



# UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

## EMOTIONAL CONTAGION: THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF PERFORMANCE ART

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a Master's  
Degree in Culture Studies: Management of the Arts and Culture

By

Marta Alves Silva

Universidade Católica Portuguesa – Faculdade de Ciências Humanas

November 2021



# UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

## EMOTIONAL CONTAGION: THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF PERFORMANCE ART

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a Master's  
Degree in Culture Studies: Management of the Arts and Culture

By

Marta Alves Silva

Universidade Católica Portuguesa – Faculdade de Ciências Humanas

Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Peter Hanenberg

November 2021

## **Abstract**

Performance art gathers a group of people in a certain time and space to live an experience that goes beyond the artistic realm. Despite this encounter being widely acknowledged as socially inscribed and despite the audience group playing an active role, this contribution remains, however, unclear. By exploring the social nature of the encounter and by focusing on a situation in which the co-present audience is bodily engaged, this dissertation proposes that through their sensorial worlds, each audience member may not only be the object, but also the subject of that engagement, nurturing and confronting the sphere of the gathered group and the artwork, infecting each other in a complex and dynamic interplay. Having this in mind, performance art is addressed in artistic, social and emotional terms. The aim is to inspect how an emotional contagion may happen amongst an audience group with and through an artwork. Emotional contagion – a term borrowed from Erika Fischer-Lichte – addresses here a process of reciprocal transformation found within a broad universe of sensorial forms mediated by the body according to cultural codes. A theoretical review on performance art is conducted in the context of Culture Studies. In this regard, four axes are addressed – knowledge, politics, audience engagement and emancipation – and an emotional framework, founded on three dimensions, is developed – liveness, immersion & intimacy and community. A case study was chosen to substantiate this theoretical proposal, resulting an in-depth analysis of *Silent disco* (2019), a performance by the Portuguese artist Alfredo Martins.

**Keywords:** performance art, emotional contagion, audience emancipation, relational aesthetics, participatory artistic practices.

## Resumo

A *performance art* reúne um conjunto de pessoas num determinado tempo e espaço para viver uma experiência que transcende o âmbito artístico. Apesar de ser amplamente reconhecido que este encontro é de carácter social e que a audiência desempenha um papel activo, esta contribuição permanece, no entanto, pouco clara. Ao explorar a natureza social deste encontro com enfoque numa situação na qual a audiência co-presente é corporalmente envolvida, esta dissertação propõe que através das suas dimensões sensoriais, cada membro da audiência pode não só ser objeto, como sujeito deste envolvimento, nutrindo e confrontando a esfera do grupo reunido e do trabalho artístico, infectando-se entre si numa interacção complexa e dinâmica. Neste contexto a *performance art* é abordada em termos artísticos, sociais e emocionais. Pretende-se examinar como poderá ocorrer um contágio emocional entre os membros da audiência, com e através do trabalho artístico. Contágio emocional – um termo desenvolvido por Erika Fischer-Lichte – é aqui ampliado, designando o processo de transformação recíproca que ocorre por meio do amplo universo das formas sensoriais que são mediadas pelo corpo, de acordo com diferentes códigos culturais. Uma revisão teórica da *performance art* é realizada no contexto de Estudos Culturais. Neste seguimento, são discutidos quatro eixos – conhecimento, política, envolvimento e emancipação da audiência – e é desenvolvido um modelo emocional ancorado em três dimensões – vivacidade, imersão & intimidade e comunidade. Um caso de estudo foi escolhido para fundamentar esta proposta teórica, resultando numa análise profunda de *Silent disco* (2019), uma performance de Alfredo Martins.

**Palavras-chave:** *performance art*, contágio emocional, emancipação da audiência, estética relacional, práticas artísticas participativas.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like first to express my appreciation to Prof. Peter Hanenberg for his commitment to assisting and supporting me throughout this research-journey. I thank him for his trust and enthusiasm on the topic from the very first moment, even before he became my supervisor. I am grateful for our productive discussions, and his insightful observations, kindness, and encouragement until the end.

I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to Prof. Luísa Santos, whose recommendations were invaluable, especially in the early stages of research and writing. I deeply value her support and guidance.

I gratefully acknowledge Alfredo Martins' willingness to give his time and share his thoughts on his artistic practice. I also thank him for the inspiring experience I had at his *Silent Disco* (2019) that came just at the right moment. It was instrumental in fueling the idea I had in mind for this dissertation.

I would also like to thank the team of Electra Magazine for their daily inspiration, particularly to my gifted friend Sofia for our constructive discussions and her unparalleled support, as well as, to Paula and Juliet for their assistance.

Finally, a special thanks to my parents, Madalena and Alberto, and also to Eduardo, Teresa, Joana and Catarina for their unconditional love and strength that truly kept me going throughout this journey.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1. Performance Art</b> .....	6
1.1. Introducing the artform.....	6
1.2. A brief historical overview .....	8
1.3. Current situation .....	21
<b>2. Performance art and the social sphere</b> .....	27
2.1. Knowledge.....	28
2.2. Politics .....	31
2.3. Audience engagement.....	35
2.4. Audience emancipation .....	40
<b>3. Performance art and emotional contagion</b> .....	41
3.1. Liveness.....	44
3.2. Immersion & intimacy.....	46
3.3. Community .....	48
<b>4. Case study: Alfredo Martins's <i>Silent Disco</i> (2019)</b> .....	53
4.1. Description .....	54
4.1.1. Separation or preliminal.....	54
4.1.2. Transition or liminal .....	57
4.1.3. Incorporation or postliminal .....	62
4.2. <i>Silent Disco</i> : the experience of emotional contagion .....	63
4.2.1. Liveness in <i>Silent Disco</i> .....	64
4.2.2. Immersion & intimacy in <i>Silent Disco</i> .....	65
4.2.3. The community of <i>Silent Disco</i> .....	70

<b>Conclusion</b> .....	74
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	78
<b>Annexes</b> .....	87
A. Interview Alfredo Martins .....	87
B. List of cited artworks .....	97
C. List of figures .....	102

## Introduction

The focus of this dissertation is to study the potentialities of performance art in creating a space for artistic, while social and emotional experiences. The emphasis is on the social nature of encounters fostered by performance art, and on examining how emotional contagion may occur within an audience group, based both on the artwork itself, and on the interaction between audience members.

Although performance art evolved as a contemporary artistic practice focusing on audience engagement, what happens through and beyond the artistic framework, i.e., among the audience group, remains widely unstudied. Therefore, this dissertation will attempt to understand the factors and components that allow the audience to be involved and become active within the context of a defined artistic framework. How does the audience respond to the invitation they are given? How do they create a space for mutual construction? How do they co-produce an artwork together? How can such a result emerge in an audience that touches and is touched by the artistic/social experience? With this in mind, this dissertation proposes that this can take place through the circulation of emotions mediated by the bodies involved.

Umberto Eco wrote, “in every century, the way that artistic forms are structured reflects the way in which science or contemporary culture views reality” (Eco [1962] 1989, 13). Aligned with the “social turn in contemporary art” – which was particularly strong after the 1990s in Western countries (Bishop 2006, 180; Bishop 2012, 3), this inquiry will attempt to pin down what happens when performances highlight social conditions.

The suggestion is that audience members who are bodily co-present in the same time and space are bodily engaged. This study considers how the audience’s sensorial universe can be awakened and intensified through reciprocal exchange in a given artistic/social encounter. It intends to answer the following research question: how can performance art foment an emotional contagion?<sup>1</sup>. An in-depth understanding of the art form needs to be able (or not) to integrate social, relational and emotional issues. Having the research question formulated as such and

---

<sup>1</sup> An extra type of contagion to add to the already overloaded use of words related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

having defined the expected results, it is important to note that emotional contagion may be just one way of engaging the audience and artwork co-production, as there are most certainly others that are equally (or more) valid and interesting. Similarly, there are many other ways of creating a socially inscribed environment with the potential for emotional contagion to take place. The intention is to study what is required for a process like this to occur.

To address this research question, the dissertation followed a combined methodology format that includes a theoretical review of the existent literature on performance in the context of Culture Studies. It follows this critical analysis with an interpretative approach to existing theories on Performance Studies (Carlson 2018; Fischer-Lichte 2008; Goldberg 1979 and Westerman 2016) and to their relation with society (Barthes [1967] 1989; Beuys 1974; Bishop 2012; Bourriaud [1998] 2002; Dolan 2005; Rancière [2004] 2009a and Rancière [2004] 2009b). By retrieving Fischer-Lichte's (2010) concept of emotional contagion, it has developed a conceptual framework that is most notably linked with liveness (Reason and Lindelof 2017), intercorporeality (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2012), intimacy (Berlant 1998), immersion (Alston 2016; Frieze 2016; Machon 2013), and community (Bishop 2012; Bourriaud [1998] 2002; Rosenwein 2006).

This conceptual framework required an in-depth analysis of a case study, intended here a cultural object. The case study selected for this project was *Silent Disco* (2019), a sixty-minute performance by Alfredo Martins with an audience of about sixty people at each performance, each of which was held in non-conventional venues. In the form of a social gathering, the audience shares the same space and time with the rest of the group, and there is no stage or artist participation. I chose *Silent Disco* (2019) for its intimate and immersive participatory potential, and also for the fact that I had the opportunity of being an audience member myself. Drawing on this, I will first share my personal experiences, and then follow these with a critical analysis using "Spectator-Participation-as-Research (SPaR)" methodology (2012, 122). This combines first-person testimony and reflection with theoretical writing (Heddon, Iball and Zerihan 2012), but not only. With the aim of gathering as much information as possible about *Silent Disco* (2019), the above is further enriched by an analysis of the performance material, including the script and a teaser made available by the artist. In addition, with a view to finding an intersection

with the artist's perspective, it draws on an interview with Alfredo Martins held on 3 August this year (2021). The conversation follows a semi-structured format that shifts and adapts to the course of the conversation while also discussing topics in greater depth.

Despite focusing mainly on the audience and its relationship with the group and the artwork, this dissertation does not include feedback from the other members of the *Silent Disco* audience. As audience narratives have a natural and permeable subjectivity that comes from each spectator's gaze on the experience (as my personal observations show), this case analysis has sought to embrace a multi-layered combination that includes the point of view of the artist – who has a distinct and wider perception of what happens in that time and space each time the performance is presented. The decision to interview the artist instead of the audience members is consistent with this idea.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters and for clarity and consistency will first contextualize the object of the study in artistic and social terms in order to orient the research and give substance to the proposed relational argument.

Chapter 1, "Performance Art" introduces the artistic discipline by not only outlining its distinctive aspects, but also by presenting a brief historical overview of the medium up until the present day. This is mainly contextualized within the traditions of the Western art world and traces the most distinguished art movements through the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. The experimental, multidisciplinary and participatory nature of performance is explored in order to examine the openness of the art form in a combined dimension between art, people and social spheres.

Chapter 2, "Performance Art and the Social Sphere" addresses the art form as being part of the social fabric, and is fourfold: knowledge, political, audience engagement and audience emancipation. First is a discussion of processes of knowledge production outside the formal circuits. This is followed by a discussion of the relationship between art and politics, and then an exploration of participatory artistic practices. This train of thought culminates in a discussion of expanded notions of spectatorship leading to audience emancipation (Rancière [2004] 2009b) and these are then addressed as a relevant process in both artistic and social terms, where a relational model of emotional contagion can play a role.

In Chapter 3, “Performance Art and Emotional Contagion”, this emotional model is hypothesized. Drawing on relevant literature in Performance Studies, Fischer-Lichte’s notion of “emotional contagion” is revisited. The study will then propose a new look at the concept, and ask how Performance Art can foment emotional contagion. A threefold conceptual framework is developed: Liveness, Immersion & Intimacy, and Community. Firstly, it will discuss the relevance of having a live encounter, in which the audience shares a spatio-temporal presence for mutual exchange with other living bodies. Secondly, I will look at immersive techniques in an attempt to understand if they can provoke an emotional experience. Thirdly, I will look at the relevance of creating a living-micro-temporary community in that time and space. The conclusion will consider that a process of emotional contagion may be enabled by having the three dimensions combined.

Chapter 4, “Case study: *Silent Disco* (2019), a performance by Alfredo Martins”, aims to validate the model developed in the previous chapter by using a particular performance as an example. It begins by introducing *Silent Disco* (2019) and making a detailed description organized in three stages: Separation or Preliminal, Transition or Liminal, and Incorporation or Postliminal (Turner 1982). The description is a combination of my personal observations and an analysis of the *Silent Disco* script and teaser, followed by a critical study that takes into consideration each of not the dimensions discussed in the previous chapters.

Before proceeding further, it is useful to define more clearly some of the terms most commonly used throughout the dissertation. For practical reasons, *Performance Art* (the object of study of this research) will be called *Performance*. It describes a bodily art form inscribed in the terrain of social and audience engagement. Considering that the audience in performance is expected to play an active rather than a passive role, the term *audience* is used in preference to *spectator* or *public*. The latter is more frequently used in Theatre Studies. Additionally and while also being further explained in Chapter 4, it should be noted that the term *emotion* aims to embrace an extended scope of the sensorial universe that is mediated by the body, including sensations, affects and feelings, among others. *Infection*, *contagion* and *contamination* are used interchangeably to refer to a situation in which audience members and the artwork enter in a transformative reciprocal change. *Liveness* is not described in opposition to mediation, and

*immersion* is intended to describe a technique that performance artists can use to foment emotional contagion, but that does not necessarily follow an Immersive Theatre framework.

## 1. Performance Art

### 1.1. Introducing the artform

Within the wider context of contemporary mediums and art forms, this dissertation focusses specifically on *Performance Art*. It adopts a multidisciplinary<sup>2</sup> approach, and embraces other mediums including literature, film, music, theatre and dance in multiple combinations with the aim of enacting new aesthetic experiences. The involvement of a performer communicating ideas in front of an audience can sometimes lead to it being confused with theatre. At other times, its physicality is reminiscent of dance and, at yet others – because of its links to the contemporary art world, it can be confused with the visual arts. By abandoning traditional, established forms of art making and by combining them, artists can take an advantage of the space between media and methodologies. Through its ability to harness the qualities of a variety of artistic domains, performance is able to fully expand its own potential as an *independent* artistic practice. Grounded on the artist's free will, and due to its open-ended character marked by the absence of rules or established boundaries in its nebulous dimension, “any strict definition would immediately deny the possibility of performance” (Goldberg 2004, 9). Simply put, what we understand by a *performance* is a contemporary artwork with a live character that is experienced (or lived / witnessed) by an audience in the form of an event.

Performance art can take on various forms. To give just a few examples in order to define it, it can be a solo or collective work; it is frequently – but not always - body-oriented; it may or may not have the artist present; it can include any medium or material; it can use a stage or not; it can tell a story or not; it can be improvised or follow a script. It may be interested in an element of chance, including complex movements or everyday actions; it may last a few minutes or several hours; it may be exhibited in a formal setting such as a museum or art gallery, or more informally on the street or in alternative spaces such as cafés or clubs; it may be part of a major

---

<sup>2</sup> Please note that the term chosen here and used throughout this dissertation when referring to performance is *Multidisciplinary*, as this is intended to describe a situation in which people from different disciplines work together. This is distinct from *Cross-disciplinary* (the view of one discipline from the perspective of another), *Interdisciplinary* (a synthesis of different disciplines) and *Transdisciplinary* (in which a unity that goes beyond the disciplines is created) (Jensenius 2012).

event or be merely an isolated happening (Battcock and Nickas 1984; Goldberg 2004). Very often, it has a fleeting character, but re-enactments – although sometimes controversial – are also acceptable, as will be explored later.

Due to the closeness created with the audience through the body, as well as, the open-ended possibilities that this artistic language undertakes in breaking barriers, performance might be conceived as a way of communicating with the audience through the artistic experience. As advocated by the artist Terry Fox (1979), performance is “an attempt at synthesizing communication. It's an attempt at a new communication”, a “direct confrontation” (Fox [1979] 1984, 105).

The relationship that is established between the artwork, the audience and the artist in the here and now is part of the artwork itself. In case of the artist being physically absent as it is the case of the study case of this dissertation, the relationship established between the artwork and the audience may be what enriches the artwork. Therefore, audience, time and space in which is inscribed are key elements of performance (Bernstein 2019) as together, entered in a process of dialogue and negotiation that contributes to what is created. In regard to the audience in particular, any sort of collaboration or participation is expected, whereas, performed as an intimate experience or with a mass effect. In its most varied forms, being a surprising and unique experience or even a shocking one, it may function as a way of conveying ideas or incite audience reflection, while inviting them for dialogue and action (Bernstein 2019).

Therefore, it might be understood as a contemporary art form different from any other that entails multidisciplinary live art events with a social ethos, in which artists and audience have an active presence (Wood 2019). As suggested by Catherine Wood, the senior curator of Contemporary Art and Performance at Tate, it is more than an artistic medium but a stand, a tool that brings contemporary art to the liveness, it is “not a genre of art separate from object-making but an attitude that has infiltrated the entire terrain of contemporary art” (Wood 2019, I). Similarly, and within a two year-research project conducted by the museum in collaboration with the academia, the theorist Jonah Westerman have argued for an expanded notion of performance from simply an artistic medium towards an “interrelated set of questions

concerning how art relates to its audiences and the wider social world” (Westerman 2016, 1), and it is also in this regard that this dissertation is drawn upon. It seems interesting that even Allan Kaprow, an artist from the 1960s who has tried to define performances of that time, as it will be explored later on, have claimed that happenings (as he put it), “are not just another new style ... they are a moral act, a human stand of great urgency, whose professional status as art is less a criterion than their certainty as an ultimate existential commitment” (Kaprow 1993, 21).

## 1.2. A brief historical overview

Historically and despite having preliminary manifestations through ancient rituals and medieval and renaissance spectacles for religious, entertainment or celebration purposes, or even circus, among others, in its multiple forms which goes from poetry, storytelling or theatre (Carlson 2018), the major influences of performance date back to the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bernstein 2019), which was a century marked by fundamental breaks with the past, great revolutions, groundbreaking ideologies and artistic movements. Here, it seems important to understand how performance was shaped along the years.

Going back as far as to 1909’s Italian political turmoil, F. T. Marinetti published the *Futurist Manifesto* on the *Le Figaro* - a cheers to modernity and progress – giving rise to *Futurism* (Carlson 2018). From then on, futurists started to gather together to share ideas while innovative concepts and mixed-art forms such as poetry, theatre and painting were explored. Just to give an example, artists at that time, such as Luigi Russolo or Giacomo Balla, were used to organize experimental evening events called *Serata Futurista* in which the artists performed with much noise, speed and movement creating a truly hectic environment (Goldberg 1979). More than surprising and creating a drunk stimulus to the audience, this hectic pace was a mode of disordered celebration, an act of rebellion. By recognizing the potential of public unrest to convey futurist ideas, they started to perform in order to successfully pursue their manifestos and reach the crowds<sup>3</sup> (Goldberg 1979).

---

<sup>3</sup> With a strong connection with the social fabric, futurist performances embraced a fusion between different art genres and with everyday life; the movement was then expanded in Russia in which performance also functioned as a propaganda instrument (Goldberg 1979).

Another interesting example of a subsequent influencing movement is *Dadaism*<sup>4</sup>. Having the chaotic post-war period as a background, being deeply affected by it and hungering for an upturn, including in the art sphere, Dadaism came to disrupt established ideas and to challenge logic. By embracing the absurd and the obscene, Dadaists started to organize cabarets, collaborative projects with musical performances and live readings (Melzer 1984). Spontaneous crazy costumes' usage was frequent and coherent with the idea of challenging formal standards and artistic dogmas, since a masquerade environment was being created (Melzer 1984). Surprise and chance were valued at this time and performance nowadays continuous to do so. Moreover, with the Dadaist movement, satirical and ready-made artworks such as Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917), a porcelain men's urinal which was signed by the artist with a pseudonym, asserted new forms of art making, introducing the idea of art as a concept (conceptual art), crucial for minimal art and as evident also fundamental for performance today.

After the triumphant Dadaist irreverence, artistic exploration went forward with *Surrealism*<sup>5</sup> by introducing studies from psychology with the aim of understanding the human mind, especially the subconscious (Goldberg 1979). More than strengthening the reception over the artistic process, the contribution of surrealism and its psychology studies was fundamental to understand the audience's response to theatre and performance. Inspired by that and later on, Avant-garde Theatre also started questioning the way the audience is affected through a theatre play. In *The Theatre and Its Double* (1958) he went forward by arguing that traditional theatre forms with all its features was turning its back on its audience, not affecting them the way it could, as could do more (Carlson 2018). In line with that, he coined the term *Theatre of Cruelty* to initiate a new form of theatre, not only focused on text and intellectualization, but creating a broaden atmosphere with impact on the experience of the audience, by their sensibility and emotion, in which rhythm, sound and visual language also played a role (Artaud 1958). The

---

<sup>4</sup> In the wreckage of WWI emerged the avant-garde Dadaism. As a war counteract, in 1916, the writer Hugo Ball and the singer Emmy Hennings opened the night-club *Cabaret Voltaire* which came up with eccentric performances, mixing poetry, dance, music and costumes (Melzer 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Led by André Breton in Paris around 1920s, Surrealism was an artistic, philosophical and literary movement focused on the exploration of the unconscious and dreaming dimension under the detachment of thought (Breton [1924] 1969). Surrealists such as Salvador Dali might believe that by representing the irrational, crowds could free themselves from a conventional and rational order.

latter through images, light and expressive bodily movements and gestures (Artaud 1958). In addressing these ideas, he has opened the space for subsequent body art early performances of the 60s (Carlson 2018). Moreover, Artaud proposed:

(to abolish) the stage and the auditorium and replace them by a single site, without partition or barrier of any kind, which will become the theatre of the action. A direct communication will be re-established between the spectator and the spectacle, between the actor and the spectator (Artaud 1958, 96).

This closeness between the artist, the audience and the artistic practice, as well as, this idea of creating communication among them was forward-looking at the time and have inspired many of the core ideas of performance today. Just to exemplify, subsequent ideas on collaborative, participative and relational artistic practices, explored on the next chapter, has only been possible through the closeness between artist and audience, created with Artaud's ideas in abolishing the stage, favoring an atmosphere of equal footing.

But apart on the consequences of surrealistic ideas and turning our gaze on 1920s again, in Germany relevant steps were being done thanks to the foundation of Bauhaus school<sup>6</sup>. By acknowledging the importance of a course on performance art, it enriched it in practical and theoretical terms (Carlson 2018). Several experiments were conducted in a multidisciplinary learning process in which community spirit was a standard practice (Meyer 2019). Just to illustrate that, Bauhaus community were used to organize costume parties in which all were invited and came appropriately dressed up. Their performances were many times improvised, others fitting everyday life movements or exploring the space through geometry. In any cases experimentation was a watchword. Their work was promoted through many other cultural and artistic events that Bauhaus organized at that time, which might had contributed to the diffusion and legitimization of performance as an artistic medium. Furthermore, and drawing on these European references, during the 1930s the Black Mountain College was founded in the USA -

---

<sup>6</sup> Founded in Germany 101 years ago (1919) by Walter Gropius, Staatliches Bauhaus was an influential school of arts, architecture and design which combined arts and crafts in an innovative way of learning. A school "with responsibilities to society", as it "sprang from a unique zeitgeist and attitude" that goes beyond its artistic heritage (Meyer 2019, 11). It was forced to close down during the Nazi period.

an institution which might have contributed to introduce performance art from Europe to the United States (Goldberg 1979).

However, it was only after World War II that performance art mostly spread out there. The work of the composer John Cage and the choreographer Merce Cunningham who introduced their multidisciplinary performance projects in their avant-garde approach in alternative spaces was fundamental (Friedman 1984). Similarly to Joseph Beuys who proposed an expanded notion of art towards life and society, “making it as broad and large as possible ... to include every human activity” (Beuys 1970, 169), as it will be explored later on, both Cage and Cunningham also explored this idea in their works, sustaining that art should melt with life, being an extension of it (Goldberg 1979).

During the 1950s, Cage’s *4’33’’* (1952) was performed, a revolutionary silent work in which absolutely no sound was produced. With a pianist seated on the piano, the keyboard remained untouched without a single note played for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, its full length (Gann 2010). Cage, influenced by his studies on Zen-Buddhism philosophy and known today for his ground-breaking ideas, unconventional musical instruments and musical compositions, opened the possibilities not only for artistic experimentation, but also for “a new approach to (audience) listening” and to audience engagement (Gann 2010, 2). But most importantly, he had organically merged art and life, in proposing that music also includes non-intentional everyday sounds, such as noise and silence (Gann 2010).

Similar ideas were shared by his many artistic collaborations partner Merce Cunningham, a dancer and choreographer who have founded a recognized dance company from which influential dancers such as Thrisha Brown and Steve Paxton emerged, to name only a few (Friedman 1984). With his avant-garde ideas and experimental practices, he argues for ordinary gestures such as walking and standing as part of the dance universe while improvised elements are combined with rehearsed ones (Goldberg 1979). By creating a crude fusion between art and life, their approach seems to reflect their desire in abandoning eccentric live art events of the past. What remained present is multidisciplinary since performances of that time continue to be

mixed-art forms (combining music, dance, painting and literature), but performance started to be a connecting link between them.

Along these groundbreaking artistic movements and with the flourishing of the American *Abstract Expressionism*<sup>7</sup>, in the beginning of the 1950s, visual art developed a performative stance (in the way that is performance-related), especially with *Action Painting*<sup>8</sup> (Rosenberg 1952). One of the most important precursors of the field was Jackson Pollock. He developed a new way of painting through frenetic bodily movements splashing paint into a large-scale canvas placed on the floor. With this movement, the canvas started to be perceived “as an arena in which to act – rather than a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyze or ‘express’ an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event” (Rosenberg 1952, 22). Thanks to that, visual artists started to go beyond the canvas with purely static images, understanding art as an event or a sum of many events that constitute the artistic process. In their perspective, the latter is as much important as the result. The Pollock’s practice overlaps his large-scale abstract paintings. The artwork is also the act of creating. Moreover, it just born in the convergence of artists’ lives (and the emotional states that with them cohabits) with the artistic process (Rosenberg 1952). Hence, it happens in an organic fusion between art and life.

As an artwork could also be a process that results from the artist’s life, art positioned even closer to the social sphere, in which contemporary art and performance resides today (Westerman 2016). In jumping out of the chair, the artist’s body acquired a special relevance in making art on the canvas, what truly expanded the possibilities for artistic creations enhancing the potential of performance in breaking barriers, in going outside the established framework. Moreover, it brought performance closer to visual arts (and vice-versa) what influenced the way we perceive the art form today (Westerman 2016). In resume, “the destruction of painting’s edge announced

---

<sup>7</sup> Abstract Expressionism is an art movement raised after the World War II in USA by the late 1940s, influenced by the previous European artistic movements such as Surrealism, distinguished by the linking on emotional self-expression, through artworks with abstract forms or physical expressive physical gestures (Goldberg 2004). It was applied to painting, to sculpture but also to performance.

<sup>8</sup> Within the previous described art movement, Action Painting is a term coined in 1952 by the art critic Harold Rosenberg, referring to an art form in which the performative act on the canvas is the artwork itself, instead of the final quiet object (Rosenberg 1952).

that relationship between the artist, the spectator, and the world as art's new form and purpose” (Westerman 2016, 1).

Through a kind of a seamless performance/painting marriage, Jackson Pollock's work has influenced many artists, including the ones interested in doing performance. The artwork here is constituted by the convergence between not only the artist's life and the artistic process but also with the exhibitory moment in which audience is inscribed. In Paris, Yves Klein's *Anthropometries de l'époque bleue* (1960) performance can be referred here. In this work, some female naked performers painted in blue were used as living paintbrushes towards a white large-scale rolling sheet in front of an audience. Despite of not being the purpose of this dissertation I could not go forward without comment on some aspects of this work. The decision of having female bodies, as they were tools managed by the artist, was received as a patriarchy manifestation. For that reason, it was evidently highly criticized by the feminists of that time. When confronted with his practice, especially the usage of the so vivid blue in his works, that himself has patented, he has remarkably emphasized the immateriality and the monochrome to “make visible the absolute” (Yves Klein Foundation, n.d.). According to the Yves Klein Foundation, he intended to create a contemplative environment by “engaging not only the eyes of the viewer, but in fact allowing us (to) see with our souls”, engaging in an almost spiritual experience as he would like to have (Yves Klein Foundation, n.d.). Here the artistic process itself was thought to be presented to an audience, and all that have constituted the artwork.

Inspired by previous approaches but with the intention of engaging the audience in a different manner, incorporating them in the artistic practice itself, Allan Kaprow has created a participatory event. In *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959) performed in New York, the audience was invited to undertake a range of movements and tasks defined by the artist, having been previously informed that will not only experience it but become part of it (Goldberg 1979). With this innovative approach in the 20<sup>th</sup> century art world, he intended to involve the audience in the artistic practice, led them to act as it was the real life. In order to describe that type of events, he proposed the term *Happening* and defined how he believe that should be: unique, spontaneous while planned, varied in terms of time and space, art/life shaped and participative, while embrace chance (briefly described) (Kaprow [1965] 1995). According to him, happenings were

essentially “events that, put simply, happen ... their form is open-ended and fluid” (Kaprow 1993, 16). It was the first time that someone has tried to define and describe that type of art form. Therefore, the ground of happenings became highly key elements for the development of performance, as we know it today. The framework designed here echoes the concept developed afterwards in 1998 by the curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud in his *Relational Aesthetics* [1998] (2002) as happenings that offered experiences and encounters for exchange, conviviality, interaction in which human relations were embodied. The art critic Claire Bishop have later criticized the concept by showing its risks in ignoring the tensions entailed in the relations created. As the conception of relational aesthetics is a fundamental reference in the field of contemporary performance it will be discussed in more detail later on.

Along the counter cultured decade of the 1960s, shaped by intense political protests, feminist and antiracist movements, as well as, radical experimentations in the field of music and drug culture, shaped the social, political and cultural background of the following advancements in the field of performance art. *Fluxus* movement<sup>9</sup> was the subsequent movement in influencing the medium. In tune with the intention behind happenings, in 1963 the artist George Maciunas argued in his manifesto for a democratization of art, claiming that there is a need of a “living art, anti-art...non-art reality to be fully grasped by all people, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals” (Maciunas 1963, 1). In a more political approach, the *Fluxus*, as it was coined, further influenced performance in going against a “world of bourgeois sickness, intellectual, professional & commercialized culture” (Maciunas 1963, 1). Performances started to be called *events* which were often informal and spontaneously performed in non-conventional institutional venues (Friedman 1984), with probably the aim of reaching a broader and less specialized audience. As the artist Ken Friedman reminds us, the Fluxus group, which was part of, was quite diverse and for that reason, it has attracted different attitudes towards society and art: more zen approaches (influenced by John Cage) and others more eccentric and concern with shock (such as Joseph Beuys) (Friedman 1984). In any cases, both approaches played a role in

---

<sup>9</sup> Fluxus movement started with a group of artists from several fields – music, literature or visual arts –who studied with John Cage and relate with each other, while engaging in experimentation by developing truly avant-garde performances (Friedman 1984). It was coined and formally created in 1960 by the artist George Maciunas and it was characterized by an uprising attitude towards society and art, a call for integration and equality, extending the possibilities of making and experience art (Carlson 2018).

the dissemination of Fluxus' radical line, presenting polemical performances with the aim of provoking the audience and calling them for action, emphasizing the creative empowered human capacity (Beuys 1974). During the Vietnam War, Beuys performed *Coyote: I Like America and America Likes me* (1974). In this performance he shared a small space in a gallery for three days with a wild and quite dangerous animal – a coyote – as a statement against American political decisions about the war. Then he called an ambulance to leave the place in order to fulfil the promise he had made, by refusing to set foot on American territory. So did Yoko Ono with her participative performances with political claims. In *Cut Piece* (1964), performed for the first time in Japan, the artist made an announcement, inviting the audience to come on stage in order to cut away a small piece of her clothes with a scissor, having ended almost undressed. It was a feminist statement against body objectification; the audience was invited to take the responsibility and acted within the performance, being a part of it, while giving it meaning.

*Body-art*<sup>10</sup> as an artistic movement, started to parallel influence performance of that time, and constitutes one of the most important influences of performance nowadays. By the end of the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s, the body acquired a special prominence in artistic practices (Schneider 1997). In front of an audience, quite often the artist's body – in movement or stand, nude or not, sacrificed or not – became the artwork itself, able to convey a message through quite often a transformative experience and by physical resonance between the artist and the audience (Schneider 1997). By bringing the human body to the foreground and as a main character, the artist is creating a bodily experience to his/her audience in an attempt to raise public consciousness. This idea will be explored later on.

Body exploration in performance was conducted in the most diverse directions with distinct goals, having widely influenced the development of performance. Artists who explored inequality issues about ethnicities or about gender issues, had found in body art and in

---

<sup>10</sup> Echoing the physicality of the performances of the past, Body Art, an artistic movement founded in the 1960s, raised the role of the human body itself as central to the artwork (Schneider 1997). It has truly influenced artists from several mediums and ideologies (Schneider 1997). Ana Mandieta's work that goes from photography, to sculpture or video, in representation of her own body and nature might be a good example for that. In doing so, she expresses her desire of reconnection exploring issues of national and personal displacement.

performance, a good way to show or to get loud your voice (Schneider 1997). At this time, the second wave of feminism, as called, was booming in Europe and USA with the women liberation movement protests, becoming a larger movement with massive echoes. Therefore, *feminist performance* emerged, under the framework of feminist movement, with the urge of raising public consciousness on gender equality and inciting change towards the end of women discrimination and oppression. It was raised, taking “obstinate hold and many boundaries, closely linked to the socially demarcated margins separating artist/woman, high/low, subject/object” with a strong political impetus (Schneider 1997, 31). Similarly to Yoko Ono, artists such as Carolee Schneemann often represented naked bodies as a way to make a statement against the power and fetishization of the female body. For instance, in *Interior Scroll* (1975), Schneemann took a sheet which involved her body off and, undressed, started to adopt some model postures and covered her body with paint. Then she extracted a paper from her vagina and started to read a text written by a male, prompting against the discrimination and sexual objectification of women (Schneider 1997).

By the early 1970's, and also influenced by body art, introspection and transgression led the way performances were conceived by artists such as Vito Acconci, Chris Burden and Marina Abramović (Carlson 2018). It functioned as artists' testing fields, engaging for instance, in limitless situations weather to explore the audience's response, the limits of the artist's own body towards danger or as a means to challenge artistic boundaries (Carlson 2018; Goldberg 1979). Vito Acconci for instance, in 1971 performed *Conversions*: burning his body hair, pulling at each breast in an attempt to produce female breasts and hiding his penis between legs. Chris Burden oversteps the bounds and performed *Shoot* (1971) in which he asked a friend to shoot him in the left arm in front of an audience. Marina Abramović has been performing since 1973 and continues to do so today. Her controversial performances, with dangerous objects, fire and drugs really tested the limits of the body and mind. From playing a quick game with a knife in between her fingers – *Rhythm 10* (1973) – or cutting a five-pointed star in her belly, to lying naked on blocks of ice – *Thomas Lips* (1975) – or even rubbing in her skin bloody cow bones for four days – *Balkan Baroque* (1997) – many were the extreme options that the artist took in her performances along the years. But physical harmful is not the only way that the artist has

been following. Psychological and issues of the mind are something that Abramović has been exploring throughout her work. Recently, she has performed *The Artist is Present* (2010) with just a table and two chairs. Sited in one of them for eight hours a day along three months in MoMA, the audience was invited to sit in front of the artist for as long as they wish. The artist remained still, silent and fixing their eyes in each audience element who was in front of her, once at a time. The audience response was quite interesting since many had run down with tears, demonstrating the emotional strength of this performance.

The 1970s and the 1980s brought a major focus on language usage and on political realms (Carlson 2018). Performance became ever more political and this continue to be until today, as it will be explored further.

The term *performance* or *performance art* as an art genre just emerged close to the 1980s (Westerman 2016) and its recognition as such, came primarily in the Western Europe, United States and Japan; in the UK is often called *Live Art* (since the 1990s) (Carlson 2018). In academia, the field of *performance studies*, in which performance art is included, just emerged in the 1990s (Dixon 2007).

Although they have already done so before by choosing alternative venues, during the 1980s and the 1990s artists started to create performances giving particular attention to the characteristics of the location inscribed, namely, geographical architectural or about its scale, but also its context, i.e., all of social, cultural and historical formulations that might exist there (Carlson 2018). In these *site-specific performances*<sup>11</sup>, the site and the performance itself are intertwined, which means that there is an exchange between both (Kaye 2000). Hence, on the one hand, performances activate the multiplicity of the site and on the other hand, the meanings of those performances are built in relation to its site and all that entails, including the atmosphere, the audience and the element of chance here inscribed (Kaye 2000). Performances at this time were varied in terms of scale, ways of doing and location, whether indoor or outdoor, they were experienced mainly in non-formal sites, including along the street. In the US, this

---

<sup>11</sup> For further research: Pearson, Mike. 2010. *Site-Specific Performance*, Mike Pearson 2010, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

artistic direction gave rise to the term *New Genre Public Art*<sup>12</sup> to define artworks that were being produced and exhibited in a non-institutional level but directly in the public sphere, closely to the audience (Lind 2007).

In the decade of the 1990s artists were creating “exhibitions that directly addressed site as a socially constituted phenomenon” (Bishop 2012, 195), by giving particular attention to the social framework inscribed. Moreover, this decade witnessed a growing awareness towards the social and an ever-expanding interest towards public engagement (Bishop 2012). In line with that and focusing on performance in particular, the British theorist and art critic Claire Bishop has suggested the term *delegated performance* to describe those performances in which an individual or a group, representative of a particular framework (in terms of gender, age, class, race, occupation or expertise, among others) is invited to collaborate or participate, whether with its presence or actions, depending on the artist guidance (Bishop 2012, 219). Tania Bruguera’s performance *Tatlin’s Whisper 5* (2008) in which two uniformed policemen patrol the audience directly in the exhibition space at Tate on horseback, might exemplify what a delegated performance can be (Bishop 2012). Just as *Kiss* (2002) by Tino Sehgal in which two performers danced, performing historical kisses, in one of Guggenheim’s roundabouts in 2006, while a group of individuals engaged in conversations with the audience. Even Steve Paxton’s *Satisfyin’ Lover* (1967), exhibited in Culturgest in 2019, might illustrate this type of performance since in the original version forty-two people were randomly invited to undertake everyday actions repeatedly, such as walking or sitting (Bishop 2012). Contemporary artists, in general, began to take collaborative and participative practices more seriously. This artistic line is fundamental for the current discussion. Therefore, it will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Performances mixed with emerging technologies are not a new subject since artists from previous decades have been creating performances with some, whether through their multi-media creations, audio recordings or media projections. Even Cage have explored electronic music manipulation in the 1960s (Birringer 1991). It is argued that video art had a relevant role in this art world’s shift with projections, loops and slow motions, truly influencing the way

---

<sup>12</sup> This term was coined in 1991, by the American artist and theorist Suzanne Lacy (Lind 2007).

installations, performances among others were created (Birringer 1991). Vito Acconci in his installation *Command Performance* (1974), used video to invite the audience to produce their own performances (Birringer 1991). Joan Jonas in the video performance *Left Side Right Side* (1972) have performed in front of a camera exploring her own body with reversed images produced by a mirror. Despite those early experiments, it was after the 1990s that technology's usage in performance gained more expression (Carlson 2018). In order to describe that, in 2000s a new term has emerged – *digital performance* – to designate “all performance works where computer technologies play a key role rather than a subsidiary one in content, techniques, aesthetics, or delivery forms” (Dixon 2007, 3). However, controversies between technology and arts have arisen in advance. While it is not the purpose of this dissertation exploring this topic, it is important to look at some concepts. Walter Benjamin in *The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936) has advocated a loss of *aura* in mechanical reproduction (Benjamin [1936] 1999), as photographing or filming a performance exemplify, which means that it lose its essence, its authenticity, and an artificial experience emerge. An idea that Douglas David have optimistically corroborated, sustaining that “aura is supple and elastic” and live in the “moment when we see, hear, read, repeat, revise” (Davis 1995), hence reborn in each viewer and each time it is revised.

In each decade, artists have more and more technology available to proceed its own creations and it continues to do so. In performance in particular it can happen through the exploration of this interrelationship between the body and the machine. Currently, digital era and cyber culture led it to another level, as we are truly entangled with technology on a daily basis, prompting that it might exist a fusion (or collision) between humans and machines – we might be all *cyborgs* (part human, part technology). This concept was widely explored by Donna Haraway<sup>13</sup>, among other writers who tried to explore the borders entailed here, such as Rosi Braidotti, who explores the dimensions of a posthuman era, or Joanna Zylińska that analyses the corporeal relationship between humanity and technology<sup>14</sup>. Some arguing that technologies are an extension of the

---

<sup>13</sup> For further research; Haraway, Donna. 1985. "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s", *Socialist Review*, 80, 1985, 65–108.

<sup>14</sup> For further research: Zylińska, Joanna, ed. 2002. *The Cyborg Experiments: The Extensions of the Body in the Media Age*. New York: Continuum; Braidotti, Rosi. 2013. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

human thought, as well as paintbrushes are extensions of the human body; others claiming that we, whether ones like or not, are living in a “vibrant hybridity”, a place of crossing different disciplines and capabilities, where brains and technology live together (Agüera y Arcas 2017). Some artists have been using gaming tools, such as virtual reality, or even artificial intelligence with algorithms to create new experiences in immersive ambiances, and a different engagement with the audience. This idea of immersion will be explored later on. Just to give an example, the *Mai Hi Ten Yu* (2017)<sup>15</sup> was a performance in which a piano was controlled through exclusively bodily movement (dance) thanks to artificial intelligence (Matias et al 2019).

Despite the humanist issues and in regard to art authenticity and legitimacy that this post-digital and technological apparatus might arise, 4.0 era is out there, and it came to stay through existing and further developments. Somehow, performance artists have to deal with that and determine its usage or rejection.

In resume, it could be said that in some way or another, performance was influenced by the hectic spectacles in which Futurist ideas were conveyed, the provocative Dada attitude which rooted conceptual art, surrealism that incited a crossing with psychological studies in order to better understand the human mind, promoting avant-garde theatre with new ideas in regard to the way the audience could be affected by a play. Bauhaus, on the other hand, gave way to a multidisciplinary and experimental learning process and Expressionism encouraged the subsequent mixed art performances bringing them even closer to the visual arts.

Then, the more the artists were going in the direction of the everyday life, in an organic connection art/life, including mundane experiences in their artistic practices, the more they were getting closer to the public as a whole, and away from the cannons of art. Happenings, one of the first attempts in describing what we nowadays call *performance art*, highly shaped the way we see it today, with a more collaborative component. Then, during the 1960s, performances with strong political impetus encouraged the subsequent developments, bringing the artistic practice even closer to social concerns and hence, to the audience. Finally, the Fluxus movement

---

<sup>15</sup>The dancer Kaiji Moriyama was able to create a musical composition in piano through dance, which was simultaneously played together with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (Matias et al 2019). The mechanism detects movement and convert it into data which is then converted into sound (Matias et al 2019).

and its events came with polemical performances which aimed to challenge the viewers' perception and call them to action. On its side, during the 1970s body art emphasized the potential of an embodied experience in communicating with the public, without a barrier of any kind such as a canvas was, exploring the raw body as a tool to convey messages. It raised performance to another level and brought with it the potentialities of crossing boundaries and disciplines, having led many artists with different political and social concerns from different mediums in creating performances.

The 1980s and the 1990s brought site-specific performances, encouraging artists in giving more attention to the context inscribed in the liveness. Social artistic practices then came hand-in-hand with new ways of engaging with the public. Technology however cannot be left out, as also gained the attention of performance artists, while posthuman discussion emerged.

### **1.3. Current situation**

As demonstrated, many ways of doing performance were conducted throughout the decades and this highly shaped the way we see it today.

With its cutting-edge artistic, social and political practice, it has been more and more recognized as a meaningful artistic medium in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This recognition is of major importance as it represents the guarantee of performance's continuous production and hence, impacting the audience. Recently, performance has seen a boom in the artworld.

Major art shows have been highlighting performance. The Venice Biennale, for example, the oldest contemporary art show, created for the first time in 2017 an official programme of performances and more than that, it has awarded one of them with a Golden Lion: Anne Imhof's performance *Faust* (2017). In this artwork with music and painting, performers move from one place to another inside and outside of multi-layered transparent installations, as a metaphor for resistance and power changes from the past to the future. Other events specifically focused on performance have been thriving in disseminating performance artists' works, prompting its creation. To name a few, Performa is a biennial event focused on commissioned works that are exhibited around New York City; it was founded in 2004 by Roselee Goldberg, a curator and

art historian specialized on performance. In London, Block Universe with four years of existence is bringing performance to the front. Also, in Portugal, Alcantara Festival and BoCA – two biennial events – have become important references in the contemporary artistic field, highlighting performance. Moreover, their programs are characterized by a vision which engages with the urgent issues of our contemporary world, promoting reflection and dialogue around social and political questions of today<sup>16</sup>.

The time of having only marginal and underground performances has ended. A reflection of this development is how major established cultural institutions are increasingly including performances in their annual programs and collections.

In London, Tate Modern has deeply embraced this art form and is very pledged to support it as it has established a team, a space (thanks to the reopening of the subterranean Tanks in 2016), in order to pursue its artistic programme and broaden a collection entirely dedicated to that. Moreover, it had recently conducted a two-year research project in partnership with the academia and the Arts and Humanities Research Council about performance (Westerman 2016). *Performance at Tate: Into the Space of Art* offers renewed insights about the possibilities of the museum's engagement with performativity and performance and has culminated, among others, in an edited book, a workshop, an international conference and a scholarly online publication relevant in the study of the art form (Westerman 2016). Moreover in 2019 Tate had announced that a fund will allow the stage of performances from the national collection and moreover, a new research project that will end in 2021 in partnership with academics that aim to explore contemporary artworks that challenge the practice of the museum, in which performance is also a main character.

In New York, the previously mentioned performance by Marina Abramović at the MoMA – *The Artist is Present* (2010) – was one of the initiatives of Media and Performance department, that was constituted in 2006, being responsible for collecting, exhibiting and preserving what they call time-based art, in which performance is included (MoMA, n.d.). Similarly, The Whitney

---

<sup>16</sup> For further information: <https://performa-arts.org/> , <http://blockuniverse.co.uk/> <http://www.bocabiennial.org/> and <https://www.alkantarafestival.pt/>.

Museum of American Art and the Guggenheim Museum has been showing some engagement with the art form. The latter, for example, included *Kiss* (2002) by Tino Sehgal, described above, in its live art programme in 2006. Also, in Portugal the new artistic direction of the MAAT Museum has recently introduced a new annual project in the field of performance in partnership with BoCA festival. Their aim is to support artistic production interested in the exploration of the potential of performance as a collaborative practice in the motto to challenge the exhibition format (MAAT 2020). In line with that motivation, the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in partnership with other institutions, organizes the Do Disturb festival which evolves around performance art. This festival has been organized since 2014, having brought since then, several international and national projects not only around France but also worldwide, in USA or Brazil, and in cities such as Cape Town or Porto, among others, having been functioned as a global network of artists and institutions.

Seeing by some as non-congruent to the root idea of performance in offering political, audience-touching, and non-sellable artworks, this institutionalization of performance is plundered by friends and foes. Claire Bishop for instance, more than making a parallelism between delegated performance and outsourcing (in the way that in the participatory performance the audience is “hired”) with connection with the art market bubble 2000, she argues, among others, that this boom on performance is nothing more than an echo of commodification and the economic flow (Bishop 2012). This inability of repetition “gives performance art its distinctive oppositional edge.” (Phelan 1993, 148). Bishop and other theorists defend how institutions might also be seen as partners of activist art instead of opponents, in the way that can work together in order to better achieve social and political upheavals.

Anyway, this institutional commitment seems to represent a step change towards the recognition of performance as an important artistic medium as it involves great shifts in the way major cultural institutions represent, mediate, document and collect artworks. At times, performances are created not only to astonish the audience and to lead it to limitless situations but also to incite an active participation, as we saw before. These situations require a particular attention not only in terms of infrastructure and sophisticated equipment but also because it may commit the image of the institution as it becomes more difficult to plan or foresee the outcome of a certain

situation. Being a live event, the risks must be taken by both parties, artist and institution. If we take Marina Abramović's *Rhythm 5* (1974) as an example, in which the artist laid down inside of a starry frame on fire and has to be rescued due to health reasons, or *Rhythm 0* (1974) in which the audience is invited to do whatever they want with several objects (some of them dangerous) we can understand how this can be a challenging moment for institutions, as they have to create the needed infrastructure to deal with the element of chance. The movie *The Square* (2017) is another example that illustrates in a satirical way how contemporary art, especially performance, might challenge the institutions' conduct code.

While it is not the purpose of this dissertation to answer to the challenges that performance art brings to cultural institutions, it is important to draw attention to some points. Therefore, it stands out the question of how cultural institutions document and collect performance art<sup>17</sup>. Documenting and archiving is important as it allows not only the conservation of a certain moment, but it also allows for the material to be studied, researched and moreover, re-performed. As reminded by the theorist Westerman, Chris Burden's *Shoot* (1970), described before, "lasted only as long as the flight of a bullet" but the photographs of this precise moment allow us to know it until today (Westerman 2016, 1). According to the theorist, the possibility of documenting performance "secures" the ephemerality that characterize performance (Westerman 2016, 1), by encapsulating the moment with its own details, effects and echoes. Here there is an expanded vision of performance as its documentation includes not only some register of the moment itself, but also its universe, namely the social and political context in which it occurred, as well as thoughts on production or the audience response. To give an example, Tate's archive is of great importance in the field, worldwide. It has been enriched since the 1960s, having collected since then a varied range of documentation about performances and other contemporary artworks that due to its character somehow might be related, due to have a performative aspect or an engagement with the audience with participatory gestures, both key to the artform. It includes, just to name a few, the performance *Tatlin's Whisper #5* (2008) by Tania Bruguera, *This is propaganda* (2002/2006) by Tino Sehgal and the wearable body

---

<sup>17</sup> For further information, a recent publication: Giannachi, Gabriella, and Jonah Westerman. 2018. *Histories of Performance Documentation: Museum, Artistic, and Scholarly Practices*. New York: Routledge.

sculptures *Moveable Shoulder Extension* (1971) by Rebecca Horn. This last one, according to a research in charge of Tate, despite of being static objects, its imagined engagement by the audience incites a performance experience (Finbow 2016a).

Despite that, it seems undeniable that the process of translating an immaterial and ephemeral object into representational media such as photography or video, truly challenges the existing formal structures on archiving. They were conceived to material artistic objects that exists *per se*. In performance, there is a demand of the live moment with all that entails, the presence of the artist and a specific audience in a certain local, within a certain social and political context. Due to that, some argues that it is still questionable how much of a particular performance actually remains, or what is left behind. When it is depicted from its realm, moving it from time and space and bringing a new artform, a new context and a new audience, something new might arises to add (or change) the original artwork (Phelan, 1993). That is why there were and still are some concerns around the issue of collecting performances. The artist Tino Sehgal, for instance, opposes to any sort of visual documentation, arguing for the urge of experiencing the artwork instead of seeing it in a wall or a screen, or even own it (Finbow 2016b). Similarly, Marina Abramović states that the best documentation is the memory of the audience (Abramović 2010).

A similar perspective could be applied to performance re-enactments. If we take Beuys' *Coyote: I Like America and America Likes me* (1974) or Ono's *Cut Piece* (1964), both works that directly acted against the particular political and social reality of their time, we can notice how sensitive the question of a re-enactment necessarily is. While Beuys' performance was directly related to the ongoing Vietnam War, a specific moment in history, Ono's work had acquired a special meaning through the particular reaction of an audience in that very specific time and space. Now if we imagine that the documentations of these works would be shown today, would they have exactly the same meaning or would they acquire a new one? And were they re-enacted, would the audience response in the same way and reproduce the particular reactions of another audience in a different time and space? For example, if we did not know the artists' intention, would we relate Beuys' performance to the Vietnam War or to Trump's political decisions, in

regard to migration, for instance? And in Ono's case, would a certain audience cut those small clothing pieces as people did in the original performance?

Echoing Allan Kaprow and making more sense than ever, "the young artist of today need no longer say 'I am a painter' or 'a poet' or 'a dancer'. He is simply 'an artist'" (Kaprow 1993, 9). Artists are more and more surrendered to the multidisciplinary, collaborative, experimental and live character that performance offers. Performing in artist's own free will, in real time she/he has the chance to notice audience's reception of the artwork in real time. For some, it can be a statement against the art market, capitalistic standards and objectification of contemporary art, since these immaterial and ephemeral artworks might not enter into the formal circuit as it has been happening with others, protected by its physicality, such as paintings or sculptures. For this to happen, it may involve a great shift in the collector's mindset, moving from the valorization of the physical object to the appreciation of the concept behind this immaterial art practice. To others, this growing interest on the production of immaterial artworks comes from Neoliberalism and a shift from an economy based on the production of goods to an economy based on the production of experiences (Alston 2016).

The producer is an "entrepreneurial subject" (Alston 2016, 16), and the audience hungers for "the greater", demanding unforgettable experiences. If that distinction still makes sense today, as the audience is also producing by participating. The audience group seems to be interested in running through the one-day-only event, living the moment and fully engage with the artworks and the artists by having the chance to interact, participate on it and perhaps give a contribution to the artwork. Somehow, feeling as part of the here and now and not to stay out seems to accompany not only the acceleration and the economy-based framework we are exposed to, but also the need to belong and to relate with each other, giving more sense to immersive, intimate, collaborative and relational artistic practices as performances many times are.

## 2. Performance art and the social sphere

Following Bourriaud's understanding of art as a "state of encounter" (Bourriaud [1998] 2002, 18), the emphasis of this dissertation is on the social nature of the encounters fostered by performance art. Far-off of led exclusively a pure passive contemplation of beauty, contemporary art emerged in its multiple facets, having as its main characteristic a tight link to the present. It involves a "negotiation between the forms of art and those of non-art" (Rancière [2004] 2009a, 45). That is, it has gone beyond the canons and entered in the realm of everyday experience in the sense that it is more and more about what is happening there. Therefore, contemporary art and performance, go hand in hand with the social tissue. They had come, as argued by Claire Bishop, from a social hunger in restoring a collaborative collective spirit (Bishop 2012). It can be claimed that they work *with* and *to* the social universe, aspiring to the creation of a communal experience with impact on all parties. However, despite of bounding together in the same tissue, this "friendship" between both, the artistic and the social world is in permanent tension, as claims Claire Bishop, who recalls the objection that artistic field suffer of not being enough to cause social change, which counterposes claiming how the social field is not doing enough to cause that same social upheaval, not being able to detach itself from existing structures (Bishop 2012). The same tension that reveals to be enriching, challenging both parties in doing better. Therefore, these two universes touch each other and coexists in a fertile tension, trying to work towards the same direction.

In Rancière terms, contemporary art enters in a game (with multiple existing signs, working on their activation and suspension), working on an inventory (of those same elements of collective life, working on their re-signification) that is then made visible through encounters (with expected connections thanks to social encounters within an artistic framework), that breaths a mystery to be solved (Rancière [2004] 2009a). More and more, performance explores processes and relations with the aim of making people think, understand, discuss and relate with each other. Hence, it has been thriving in developing alternative ways of knowing, in fostering new ways of perceiving the world and of collective awareness, as well as, in bringing people together to think and feel through the artistic experience. Contemporary art has been steadily working to offer social relevant tools.

## 2.1. Knowledge

By working in the reality of the here and now, performance creates a space of encounter that goes beyond its physicality, by bringing people together – audience and artist – around common issues of existence, triggering reflection, exchanges and opening discussions outside the formal arenas. Indeed, as a contemporary artistic medium or as described before, an “attitude that has infiltrated the entire terrain of contemporary art” (Wood 2019, I) with all that entails, it has been showing a “marked interest in alternative ways of producing knowledge” and of communicating (Lind 2007, 16).

A simple research on the definition of *knowledge* seems to be object of interest here. According to the Oxford Dictionary it is constituted by the “information, understanding and skills that you gain through education or experience”, two dimensions that I would like to distinguish regarding to the possibility of achieving a state of knowing (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, n.d.). The first one more formal and traditional and the second with a more open-end character, regarding to our own experience. Academic institutions such as schools, colleges and universities are the formal responsible ones for creating processes of teaching and learning – education as we formally know it – in which research is also included. Normally it happens in a controlled environment where it is established what is learnable (or assumed as a starting point, having evidence as key elements) and following foremost an expository methodology.

In the last decades, especially after the 2000s, artists, curators, but also art institutions have increasingly been interested in the educational component of artistic practices, engaging in educational projects and mediation's concerns (Bishop 2012). Therefore, they have been intervening on that, entering more and more into some sort of collaboration with the academia, working together with researchers or specialists of a certain knowledge arena, creating rich networks in which each one contributes to their own expertise. Moreover, engaging in projects that make usage of educational methods such as lectures, publications or workshops (Bishop 2012). The *Para-Site School* (2011-2018) initiated by the artist Felipe Castelblanco activated in Cuba, UK, Iran, Germany and USA might be a good example on how art might seize of academic resources, namely people and infrastructures, with both artistic and social purposes,

as it has made usage of it in a “parasitical way” in order to “embrace and serve immigrants and artists-nomads” (ParaSite School, n.d.). Similarly, the *Silent University* (2012 – Ongoing) initiated by Ahmet Ögüt and existing globally (UK, Sweden, Germany, Greece and Jordan), functions as an alternative educational program with social purposes, involving displaced people and forced migrants, who together create a platform for knowledge exchange through lectures, discussions, events and publications. As it is described, the name of the project came with the idea to “challenge the idea of silence as a passive state, and explore its powerful potential through performance, writing, and group reflection” (The Silent University, n.d.)

Triggered by the post-structuralist debate, many intellectuals, such as Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard and Lawrence Grossberg, among others, have been identifying some issues on knowledge production. Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) sustained how knowledge is intimately connected to power. According to him, it is produced under and through the influence of government and other authority structures in order to achieve the goals established and assuring the conditions for power maintenance (Foucault [1969, 1989] 1972). That is, only dominant knowledge is considered valid. According to that, knowledge is losing its innocence as an independent educational value, just as, institutions are losing their credibility – what Grossberg has recently called a “public crisis of knowledge” which he identified of being also a crisis of “authority and power”, which enable its impartiality (Grossberg 2017, 149; Lyotard [1979] 1984). An issue that is getting worse today due to both new digital technologies and social media, in which opinions are confused with knowledge, and trustful and non-trustful information is quickly proliferating (Grossberg 2017).

Despite of seeing education as an ally (Bishop 2012) as demonstrated above, the art sphere has been offering new paradigms in terms of knowledge production, outside the institutional level per se, i.e., in other contexts with different approaches with an open character. Thanks to that, artists have been thriving in offering experiences of knowing. It is this second dimension – of experience – the one I would like to highlight, because it is here where contemporary art might ultimately dwell. The curator Irit Rogoff emphasizes the importance of these knowing arenas outside the academia and far from its formalities, its rigidity and demands, places that “do not necessarily intend or prescribe such activity” (Rogoff 2008, 1), from which she sees a window

of opportunity for learning expansion. She adverts for the relevance of the encounters that contemporary art generates, between citizens, artists, curators, academics, activists and others (Rogoff 2008), people from different ages and social/cultural/economic situations. Encounters around common interests and concerns, creating a convivial environment in which thought and critical thinking are stimulated through the artistic experience and the sharing moments that might emerge through informal and fleeting conversations (Rogoff 2008) at the time or afterwards. So far, what I would like to focus on is that, in this living experience, there is certainly a process in which any process of knowing occurs. New insights enrich the intellect and are joined to existing ones, creating a new puzzle that entered in a flexible and ever-ending process of construction as more is known. A process on intellectual production, from which thought, and discourse derived, that Levi-Strauss and Derrida would call “bricolage” in which new states of knowing are created in a decentered way, discarding a privileged information centre (Derrida 1978, 285).

Back on the 70s, Joseph Beuys was one of the firing pins in exploring this idea, mixing performance with “social, political and pedagogic ambitions” (Bishop 2012, 244). He has explored experimental educational methods as part of his artistic activity, inviting the audience to engage in public workshops, as well as, in conversations and public discussions, aiming not only at teaching but mainly at empowerment (Beuys 1974). If we take again Beuys’ performance *Coyote: I Like America and America Likes me* (1974) in which he exposed himself in a dangerous situation assuming deliberately that it was a statement against the American support on Vietnam war, we can notice that there is some knowledge being passed to the audience. The Cuban performer Tania Bruguera has founded the *Arte Útil* (Useful Art) movement – materialized in both artistic and educational long-term project between 2002 and 2009 – focused on exploring the functionalities of art in the social sphere, proposing that might be seen as a tool in shaping society. Among diverse interventions, the artist has founded the *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* (Behavior Art School) (2003) in order to create a pedagogic space for discussion (Tania Bruguera, n.d.). From another angle, the Portuguese artist Tomás Saraceno has initiated the *Aerocene* (2015 – 2020), an experimental artistic project that crosses art, social issues and education. This involves the production of emission-free aerosolar sculptures to overfly the 6

continents, collaboratively with a global and interdisciplinary community, with the aim to raise environmental awareness, working as a platform of knowledge production and distribution.

These projects and the respective experiences go beyond the academic circuit, despite of making use of educational lines. By that, the artists are not only discarding institutional and impositions of power, but also creating an opening space, able to undress layers of information (Rogoff 2008), the known and the unknown, while reframing them, in which the access of a new level of information is created. It is not a game over on what was playing, but simply a level crossing. That because, this disclosure is then embraced by the audience in a very particular way, opening the possibility for a dialogue or a “negotiation”, a process that Rogoff claimed to be the ideal, the long-awaited “educational turn” (Rogoff 2008, 1).

## **2.2. Politics**

Described by Robert Rauschenberg as an “an art that refuses to settle”, performance seems to perfectly match with the unsettled reality we are part of nowadays (Tate 2017, 3:17). More than producing knowledge outside the formal structures and feeding critical thinking, contemporary art – and mainly performance, with its disruptive attitude, as it was outlined through the previous chapter, being voiced especially after the 1960s with fluxus and happenings – has been showing an “affinity with activism” (Lind 2007, 16). This idea in which art and social issues come together and art is seen as a vehicle to change reality, whether one likes it or not, it is many times political and describes the idea of art activism or activism. A new way of protest, entailing time and reflection (Power 2016).

The dimension of politics does not merely exist on the level of conventional practices and traditional structures, but also in other terrains thanks to political practices. That is, the way human co-existence is organized (politics) allows not only to perceive the social but also to be discussed and reframed through a “political looking-glass” (Marchart 2007, 57). Contemporary artistic practices are thriving in offering these goggles.

According to the philosopher Jacques Rancière, politics and contemporary art seem to share the same point of departure, both explore the sensible world, dissecting it and working “on the level

of the sensible delimitation of what is common to the community, the forms of its visibility and of its organization” (Rancière [2000, 2004] 2013, 18). Despite that, and especially in neoliberal models, they seem to go in opposite directions. When politics might flow with economics, power and capitalistic structures, as Maria Lind reminds us (Lind 2007), culture and contemporary art seem to take an advantage by enjoying the empty space created to pursue its goals.

As discussed, art has thus the chance to question established ideas, while working on their deconstruction and at the same time on new associations, creating new propositions: new worlds. This is a process that crosses over the three times: past, present and future. Therefore, buzz and restlessness are two constant variables of the equation.

Tania Bruguera who was already mentioned, is a performer artist who prefers to call “Arte de conducta [Behaviour Art]” instead of performance art (Bishop 2012, 246), defining it as the art that uses social behavior as a linguistic tool but also as work material, based on the response of the audience (Tania Bruguera, n.d.). According to the artist, it is an art form that gives “rise to a process where the audience transforms into citizenship” (Tania Bruguera, n.d.). Therefore, she has become a key reference when it comes to political art, exemplifying the intentions of contemporary artists working in this realm, distancing themselves from the wish to find consensus. She wrote in her manifesto *Political Art Statement* (2010):

Political art has doubts, not certainties; it has intentions, not programs; it shares with those who find it, not imposes on them; it is defined while it is done; it is an experience, not an image; it is something entering the field of emotions and that is more complex than a unit of thought. Political art is the one that is made when it is unfashionable and when it is uncomfortable, legally uncomfortable, civically uncomfortable, humanely uncomfortable. It affects us. Political art is uncomfortable knowledge (Tania Bruguera 2010, 1).

Contemporary art, as said, quite often engage with the sensible (in Rancière terms) by confrontation and discomfort, i.e. raking over controversies from the past or the present. However, and according to the philosopher and critic Nina Power, a political artistic practice can also happen by giving a break in this discomfort, as an escape from the turmoil, as she reminds us in a text written to Tate Magazine (Power 2016). Therefore, as some theorists would say all artworks might be political in themselves.

True politics are immersing in a valuable complexity, full of conflicts and contradictions – in which divergent views should be accepted and converged within the same democratic space – what the Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe has called “agonistic pluralism” (Mouffe 2013, 6). It means keeping question of keeping a divergent vision close, in order to constantly challenging each other’s visions and subjecting them to consecutive tests. Tests that might uncover their fragilities and led them to eventual adjustments, for both sides. More than favouring a reciprocal learning, in fact lying down with opponents, might let us know them better and predict their next steps. Hence, this complexity should not be discarded but clearly assumed and explored, with the aim of discarding any universal truth and finding a rich agonistic “conflictual consensus”, in order to live a crucial and healthy “vibrant democracy” (Mouffe 2013, 7). Pluralism should be embraced in its fullness, whether the difference comes from age or gender, or even nationality, language, race, religion, values, beliefs or any other dimension that compose the culture tissue. Moreover, and as reminded by Prof. Isabel Capeloa Gil recalling Georg Simmel’s ideas (1918), it is precisely in the conflict created by this difference and its subsequent negotiation that culture is actually structured (quoted in Gil 2017). It is through the difference that we actually assume and establish cultures. Conflict is therefore a necessary dynamic, pointing to an “open society” in which every human being can think and act freely, creating an atmosphere in which different people and opposite ideas co-exist and together, contributing to the same goal of truly exercising democracy (Popper 1974).

Therefore, a conflict is not synonym of violence, war or death. It is a matter of growth. Political art (or critical art in Mouffe’s and Rancière’s terms), more than involving people around shared concerns, also incite conflict by offering spaces of resistance. It is precisely here, in noticing the potential of a continual tension that some theorists, such as Claire Bishop, argue against artistic practices that instigate coerced harmony and moreover, that see the potential of presenting artworks in an institutional level, as referred before. Being able to enjoy the potentialities that the recent institutional commitment might entails in presenting performance and participatory practices.

What is mainly important is the creation of times and spaces able to cause agitation in order to shake people’s minds, to liberate them from established assumptions, and open up imaginative

space for new constructions, with the final aim of transforming them into social and political subjects, who relate with each other and keep an active role in the common sphere (Bishop 2012; Marchart 2019; Mouffe 2013; Rancière [2004] 2009a). Cultural and artistic practices, in favouring alternative ways of knowledge production and working on the political tissue, might instigate and perpetuate a particular attitude that the French philosopher Foucault has described in a lecture, that was then published with the title *What is Critique* (1978), as a “critical attitude” – “a certain way of thinking, speaking and acting, a certain relationship to what exists to what one knows, to what one does, a relationship to society, to culture, and also a relationship to others” (Foucault [1978] 2007, 42). A kind of attitude that is increasingly relevant. The one that is able to accept and deal with conflicts. An attitude aligned with the counter-hegemonic struggle, needed to reflect upon it and question what is known about a certain context, able to challenge established truths and confront any kind of a totalitarian impetus. A critical attitude that keeps individuals in alert, enlightened and empowered with the necessary tools to think and act in conscience, facing power structures (if so) on behalf of social well-being.

This critique as practice describes the artists’ attitude in their artistic process. Therefore, as Mouffe reminds us, they might be considered what Gramsci has called “organic intellectuals” – the group of individuals with different functions in society that came up organically as intellectuals producing knowledge with impact on society, able to incite change (Gramsci 1971, 6). I would dare to argue that this attitude might be extended to the audience when confronted with the artistic experience. We can all be intellectuals, as Gramsci would argue.

That is why it becomes quite clear that the reception of the artwork is a key element for it to fulfil its purpose. According to the performance artist Bruguera, a political artistic practice does not intend to end when it is presented to the public (Tania Bruguera 2010). This moment would be only the beginning. The response of an audience, whether it be thinking, discussing or acting, becomes the artwork itself. This is an idea that picks up on Joseph Beuys’ work, who believed in an expanded notion of art in which “every human action [...] is a declared piece of art” (Beuys 1970, 169). He was a pioneer in the understanding and acting upon the social impact of artistic practices. Beuys strongly believed in the transformative power of art as a tool in shaping society, coining the idea of *Social Sculpture* (Beuys 1974). That is, he believed that the development of

society is in its members' hands, stressing on the power of collective creativity (whether artists or not), able to move them towards action and change – society being shaped as if it was a mug of clay, with all hands involved (Beuys 1986).

Artaud had claimed how art, namely those new theatrical forms (and we add performance here), might be our lifebuoy in the way that have the potential of liberating ourselves from the existing structures and forms (Artaud 1958). And as the poet Marianne Moore had written “the power of the visible/is the invisible” (Moore 1956, 100). Peter Brook had sustained how some artistic forms and social gatherings, namely happenings, under certain conditions, might have the potential of offering a new vision and making visible the invisible (Brook 1968). In the same line of thought and in the words of the art critic and theorist Boris Groys, by swimming against the tide towards social growth, by touching on the untouchable, questioning the unquestionable, making visible the invisible, and audible the inaudible, contemporary art “teaches how to practice metanoia, a U-Turn on the road towards the future, on the road of progress” (Groys 2014, 11).

### **2.3. Audience engagement**

More than inciting experiences of knowing with a political impetus, performance, the object of study of this dissertation, as an artform that is focused on creating situations inscribed in a particular time and space, lived by a specific group of people, has in its roots a primary concern on the audience and its engagement.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, its open-ended and collaborative character has favoured many artistic and social experiments along the years. Even futurist and later dada events (1910-1920), already revealed a concern to mass audiences' response, striving provocation with political ends. Thanks to Artaud's idea of abolishing the traditional theatre stage, performance has been developing its practice ensuring a closeness between the artist and the audience. In line with the idea of bringing the art sphere closer to the audience and its daily existence, mundane elements and gestures started to be considered by artists from Cage's generation, aspiring to an organic fusion between art and life. Moreover, performance artists always explored audience's response and new ways of engagement. As we have seen, this was

especially embodied after the 1960s, when the audience started to be invited to have an active role in Kaprow's happenings, as in other artists' performances of that time, and continue to be strengthened in political Fluxus' events that were also participatory. An artistic line that was strengthened in the 1990s with delegated performance that happened with volunteers and continued to do so today, but with social media and new technologies in the equation. Performance has been playing a key role in this respect along the years, and as Claire Bishop so well resumes "from crowds (1910s), to the masses (1920s), to the people (late 1960s/ 1970s), to the excluded (1980s), to community (1990s), to today's volunteers whose participation is continuous with a culture of reality television and social networking" (Bishop 2012, 277). It has a genuine interest in the fusion of artistic and social experience. It has an inherent participatory aspect.

A greater interest in audience engagement was noted thanks to the western "social turn in contemporary art" from the 1990s (Bishop 2006, 180; Bishop 2012, 3). Due to that, artists from every artform, namely visual artists, started to focus on social engaged artistic practices, including on participatory methods, previously explored by performance artists. This was a shift with unprecedented impact on the art sphere as a whole.

Therefore, artists with distinct artistic practices, namely visual artists, have escaped themselves from an individualistic object-based practice, as well as, many times solitary work, towards an open-ended artistic process focused on social exchange, an urge of getting together "around shared concerns" (Lind 2007, 16; Bishop 2012). As reminded by Claire Bishop, this direction of the 1990s is also a side effect on a worldwide "turn" into the social, i.e., a rise of a "renewed social awareness" in contemporary art (Bishop 2012, 2, 215), a will of feeding (or restoring) a collaborative, collective spirit. As described by Rancière, an urge focused on the "lack of bonds" aspiring the "reparation" of the "social bond" by the creation of encounters focused on social relations (Rancière [2004] 2009a, 57). Aligned with an impetus of challenging traditional ways of art-making and art-experiencing, including the relationship established between the artist, the artwork and the audience (Bishop 2012), they started to deeply explore new ways of engaging with the public by introducing new methods in their artistic practices.

Just to give a few examples in order to illustrate the variation entailed in the 1990s: in art installations the audience inhabits the artwork, and its mere presence was being called to activate it; in interactive art, the audience was invited to interact whether with other people or the artwork itself, or both; the new genre public art, that flourished at this decade mainly in US, with an activist stance is also part of the same phenomena (Bishop 2012). More approaches were being followed, involving distinct ways of working together with a specific community with social purposes of integration or improvement. But also, more deep ways of engaging with the public (my words) in which a group of individuals is invited to undertake a particular action, as part of the artistic experience. These emerging ways of art-making and art-experiencing are discussed and quite often mislabeled, under the headings of participatory art, community-based art, socially engaged art, dialogical art (Bishop 2012), relational art among others.

The possibilities of working together are endless but regardless of how, artists have moved their focus from the artistic object to the people, namely to the audience, and focusing on ways of engaging the audience “in the manner of theatre and performance” as referred by Claire Bishop (Bishop 2012, II). That is, they were exploring similar participatory methods to the ones already explored in the past, by performance artists. An evidence that embodies Wood’s idea that performance is more than a medium, but a stand that has slipped into all contemporary art tissue (Wood 2019, I), giving strength to performance artistic practice and supporting the discussion entailed.

In this case, the artists create or facilitate a framework/situation/atmosphere that calls the audience to engage directly in the artistic practice, through participation. The audience is able to not only observe, listen and snort it but also to walk, run, paint, discuss, cook, sing, communicate, clean, climb, play, dance, hug, write and as many actions as we could remember, whether alone, with the artist or with other participants, but most important, to feel, think and learn through it. Stepping outside under the flag of passive viewer or even art buyer, the audience has now an active role as in a way, contributes to what is created (Bourriaud [1998] 2002; Lind 2007; Bishop 2012). The artwork itself is constituted in this crossing. Also sustained by Umberto Eco, who developed the reader response theory (1962), an artwork is more than a closed form, but an open one; the artist creates a framework to be experienced by the audience

which is also an “interplay of stimulus and response which depends on his unique capacity for sensitive reception of the piece”, a universe especially created to complete the artwork (Eco [1962] 1989, 3). The meaning of the artwork is constituted throughout this rich universe, instead of coming from the author’s intention, as Roland Barthes has claimed in his so proclaimed essay *The Death of the Author* (1967) (Barthes [1967] 1989). Hence, the artwork is eternally a “work in movement” i.e., a work in progress as it reborn each time it is viewed (Eco [1962] 1989, 19). In participatory artistic practices, this idea of the open form is taken further. Enriched not only by the audience’s reception through interpretation, in creating a participatory atmosphere, the artwork is this resulting situation, the artistic experience in itself on the here and now. Together, both audience and artist, co-create and recreate the artwork, by constructing meaning together, while bringing social, economic, political and cultural questions into dialogue. What Adam Alston called a “productive participation”, that according to him comes from the neoliberal demanding scheme of production and consumption (Alston, 2016:5), but that can also be seen, I would say, as a counter-response to the social inaction established.

This gaze towards the social and audience engagement has also followed interesting outlines. In the early 90s some artists have conducted quite ground-breaking artistic experiences in challenging not only the way of doing art and the exhibition space, but mostly the way of experiencing art, as said. Rirkrit Tiravanija, an artist that has deeply explored and pushed convivial artistic experiences, in *Untitled (Pad Thai)* (1990) instead of conventionally exhibiting or perform an artwork, converted a gallery space in New York (Paula Allen Gallery) into a temporary kitchen where, for free, he served food for the exhibition visitors. A similar experience – *Untitled* (1993) – was then repeated at the Venice Biennial in which the visitors could prepare a Chinese soup together with the artist and the remaining audience (Bourriaud [1998] 2002). Parallel in Europe and in the context of *Project Unité* (1993) – a huge project was created, in which many artists were invited to convert inhabited flats in an exhibition space – Heimo Zobernig has created a café (Bishop 2012). In doing so, those artists were not creating a static artistic object, and more than an installation or a performance (Bourriaud [1998] 2002), they created encounters through the reference of the ordinary activity of eating, nurturing a certain degree of conviviality or connection between those who took part of that.

In order to describe those artistic practices that were blooming at that time, and having the cultural phenomena incited by the popularization of the internet as a background, a promise of a newly interactive universe in which people can (apparently) easily gather together, the French curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud introduced a new concept. A concept that came to sustain the artistic path of that time, of engaging with the social, since “there was simply no adequate language” to refer this new social orientation of art (Bishop 2012, 202). Formally written, in *Esthétique Relationnelle* (1998), Bourriaud proposed the term “Relational aesthetics” to describe “an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space” (Bourriaud [1998] 2002, 14). He aimed to describe those artistic works in which a specific framework is designed to involve audience members and many times the artist, in a shared experience that is regulated by human interaction and social relations. Among the existing ways from which a relational state might be created, Bourriaud highlights connections and meetings that happen within a specific time frame (e.g. performance), convivial encounters and user-friendly situations (e.g. artistic practices with a community, or a festive encounter), or participative ones in which a more engagement is required (Bourriaud [1998] 2002).

Claire Bishop, despite of recognizing the importance of the concept in shaping the field, has later criticized it. According to her, relational artists are primarily concerned with the creation of a relational framework by itself without any other goal beyond that, discarding any political implication (Bishop 2012). She has argued that, in creating those harmonious situations, a relational component was being forcibly included, at the risk of discarding a relevant part offered by this social encounter: the tensions and conflicts (Bishop 2012; Lind 2007). More than being ignored, conflicts are dissembled in the rush of a harmonious coexistence, forcing a consensus. The same consensus of heterogeneity that Chantal Mouffe has criticized on behalf of a conflictual one. But disregarding those divergencies of thought, these encounters fostered by performance artists encourage a shift on the role of the audience, certainly with interest to explore.

## 2.4. Audience emancipation

Artaud's ideas on the closeness of the audience, being seen as a central element of a play has come to stay. Influenced by his legacy, Peter Brook, in his experiments, has explored how the audience is not a dead audience but really matters, how their "quality of attention" affects a play, what happens in a stage, how the actors acted, the emotions lived and the meanings it can acquire (Brook 1968, 24). In a way those spectators, once with their passive roles, sees now their power recognized in exerting an influence on the artistic event. They have a responsibility on what happens. Similarly, Jacques Rancière went forward by arguing for an "emancipation of the spectator", an escape to their "state of ignorance" i.e., those who were previously seen as individual and passive spectators unable to know and act (as happens in traditional theatre) have now been emancipated, being transformed to an active audience, empowered, being able to do more than contemplation (Rancière [2004] 2009b, 2). The theorist does not go in the direction of participatory artistic practices, as previously described, to justify the active role of the audience. He goes less far, claiming that an empowered audience has an active role in the simple action of viewing, feeling and understanding, as they actively enjoy to their own capacity to act accordingly, by making their own connections, creating their own universe of information, as "narrators and translators", as "bricoleurs", that they are (Rancière [2004] 2009b, 22; Derrida 1978, 285). In this dissertation this idea is not discarded but we had intended to go beyond that, by not only discussing deep ways of being active in an artistic experience, but also by discussing emancipation as a process with high potential for the artistic/social experience, in which emotional contagion may play an important role.

### 3. Performance art and emotional contagion

“How do we find each other?” was the question posed by an anonymous French group of authors who hypothesized an insurrection grounded on among other things, “a new definition of capital as human capital, a new idea of production as the production of relations, and consumption of situations” (Committee 2009, 71), echoing precisely what performance seems to do. Fleeing from motionless and commodified artistic objects and the exclusivity of artistic mediums, performance is focused on the creation of experiences. Artistic experiences with certain gathered groups, that are also social encounters, particularly as their prime concern is the audience, and the way in which they are engaged and moved. Of equal importance, particularly in the context of this dissertation, is the way they relate to each other. Emotions play a vital role in all of the above as they are inherently relational categories.

In traditional theatre, emotions are triggered by representation through actors’ bodily and facial expressions. Antonin Artaud’s reconceptualization of theatre in the 1960s, where the stage is abolished in favour of improved communication between actors and spectators, led him to the realisation that the theatre “is a delirium and is contagious” (Artaud 1958, 27). The German contemporary theatre and performing arts theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte sought to clarify this idea, arguing for an “emotional contagion” resultant from the spectator’s own gaze on the stage (Fischer-Lichte 2010, 27). By passionately representing a certain character, and through facial expressions and gestures, actors/artists/performers were transmitting emotions to spectators<sup>18</sup> (Fischer-Lichte 2010). This process, which happens in the act of spectating, leads to a transformation seen in earlier decades as a magical, mysterious and illegible phenomenon (Fischer-Lichte 2010). The spectators were undergoing a “catharsis”, a term from ritual theory linked to the idea of healing, cleansing and cure (Fischer-Lichte 2010, 28).

Fischer-Lichte reintroduces the concept of transformation, recognizing that emotional contagion is reinforced by spectators through their somatic perception. In her studies around the subject, she describes a situation in which a dramatic figure, realized as such, expresses an emotion that

---

<sup>18</sup> Please note that the term “spectator” has been intentionally chosen here as it refers to a group of people who traditionally assume a passive role in the plot, as opposed to the term “audience”, which is strongly used in this dissertation and represents active agents.

is perceived by those present. These then display the same emotion, giving strength to the group experience and enabling successive contagions around the same emotion. In this situation, emotions “are located neither within nor without the individuals, but in the field between them” (Fischer-Lichte 2010, 31). According to her, this contagion happens in a “liminal state”, being a “liminal experience”, a term in ritual theory connected with the possibility of transformation (Fischer-Lichte 2010, 31, 37).

From traditional theatre to contemporary performance art, Peggy Phelan posits that “[performance] becomes itself through disappearance” (Phelan 1993, 146), referring to the importance of what happens through and beyond the artistic framework. The aim of this dissertation is to look at the social situation incited by the artistic framework. As discussed in the previous chapter, and in line with Rancière’s notion on emancipated spectators, by considering that the audience of performance has an active role and can co-produce the artwork, the focus is on one of the many ways in which this can happen. Drawing on Fischer-Lichte’s ideas, it will discuss how emotional contagion can occur between audience members.

The use of the term “contagion”, as well as “infection” and “contamination” is pertinent. From a medical perspective, contagion takes place when an infection spreads from individual to individual<sup>19</sup>. This occurs via direct or indirect contact with a living infected agent (germs that can be viruses, bacteria, or other microorganisms). These enter the body, and in response to the foreign agent, our immune systems (including blood cells and antibodies) spring into action in an attempt to eliminate the invader. This contaminated agent cannot move by itself, as it is doubly dependent: it requires an enabling environment for the point of contagion, and it needs humans and their bodies to be alive in order to be able to reproduce. In the presence of an outsider, a response mechanism is activated and triggers a battle between the two. Metaphorically, contagion designates a passage from one state to another and involves a kind of transformation. The transposition of these ideas to the artistic tissue: the enabling environment that corresponds to the framework produced by an artist, allows people – i.e. the

---

<sup>19</sup> This dissertation uses terms such as “infection”, “contagion” and “contamination” interchangeably. As opposed to the more negative medical definition, it has positive connotations that instead of culminating in disease may lead to transformative experiences with impact on the audience, the artwork, the artist(s) and ideally, the surrounding social sphere.

group present in time and space, to be infected by the live microorganisms – i.e. the emotions that come about through the social interaction between audience members.

The term emotion here designates the broad range of senses that are mediated by the body in an artistic/social encounter, including sensations, affects, feelings, dispositions, moods, and the universe of perceptions that can, through embodiment, come out of them. These emotions are shaped by the social situation that the performance demands. It may include a sensation of calmness created by a gentle voice in the ears, a state of ecstasy induced by dancing amidst a crowd, a sense of being overwhelmed by numerous stimuli, or even a hollow feeling in the pit of the stomach caused by a disturbing image or fact. Other than the examples given, categorical distinctions will not be made to justify how emotional contagion takes place, or to differentiate between physical, emotional, or intellectual processes. Drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ideas, the process of perceiving the other does not belong to a single entity as it is simultaneously an inter-corporeal, emotional, and embodied experience (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2012). As Roland Barthes would argue, intellectualization here is intended as something that is "sensually produced" (Barthes [1973] 1975, 61). Etymologically, the word "emotion" originates from the Latin *emovere* that means "to move out or agitate" (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). For the universe of emotions proposed here, this is particularly relevant as it encompasses everything that emerges from our sensorial perceptions that agitates, that emotionally moves or touches. The intention is to discuss how performances may foment the circulation or multiplication of emotions among audiences through contagion.

Embedded within this artistic/social encounter, emotional contagion is a process of reciprocal exchange that is mediated by the bodies in which cultural codes are read, as it will be explored further. Moreover, what emerges from emotional contagion is an exquisite moment more than a reciprocal exchange between audience members. Such experiences may culminate in a sense of "awe", "serendipity", "kairos", "liminal" (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 54) – moments of transformative potential. This is what Jill Dolan, who also recognized the importance of encounters between audience members, has called "utopian performatives" – those "small but profound moments [...] that lifts [sic.] everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be like if every moment of our lives were as emotionally voluminous,

generous, aesthetically striking, and intersubjectively intense” (Dolan 2005, 5). The intensity of these moments lives in the social encounter of an audience that feels engaged, challenged, infected, and part of the whole (Dolan 2005). In this sense, it can be posited that through emotional contagion, “artistic performance opens up the possibility for all participants to experience a metamorphosis” (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 23). A moment that impacts on the body, where audience members and artworks are mutually infected and constitute each other in a complex entanglement that can be lasting, able to create memories beyond the artistic experience.

Having introduced the concept of contagion above, the following section aims not only to clarify the variations outlined, but also to open a discourse around how performance can activate emotional contagion between audience members, co-producing the artwork together with the artist. It will also advance a theoretical framework that describes some suitable conditions for this kind of process to occur.

### **3.1. Liveness**

Performance is usually referred to as work on liveness (Auslander 2008; Phelan 1993; Reason and Lindelof 2017). However, it is also described as a situation in which artist and audience share a spatio-temporal presence. In line with this, Fischer-Lichte has argued that liveness is a necessary condition for emotional contagion to occur (Fischer-Lichte 2010). In these terms, given that the focus here is about what happens within the audience and through the artistic framework, liveness is relevant particularly if one considers the fact that the audience itself shares the same spatio-temporal presence. Therefore, and contrary to what has already been addressed, the artist or performer is seen as a facilitator of the experience without necessarily having to be present. In these terms, it is the audience’s bodily co-presence – i.e. the fact that their bodies are in close proximity, that constitutes liveness, enabling contagion between them to easily take place.

[...] Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument, and when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object. We transport it without instruments as if by magic, since it is ours and because through it we have direct access to space. For us the body is much more than an

instrument or a means; it is our expression in the world, the visible form of our intentions. Even our most secret affective movements, those most deeply tied to the humoral infrastructure, help to shape our perception of things (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 5).

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological notions on "intersubjectivity" and "intercorporeality" can offer an understanding of the relevance of being present at the same time and space with other living bodies for mutual exchange. According to him, human (inter)subjectivity is intercorporeal, meaning that the world is perceived with our bodily/motor/sensorial ability (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2012). The body plays a key role, as it is permanently experiencing the world around it. Through embodiment, the body can function as "the object, subject, material, and source of symbolic construction, as well as, the product of cultural inscriptions" (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 89). Therefore, it acquires an extended dimension, being seen both as subject and object, contributing to the construction of ideas (Fischer-Lichte, 2008) and the production of an embodied knowledge. According to Fischer-Lichte, this is generated through the "phenomenal body" of the person in movement, usually the artist. However, again this idea is extended to everyone present, who are also in movement. The movement is embodied and the bodies in movement are perceived as a "source of energy" and power that is returned to those who are physically present, granting "in turn an intense sensation of themselves as present" (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 96). The audience can be more or less aware of the phenomenon, one that involves both body and mind, and touches on feeling and thinking, establishing the audience as "embodied minds" (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 99). The *other* is grasped through a somatic and sensorial process, as if the bodies were in conversation: we embody the other, while the other embodies us (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2012), both engaging in a multi-layered confrontation. Emotional contagion may happen precisely thanks to such body reading and mutual exchange.

Therefore, a group can experience an artistic framework produced by an artist, by not only being physically co-present in the here and now, but also by co-producing it, sharing a moment in which production and reception coincide, as both processes happen simultaneously (Reason and Lindelof 2017). This is what qualifies liveness experiencing (Reason and Lindelof 2017).

The quality of being live involves "various qualities of vibrancy, immediacy, relevancy, realness" (Reason and Lindelof 2017, 1). Thanks to the presence of those "living bodies",

performance implicates “the real”, an immediate experience that takes on even greater expression thanks to the fleeting nature of performance, which suggests that a performance is reborn each time it is re-enacted (Phelan 1993, 148; Reason and Lindelof 2017). Through a performance that is also participatory, the group is brought together around a raw experience that is lived together and co-produced by everyone present, and that configures the uniqueness of the moment. Real people with their “real bodies” coexist and engage in “real space” and real time (Herrmann 1930 as cited in Fischer-Lichte 2008, 36). What is particularly relevant for the purposes of the current discussion is the audience’s immediate response to the artistic/social framework, that is produced in order to be completed. The term “real” here considers that the situation is subject to a certain realness, including who is present, what and how they do or do not do, what they feel or do not feel, and their perceptions. This is especially important because here the artist does not have to be present, and the audience may have a greater influence over what will happen. However, Philip Auslander has argued that a certain mediation may also take place, meaning that the boundaries between authenticity and mediation are so blurred that mediation may be difficult to avoid; liveness and mediation are interdependent (Auslander 2008)<sup>20</sup>. Liveness and experiencing live deals precisely with the relationship established between the performance and the audience (Reason and Lindelof 2017), and the real-mediated game established between the two.

Bodily co-presence and the quality of liveness in a performance is therefore relevant for emotional contagion to occur. Those living bodies, with their infinite repertoire (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2012), come to be stimulated in the here and now (as will be discussed later), and enter in the process of contagion. That is, they respond to the stimulus, manifest their emotions, and infect each other.

### **3.2. Immersion & intimacy**

Liveness gains dimension here when combined with other factors, i.e. when the audience is bodily engaged, triggering an infectious universe of sensory forms – the sensations, emotions,

---

<sup>20</sup> For more on the debate between mediation and liveness in performance cf.: Auslander, Philip. 2008. *Liveness: Performance in a mediatized culture*, London: Routledge, and Bolter, Jay David and Grusin, Richard. 1999. *Remediation: Understanding new media*. MA & London: MIT Press.

feelings, dispositions and moods previously described: microorganisms that will cause contagion. By focusing on the audience experience, on immediacy and on creating sensual atmospheres with all they entail, some performance artists produce immersive experiences. Particular kinds of encounter, quite often within a carefully prepared environment with a topic that the audience can often find itself affected and bodily engaged by a huge number of stimuli.

In immersive practices, the audience does more than watch. It is expected to be alert and engaged, so it is spontaneously responsive and directly participates in the co-authorship experience (Alston 2016; Frieze 2016; Machon 2013). Encouraging the audience's willingness to be involved and participate can stimulate emotional contagion. The creation of a sensual environment with certain stimuli such as lighting, rhythm and sound, can help with this progressive shift. Immersion here is seen as a way of doing, a way of audience engagement. It concerns not just participation; the co-production referred to also happens through immersion<sup>21</sup> where the audience is bodily engaged. With this the audience summons its explorative, imaginative and participative abilities, and can often quite freely move throughout the space and interact with who or what is in the same space for the duration of the performance, being part of it (Alston 2016).

According to the Oxford dictionary, being immersed in something is “the state of being completely involved” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, n.d.). To be immersed in a performance means being totally involved in the artistic experience (Machon 2013). A willingness to plunge into the artistic framework is created, and overflows with potential. As noted by Bolter and Grusin, who explore virtual reality (a deep mode of being immersed), by stimulating immersion is brought to disappear (Bolter and Grusin 1999; Machon 2013). The audience enters in an “event bubble that excludes the reality of the wider world” as we know it, which can create a scope for new awareness, understandings, and connections (Frieze 2016, 5). That is, by fostering a deep engagement in something, offering an escape from audiences' daily existence, a group of people with an open eye is formed, able to consider new propositions. It

---

<sup>21</sup> In this dissertation, the concept is explored as a method of performance, not necessarily following the framework of Immersive Theatre, in which artists play a role, while the audience moves from room to room in the same play. Further research may shed light on how to better draw the line between both disciplines.

makes it possible to “replace and accentuate the live(d) existence of the everyday world” and “immerse the individual in the unusual” (Machon 2013, 25, 28) through detaching the individual from everyday life and immersing them in a totally distinct environment.

Quite often described as a “thrilled, enchanting or a challenging” experience (Alston 2016, 3), the impact can be intimate, subtle, or even unconscious (Machon 2013), but very much relevant. Each element of the gathered group shares a certain time, space and experience with the rest. The starting point is to create an intimate atmosphere in which something is shared (Berlant 1998). Frequently associated with one-to-one performances, it is argued here how this can also happen among larger groups and among the audience group. Intimacy here is about a sense of connectedness in an ephemeral situation, shared with those sharing our presence, in the frame of an artwork. Etymologically, “intimus” means “inmost, most profound”, and “intimare” designates a revelation (Marar 2012, 20-21). Therefore, it is related to sharing depth, or at least, metaphorically, to a genuine sharing, emotional closeness or connection, inspiring mutual care. Intimate interactions might include verbal and non-verbal manifestations, from laughter or tears, or a conversation. According to Lauren Berlant, “intimacy builds worlds; it creates spaces and usurps places meant for other kinds of relation” (Berlant 1998, 282).

The potential of an immersive experience here can deeply affect not only an audience’s agency but also the way it is engaged, bodily and emotionally, expanding the universe of sensorial form and intimacy. Through this, a state of openness is created amongst the audience that can increase relevancy, and enable new relations, structures, and beliefs. An enabling environment for mutual creation and exchange that may enable emotional contagion.

### **3.3. Community**

The proliferation of these infectious microorganisms – the emotions, needs the agents that are infected by them and that promulgate their circulation – the audience. As seen, by focusing on the creation of live, immersive and intimate experiences in which a group of people is gathered, performance embraces the idea of creating social encounters that have a special significance. The group of people involved only come together because of the artwork; they are its existential condition. Those who are there, at a certain time and space, are entangled in a communal artistic

experience. Invited by a performance to stop their busy, high tech lives, the members of the audience inhabit a moment together in the form of a temporary community through a shared experience (Wood 2019).

The philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau was one of the first thinkers to discuss the relevance of generating a community and finding societal constraints to create and keep a collective intimacy (Nancy [1986] 1991). He designates community thus:

[...] intimate communication between its members, but also its organic communion with its own essence. It is constituted not only by a fair distribution of tasks and goods, or by a happy equilibrium of forces and authorities: it is made up principally of the sharing, diffusion or impregnation of an identity by a plurality wherein each member identifies himself only through the supplementary mediation of his identification with the living body of the community (Nancy [1986] 1991, 9).

This community is a community with its own specifications. While Auslander argued that rather than an actual community, what is created through the artistic framework is a *sense* of community (Auslander 2008), other authors have different views. Bourriaud explores the notion of creating a temporary and alternative micro-community outside the established and formal flow. He draws attention to Marx' notion of "interstice", but instead of a community that gives a pause on economic capitalistic flow as the maximization of profit as a final goal, he calls for a "social interstice", i.e. a tabula rasa – a community that follows its own principles and uses its own communication tools, exploring an alternative space for social interaction (Bourriaud [1998] 2002, 16). The proposition is that a performance constitutes a living-micro-temporary community with its own specifications negotiated in that time and space by those who are physically present, a negotiation that is yet again live-mediated.

This community is a community of gazes. *Gaze* here entails an intercorporeal perception, with all its sensorial forms. These can range from the energy of a dancing crowd, to an emotion felt by listening to someone crying, or the chance sensation of touching a warm body. As discussed, my gaze on the world and on others is corporeal and embodied. It offers the possibility for what Peggy Phelan has called a "reciprocal gaze", in which one sees and is also seen (Phelan 1993, 40). It invokes a moment to explore each other's sensorial worlds, emotions and perceptions. Similarities and differences are revealed by exploring the heterogeneity of the bodily co-present

constituent members. My gaze on the world is shaped according to a myriad of universes of feeling and knowing that affects the projections I make. This community is a space in which social and cultural codes are read and mediated by the body; in which distinct personal histories interact and converge in the same social experience, in a singular/plural scheme.

This community is a community that dialogues. The usage of the term “community” here refutes the idea of a unilateral chain of interactions in a sender/receiver scheme, and of a one-sided contagion between artist and audience. It embraces the idea of complex reciprocal interplay between the group and artwork. The idea is that in front of a stimulus, each audience member infects another, and this other infects yet another in a successive contamination along a horizontal scheme (A infects B; B infects A who infects C, and so on). Therefore, “after being infected, (they) infect each other or reinforce the contagion” (Fischer-Lichte 2010, 30). This reciprocal dynamic constitutes the social encounter, and infects the artwork continuously, extending the possibilities to feel again and again. Hence, the audience cannot only infect but also be infected by emotions triggered in the context of a performance.

This community is a community that negotiates.

The artist transfers the ability to co-produce the experience to the audience and agrees on a certain realness by letting the situation flow with a certain degree of unpredictability, accepting the risk and temporarily suspending the role of producer, of a power figure (Fischer-Lichte 2008; Bishop 2012). On the other hand, the physically present audience then accepts the invitation and constitutes a community with its own specifications. These respond to the stimuli, following their own ways of doing, and contribute organically to the exchange; an exchange that is both “live and mediated, determined and autonomous” (Bishop 2012, 237). Constituted by audience members, the situation tends to aim to proceed as democratically as possible. As the artist does not necessarily have to be present in this situation, it is simple to implement a horizontal scheme among the audience group. Their positions are constantly, automatically, and organically negotiated or reversed from being the subjects or objects of contagion. The circulation of emotions depends on the other’s bodily gaze, dialogue and negotiation.

Such audience members are both “narrators and translators” as Jacques Rancière would say (Rancière [2004] 2009b, 22). The opportunities for emotional contagion to occur were reinforced with the emergence of the concept “empathy” over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Fischer-Lichte 2010). This embraced a wider perspective including fields such as Neuroscience and Psychology that could demonstrate our ability to experience another’s inner world with mirroring mechanisms, causing bodily responses in tune with what we see (Freedberg and Gallese 2007). Emotional contagion is usually and traditionally linked to mimicry, synchrony, mirroring, or imitation (Fischer-Lichte 2010; Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994). While there is evidence for bodily resonance – which claims that people tend to align their bodily movements continuously and automatically due to their own gaze on others and get feedback from their emotional states (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994), this dissertation has a different proposition. Just as in a real infection, by depending on people’s structures to succeed it is not linear. Firstly, a negotiation happens between the micro-organism and the person’s immune system; and secondly, the latter is not infected in the same manner as any other. Setting aside metaphorical ideas, this dissertation proposes that among this community, emotional contagion happens not through a standard imitation, but through a negotiation, a translation, depending on each audience member’s response to a stimulus, in which personal, cultural and social codes are read and considered. They “see, feel and understand something in as much as they compose their own poem” (Rancière [2004] 2009b, 13). Therefore, audience members do not necessarily create positive and harmonious environments by a mesmerizing emotional mimicry devoid of any tension. Claire Bishop suggests that this community is one in which the differences between those who take part are not discarded, but accepted and explored (Bishop 2012). A shared space of connection and disconnection is created within a convivial environment in which divergences are explored by those present. Similarly, drawing on the concept developed by Rosenwein (2006) and extending it, this emotional community does not evolve from common interests and values and even less to a single entity with homogenized emotions. Rather, members share an emotional experience and the process of contagion itself that evolves from a multi-layered confrontation with mutual infections in several directions. This makes it culturally contingent, formed by “constellations or sets of emotions” (Rosenwein 2006, 26) that may diverge.

In resume, the audience and emotions are at the forefront. This community evolves from an affectively intense social encounter and has the potential for successive emotional contagions. Having its own specifications, this heterogeneous community gazes, dialogues and negotiates along both an intercorporeal and horizontal axis. The audience is both producer and receptor, both object and subject, infecting or being infected by the rest of the audience and artwork in a complex interplay. This may confer the fluidity that Zygmunt Bauman advocated so strongly, free from rigid structures and inertia, averse to the immutable situation we live in, like nomads in constant metamorphosis (Bauman 2000). The social/artistic live, intimate, immersive and community-based encounter contributes to an openness able to explore new propositions. It can be seen as a social experiment that explores the plasticity of the brain and is open to potential emotional contagion. It is also “a drive to emancipate it (the audience) from a state of alienation induced by the dominant ideological order”, and a way to fill the blank spaces in order “to restore and realize a communal, collective space of shared social engagement” (Bishop 2012, 275).

#### 4. Case study: Alfredo Martins's *Silent Disco* (2019)

Previous chapters have reflected on Performance as an art practice and on its connection to the social sphere in which this dissertation is positioned. To show how emotional contagion takes place through performance art in a certain time and space and with a present audience, as a case study I selected *Silent Disco* (2019), a performance by Alfredo Martins.

The choice of this artistic/cultural object was founded on its intimate and immersive participatory potential, particularly because the audience shares the space and time with the rest of the group, and the artist is almost not present. I also had the opportunity to experience it myself on its opening night on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019 in Lisbon. The deep-felt emotions I had during the performance also lasted after the *awe* moment. This was a decisive factor in choosing it.

If one takes into account the suitable conditions set out in the previous chapter for emotional contagion to take place – liveness, immersion & intimacy, and community - the aim of this case study is to show: 1) how a performance can create a live, intimate, immersive and community-based encounter with a group of people gathered in a certain time and space without the physical presence of an artist; 2) how their bodily co-presence together with the immersive framework produced by an artist can help the audience to be involved and co-produce the experience created; 3) how the audience creates and engages with this transitory micro-community that has its own structures; 4) how this artistic/social experience generates possibilities for living distinct corporeal sensations, emotional experiences and imaginations. All of the above explain how a performance may contribute to an emotionally contagious atmosphere and eventually to an enduring social impact, more reflections on which will follow.

This case study has been supported by an interview made with the artist and also a wide range of materials made available by the artist, including the teaser and the script of the performance. The analysis of the performance will also be supported by my personal observations and memories as an audience member, drawing a first-person portrait of it. It should be noted that my overall impression of what I experienced does not negate other audience members' experiences of the same subject.

*Silent Disco* is a sixty-minute performance that has been exhibited five times (so far). As an artistic experience, it has involved around two hundred and fifty audience members in several venues aligned to various art festivals: *BoCA* [Biennial of Contemporary Arts] (Lisbon, April 2019), the *Dias de Dança* festival (Porto, May 2019), and *Walk & Talk* (Azores, July 2019). The critical analysis here pertains to the opening at *Rive Rouge* as part of *BoCA*, on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019, in which I was a member of the audience. This distinction is important to make as a performance is different every time it is reenacted.

The performance consists of seven parts: 1) Protocol, 2) Ruin, 3) Decadance, 4) Groups, 5) Manifesto, 6) Ecstasy, 7) After<sup>22</sup>, which I would like to condense into three parts: 1) Separation or Preliminal (detachment of familiar structures), 2) Transition or Liminal (an experience of learning, transformation), and 3) Incorporation or Postliminal (reintegration).<sup>23</sup>

## **4.1. Description**

### **4.1.1. Separation or preliminal**

At the door of *Rive Rouge* in Lisbon, I was asked to show my ticket and to store my personal belongings in the cloakroom. Once I was free of whatever was physically attached to me, a staff member gave me the set of objects needed to enter into the artistic experience: a set of headphones, two round-stickers and a tiny plastic bag containing what seemed to be a tablet. I was then guided to an empty narrow corridor with long ladders at the end. Within this new space, I realized that the artistic experience was going to take place there. I entered a medium sized room in the form of a bar or a club, with real drinks being served, some sofas in one of the corners of the space and a toilet in another. It was just like the regular *Rive Rouge* with its own regular scenery. There were already some people floating around. Some were chatting, others were drinking, some were seated, and others were standing and waiting for what was to follow.

---

<sup>22</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): “Protocolo”, “Ruina”, “Decadance”, “Grupos”, “Manifesto”, “Êxtase”, “After”.

<sup>23</sup> The structure presented echoes the three stages involved in a rite of passage that were defined by Van Gennep (1909) and then reviewed by Victor Turner, as a metaphor for a situation which an individual passes through by living an experience outside of ordinary life and overcomes the challenges of a potentially transformational experience (Turner 1982). This individual then returns from their adventure, ready to re-incorporate the insights they have acquired.

There was no sign of a stage or artist, only what it seemed to be the audience sharing the same open-plan room. Unfamiliar with such apparatuses in an artistic experience, and not knowing what was coming next and in what format, there was a sense of foreignness and disquiet. Away from routine daily life and removed from my natural habitat, I was already diving into the unknown.



*Figure 1: Performance space with the audience of Silent Disco, screenshot taken from the teaser (by Marta Alves Silva, November 6, 2021).*

As I was immersed in my own thoughts, a voice erupted from the walls, and it was not possible to see who was talking. It was an electronic message informing us that we were being uploaded into “the *Silent Disco* system”, whatever that meant. It also invited us to put on our headphones, which confirmed our entry into what seemed to be a new dimension: a dimension called *Silent Disco* that was repeating the slogan “We invest in the future of the species”. Another voice, this time more human sounding and easier on the ear, echoed from the headphones, welcoming us:

You're here! I'm glad you came. We're together. We're these and not others. During this time-experience, I will be with you. Let's be together. Everyone. Look at us all. Look at each one of us<sup>24</sup>.

Notwithstanding the sense of alienation, I had the impression that this musical voice was able to break the wall and bring some comfort. As I was looking around at the rest of the audience, I remembered to imagine that we were all probably listening to the same voice, as the voice was repeating the same ideas through everyone's headphones. But there was still a sense of doubt. The voice was whispering in my ear, and therefore it gave me the sense that it was talking to me specifically, as if it were a voice coming from my own mind, my own consciousness. This sensation remained present throughout the experience.

In an attempt to prepare the audience and to explain what would happen, the voice explained that it would guide us but never give orders, and that we were free to do whatever we wanted, whether it was dancing, drinking, eating, dressing, undressing, sitting, lying down or leaving the room. This suggested to me that we were to be an active part of the experience through our participation. It also gave me a sense of certainty that I would not do anything I was not comfortable with and that it was completely up to me what invitations I decided to accept and which actions I chose to take. After explaining to us all that the space we were inhabiting was a "safe space", a totally "affection-positive space" without any verbal/physical violence, where image recordings were strictly forbidden, the voice asked us to put the round stickers given to us at the entry onto our phone's cameras. I still had the tablet that I had been given at the door in my hand, and after looking at it and noticing that was a *lemon smint*, the voice invited us all to take it. The voice explained: "You are part of a transitory community that welcomes you. It is a fiction, but it is not exactly a lie"<sup>25</sup>, enhancing the idea that we were embarking on a journey with those present in the shared time and space. I was feeling secure and possibly even comfortable with the voice, I had the sense of my free will being respected, and moreover, I was

---

<sup>24</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): "estás aqui! que bom ver-te. Que bom que vieste. Estamos juntos. Somos estes e não outros. Durante este tempo-experiência, vou estar contigo. Vamos estar juntos. Todos. Olha para nós. Olha para cada um de nós."

<sup>25</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): "fazes parte de uma comunidade transitória que te acolhe. É uma ficção mas não é propriamente uma mentira".

becoming increasingly curious and involved in the experience and actively enjoying it, so I decided to accept the invitation given and to commit to the artistic experience.



Figure 2: Audience group with the headphones listening the voice, screenshot taken from the teaser (by Marta Alves Silva, November 6, 2021).

#### 4.1.2. Transition or liminal

After the initial phase entitled “Protocol”, there followed several references and reflections on the social sphere and on what the artist calls the “Ruin” in which we live (Martins 2021, 91). Illustrating the real world or an imagined future reality, depending on the gaze, the voice declared:

Our world is a world in vertigo, half buried, half burning. The collapse of the system is not a thriller, it has long blinded us, but our bodies remain docile ... the future lingers in these ruins. We live in stolen times. The land is full of refugees without refuge. Solids are dissolved in this techno-virtual soup where we all swim ... life is technically calculated. Bodies are administrated by the capital, deviations are sanctioned and corrected. Codes are naturalized into dual systems – self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, active/passive, truth/illusion, god/man <sup>26</sup>.

---

<sup>26</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): “O nosso mundo é um mundo em vertigem, metade soterrado, metade a arder. O colapso do sistema não é um thriller, a fálência cegou há muito, mas os nossos corpos continuam dóceis ... o futuro tarda nestas ruínas. Vivemos em tempo roubado – a terra está cheia de refugiados sem refúgio. Os sólidos dissolveram-se nesta sopa tecno-virtual onde nadamos todos ... a vida é calculada

The voice then repeatedly stated, “both more useful and more obedient, and vice-versa”<sup>27</sup>. There were many references and social criticism. While I write, I recall that at this stage I began to understand what the performance was about - a call to reflection. Reflection on a social, cultural and political level. A call made not specifically to anyone, but to each of us who were inhabiting that same time and space. The voice was so close to me, right there in my ears; it made me stop and listen carefully, while at the same time I was looking at the rest of the audience in its own process.

Until that point, I had been feeling more and more comfortable with my surroundings, even with this dive into the unknown and the unease created by the discourse. However, I was still physically in the same space, almost. So, in the space I was inhabiting I was not quite as at ease as I had thought. I reminded myself to question how the rest of the audience, who were also wearing headphones, was feeling, but I did not have any sense of insight. It seemed like they were having a similar experience, but it was hard to tell.

After a while, the tone of voice seemed to change slightly, with the focus turning from social concerns to the place and time of the artistic experience. The voice suggested: “Relax your body, relax your soul, welcome to the inside of the outside”. This sentence was repeated from time to time. The voice then started to bring other questions to the fore, involving the audience in a conversation: “Do you come here often? What can we do? I’ve waited so long for this. Speak louder please. I can’t hear you ... we’ve seen each other before”.<sup>28</sup>

After this was a reference to the importance of the group: “It all starts with being together, and how does it end?”, and an invitation: “Come, please. I’m waiting for you ... I need you here ... Let’s write an infinite language against the world. Stulted letters. Obscene signs. Let’s break the mirrors and give birth to ourselves again”. And then speaking louder: “Intimacy is bravery”, insisting: “We have to bury the bodies, mourn the dead and then burn. Insist on something else,

---

tecnicamente. Os corpos administrados pelo capital. Os desvios são sancionados e corrigidos. Os códigos são naturalizados em sistemas duais – eu/outro, mente/corpo, cultura/natureza, macho/fêmea, civilizado/primitivo, ativo/passivo, verdade/ilusão, Deus/homem”.

<sup>27</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): “tanto mais úteis quanto mais obedientes, e inversamente”.

<sup>28</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): “vens aqui muitas vezes? O que podemos fazer? Esperei tanto tempo por isto. Fala mais alto, por favor. Não consigo ouvir-te ... nós já nos vimos antes”.

other possibilities, other languages, other alien bodies, other pleasure-knowledges”<sup>29</sup>. The manifesto was quite clear about creating something new, finding creative ways of changing, and emphasizing the role of being together to make that change. The rhythm was changing, and it seemed to be preparing us for something about to come. The light had been steadily lowering until the point where it was almost dark. At the same time the volume of the sound – electronic chill out music – had been increasing. The voice was quietening little by little, and I remember instinctively closing my eyes and starting to enjoy the music, while moving my body timidly. I remember that soon after hearing the invitation to dance I wondered for a while if this was actually directed at me, and I questioned myself if I really should do it, and if so, would I be the only one doing it. Then I opened my eyes and realized how everyone else was moving smoothly around the space. This gave me the impression that they were also feeling more comfortable, and so I felt, in a way, that I was almost entering a ritual.



*Figure 4: Audience group moving around the space while enjoying the music, screenshot taken from the teaser (by Marta Alves Silva, November 6, 2021).*



*Figure 3: Audience member with the headphones enjoying the music, screenshot taken from the teaser (by Marta Alves Silva, November 6, 2021).*

In the following four stages, which the artist entitled “Decadance”, “Groups”, “Manifesto” and “Ecstasy”, every once in a while, the voice encouraged making a deep connection and immersion with the present moment, and with bodily movement: “Your ribs are alive. Breath. Stretch, stretch, stretch ... Let yourself to go. Dive. Move yourself ... Your spine is a snake that

---

<sup>29</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): “tudo começa com estarmos juntos, e como é que acaba? ... vem. vá lá. Estou à tua espera ... Preciso de ti aqui .... Vamos escrever uma língua infinita contra o mundo. Letras torpes. Sinais obscenos. Vamos partir os espelhos e parir-nos outra vez ... A intimidade é uma bravura ... temos de enterrar os corpos e chorar mortos e depois arder. Insistir noutra coisa, outras coisas possíveis, outras linguagens, outros corpos-alien, outros prazeres-saberes”.

connects your mind to this place”<sup>30</sup>. The pace was gradually increasing, as was the intensity of the experience. The lights were low and every now and then there were special effects. At one point, a white mist was set off and I remember noticing that I could no longer see the rest of the group clearly. However, at a certain point in time there was one person dancing more than everyone else and interacting with the group. I realized that it was a performer and not another audience member. The performer had arrived with the role of guiding us and encouraging us to move and to let go even more. The pace of techno music being played was fast, and I just danced and enjoyed the moment. In retrospect, I was completely involved in the moment, immersed in my own experience of *Silent Disco*, and in every feeling and emotion I was confronted with. The voice added: “How distorted you get when you move! Multiple, blurred, borderless. Shake, shake your every molecule, all your fluids”<sup>31</sup>. I remember almost forgetting that I was participating in an artwork, being immersed in a personal yet also communal journey.



Figure 5: Audience member immersed in the experience, screenshot taken from the teaser (by Marta Alves Silva, November 6, 2021).



Figure 6: Audience member dancing with the crowd, screenshot taken from the teaser (by Marta Alves Silva, November 6, 2021).

I remember feeling self-conscious at one point and doubting the sense of release and well-being I was feeling. When I looked around, I could see some bodies fervently moving while confronted to others that were still, also some smiles on the audience’s faces. I remember the undeniable feeling of pure bliss through the atmosphere of the group and the exchange entailed. At a certain moment, half the group was invited to do exactly that, to step out of their boxes and look around,

---

<sup>30</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): “As tuas costelas estão vivas. Respira, Estica-te, estica-te, estica-te ... Deixa-te ir. Mergulha. Move-te ... A tua coluna é uma cobra que liga a tua mente a este sítio.

<sup>31</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): Como ficas distorcido enquanto te mexes! Múltiplo, desfocado, sem fronteira. Sacode, sacode cada molécula tua, todos os líquidos”.

while the other half was being encouraged to dance. As this was done without us realizing; it was surprising and stimulating to feel the energy of those living bodies. Those who had not yet looked around them had the opportunity to do so, engaging with the groups' eyes and bodies, looking at their faces and perceiving their emotions. Despite being focused on each other's worlds, there was in a way, a sense of being singular while the plurality grew. The voice declared:

Bodies negotiate at the techno-frontier. They dream the impossible, the unimaginable. They embrace new thoughts and positions ... notice how they look at you and look back at you. This is the possible night – we are these and not others. We are here and not elsewhere. We are committed to this moment and not another. We are connected through a kind of laser-wifi. Link your morph-cortex-dermis-feelings with mine ... your body is vast, scattered throughout space and in every body and every air particle<sup>32</sup>.

The voice was demanding immersion, but not only that. There was also an invitation to connect with the other, to share a mutual encounter. A call was being made to integrate something new through a sensual experience, through “a multitude of dancing bodies that burn! United in a collective temporal distortion”, the ones that “build refuges”, that “seek pleasure-knowing” and that “counter-produce”<sup>33</sup>. This was clearly a manifesto, with emphasis on the relevancy of the bodies, those living and speaking bodies, sensitive and affective. The rhythm gradually started to slow, the music became less frenetic, and the voice announced that a translucent cloak would surround the group. There was a small machine in the corner of the room that started to release a huge and very thin transparent plastic sheet. The voice asked us to collaborate to rise it above our heads. As I was following the request, I noted that everybody else was also committed to the task. At a certain point, when the machine stopped releasing the fluid material, I realized that the members of the group were now very close to each other, below the translucent sheet. Despite being fully involved in this circle and establishing eye contact again with the other

---

<sup>32</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): “Os corpos negociam na tecno-fronteira. Sonham o impossível, o inimaginável. Reclamam novas posições de enunciação ... repara como te olham como te devolvem o olhar. Esta é a noite possível - somos estes e não outros. Estamos aqui e não noutra lugar. Comprometidos com este momento e não outro. Estamos ligados por uma espécie de ligação de laser-wifi. Liga o teu morfo-cortex-derme-feelings com o meu ... o teu corpo é imenso disperso por todo espaço em todos os outros corpos e todas as partículas de ar”.

<sup>33</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): Uma multidão de corpos abjetos que dançam! Que ardem! Unidos numa distorção temporal colectiva ... Construimos refúgios. Desidentificamo-nos. Buscamos o prazer-saber. Contraproduzimos”.

members of the audience, it was still possible to see what was beyond. The majority of the audience was smiling in fact, it was possible to feel the group's energy-substance. I felt completely engaged with the intimate atmosphere created. I remember having the insight that we were united and surrounded by a sort of a cocoon or expanded womb. This idea seemed to fill my body with ecstasy. It gave me goosebumps and a burst of well-being. The intensity of the experience then increased with my perception of myself as an audience member, being part of that group.



*Figure 7: Untitled (Audience group collaborating beyond the translucent plastic sheet) (Photography by Bruno Simão, 2019).*

#### **4.1.3. Incorporation or postliminal**

After a while, the voice reminded us that what we had just experienced was an artistic performance and that it was almost coming to an end. I remember hearing some disappointed voices coming from somewhere else in the room, asking for more. A kind of denial about going back. Shortly after, I heard other people laughing, and the voice continued: “And now what

happens? What awaits us out there? Has the evolution arrived or is it just a hangover?” It called for further reflection and offered some assistance on our return to everyday life. The voice closed the artistic experience, repeating the sentences: “It is just fiction, even though it is not exactly a lie... *Silent Disco*. We invest in the future of the species”<sup>34</sup>.

I remember feeling exhilarated and having a sense of lightness. People around me were full of enthusiasm, interacting with each other, laughing and commenting on their experiences, sharing their thoughts.

The audience returning from *Silent Disco* is an audience that eventually integrates the social/artist experience lived and the insights gained into themselves, resetting their own structure if necessary. This was my experience. A sensation of having a sharing experience with successive emotional contagions that had been embodied and was enduring.

#### **4.2. *Silent Disco*: the experience of emotional contagion**

As described above, *Silent Disco* (2019) resembles a ritual or rite of passage. In this context, as in ancient rituals, it invites participants to the present moment and “Sensitivity is put in a state of deepened and keener perception” (Artaud 1958, 91), instigating a shared experience that enables the emergence of other states of being and doing. This ritual is performative, and constitutes the cultural experience of the performance that is enriched by the audience in co-authorship. It can also echo a state of collective catharsis or liminality, produced in a nightclub within an artistic framework that is participative and immersive.

The audience group is invited on a journey. Detached from the daily grind, the audience lives an experiment that is artistic as much as social, individual as much as collective, unsettling as much as celebratory, physical as much as emotional and intellectual. Its parts are diverse and bear a resemblance to stages or levels that subtly evolve, and are not only completed by, but also enriched by the audience. This passage progresses according to what is being created. The

---

<sup>34</sup> My own translation from the script of *Silent Disco* (2019): “Isto é só uma ficção, ainda que não seja propriamente uma mentira. *Silent Disco*. We invest in the future of the species”.

audience guides and is guided along that emotional journey, culminating in a new stage that may be marked by an emotional contagion of the present community.

Under the realm of an artistic performance that goes hand-in-hand with the social sphere, as described on chapter three, the combined forces of liveness, immersion, intimacy, in a community-based encounter, topics discussed on chapter four, describes some tactics for an emotional contagion to occur on the artistic performance *Silent Disco* (2019)<sup>35</sup>.

#### **4.2.1. Liveness in *Silent Disco***

The audience in *Silent Disco* (2019) is co-present in that time and space almost entirely without the presence of the artist. Their bodily co-presence ensures a co-liveness that matters to both the experience lived by the audience and the artwork itself. The artistic framework encompasses direct contact between audience members, enhancing the possibilities of contagion. More than ontological, the liveness in *Silent Disco* is experiential. There are some relevant considerations on that.

Firstly, the opening questions brought gently to the fore by the voice from the headphones (“Do you come here often? What can we do? I’ve waited so long for this. Speak louder please. I can’t hear you ... we’ve seen each other before...”) recognize and promote the audience’s sense of presence, and also promote trust in the voice, both of which are essential to what follows. In addition, the pause between the iterations strengthens this trust and foments a closeness, in a similar way to a conversation. Secondly, it is an intercorporeal experience in which the audience’s bodies are the main characters. The artist appears to be interested in how bodies can collectively transform the space and how experiences are mediated by the presence of other bodies (Martins 2021). As they are not in an auditorium with seats, the bodies are able to act freely and move around while their senses are being stimulated. Thirdly, the audience members are truly noticed by each other, since they are encouraged to note each other’s bodies and movements. This brings a vitality that is reciprocal and conveys the sense of being present at that exact moment (Fischer-Lichte 2008). Contrary to most performances in which it is the artist

---

<sup>35</sup> There are certainly others with interest to explore.

or performer who is in movement, and who carries this liveness, in *Silent Disco* this characteristic is enhanced precisely by the non-presence of the artist or any performer, almost entirely throughout the time-performance. This brings us to the fourth point: the fact that both experiencing and producing happens simultaneously. The audience is also a co-producer. These “embodied minds” (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 99) inhabit the performance space for themselves, being able to freely move around and to act according to their own wills (a disclaimer is made at the beginning to encourage this). It is the audience that plays the key role of retaining and feeding the liveness. This also extends the participatory and immersive potential, as there is no one to halt or hinder it. As an artwork, the performance is subject to unforeseen circumstances, to a certain realness, and thus the same applies to and characterizes the audience’s experience. The potential for emotional contagion also varies accordingly. In the case of a fully inert or unresponsive audience, or of a performance with no physical presence at all in which other bodies are perceived, this dissertation would be probably different.

#### **4.2.2. Immersion & intimacy in *Silent Disco***

As described, in *Silent Disco* the artistic framework is constituted not only through bodily contact but with a focus on the audience’s immersive engagement and participation. The immersive environment produced depends on the creation of a sensual atmosphere, and to achieve this, the technology of *Silent Disco* is applied, and headphones are provided to an audience that shares the same space. The artist justifies the choice:

It produces a highly poetical image of people dancing in silence, with the poignancy of being able to choose the music that interests them. It can be seen as a foreign, highly individual reality, but it is an experience that is shared with a collective, and there is a group dance. From an artistic point of view, it seemed that it creates infinite possibilities for producing a performance, mainly through how the audience is engaged, and in what and how they hear (Martins 2021, 92)<sup>36</sup>.

The aim of the performance was to create an atmosphere of openness with a certain sensorial and affective quality (Martins 2021). Due to the immersive environment that is created, the

---

<sup>36</sup> My own translation of: “Produz esta imagem altamente poética de pessoas a dançar no silêncio, com a delicadeza de poderem escolher dançar ao som da música que lhes interessa. Podendo ser visto como estando numa realidade alheia altamente individual, esta experiência é partilhada com um colectivo, há uma dança conjunta. Do ponto de vista artístico, pareceu-nos que criava uma data de possibilidades de criação de uma performance, sobretudo na forma como o público é envolvido, àquilo que ouve e como ouve” (Martins 2021).

audience is bodily engaged, and the infectious microorganisms (emotions and other sensorial forms) needed for contagion are produced.

This immersive state undergoes a gradual evolution with multiple interlinked aspects, which confers a promise of success. There are some relevant aspects that highlight the entrance into the *Silent Disco*'s immersive atmosphere. Notice is given in an attempt to avoid a coercive environment that forces and limits the audience's actions. It explains that they can be at ease to enjoy the space in its fullness, acting according to their own free will. Moreover, audience members are allowed to enjoy a drink while being part of the artistic experience, thereby blurring the boundaries between art and life. Then, it goes one step further. The initial invitation to take a pill contributes to a detachment from familiar structures. It marks the beginning of the journey, the entrance to a brave new world. With that comes a prompt for new ways of being and doing, thanks to that *lemon smint*. As claimed by the artist "taking the pill is a metaphor for transformative potential" (Martins 2021, 93)<sup>37</sup>. More than a reference to *Matrix*, this is exactly how Frieze described immersive environments, as bubble spaces of new awareness (Frieze 2016). The creation of the raw ingredients of this environment requires a keen eye for spatiality, tonality and temporality.

In regard to spatiality, to present *Silent Disco* Alfredo Martins decided to distance himself from traditional artistic circuits and venues. So far, it has always been presented in the context of art festivals, and mainly in nightclubs. This choice of a non-conventional venue reveals a willingness to reach a broad and diverse audience, and creates a space denuded from traditional formalities, similarly to what the Fluxus artists were doing with events in the 1960s. Audience immersion in a nightclub, directly in a public space, is considerably different from immersion in a cultural institution with a certain code of conduct. This choice has also a conceptual value (Martins 2021). It draws on electronic dance music culture, including clubbing and rave culture from the 1980s and 1990s, linked to the creation and reconfiguration of social imaginative spaces, and to the counterculture movement<sup>38</sup>.

---

<sup>37</sup> My own translation of: "a tomada da pastilha é então uma metáfora desse potencial de transformação" (Martins 2021, 93).

<sup>38</sup> For further information cf. St John, Graham. 2006. "Electronic Dance Music Culture and Religion: An Overview". *Culture and Religion* 7, no. 1 (March): 1-25.

The physical space of the nightclub hosting *Silent Disco*, with all its characteristics, including size, shape, lighting, acoustics, and objects has an influence on audience perception. Low lighting is an important component. As argued by Alston, darkness enhances the affective potential of performance not only by encouraging audience engagement in immersive settings, but also by cultivating intimacy through the creation of “a bond of trust with (quasi) unseen others” (Alston 2016, 104). As Erika Fischer-Lichte outlined, “The spectators become aware of their own corporeality in atmospheric spaces. They experience themselves as living organisms involved in an exchange with their environments” (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 119). In *Silent Disco*, the audience can move freely around the space and freely engage and merge with their surroundings. The fact that all the members of the audience are gathered in the same space may also aid intimacy, immersion, and enable the conditions for a community-based encounter through exchange and emotional contagion.

In addition to spatiality, tonality also plays a relevant role in *Silent Disco*. As Fischer-Lichte argues, the aura of performance is influenced by intentional and non-intentional sounds heard at the time of the event (Fischer-Lichte 2008). According to her, sounds and voices are not only experienced physically (they may relax or tense the body), but also resound through the space: “The aural space it generated was experienced as a liminal space of permanent transitions, passages, and transformations” (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 128).

Vocal reactions by the audience, chatting, the sound of tapping feet on the floor while dancing, toasts, clapping and the sounds produced in the context of the *Rive Rouge* bar itself, all constitute *Silent Disco*'s universe of non-intentional sounds.

Alongside this, the voice that echoes from the headphones figures throughout a large part of the performance. It is mostly delicate and human-shaped, its tone and volume slightly vary, accompanying the different stages of performance. At the beginning and end of the performance, it also resembles a machine, determining the entrance and exit of the experience. It is as if it were from another dimension. To a certain extent, this voice has the role of a guide, with the aim of accompanying the immersive atmosphere created and instigating participation. According to the artist: “It gives some coordinates to the public about how they can live that experience. It then invites them to enjoy the music they are listening to and gives them space to

do this or that, according to their own will” (Martins 2021, 92)<sup>39</sup>. Even though it can be seen as a mediation tool, it goes beyond the conventional as it is combined with the apparatus that the technology and immersive techniques in *Silent Disco* require. It enters in a real-mediated game, as discussed in the previous chapter. In accordance with Auslander, and particularly Bolter and Grusin, I would like to emphasize the potential of such devices in leading the audience to a transparent immediacy under the pretext that an immediate and unconscious relationship with its contents is being established (Bolter and Grusin 1999). The audience’s immediate emotional response to that, is what stands out to the current discussion of *Silent Disco*. Existing by itself, without figures or bodies, it is purely an auditory stimulus. This condition enhances the audience’s quality of attention and fosters an immediate awareness and response to what they are presented with, and furthermore, it does not rely on loudspeakers. Thanks to the headphones provided, the sound of every word echoes directly into the ears of each audience member. As Frieze points out, technology is used to “re-orient and disorient”, and “(headphones) can cause powerful (con)fusion” of environments (Frieze 2016, 8, 10). It seems to mirror our minds and our consciousness due to its aural proximity, offering a sense of the singular being plural and the sense of trust that is important to enter the “safe space” that Alfredo Martins aims to create (Martins 2021, 92). According to the artist, “It seemed to us that the headphones were a very powerful tool that extrapolated this more poetical idea, transmitting comfort and trust in your own universe, while you reclaim new ones” (Martins 2021, 93).<sup>40</sup>At a certain time, this voice drives one to introspection. The audience is accompanied through a process that begins with an encounter with the self, removes blocks, and offers successive invitations to disconnect from the surroundings. These invitations to relax, breathe and close the eyes foment a connection with each other’s bodies and inner worlds, and work as an unzipping, helping the audience to feel at ease. This internal gaze foments self-intimacy and immersion and lays the ground for the

---

<sup>39</sup> My own translation of: “dá algumas coordenadas ao público sobre como podem viver aquela experiência. Depois convida-o a usufruir da música que estão a ouvir e dá espaço para que possam fazer isto ou aquilo, conforme entenderem.” (Martins 2021, 92).

<sup>40</sup> My own translation of: “pareceu-nos que os headphones eram uma ferramenta poderosíssima que extrapolava esta ideia mais poética, transmitindo conforto e segurança no teu próprio universo enquanto reclamas novos” (Martins 2021, 93).

subsequent invitation to a more outward gaze at the rest of the audience, leading to a collective intimacy, and eventually to emotional contagion.

At some points, this voice is allied with other auditory stimuli. Music fills the space and involves the audience, playing a key role in their immersive experience in *Silent Disco*. This is especially because it is played through headphones, which like the voice, increases the intensity of the experience. The artist also considers temporality here. Volume, rhythm, and music type vary over the time-performance. At the beginning, when personal immersion is encouraged, electronic chill out music is played, creating a relaxing atmosphere. The lighting keeps pace with the performance but is dim most of the time. Bodily movements are stimulated as the volume and pace of the music increases and the lights are flashing. The climax is reached with techno music being played while the audience's bodies are vigorously moving ("A multitude of dancing bodies that burn! United in a collective temporal distortion"). The audience is dancing together to the music, which strongly foments intimacy within the group and sets the field for emotional contagion to occur. According to Jeremy Gilbert, "(Music) is the capacity to create a set of common affects, enabling otherwise disparate bodies to resonate in harmony" (Gilbert 2010, 1), and with negotiations on the dancefloor I would add.

"Those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who couldn't hear the music", as it is usually said. The rhythm patterns of electronic techno music urge audience members to dance. A certain pattern of sounds and body movements produces a certain rhythm, which then has an impact on the performance. Rhythm is produced via an interwoven grid of expected and chance elements that are in constant flux. According to Erika Fischer-Lichte, the rhythm produced in the context of a performance collides with each individual's rhythm, one that comes not only from our actions (such as walking or dancing) but also from our inner movements (such as breathing or heart-beats) (Fischer-Lichte 2008). The rhythm produced is not an independent and fixed creation with no impact; it enters into a dialogue with the individuals and their own rhythms. This increases the likelihood of a rhythmic tuning that has great potential for the group and the exchange, and hence for the performance itself (Fischer-Lichte 2008). This rhythmic tuning is interconnected with emotional contagion.

### 4.2.3. The community of *Silent Disco*

Alfredo Martins' artistic framework proposes the creation of an environment detached from ordinary life, with its own structures that explores new possibilities of being, feeling, thinking, doing, and relating. Invitations are made to the audience in this regard ("Let's write an infinite language against the world. Stulted letters. Obscene signs. Let's break the mirrors and give birth to ourselves again"). This framework is presented to the audience to be completed, being a liquid space of openness, free of rigidity (in Bauman's terms), with an interest to explore. But this broth is full of a variety of slowly cooked ingredients.

For contagion to occur, people are needed in order to be "infected", and to promote the circulation of 'microorganisms' – emotions. In this social experiment, a miscellaneous group of unknown people, with their similarities and differences, gathers in the same space to cultivate an artistic-social experience. They form a temporary community outside the ordinary flow of things. There is also an intention to incite the audience ("You are part of a transitory community that welcomes you. It is a fiction, but it is not exactly a lie"), enhancing a sense of community. In addition, there are references in the script to the structures inscribed in this alternative community – a "safe space", an "affection-positive space", a "(non) dual system", among others – that may make us imagine the point of origin of this community. This introduces the concept of Bourriaud's community in the form of "social interstice", an experiment with distinct formulations. The artist as being interested in the exploration of collective spaces for new creations (Martins 2021).

Initial questions raised by the voice to the audience – "Do you come here often?", among others – not only enhance the audience's sense of presence, as previously discussed, but also cultivate their imaginations and engagement with those ideas. The same happens with the initial reflections on the social sphere ("Our world is a world in vertigo, half buried, half burning"), that aim to both captivate and disturb audience members. Some emotional responses might coincide within the group, and yet others might collide, creating a rich universe. By fostering a critical gaze, it also instigates a willingness to do things differently, at least on that social experiment, in that time and space with that community (from the script "This is the possible night – we are these and not others, we are here and not elsewhere, committed to this moment

and not another”), preparing the ground for the subsequent invitation towards a mutual construction.

The audience’s positions are constantly and organically switching from receivers to producers of the experience. The artist is not present, so he does not participate in this role-play. As already mentioned, this extends the audience’s participatory possibilities. In this alternative space for social interaction, audience members are encouraged to explore the horizontal axis established by bodily gaze, dialogue, and negotiation. New insights inevitably emerge through embodiment. This reciprocal apparatus involves exchanges in a feeling-thinking setting, towards potential emotional contagion.

The audience’s alternating bodily movements include an internal and external gaze<sup>41</sup>, and this is what constitutes the shift from being objects while simultaneously subjects, and is what feeds the subsequent exchange. The audience’s non-verbal behavior is what predominates in *Silent Disco* and their bodies – those living, sensorial and affective bodies, play a key role in this. This is also evident in the script of *Silent Disco*: “The bodies negotiate at the techno-frontier. They dream the impossible, the unimaginable. They declare new thoughts and positions”, they “build refuges”, “seek pleasure-knowing” and “counter-produce”. At first, the voice invites members of the audience to close their eyes and breathe in and out. Later on comes the invitation to dance, and this continues throughout the duration of the performance. Later still the audience is invited to collaboratively wrap themselves under a giant transparent plastic sheet. The audience’s immediate response constitutes the artwork and is what makes them subjects of the experience. However, they are also simultaneously artistic objects when they are gazed at (noticed/perceived) by other members of the group as well as subjects, since the act of gazing is a response in itself. This reciprocal gaze of gazing at and being gazed at generates an information flow that feeds audience perception of the experience. When an audience member gazes at another audience member, they are soliciting input, feedback or guidance directly from their peers and surroundings. They are therefore open to bodily receiving and apprehending this

---

<sup>41</sup> Again, “gaze” here is meant to describe an intercorporeal perception, with all sensorial forms described. From a sensation of inner peace or restlessness, to the energy felt by a dancing crowd to an emotion created by listening to someone crying, or the chance sensation of touching the warm body of another audience member.

information and are open to a certain exchange. As an example, I would like to recall my own experience of *Silent Disco*. When, at a certain point of being immersed in the experience, I decided to open my eyes and look around, I saw most of the group smiling and enthusiastically dancing. This bodily reading gave me the impression that they were enjoying the moment, and this perception entered into a dialogue and negotiation with my own perception. Instead of directly imitating and transposing the same emotion to my own universe, there was a multilayered confrontation taking place. As I was experiencing a blissful and freeing sensation, this perception from another body enhanced what I was already feeling. A certain contagion seemed to take place. The intimate atmosphere created in *Silent Disco* clearly contributed to that exchange. However, it is important to note that other views are equally valid, and there might be audience members that do have such distinct feelings. Rancière's emancipated spectator is not one-way only, as it can take various forms. Those audience members who were inert and enjoying the experience in a different way also contributed to this exchange amongst the group, and hence to this co-production. When a reciprocal gaze between two opposite poles with distinct emotional responses takes place, I believe there is a clash. However, if one considers Claire Bishop's statements on harmonious environments, and Chantal Mouffe's discourse and discussion about the importance of a vibrant community full of enriching conflicts (cf. chapter 3), one is led to ponder how this situation is also key to the experience created. That is, a stance of refusal or resistance is also important to any exchange. It seems reasonable to envision that there should be a negotiation in which divergences are explored and that both parties are mutually influenced by the encounter (a reference from this is found in the script "Link your morph-cortex-dermis-feelings with mine ... your body is vast, scattered throughout the space in every body and every air particle"). Emotional contagion may happen, where both parties infect each other, creating a community of mutual exchange.

This process, here described in slow-motion, should occur frequently through the time-performance and in an automatic mode. The number of times that we experience this exchange, and the coherence of the stimulated emotions may increase the intensity of emotional contagion in a certain direction by having its central features – liveness, immersion & intimacy, community – discussed and enhanced too. The fact that *Silent Disco* invites immersion in such a progressive

manner and taking into consideration the multisensory components that waken the body – sound, light, rhythm, among others – allows for a continuation of successive emotional contagions. Involvement in this emotional community, even with its antagonistic character, in artistic/social co-production, increases the chances of finishing the performance with a sense of transformation – the liminal experience evoked by Fischer-Lichte (2010). This can be lasting if there is a surprise, a touching moment, that can create memories beyond the artistic experience, and contribute to an enduring ephemerality. My experience as an audience member reached its peak, its moment of serendipity, with a deep emotional contagion, when the group was underneath the transparent plastic sheet that resembled an expanded womb, after which, we were closer than ever, ready to be reborn.

Performances such as *Silent Disco* create environments with the potential to be emotionally responsive and contagious. It is this idea that this dissertation has been describing and discussing and is what this case study aims to illustrate. The fact that this particular artistic framework of *Silent Disco* is live, intimate, and immersive, and the fact it has a particular audience at a specific time and space can lead a group of people to a set of emotions. Emotions that are then shared within this living-micro-temporary community that plays an active role, and entails mutual gazes, dialogues, and negotiations. This can configure the groundwork for emotional contagion, which may culminate in a mutual terrain of social relevance and affection, a liminal state that is constituted of diverse and intertwined bodies.

## **Conclusion**

With a focus on Performance Art, this dissertation has discussed how the artform may be able to create experiences that go beyond the artistic realm, being also a social encounter and a practice of emotional contagion that happens among the audience group in a dynamic process with and through the artwork. In an attempt to try to answer the research question set, I would like to summarize the conclusions obtained from previous chapters.

Chapter 1, “Performance Art”, was important in the sense that it offered a greater understanding of the object of study in conceptual and historical terms. The preference for the art form rested on the apparent focus it has in terms of artistic practices that better involve and engage the audience. Having mapped the field, this project thus became more consistent. Performance is shown to have been – since its very beginnings – a cross border, unsettling, multidimensional, and increasingly popular art form, and I would like to sum it up in three parts. The first is between art and life, going beyond the canon of art while remaining close to social and political concerns. The second is between artist and audience, merging producers and recipients, calling the latter into action. And the third is between body and mind, favouring bodily engagement and embodiment. Thus, as it is experiencing a boom in the art world and is seen under magnification, performance may be considered as more than an art form as it is a symbol or stance that brings art, and social and audience engagement, together in an enriching confrontation, questioning the relationships between them.

Chapter 2, “Performance art and the social sphere”, underlined the social dimension of contemporary art, and most notably, performance, in order to frame the discussion around the subject. It discussed four dimensions that revolve around the intersection between artistic and social encounter: knowledge, politics, audience engagement and emancipation. Firstly, the increasing interest of contemporary artists in knowledge collaboration with researchers, allied with the potential of performance in creating experiences with a heterogeneous audience in social/cultural terms that encourage critical thinking, places performance in an interesting position. With distinct approaches and in non-conventional contexts, it concludes that performance may create an alternative circuit for knowledge production. Secondly, this non-conventional path continues as a political artistic practice. Performance triggers reflection on

social issues, generates enriching confrontations among the audience group, “dissects” ideas, and leaves an open space for new construction. It demonstrates that with those living bodies, performance may foment new spaces of resistance. Thirdly, it is audience engagement that is the foundation for that link with social issues. Performance explores participatory practices, invites audiences to extend their agency in the encounter generated, and involves them in a shared experience that is regulated by social relations. The three previous points lead us to the fourth point about audience emancipation. The artwork, which was brought by the artist in an open form, is co-produced by both artist and audience. Audience emancipation is taken further. Performance is intimately connected with the social sphere, as it promotes social encounters in which an empowered audience is involved with mutual concerns, allowing it to possibly function as a conversation starter towards social change.

Having addressed the artistic and the social dimensions of performance art in the previous sections, in Chapter 3 “Performance art and emotional contagion”, the inquiry went further. It focused on the topic of audience engagement and emancipation, namely by exploring in depth the relational component of performance. It proposed an understanding of what may happen with a group of people in a certain time and space in the framework of a performance and developed a conceptual framework around the influence of performance in fostering emotional contagion among the audience group. This concept, already introduced by Fischer-Lichte (2010), was redesigned and broadened to include three dimensions that may contribute to enabling such a process: Liveness, Immersion & Intimacy, and Community. Firstly, Liveness explored performance’s quality of being live. The conclusion was that it can enable an intercorporeal experience. With this, the audience’s bodies face each other and may easily enter into a mutual construction, one that involves feeling and thinking structures in a real-mediated game established between the artwork and the audience. Secondly, it explored ways to prompt audience sensitivities and intimacy in the context of a multidisciplinary approach to performance. The idea of immersing the audience in a participatory and multisensorial situation with others who are present seemed to carry great potential in relational terms. It was concluded that immersive techniques may instigate intimate and emotional responses among a given group. Thirdly, it looked at the nature of the temporary community constituted by audience members

– one that emerges in that specific time and space, and through which emotional contagion may occur. Separated from the mundane existence, it has its own specifications. It is a community of gazes – corporeal and culturally mediated gazes – on the rest of the group. It is a community that dialogues and negotiates along a horizontal plane, an emotional community that evolves through a convivial scheme. This chapter concludes that the combination of an experience that is live, immersive, intimate and community-based, may amplify the circulation of emotions, which then favours a process of emotional contagion.

Chapter 4, “Case study: *Silent Disco* (2019), a performance by Alfredo Martins”, then analyzed this case study to verify the earlier arguments. By incorporating my own observations as an audience member, I have been able to provide an in-depth reflection on my own experience – thereby solidifying my beliefs. The aim of combining it with an analysis of the textual and visual material provided by the artist was to offer an as accurate as possible empirical portrait (while appreciating that there may be different perspectives). To enable this analysis, the performance was not divided in accordance with its initial structure but was presented in three parts within concepts related to ritual theory. This highlighted a before, a during, and an after. With that, it was able to propose that *Silent Disco* could potentially be a transformative experience. This was then merged with the threefold theoretical framework addressed in the previous chapter. Liveness, Immersion & Intimacy, and Community are topics of particular relevance in *Silent Disco*. This is due to the fact that the audience lives an intense experience outside the ordinary flow of life and shares a spatio-temporal presence in a non-conventional space without the physical presence of the artist. The bodies co-present are intimately and emotionally engaged through the voice and the music played through their headphones, while confronting each other and creating something together as a community. It concludes that *Silent Disco* (2019) meets the three dimensions defined as suitable conditions for emotional contagion to occur, and that therefore, more than just an *artistic* experience, the performance instigates an *emotionally contagious* experience.

Further research on accurate models to measure audience experience might be useful in order to grasp if emotional contagion has been effectively felt by the audience group each time *Silent Disco* is presented. The results of this research aim to contribute to the study of Performance

Art, and to encourage more studies on its artistic and social potential, and on spectatorship. Further research on emotional contagion might also be useful in the scope of affect studies in order to find synergies that can develop the concept. Additionally, it may be interesting to investigate if emotional contagion can lead to an empathic process among the audience group.

As discussed, performance promotes social encounters in the here and now. It is aligned with the need to gather collectives around shared concerns, and to co-produce experiences that are able to awaken a sensorial universe. Thus, by proposing a relational model anchored in emotions, this dissertation highlights the emergence of those unique and touching moments enabling the creation of a lasting ephemerality. If performance can indeed promote emotional contagion among an audience group, it could be argued that such experiences can be transformative, and even emancipatory. Encounters constituted by diversified and intertwined bodies that infect each other emotionally, may eventually culminate in a mutual terrain of socially relevant affection.

## Bibliography

Abramović, Marina. 2010. "Marina Abramović: Documenting performance", interview with Edward Roy. Filmed March 14, 2010 at Museum of Modern Art, New York. Youtube video 1:45. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rp\\_av9kLPM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Rp_av9kLPM)

Agüera y Arcas, Blaise. 2017. "Art in the Age of Machine Intelligence." *Arts* 6, 18, no. 4 (September): 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts6040018>

Alston, Adam. 2016. *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Auslander, Philip. 2008. *Liveness: Performance in a mediatized culture*, London: Routledge

Artaud, Antonin. 1958. *The Theater and Its Double*. Translated by Mary Caroline Richards. New York: Grove Press.

Barthes, Roland. (1967) 1989. "The Death of the Author" In *The Rustle of Language*. Translated by Richard Howard, 49-55. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1973) 1975. *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang.

Battcock, Gregory, and Robert Nickas, eds. 1984. *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology*. New York: E.P. Dutton, Inc.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press.

Benjamin, Walter. (1936) 1999. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.", In *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt. Translated by Harry Zorn, 211-44. London: Pimlico.

Berlant, Lauren. 1998. "Intimacy: A Special Issue." *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (Winter): 281-288. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1344169>

Bernstein, Larry. 2019. "Performance art". *Salem Press Encyclopaedia*. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib,uid&db=ers&AN=119214537&lang=pt-pt&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Beuys, Joseph. 1970. "Joseph Beuys", interview with Robert Filliou. In *Teaching and Learning As Performance Arts*, 160-173. Koln and New York: Verlag Gebrüder König.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1974. "I am searching for field character" In the *Art into Society - Society into Art: Seven German Artists*. London: Institute of Contemporary Arts. <https://theoria.art-zoo.com/i-am-searching-for-field-character-joseph-beuys/>

\_\_\_\_\_. 1986. *What is Art? Conversation with Joseph Beuys*. Edited by Volker Harlan. Translated by Matthew Barton and Shelly Sacks. 2004. Stuttgart: Clairview Books.

Birringer, Johannes. 1991. "Video Art / Performance: A Border Theory." *Performing Arts Journal* 13, no. 3 (September): 54-84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3245541>

Bishop, Claire, ed. 2006. *Participation*. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel and The MIT Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2006. "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents." *Artforum* (February): 178-183.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2012. *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London: Verso.

Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin. 1999. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. New York: The MIT Press.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. (1998) 2002. *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods. Paris: Le presses du Réel.

Breton, André. (1924) 1969. "Manifesto of Surrealism." In *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, 1-48. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Brook, Peter. 1968. *The Empty Space*. New York: Simon & Schuster Inc.

Gil, Isabel. 2017. "Intense and Conflictual. Cultural Work in the 21st century". In *Tension and Conflict: Video-art After 2008*, edited by Pedro Gadanho and Luísa Santos, 35-45. Lisbon: Assírio e Alvim.

Carlson, Marvin, 2018. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Committee, The Invisible. 2009. *The Coming Insurrection*. USA: Semiotext(e).

Davis, Douglas. 1995. "The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction (An Evolving Thesis: 1991-1995)." *Leonardo* 28, no. 5: 381–86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1576221>.

Derrida, Jacques. 1978 "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass, 278-293. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Dixon, Steve. 2007. "The Genealogy of Digital Performance". In *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*, 37-45. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press.

Dolan, Jill. 2005. *Utopia in Performance*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Eco, Humberto. (1962) 1989. "Poetics of the Open work." In *The Open Work*. Translated by Anna Cancogni, 1-23. Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Finbow, Acatia. 2016a. "Rebecca Horn, Moveable Shoulder Extensions 1971." In *Performance At Tate: Into the Space of Art*, Tate Research Publication. <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/perspectives/rebecca-horn>

\_\_\_\_\_. 2016b. "Tino Sehgal, This is propaganda 2002/2006." In *Performance At Tate: Into the Space of Art*, Tate Research Publication. <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/perspectives/tino-sehgal>

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. 2008. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. Translated by Saskya Iris Jain. New York and Oxon: Routledge.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Performing Emotions. How to Conceptualize Emotional Contagion in Performance." In *Habitus in Habitat I: Emotion and Motion*, edited by Sabine Flach, Daniel Margulies and Jan Söffner. Bern: Peter Lang AG.

Foucault, Michel. (1969, 1989) 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1978) 2007. "What is Critique?" In *The Politics of Truth*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer. Translated by Lysa Hochroth and Catherine Porter, 41-81. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Fox, Terry. (1979) 1984. "Robin White: An interview with Terry Fox", interview with Robin White. In *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gregory Battcock and Robert Nickas, 105-118. New York: E.P. Dutton, Inc.

Freedberg, David, Vittorio Gallese. 2007. "Motion, emotion and empathy in esthetic experience." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11, 5: 197-203. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2007.02.003>

Friedman, Ken. 1984. "Fluxus Performance". In *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gregory Battcock and Robert Nickas, 38-55. New York: E.P. Dutton, Inc.

Frieze, James, ed. 2016. *Reframing Immersive Theatre: The Politics and Pragmatics of Participatory Performance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gann, Kyle. 2010. "4'33'' at First Listening". In *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's 4'33''*, 1-31. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Gilbert, Jeremy. 2010. "Music is Power." *Jeremy Gilbert Writing* (blog). November 3, 2010. <https://jeremygilbertwriting.wordpress.com/2010/11/03/music-is-power/>

Goldberg, Roselee. 1979. *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2004. *Performance: Live Art since the 60s*. New York: Thames & Hudson.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. "The Intellectuals." In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, 5-23. New York: International Publishers.

Grossberg, Lawrence. 2017. "Tilting at Windmills: a Cynical Assemblage of the Crisis of Knowledge." *Cultural Studies* 32, no. 2 (November): 149-193.

Groys, Boris. 2014. "On Art Activism." *E-flux*, no. 56 (June). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/56/60343/on-art-activism/>

Hatfield, Elaine, John Cacioppo and Richard Rapson. 1994. *Emotional Contagion*. Cambridge, Melbourne and Paris: Cambridge University Press.

Heddon, Deirdre, Helen Iball, Rachel Zerihan. 2012. "Come Closer: Confessions of Intimate Spectators in One to One Performance." *Contemporary Theatre Review* 22, no. 1: 120-133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10486801.2011.645233>

Jensenius, Alexander. 2012. "Disciplinarity: intra, cross, multi, inter, trans". Last modified March 25, 2016. <https://www.arj.no/2012/03/12/disciplinarity-2/>

Kaprow, Allan. (1965) 1995. "Excerpts from 'Assemblages, environments & happenings'". In *Happenings and Other Acts*, edited by Mariellen R. Sandford, 260-278. Oxon and New York: Routledge.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1993. *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, edited by Jeff Kelley. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Kaye, Nick. 2000. *Site-specific art: performance, place and documentation*. London and New York: Routledge.

Lind, Maria. 2007. "The Collaborative Turn." In *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, 15-31. London: Black Dog Publishing.

Lyotard, Jean-François. (1979) 1984. *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

MAAT, 2020. "RExFORM International Performance Project". <https://maat.pt/en/rexform-international-performance-project>

Machon, Josephine. 2013. *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Maciunas, George 1963. *Fluxus Manifesto*. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift, n.d. MoMA. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127947>

Marar, Ziyad. 2012. "Translating Intimacy." In *Intimacy: Understanding the Subtle Power of Human Connection*, 15-31. Durham, Bristol: Acumen Publishing.

Marchart, Oliver. 2007. "Politics and the Political: Genealogy of a Conceptual Difference." In *Post-Foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau*, 35-60. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2019. *Conflictual Aesthetics: Artistic Activism and the Public Sphere*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Martins, Alfredo. 2021. "Interview Alfredo Martins", interview with Marta Alves Silva. August 3, 2021. In *Emotional Contagion: The Transformative Potential of Performance Art*, 89-98 (master's diss., Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2021).

Matias, Ferry, Catur Surya, Yayat Hidayat, Made Putra. 2019. "The Value of Musical Creativity in Industry 4.0 Era: Based on Musical Composition Generated by Artificial Intelligence &

Computer Learning.” *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Intermedia Arts and Creative Technology*. [https://doi.org/ 10.5220/0009443801850191](https://doi.org/10.5220/0009443801850191)

Melzer, Annabelle. 1984. “The Dada Actor and Performance Theory”. In *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gregory Battcock and Robert Nickas, 27-37. New York: E.P. Dutton, Inc.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice 1964. “An Unpublished Text by Maurice Merleau-Ponty: A Prospectus of His Work”. In *The Primacy of Perception*, edited by James M. Edie. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1945) 2012. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes. London: Routledge.

Meyer, ULF. 2019. “Bauhaus Revisited”. *Electra Magazine*, Issue 6, June 2019. Lisbon: EDP Foundation.

MoMA. n.d. “Media and Performance”. Accessed August 6, 2020. <https://www.moma.org/collection/about/curatorial-departments/media-performance>

Moore, Marianne. 1956. “He ‘Digesteth Harde Yron.’” In *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*, 99-100. London: Faber and Faber.

Mouffe, Chantal. 2013. *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*. London: Verso.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. (1986) 1991. “The Inoperative Community.” In *The Inoperative Community*, edited by Peter Connor, Translated by Peter Connor, Lisa Carbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney, 1-42. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.

*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, n.d. S.v. “knowledge.” Oxford University Press. Accessed December 20, 2020. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/knowledge?q=knowledge+>

*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, n.d. S.v. "immersion." Oxford University Press. Accessed March 15, 2021. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/immersion?q=immersion>

*Online Etymology Dictionary*, n.d. S.v. "emotion.". Accessed July 20, 2021. <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=emotion>

Para-Site School, n.d. Accessed January 10, 2021. <https://parasiteschool.org/>

Phelan, Peggy. 1993. *Unmarked: The politics of performance*. London and New York: Routledge.

Popper, 1974. "Karl Popper on the Open Society." Filmed 1974. Video 3:27. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVnlzYfIAj0>

Power, Nina. 2016. "The Art of Protest: Can Artists Respond Effectively to Social and Political Upheaval?" *Tate Etc* 36, no. 1 (Spring). <https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-36-spring-2016/art-protest>

Rancière, Jacques. (2000, 2004) 2013. *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. Translated by Gabriel Rockhill. London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

\_\_\_\_\_. (2004) 2009a. "Problems and Transformation of Critical Art." In *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. Translated by Steven Corcoran, 45-60. Cambridge: Polity Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. (2004) 2009b. *The emancipated Spectator*. Translated by Gregory Elliott Corcoran. London: Verso.

Reason, Matthew, and Anja Mølle Lindelof, eds. 2017. *Experiencing Liveness in Contemporary Performance: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New York and Oxon: Routledge.

Rogoff, Irit. 2008. "Turning." *E-flux*, no. 0 (November). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/56/60343/on-art-activism/>

Rosenberg, Harold. 1952. "The American Action Painters." *Artnews*, no.1 (January): 22-50. <https://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/art112/readings/rosenberg%20american%20action%20painters.pdf>

Rosenwein, Barbara H. 2006. *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. Translated by Donald A. Landes. New York: Cornell University Press.

Schneider, Rebecca. 1997. "Binary terror and the body made explicit". In *The explicit body in performance*, 11-42. London and New York: Routledge.

Tania Bruguera, n.d. "Cátedra Arte de Conducta (Behavior Art School)." Works. Accessed February 4, 2021. <http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/492-0-Ctedra+Arte+de+Conducta+Behavior+Art+School.htm>

\_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Political Art Statement." Writings. [http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/388-0-Political Art Statement.htm](http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/388-0-Political+Art+Statement.htm)

Tate. 2017. "An Introduction to Performance Art". Tate Shots. Video 3:42. Created September 22, 2017. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/performance-art/introduction-performance-art>

Turner, Victor. 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre: the Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publications.

The Silent University, n.d. Accessed January 10, 2021. <http://thesilentuniversity.org/>

Westerman, Jonah. 2016. *Performance at Tate: Into the Space of Art*. Tate Research Publication. <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate>

Wood, Catherine 2019. *Performance in Contemporary Art*. London: Tate Publishing.

Yves Klein Foundation. n.d. "Yves Klein". Biography. Accessed August 10, 2020. <http://www.yvesklein.com/en/biographie/>

## Annexes

### A. Interview Alfredo Martins

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021, 11:00 – 12:30

**A mediação e o envolvimento do público têm sido uma constante no teu trabalho. O que te motivou para a produção da *Silent Disco*? Quais foram os teus principais objectivos com este projecto, nomeadamente na criação da experiência que proporcionas ao público?**

São várias as motivações, desde as mais intuitivas, às mais estruturadas. Fui trabalhando várias formas de interpelar esta entidade misteriosa que é o público, quer pela criação de formatos artísticos que interpelam a experiência e o poder dos espectadores num contexto performativo, quer através do trabalho de mediação que tenho vindo a desenvolver.

A ideia para a criação da *Silent Disco* começa com uma reflexão sobre algumas realidades sobre as quais sempre me senti atraído. Refiro-me ao universo do *clubbing*: espaços aparentemente hedonistas, mas de tradução identitária com potencial para a criação de ligações, como a teoria *queer* tantas vezes explora; espaços simultaneamente emocionais e intelectuais e, por vezes, de estados alterados de consciência; experiências colectivas de novas possibilidades, onde se negociam estratégias de resistência e se propõem novas formulações, formulações que definem aquele espaço com aquele grupo presente.

Depois existia também esta imagem das festas *Silent Disco* onde há um colectivo que dança no silêncio. Cada um com os seus headphones, tem esta particularidade de poderem dançar ao som da música que é da sua própria escolha. Um espaço contraditório onde cada elemento está circunscrito ao seu próprio universo, ao mesmo tempo que se envolvem numa energia colectiva e numa negociação dentro desta aparente afirmação individual.

Tinha vontade de explorar um formato performativo que pudesse colocar o público neste contexto. Por isso também a escolha dos locais. Partindo de uma experiência de ir dançar, quis propor um uma experiência intelectual, emotiva e afetiva. No trabalho que desenvolvo procuro fomentar no público um papel activo, modelador da experiência, que testa os limites da sua acção, e que o faça explorar outras ferramentas para além da mente.

**No discurso da Performance parece haver algumas referências a Donna Haraway, Nicolas Bourriaud, Zygmunt Bauman, Jean Baudrillard ou até mesmo Michel Foucault. De onde vêm as tuas principais influências ou referências e em que medida é que as suas ideias se veem reflectidas no trabalho que produziste?**

Há um trabalho de reflexão mais próximo de um contexto académico que me foi interessando, não por um fascínio pela referência académica *per si*, mas pela abertura que proporciona ao pensamento, ao encontrar discursos com os quais nos identificamos. É certo que o texto da *Silent Disco* é muito permeável à formulação de ideias com esta base.

De facto, o texto parafraseia muitas vezes alguns autores que referes. Alguns, imagino que se relacione, mas não tenho tanta propriedade em falar sobre eles. Outros têm uma maior influência sobre o meu trabalho. A estética relacional proposta por Bourriaud, por exemplo, está muito presente. Interessa-me muito esta ideia da construção de uma experiência estética que assenta na experiência colectiva. Refiro-me ainda a Donna Haraway e Foucault com especial proeminência para a construção do texto propriamente dito da *Silent Disco*. O Foucault, por ser um autor central nesta questão do poder e da biopolítica, nesta ideia de como o corpo disciplinado se torna o centro do exercício político, de como é reconduzido para se afastar do desvio. Passando também um pouco por outros autores como Paul Preciado e Judith Butler, até chegar a Donna Haraway, que referiste. Como é referido no *Manifesto Cyborg*, “a linguagem é tecnologia e permite criar realidades” surge então a questão de como é que eu me enuncio; como é que exploramos novas possibilidades de vir colectivo no quadro actual em que vivemos, de capitalismo patriarcal altamente desregulado. Assumindo que vivemos numa ruína, e o texto utiliza esta ideia, onde há coisas que já se perderam irremediavelmente do ponto de vista social

(e até ambiental), quais são então as possibilidades para, tal como Haraway afirma, “aprendermos a viver e a morrer bem em conjunto”. A *Silent Disco* tenta cozer um pouco todas estas ideias e propô-las ao público, sobre como é que podemos negociar um espaço colectivo que pertence àquelas pessoas que ali estão presentes, e não a outras; e como é que podemos imaginar um devir comum, narrativas comuns que deem resposta a tudo isto, que nos permitam chorar o que se perdeu e imaginar o que daí pode vir.

**Como artista, no que diz respeito a linguagens e formatos, porque valorizas as artes com o corpo ao invés das artes visuais, ou qualquer outro formato? No discurso da performance referes “Os corpos negociam na tecno-fronteira. Sonham o impossível, o inimaginável, reclamam novas posições de enunciação”. Envolver o corpo numa experiência imersiva, sensual ou multissensorial é também uma forma de provocar uma experiência emocional e de pensamento?**

Sim, sem dúvida. O trabalho com o corpo sempre foi a minha matriz, sempre me surgiu muito naturalmente com o meu discurso. Acho que tem que ver com as possibilidades visuais e plásticas do próprio corpo, mas também com esta dimensão da co-presença, que me interessa bastante, mais do que a ausência ou a distância. Apesar de situar a maior parte dos meus trabalhos no ponto de vista do teatro, compreendo que um trabalho como a *Silent Disco* se possa pensar como uma performance, do ponto de vista disciplinar. Foi-me interessando sempre muito esta ideia de, dito de uma forma meio tosca, “quebrar a quarta parede”, referindo-me com isto a esta ideia de deslocar as posições do performer e do público. Refiro-me a esta ideia de como é que os corpos de todos podem transformar o espaço, considerando o poder de ambos os lados. Por isso pretendo envolver o público em experiências onde, para além do intelecto, outras ferramentas possam ser convocadas. Ferramentas como o corpo, o toque, o movimento, e a possibilidade de activar outros mecanismos como o suor, o calor. Deixar que isso se traduza numa experiência que é simultaneamente física, emocional e intelectual, e por isso traduzida a três níveis. Na verdade, não é sobre desvalorizar a experiência intelectual, mas trabalhar na sua descentralização. Há uma expressão que se refere ao sentir-pensar que me parece relevante.

**Qual a razão do recurso à tecnologia *Silent Disco*? Como é que estes dispositivos contribuem para a experiência que quiseste criar?**

Em primeiro lugar teve esta ligação muito directa com o próprio formato das festas *Silent Disco*, tal como referi. Gosto da inquietação que o próprio nome traz, uma dicotomia que me interessa. Produz esta imagem altamente poética de pessoas a dançar no silêncio, com a delicadeza de poderem escolher dançar ao som da música que lhes interessa. Podendo ser visto como uma estratégia de alheamento, esta experiência é partilhada com um colectivo, há uma dança conjunta. Do ponto de vista artístico, pareceu-nos que criava uma data de possibilidades de criação de uma performance, sobretudo na forma como o público é envolvido, àquilo que ouve e como ouve. Há uma voz muito próxima que soa, contrastando com o que se ouve sem os headphones. No início tem um papel mais dirigista uma vez que dá algumas coordenadas ao público sobre como podem viver aquela experiência. Depois convida-o a usufruir da música que está a ouvir e dá espaço para que possa fazer isto ou aquilo, conforme entender. Por outro lado e do ponto de vista da experiência, esta tecnologia permitiu-nos ir ao encontro de uma ideia importante, que é a ideia de *safe space*. Esta ideia tem estado associada a um discurso sobre um tipo de festas que tem vindo a surgir um pouco por todo o mundo. Vivi algum tempo em Berlim e conheço o tipo de festas que acontecem por lá, como a *CockTail d'Amore*. Em Portugal temos a *Mina* e a *Kitket*. Existe ainda a *Pag* em Telavive ou a *Homobloc* em Manchester. Usando um termo mais genérico, são festas queer que reclamam esta ideia de um espaço seguro e de liberdade, em que as pessoas se podem exprimir, para se preformarem. Também tem uma tradução relativa ao facto de serem raves, festas techno que também estão associadas a outro tipo de consumos. O que nos interessava aqui era a criação de um espaço seguro não só para o indivíduo, porque sabe que se pode exprimir livremente, mas também para um colectivo que cria e negocia. Desta forma, pareceu-nos que os headphones eram uma ferramenta poderosíssima que extrapolava esta ideia mais poética, transmitindo conforto e segurança no teu próprio universo enquanto reclamas novos.

**Sim sem dúvida, como espectadora senti que era um som que quase me segredava a consciência, trazendo-me numa intimidade envolvente. No início da experiência, a audiência é convidada a tomar uma pastilha. O que motivou esta escolha? Como é que este elemento marca um antes e um depois da experiência vivida pela audiência?**

Sim, no início a performance procura estratégias de envolver o público naquele espaço e de alguma forma, de propôr formas de viver aquela experiência. O autocolante está ligado a esta ideia do *safe space* e das vivências que referi anteriormente. A pastilha também está ligada a isso. Segue ainda uma onda meio *matrix*, de uma realidade que se propõe, onde o público pode escolher se pretende entrar na experiência ou esquecer tudo. Ele ali tem uma opção de escolha. Claro que aquilo é um *smint* (risos). Isto traça a linha do espetáculo e como o público é visto, como parte do que se cria. Nos meus espetáculos pretendo desafiar o papel do espectador. Para isso é importante a criação de estratégias para que o público se sinta seguro pois isso vai interferir no tipo de experiência que se pode ter. Há um leque de opções que é aberto, estou no meio de uma pista, posso dançar, vaguear ou ficar naquele cantinho escuro a observar. A toma da pastilha é então uma metáfora desse potencial de transformação. À semelhança de outros consumos, possibilita que possas ter uma outra visão, e de estar num outro lugar, experimentar uma realidade diferente. É potenciada uma outra experiência, de corpo e mente. A *Silent Disco* também abre este espaço de descentralização da experiência da vida quotidiana.

**Sim, de despreendimento das estruturas que conhecemos para novas construções. Ainda neste sentido, há uma frase que é utilizada aquando a referência à *Silent Disco* que é a seguinte: “é uma ficção mas não é propriamente uma mentira”. O que significa isto? Dirias que esta performance é uma forma de abstração, ou por outro lado, de simulação da realidade?**

Tem esta ironia de ser simultaneamente um espetáculo que é ficcional, que é um simulacro, mas que não é uma mentira. Não querendo entrar na discussão acerca do que é real ou não real, do que é verdade ou mentira, diria que a experiência que o público vive é concreta e real, isto é, o

que ele sente é real. Mas a decisão cabe-lhe a ele. Diria, mais uma vez, que é acerca deste convite para que o público faça as suas escolhas.

**A performance é constituída por 7 partes ou níveis que ecoam os vários estágios da Jornada do Herói de Joseph Campbell: 1) Protocolo, 2) Ruína, 3) Decadance, 4) Grupos, 5) Manifesto, 6) Êxtase, 7) After. O que significam e como contribuem para a experiência vivida?**

Sim nós tentámos que, de alguma forma, o espectador passasse pela mesma cronologia, o mesmo gráfico, o mesmo ritmo de experiência, que uma pessoa vive quando vai sair para dançar. Tentámos replicar essa cronologia. Num primeiro momento de chegada, de percepção do espaço que códigos é que são passíveis de serem lidos: homem mulher, branco, negro. O Protocolo vai nesse sentido, de leitura da proposta. Depois isto foi-se cruzando com as ideias que queríamos transmitir ao longo do espetáculo. Esta ideia da Ruína é uma reflexão sobre o que se passa lá fora. O espetáculo vai fazendo esta ligação entre o que se passa dentro e fora. Fora como uma metáfora para o mundo, para o sistema como ele é. Esta ideia da ruína é precisamente de Donna Haraway: de ruína civilizacional, capitalista, patriarcal. E ainda por oposição ao que está dentro, ao espaço de encontro, de negociação de experimentação. Esta parte da Decadance é constituída precisamente por esses momentos, em que estás meio tímido e te desinibes, a energia cresce e há uma libertação. Propõe-se que, de uma forma guiada ou até terapêutica, haja uma libertação do corpo, de desinibição. Depois há este momento dos grupos, em que o sistema é operado em 2 canais, em que metade do público está no canal A, enquanto a outra metade está no canal B. Nesta parte do espetáculo o público ouve coisas diferentes. O público A é convidado a olhar o público B, que está a dançar, e depois troca, o público B é convidado a acalmar e a observar o público A, que dança. Esta foi a forma que arranjámos para que houvesse uma observação dos corpos dos outros, de os vivenciar e experienciar. É, de facto, um momento de identificação com o outro, de perceber se ele está a ter a mesma experiência ou não, se está a ter outra vivência. Há uma conexão e reconexão entre aquelas pessoas, no sentido de assunção de um colectivo qualquer, de uma comunidade temporária que é constituída por aquelas pessoas que ali estão. O

Manifesto é o ponto do espetáculo em que ressalta a possibilidade da criação de um espaço de resistência em relação ao que está fora, à ruína. O Êxtase é aquele espaço da bolha, um espaço de fusão, de experiência coletiva, de ligação não mística, mas sensorial, emotiva. O After é o fim da festa, como acontece depois de uma noite: saís de manhã e encarás o mundo tal e qual como o conhecias, mas agora com a latência da experiência que viveste, de perceber como é que aquela experiência te transformou. O que carregas dali para o mundo.

**No teaser e no discurso da performance referes “Estamos juntos. Somos estes e não outros” “Estamos aqui e não noutra lugar. Comprometidos com este momento e não outro”, “Vamos estar juntos, todos. Olha para nós”. Qual a importância da presença e intimidade criada com um determinado grupo, num determinado tempo e espaço? Considerarias existir uma espécie de contágio emocional que dá corpo à experiência e ao trabalho artístico?**

Sim acho que sim, é uma ideia que poderia considerar.

Foi interessante também observar a diferença entre os vários espaços onde a *Silent Disco* foi apresentada. O espaço do Rive Rouge era maior, as pessoas estavam mais dispersas, depois na Pérola Negra no Porto o espaço já era mais pequeno e no Sentado em Pé nos Açores, o espaço era ainda mais pequeno. Ainda assim, teve sempre cerca de 60 pessoas, a capacidade máxima do equipamento que dispúnhamos. O que observámos foi que, quanto mais pequeno era o espaço mais envolvente era a experiência, mais notória era a intimidade que se criava entre os vários elementos do grupo. Claro que há outras condicionantes, nomeadamente de contextos, geografias e ambientes. Isso é notório se olharmos para o espaço e contexto de um festival com um determinado público, versus outro tipo de situações, e ainda para as diferenças que observámos, por exemplo, entre Lisboa e Ponta Delgada. O espaço e todos estes factores têm uma importância nisto: na forma como te relacionas com os outros e como crias esta ligação com as pessoas. Foi um pequeno comentário que acho que se relaciona com o que dizes.

Gostaria, de facto, de pensar que acontece um certo contágio emocional sim. Talvez também aconteça noutra tipo de eventos que não sejam mediados por este dispositivo artístico, como um jogo de futebol ou uma tarde de compras. No nível mais imediato, basta uma pessoa colocar-se muito colada a ti, que isso produz logo alguma reacção. Claro que este contágio acontece em níveis diferentes, dependendo das pessoas, mas considero que é inevitável uma certa afectação mútua em experiências que são mediadas pela presença de outros corpos. Um interfere na esfera do outro, especialmente, energeticamente e emocionalmente. Mas claro que quando colocas sobre isto um dispositivo que explora esta experiência colectiva, esta co-presença colectiva, de dançar em conjunto e de estar com os outros, isto activa esta possibilidade de partilha de sensações. De alguma forma o público na *Silent Disco* também co-criou aquele momento, diria que dentro dos limites daquela *framework*, com os estímulos que são dados, e havendo uma negociação de autorias.

**Sim e até de poder talvez, não? É aceite um determinado grau de imprevisibilidade, não é? Se de repente a audiência tivesse decidido, em conjunto, não se absorver pela experiência, não fazendo absolutamente nada, não aceitando o convite da participação, seria totalmente diferente.**

Sim, sem dúvida. Recordo-me de outro espectáculo que fiz há alguns anos atrás: o *Nacional Material Paisagens com Argonautas*, onde é simulada uma assembleia em que é discutido se uma mulher estrangeira pode permanecer naquele espaço. É a história da Medeia. O público são os cidadãos de Corinto que podem decidir se a estrangeira pode ou não pode ficar. Claro que isto é para debater o acolhimento de estrangeiros num país. Há um momento central no espectáculo em que o público pode intervir na assembleia. Temos algumas estratégias de alguma regulação, mas está sobretudo nas mãos deles sobre o que acontece ali. Recordo-me de um espectáculo em que ninguém falou (risos) e recordo-me de outros em que o ambiente aqueceu bastante e surgiram posições contraditórias. Portanto o espectáculo está de facto muito dependente do poder que cada espectador reclama para si.

**Na *Silent Disco* há momentos que remetem para um olhar interior e outros que convidam a um olhar exterior, num esquema singular sendo plural. Em que medida é que esta performance pode remeter à ideia de uma plataforma ritualística, meditativa ou até terapêutica?**

Esse é um aspecto que me interessa, no sentido de pensar que estratégias é que ainda temos para estarmos juntos, para construirmos juntos. Depois de alguma falência da religião e da política, que espaços é que ainda temos para construir juntos, ou que espaços é que podemos criar. Olhando para a ruína, que novos rituais é que importa criar, que novas para-religiões é que interessa criar que nos permitam criar espaços do conjunto. E neste caso, utilizando as ferramentas do teatro e da performance, como é que elas podem sugerir ou simular esses espaços, seja uma assembleia, ou um espaço para dançar. Tenho um outro trabalho, o *Días Hábiles*, que vem no seguimento de uma viagem que fiz à América do Sul, em que proponho uma celebração ritualística, de vivência em comum. Portanto sim, interessa-me pensar que novos espaços de encontro e ritualísticos é que podemos encontrar. Porque isso faz parte do que somos.

**Recordo-me de ouvir na performance - “O nosso mundo é um mundo em vertigem, metade subterrado, metade a arder”. Como vês o impacto das experiências artísticas na audiência, no âmbito da esfera política e social? Entendes a *Silent Disco* (e a arte em geral) como um chamado para o empoderamento individual e mudança colectiva?**

Sim sem dúvida, diria que resume o que temos estado a conversar. Não considero que a arte possa ser pensada de outra maneira. Acredito que todas as formas artísticas propõem um qualquer exercício político, quer seja por incitar reflexões, quer seja por apelar a outras sensibilidades que normalmente não são trabalhadas no teu dia-a-dia. Claro que há aqui um lado

ideológico e de comprometimento que também está presente no espetáculo. Mas sem dúvida que me interessa que o trabalho que faço seja um espaço de convocação deste sentir-pensar. E se puder ser ainda um espaço de empoderamento pessoal, colectivo, e no limite de mudança, que é o mais ambicioso, seria incrível. Iria reformar-me feliz.

**E para a relação com o outro? A certa altura, a audiência é convidada a envolver-se num manto fluído, em que todos estão reunidos dentro da mesma bolha, casulo ou ventre expandido. Que fluidez é esta? Tal como referes, parafraseando Donna Haraway, “para vivermos e morreremos bem em conjunto”? O que significa para ti esta escolha e esta frase?**

Relaciona-se com esta vivência de transitoriedade, no sentido em que estamos aqui num tempo limitado, há uma continuidade com o que construímos juntos, ou seja, somos um. Também há a ideia do legado, sobre o que tocamos e transformamos. Está relacionado com o que a autora chama de “become together”, com a qual me revejo, esta ideia de transformação colectiva, de imaginar futuros comuns. Aquele momento da bolha que se cria, e que é também um momento muito visual, está nessa base, de proporcionar ao público essa experiência. Apesar de chamarmos esse momento de “êxtase” é um momento muito calmo, é quando o ritmo abrandar, a voz é sussurrada, por oposição ao momento anterior, em que o público dança e sua. É sobre propor esse encontro, de estarmos juntos.

## B. List of cited artworks

### Artwork selected as a case study:

*Silent Disco*, dir. Alfredo Marins, int. Marco da Silva ferreira, accomp. dram. Teresa Fradique and Pedro Marum, graph. Ricardo Barbeiro, sound des. Rui Lima and Sérgio Martins, light des. Joana Mário, exec. prod. Daniela Ribeiro, prod. Teatro Meia Volta. BoCA Festival, Rive Rouge, Lisbon, April 11, 2019.

Official information and teaser can be consulted online at: Teatro Meia Volta. 2019. “Silent Disco / 2019.” Projects. <https://teatromeiavolta.com/teatro-meia-volta/projectos/silent-disco/>

### Other artworks mentioned:

*4'33''*, musical composition by John Cage, Maverick Concert Hall, Woodstock, New York, August 29, 1952.....11

As discussed at: Gann, Kyle. 2010. “4'33'' at First Listening.” In *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's 4'33''*, 1-31. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

*18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, performance by Allan Kaprow, Reuben Gallery, New York, October, 1959.....13

As discussed at: Goldberg, Roselee. 1979. *Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

*Aerocene*, artistic project initiated by Tomás Saraceno, 2004, developed 2015-2020..... 30

Official information can be read at: Aerocene, n.d. Accessed December 21. [https://aerocene.org/about\\_2020](https://aerocene.org/about_2020)

*Anthropometries de l'époque bleue*, action painting by Yves Klein, Galerie Internationale d'art contemporain, Paris, Mars 9, 1960.....13

A short video can be viewed online at: Odaddy, Mac. 2019. “Anthropometries of the Blue Period.” Vimeo video, July 1, 2019, 2:26. <https://vimeo.com/345599593>

*Balkan Baroque*, performance by Marina Abramović, Venice Biennale, Venice, 1997.....16

A short video can be viewed online at: Ariberti, Antonio. 2020. “Marina Abramovich - Balkan Baroque - Venezia 1997.” Vimeo video, September 8, 2020, 2:42. <https://vimeo.com/455919079>

*Cátedra Arte de Conducta (Behavior Art School)*, artistic project initiated by Tania Bruguera, 1998, developed 2002-2009.....30

Official information can be read at: Tania Bruguera, n.d. “Cátedra Arte de Conducta (Behavior Art School).” Works. <http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/492-0-Ctedra+Arte+de+Conducta+Behavior+Art+School.htm>

*Command Performance*, video installation with sound by Vito Acconci, 56:40, 1974.....19

An excerpt of the video is available online: Video Data Bank. n.d. “Command Performance: Vito Acconci.” Video, 0:31. <https://www.vdb.org/collection/browser-artist-list/command-performance>

*Conversions*, silent video installation by Vito Acconci, 65:30, 1971.....16

The video is available online at: Acconci, Vito. 1971. “Conversions (1971).” In *Ubuweb*. Super 8 film on video, 65:30. [http://ubu.com/film/acconci\\_conversions.html](http://ubu.com/film/acconci_conversions.html)

*Coyote: I Like America and America Likes me*, performance by Joseph Beuys, René Block Gallery, SoHo, 1974.....15, 25, 30

A short video can be viewed online at: Marygrove College. 2017. “Joseph Beuys - I Love America and America Loves Me.” Vimeo video, October 29, 2017, 3:09. <https://vimeo.com/240418390>

*Cut Piece*, performance by Yoko Ono, Yamaichi Concert Hall, Kyoto, July 20, 1964.....15, 25

Relevant information and a short video are available online at: Phaidon. 2015. “Yoko Ono’s Cut Piece explained.” Articles. <https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2015/may/18/yoko-ono-s-cut-piece-explained/>

*Faust*, performance by Anne Imhof, Venice Biennale, Venice, 2017.....21

A short video can be viewed online at: Mona productions. 2017. “Anne Imhof’s ‘Faust’ at the 2017 Venice Biennale.” Vimeo video, September 25, 2017, 3:15. <https://vimeo.com/235310711>

*Interior Scroll*, performance by Carolee Schneemann, East Hampton, New York, August, 1975.....16

A short video can be viewed online at: Nitoslawska, Marielle. 2012. "Breaking the Frame (fragmento)." Vimeo video, March 31, 2020, 2:52. <https://vimeo.com/402673663>

*Kiss*, performance by Tino Sehgal, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2006.....18, 23

As documented at: Guggenheim, n.d. a. "Tino Sehgal". Collection Online. <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/tino-sehgal>

*Left Side Right Side*, video installation with sound by Joan Jonas, 08:50, 1972.....19

An excerpt of the video is available online: Lima. n.d. a. "Left Side Right Side: Joan Jonas, 1972, 7'37". Video, 0:32. Accessed August 20, 2020. <https://www.li-ma.nl/lima/catalogue/art/joan-jonas/left-side-right-side/2539>

Mai Hi Ten Yu, performance by the dancer Kaiji Moriyama and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Sogakudo Hall, University of the Arts, Tokyo.....20

As discussed at: Matias, Ferry, Catur Surya, Yayat Hidayat, Made Putra. 2019. "The Value of Musical Creativity in Industry 4.0 Era: Based on Musical Composition Generated by Artificial Intelligence & Computer Learning." *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Intermedia Arts and Creative Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.5220/0009443801850191>

Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917. Sculpture. Porcelain, 360 × 480 × 610 mm. Tate Modern, London.....9

As documented at: Tate. 2015. "Fountain." Artworks. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-t07573>

*Moveable Shoulder Extensions*, installation by Rebecca Horn, The Tate Modern, London, (1971) 2016.....25

Official information and images can be viewed at: Finbow, Acatia. 2016a. "Rebecca Horn, Moveable Shoulder Extensions 1971." In *Performance At Tate: Into the Space of Art*, Tate Research Publication. <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/perspectives/rebecca-horn>

*ParaSite School*, artistic project initiated by Felipe Castelblanco, 2010.....29

Official information can be read at: Para-Site School, n.d. Accessed January 10, 2021.  
<https://parasiteschool.org/>

*Project Unité*, artistic project curated by Yves Aupetitallot and Christian Philipp Müller, Le Corbusier's Unité d'habitation in Firminy, 1993.....38

As discussed at: Bishop, Claire. 2012. *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London: Verso.

*Rhythm 0*, performance by Marina Abramović, Studio Morra, Naples, 1974.....24

A short video can be viewed online at: Lima. n.d. b. "Rhythm 0: Marina Abramovic, 1974, 5'45".  
Video, 0:30. Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://www.li-ma.nl/lima/catalogue/art/marina-abramovic/rhythm-0/21576>

*Rhythm 5*, performance by Marina Abramović, Student Cultural Center, Belgrade, 1974.....24

A short video can be viewed online at: Lima. n.d. c. "Rhythm 5: Marina Abramovic, 1974, 8'11".  
Video, 0:30. Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://www.li-ma.nl/lima/catalogue/art/marina-abramovic/rhythm-5/19629>

*Rhythm 10*, performance by Marina Abramović, Edinburgh Arts, Melville College, Edinburgh, August 19, 1973.....16

An online publication with a short video can be viewed at: Vice Video (@VICE\_Video). 2016. "Marina Abramovic's 'Rhythm 10'." Twitter, November 14, 2016, 6:23 p.m.  
[https://twitter.com/vice\\_video/status/798229873227534340](https://twitter.com/vice_video/status/798229873227534340)

*Satisfyin' Lover*, performance by Steve Paxton, Culturgest, Lisboa, Março, 9, 2019.....18

A full conference with the artist can be viewed online at: Culturgest. 2019. "Steve Paxton conference at Culturgest, Lisbon 2019." Video, March 10, 2019. 1:59:30.

*Tatlin's Whisper 5*, performance by Tania Bruguera, The Tate Modern, New York, January 26-7, 2008.....18, 24

Official information and images can be viewed at: Westerman, Jonah. 2016. "Tania Bruguera, Tatlin's Whisper #5 2008.", In *Performance At Tate: Into the Space of Art*. Tate Research Publication. <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/perspectives/tania-bruguera>

*The Artist is Present*, performance by Marina Abramović, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010.....17, 22

A short video can be viewed online at: Zec, Milica. 2011. "Marina Abramovic on The Artist Is Present (2010)." Vimeo video, August 20, 2020, 2:06. <https://vimeo.com/72711715>

*The Silent University*, artistic project initiated by Ahmet Öğüt, 2012.....29

Official information can be read at: The Silent University, n.d. Accessed January 10, 2021. <http://thesilentuniversity.org/>

*The Square*, film by Ruben Östlund, 2017.....24

Östlund, Ruben, dir. 2017. *The Square*. France: Cannes Film Festival. UCI Cinemas Portugal, November 23, 2017.

*This is propaganda*, performance by Tino Sehgal, Venice Biennale, Venice, 2002.....24

Official information and images can be viewed at: Finbow, Acatia. 2016b. "Tino Sehgal, This is propaganda 2002/2006." In *Performance At Tate: Into the Space of Art*, Tate Research Publication. <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/perspectives/tino-sehgal>

*Thomas Lips*, performance by Marina Abramović, Innsbruck, Austria, 1975.....16

A short video can be viewed online at: Lima. n.d. d. "Lips of Thomas (1975/1993) 1975: Marina Abramovic, 1975, 9'54'." Video, 0:29. Accessed November 20, 2020. <https://www.lima.nl/lima/catalogue/art/marina-abramovic/lips-of-thomas-1975-1993-1975/7215>

*Untitled*, installation by Rirkrit Tiravanija, Venice Biennial, Venice, 1993.....38

As discussed at: Bourriaud, Nicolas. (1998) 2002. *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods. Paris: Le presses du Réel.

*Untitled (Pad Thai)*, installation by Rirkrit Tiravanija, Paula Allen Gallery, New York, 1990.....38

As documented at: Guggenheim, n.d. b. "Rirkrit Tiravanija". Collection Online. <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/rirkrit-tiravanija>

*Shoot*, performance by Chris Burden, F Space Gallery, Santa Ana, California, November 19, 1971.....16, 24

A short video can be viewed online at: Ha!. 2018. “Chris Burden – Shoot.” Vimeo video, March 1, 2018, 1:40. <https://vimeo.com/258122957>

### C. List of figures

- Figure 1:** Silva, Marta A. 2021. *Performance space with the audience of Silent Disco, screenshot taken from the teaser.* November 6, 2021, retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/334918527>..... 55
- Figure 2:** Silva, Marta A. 2021. *Audience group with the headphones listening the voice, screenshot taken from the teaser.* November 6, 2021, retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/334918527> ..... 57
- Figure 3:** Silva, Marta A. 2021. *Audience group moving around the space while enjoying the music, screenshot taken from the teaser.* November 6, 2021, retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/334918527>..... 59
- Figure 4:** Silva, Marta A. 2021. *Audience member with the headphones enjoying the music, screenshot taken from the teaser.* November 6, 2021, retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/334918527>..... 59
- Figure 5:** Silva, Marta A. 2021. *Audience member immersed in the experience, screenshot taken from the teaser.* November 6, 2021, retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/334918527>.....60
- Figure 6:** Silva, Marta A. 2021. *Audience member dancing with the crowd, screenshot taken from the teaser.* November 6, 2021, retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/334918527>..... 60
- Figure 7:** Simão, Bruno. 2019. *Untitled.* Photography. Retrieved from: <https://teatromeiavolta.com/teatro-meia-volta/projectos/silent-disco/>..... 62