, 2019b, p.14). It seeks to make and constitute practices and knowledge based on the meetings and how they are constituted - understanding that visible and invisible presences are also part of this construction.

There is no formula to define this. The trail is opened in each experience and for each experience. There are countless variations that constitute the possibility of having a common choreography. We can also think that the choreographies that change bodies in time and space are ontological. Donna Haraway (2003) uses the term "ontological choreographies" (2003, p. 11 and 51) when talking about her Cyborg Manifest and her relationship with companion species. It is as if, at all times, we formed new ways of being and moving - not only in the city space, but in the technical and political spaces that the urbanization process organizes.





It is also necessary to think about ontological choreographies linked to public facilities, which operate in cities, which provide experiences and meetings. To reduce the gaps and also to friction the links university-equipment and culture public policies, people (artists or not), occupying the streets, the conversation and elaboration of private processes, and the encounters that take place in the deformation-performance. This deformation, this *undercommons* (Harney & Moten, 2013), can be a space for coexistence, poetic referral and new alliances for small and mundane changes - so necessary to cheer, or escape, a city.

The opening to the embrace moves against the background curtain of exclusion, and the history of exclusion is a series of incorporative operations. This is how the opening to be affected is inseparable from the resistance to be affected. Dance writes this pulling and pushing into the air and onto the ground and over all the skin of the earth and of the flesh that makes up the city (Moten, 2020, p. 189).

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