

How to quote this text: Martins, M. J. S., 2011. Between art and education, body in action. Translated from Portuguese by Paulo Ortega, *V!RUS*, [online] n. 6. Available at: <<http://www.nomads.usp.br/virus/virus06/?sec=5&item=1&lang=en>> [Accessed 00 Month 0000].

Between Art and Education, Body in Action

Maria Julia Stella Martins

Maria Julia Stella Martins is *Performer* and Pedagogue. She investigates the field of contemporary body Arts and the elements for the development of methodological processes focused on aesthetic education. She worked with different groups: garbage pickers, sex workers, children and adolescents from low-income, etc. She is currently a collaborator of *Instituto Cultural Janela Aberta*.

Abstract

In this text I present the investigations I have been developing in order to propose a survey and teaching methodology based on the expressive qualities of the bodies. For most, I point out the relation between creativity and knowledge production as a way to give thought to pedagogical practices that can embrace different fields of knowledge and wisdom, having as central focus the expressive qualities of the body. Following, I am going to make a short presentation of some elements related to contemporary arts, more specifically, the performances and the new conceptions about corporeity. And lastly, I am going to present the processes and the research results that I have made with sex workers, while I worked with a Research and Extension in Sex Work at *Universidade Federal de São Carlos* (UFSCar). Herewith, I intend to present relations among creativity, knowledge production and the body which may contribute with the methodological processes related to aesthetic education.

In the text, some links were inserted which relate to the approached themes.

Keywords: creation; knowledge; body; experience; methodological processes.

***Criamento* = (creation + knowledge)**

'Create: 1. Give birth to. Give origin to. 2.To form.3. To imagine. 4.Found. 5. Educate. 6. To promote the breeding of. 7.Cultivate. 8. Acquire. 9. Be born; originate from' (Aurelio Portuguese Language Dictionary, 1993, p.153, our translation).

The raw material of the artist, independently of the language used to communicate, is creativity. The artist is a builder of realities, his labor consists of searching in the idea field, of imagination, the dream, of the unknown, of experimentation and techniques elements that may be used to change its surroundings, creating senses, expanding the horizons of human conquests, suggesting recombination. The artist updates the knowledge which has been conquered and opens new perspectives of comprehension and action.

The artistic practices can set our daily world in a strangeness state proposing new modulations of action and thought. They opens spaces for the unexpected to happen, works in the most subtle layers of the corporeal memory. The strength of the artistic expression arises from the contrast created with what is culturally established.

Creating, is related to originate, educate, and thus, it searches for an aesthetical pedagogical practice and unfolds the new forms of producing and transmitting knowledge. Stimulated by experience, it experiences, reorganizes, produces new combinations, stimulates the interactions and exchange among the participants, it is founded on the collective practice of the surrounding and work on it. Leaving its impressions, its registry, legitimating the existence, simultaneously transforms the inside the outside, the individual and the collective.

Therefore, we can aim to a live learning process, in which the doing and the thinking melt in the creation act, in the artistic experience, in the experimentation, where the multisensory body is the center of the process. In this sense, education is understood as the collective production of knowledge, of senses, as a communitarian experience, as interaction among the subjects who respecting their cultural diversity and the wisdom brought from their experiences, create fields of knowledge production and learning. Appropriates the knowledge produced by humanity, giving other meanings to them. It brings within itself the meanings of creation and autonomy for the subjects who part of it, in a perspective of wisdom widening and the collective production of knowledge.

This perspective of pedagogical practice allows that we consider other forms of knowledge, different from the scientific wisdom, as ways of learning and producing knowledge. It opens the dialogue possibility among different fields of knowledge. Here, learning shifts from the function of pragmatic-utilitarian to find again the aesthetic dimension. In this aesthetic doing, creation and experimentation in the learning processes and conventional subjectification, institutionalized and recreate these processes and generating new processes. Thereby, the pedagogical and artistic practices free themselves from a look that reduces their constituted forms and their representations, opening up for invention and interaction. Subject and object melt into each other and transform aesthetically, generating a new inter-relational becoming.

Guatarri (1992), coins the term *ecosophy*, that comprehends the three ecological registries: the environmental, the social relations and the human subjectivity one, suggesting and an ethical-political-aesthetic articulation for the analysis of the challenges that are presented for

the human being in the entry of the XXI century. It argues the necessity the creation of devices of subjetification which represent an alternative related to devices produced by *mass media*.

'In all individual and collective scales, concerning both daily life as well as the democracy reinvention – in the registry of urbanism, of the artistic creation, of sport, etc – it is increasingly about focusing on what could be the devices of subjective production, going towards an individual and/or collective re-singularization, instead of going towards a media machining, synonyms of despair and desolation' (Guattari, 1992, p.15, our translation).

The development of information and communication technologies set about a series of alterations in the production, storage and transmission process of knowledge and wisdom generating intense exchange of global dimensions, enabling the navigation in the information ocean in real time. We are not lacking information; what is at stake is the senses we provide them. In this scenario, it seems relevant to exercise the ability to observed, reflect, choose, reorganize and communicate the information that affects us, providing them with senses that guide us, assuring a significant existential trajectory. According to Lévy (2004, p.156, our translation):

'Each and every serious reflection about the becoming of education systems and the formation in the cyberculture has to be based on a previous analysis of the contemporaneous mutation of the relation with the wisdom. Regarding that, the first statement involves the speed of emergence and renewal of the know-how and wisdom. For the first time, in the history of humanity, most of the acquired competencies by a person in the beginning of his/her professional journey will be obsolete in the end of his/her career. The second substantiation, strongly linked to the first one, regards the new work nature, in which the knowledge transaction does not stop growing. Work increasingly equates to learning, transmitting wisdom and producing knowledge.

Thus, the flux-wisdom, the transaction-wisdom, the new technologies of collective and individual intelligence are deeply modifying the education and formation problem. What has to be learnt cannot be planned, nor precisely defined anticipatorily. The paths and the competence profiles are, in all, singulars and increasingly less possible to be channeled in programs or curriculums which are valid worldwide. We shall build new models of the knowledge spaces'.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5Ko5gGPF4w>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIo2QIQMN5k&feature=related>

Therefore, providing experience spaces and knowledge exchange allows us to envision the possibility of pedagogical experiences which represent, beyond a strict formation for the work market, a formation of subjetification devices in which the knowledge finds creation again.

The relation between space and objects, body and gesture, are the guiding axles of the contemporaneous bodily arts. They point to the possibility of new modulation and proposition experimentations, resignifying the space, the objects the body and the relations that we

establish with them. The act of resignifying relates directly to the act of creation and with the knowledge production. Produces strangeness, increases the porosity expanding the circulation of information. These processes generate, for those who take part in them, certain complicity, making them responsible for their creation. It presents people their creative potential, develops the notion of process, creating contrast regarding the anesthetizing disposable passivity of the consumption world, in which the act of acquiring objects is the most stimulated and valued subjectivation device, a safe path to happiness.

Escorpação = (space + body + action)

Contemporaneous studies about the body, specially the body in art, point to the perception of the body as the intercrossing space of information, of stimuli, of passage, of flows and of senses production. The description of a body is more directed towards the perceptive and bodily states, for the densities and for the strength lines and their action and communication capacity in relation with the environment in which it is inserted. The body begins to be perceived as something plastic, shaped by the experiences it has been through; it becomes a support and an original sign of all communication.

Along the XX century, mainly from the second half, the Arts field faced questionings that modified radically its *modus operandi*. The relations to new technologies, distances each time shorter, the intensification flows of communication resulted in expressive combinations never seen before. There was a closing tendency of artistic languages, ruptures and reorganizations of the structures inside the languages. The artist had available symbolic and technical elements that modified his creative and perceptive apparatus.

In the seventies, in the U.S.A. and Europe, the *performances* are designed, hybrid combinations and manifestations which brought roughness for central themes of the artistic doing, its function and relation to world in life. Art and life come close and the works of art gradually abandoned their thoughtful potential and become increasingly developer of problematics and producers of new senses and meanings (Rolnik, 2002). It is observed an intense movement of appropriation of the new technologies in the creative processes and the occupancy of various spaces, rupturing with the European artistic traditions. The artistic doing sense is overthrown as something turned to the mastery of a specific technique, from the body discipline, proposing an artistic doing turned to the processes for the singularization and readdressing of the meaning of the objects, of spaces and time. Other parameters start to interfere in the works, as the, chance and indetermination. The relation with the public also undergoes modifications and in many cases, the action of the spectator is fundamental for the work to happen.

As example, we are going the trajectory of the plastic artist Lygia Clark, in order to visualize some transformations, in the field of the arts, which brought to the center of the debate, the presence of the body (the corporeity).

The artist began her career as a painter of geometrical themes, joining the Neo Concreto movement. Later, she started to produce sculptures. In this moment, her works already used the action of the spectator to be completed, as in the "*Bichos*" (1960). In the following step of her work, she declares herself as a "*proponent*", with performative actions in which the spectator becomes the center of the process, such as in "*Baba Antropofágica*" (1973). About the artist-proposer act, declares:

We are the proponents: we are the mold, is up to you to blow on inside of it the sense of our existence. We are the proponents: our proposal is the dialogue. Alone we do not exist. We are at your mercy. We are the proponents: we bury the art of work as it is and we invite you for the thought to live through its action. We are the proponents: we do not propose them either the past or the future, but the now (Lygia Clark, 1968, p. 36).

Further, she started to develop her work in individual sessions, in which the person was invited to lay down on a mattress full of styrofoam balls while the artist manipulated a series of objects on his/her body. In the last step of her work, "*Estruturação do Self*," the work happens in the direct relation between a subject and the objects, as a way of subjective reorganization. The work happened intense tactile stimulation as a way of "sculpting" the inner body of the participants. In a succession of sensations produced through the stimuli generated by the objects, the subjects are invited to dive in their own bodily memories, opening themselves to the unknown that inhabits their unconscious, revisiting their memories and rebuilding their experiences. For Lygia Clark (1969, p.19, our translation):

'The bodily expression has in this case an essential importance – since it is through it that the cells are built, for instance, opening the arms, creating tunnels with open legs, where people can pass through. It is about a poetic shelter where the inhabiting is equivalent to the communicating. The movements of the man build this habitable cellular shelter from a nucleus which mingles with the others. An open sheet of plastic on the floor is still nothing. It is the man who, penetrating it, creates and transforms it, that develops it afterwards, in the interior, and live organism. It incorporates the concept of the action through the gestural expressions. It cedes to be the object of itself to become the object of the other, linking the processes of introversion and *extraversion*. It inverts the concepts of house and body. Now the body is the house. It is a communitarian experience. There is no regression, because there is the opening from the man to the world. It incorporates the creativity of the other in the collective invention of the proposal'.

www.lygiaclark.org.br

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYRcKaXw6EQ>

***Proposicesso* = (proposition + success)**

The brief report as follows illustrates the ideas presented above in a practical way. I am going to highlight the methodological processes and the survey results while I worked at Research and Extension Group in Sex Work of the *Universidade Federal de São Carlos*. Coming from the use of artistic and bodily resources as method of interaction and the exchange of wisdom I sought to promote the debate and the deepening in themes such as: human rights, health, education, maternity, work conditions, healthcare, self-image, relations with men (clients and partners), relation with the family and migration; as well as to proportionate them new perceptions concerning their own bodies. To submit the body to differentiated processes from the ones in which they are used in the daily life is a way to open creation spaces which leads us to reflect upon the way the body is used, modifying the perception in which we establish with it. My objective was to broaden the previous conceptions about the sex work.

I prepared a images collection of paintings of plastic artist, like: Toulouse Lautrec, Hopper, Rodin, Van Gogh, Schiele, Gauguin, Klimt, Picasso, in which the image of women in several situations is represented. I also added the image of women prostitutes in several times and also of women goddesses (the images are available in the link below). The contact with this material is the served as a prelude for the practice which will follow. The participants could choose some images, they reported to what is imagined to what was happening there and to what was going to happen later, they suggested names for the works, they invented stories and told their own. Staring with this first analysis, we went to the bodily experimentations with theatrical games of improvisation, in which the women created and performed several roles in different dramatic situations. We worked on improvisations on dance as improvisations–contact and deconstruction of the daily gestures from the time dilation or of the fragmentation of the movement. Or yet, the spontaneous dance, that in first instance was the free moving in the space focusing the movements and afterwards it was reconstructed from some movements that were worked again. We also experimented, the practice of yoga and massage.

We talked about was being experienced, highlighting, in its reports, expressions of alterations in bodily sensations, such as "it seems that I got rid of a weight of my back" "the knot of my chest is gone," "my legs feel lighter". Other observations are also interesting to be mentioned: "I never saw the time going by". These statements point to an altered perception of body and time, that were collectively created and that modified the initial state, given the potential of creation and expression to it. It can also be observed alterations in the voice tone and the lightness in the gestures, softened facial expressions and more often smiles.

Some images suggested debates about the history of the sexual work in different cultures, as well as, the various relations and representations that different cultures developed concerning sexuality and femininity.

Themes such as history of art and the production of the presented artist were also debated.

These practices helped us to think over the different representations of the woman, of the sexuality and of the sexual work throughout the time and in different cultures, amplifying the comprehensions about the sexual work.

The contact with these thematics and with the workers also contributed to my formation as a performer, widening my gestural and tensile repertoire, as well as populating my imaginary with different stories of life.

From these experiences, I was able to observe that added to the alterations of the bodily states, these practices propitiated the creation of what I called "fields of apprenticeship". As "fields of apprenticeship" I understand pedagogical experiences which propitiate the spaces for exchange and knowledge production in which the sentient and expressive qualities of the body be the center of the process, in a way that, the theoretical contents be worked from the sentient experiences and that it is possible, through the bodily practice, to be, to a certain extent, reflected and having its meaning readdressed.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Of-Ha1JMss>

<http://www.youtube.com/mariajuliamartins1>

References

Aurelio Portuguese Language Dictionary, 1993. 3rd ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira.

Guattari, F., 1992. *Caosmose: um novo paradigma estético*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora 34.

Lévy, P., 2004. *As tecnologias da inteligência: o futuro do pensamento na era da informática*. São Paulo: Editora 34.

Rolnik, S., 2002. Arte cura? Lygia Clark no limiar do contemporâneo. In: G. Bartucci (Org.), 2002. *Psicanálise, arte e estéticas de subjetivação*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, pp.365-381.