



Artigo Indefinível

in RESEARCH RESIDENCY at
OSSO Associação Cultural

“Artigo Indefinível”

Translatable to “*something beyond definition*”.

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OSSO RESIDENCIES’ EXPLORE ARTISTIC PRACTICES IN DIALOGUE WITH CRITICAL, AESTHETIC, AND POLITICAL THINKING, ENGAGING WITH THE SPECIFIC CONTEXTS AND TERRITORIES IN WHICH THEY TAKE PLACE. IN THE SMALL, REMOTE VILLAGE OF SÃO GREGÓRIO, IN THE INTERIOR OF PORTUGAL, ARTISTS SAMUEL GAPP AND JOÃO GHIRA HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO DEVELOP “ARTIGO” AMID THE STORMS THAT MARKED FEBRUARY 2026 IN THE TERRITORY.

“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.

The residency develops through a parallel theoretical and sculptural process. References are brought and framed, in the spirit of their study, from authors in the visual and sonic arts, composers and philosophers who address topics of interest. Namely, the creation of reality and meaning through human subjectivities. Inevitably, questions concerning economies and ecologies of attention.

The scope of the writings considered includes analysts as well as practitioners, such as theatre scriptwriters, an affinity that inevitably resonates with the work's dramatic and playful dimension. The objective: to develop the project in its interactive and interdisciplinary aspects. Experiences in contact with the piece are shared as it is assembled and tested through a format of open discussion.



Material from the latest iterations is collected and studied, alongside a survey of key concerns. These include its analytical and playful character, its interaction with the public, as well as material, disciplinary, philosophical, and performative dimensions. Attention is also given to its points of failure - what the artists have described as its fallacious character.



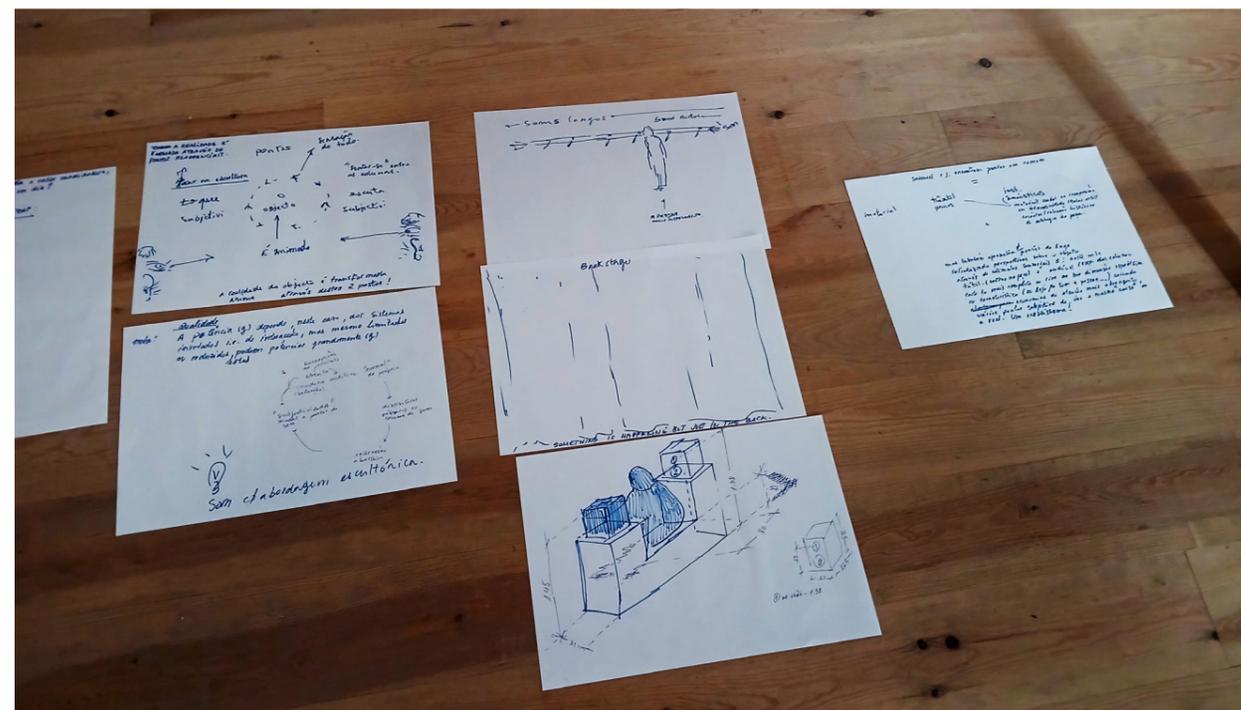




Here we see
the piece in
the process of
being rebuilt,
where various
formal tests are
taking place.



On this ground, the work is approaching epistemologically through experience and artistic practice. This idea of complexity of systems leads to the questioning of the categorical frameworks produced by human language, which do not always effectively intersect with the phenomena they attempt to describe.









The idea of an ecosystem is developed here through the senses. These, constitute the main field of exploration at this stage. The 'devices' therefore activate perceptual and attentional responses that remain malleable, allowing the piece to be experienced in multiple ways. Rather than producing something closed or pre-determined, the artists seek to create an open object, similar to systems observed in nature, setting phenomena in motion that affect our perception of it. In this sense, the work raises fundamental questions: Who defines, and how the identity of such a perceived object is defined?



Besides, the residency becomes an opportunity to reflect on and test ways of making the work accessible to the public. This operates both on a practical level, allowing elderly people and children to have a rich experience and on a conceptual level, ensuring that the piece remains accessible within its theoretical matrix. In this sense, it opens a more “comprehensive” way of working, where complexity is addressed through forms that shall remain accessible to all audiences.





DURING AND AFTER THE RESIDENCY, SOME TESTIMONIALS WERE COLLECTED ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE:

When I arrived in Lisbon, after a week of living almost exclusively with Samuel and the piece, I dreamt, having awakened to the darkness and shadow play of the big white curtain against wall of my room: *¿ ¿ I was inside it; better! I was It, hanging??!!* I felt like I was in that fabric, half sewn, half open, undone, half composed, and half-wrapped up, wrinkled and tangled. But I was alright; it was a high and privileged situation.

At the same time, what seemed to be another plane of the same dream, pieces of my life were flashing: unsolved questions with a dear friend, a wedding with my girlfriend(...). Having gotten up to write what I had experienced, it crossed my mind the connection of these two planes, that just as last week I was composing the piece, now pieces of my life were being added, somehow. I thought of all the anthropomorphising I might have done with it back then and how this might have been still in my subconscious.

Now in the darkness of my living room, I remembered what might have activated that dream. I was feeling a lot of heat while in bed and I had moved right, dragging the sheets with me, and felt they were wrapped, do you know that feeling? That the sheets are not straightened anymore? Anyways, I moved at some point and the sheets moved with me and I became the thing, and apparently some bit of awareness took care of me after I had awakened, and I also witnessed the becoming of me: and sued by pieces, I was at show.

On a stormy afternoon, a photographer called João came. It was during a crucial period of the installation, and Samuel and I were talking near the piece, discussing ways in which it could fit into the field of sensations, how this should be conveyed to people, and perhaps making a comment or two about the ontology of the thing. João, after photographing it, walking around it to the taste of that sound that reverberated through it and the room, approached us enthusiastically:

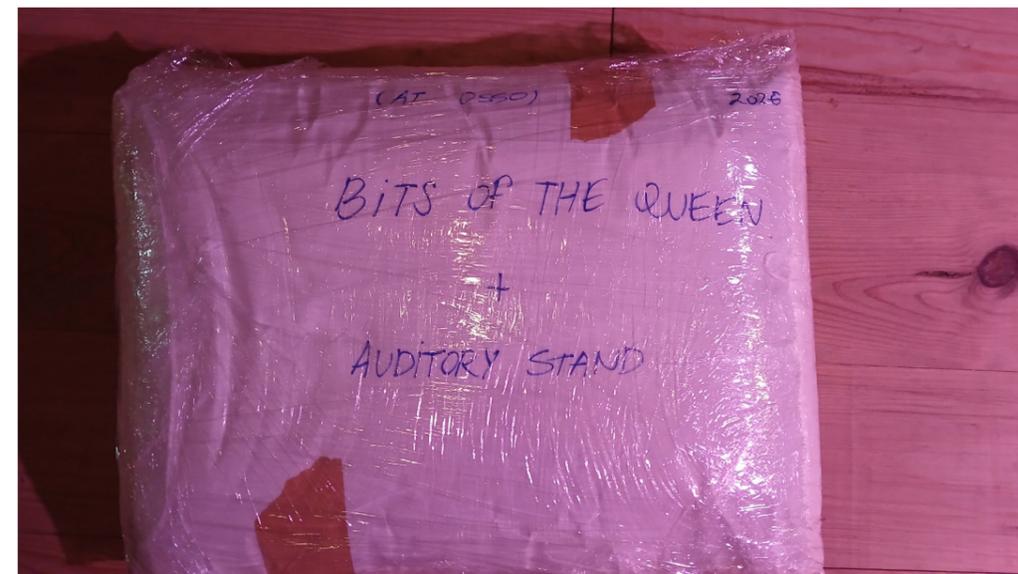
«Can I tell you an experience??? When I was a child I used to watch some cartoons called Nemo, do you know them?! It's one of those old ones anyway... ; It's just that I was transported to when I was a child ! ...It was a boy who flew in a bed, and was carried through various scenarios. I now saw myself as a child again, small, smaller than the bed. ...as if it were this piece here, big! I don't know! look, now I returned there...»

A smile sprang from our faces; we found that beautiful, how it resolved so simply and purely all that boring conceptual conversation we had had.

The name “Queen” came to me as I remembered a video I had seen, one of those nature ones. Well... I suppose I had it in the back of my mind: when I was disassembling the piece, I wrote down on a fragment of its condensed packaging: “Bits of the Queen”.

Anyway, in that video, some very strange creatures, half rats, half other things, moved underground in complex tunnels and were blind, which reminded me of Plato’s allegory of the cave. Everyone worked for a queen, much larger than all of them, and she, almost immobile, breathing painfully, displaying a large, translucent, flocculent white belly, remained at the centre. The queen supposedly produces many litters, an absurd number of them, and provides for the survival of the group and its extension, while that body works for her and responds to her needs.

I thought of her as a mind, and of how we were composing it (our piece). How it feeds on us, forcing us to work for her, and in turn, how without it we do not survive. ; Our art dies if we do not give it exactly what she asks for ! is it the same with language?! The Queen can also be a drag, a crossdresser, who transforms, dressing in various senses, to impress... to feel good... The human perspective, after all, works in the same way: it finds the veins through which it wants to feel good; some make more use of their hearing, others of their sight, others of what they touch, smell... thus, constructing very particular visions of the world.



During the residency at OSSO, while we were in the process of creating a new piece, a new “listening stage”, as we called it, several ideas emerged regarding its accessibility. We thought about forms of inclusiveness, of making the piece ‘democratic’ in its feeling or in its essence.

Young and old should be able to feel it. A difficult middle ground to find, much due to practical issues: height, width, physical arrangement, whether the invitation was well made or not, and so on. At the height of an adult it would not serve children, and close to the ground it would be a problem or difficulty for some. It was decided that an average height for the sound device could serve and equally potentiate that whole range, and compromises had to be made. And it is important to note that the type of experience we wanted to provide at the moment would only work if it were enhanced at the level of the ears, so that the qualities of the sound could be felt in our bodies, organs and skeletons, and in turn, the mind.

But would the seated position be the best way? In the choice of these practicalities, sometimes things, or forms, that for ourselves would be ideal are lost; but at the same time, on the contrary, if we choose to keep them only for ourselves we run the risk of a certain conceptual encryption, a kind of self-referential aesthetic. In the end, we improvised a bench, and it worked; we did not quite know why, but for something very obviously related to comfort and comprehensiveness.

Some time later, I was attending a class at the Faculty of Letters of Lisbon, taught by Professor Paulo Borges. During it, the origin of several terms was discussed, such as “to be”, which in Portuguese has two ways: “ser” and “estar”, and the resonance of those words in the experience of existing: whether we feel them, and to what degree. There was talk of incomplete modes of feeling; for example, an authorial reference that refers to a wound that human beings perhaps feel, for having an incomplete vision of the world, and the attempt to fill that void at all costs (whether by reading books or by looking at a mobile phone). The heteronym of Fernando Pessoa, Alberto Caeiro, was also invariably mentioned and his “revolutionary proposal” that vision, or the naturalness of being-there, already transmits all the completeness necessary if we can have it and that many conceptualities would spoil it.

I no longer remember what the guiding line was, but after, there was talk about the simple state of being seated. Of how in many cultures, and we sometimes forget this, a large part of life is spent seated. That this is a form of contemplation of the world - of being in the world - and feeling world. How it opens a perspectival field and provokes specific ways of being and existing.

As perhaps we may think of sitting in certain regions of Portugal. An image that inevitably stays with us when traveling through those regions, especially in the hot season, is of the seated people; just looking. Where this piece is now presented, for example... It takes a big part of the day and, we find, is a specific sitting. The sitting here is different from the sitting of Lisbon. One feels that. Thinking about sitting gave me a click. Ok! now my field really opened up and I have a vision, “in the mode of Caeiro”, of what we had created at the residency. Something I had already felt when Samuel placed the device at the right height for my ears, a unique perspective, without much explanation.



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