

Subjectivity in the art of those who research

The researchers of the project were invited to present works produced during the pandemic, through photos, drawings, writing, or any other medium.

Timeline Portraits of an Isolation



San Momm*

On the afternoon of March 13, 2020, a Friday, we were at the Planning Laboratory - LaPlan¹ finishing some activities when the Federal University of ABC (UFABC) suspended activities for a week². Closing the laboratory that late afternoon, until the day before we had been holding meetings and hearing reports of infection (or suspected infection) by the virus from several people, and we had no idea what was about to happen. The following week it was necessary to return to the Laboratory to collect materials and equipment, and the university, the streets, were already empty.³ Days turned into weeks and months. The routine was slowly and profoundly changing. Uncertainty, surprise, apprehension were taking the place of routine. Life in confinement and online was becoming the routine.

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1 <https://laplan.pesquisa.ufabc.edu.br/>

2 <https://www.ufabc.edu.br/administracao/reitoria/noticias/suspensao-das-atividades-na-ufabc>

3 see the Conjecture section of this issue

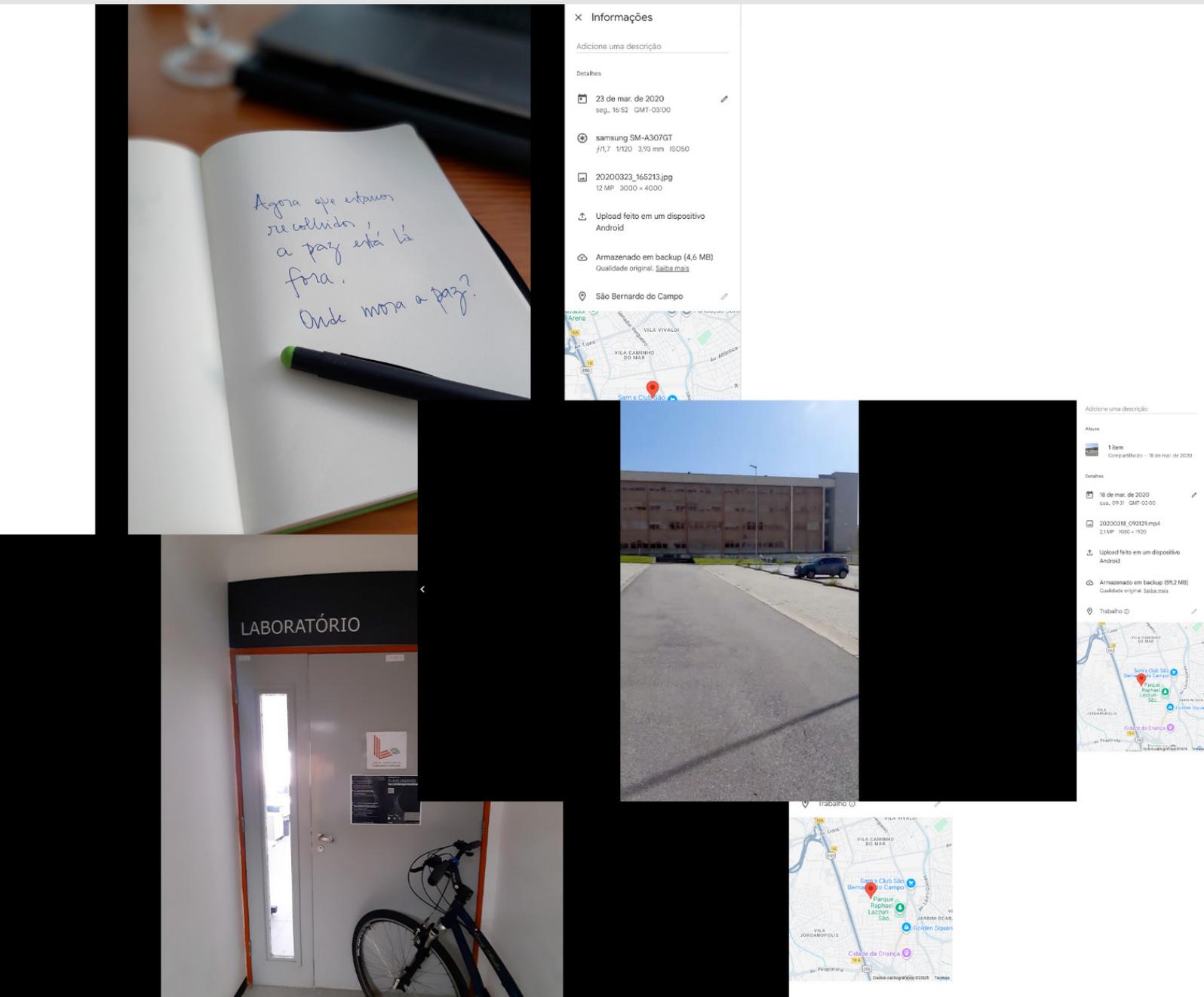


Figure 1. Timeline Portraits of an Isolation

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/k2ym1CCWI0g> (link open to the public on 12/08)

Self writing



Gabriel Machado*

April 5, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic ruptures with at least 15 million breathers. Suddenly, meaning begins to grant importance to the invisible. In times of undeniable affection for cultural production, image teaches me: the invisible often holds more mobilizing power than the material - don't you think? Perhaps I'm moved by Palm Sunday. Another moment that exalts the individual as a center of truth-making. The figure of someone crossing crowds, offered branches to mark their anthropogenic path. What path should we take? I believe the world's current climate of worry may be a gift. After all, we haven't yet fully experienced what it means to be without air. There is something to be done amidst all of this. The sun is no longer visible. Darkness slowly takes hold. The body acclimates. Air production becomes denser. I can already tune in to the purpose of writing. Isolation, in this hyper-connected world, is a fact we must reckon with. From now on, it's like watching a film in a Mexican cinema. Before every screening, a warning: "In case of earthquakes, do not panic. This theater is prepared for tremors. Follow the lights, stay calm, and look for a safe meeting point." And so begins your moment of leisure. Poetry, on the other hand, offers no such warning. Poetry is raw. It doesn't wave before it cuts through you. It's bold, my friend. Maybe it's part of your need - or perhaps, it's needed in order to hold the parts together. It displaces the flow of continuity with or without your consent, often unnecessarily. I am startled by my ability to understand problems and yet make them my travel companions. I am startled -and haunted -by my blend of force and intensity within a relationship that, in this moment, hurts more than it heals. I am startled by the frustration of a friendship without conflict, reproducing values I spent years learning to unlearn. I am startled by how easily I am absorbed by domination. I am startled by being dominated, beaten, cornered, summoned - and still offering my attention, my listening, my submission - with the ease of someone who holds just a handful of facts about who I am and where I've been. I am startled like a grain of rye cast into plowed soil by the wind. I am startled by my urge to affirm, to devote myself to a relationship that, even as it engages me, strangles me and presses me into aerial heights. I am startled by being all of this -a queer in formation- with my bundle of affective

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responsibilities. I am startled by being deceived. By being placed in sacrilege, in the constant devotion of someone who can be so easily divided, indexed, and traded for coin. I am startled that I'm content with this journey, where I'm the only one who speaks the language. And I liked it. And so, with rhythm, with prayer, and a necklace around my neck, poetry hits bone. In the society of poetry, its face is familiar-like the shattering of the past when it dares to show itself. Emotion, after all, was a mental state. These discoveries make it clear: our knowledge is deeply shaped by prior experience. Emotional brain states can persist over time. Throughout life, we may come to know multiple existences. And eventually, withdrawals. In fact, that's the more common path. Few, however, ever get the chance to wear another skin - **dissidence**.

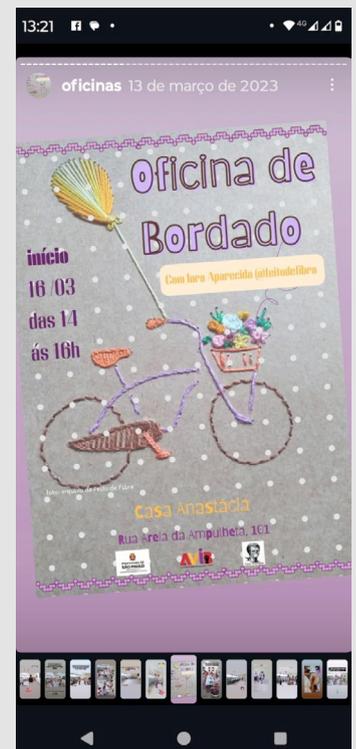
Portraits of a Collective Embroidery



Aline Bezerra Silva*

During the pandemic, many people found themselves isolated and not knowing how to deal with their free time. In this context, the opportunity arose to participate in the embroidery workshop offered by Center for the Defense and Social Support of Women (CDCM) Casa Anastasia, with the aim of providing a space where we could express creativity and connect with one another. Embroidery became a form of creative therapy and a way to develop manual skills and concentration, allowing us to share experiences and also serving as a space of emotional support where we felt heard and understood. The workshop was a fundamental tool for our well-being at that moment.

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Close, from afar



Tanja Schnitfinke*

These digital drawings were created during the COVID-19 lockdown, at a time when meeting friends wasn't possible. They depict ordinary moments of connection and friendship - warm mornings on a bench sipping coffee, arms slung over shoulders and walking side by side - that felt out of reach during isolation. Based on real-life photographs, the images were digitally illustrated by hand, simplifying shapes and colors and later shared with friends to remind them of what would be again.

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Self-assembling Legos



Bradley Rink*

The minifigure was made for me during lockdown by my colleague in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, Dr Jacolien Volschenk. It followed my participation in an online session entitled “Are you there, students? Creating presence in the online tutorial” and represents the challenge of finding and representing my online identity in the context of learning, teaching and research that moved entirely online during lockdown. The minifigure represents me in an uncanny way. As Jacolien noted in our email communication, “...the jaunty little hat just seemed right, but I don’t know if you actually wear hats like that! I hope you do.” In fact, I do wear such a hat, and like the figure I also felt fixed in place, constrained like the figure on the platform.

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forest:play



Sophie Schramm*

Children occupy less and less public spaces in cities across Germany and Europe. Factors such as the proliferation of playgrounds as designated places for children's outdoor activities, the shrinking share of children in urban populations across Germany and Europe, changing perceptions of safety and appropriateness, as well as ever more differentiated and attractive offers for virtual learning and play, all contribute to less and less (unaccompanied) children spending time in the streets and green spaces of cities. In the pandemic moment, children came to be framed largely as carriers of the COVID-19 virus and related measures centered around containing children's movement as well as their contact with other adults or children.

In German cities, in the highly uncertain early weeks of the pandemic, open air playgrounds were sealed off in order to prevent the disease from spreading through children engaging in close contact as part of their playground activities. Later on, as it emerged that open air contact, if not too close, is rather unlikely to spread the virus, decision makers admitted that this measure was probably not productive, particularly because it further limited the already much restricted possibilities for children to engage in learning or playing due to closed down schools and kindergartens. In Germany it has become widely acknowledged that children bore the brunt of pandemic restrictions, as schools and kindergartens remained closed for a very long period. Their restriction arguably mostly served the protection of adults and the elderly. Critical voices mentioning children's and adolescents' mental health problems and other long term costs of extremely limited access to education and social networks were heard only in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Nevertheless, rather than focusing on the adverse consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures (whether these measures came to be regarded as appropriate or not) this contribution foregrounds the possibility of spaces for creativity and appropriation to emerge when everyday routines are disrupted and activities are restricted. When our children's kindergarten closed in February 2020 and we found playgrounds sealed off as we were no longer able to stay in our flat, our cycling tours through the city brought us to the forest at the city's edges. We walked into the forest and soon our children started building structures with trunks and

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branches of the surrounding trees. By attaching larger branches to trunks and smaller branches to the larger branches they constructed a tent-like structure. (Figure 1)

In some distance, we saw other groups of children and adults spending time in the forest, playing with mud, leaves, branches and trees, some of them constructing more or less elaborate structures. A short walk through the forests adjacent to Dortmund, the city we now live in brings into view several similar, at times quite large and elaborate wooden structures sometimes vacant, sometimes populated by groups of children. (Figures 2 to 4)

SARS COVID-19, with the restrictive measures it triggered, has accelerated this forest:play. Despite the pandemic's many harmful impacts especially on children and adolescents, these structures remind us that also precarious moments might carry the potential for creativity, play and new appropriations of (urban) spaces - by children and adults alike - beyond those explicitly designated for a certain group or activity.

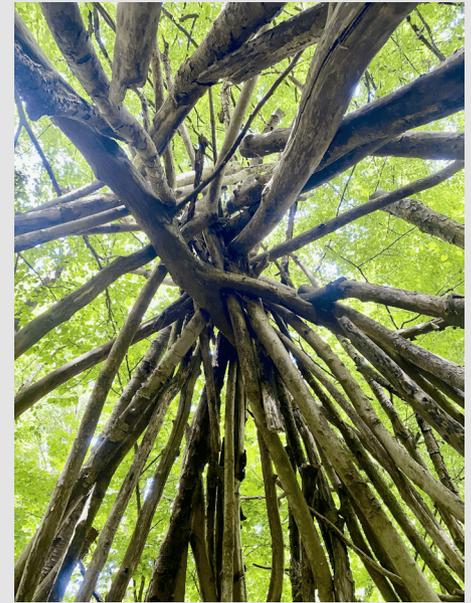


Figure 1. Tree structure by my sons in February 2020.

Figure 2. Tree structure in Dortmund.

Figure 3. Tree structure in Dortmund.

Figure 4. Tree structure detail in Dortmund.