

Artigo Indefinível

a CO-CREATION & PLAY by
João Ghira & Samuel Gapp

“Artigo Indefinível”

Translatable to “*something beyond definition*”.

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IN AUGUST 2023, THE PIECE WAS PRESENTED IN THE MEDIEVAL CISTERN OF THE CONVENTO DE SÃO FRANCISCO OF LISBON. SEVEN MUSICIANS AND A DANCER PERFORMED INTIMATELY WITH A SCULPTURAL SCENE, GUIDING AN AUDIENCE THROUGH A DREAMLIKE, EPHEMERAL PATH OF DECISION-MAKING. VISITORS NAVIGATED A LITERAL LABYRINTH OF CHOICES, CYCLICALLY INFLUENCING THE PERFORMERS AND THE FORMS.

Link to the documentary’s trailer:

<https://samuelgapp.com/artigo-indefinivel/>

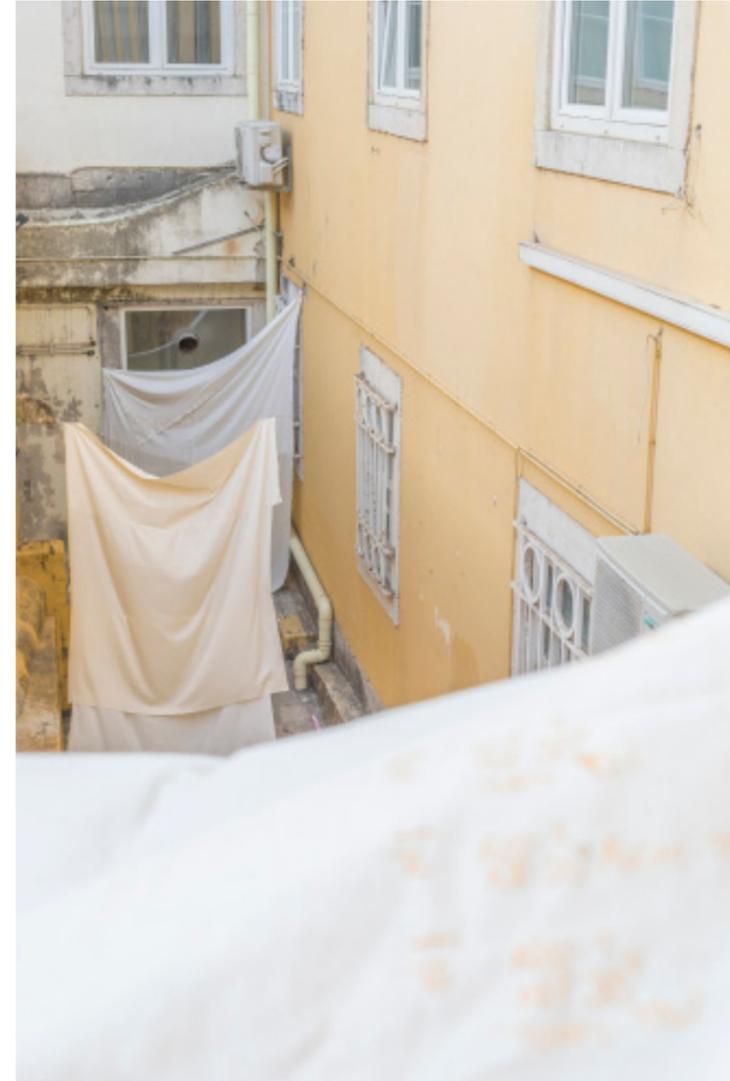
“Artigo Indefinível”

is an ongoing artistic research project by Samuel Gapp and João Ghira, exploring how human perception and subjectivity can be influenced by the effects of movement, sound, materials and space as evolving ecosystems.

Artigo Indefinível was set up inside and around the remarkable Convent of São Francisco of Lisbon, where the School of Fine Arts took up residence many years ago. From the outset, the play was conceived to lay the foundations for reciprocal interaction between audience, performers, and a sculptural setting built specifically for this unique location. Observed and Observant became interchangeable, as the subject of the artwork constantly shifted perspective. The audience, unknowingly, had a decisive impact on the work, on its form, its dynamics, and thus on its very reality.

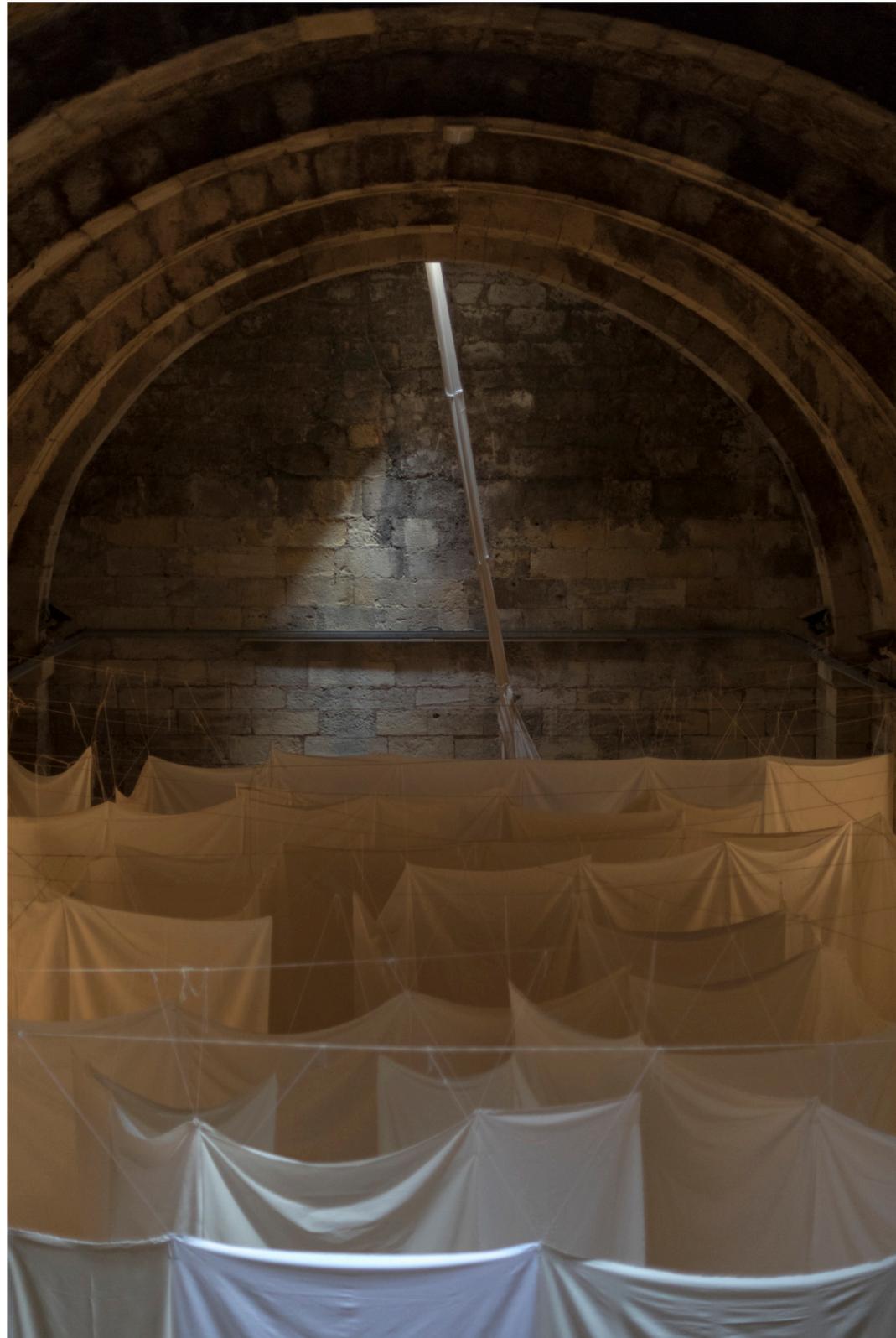
Conversely, the work would influence the participants' behavior. For Samuel and João: *"this reciprocity not only influenced the piece's unfolding form, but it also helped bring it into being. The sculptural scene and written scores served as foundations, accepting ephemeral gestures in a tangible dramaturgy of form, space and sound."* Long-lasting talks between the two artists, coming from different fields of the arts, brought up how an artwork comes into being-one, and what it reveals about our relationship with sense and meaning.



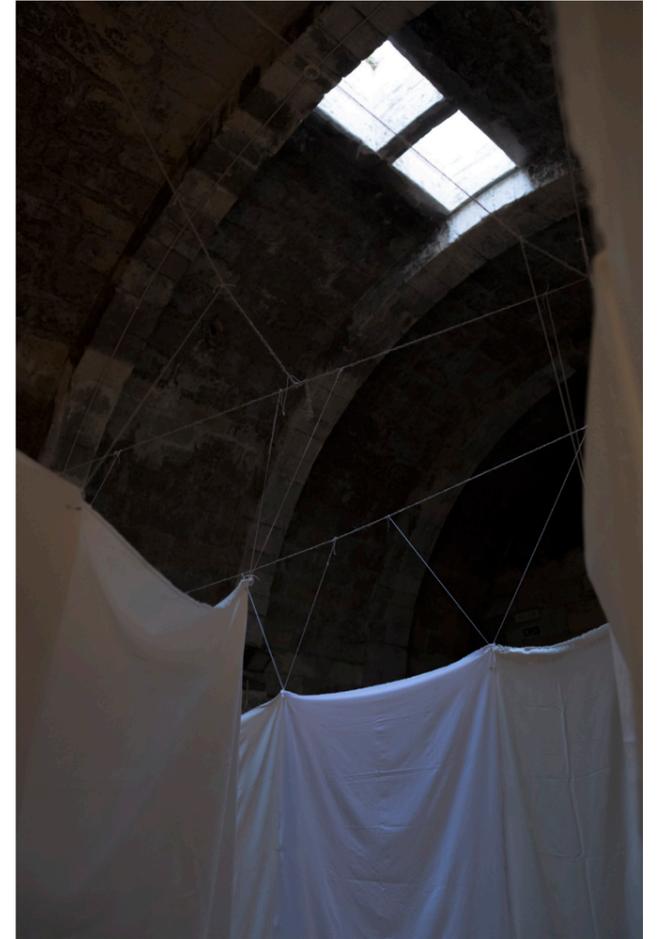


These exchanges inspired questions about historical themes and their resonance today. As a possible starting point for their research, the co-creators turned to “compositional concepts” of ancient Greece. The *labyrinth* as a structuring enclosure of ideas and actions; *peripeteia* as an inversion of form or narrative, and *catharsis* as a collective, transformative force. From the start, the project would unfold simultaneously as a dimensional construction and a philosophical inquiry.



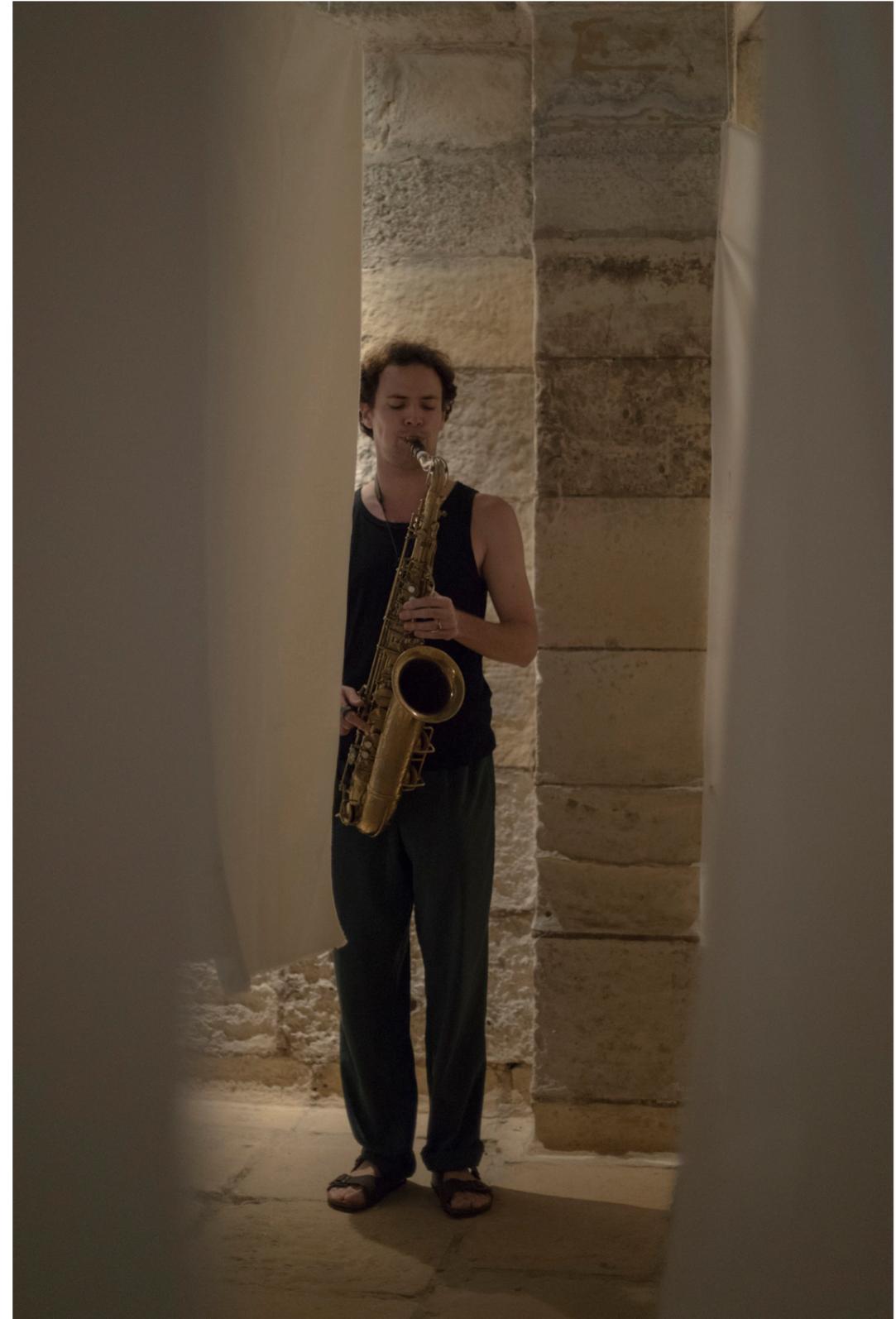


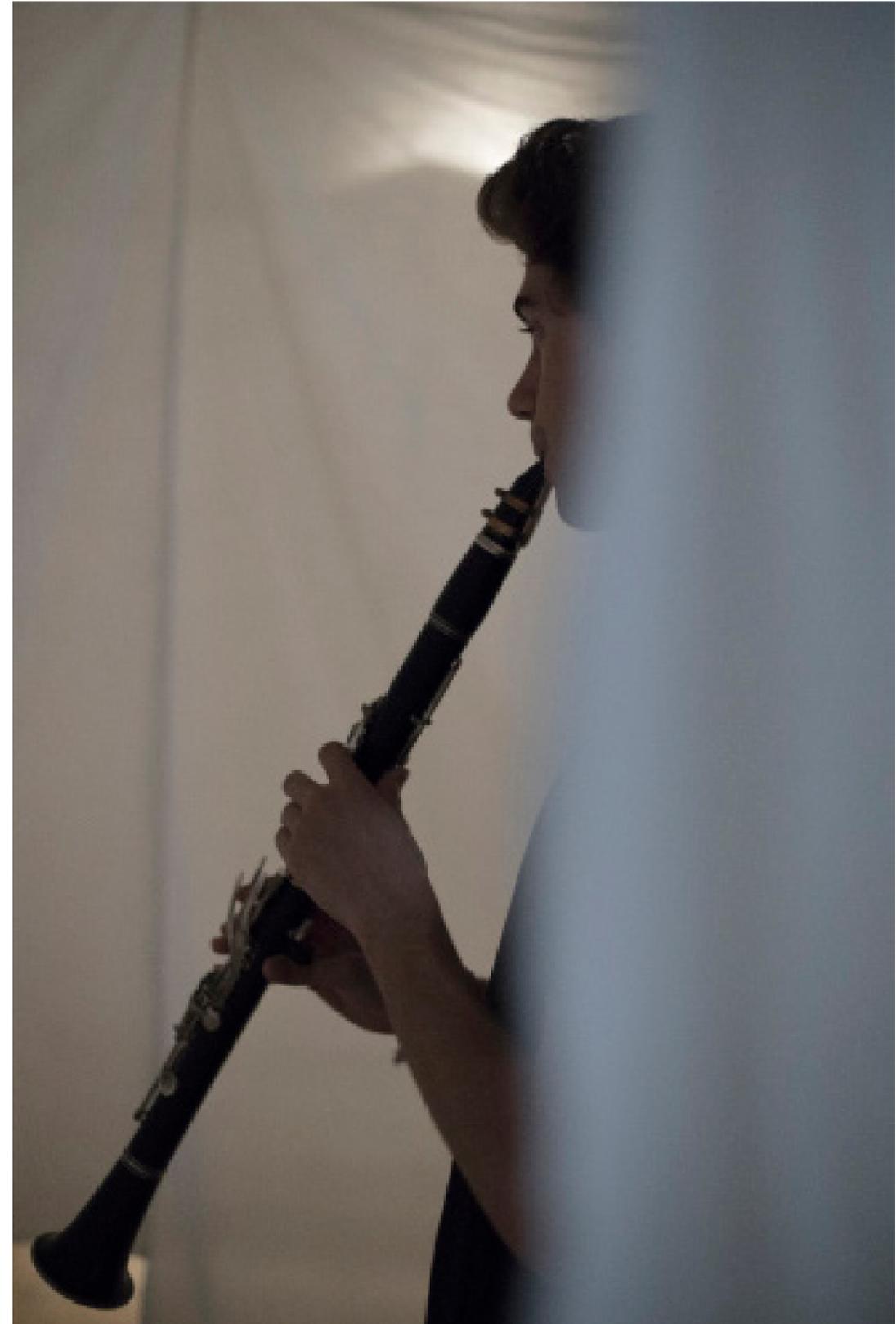
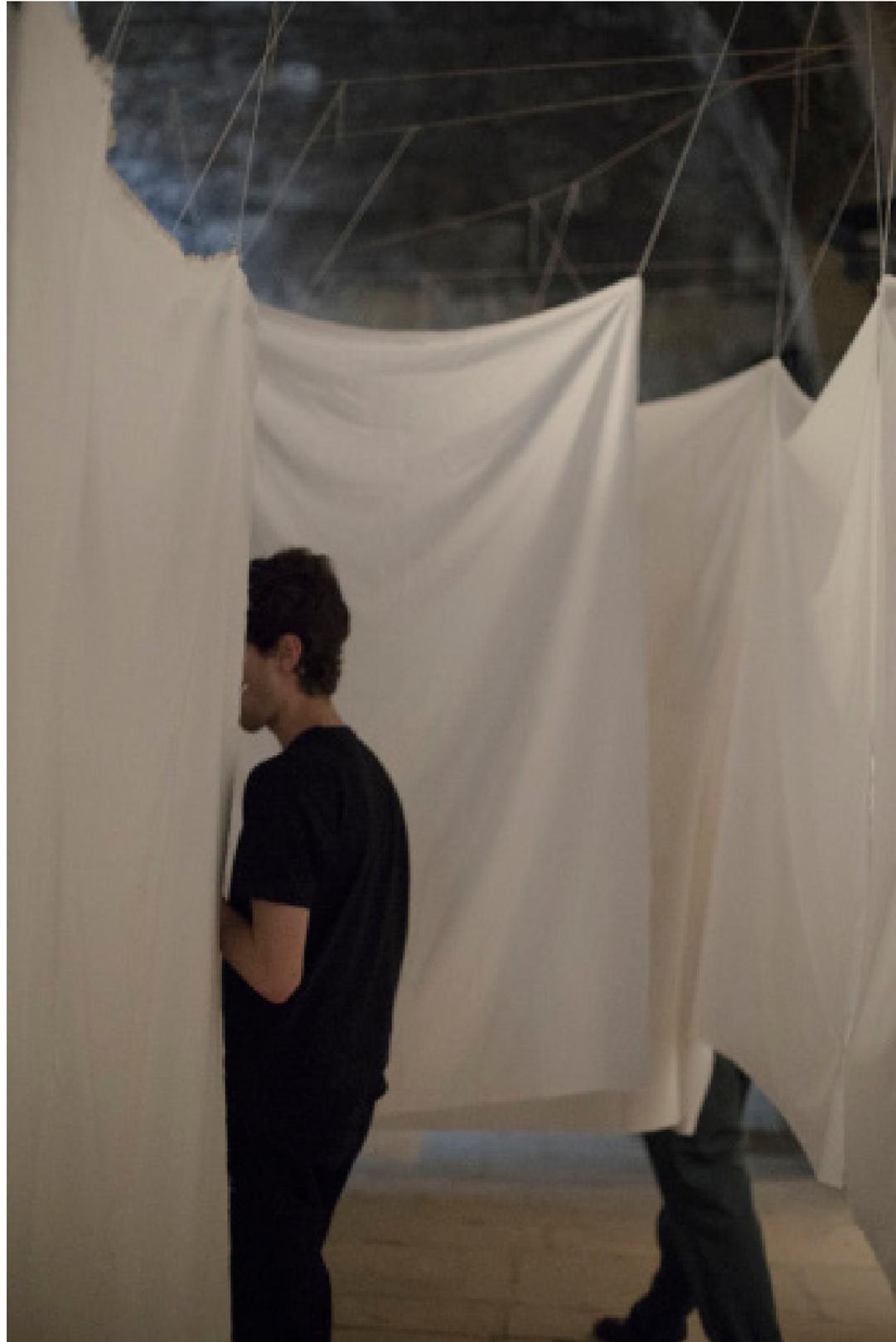
Translucent, changeable, and unpredictable textile walls evoked the internal barriers of the creative process; their changing surfaces recorded the friction between entities and egos, carrying a silent, almost transcendental charge. The audience and everyone involved not only observed this labyrinth from above, but experienced it as maze-treaders, capturing fragments, gathering partial perceptions, and relating them emotionally to inherited narratives or their own. Historical themes thus appeared not as fixed figures from the past, but as unstable presences whose meanings resonate and reconfigure themselves in the present.





Written scores guided musicians, yet allowed them to improvise. As the audience moved through the labyrinthine paths, their seemingly spontaneous actions shaped the performers' decisions, governed by those specific rules. Stone, fabric, instruments, and bodies formed a living microcosm and an ever-shifting interplay.

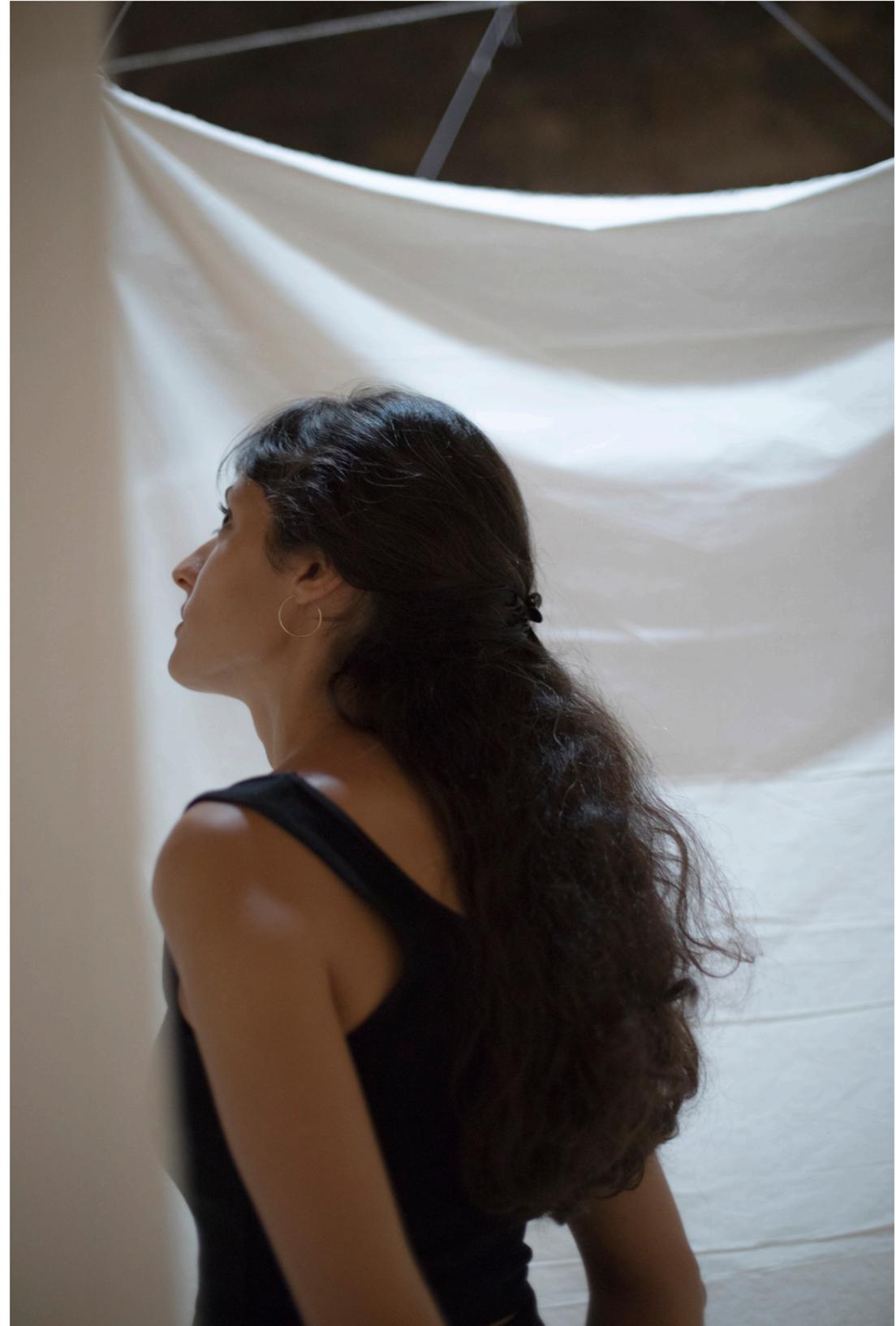








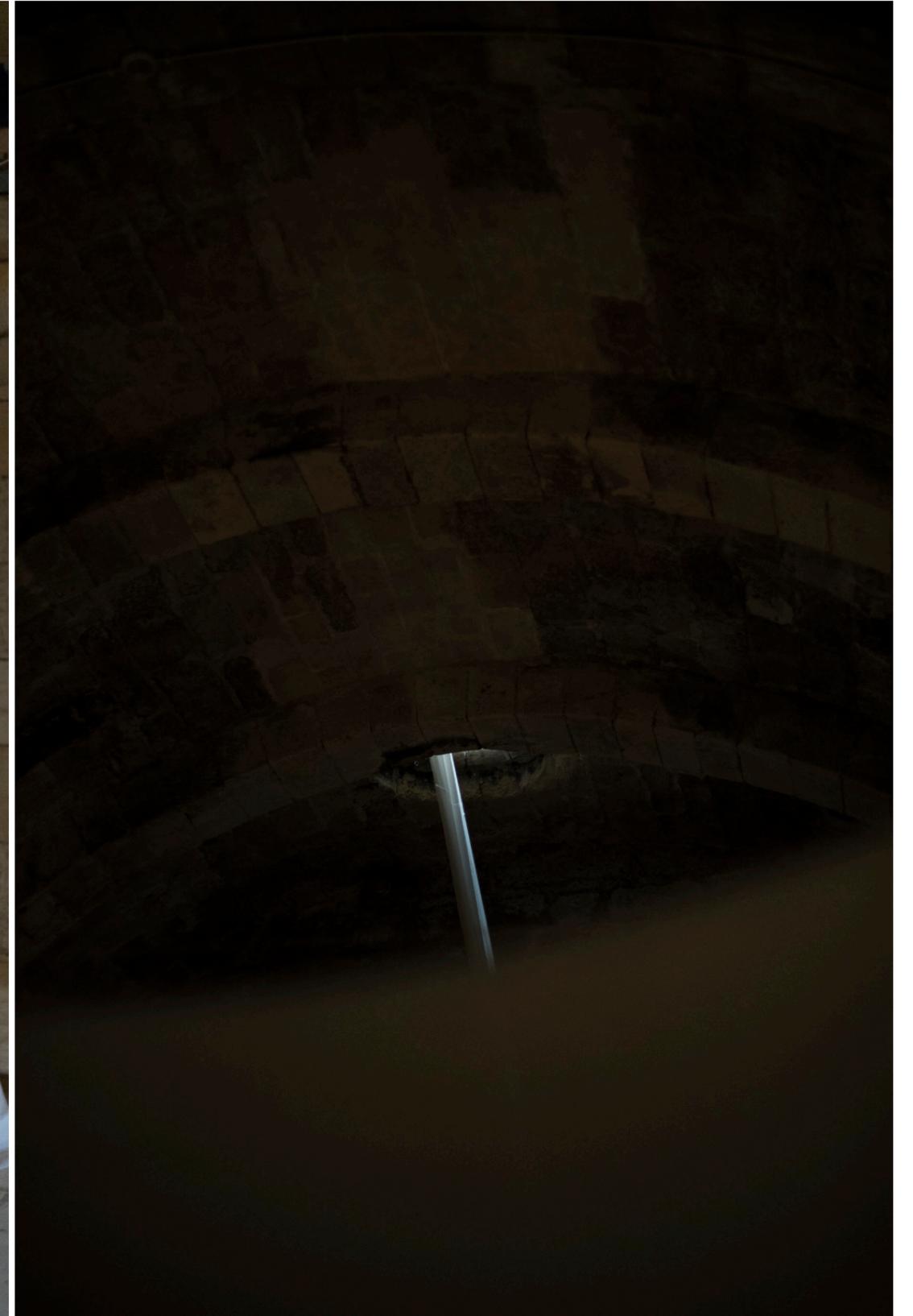
The installations carried a subtle but persistent sense of something withheld, a missing note that prevented the works from settling into complete form. Their aesthetic operated through a back-staged or veiled character, as if what was presented stood on the verge of appearance while simultaneously withdrawing from it; something reminiscent of a construction site or of sculptures covered by sheets in a sculptor's studio. Elements seemed partially covered, deferred, or suspended, creating the impression that the work was not fully disclosed but caught in a state of becoming. This condition of near-form, of emergence without closure, shaped the viewer's experience as one of attentiveness to what flickers at the edge of visibility.





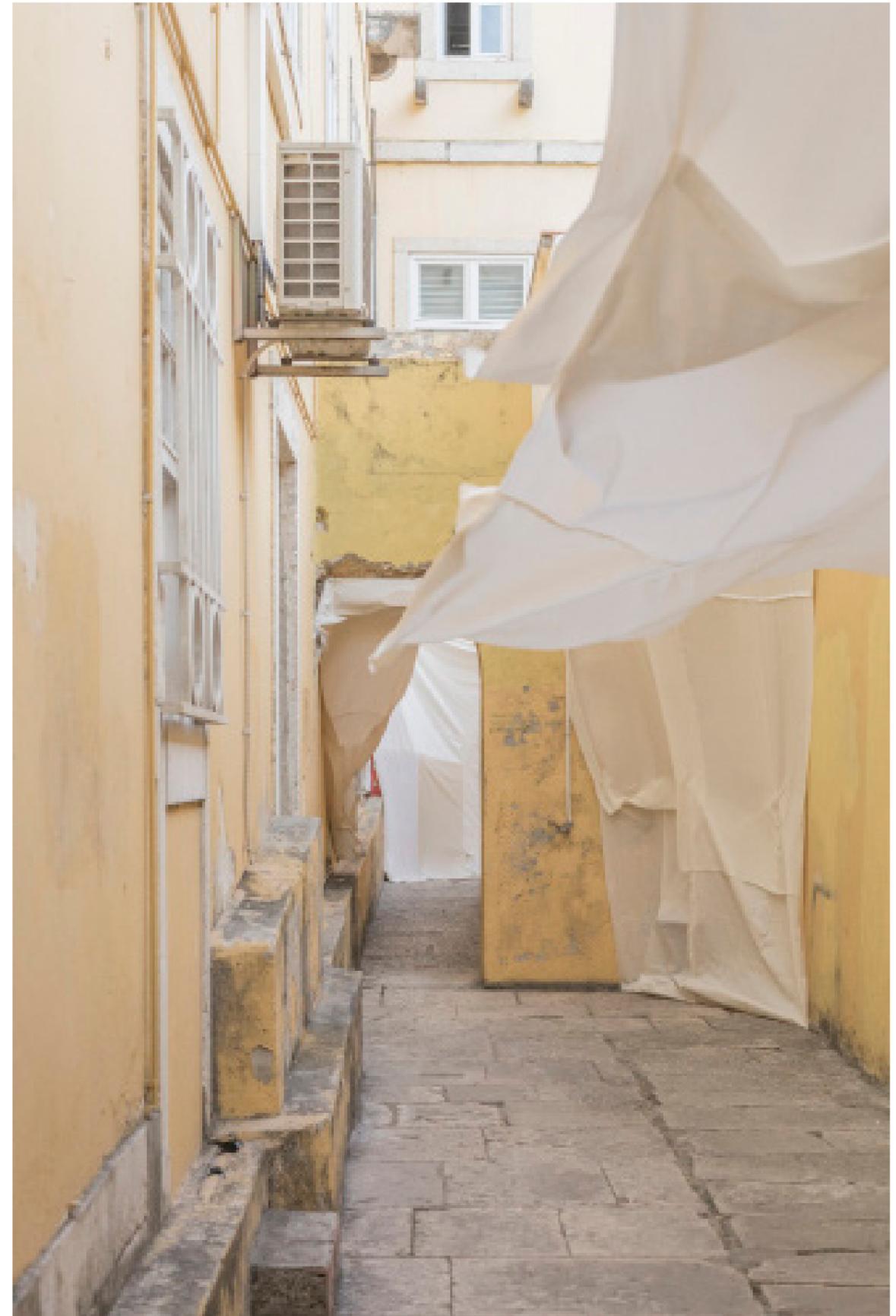
The nature of the scenic arrangement and sonic composition were therefore neither decorative nor merely spatial. Each configuration of materials, movements, and sound scores articulated a question about presence itself: how something comes into view, how it is framed, and what remains obscured. The decision to construct layered, translucent environments was not only aesthetic but ontological. By foregrounding mediation between physical structures and sensory fields (e.g. auditory, tactile, etc.) with the means of veils, thresholds, incoming sounds, the installations suggested that being is never fully given, only staged in relation to perspective, movement, and encounter. What appeared did so through concealment; what was hidden actively shaped the visible. In this way, the set became a reflection on ontology itself: existence understood not as stable substance, but as a dynamic interplay between revelation and withdrawal.

Performer Inês Zinho Pinheiro, veiled in a textile cloak, embodies transformation and reciprocity, moving between the roles of observer, mediator, and agent.





Artigo seeks to sensitise the audience and stimulate their perceptions. Its ever-changing sonic and physical nature mirrors the organic, causal, and continuous processes of nature and gestation. Yet it both implies and resists fixed perspectives, inviting participants into an infinite state of “being-in-formation.”



“This confrontation with the ontological, the questioning of identity and its limits, creates fundamental ambiguity on multiple levels for everyone involved — ultimately referring to the complexity, precariousness, and fluidity of contemporary concerns, while counteracting the global climate of biased, fundamentalist, radical tendencies and oversimplified ideologies.”

João Ghira & Samuel Gapp
Lisbon, December 2023



CREDITS

Artigo Indefinível

a CO-CREATION & PLAY by
João Ghira & Samuel Gapp in 2023

With the artistic body

Pedro Massarrão Cello

Eva Aguilar Cello

Mariana Dionísio Voice

Afonso Gaspar Flute

Tiago Mourato Clarinete

Honza Michálek Saxophone

Miguel Cardoso Tuba

Inês Zinho Body

Marco Sardinha Film and Production

Hugo Nunes Filming and Editing

Kenny Gad Filming

Maria Bicker Photography

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