

***Dispositifs* of Touching**

A Curatorial Study on the *Plazas* of Sovereignty

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PhD Thesis

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DECLARATION

I, Leire Vergara, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

7th of December 2016.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Abstract

This dissertation explores the scattered geography of the so-called *plazas* of sovereignty, a group of rocks, islets and archipelagos spread out along the Northern coast of Morocco. These have been occupied by Spain since the Middle Ages and today remain inaccessible for Spanish, Moroccan or any other citizens. In particular, this research proposes to study the enclaves from a curatorial perspective, including the configuration of a specific project in North Morocco that takes the form of a reading group and offers a public platform for collective debate and awareness in respect to these forbidden territories. The thesis is also accompanied by a series of documentary materials on the *plazas* produced specifically for the occasion by artists, who have taken several site-visits to some of the nearest locations. Thus, the work explores two different registers: one theoretical, the other practical. Theoretically, it navigates a list of concepts that help to understand the inner logics of the *plazas* in respect to a double context: one related to the migration crisis of the Gibraltar Strait, the other related to the public ground from which to establish a curatorial practice. Practically, it allows conforming a set of methodologies of research that influence not just the fieldwork but also the text that gives an account of it. Finally, the ensemble of both registers allows curatorial knowledge to develop across an inventory of references coming out from history, philosophy, artistic practices, collective readings and lived experiences.

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Finally, I would like to mention the absolute challenge I have received from the academic context of the program of *Curatorial/Knowledge* within the Department of

Visual Cultures of Goldsmiths College University of London. This programme has allowed me to project curatorial practice beyond any predetermined historical, geographical, cultural, theoretical and aesthetic parameter. This context of study has been absolutely essential for this dissertation in terms of permitting me to envision new possibilities for re-assessing my position as a researcher and a curator. Besides, the ongoing discussions between the teaching staff, guest speakers, student colleagues and auditing people during the seminars of *Curatorial/Knowledge* have given me the opportunity to widely reflect on the relationship between curatorial practice and knowledge production. My interest within these discussions, and specifically regarding my dissertation, has laid in thinking what kind of knowledge curatorial practice can or should produced in contrast to other disciplines and methods of scientific, humanist or artistic research. For all of this, I would like to expres my deepest gratitude to Irit Rogoff, Paul Martinon and Stefan Nowotny. Without their support, this thesis would not have been possible.

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Foreword

While I was finishing the writing of this PhD thesis, the documentary *Astral* (2016) was premiered on Spanish TV. This film is dedicated to registering how, during the past summer, a luxury boat donated to the NGO Proactiva became a refugee rescue vessel in the central Mediterranean area, approximately 18 miles off the coast of Libya. Even though the setting of the rescue operations of this boat differs from the exact location of the *plazas* of sovereignty, some details concerning its unsettled demarcations – established by water jurisprudences – reminded me of the high degree of policing surrounding the Spanish enclaves and the way its uncertain status violently affects the rights of migrants. While I was watching the documentary, I could not help recalling the claims of the spokespersons for the *sans-papiers* movement of the 90s in France, Madjiguène Cissé and Ababacar Diop, who tried to bring some awareness of the need to defend democracy – by all citizens, with or without papers – against the current abuses of fundamental rights. However, let us not forget that democracy should apply equally to unreachable enclaves like the *plazas* of sovereignty or the troubled waters in between conflicting jurisprudences. ‘Welcome to Europe,’ shout the volunteers when they find one of the inflatable boats with hundreds of migrants aboard. The *Astral* can take no more than 130 people. Once they are aboard, they provide first aid. However, after this, they need some help. In one of the scenes, we see how the latest refugees they have helped are transferred to a larger vessel. This is said to be a German ‘military vessel’ that operates in the area. At this point, a Zodiac speedboat arrives from the second vessel to help the *Astral*. In the background, aboard the larger ship, we see some armed men while others are wearing masks and white protective coveralls for frisking everyone. The scene gives an account of how the policing of borders materialises in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, going beyond its own limits, gaining more and more space in order to continue its classificatory work. The film ends at this point.

This dissertation started from the desire to study, and work curatorially with, inaccessible sites of this kind, that is with territories inaccessible for citizens but that ultimately end up affecting the forms under which we are governed. Furthermore, my

interest in the *plazas* of sovereignty is also complicit with the proposition that étienne Balibar poses in his essay *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship* of acknowledging ‘border areas not as marginal and peripheral territories to the constitution of a public sphere, but, on the contrary, as central fields from where to articulate it’ (Balibar 2004, 1). This argumentation allows us to support the potentiality that lies in considering the empty Spanish strongholds in North Morocco as useful tools for imagining new processes of public sphere production. This proposition can also help us to critically think about sovereignty beyond the perimeters in which it seems to be entrapped. This also implies reflecting on the notion of sovereignty, not just within the enclosed framework of the nation-state or even the current practices of externalisation and dematerialisation of such conditions within the context of migration control, but also in respect to the potentialities of a self-governing society: that is to say, a community that aims to redefine its own modes of being governed. This idea offers us the opportunity to reflect on the ways these empty enclaves impose sovereign power over the processes of touching between subjects, objects, lives and imaginaries existing on both sides of the border.

Finally, the impossible image of a ‘collective life’ within the forbidden *plazas*, projected by the newspaper article ‘The Last Remains of the Empire’ (Ceberio, Cembrero and González 2012), captured my attention at an early stage of this research. A ‘life’ that was once ‘conformed by postal employees, border patrolmen, schoolteachers and lighthouse-keepers...’ (Ceberio, Cembrero and González *ibid*). At least, that is what Amar Binauda, a Moroccan fisherman approached by the Spanish journalists dedicated to covering certain incidents at Peñón de Alhucemas in the summer of 2012, confirmed on 29 August of that same year. This forgotten life brought to mind the words employed by Félix Guattari, that I had just read coincidentally, referring to the experience at the clinic La Borde. The desire for configuring communal *lifespaces* (*lieux de vie*) as entities independent from official structures and institutions had nourished the communal lifestyle between patients, workers and volunteers at Jean Oury’s clinic (Guattari 2009, 176-94). Despite the obvious disparity between both contexts (the *plazas* and the clinic), the coincidence of my reading both texts at the same time caused them to mix and contaminate each other. Thus, their conceptual intertwining challenged my imagination, creating the desire to transform these empty and deregulated Spanish strongholds into possible *lifespaces*. Since then, this powerful

mixture has silently accompanied this research, that in certain ways is also dedicated to the study of the contemporary conditions that prevent a sharing between communities.

Introduction

0.1. *Plazas* of Sovereignty: A Case Study for Curatorial Research

This dissertation is focused on a particular colonial model of occupation, the *plazas* of sovereignty,¹ the Spanish sovereign strongholds spread across the Northern coast of Morocco, which since medieval times have configured a territorial exceptionality. The research pays attention to this model of colonial reach that still today remains physically inaccessible for ordinary citizens but which is occupied and controlled by military forces with the intention of representing and protecting national sovereignty. In other words, it analyses the way in which these enclaves, currently populated exclusively by external sovereignty² but prohibited in access, stand for the cancellation of disagreement, the dissolution of the popular will and the suspension of collectivity.³

¹ In English, *plazas de soberanía* appears occasionally translated as ‘places of sovereignty’. However, I have decided to avoid this translation, as it loses the rich reference to the word *plaza*. The Spanish term *plaza* may be translated in different ways such as: square, market, job, post, vacancy, stronghold and zone. However, *plaza* is regularly translated into English as square or directly as stronghold. In contrast to the Spanish term, the English word ‘square’ strictly circumscribes itself within the particularities of its shape, being defined by four sides of equal length and four angles of 90°. Apart from this, the urban square is understood as a piece of land in a city area, where buildings of different types surround it (Cambridge Online Dictionary). I have therefore decided to use the Spanish term in this thesis in order to allow different meanings to be reflected in the single term, more concretely, between the concept of a public open space within a city and the fortified stronghold. This antagonism confronts the regular interpretation of a public *plaza* with the former military strategy of settlement employed within Spanish colonial history. Besides, the term also recalls the recent citizens’ movement against austerity undertaken in different public squares across Spain since 15 May 2011.

² According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, external sovereignty depends on recognition by outsiders. To states, this recognition is what a no-trespassing law is to private property – a set of mutual understandings that give property, or the state, immunity from outside interference. It is also external sovereignty that establishes the basic condition of international relations. An assemblage of states, both internally and externally sovereign, makes up an international system, where sovereign entities ally, trade, make war and make peace (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2003). In <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sovereignty/>

³ More concretely, with respect to the Spanish political realm, the sovereignty of the *plazas* contrasts with the repression of an open debate on national sovereignty in relation to other territories within the Peninsula and also with the prevention of a public acceptance of its multiple failures, disputes and political conflicts that have occurred since the early stages of the formation of Spain as a nation-state.

Apart from the understanding of the *plazas* as vague metaphors for national sovereignty, this thesis examines their indeterminate present condition that appears immersed within the current migration management of stretching the borders beyond sovereign territories. In this sense, the research aims to look at the regulating vacuum that surrounds the *plazas* and activates the opaque parameters that allow the externalisation of European borders in Africa.⁴ In fact, the thesis also considers the way their vague status fosters a constant filtering of the past abuses of colonialism by fitting them into a contemporary classification of citizenship applied in respect to the current migration flux coming from Africa into Europe.

The investigation proposes to study the occupied enclaves from a curatorial perspective, that is, from a methodological approach conceived specifically for the occasion and applied through the production of a curatorial project in the north of Morocco: a project that, later on, profoundly influenced the writing of the Chapters. Therefore, this research contributes not only to examining the forbidden *plazas* of sovereignty, but also to developing a specific curatorial methodology for the completion of such an examination, a curatorial device capable of disposing various forms of (individual and collective) study and of making public some thought and knowledge around the Spanish enclaves along the Northern coast of Morocco.

Consequently, the thesis proposes a specific writing structure: four Chapters introduce an enclave together with a concept and through this combination, a specific set of relations is offered in order to approach the site while other historical, political, theoretical and even curatorial issues are considered. Following this logic, the Chapters combine various forms of knowledge, garnered from diverse sources such as theory, curatorial and artistic practices, history, lived experiences, site-visits, documentary materials and reading group sessions. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a different site that stands apart from the specific geography of the Spanish strongholds. This is the church of Saint-Bernard, one of the buildings occupied by the movement of asylum seekers and immigrants without papers in the mid-90s in France. This site, which also appears in correspondence with a term, offers an alternative perspective from which to read the

⁴ This focus is inspired by the work of geographers and anthropologist John Pickles, Sebastián Cobarrubias and Maribel Casas on the EU and Spain's border externalisation policies developed in Africa that they have elaborated in various articles (2011a, 2011b, 2015).

plazas: from those who suffer the violent bordering techniques that operate throughout these territories.

0.1.1. General Historical Background of the *Plazas* of Sovereignty



Illustration 1. Map of Location.

Originally, there were five *plazas*. These were divided into the major *plazas* of Melilla (occupied in 1497) and Ceuta (in 1668), and the minor *plazas* of Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera (1508), the Alhucemas Islands (1673) and the Chafarinas Islands (1848).

The historical context in which the epithet of '*plazas* of sovereignty' emerges coincides with the modern colonial enterprise of the 19th century in Africa, when these occupied territories had to be distinguished from other areas that were targeted for occupation. In fact, this distinction should be put into a wider perspective in order to understand the logic behind classifying the different periods of occupation in the area. I refer specifically to the precise division between the history of these medieval enclaves and that of the modern colonial campaigns in the territories of Ifni (occupied in 1860), Western Sahara (occupied in 1884) and the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco

(established in 1912). Moreover, it could be said that the differentiation between the medieval settlements of the *plazas* and the modern colonial enterprises undertaken by Spain in the 19th and 20th centuries in Northern and Western Africa was carried out through the simple strategy of renaming the fortified *plazas* as *plazas* of sovereignty. As a matter of fact, the *plazas*, having been reconstituted as sovereign, offered Spain the reason for starting a new colonial project in the continent of Africa in the years previous to the Berlin Conference (1884-85), while claiming to be treated distinctively as a way of recognising its longer trajectory of occupation. This periodisation clearly aimed to show a historical and unbreakable bond between the enclaves and the conformation of Spain as a sovereign nation during the 15th and 16th centuries.⁵

However, the historical context of the *plazas* varies. Some were conquered by European kingdoms during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries until they were finally recognised as Spanish territories by a peace treaty between Spain and Morocco in 1799 and later ratified in the Wad-Ras Treaty of 1860. This is the case with Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera (Badis for Moroccans and the only *plaza* that is connected to Morocco by land), that was conquered for the first time in 1508 by order of the so-called Catholic Monarchs and occupied again, after being lost in 1522, by King Philip II (Rivas 2015). Or the case of the Alhucemas Islands, (a small archipelago conformed by three islands, one of them, the Peñón de Alhucemas situated at 700 metres off the Moroccan coast and the other two, the islets called Tierra and Mar, situated only at 50 metres from the coast) that were relinquished by the sultan Muley Abdalá in 1560 to the Spanish crown in return for protection against the Ottoman armed forces (Rivas *ibid*): they were only formally occupied in 1673 by Charles II of Spain.

In contrast, the occupation of the Chafarinas Islands belongs to another historical background. This is also a small archipelago conformed again by three islands (Isabel II, Congreso and Rey Francisco) situated 30 miles from Melilla and which were occupied by Spain during the French occupation of Algeria initiated in 1830⁶ (Rivas *ibid*). Nevertheless, even though the settlement of the Chafarinas belongs to the modern

⁵ The argument is also supported by the reasoning that the enclaves were sovereign even before Morocco existed as a nation-state itself (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi, 2005, 408).

⁶ According to some authors, France was prepared to expand its presence in the area, but ‘this was known by the Spanish forces through a Spanish soldier in the French army, and Spain forestalled it by only few days’ (De Madariaga in Rivas *ibid*). Translated by the author.

colonisation period, their status as *plazas* of sovereignty has (since the time of their occupation) never been questioned.

Then again, it seems ‘the *plazas* had a time of splendour, almost a century ago now, when trade was plentiful, the gates of the fort swung open and the nearby residents of the Rif would come to sell their chickens, eggs, fruit, vegetables and coal’ (Ceberio, Cembrero and González 2012). The newspaper article ‘The Last Remains of the Empire’ clarifies this, explaining that on each of these tiny *plazas* of sovereignty there were postal employees, border patrolmen, schoolteachers and lighthouse-keepers amongst a population of over 400 in Alhucemas and Vélez (Ceberio, Cembrero and González *ibid*). The Moroccan fisherman, Amar Binauda, sold fish to the soldiers stationed at the *plazas* when he was young. His father before him also did business with the Spanish garrison: he was their butcher. ‘But that was a long time ago,’ he points out, ‘when the island troops still mingled with the residents of the nearest coast’ (Binauda in Ceberio, Cembrero and González *ibid*). The protagonist of the article may be referring to an old tendency, when Spanish colonial figures distinguished between two types of Moroccans: the pacifists and the rebels. During the 18th and 19th centuries this distinction between the peaceable Moroccans, who kept contact with the *plazas*, either through commercial interests or military purposes, and the troublesome ones, who remained outside these enclaves as they did not accept submission, brought about a harsh tactic. In the words of the Basque writer Joseba Sarrionandia:

Spain, and likewise France, developed a sharp strategy of arming the peaceful Moroccans against the troublesome ones. (...) For a long time there had been Indigenous troops at the service of the Spaniards. They already existed in 1732 (...) [but this] new force of Indigenous people supporting Spain were to be organised with much more consistency and would be called the Group of Regular Indigenous Forces (*Grupo de Fuerzas de Regulares Indígenas*) (Sarrionandia 2012, 169).⁷

In the summer of 2012, when Binauda conversed with some Spanish journalists, he was already in his 70s and he stated clearly that he hardly talked to the Spaniards any more. He explains:

⁷ Translated by the author.

Each one is in his place. With the Sahara thing, everything changed. There is no relationship (Binauda in Ceberio, Cembrero and González *ibid*).

Binauda's argument draws attention to the role of the *plazas* during the period of decolonisation,⁸ more specifically to the Western Sahara⁹ conflict between Spain and Morocco. As a matter of fact, this unsolved conflict led to some important fissures within the process of decolonisation which resulted in a broken dialogue in respect to certain issues. However, before the relinquishment of Western Sahara (1975), the decolonisation was secretly developed.

In 1963, according to some authors, the Spanish dictator, Francisco Franco, and King Hassan II of Morocco secretly reached an agreement, known to Spanish diplomacy as the *Spirit of Barajas*. This agreement addressed four issues:

The first had to do with the Spanish occupation of the province of Ifni, which Morocco managed to have relinquished by Spain in 1969. The second had to do with reaching a solution for the Spanish Sahara and for this, Spain asked Morocco to cease its demands over this territory for some years. The third demanded that Morocco renounce Ceuta and Melilla forever. And the last dictated that Perejil Island be considered *terra nullius*, a land neither pertaining to Spain nor to Morocco, but on which both countries could maintain a permanent military or civil presence¹⁰ (Bermejo García 2002).

⁸ During the process of decolonisation, the dissolution of the colonial borders between Spain and Morocco conflicted with the demand of keeping the *plazas* as sovereign territories and not as colonial occupied areas that could then be decolonised. In fact, when Spain relinquished the area, thus recognising Morocco's independence in 1956, it did not give up the major and minor *plazas*. The argument was based on the same logic that introduced colonialism in the territory, stating that Spain had held the *plazas* well before the establishment of The Protectorate of Morocco and therefore they didn't belong administratively speaking to it (Rivas 2015). As a result, the *plazas* of sovereignty continue to be part of Spain today and, consequently, also part of the European Union and the Schengen Area. In fact, they are governed by an administrative empty space controlled from Madrid (Cembrero 2012).

⁹ Kamal Fadel argues against the definition of Western Sahara as a *terra nullius* during the time of Spanish colonisation and questions the legal relationship between Western Sahara and Morocco and between Western Sahara and Mauritania. For that, he argues that in 1975 the International Court of Justice finally decided unanimously that Western Sahara was not *terra nullius*, when Spain proclaimed a protectorate in 1884, since it "was inhabited by people, who if nomadic, were socially and politically organised in tribes and under chiefs competent to represent them" (Fadel 2010).

¹⁰ Translated by the author.

As mentioned above, there has been a historical distinction made between the so-called major *plazas*, comprising the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, and the minor ones, referring to the small islands along the coast. Since 1995, after Ceuta and Melilla gained the status of autonomous Spanish cities,¹¹ the term *plazas* of sovereignty refers exclusively to the original enclaves of the Chafarinas Islands, the Alhucemas Islands and Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera. Nevertheless, since 2002, after a military operation against the occupation of Perejil Island (situated at 5 miles from Ceuta and 200 metres off the coast of Morocco) by six Moroccan navy cadets who offered no resistance when captured, the term has also been applied to it. This action created a diplomatic crisis between Morocco and Spain. As a consequence, Perejil – the ‘brand-new’ *plaza* (in fact an uninhabited islet, situated close to the city of Ceuta and a few metres away from the Moroccan coast) – started to be referred by the Spanish media as a *plaza* of sovereignty. Despite this, the island is well monitored from both sides to maintain the *status quo ante*: that is, an ambiguous *terra nullius* (Bermejo García 2002).

Perejil Island (also known by local Moroccan residents as Tura or Layla) is the first territory I visited with an artist as part of this research, even though it could be argued that strictly speaking it should not be considered a *plaza*. However, its ambiguity strengthens the idea of the exceptionality of these territories as well as offering interesting accounts within current political events. Besides, Perejil is the closest island to Tétouan, the city in which part of my curatorial project related to this thesis has taken place.

Immersed now in another timeline condition that receives its frame from the current European migration management policies applied in Africa, the *plazas* contribute to the control of the sub-Saharan flux of migration into Europe. In this new context, their indeterminacy also plays its role. In fact, their present undefined condition helps to establish a new strategy of migration control through the stretching of borders beyond sovereign territories, that is to say the externalisation of European borders in Africa through the regulating vacuum that surrounds territories such as the Spanish *plazas*.

¹¹ They hold a similar legislative status to the *comunidades autónomas* of Spain (e.g. Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia), but without having a legislative chamber.

0.1.2. Current Context

Two separate incidents, both occurring in 2012, marked the start of this research.¹² The first took place at islet of Tierra on 29 August 2012, when a group of sub-Saharan migrants traversed the short expanse of water between Morocco and the islet, in order to camp there as a means of access to the Spanish mainland (Ceberio, Cembrero and González 2012). The second incident followed shortly afterwards by the short-term occupation of another *plaza* of sovereignty, Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera, by seven Moroccan activists from the Committee for the Liberation of Ceuta and Melilla. They simply crossed the invisible line that divides both countries and raised the Moroccan flag beside the Rock (Rivas 2015).

Some articles published by the main Spanish newspapers, such as *El País*, reported the incidents, revealing that the group of sub-Saharan migrants received the green light to enter Morocco from Rabat, later to be quickly deported to Algeria ‘through a border that has theoretically been closed for the last 18 years’ (Ceberio, Cembrero and González 2012).

The articles published at that time introduced some historical and contemporary background to the *plazas* as a way of offering a collective consciousness into the crisis that the entry of the *sans-papiers* was then causing in Spain. Since that time, and during the process of this research, the *plazas* have only gained visibility at times of crisis; otherwise they have remained invisible.

Most people’s limited knowledge of these territories may be a consequence of the many failed attempts by Spain at getting rid of the enclaves. The Spanish historian María Rosa de Madariaga explains how since mid-18th century Spain started to question whether the enclaves were economically viable or if it was more convenient to dispose of them (De Madariaga in Rivas 2015). However, it can be argued that Spain’s interest

¹² It is important to mention that before this moment, I was not aware of the existence of the *plazas*, except of Perejil, which during the incident of 2002 gained the attention of the media. I later found out that few people from Spain, Morocco or elsewhere knew about the existence of the *plazas*.

in establishing a broader colonial presence in the area during 19th century prevented, at least publicly, these attempts.

Present circumstances are completely different. The enclaves seem to be irrelevant as a defensive protection against occupation. However, one real fear has to do with the fact that if Spain relinquishes them, Morocco would demand Ceuta and Melilla. This would cause Spain to lose its strategic position on the Gibraltar Strait, a position that not only involves Spain, but also the EU, if we take into consideration the important role that Melilla and Ceuta play as border guards in one of the Southern entries to fortified Europe.

Meanwhile, the illegal and legal flows circulate around the *plazas*. In fact, they have contributed to the development of frequent illicit procedures in respect to the control of the sub-Saharan migration flux coming into Europe. This is the case of the numerous so-called ‘hot returns’¹³ (in Spanish: *devoluciones en caliente*), the unlawful expulsions of persons on the spot, outside legal procedures or international obligations’ (Legal Report 2014). These illegal returns have happened on various occasions and on several *plazas* since the media reported the new migration route opened by the *sans-papiers* during the summer of 2012. Above all, if we take into consideration the easy accessibility of some *plazas* such as Tierra and Mar (the Alhucemas Islands) or Perejil, which are all situated very close to the coast of Morocco, we can understand the menace that this new route of entry into Europe could represent for the border control management. Despite this migratory crisis, the information about these expulsions is never clear and it is mostly surrounded by speculation and uncertainty.

As a consequence of all this, today the *plazas* are condemned to continue within the limits of a specific battle of geopolitical dispute between Spain and Morocco and the singular and deregulated management techniques of surveillance and biopolitics applied within European borders. In fact, having gradually lost their military usefulness and residents throughout the 20th century, the enclaves are used now within their ambiguous legal status for breaking the flow of migration into Europe. Furthermore, the indeterminacy of a real popular sovereignty within the *plazas* promotes a syncopated

¹³ For example, Pablo Rivas, in his article ‘Enclaves españoles en África: Plazas de soberanía, vestigios de un imperio’, refers to the macro-hot return that occurred in September 2012.

sense of touch between the nearer and the more distant, between neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies, territorial and water jurisprudences, legal citizens and *sans-papiers*, national and international law: in short, between the inconclusive status of a *terra nullius* and the potentialities of a *res communis*.

0.2. How to Study the *Plazas* of Sovereignty from a Curatorial Perspective

This dissertation is dedicated to study the colonial model of occupation of the *plazas* of sovereignty from a curatorial perspective,¹⁴ that is, from a methodological approach conceived specifically and employed through the development of a curatorial¹⁵ project in the north of Morocco. In other words, this investigation contributes to the examination of the forbidden enclaves as much as to the development of a specific curatorial method for carrying out such an assessment. This study model comprises several stages:

Firstly, the selection of certain theoretical references helped me at the beginning to comprehend the itinerary that has been traced through the timeless exceptionality of the *plazas* of sovereignty. This first theoretical approach encouraged me to turn the notions and references so far collected into a toolbox; to employ them as a dictionary that could help us to situate the research in context. At this early stage, a list of concepts was extracted in order to study the current dynamics of control of the *plazas*. These notions were finally reduced to five (*dispositif*, touching, friendship, display and *lieu de vie*) and

¹⁴ By curatorial perspective, I mean to acknowledge the practice of curating from a broad perspective that can involve procedural participatory activities, engendering 'new practices, new meanings, values and relations between things.' (O'Neill 2007).

¹⁵ The dimension of the term curatorial is complicit to the way it has been claimed since the 1990s by several curators outside the academic context and as a reaction to the limitation of the practice of curating to the conventional forms of exhibition production. The curatorial, established as a conceptual approach, has progressively committed with knowledge production processes and diverse forms of research (Szakács). Within the academic context, the notion of the curatorial has also been enriched for example by the ongoing discussions shared with numerous research fellows, curators and thinkers within the context of the seminars of the programme *Curatorial/Knowledge* led by Irit Rogoff, Paul Martinon and Stefan Nowotny. Another example that combines both academic and non-academic positions is the postgraduate study program, public conferences and publications entitled *Cultures of the Curatorial* run by Barbara Steiner, Beatrice von Bismarck and Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer.

came out of diverse fields of practices and knowledge like anthropology, geography, philosophy and even curatorial practice.

Besides, theory has also helped me to propose a specific new term, '*Dispositifs*'¹⁶ of Touching', as a curatorial site for publicly studying the enclaves. '*Dispositifs* of Touching' is an invented term that was firstly inspired by the *oeuvre* of the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy and his dedication to the notion of touching, and secondly by several philosophical accounts of the notion of *dispositif*. Regarding in particular the concept of touching, it is enthused by Nancy's approximation of the term, which he separates from the critique of phenomenology, while claiming it within the political debates surrounding the forms of the collective as an entity and the possibilities for commonality. In this sense, the curatorial has been exercised within this research as the practicing of touching within the historical, political, cultural and even aesthetic context in which the *plazas* happen to be inscribed. Furthermore, the curatorial as an exercise of touching has comprised the potentiality of configuring a common time where knowledge, experience and imagination have been offered for sharing. In respect to the concept of *dispositif*, it is important to mention that I was initially interested in tracking a specific series of related philosophical references including Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser and Giorgio Agamben.

In sum, it is suggested that the new term '*Dispositifs* of Touching' approaches the relational dynamics that take place between subjects as well as objects, between political issues as well as cultural concerns, between archival processes and aesthetic imaginaries. In this sense, to study these occupied territories through the logic of this new invented notion has meant aiming for the declassification and reorganisation of the existing forms of producing relations that operate, initially, as ways of controlling the opposition between elements. Ultimately, this attempt has tried to bring out other possible meanings and approaches into the issues examined.

Secondly, this dissertation has taken the form of a public curatorial project thanks to a

¹⁶ Within my thesis, I will use the term *dispositif* instead of apparatus in order to keep the reference to the latin word *disponere* (arrange) as well as the influence of the English verb "dispose" which comes from Old French *poser* "to place".

residency within Trankat,¹⁷ an independent organisation with a base in the Medina of Tétouan. Immersed in the open dynamics of a small institution, the research has managed to cross the limits of the academic context in order to reach other publics. Within that context, through different moments and stages, the residency offered the opportunity for bringing attention and visibility to these territories, producing a public sphere for the *plazas*, a dialogic sphere that demanded a certain consciousness about their existence and their dynamics of control, of which few people in Morocco, Spain or elsewhere are aware. This public sphere, configured outside the parameters of the exhibition format, has been developed progressively through the form of a reading group, a series of public presentations and some walks and visits around the Medina, the city of Tétouan, its rural surroundings and finally the closest areas to the actual *plazas*.

Lastly, the thesis also reflects the influence of curatorial practice into the configuration of a specific writing that combines various forms of knowledge coming out of diverse sources such as theory, curatorial and artistic practices, and history. Therefore, the curatorial endeavour in this research should also be acknowledged in the writing structure of every Chapter where an enclave is introduced in conjunction with a concept so that through this unexpected encounter an enriching relational context emerges between vivid descriptions of historical passages and lived experiences with theoretical accounts. Consequently, this investigation implies a double attempt, theoretical and practical, giving shape, through their interrelation, to all the contents of the proposed study.

¹⁷ Trankat is a small, non-profit, artistic institution based in the ancient Medina of Tétouan, the old centre of the city. This small organisation was temporarily hosted at the Dar Ben Jelloun house, a ‘protected’ building that was constructed in the 19th century out of an iron structure and situated close to Jamaa El Kebir, the biggest mosque of the Medina. The house belonged to a former *fasi* family and for five years hosted Trankat’s independent residency programme. Trankat survives on a very small budget and came into being through the initiative of the French curator Bérénice Saliou with the support of Moroccan artist Younès Rahmoun and other influential professional local figures, such as Hakim Cherkaoui (director of the Faculty of Architecture of Tétouan) and Mehdi Zouak (director of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Tétouan). One important peculiarity of Trankat’s programme is that artists in residence are asked to develop specific productions that establish a direct connection with the local context and diverse educational initiatives, realised in collaboration with the Fine Arts and Architecture Faculties of Tétouan. It should be mentioned that I was the first curator in residence at Trankat.

0.2.1. Objectives

The main objectives of this thesis are twofold:

- To give account of some the inner logics of control of the colonial model of occupation of the *plazas* of sovereignty. This entails the exploration of some historical references and current tendencies related to each enclave and the determination of the present contextual framework in which these territories are inscribed.
- To discover how to configure a curatorial mode of research with regard to the forbidden territories of the *plazas* of sovereignty. This involves the development of a curatorial position in relation to the object of study. This objective includes two concerns:
 - Defining the role theory should play in the research: how to employ theory as a means of identifying a specific site for my own curatorial practice within the research.
 - Figuring out how curatorial practice can contribute to the generation and dissemination of knowledge in respect to the *plazas* of sovereignty. This comprises the establishment of a public platform from which to open a critical debate and bring some collective awareness in relation to the Spanish enclaves.

0.2.2. Description of the Project

The curatorial project entitled *Dispositifs of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Time of Expanded Borders* developed for this research consists of two parts:

1. The organisation of a reading group at Tétouan that comprised four sessions

over three months.

2. The production of documentary materials by certain guest artists through a series of site-visits to the surroundings of the *plazas* of sovereignty.

This two-sided approach lends a structural consistency to the writing of the thesis. In order to further clarify this, I will now describe in general terms the structural basis of both initiatives.

1. The reading group consisted of a series of sessions spread over three months (from April to June 2015) and focused on the vocabulary that has nourished this practice-based PhD research. Each session lasted four hours and was centred on a specific term that was introduced by a text or number of texts (the recommended readings were short enough to enable an in-depth exploration) and a specific artistic practice that was introduced by the artists themselves. The participant artists were (in chronological order of participation): Xabier Salaberria (Donostia-San Sebastián, Basque Country, Spain), Younès Rahmoun (Tétouan, Morocco), Heidi Vogels (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) and Youssef El Yedidi (Tétouan, Morocco).

These sessions took place in different specific sites previously determined with the artist. In sum, every session was moderated by the guest artist and myself, and tried to activate a live crossover between theory and practice, text and image, through a performative experience of reading, learning and temporarily inhabiting a chosen place. During the sessions, the group discussed issues related to the selected texts, as well as sharing concerns regarding the artistic practices of, and works by, the invited artists. The dialogical encounter between these two sources – one arising from theory, the other from the artists' own practice – put in play an experimental, collective and productive dynamic, while allowing us to critically configure a group that reflected on issues related to the control of the *plazas* as well as about itself in relation to certain concerns related to curatorial and artistic production within the specific geographic context: in this case, Northern Morocco.

2. The production of documentary materials. The guest artists, apart from being invited

to present some of their works and moderate a reading session together with me, were also invited to visit (again with me) the environs of one of the enclaves studied within this research and to produce some documentation out of that visit. The conceptual framework employed for the organisation of these site-visits was conceived in correspondence with the ideas worked on collectively during the reading sessions, and also in relation to other practical factors, personal circumstances and conceptual motivations. The idea of visiting the enclaves (or rather the nearest points to them) arose from the desire to produce a specific documentation for this research. In other words, it was proposed as a way of establishing direct contact with the surroundings of the *plazas* and formulating an artistic mode of registering that experience.

Most of the site-visits were organised to coincide with the reading group. The islets ‘visited’, in chronological order, were: Perejil (with Xabier Salaberria on 11 April 2015); Peñón Vélez de la Gomera (with Younès Rahmoun on 15 June 2015); and the Alhucemas Islands (with Heidi Vogels, also on 15 June 2015). The last visit to the Chafarinas Islands happened after the reading group had terminated and was undertaken together with Marion Cruza Le Bihan (Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain) from 22–25 October 2015.

Finally, the documentary productions varied in format and are included in the appendices section that accompanies this research. These include: photography, drawings, a display of text and image, and a performative slide projection transferred to DVD. The last Chapter, which introduces another site outside the geographical context of the *plazas* of sovereignty but is related to this research through the movement of asylum seekers and immigrants without papers in France in the 90s, was the church of Saint-Bernard (Paris), and is accompanied by a series of pages from the book *Maquetas-sin-cualidad* by the Argentinian Paris-based artist Alejandra Riera.

0.2.3. Methodological Tools

Concerning the theoretical methods and tools, this thesis has been approached through a

wide range of references coming not exclusively from readings, but also from conversations and collaborations with artists. However, it is important to point out that, during the research, theory was the first tool applied to study these territories. In this sense, theory was initially employed to configure a perspective from which to analyse the *plazas* as devices of control within the bordering context of the Gibraltar Strait. Moreover, theory was later used for allowing things to happen collectively in response to the object of study, so to say, for helping to configure a public sphere from where to discuss and make public the Spanish enclaves.

In respect of the methodology applied in the practice-based part, it is also relevant to mention that I have made use of diverse methodological tools, some arising specifically from the practice of curating, while others are derived from other fields. The most relevant tools were: the reading group, the site-visit, the development of fieldwork, the production of commissioned documentary works by artists, the editing of materials on paper, the dialogue and collaboration with artists, the production of public events and the configuration of publics around the object of study.

The reading group:

Some of my latest projects have been dedicated to showing that a reading group can be acknowledged as a curatorial tool. This is the case for example with the project entitled *EL CONTRATO* (The Contract) that I curated during 2013 and 2014 in Azkuna Zentroa (Bilbao) together with Beatriz Cavia (sociologist), Isabel de Naverán (choreography researcher) and Miren Jaio (art critic) under our common initiative of Bulegoa z/b,¹⁸ an office for art and knowledge based in Bilbao.

EL CONTRATO was a two-year project developed by Bulegoa z/b in collaboration with Azkuna Zentroa. The project was developed in two phases: a reading group that ran from April 2013 to February 2014, and an exhibition that took place from October 2014 to January 2015. The exhibition arose from themes examined in the reading group, and comprised works by around thirty artists, as well as a film programme, talks,

¹⁸ Bulegoa z/b was initiated in 2010 with the intention of developing collective research and discussion on common interests such as processes of historicisation, cultural translation, performativity, postcolonialism, social theory, archival strategies and education. www.bulegoa.org

performances and a new reading group. The project aimed to reflect on the way in which contracts, tacit or explicit, determine practices and ways of doing, being and acting. However, more than a mere theme, the notion of the contract was approached as an area of study to develop core conceptual issues related to the ‘agreements’ established from modernity up to the present within the four areas of practice that define Bulegoa as a project, i.e.: curating, art criticism, social theory, and contemporary dance/choreography. The group was finally composed of a heterogeneous assemblage of people (artists, curators, choreographers, but also civil servants, a retired journalist, a bank employee, unemployed people, students, etc.) who committed to meet every fifteen days for almost a year, focusing on certain texts in order to study jointly the idea of the ‘contract’.

During 2013, *EL CONTRATO* was developed through sixteen reading sessions, of which the members of Bulegoa organised twelve, the remaining four being conducted by four invited guests: Héctor Burgues, Mexican playwright and member of the Mexico City-based artistic collective *Teatro Ojo*; Filiep Tacq, Belgian independent graphic designer specialising in art catalogues and artist’s books; Portuguese artist Catarina Simão; and Spanish sociologist Elena Casado. During the sessions, we read different text formats – prose, poems, essays, critical reviews and conferences – and used other references such as films, art works, documentation of performances and dance pieces, and popular imaginary.

After the first phase, the reflections and discussions that took place at the twelve reading sessions conducted by the members of Bulegoa helped to configure an exhibition with the same title. Therefore, in the second phase, *EL CONTRATO* attempted to translate the dynamics of a reading group into the logics of an exhibition.

Each reading session was then turned into a section in the exhibition: The Staging of the Social Contract; The Contract Between Bodies; The Contract in Forms of Production; The Contract as *Dispositif*; Dismantling the Contract; Contracts between Theory and Practice; Declassifying the Contract; Written and Spoken Contracts; Pedagogical Contracts; Performativity of the Contract; The Archive as a Contract; and The Contract with Thought.

Every session was moderated by two members of Bulegoa, with the intention of conforming to Bulegoa's interest in allowing certain dialogical crossovers between practices. In this respect, all the reading sessions tried to reflect upon the four practices at work at Bulegoa, offering 'crossed' perspectives that activated exchanges between curating and social theory, curating and choreography, choreography and social theory, critical writing and choreography, etc...

In this context, curating was examined through three reading sessions where in turn three different curatorial concerns were examined together with the contractual agreements that sustain them. The issues treated were: the *dispositif*, the display and the archive. Dance and choreography were debated in terms of other relevant questions and contracts fundamental to them, such as movement, work, the body, life and the lived. Social theory was reflected by ideas such as the social contract, theatre, theory/practice and performativity. And art criticism was looked at from the conditions of a review, the materiality of a text to be read in silence or a text to be read aloud, and the act of writing in relation to thinking.

I am introducing this example of a reading group that aimed to be the conceptual and structural curatorial mechanism of an exhibition because this experience ended a few months before my first visit to Tétouan. Obviously it functioned as a working model for the project developed in collaboration with Trankat. However, for this new venture we didn't aim to configure an exhibition from the experiences lived in the group. Rather, we wanted to explore a new format that we could put in contact with the dynamics of a reading group: the PhD research.

Site-visit:

The site-visit is a common curatorial methodology activated every time a project begins, and normally originates with the intention of exploring an institution or a specific exhibition space before production. A site-visit can also involve a further exploration that facilitates contact between the curators and the local and artistic context where their project will be presented. In this research, the site-visit was employed as a common curatorial tool but with the particular distinction of performing it together with artists. The trips to the enclaves were strictly speaking site-visits where the artists and I

could experience these locations and their local surroundings. Some visits, logistically speaking, were easy to undertake: for example, the visit to the islet of Perejil, as it is situated close to the city of Tétouan. However, others were not so accessible, although we had the opportunity to travel accompanied by local people, as was the case with Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera and the Alhucemas Islands (both situated in the province of Al Hoceïma in the middle of the Rif mountains). This offered us the opportunity to get a closer perspective of the environs of those *plazas*. For the final visit to the Chafarinas Islands, the artist Marion Cruza Le Bihan and myself travelled on our own to Melilla, crossing the Rif mountains, first by bus and then by shared taxis. This journey was pre-planned in order to incorporate the experience of the visit in the production of the artist's documentary materials on the Chafarinas Islands. Instead, we could have flown directly to Melilla from Madrid or even have avoided Melilla entirely by travelling to Ras Kebdana, one of the nearest points on the Moroccan coast to the islands. However, we considered that the experience of crossing the European border from Morocco was more interesting. Besides, for us investigating certain institutions and museums from Tétouan and Melilla were also relevant to the project. Nevertheless, I have to admit that the decision to approach the Chafarinas Islands from Melilla resulted in us not seeing the islands. Supposedly, there is a point in the ancient walls of Melilla where the islands are visible on a clear day: unfortunately, that day it rained.

Fieldwork:

Even though we tend to situate the methodology of fieldwork within the research practice of human sciences, Irit Rogoff claims this tool within the field of artistic practice and she even places it in a comparison to the familiar artistic term 'site-specific' (Rogoff 2000 and 2004). Rogoff employs fieldwork as a way of pointing out those artistic practices that spatially and geographically remain sensitive to the actions and assumptions that take place within a site. In that sense, fieldwork should involve, for Rogoff, a more active criticality from the artists (and curators). For the author, the site-specific format exposes truth as opposed to inhabiting the problems and assumptions proper to the production of the work (Rogoff 2000 and 2004).

Apart from this relevant consideration, other references arising from the practice of ethnography have also been acknowledged in this research. For example, the historical

crossover between Surrealism and ethnography found in the work of Michel Leiris has provided a further reference. In this line, the self-ethnography developed in some of his writings such as *L'Afrique fantôme* (1934) has also been a source of inspiration for this investigation.

The production of commissioned documentary work by artists:

This methodology commonly corresponds to the professional curatorial process of production and it is normally activated once a budget is approved. In the case of this research, the budget for production has been very limited, covering basic expenses like travel, accommodation and per diems. The documentary work was developed almost without budget. As a consequence, some parts of the production were realised later with alternative budgets in the context of other presentations, while other parts remain more invisible and modest, although latent for further development and public moments of the project.

Editing material on paper:

This research experimented with different forms of editing text and image within some of the artists' (contributions gathered here in the appendices section). This is the case with the contributions of Heidi Vogels, Marion Cruza Le Bihan and Alejandra Riera (see the appendices related to Chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively). Each artist establishes a particular mode of editing text and image, and proposes apposite approaches to the configuration of meaning out of their crossover. In the case of Vogels, an edition specifically designed for the occasion of this research is included. Within it, we can approach the lived experience during the site-visit to the province of Al Hoceïma where Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera and the Alhucemas Islands are situated. Cruza Le Bihan also contributes with a form of editing that includes all the photographic items employed in her performance-piece *1020 items (Tétouan-Melilla)*. Finally, Riera contributes with some pages of her book *Maquettes-sans-qualité* (Barcelona, 2004), through which a peculiar montage between images and text introduces some of the experiences around the movement of asylum seekers and immigrants without papers in France in the mid 90s.

Apart from these contributions, the thesis also includes illustrative edited pages produced by Basque designer Gorka Eizagirre (also in the appendices section) in which an account of the different phases of the project *Dispositifs of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Time of Expanded Borders* is unfolded.

Dialogue and collaboration with artists:

The practice of curating is not autonomous; in order to take place, it relies on many different relations that need to be established. For this research, the dialogue and collaboration with the artists was essential during the stages of developing the reading group and producing the documentary materials of the enclaves. As Nirmal Puwar and Sanjay Sharma point out, since the 1960s, ‘there has been an emergence of curators influenced by avant-garde movements, who have been rethinking the exhibition space, questioning conventions and experimenting with critical practices and forms of media. Thus, over time, in this critical traditions new methodologies built on participatory and collective models of working collaboratively beyond traditional institutions of art have multiplied’ (Puwar, and Sharma 2012, 43). The collaboration established with the artists in this research follows this curatorial trajectory.

Production of public events:

The research has been accompanied by a series of public moments of different formats, namely: public lectures, presentations, seminars, installation formats, etc. The venues include: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid, 2012); ArtyePensamiento, UNIA, International University of Seville (Seville, 2013); Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin, 2014); Trankat (Tétouan, 2015); Bulegoa z/b (Bilbao, 2015); and Tabakalera (Donostia-San Sebastián, 2016).¹⁹

Configuration of publics:

As some authors argue, the curator is generally acknowledged as the ‘professional figure that manages to stimulate relations between artists, art works, places and publics’

¹⁹ A full detailed list of these public events can be found in the conclusions.

(Puwar and Sharma 2012, 40). Apart from curating, we could argue that other fields of practice also configure publics. In the context of this research, journalism could be considered as one of those fields, as it constitutes a public of readers around the *plazas* of sovereignty every time an article is published. As mentioned above, the type of articles published in 2012, when this research started, not only brought attention to the enclaves by reporting the incidents as they occurred, but also gave historical context in order to situate the origins of these ambiguous territories. The curatorial project that has been produced within the context of this research similarly aimed to configure publics around the enclaves, and in particular this has happened within the experimental crossovers occurring between artistic practices, locations and experiences. As we can see further on in the Chapters, the written part of this thesis also aims to configure new publics of readers through the inter-textuality activated by the correlation between history, theory, lived experiences, artistic and curatorial practices.

Chapter 1. Perejil Island: *Dispositif*

1.1. Introduction

This Chapter studies Perejil Island, a small, uninhabited rocky islet situated just 200 metres off the coast of Morocco and supposedly considered to be unclaimed by any country. The Chapter introduces the island in correspondence with the philosophical term of *dispositif*, following the original structure of the public project developed in collaboration with Trankat in relation to this investigation, where this notion was the first to be worked within the context of the reading group. Apart from this, *dispositif* was also the term that I shared with Basque artist Xabier Salaberria when selecting some works by him for the reading session. Besides, the term also helped us to conceptually frame our site-visit to the nearest approachable location from which to access the islet visually. In this way, the term accompanied us on site and helped to produce some specific documentary material that can be found within the appendices section. Therefore, the territory examined and the notion of *dispositif* are explored in this Chapter in conjunction, elaborating a writing entanglement between diverse knowledge sources: firstly, the knowledge obtained through the reading of certain documents and other historical sources; secondly, through the study of the philosophical trajectory of the term *dispositif* that gives account of various of its interpretations developed by different philosophers and thinkers; thirdly, through the personal experience of trying to approach this enclave physically; and lastly, the knowledge produced collectively through the curatorial project *Dispositifs of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Time of Expanded Borders*.

1.2. Context

Wednesday, 8 April 2015

Trankat is in the middle of the Medina. The visual markers for arriving at Dar Ben Jelloun without getting lost are:

Wooden roof

Little square (crossed diagonally)

Bougainvillea tree

Small mosque

Mattress leaning on a wall

Two signs reading: N1 + an arrow

Little restaurant whose owner speaks Spanish and serves cheap and very tasty meals. (We will have to go for lunch there one day).

Food corridor

Yellow post-box

A pair of parking bollards

Door of Jamaa El Kebir (the biggest mosque of the Medina)

The Spanish Ensanche of Tétouan was built in 1917 following the regionalist style of Andalucía in which decorative neo-Mozarabic elements prevail. Apparently, the facades of the buildings were originally painted in different colours. However, today they are all white with green shutters, making no difference between the colour of the walls of these houses and those of the Medina.

It hasn't stopped raining since we arrived in Tétouan.

(Vergara, fieldwork notes, 2015)

Our visit for documenting Perejil Island took place on Saturday, 11 April 2015. It was a rainy day and we travelled from Tétouan to the cliffs in the area of Belyounech. We made the trip by taxi and Xabier Salaberria decided to document it with a digital camera. During the journey, the photos taken were somewhat arbitrary, as the taxi driver decided for us where and where not to stop in order to get the best viewpoints of

the coast. When we arrived in the area of Belyounech, we felt that the enclave ought to be near. We recognised the rocky landscape that we had seen many times through images on Internet. The car stopped where the road ended and just in front of the place where we parked we saw a Moroccan military post and a group of precarious barracks. We couldn't see any Spanish military post in the area, something that surprised us, because along the way we could distinguish in the cliffs various Moroccan posts guarding the calm coast. We got out of the car and Xabier started shooting in the area, still with his digital camera, until we found the ruins of an old bunker that he decided to shoot with his reflex camera.

One of the works that we had selected for the reading group session and which had also inspired us to organise that trip to Perejil was Salaberria's unfinished work *The Atlantic Wall*. This was a proposal he developed for the group exhibition *The Society Without Qualities* curated by Lars Bang Larssen at Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm in 2013. The Atlantic Wall – an extensive line of fortifications that stretched from Scandinavia to the Bay of Biscay and was built by Nazi Germany between 1942 and 1944 – was a historical reference for this visit just as it had been for a previous artistic investigation related to the work of Xabier Salaberria (a project, though, that had remained unfinished because he couldn't find a sufficient budget). Guided by this old interest in warlike constructions, Xabier Salaberria and I clambered inside the bunker to photograph the crude, concrete carcass without noticing that we were now being observed from a closer distance. A Moroccan soldier with a submachine gun hanging from his shoulder then approached us to make clear that it was forbidden to take photos anywhere in the area. We asked him, though, if we could stay there and visit the cliffs from where we could see Perejil Island. He said we could, but without taking any more photographs.

As soon as the soldier left, I said to Salaberria that we should do as he ordered, but that I would include that fact in the thesis. Salaberria said: 'Are you kidding? Let's try.' We accessed a little path that ran parallel to the cliff and the taxi driver accompanied us. Some metres away from the military post, we found the islet. It was imposing, in fact bigger than I had imagined, standing quietly within a calm sea. Salaberria's camera was loaded with a reel of transparencies, as we had agreed before arriving in Morocco to document this island with slides in order to differentiate his work from the many digital images we had seen on the Internet. The light, the exposure time, the framing, the

difficulty of deploying the manual focusing were details that the artist wanted considered and acknowledged in the photographs that he was going to take. He believed that those particular decisions would then reveal the actual conditions in which the images were produced.

So Salaberria started photographing the enclave. Although we only realised thanks to the taxi driver, a second soldier was observing us from nearby. Xabier quickly put away his camera. It was time to leave. Immediately, the soldier walked toward us and we feared he would confiscate the camera or the film. But as he approached, we realised he was only a young man whose shift had ended and who was returning to the post. We left then, hoping that the few images that Salaberria had taken would turn out well.

I have decided to narrate this story because it gives an account of the current situation in the immediate area of Perejil Island. A place that initially does not seem to be guarded, or at least not as heavily as we imagined it to be after the military presence reported in the Spanish media in the summer of 2002. It was a peaceful, coastal area reminiscent of many other locations on the Mediterranean Sea, except for the precarious barracks that proliferated and from which Moroccan soldiers kept the area secure.

This was the only visit I made to this site during my three stays in Morocco. However, I talked about this place with many different people while I was there. Some of them had never heard about it before, others knew a bit about it and one of them in particular had a close relationship with the area and more specifically with the actual islet of Perejil. This person was Mohamed Larbi Rahhali²⁰, an artist born in Tétouan in 1956 and who continues to live and work there. The peculiarity of Larbi Rahhali's work in connection with this research has to do precisely with the main topic of his painting and sculpture, determined as it is by the conditions of his life as a Tétouanese artist who earns his living as a fisherman. I visited his studio-house, situated at the district of Laayoune – one of the poorest neighbourhoods of the Medina – with Younès Rahmoun (Tétouanese artist), Carlos Marín Pérez (Ceutan architect) and Aymeric Ebrard (French artist also

²⁰ Larbi Rahhali has recently exhibited extensively within international group exhibitions, including: *Here and Elsewhere*, a major exhibition of contemporary art from and about the Arab World organised at the New Museum, New York (2014); *Before Our Eyes*, MACBA, Barcelona and *Sous nos yeux. Part 2*, Kunsthalle, Centre d'Art Contemporain Mulhouse (2013-14). Coincidentally, the artist had his first comprehensive solo exhibition at L'appartement 22 in Rabat in June 2015, which I visited during my second stay in Morocco.

resident at Dar Ben Jelloun that summer). Younès had previously told me about Larbi Rahhali's connection to Perejil Island, as for many years he sailed and fished in that area. The visit to his studio was very stimulating as we could see the objects that nourish his art works spread out, ready to be animated by the hands of the artist.

In the middle of the room were the little matchboxes in which he has recurrently painted miniature watercolour seascapes, maps and other daily motifs. There were hundreds of them already painted but also many others prepared and waiting to be worked on. It was a small workshop-like studio that Larbi Rahhali had organised recently, although, as he confided to us, those little matchboxes were no longer manufactured close by. Soon, Younès and I started to ask him some questions about his fishing work and about the islet. I was curious to hear about the current policing conditions of the waters that surround the island. But more precisely, I wanted to hear about something that so far had been just pure speculation for me: the arrival of sub-Saharan migrants on the island, of which I could find no visual reports. Larbi Rahhali responded affirmatively:

Yes, they arrive continually. They cross the sea on black inflated car inner tubes. However, they are simply expelled by the military police. No one is allowed on the island²¹ (Larbi Rahhali, in conversation, 20 June 2015).

1.3. History

Perejil Island has the peculiarity of still maintaining an uncertain status in respect to its own sovereignty. In fact, there is no unanimity of opinion on its legal status. The disagreement takes place between the countries that guard it, Morocco and Spain, and by extension within a broader international context; but also internally, at least in Spain, where different jurists and historians oscillate between the belief that the islet's sovereignty belongs to Morocco (De Madariaga 2002) or to Spain (Vilar 2002). However, other authors defend a completely different opinion concerning Perejil's sovereignty (García Flórez 2002 and Bermejo García 2002), reflected in the above mentioned secret agreement of the *Spirit of Barajas* reached in 1963, where the islet

²¹ Translated by the author.

was apparently to be considered a *terra nullius* (Bermejo García 2002). This is a legal status that affirms that while the island belongs neither to Spain nor to Morocco, both countries can have a permanent military or civil presence on the island (Bermejo García 2002).

There are some unclear issues concerning the content of the secret agreement of the *Spirit of Barajas*. In a more recent article by the scholar of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Seville, Ana Torres García, she brings to light the miscommunication that occurred between both countries at the time of this secret meeting. In her essay, she questions whether the *Spirit of Barajas* agreement was absolutely conclusive (Torres García 2013, 840). Re-examining the diplomatic documentation, the author approaches the tense internal situation in Morocco through the challenge of the recent liberation of Algeria and the *Sand War* of 1963 between both countries concerning their borders in the area of Tinduf and Béchar. In this context, the author stresses the recurrent insistence of Morocco for reaching an agreement with Spain in respect to a series of Moroccan territories still occupied after the end of the Protectorate: an agreement that in the diplomatic documents examined by the author seemed a priority for the internal stability of Morocco, but also for the whole international context in which the menace of a socialist Maghreb was also on the table (Torres García 2013, 839).

Torres García follows the innumerable meetings and exchanges between Spanish and Moroccan diplomats, ministers of foreign affairs and ultimately between King Hassan II of Morocco and the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco. However, these exchanges that started at least in 1960 and were initiated by Mohammed V (Moroccan sovereign until 1961) claimed the retreat of Spain from Sidi Ifni, the Sahara, and Ceuta and Melilla (Torres García 2013, 823). From these documents and press articles, the author demonstrates the persistent desire for agreement on the part of Morocco as opposed to the unexplained stagnation of Spain, which appeared to do its best to postpone all decisions concerning the Moroccan territorial concessions. The claims expressed by the Moroccan side in several correspondences, press articles and minutes of meetings before and after the *Spirit of Barajas* meeting make clear that the agreement was not decisive and remained inconclusive in terms of the legal organisation of the area. However, Torres García does not confirm that those points supposedly addressed in Barajas (and which Bermejo García argues in his earlier essay) were not in fact

addressed at all. As mentioned in the introduction, and according to Bermejo, these points were: 1. To end the Spanish occupation of Ifni; 2. To reach a solution for the Spanish Sahara; 3. Morocco to renounce Ceuta and Melilla forever; and 4. Perejil to be considered *terra nullius* (Bermejo García 2002). Nevertheless, something clearly arises, namely that ‘the climate of détente of that meeting opened a dialogue about the administration of the territorial dossier’²² (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi 2005, 406).

This is again another example of the contradictory landscape in which this rocky, uninhabited islet stands, where the sources constantly contradict each other, thus allowing its legal status to remain unclear.

The same contradictory terms appear when we approach the historical accounts of the islet. Within a historical perspective, some authors have claimed Spanish sovereignty of the islet through mythological references, historical theories and even Spanish military engineering plans for fortifying Perejil that were finally abandoned. What seems clear though is that this islet has an excellent geo-strategic position, as it is situated in the middle of the Gibraltar Strait, just 14 miles from Gibraltar, 8 miles from the nearest point of Spain and just 2 miles from Ceuta. However, the nearest point to the islet, as already mentioned, is the coast of Morocco at just 200 metres. Historical accounts refer to the intention to occupy the islet on the part of Portugal (16th century), Spain (17th and 18th centuries), England (19th century), USA (19th century), Morocco (19th century) and again Spain (19th century) (García Flórez 2002).

The first reported problem concerning the sovereignty of this islet is related to the Wad-Ras Treaty of 1860 (García Flórez *ibid*), where there is evidence of disagreement over a recurrent Spanish presence in the island. More contemporary arguments coming from Morocco arise from their claim that nothing was stated in the treaty for the Spanish Protectorate of 1912, so that with the end of the Protectorate in 1956, the islet was ‘missed out’, with both countries assuming sovereignty (García Flórez 2002). In effect, for Morocco the islet was decolonised whereas for Spain it retained the same status as

²² Translated by the author.

Ceuta and Melilla, i.e. one of the territories that did not pertain to the colonial period of the Protectorate and so continued being Spanish thereafter.

Within this unclear historical background, the 2002 incident – when the islet was occupied by six Moroccan navy cadets – opened once again the problem of its uncertain sovereignty. However, what seemed initially to be a direct diplomatic crisis between Spain and Morocco, within the rhetoric of terror established internationally after 11 September 2001 reached a global scope, even implying the return of the USA to the region²³ (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi 2005, 404).

The article ‘Una piedra en el camino de las relaciones hispano-marroquíes: la crisis del islote Perejil’ by Ana I. Planet Contreras and Miguel Hernando de Larramendi introduces the complexity of the incident. The authors situate the crisis of Perejil within the Moroccan refusal in 2001 to renew the fishing agreement with the European Union (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi 2005, 403). This refusal signalled a period of decline in international relations between Morocco and Spain, ending with numerous reproaches such as when 800 immigrants arrived on the Spanish coast and the Spanish minister of foreign affairs blamed the Moroccan government for its lack of control of the mafias managing ‘illegal immigration’. Morocco responded in kind, saying that the mafias also came from Spain (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi 2005, 414). However, these bilateral conflicts hide broader geopolitical concerns that were further exacerbated by the Perejil crisis. In fact, a new geo strategy map was drawn up within the context of these former Spanish colonial territories in the postcolonial era. This is the case for the Western Sahara, for example, but also the Canary Islands, since the American company Kerr MacGee and the French Elf had oil interests in the area (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi 2005, 416). Besides, other energy interests ran in parallel to these, for instance some coming from the European Union, which sought to maintain the energy cooperation established in the area since 1982. This included an electric interconnection through the Gibraltar Strait and the exploitation of the gas fields in Southern Algeria with a pipeline passing through Morocco and reaching Europe via Seville (Planet Contreras and Hernando de

²³ The USA took an interest in the islet for the first time in 1835 for the installation of a coal station. However, this intention was abandoned after pressure from Britain, who did not want anyone to establish a presence so close to Gibraltar (García Flórez 2002).

Larramendi 2005, 410). Other interests concerned future plans, such as those of the USA for establishing a Free Trade Zone in the Maghreb. With all these geo-economic interests at play, the Perejil crisis was, as the authors of the essay say, ‘a stone in the path’.²⁴

Morocco’s decision to occupy the islet of Perejil in 2002 was apparently approved by King Mohammed VI without the knowledge of Moroccan government. Spain mounted a military action against the occupation that later gained the approval of the European Union and the mediation of the USA for reaching a solution to the crisis (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi 2005, 425). On the other hand, Morocco got support from the Arab League, with the exception of Algeria that aligned with Spain claiming a *status quo* for the islet previous to the occupation (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi 2005, 427). The immediate crisis was finally ‘resolved’ in 2003, reinforcing the cooperation between both countries with the control of ‘illegal immigration’ through the creation of join-patrols, among other agreements (Planet Contreras and Hernando de Larramendi 2005, 430). However, the question of the sovereignty of Perejil still continues.

After all these events, the question, ‘what is sovereignty?’ gains particular importance, especially in the light of the fact that empty territories like Perejil represent sovereignty above the will of the people.²⁵ However, this void of sovereignty exemplified by Perejil suggests a double demand. On the one hand, with the awareness of a contemporary tendency of emptying the place of sovereignty by the political economy and on the other, with the potentiality of imagining a new definition of the notion of sovereignty, thus reinventing new modes of collective organisation. In sum, the question remains as to how this small island can inspire the imagination for new modes of self-governing²⁶, in other words, new collective experiences that do not follow the dictate of any

²⁴ This is in fact the title of the article: ‘Una piedra en el camino en las relaciones...’ (In English a stone in the path of the relationships...). Translated by the author.

²⁵ For a critical reading on the notion of the will of the people as an emancipatory process for collective self-determination, see (Hallward 2009, 17–29).

²⁶ This idea of self-governing can be related to some suggestions made by Eyal Weizmann in his conference lecture at the symposium entitled *Archipelagos of Exception. Sovereignities of Extraterritoriality* at CCCB, Barcelona, 2005. For example, when he makes a distinction between the moment in which the sovereign law gets deliberately suspended, allowing consequently the emergence of dangerous sites of biopolitics, and, on the contrary, the formation of self-governing societies that can even occur in this type of space. Weizmann sees in the later an opportunity for individuals to re-affirm their existence as political subjects (Weizmann, 2005).

instrumental use. The following part in this Chapter acknowledges how political economy governs not just territories, but also bodies and minds, objects and materials: anything caught within the multiple *dispositifs*.

1.4. Considerations Among the Notion of *Dispositif*

The relevance of the concept of *dispositif* in relation to the conceptual framework of this investigation comes from two distinctive fields. On the one hand, this concern arises from the attention paid to this notion by the field of my own professional practice, that is, the practice of curating exhibitions. On the other, it corresponds to the way it is considered within the study of borders as *dispositifs* of control as devices that influence the life conditions among bodies and objects, causing a confinement between the different divided parts. These two distinctive fields of research and practice join together in this thesis through the analysis of this term. This happens through the consideration of three different connotations of the term that, in fact, are interrelated. Firstly, the interpretation of *dispositif* as a network that establishes order and control between the elements (Foucault 1977, Deleuze 1988 and Agamben 2009). Secondly, the idea of understanding the techniques behind the *dispositifs* that mould, classify and reproduce subjectivity (Foucault 1977–1984, Deleuze 1988, Mezzadra and Rahola 2008, and Mezzadra with Casas, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2009). Finally, the intention of considering the *dispositif* in relation to the influence it exercises on the production of truth (Althusser 1970, Foucault 1982–1984).

If we consider critically these three connotations in relation to the notion of *dispositif* within the double perspective of curating and the study of the conflict zone of the borders between Europe and Africa, thought-provoking cross-reflections may emerge. For example, within curating, this could offer a critical reflection on the idea of interpreting the exhibition *dispositif* in terms of the network established between the exhibited objects. Consequently, it could entail thinking of the exhibition aside from repetitive protocols in order to allow other modes of agency between the objects and subjects implied in the process of its making (namely, the artworks, the texts that

accompany them, the furniture, etc, but also the artist/s, the curator/s, the spectators...) with the intention of exercising new collective processes of subjectivation towards the construction of meaning. In other words, considering the exhibition as a *dispositif* implies to reflect on the power relationships established between the subject, the object and truth.

In respect to understanding the border (or the *plazas* of sovereignty in the context of this research) as *dispositifs* of control that establish power relations between subjects, objects, etc, a critical concern may emerge against the classification through the law that begins to operate within the division between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’. This awareness could promote a critique that tries to search for other alternative collective processes of subjectivation that confront this abusive and hierarchical ordering.

1.4.1. Theoretical Context of the Term

In 1988, within the context of the international congress organised in Paris in January at the Michel Foucault Centre, Gilles Deleuze opened up the question of what a *dispositif* is, acknowledging that he believes it is still unanswered after Foucault’s death (Deleuze 1992).

In his essay, more than trying to tie the term *dispositif* to a fixed definition, something that Foucault also eluded, Deleuze focuses on the uncompleted reflections initiated by Foucault on the production of subjectivity that occurs within the *dispositifs*. For this, Deleuze starts his essay with a spatial approximation to the term, trying perhaps to acknowledge the methodologies of research that inspired Foucault to enquire about it. Deleuze argues:

There are lines of sedimentation, Foucault says, but also lines of “fissure” and “fracture”. Untangling the lines of an apparatus means, in each case, preparing a map, a cartography, a survey of unexplored lands – this is what he calls “field work” (Deleuze 1992, 159).

With this early proposition, Deleuze claims to approach the term *dispositif* as a cartographer would navigate unknown territories: that is, drawing a mental image out of the experience of the encounter with the term. This reference helps us to situate Deleuze's contribution to the concept of *dispositif* in respect to Foucault's work, thus establishing a difference in perspective between both authors, more concretely in the case of Foucault towards the idea of action and efficacy in the repression and control that the *dispositif* executes and of Deleuze towards the prevalence of the assemblages of desire over the assemblages of power (Lazzarato 2006, 78). Deleuze focuses his attention in the unexpected nature of the *dispositif*, claimed by Foucault, as a way of emphasising the way the *dispositif* works as a machine that makes one see and speak (Deleuze 1992, 160). In this sense, Deleuze's text places the question of the *dispositif* within the terrain of the virtual, in other words, in relation to the imagined and the desired, something that for the philosopher is also to be controlled by the apparatuses. This is made clear at the end of his contribution, when he offers a remark on the importance of the interviews in Foucault's work. For Deleuze, the reason for this is:

(...) not because he had a taste for them, but because in them he was able to trace these lines leading to the present which required a different form of expression from the lines which were drawn together in his major books. (Deleuze 1992, 166).

Following this remark, we should pay attention to the conversation that followed Deleuze's contribution at the congress, where, for example, he was asked about the notion of truth and truth-telling in Foucault's late works and if truth becomes an apparatus (*dispositif*) itself, or a dimension of all apparatuses (*dispositifs*). Outside his contributing essay, Deleuze's answers give us further important indications to interpret the *dispositif* as an ideological tool for producing meaning. Deleuze puts it this way:

For Foucault the truth has no universal nature. The truth designates the ensemble of the productions which come about inside an apparatus (*dispositif*). An apparatus comprises truths of enunciation, truths of light and visibility, truths of power, truths of subjectivation. Truth is the actualization of the lines which constitute an apparatus (Deleuze 1992, 166).

This comment draws attention to a very important purpose of the *dispositif*, the production of knowledge/power, in other words, the foundation of what becomes available to people as knowledge. However, this answer also leads us ‘towards a future, towards a becoming’, as he mentions later, in which ‘the underlying strata and the present day’ (Deleuze 1992, 164) are equally considered.

It is important to mention that the relationship between truth and the *dispositif* is suggested much earlier, in particular in the essay by Louis Althusser *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1970). There, Althusser develops a study of the reproduction of the conditions of capitalist production. In this context, he uses the expression of apparatus (*dispositif*) as an ideological conceptual device for reproducing such conditions. In the hypothesis that every ideology interpellates individuals as subjects, the philosopher alludes to the rituals of recognising ideology as an essential condition for the individual, concrete and irreplaceable subject. A trivial image of how a policeman interpellates an individual with a simple ‘Hey, you there’ is used by Althusser to point out the structures and systems that conform and reaffirm subjectivity through the ideological recognition of authority (through the repressive State apparatuses, as he calls them) over the individual. Moreover, Althusser proposes this production of subjectivity be located, not just within the public, but also within the private domain. In this sense, for the author, the family, the school, culture and media are also apparatuses that punish, select and discipline subjectivity in order to reproduce the structure of capitalist power.

Although, in a contemporary reading of this essay, we cannot avoid the specific philosophical and historical context from which it emerges (and therefore its resulting relationship of consent or rupture with other pertinent examples of critical thought coming out of the same post-war period), neither should we forget about actualising other new values and interpretative codes to unveil his ideas concerning the Ideological State Apparatuses. In fact, Althusser claims it as such:

The writing I am currently executing and the reading you are currently performing are also in this respect rituals of ideological recognition, including the “obviousness with which the ‘truth’ or ‘error’ of my reflections may impose

itself on you (Althusser 1971, 85).

In a footnote, the author also points out the double temporality that occurs between the writing and the reading of his text:

This double “currently” is one more proof of the fact that ideology is “eternal”, since these two “currentlys” are separated by an indefinite interval; I am writing these lines on 6 April 1969, you may read them at any subsequent time.
(Althusser *ibid*).

With these notions, Althusser seems to wish to demonstrate the impossibility for the subject to escape from the ideological apparatuses, as much as to draw attention to the specific conditions and the context in which the production of subjectivity occurs. Following this line of thought, we may understand that it is precisely through the materiality of time – the temporal correlation between the writing and the reading of the text, as Althusser suggests – that the specific conditions of each interpellation gets highlighted. Althusser states this idea through a performative act, that is, interpellating directly to us, the readers of his text, by making us enquire about our own specific ideological conditions of subjectivation. This is another way of claiming the importance of the present day, as Deleuze states in his essay. Something that may entail interpellating ourselves, perhaps, not any longer as workers of the Fordist capitalist model, as did the readers contemporary to the publication of Althusser’s text, but as citizens of our current, global, post-Fordist society.

Within our post-Fordist context, Giorgio Agamben wonders again about this simple question: ‘What is an Apparatus?’²⁷ In his essay of the same title, he proposes the term apparatus (*dispositif*), as a decisive technical term in the strategy of Foucault’s thought, and, more precisely, in relation to his work on governmentality or the government of men. Agamben reminds us of the fact that Foucault never used a complete definition of the term *dispositif* in his writing, however he extracts something close to a definition from the context of an interview with Foucault conducted by the editorial team of the

²⁷ The original title in Italian is *Che Cos'è Un Dispositivo?* Rome: Nottetempo, 2006. The English translation did not accept the word *dispositif*, which in fact does not exist, but as mentioned earlier, we have decided to employ it in the context of this research in order to emphasize the cross-reading between the references and authors.

psychoanalytical Journal *Ornicar*? in 1977, a year after the publication of *The History of Sexuality*.²⁸ Foucault says:

(...) I am trying to pick out (...) a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid. (...) I understand by the term ‘apparatus’ a sort of _shall we say_ formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an *urgent need*. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function (...), a certain manipulation of relations of forces, either developing them in a particular direction, or blocking them, stabilising them, and utilising them, etc. The apparatus is precisely thus always inscribed in a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain coordinates of knowledge which issue from it but, to an equal degree, condition it (Foucault 1980, 194-96).

Giving attention to the word ‘network’, Agamben points out how Foucault aimed to displace the interest from what he called the ‘universals’, i.e. the state, sovereignty, law, power... towards the processes that organise and control everyday life. Therefore, Agamben attempts to expand the power of the *dispositif* beyond the obvious uses proposed by Foucault, considering the *dispositif* to be not just the prison, the hospital, the confessional, but also, the pen, writing, literature, computers, mobile phones and language itself. However, it is interesting to mention that Agamben advises us (the readers and interpreters of his text) against using the term outside its own agenda, or beyond its urgency of controlling the subject and his/her own production. For the author, the only way to liberate that which has been captured and separated by means of the *dispositif* is by undoing the separations, the ordering that has been imposed on subjects and objects. In this way, things or elements may be brought ‘back to a possible common use’. (Agamben 2009, 17). Furthermore, we could also interpret this restitution of common use as a way of undoing the control of the production of meaning,

²⁸ In the first volumen of *The History of Sexuality*, the IV part is entitled in French as *Le dispositif de sexualité*, although in English this part loses that connotation when it appears translated as *The Deployment of Sexuality*. In this book, Foucault pays attention to the dynamics of control of the *dispositifs*, placing importance on sex, not just as a practice that should be examined in order to get access to the secrets of the private lives of individuals, but also as a target of control and a political issue.

reinstating the common processes of knowledge and production of truth.

Agamben attempts to resolve all these questions through another term: profanation, a term that originates in the sphere of Roman law and religion:

Profanation is the counter-apparatus that restores to common use what sacrifice has separated and divided (Agamben 2009, 19).

Agamben further expounds on this idea:

While “to consecrate” was the term that designated the removal of things from the sphere of human law, “to profanate” signified, on the contrary, to restore things to the free use for men (Agamben 2009, 17-18).

Agamben finally concludes that today’s proliferation of *dispositifs* coincides with the most docile and cowardly social body of all times. What is urgently needed, then, to control the proliferation of the *dispositifs* is, as Agamben suggests, the restitution of common use of what has been captured and separated by them. But as Agamben says, this cannot be carried out if:

(...) those who are concerned with this are unable to intervene in their own processes of subjectivation, any more than in their own apparatuses, in order to bring out into the light the Ungovernable, which is the beginning and, at the same time, the vanishing point of every politics (Agamben 2009, 24).

This final sentence that closes Agamben’s essay seems to suggest going deeper into the notion of government, but also of the ungovernable, as a form of resistance against the oppressive models of government. Foucault focuses specifically on the notion of government in his essay ‘Governmentality’ (2000), which he prepared for the course on *Security, Territory and Population* for the academic year of 1977-78 for the Collège de France. A text that is central to the ongoing philosophical debates concerning the notion of *dispositif*. Foucault’s essay begins with an inventory of older references extracted from a series of treatises from the middle 16th century to the end of the 18th addressing the idea of the ‘art of government’. The philosopher identifies, in the literature of this

genre, the introduction of economy in the ‘art of government’, drawing parallels between managing individual goods in the family and the governance of the state. For Foucault, this is an ‘essential issue in the establishment of the “art of government” – the introduction of economy into political practice’ (Foucault 2000, 207). Within this particular approach, Foucault understands that to govern means to govern things, in the sense of applying a definite ordering.

What we learn from Foucault’s ‘Governmentality’ is that the notion emerges out of a crisis of sovereignty, in which the practices of governing are progressively more autonomous from the juridical framework of the sovereign. Even though in Foucault’s text, the shift between the classical concept of sovereignty to the notion of the ‘art of government’ and from there to the idea of governmentality is made clear as a progression, he reminds us that:

(...) we need to see things not in terms of the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a society of government; in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism the apparatuses of security (Foucault 2000, 219).

In his final two courses at the Collège de France entitled *The Government of Self and Others* (2010) and *The Courage of Truth* (2011) between 1982 and 1984, Michel Foucault addresses specifically the act of truth-telling as a form of resistance against the disciplinary practices of the *dispositifs*. An example of this is a particular ancient practice known as *parrhesia*, a practice of free speech that the philosopher interprets as the attitude or will of not being governed or not being governed in certain ways. Foucault introduces this notion, taking in consideration that through history *parrhesia* has had a bad reputation. However, he points to a positive interpretation of the term. He explains:

Parrhesia consists in telling the truth without concealment, reserve, empty manner of speech, or rhetorical ornament which might encode or hide it. “Telling all” is then: telling the truth without hiding any part of it, without

hiding it behind anything. (...) For there to be *parrhesia*, (...) the subject must be taking some kind of risk (in speaking) this truth which he signs as his opinion, his thought, his belief, a risk which concerns his relationship with the person to whom he is speaking (Foucault 2011, 10-11).

So, from a wider perspective, we can see how the concept of governmentality is expressed as a confrontation with the notion of self-government. Deviating from the study of this notion in relation to the act of truth telling, the philosopher examines Greek citizenship and the way this practice served as an ethical foundation for democracy. The content of his lectures in these courses gives us a view of the potentialities that Foucault envisions in the practice of *parrhesia* or free speech. Thus, we can see Foucault's reflection on the practice of *parrhesia* as a possible critique on the control that the *dispositifs* impose on the production of truth. In this respect, free speech or the practice of *parrhesia* seems to be suggested as a resistance towards the art of being governed. However, this public truth telling shouldn't be interpreted as fixing the truth to definitive statements or declarations. Quite the contrary, in line with Foucault's proposal, this courage of public telling should be seen as a way of expressing the desire of not being governed under certain rules. Therefore, the practice that Foucault extracts from Ancient Greek society seems to be placed between the act of being governed by others and the potentialities of being self-governed. In short, it suggests an ungovernable form against the oppressive manners of governance, that is to say, a way of restoring the common project of democracy when this seems to be abused. Following this logic, to see the courage of truth telling as an ungovernable form of resistance could imply projecting this production of truth beyond hierarchical processes.

All these final arguments by Foucault should be read in line with Deleuze's urgency of bringing the future into the present tense, the becoming into analysis of the current *dispositifs*. In other words, the desire of being governed by other ways implies making room for a possible counter-*dispositif*.

We can abstract relevant ideas out of the philosophical trajectory of the term *dispositif* that have influenced the study of the Spanish enclaves in the context of this investigation and more concretely the islet of Perejil. Firstly, one of these concerns has to do with Deleuze's proposal of approaching each *dispositif* in cartographic terms,

however, not just with the intention of allowing a mental map to emerge out of it, but also of establishing a direct connection through the development of fieldwork. This suggestion has influenced greatly the potentialities of the curatorial practice that accompanies this investigation. Secondly, another concern refers back to how Deleuze and Althusser claim analysing the *dispositif* from its own context of influence, in other words, from its own present conditions. This consideration has led me to highlight the importance of introducing the current context of Perejil Island, mainly due to the fact that little information about this islet is available and when it comes to the control of migration the everyday reality of the surroundings of the island is treated with silence and neglect. Thirdly, another relevant issue that can be abstracted from the theoretical approach to the term is related to the crisis of sovereignty that Foucault points out with his term of governmentality. This makes him focus on the relevance of the *dispositifs* in the act of governing. The notion of sovereignty is also key in the context of this investigation, mostly regarding the fact of the name of the Spanish enclaves (*plazas de soberanía*). Besides, the ambiguous status of the enclaves and more concretely the uncertain legal status of Perejil seems to be a good model for understanding what Foucault claims to be in crisis, that is to say, the potentiality of allowing other modes of governing that do not necessarily establish an economic profit. Lately, Deleuze's focusing on the imagined, the desired when considering the logics of control of the *dispositif*, has influenced the intention of the curatorial project produced for the research – a freeing desire that is proposed in this context as a free speech within the framework of the project *Dispositifs of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Time of Expanded Borders*.

1.4.2. In Relation to the Control of the Flux of Migration

The notion of sovereignty implicit in the name of the Spanish enclaves on the Northern coast of Morocco functions as a key term in the context of today's control of migration. This connects with the centrality of the act of governing, as we have just seen, within the conceptual trajectory that defines the notion of *dispositif*. Sandro Mezzadra specifically discusses this term with geographers John Pickles and Sebastian

Cobarrubias and anthropologist Maribel Casas in relation to the changing role of sovereignty and the emerging of new forms of governing subjects in motion through different current policies of migration management executed today in Africa by European and international organs, an approach that is no longer based on the model of the nation state's control of borders, but on a global model of monitoring a bigger topography (Casas, Cobarrubias and Pickles 2011, 584-98). In line with this, Mezzadra's proposition tries to bring some light onto how an unequal social geography correlates to an uneven temporal reality between the coloniser and the colonised. However, as Mezzadra and Rahola claim when the *dispositifs* of domination, originally forged in the context of the colonial experience, filter into the metropolitan spaces, we find ourselves in a postcolonial time (Mezzadra and Rahola 2008, 265). In this respect, the *plazas* of sovereignty are clear examples of unregulated territories that attempt to transfer colonial legacies into our contemporary world. The abuses are now produced at the level of defining, modelling and classifying citizenship in the name of its actual absent presence.

But, what is the meaning of 'post' in the term postcolonial? Why are we still obsessed with the time frame of the colonies? Like Sandro Mezzadra and Federico Rahola, we may wonder about the way in which time gets organised by capitalist abstraction. With these questions, the authors seem to suggest the need to interpret the colonial *dispositifs*, not just in terms of the control of space, but also in terms of the regulation of time. This logic, which echoes different theoretical accounts (Appadurai 1996, Ginzburg 1999 and Chakrabarty 2000),²⁹ proposes that 'the real abstraction of capital has imposed its dominance, arranging those times at first, through colonialism, in a succession of stages, and then, in the postcolonial present, violently synchronising them' (Mezzadra and Rahola 2008, 275). This reflection tries to track the inequalities produced by colonialism through time.³⁰ Following this logic, arguments related to the urgency of

²⁹ The authors directly refer to the work of Arjun Appadurai: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis and London: 1996), Carlo Ginzburg's *Clue: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm* (Baltimore: 1999) and Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincialising Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (New Jersey: 2000). However, it is also worth mentioning the work of Slovenian philosopher Bojana Kunst who is developing a very thoughtful critical approach to the notion of time regarding work and precarity within performance and artistic practices (see for example, Kunst 2010, 132-134).

³⁰ This way of understanding the temporal imbalance between the colonies and modern-day colonial nations parallels the empowered denunciation of inequality by prominent anti-colonial figures. Thus, the authors highlight the empowerment received by the denunciation of inequality between the colonies and

reappropriating time by different contemporary authors³¹ gain a special relevance here, not just in relation to the consideration of time as much as space when trying to understand the techniques behind the *dispositifs* that hold and produce our subjectivities, but also to deciphering the abstract and universalising conditions of the global present in which we all live.

The contexts that Mezzadra and Rahola refer to take place behind the borders, that is, outside their physical construction, through their own dematerialisation across the landscape. In connection to this idea, authors Casas, Cobarrubias and Pickles have explored the Spanish management of the border in Northern and Western Africa, focusing on the roles executed by the Spanish Ministry of Interior as well as agents of international cooperation in changing traditional border policies. In their essay 'Stretching Borders Beyond Sovereign Territories? Mapping EU and Spain's Border Externalization Policies' (2011), they introduce how this change uses a global approach towards the idea of territory. In this new operative context, control is not wielded exclusively within border areas, but also throughout migration routes, thus establishing a new classification between countries of departure, transit and arrival. Within this new meta-cartography, concepts such as routes, itineraries, neighbours, friends, enemies, community, collaboration, sovereignty, nation state, border, externalisation, deterritorialisation, etc are subject to redefinition.

The *plazas* of sovereignty, as much as Perejil Island, belong to this new cartography of border externalisation where control happens outside the customs and therefore reaches unexpected moments within the life sphere. This idea is in line with Agamben's suggestion of considering the *dispositifs* no longer as physical institutions of control like the prison, the hospital, the confessional, but also writing, philosophy and language itself. Something that makes us think that the *dispositifs* operate through our own bodies, creating division and separation from within. In other words, we can argue that the *dispositif* operates within the very same place where individuation occurs,

the metropolis by anti-colonial protagonists such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Patrice Lumumba, or C.L.R. James.

³¹ A complementary reading to Sandro Mezzadra and Federico Rahola's text could be Jean-Luc Nancy's 'War, Right, Sovereignty-Techne', where he explicitly claims that 'it is time to appropriate one's own time', implying thus an urgent reflection on how to think, act and do without a model after the event of the first Gulf War which introduced the technologies of global war and what he calls 'the regime of sovereignty without sovereignty'. (Nancy 2000, 142).

controlling meaning, knowledge and desire, sanctioning all that puts the general order at risk.

The border acts thus within the physical devices, but also within our own bodies, leaving indeterminate zones of control, as with Perejil, where, as we have previously seen, the protocols of securing the migration flux apparently get suspended. In the same way, the knowledge, sense and desire that constitute us produce equally indeterminate zones, something that later gets established by the law as truth, thus suspending the citizenship of those who put at risk the general order.

Following this argument, we can suggest that Perejil is also a *dispositif* that holds within it lines of sedimentation as well as lines of fissures and fractures: however, due to its restricted accessibility, preparing a cartography out of this apparatus entails an exercise of speculation.

1.4.3. In Relation to Curatorial Practice

Considering the exhibition in terms of *dispositif* entails revising the mechanics of a spatial manifestation crucial to late modernism: the white cube.

The white cube, this space where windows have been obliterated, walls whitened, floors polished and where light source is placed on the ceiling, exemplifies the process of isolating art exhibition spaces from the outside world. This separation of the exhibition space has privileged the aesthetisation of the formal qualities of life in its transference to the art object. However, as Brian O'Doherty suggests, it is precisely the confinement of the exhibition space to that modern canon, the actual trigger for a body of reflexivity around the work of art and its public exhibiting constraints (O'Doherty 1999). In fact, this is the context from which we could say curating arose as a critical practice capable of projecting creative modes of exhibition making that in turn were able to contest the limits of that modern canonical space. In this respect, the debates and artistic practices, that since the 1960s have taken place as a critical response to the white cube, struggle to

break with the supposed neutrality of the exhibition space. In this guise, the critique that has emerged since the irruption of the white cube should still claim a rupture with the bourgeois ideology implicit in the neutral form that shapes its spatial form. However, the fact is that time and again, its qualities, whiteness and silence, attempt to erase the evolution of that struggle. For this reason, curatorial practices should allow a creative disruption of the procedures that constrain the artistic experience within the limits of the white cube: in other words, they should imply a process of actualisation of all those qualities of the work of art discarded by bourgeois rhetoric.

Besides the spatial characteristics of the white cube, the exhibition can also be interpreted in terms of a *dispositif*. This entails: firstly, understanding the exhibition as a network that establishes order and control between different elements; secondly, as an apparatus or set of rules that regulates, classifies and produces subjectivity within its physical parameters; and, thirdly, as a device that influences the production of meaning, thus determining what prevails and what does not – in other words, what becomes true and what does not. According to this, seeing the exhibition as a *dispositif* means we must question ourselves about the relationship between object, subject and truth, about the protocols that get into work inside the exhibition in respect to the agency between objects and subjects. This implies going back again to thinking about the *dispositif* in relation to the process of subjectivation, but activating in this case a critical reflexivity towards curatorial practice. In the case of this specific research, the attention of this self-analysis is not just to alight exclusively on the matters of curating, as for example on the practice of exhibition making, but also on other curatorial endeavours, for example, the production of curatorial research. In this sense, this self-criticality³² should entail reassessing the position of the researcher and curator beyond the already existing institutionalised limits of the practice of curating. The curatorial project that accompanies this research has then focused on the possibility of activating a public truth telling, meaning the production of truth as a wandering collective practice, rather than as a fixed and regulated exercise. In other words, it has put to work a process that is constructed out of non-hierarchical ways of exchanging knowledge, affections and

³² I would like to borrow here the notion of criticality that Irit Rogoff introduces in her essay entitled 'From Criticism to Critique to Criticality' in order to point out, as she suggests, the recognition of "not just our own imbrication in the object or the cultural moment, but also the performative nature of any action or stance we might be taking in relation to it" (Rogoff 2003).

desires. Following this idea, my interest has lain in suggesting the *plazas* of sovereignty and more concretely the indeterminate site of Perejil Island as a potential self-governing public sphere, where truth is produced through the aspiration of instituting a common free telling. A space offered for free speculation that emerges from the crossover between texts and documents coming from diverse types of sources, but also from life experiences and artistic practices.

1.5. Speculating on the Term *Dispositif* in the Context of this Research

1.5.1. The Work of Xabier Salaberria

As we have already seen, the concept of *dispositif* is introduced in this Chapter as a conceptual lens to allow an understanding of the opaque legal status and operative role of Perejil Island in the context of today's management of migration in the Gibraltar Strait. As already mentioned too, this concept was the first notion to be introduced in the reading group *Dispositifs of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Time of Expanded Borders*³³ at Trankat. In fact, for the first session on 13 April, the term *dispositif* was worked through Gilles Deleuze's text 'What is a Dispositif?' and a selection of works by Basque artist Xabier Salaberria, which, in my opinion, offered to bring new interpretations to the notion of *dispositif* in connection to the device of the exhibition and furthermore in connection to the islet of Perejil. In this sense, Deleuze's text and Salaberria's works didn't fight against each other when it came to establish their own competencies, but both added or argued differently, creating an in-between space and an opportunity for being together, in sum, an experience to be shared around relevant concerns related to this research. In other words, the works helped to create a temporary working ground from where to study, reflect and exchange ideas regarding the concept of *dispositif*.

³³ An introductory session preceded this first reading where Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* was worked through together with some past examples of artistic transformations and interventions in the exhibition space.

The idea of recalling now these working sessions through the act of ‘speculating’ is inspired by the work of Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, who in a conversation with Stevphen Shukaitis discuss the idea of study as something that is done with other people (Harney and Moten 2013, 100-60). For the authors, a speculative practice involves ‘a study in movement, a study that takes place between bodies, across space, across things’ (Harney and Moten 2013, 118). Following this suggestive idea, I will now try to reconstruct the speculative experience that took place between the presentation of some works by Salaberria and the collective reading of Deleuze’s text.³⁴

I will describe two of the works Salaberria presented in the reading session, because I consider them very relevant when trying to consider the term *dispositif* within this research. The first work presented was a permanent intervention by the artist produced in 2002 for the garden of Arteleku³⁵ in Donostia-San Sebastián. This is a concrete platform of 40 cm high and 9 x 6 m width³⁶ that stands ambiguously ‘as a piece of street furniture, a pedestal for a monument yet to come, or the concrete foundation of a small building’ (Jaio 2013, 98). In spite of the indeterminacy of its own character, that oscillates between ‘an anti-monument, an unfinished work or a leftover ruin’ (Jaio 2013, 99) and the lack of an apparent functionality, being ‘too low and broad to serve as a bench’ (Jaio 2013, 99), this construction establishes a site for a becoming, a space that is opened for setting up fortuitous relations and uses. In sum, the platform simply offers a space for staying without any purpose or a device with an undefined functionality that could trigger multiple imagined possibilities.

³⁴ All the reading sessions were recorded and for their reconstruction I have made use of these sound documents.

³⁵ Arteleku was an art centre initiated by the local government of the Province of Gipuzkoa in 1987 (in the middle of the period of the Spanish transition to democracy after Franco’s dictatorship) and which ended its activity in 2014. It was mainly dedicated to foster art education through the organisation of artists’ residencies, workshops, seminars and lectures led by artists, curators, critics and contemporary thinkers. Along its history, Arteleku maintained a live dynamic between the local and international artistic scenes, allowing a vivid exchange between art professionals, students and young artists at a micro and macro level. Arteleku offered studios, but also wood and metal workshops for the production of sculpture, silk-screen printing or video editing, among other facilities. Furthermore, the institution also had a library and provided a place to meet and work without constraints. Apart from all this, it dedicated much effort to editing the journal *Zehar* that became a reference in Spain and beyond.

³⁶ This work still exists today, but it will finally disappear as the building and surroundings of Arteleku are to be demolished for the construction of residential housing.



Illustration 2. Platform in the Garden of Arteleku, Donostia-San Sebastián, 2002. Xabier Salaberria.

The context of the production of this work had to do with the refurbishment of Arteleku's building in 2002, which coincided with the aim of redefining the institution following a specific concern that understood certain current processes of dematerialisation of the artistic production as an answer to, or consequence of, the neoliberal economical model of late capitalism. Within this belief, the institution searched for a new definition of the space that could allow other uses apart from the production of art objects and finished works. For the refurbishment, the director, Santiago Eraso, invited not just architects but also artists³⁷ to intervene in the renovation, thus adding two layers – one architectural, the other artistic – to the renewal of the building and its surroundings. Salaberria was invited to intervene in the garden and to collaborate with young architects Alex Mitxelena and Ibon Salaberria, who were commissioned to design an adjacent piece of land that belonged to the building.

I have personal memories of the building, the garden and Salaberria's platform, since at that time, together with Basque art critic and curator Peio Aguirre, I ran the independent

³⁷ All the artists' interventions were inscribed within the initiative of Basque artist Ibon Aranberri who entitled the operation *Garai Txarrak* (in Basque Bad Times).

artistic production project called DAE, which maintained a very close collaboration with Arteleku. I remember going to the platform many times, to have lunch there, to discuss issues concerning our ongoing work and the current situation of the local and international art scene in the years close to the opening of Manifesta 5 in Donostia-San Sebastián. In fact, the platform was a resource for us to think and see things from new angles, a space from which to interrupt daily dynamics or throw up ideas for future projects. Finally, this recurrent use led to us employing the platform for a collective experience, since we ended up using Salaberria's work as a spontaneous site for meeting and discussing within the context of the workshop entitled *We Rule the School: A Community of Investigation*³⁸ that we organised at Arteleku in 2005.

That time has now passed and I have not visited this work for years. Yet I still recall its raw formal structure as a metaphor for the ephemeral conditions needed to allow the formation of an institution. The platform becomes an image of the skeleton of what could be a site for a project to come, the foundation of a possible counter-*dispositif* capable of instituting new forms of common agency through the desire that emanates from simply being there without a predetermined purpose. As a consequence, the platform marks the space with a demand, that is, the need for activating our own imagination when it comes to establishing alternative instituting forms.”

³⁸ The workshop was defined within the parameters of theory and practice and was addressed to artists, critics and curators interested in reflecting on contemporary artistic production and research. The desire for configuring a community of investigation around artistic concerns was the main purpose of this educative experience. For that, we proposed to consider the experience of living together during the duration of the workshop, in total two weeks and the exchange of knowledge as the main foundations to allow that community to take place. The workshop was configured out of a group of 15 people that functioned mostly through private sessions, but it also had public moments where international artists and curators were invited to give lectures and work with the group.



Illustration 3. Replica Spanish Republic Pavilion, Barcelona, 2011. Photo by Manolo Laguillo.

The other work that was introduced in the session with Salaberria at Trankat corresponds to a large project and installation that was presented in several exhibition contexts in 2011 and 2012. The project entitled *Inkontziente/Kontziente* (Unconscious/Conscious) contains a series of works that through a dialectical crossover between sculpture and design analyses the ideological implications of some formal gestures coming out of modernism and postmodernism. However, I will just focus on a specific work of this installation since I consider it the most relevant for this research. In this project, Salaberria points to design as a specific ‘material waste of the dominant ideologies of each historical period’³⁹ (Aguirre 2011). This installation work tries to look carefully at every constructive detail of some past sculptural works, designed pieces and landmark constructions in order to expose the ideological investment behind each formal decision. One of these constructive references is the Spanish Republican Pavilion designed by the Spanish architects Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa in 1937 for the International Exposition in Paris. Salaberria makes reference to this construction through a series of colour photographs made for the occasion by the Spanish professional photographer based in Barcelona, Manolo Laguillo, who was asked by

³⁹ Translated by the author.

Salaberria to document the replica of the pavilion constructed in 1992 for the celebration of the Olympic Games in Barcelona.

This replica was in fact built out of an architectural operation that the city of Barcelona decided to embark upon after the tourist success of the reconstruction of the Barcelona Pavilion, the emblematic work by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe for the German national pavilion for the Barcelona International Exposition of 1929. The original construction was torn down in 1930 and a replica built on the original site in the 1980s by the City Council. Searching for a similar tourist effect, the city of Barcelona decided to reconstruct the Spanish Republic Pavilion on a delocalised site within the Olympic Village, a reconstruction that fell into oblivion soon after being built and later became a local community centre and library. Salaberria decided to work with the replica in order to examine how architecture has represented national identity and, more concretely, how this representation puts into play nation-state awareness through the medium of the exhibition. Anachronism plays also an important role in this work, which allows placing this examination through different constructive devices exercised across modernism and postmodernism.

The Spanish Pavilion was in fact a commissioned work made for the Spanish Republican government by the architects Sert and Lacasa, who were already relevant figures within Spanish modern architecture.⁴⁰ This commission in the context of the 1937 Universal Exposition in Paris aimed to expose the difficult moment that the country was living through, being immersed in the Civil War (Sambricio 2014, 61-80). In this sense, the pavilion was projected as the needed device for denouncing publicly the atrocities of the war against civilians and thus becoming a symbol of the Republican resistance against fascism during the war. Constructively speaking, the Republican Pavilion became soon a landmark, even though it was much more precarious and modest than the ambitious constructions of the two big social and economic systems of the time, the Pavilion of Nazi Germany (for which Albert Speer won a prize) and the Russian Pavilion. Therefore, the building later became a historical reference, considered

⁴⁰ In the case of Luis Lacasa, he was one of the professionals who introduced the rationalist movement into Spain, while Josep Lluís Sert was co-founder of GATEPAC (Grupo de Arquitectos y Técnicos Españoles para el Progreso de la Arquitectura Contemporánea/ Group of Spanish Architects and Experts for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture), which in the 1930s brought together the supporters of modern architecture and tried to connect Spanish architecture with the concerns of the international movement in searching for a new definition for architecture and urbanism.

to be an example of good architecture executed under the precarious conditions of a state of emergency and also one of the first models of prefabricated architectures in history (Sambricio 2014, 61-80). Furthermore, the Spanish pavilion is also well known today as the venue in which the Picasso's *Guernica* was shown for the first time. Going through the documentation of the original pavilion, one can see that the building was designed for exhibiting art works, but also for hosting public events and film screenings. This is a detail that gives us some keys concerning the exhibitory mechanism of the pavilion that made public the Republican concerns through a sophisticated exhibitory apparatus within this historical moment.

With his work, Salaberria aims to expose the constructive logics of the 1937 pavilion, but also the anachronistic presence of its postmodern replica in Barcelona, which unexpectedly offers the viewer new information about the original construction such as the colours and the texture of the materials, which were imperceptible in the black-and-white documenting photographs. However, he draws some distance between the pavilion and himself, commissioning Laguillo, a professional documentary photographer, to photograph the replica building, following some precepts given by the artist. The resulting images, 12 in total, turned out iconic, but strangely anachronistic too, pointing at the same time to a model of exhibiting in the past within a highly political framework. This interest is also materialised within the structural system of hanging that Salaberria designs for the photographs and that consists of several panels that detach themselves from the wall through an iron stand.



Illustration 4. *Inkontziente/Kontziente* at GfZK Leipzig, 2011-2012. Xabier Salaberria.

This is a system of display that Salaberria designed for exhibiting the images of Laguillo and which establishes a formal connection with ‘the panelling systems devised by the founder of “documenta”, Arnold Bode in the mid-to-late-1950s, a prototypical modernist solution for the development of the exhibition as a medium itself’⁴¹ (Aguirre 2011). Highlighting the gesture of exhibiting some images that the artist has not taken himself, the purpose of authorship becomes unclear in this work by Salaberria, which in fact gives equal importance to the photographic content and the way it is exhibited publicly. Salaberria’s system is not simply a formal repetition of Bode’s design, it is again a strategy of signalling a past form of exhibition making, though with a certain degree of unconsciousness. This repetition makes visible the waste of a formal vocabulary that made possible the configuring of the exhibition as a modern apparatus.

⁴¹ Translated by the author.

1.5.2. A Reading Session on the Notion of *Dispositif* with Xabier Salaberria at Trankat, Tétouan

The following draws on the audio recording of the session:

By the time Salaberria finishes his presentation, we have to switch on the lights because the room is getting darker. I then explain the mechanics of the reading group, emphasising that we will openly discuss the text selected for each session, trying not to generate hierarchies between the ones who know more or less about it. I also propose that each session will require a volunteer who will produce a chronicle of the discussion. However, on some occasions, exercises for writing could be proposed instead in order to generate a collective report out of the session. This time, Mariam proposes herself as volunteer.

I suggest then going into Deleuze's text and open the dialogue in the group, but Samuel, one of the participants, proposes to do this on the roof of Dar Ben Jelloun. We all agree. We take the sound recorder with us, even though it is a windy day and the conditions for recording are not particularly good.

Several months later, the sound of the wind and of the narrow streets of the Medina interrupt my listening to the session, but despite that it helps me to reconstruct this experience. The discussion opens with questions and comments on the text and the works of Salaberria. The participants⁴² are quiet and shy at the beginning. They mention the difficulty of the text and they excuse their own lack of awareness of the term proposed for the session. I decide to ask everybody about their own experience reading it and the conversation starts to flow. I also confess then that I have read this text many times already and there are still things I don't understand and that is why I really like reading groups, because you can receive the help of others in order to understand a difficult text better. Then Samuel brings up an idea:

⁴² The group was composed of young Moroccan Fine Arts students and Architecture students (among them: Yasmina Temsamani, Ihsane Chetuan, Ouissame Elasri, Lamiae Arjafallah, Ferdaoussi Jihane, Houari Hassan, Harmouch Farah, Rim Balafrej and Oumaima Elkharraz), but also of Elliot Brooks, a Fulbright scholar in Art History from USA, Samuel Braikeh, a French artist who lived temporarily in Tangier, Wiame Haddad, a French-Moroccan artist who was at Dar Ben Jelloun invited by the French Institute and a few young local artists like Mariam Souali.

Can we read now?

We decide then to read aloud together, there in the roof, and we start from the discussion part, sharing among the group the six voices that appear in the text: those of Michel Karkeits, Gilles Deleuze, Manfred Frank, Raymond Bellour, Walter Seitter and Fati Triki. We start reading aloud and it works. Soon there are interruptions from those wanting to go deeper into what has just been read, like when Samuel again suggests going back to the notion of truth. He understands from the text that truth is everywhere, but he wonders about what kind of truth is that. Besides, he wants to know how this notion of truth functions in the work of Xabier Salaberria, specifically in relation to the photographs of the replica of the Spanish Pavilion and the photographs of the original one. He suggests that truth telling can be also understood as a truth lying, like the photograph of the replica, which becomes as iconic as the original images, even though the image tries to do something else. Photography can be also an apparatus, we all agree. We abandon ourselves into that argument, forgetting the text we were reading. Suddenly, prayers interrupt our conversation. We are sitting on the roof of Dar Ben Jelloun, which is very close to Jamaa El Kebir (the big mosque) and the sound is really loud. We have to stop and wait for the prayers to finish, as it is not possible to hear our own voices.

This moment of silence in the group encourages me to think about the lingua franca of the session. We are using English this time, but I am not sure if this is correct. We have failed to find the text of Deleuze in French on the Internet. The level of English varies. Most of them understand it, but when it comes to reading a theoretical text in English, it proves difficult for most of them. However, I appreciate the effort and the interest everybody is showing when it comes to following the discussion. I wonder if we should use any other language in the session. The students who come from the region of the Rif speak Spanish, the rest, who come from other cities from the west or south, speak French. I like this moment of silence in the group.

As soon as the prayers finish, our conversation starts again spontaneously. The discussion through the reading now prompts us to talk about subjectivity in respect to the subject, and what is subjectivity in respect to objectivity. The idea of becoming, of

what becomes out of light, as in the example of Manet, that Deleuze poses opens new spaces within the conversation. I bring the question of light and of what becomes out of light with respect to the white cube, the notion I introduced earlier to the group through Brian O'Doherty's essay. I make then a correlation between the white cube and the black box of the theatre. In the black box, I said, things appear from the darkness into the light and become visible. Contrary to this, in the white cube, everything remains over exposed; however this bright over exposition ends up also erasing important traces from the past and turning them invisible.

The physical is the threshold of that which is visible and that which can be stated. There is nothing given in an apparatus which can be taken to be in some kind of raw state (Deleuze 1992, 167).

We read these couple of phrases several times. We conclude our reading with the last intervention of Deleuze, which in fact makes all of us laugh, when Samuel refers to Deleuze's last intervention with an oriental twist. According to the transcription, Gilles Deleuze replies:

(...) for a long time Foucault limited his method to short sequences in French history. But in his latter books he envisaged longer sequences, starting with the Greeks. Could the same extension be made geographically? Could methods analogous to those of Foucault be used to study oriental social apparatuses (*dispositifs*) or those of the Middle East? Certainly so, since Foucault's language (*langage*), which sees things in terms of parcels of lines, as entanglements, as multilinear ensembles, does have an oriental feel to it (Deleuze 1992, 168).

The circular urban outline of the Medina of Tetouán then enters the discussion as an example of a non-Western city plan. I also refer to an image that I found that same week in the library of the French Institute in Tétouan in a book about the modern urbanisation of Casablanca since the French Protectorate. This is an image that shows the display of a colonial exhibition in Marseille in 1922.

The exhibition introduces a series of urban maps and aerial photographs of the urban development of Casablanca undertaken during those early years of the French

Protectorate. The photographs and documents are shown within the logics of a display layout that follows the same structure employed in the Exhibition Salons of the previous years. All the images conform to a skin or surface against the wall, in which few parts of the wall are visible. Once again, like in the work *Inkontziente/Kontziente* by Salaberria, content and container communicate the same message. The content and the medium showed the rectilinear plan of the Western canon.

We leave it here. In total, we have discussed for an hour and a half.

1.5.3. Documentary Materials by Xabier Salaberria on Perejil Island

As mentioned before, besides Salaberria's reading session at Dar Ben Jelloun, I also invited him to produce some documentation on Perejil Island. For that, all the work and the conversations we had in preparation for the session helped us to configure a conceptual framework for approaching the islet.

We didn't develop the slides Salaberria took on 11 April from the cliffs facing Perejil until we arrived back home. In the end, most of them were quite good. We felt relieved.

Two of the slides have been selected for the appendices section of this thesis. Both images propose a visual game between figure and background. The first image shows Perejil in focus in the background, making the little piece of land on which we are standing out of focus. The second employs the contrary effect. The land from which the photo has been taken is now in focus and the islet out of focus. The first image shows the islet as its central object, a view that almost resembles an illustration out of some geography book or magazine. The second image blurs this intention, giving as a first reference the site from which the vista is constructed. There is also something interesting that comes from the relationship between both images, the way they visually connect island and mainland. In this sense, the island stands in its own ambiguous sovereign status, strangely representing the European fortified border. However, its untouched look seems also to invite a new colonisation, an imagined settlement for

activating its own full potency of being a no man's land. On the contrary side, the small piece of mainland corresponds to an African country, Morocco, quite involved also, as we will see in the following Chapters, in the control of the European borders established on its coasts. Xabier Salaberria proposes both locations as equally relevant, through shifting the viewer's attention between figure and background, focusing and unfocusing any point of stable reference. Thus claiming that the *dispositif* may be contained by a well-defined construction or setting, but also dematerialised in many other ephemeral forms that sustain our own everyday life.

1.6. Conclusion

In this Chapter, we have navigated the unknown territory of Perejil thanks to a cartographic map composed of life experiences, historical accounts, theoretical references, speculative collective readings and various art works. The notion of *dispositif* has guided us across this scattered cartography full of multiple lines of fractures and fissures. Besides, the *dispositif* has drawn attention to this mental map in terms of fieldwork, establishing a direct connection with the present conditions of the object of study. In the specific context of the islet of Perejil, those present circumstances reveal the fractures, as for example, the many silenced incidents due to the opaque procedures for the control of migration conducted outside the law. We have also proposed Perejil's uncertain legal status in connection to the potentiality for activating other modes of self-governing, an imagined one, capable of dismantling the control that moulds our subjectivity. We have also shared the collective experience of the first session of the reading group that pertains to the curatorial project produced for this research. This has been introduced as a collective exercise of speculation where theory and (artistic) practice have been offered to allow possible ways of freeing our desire. Within this speculative approach a space of collective study emerges in respect to the Spanish strongholds, a series of territories hardly spoken of or discussed critically. Thus, the methodology of the reading group is tested and established within the research as a curatorial tool to develop within this collective study space. Besides, the site visit to Perejil offers also a curatorial *modus operandi* that will be implemented for each

island. Accounts of the visits also provide materials to the knowledge production gathered within the context of study. In this respect, the Chapter introduces the first documentary material produced specifically within the process of research. In this case, Basque artist Xabier Salaberria has contributed with some documentation of Perejil Island that can be found in the appendices section.

Chapter 2. Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera: touching

2.1. Introduction

This Chapter focuses on the Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera (the Rock of Vélez de la Gomera) situated 74 miles southeast of Ceuta in the Northern Moroccan region of the Rif.⁴³ Previous to 1934, this outcrop was a natural island, but following a huge thunderstorm it became a peninsula and is now connected with the African continent by a short channel of sand. Today, it is still inhabited only by military personnel who approach the Rock by helicopter or ship. This Chapter presents the territory through Jean-Luc Nancy's notion of touching, a concept that was worked collectively in the second session of the reading group that took place at the former family house of Younès Rahmoun situated in the neighbourhood of Ybel Dersa of Tétouan. Later on, the term inspired us to outline the site-visit to the nearest point to the Rock of Vélez carried out on the 15 June 2015. Touching also offered a conceptual framework for the subsequent documentation produced about the visit by the artist.

The Chapter continues with the same structure as the one preceding, where life experiences, historical sources, theory and artistic and curatorial practice intertwine for examining a forbidden territory.

2.2. Context

Tuesday, 2 June 2015

⁴³ The term Rif comes from *er-Rif* (meaning border or frontier). This definition seems to fit perfectly with the complexity of the socio-political historical incidents and geographical features that delineate this territory. According to some authors, the Rif is a Berber settlement determined by its austere, daring, independent and resistant character (Guerrero 2015, 103).

I arrived in Tétouan yesterday. Naziha was waiting for me at the taxi stand close to the door of Bab el Okla. As soon as I arrived, she repeated to me several times the name of the door, so I could memorise it: Bab el Okla, Bab el Okla, Bab el Okla. I asked her for the meaning of it, and even though Naziha's Spanish is really good, sometimes she forgets words. She took her hands towards her head and said something about ... memory. Alright! The door of memory, I will think of this idea when I refer to this entry, but I will try to remember its name in Arabic. Later at Dar Ben Jelloun, Naziha helped me to go over the route from Bab el Okla to the house:

Vegetable stands

Street for fish

Chehakia sweets

Shoe shop

Bahi Street

Hamman Damhli Street

Fendak Nejar

Children's school

Jamaa El Kebir

Dar Ben Jelloun

Tuesday, 9 June 2015

Kings of Morocco:

Mohammed V (Sultan 1927-1957) (Kingdom 1957-1961)

Hassan II (Kingdom 1961-1999)

Mohammed VI (Kingdom 1999-)

French and Spanish Colonial periods:

French Protectorate: (1912, Treaty of Fez – 1956 Independence)

Spanish Protectorate: (1912, Treaty of Fez – 1956 Independence)

At Younès Rahmoun's studio in Rabat, I show him and his wife Laila the book *Berber Women of Morocco* that I have bought at the Slaoui Foundation in Casablanca. While we browse the book together, they tell me that the Moroccan monarchy has never wanted Berbers to access positions within the administration or government. They explain that this has to do with the Riffian tribe's revolt of 1921, later called the *Rif War*, against the Spanish colonial power. This uprising spread to other regions controlled by the French power, even to the doors of Fez, capital of Morocco at the time and site of the residency of the Sultan of Morocco, Yusef Ben Hassan. Under such threat, the court was moved from Fez to Rabat where it remains today.

(Vergara, fieldwork notes, 2015)

The visit to the rock of Vélez de la Gomera happened on Monday 15 June 2015. We left Tétouan the day before and travelled by car to the *cabyle* of Beni Boufrah, a small rural town in the Al Hoceïma Province of the Rif. I organised this journey together with Younès Rahmoun and his uncle Mohamed Charchaoui and Laila Eddmane, the wife of Younès. Heidi Vogels also accompanied us as the Rock of Vélez de la Gomera and the Alhucemas Islands are both in the same province and quite close to each other, so we decided to do these two site-visits as part of the same trip. The journey from Tétouan to Beni Boufrah was long, it lasted approximately 5 hours, and a bit uncomfortable, because the road was full of bends. We finally arrived by night and we all stayed with Younès' uncle's family. The house was newly built and during a short period it functioned as a residency for an artistic project initiated by Moroccan curator Abdellah Karroum in collaboration with MACBA (Barcelona). This artistic collaboration finally

took the form of a group exhibition entitled *Before Our Eyes: Other Cartographies of The Rif* that took place at La Kunsthalle in Mulhouse (France) and MACBA⁴⁴.

Unfortunately, I didn't visit the exhibition neither did I know before starting my investigation that Younès' family house had hosted artists from Barcelona for a period of time. Thanks to Dutch artist Heidi Vogels who had been working with Morocco for several years, I got to know about the existence of this residency in Al Hoceïma, however I didn't realise until I arrived in Tétouan that the residency was in fact hosted at the house of Younès' Riffian family. Once there, we all shared time and space within this homely environment. We had lunch and dinner together, played with Younès' little nephew and watched TV in the living room after coming back from our walks and visits to the enclaves.

The Rock of Vélez de la Gomera was the first one to be visited in this trip. Younès' uncle tried to get a boat to approach the Rock by water, but finally the weather conditions were not good for sailing. We decided to walk through the nearby mountains. The sun was strong that day and the sound of the cicadas in the forest made us aware of the increasing temperature. The surroundings of Vélez differ from those of Perejil. During our stroll, we didn't see any Moroccan military posts and as the area didn't seem to be secured one could abandon oneself to the beauty of the Mediterranean landscape.

It took us approximately an hour to arrive at a place from which we could see the Rock. When we finally got there, we were again on a hill like when we visited Perejil Island, but this time the Rock was quite close to us, as it is connected to the land by a sandy section. Even though, we were too far to distinguish the daily activity of Vélez, we could in fact confirm that it was still inhabited. We sensed this through the visible architectural constructions: few buildings nicely painted in white at the bottom of the Rock and a station for invigilation at the top. However, the most remarkable thing was the inexistent division between countries. One could not decipher where Morocco finishes and where Spain starts. On the sand, there were a few boats lying and

⁴⁴ In Barcelona, the project established an artistic exchange between Moroccan artists and artists belonging to the Catalan art scene, which was inserted within MACBA's interest in organising an artistic programme of activities that critically examine the Mediterranean Sea as a specific geography.

somewhere on the side a sign for helping the helicopters to land. We could not see anybody and we did not know if anybody was watching us from below.

We took a moment at that particular place. Younès went back to find other views of the Rock, Heidi arrived a bit later as she had been sound-recording the noise made by the cicadas and I was talking to Younès' uncle, when we realised we were not alone. A flock of goats suddenly colonised the area in which we were standing and a bit later the shepherd reached the place too. We waited for few minutes before approaching him. We wanted to ask him so many questions... The conversation happened finally in Darija⁴⁵ between Laia, Younès, his uncle and the shepherd. As I could not understand what they were saying, I decided to enjoy the image that spontaneously appeared in front of us. The shepherd sat down on the ground, turning his back to the Rock, looking at where we were standing. The spontaneous scene of the shepherd and his goats seemed peculiar in contrast to the image of a highly-politicised border area that in Spain we sporadically received through the media. We suddenly took out all our equipment: cameras, microphones, sound-recording devices, mobile phones. We didn't want to miss any detail of that moment. Meanwhile, the goats were eating grass peacefully. I wonder now how this sight was seen from the other side. Later, they explained to us that the shepherd was telling them how the contact between the Spanish soldiers and the Moroccan inhabitants of the area was not very frequent. However, not long ago a Spanish military doctor from Vélez had treated a child from the nearby town of Badis.

We returned home immediately after, as they were waiting for us in order to have lunch. During the late afternoon, Younès proposed that we visit his ongoing artistic project situated in the fields of Beni Boufrah. This is located within walking distance of his family house in the woods outside the town. It consists of an ephemeral construction that is related to his long-term project entitled *Ghorfa* and is accompanied by three trees planted for the occasion by the artist: an olive tree, a palm and a fig tree.

We walked along a little path of clay trying to shoot the beautiful light of that moment in which the sun set was just starting. Coincidentally, the prayers began. Ramadan was about to start and we could hear the call from several nearby mosques, causing an

⁴⁵ Moroccan Arabic with a very strong linguistic Berber influence.

interesting resonance. The sun had disappeared by the time we arrived on site. Laila and Younès rested for a bit sitting on a rock near the *Ghorfa*. Heidi and I decided to wander around the area and confirm for ourselves that the door of the *Ghorfa* remained open. We stayed there for a while, in silence, trying to capture that special experience.

2.3. History

For some time, while undertaking the research on the history of the Spanish enclaves of the region of the Rif, I could not find relevant accounts concerning Vélez or Alhucemas. That made me aware that the invisibility of these territories was not only a contemporary issue, but it also had historical precedents. In fact, we could say that the forbidden status of these territories caused a blind spot in history, making it difficult to get to know what their conditions of everyday life were. Once again, I found myself speculating about the life of the *plazas* and their contact with nearby communities. It was not until I visited the library of the Cervantes Institute in Tétouan that I managed to find an interesting account that helped me envision those living conditions. I located there a magazine called *Aldaba* published by the Open University (UNED) of Melilla in 1983 that includes the facsimile of a book entitled *El Contagio del Peñón* (The Infection of the Rock) written in 1744, a medical report that gives us some idea of the severe living conditions on the Rock of Vélez during 18th century. From then on, and thanks to other findings, I was able to get some accounts of past experiences of life in the *plazas* of the Rif. What follows now will help us to situate spatially and temporarily the complex circumstances of the colonial settlement of Vélez de la Gomera.

Since remote antiquity, the inhabitants of the province of Al Hoceïma had seen numerous commercial ships navigating through the Alboran Sea. From time to time, some vessels ran aground and the local people quickly salvaged the things that the sea left on the beach, thus producing, according to archaeological traces (De Madariaga 2009, 38), a form of living contact with far away cultures. However, other visitors approached the coast with the intention to conquer, like in 1508 when various ships from Spain arrived in the area and occupied the Rock of Vélez de la Gomera in the name of Ferdinand II, called the Catholic, with the intention of a later conquest of

Badis⁴⁶ (De Madariaga, 2009, 36). Since then, the history of the occupied Rock of Vélez resembles a labyrinthine itinerary across numerous catastrophes, including earthquakes, plagues and epidemic diseases that give account of its marginal existence in respect to the nearby African continent (De Madariaga 2009, 38).

According to some authors, resistance to occupation was expressed by the local populations from the outset, eventually getting back the Rock from 1522–64, when it was reconquered by the Spaniards (De Madariaga 2009, 40) and incorporated within the Kingdom of Castile (Moga Romero 1983, 12). The pretext of the invaders had been that the Rock was home to corsairs and, since Spain had trade interests in the area, it made itself the Rock's protectors. In fact, Spain would use the same excuse in 1673 when it decided to occupy the nearby islands of Alhucemas, which at the time were the target for French traders who wanted them for establishing their headquarters in the region (De Madariaga 2009, 41). Across the centuries, the Rock of Vélez and the Alhucemas Islands would constantly receive attacks from the coastal inhabitants in order to get back these territories.

Since their settlement, the strongholds also functioned as prisons in which criminals and political prisoners, belonging to different political ideologies, depending on who had won the numerous civilian battles that took place in Spain, shared incarceration⁴⁷ (De Madariaga 2009, 43). Under such extreme circumstances, the Rock of Vélez and the Alhucemas Islands experienced insurrections, escapes and even expulsions: thus the crossing to the other side was something that occurred regularly. In that exchange, Spanish prisoners normally mixed easily with the local population, getting married and converting to Islam, whereas some local inhabitants ended up as captives on the Rock and the islands, serving the Spaniards as slaves in the construction of the fortification of the enclaves (De Madariaga 2009, 43). Nevertheless, some members of the Berber communities managed to establish fluent trade activities in spite of the constant incidents occurring between those who wanted to make business and those who opposed it (De Madariaga 2009, 44). Therefore, across the years and in between both

⁴⁶ The city of Badis had functioned as the natural seaport of the Kingdom of Fez in the Middle Ages. (Cressier 1983, 46)

⁴⁷ Spain held a network of minor prisons in Vélez de la Gomera, the Alhucemas Islands and Melilla. Ceuta was home to the largest imprisonment. The four enclaves together managed to strangle the commerce routes of the Fez Kingdom during the Middle Age (Moga Romero 1983, 12).

worlds, the Rock and the coast observed each other with mistrust, despite an ongoing exchange of products and people.

It seems hard to imagine how the inhabitants of Vélez de la Gomera could bear the difficult conditions on the Rock, especially being subjected to constant fights and battles coming from the inland population. The book *El Contagio del Peñón* helps us to envision the austere life of 18th century, when the Rock had a population of 500 people. Vicente Moga Romero offers us an introduction to the contents of the book that was originally written in Latin in 1744, translated one year later into Old Spanish and finally republished in the magazine *Albaba* in 1983. According to the author, the main problems of the Rock were to be found in the difficulties of obtaining provisions and the lack of water. What is more, the risky forays from the island for hunting and fishing increased the impact of epidemic diseases (Moga Romero 1983, 13).

Between 1700–46 the enclaves fell into oblivion and were in part abandonment by King Felipe V. This was accompanied by the isolation that followed laws prohibiting the selling of food to foreign ships, thus making Malaga the centre for the provision of supplies. All these issues called the minor enclaves into question (Moga Romero 1983, 13). Within the public realm, even today doubts concerning the enclaves are rarely expressed, however some authors (De Madariaga 2009, 48) refer to the fact that they have existed since mid-18th century. Accordingly, the Spanish leaders started to question whether the expenses dedicated to the support of the *plazas*, in particular Vélez and the Alhucemas Islands were justified or whether it was more expedient to abandon them. By the end of 18th century, the idea of leaving the *plazas* was substituted by the possible cession of these territories to the Sultan in return for certain economic advantages (De Madariaga 2009, 48). The cession was attempted on several occasions during 19th century through unsuccessful negotiations with the Sultan and the issue was finally forgotten in 1869: since when it was never again proposed formally (De Madariaga 2009, 48).

According to Vicente Moga Romero, the big epidemic diseases took place in Europe during 12th and 13th centuries, with a decrease during 16th century, to be followed by renewed increases in 17th century. By the 18th century, bubonic plague was almost eradicated in Europe, producing only sporadic infections. But this didn't see its total

disappearance outside Europe and the period witnessed an increase in medical literature detailing how to fight it in port areas (Moga Romero 1983, 16). Vélez being one such port inscribed within the Spanish overseas circuit, in 1744 the book was published in response to these circumstances.

Preventive measures like quarantine or hygiene were quite common on the Rock, but the lack of water made for difficulties, causing prisoners and soldiers alike, at least the most vulnerable ones, to die quickly when an infection reached Vélez. About the specific infection of 1743 upon which the book is predicated, there seem to be two hypothesis concerning its origin: that it either reached Vélez through a shipment of tobacco that ran aground near Larache (Caro 1989, 166) or that the infection was spread from Ceuta to the *plaza* of Vélez through the corpse of a friar who had lived in the Berber territories and which was brought back by Moroccans to Ceuta for burial (García Fernández 1987, 121-22). As Vicente Moga Romero explains, quarantine was adopted in Vélez in July of 1743, immediately after the epidemic was declared in Ceuta and when a vessel arrived from there carrying an infected soldier who died soon after. The soldier's death was followed by others, including those of the doctor and surgeon of the Rock, causing the governor of Vélez to write to Malaga asking for replacements (Moga Romero 1983, 16). As a result of this request, Thomás Exarch, Juan de Figueroa and Joseph Serrano, two doctors and a surgeon and authors of the book *El Contagio del Peñón* arrived on the Rock (Exarch, Figueroa and Serrano 1744 29-33). The book describes how to fight bubonic plague according to the knowledge of the time, giving importance not just to the care of physical needs but also of spiritual ones. The infection was believed to have occurred because of the bad conditions of the *plaza* (Moga Romero 1983, 20). The measures taken were also in correspondence with the knowledge and beliefs of the time and with the fact that leaving the Rock was not permitted. The following actions were also taken: trees on the coast were burnt; isolation for the sick was established; the nearby coast was to be used for those in quarantine; everything in contact with those infected was burnt; gunpowder was used for purifying the atmosphere; finally, all dogs and cats were sacrificed (Exarch, Figueroa and Serrano 1744, 44-9).

The book, considered an historical, literary and medical account, was finished on 18 December 1743 and published a year later in Malaga after being translated into Spanish

for greater public dissemination. This shows how, in times past, the small, forbidden Rock of Vélez could suddenly become visible.

This epidemic wasn't eradicated until September 1744. However, as Moga Romero clarifies, soon after, in 1747, a new plague arrived on the Rock, providing further evidence that quarantine, the lack of water and deficient food were part of the regular and permanent conditions of the invisible life of the enclaves of the Rif (Moga Romero 1983, 26).

2.4. Considerations Among the Notion of Touching



Illustration 5. *La Ribot* in *Laboratorio 987*, Musac, León, 2012. Exhibition by Chus Domínguez, Nilo Gallego and Silvia Zayas as part of *La forma y el querer-decir* programme.

At the beginning of this investigation, the notion of touching according to the body of work of Jean-Luc Nancy functioned as a driving force for analysing the colonial model

of occupation of the *plazas* of sovereignty. I arrived at this concept by reading Jacques Derrida's early essay entitled 'Form and Meaning: A Note on the Phenomenology of Language' (1967), having decided to use it as the conceptual framework for a programme of exhibitions entitled *La Forma y El Querer-Decir* (Form and Meaning),⁴⁸ which I curated at Musac (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León) during 2012 and 2013. The text, published the same year as some of Derrida's most widely recognised writings, such as *Of Grammatology* (1967), *Writing and Difference* (1967) and *Speech and Phenomena* (1967), belongs to a line of work dedicated to the critical analysis of phenomenology and at the same time committed to proposing a new conception of the world, consciousness and language. This essay, a product of the cultural climate of the time, contributed to shaping a new space for thought by uncovering the hierarchical relationship of speech over writing typical of the structuralist debate and suggesting the revision of the idea of the subject.⁴⁹ Due to the difficulty of this text, I was engaged with it for almost a year, reading it over and over again and even enriching it with other philosophical references and texts by Derrida, including a late publication entitled *On Touching Jean-Luc Nancy* (2000). In this late book, the author expresses the relevance of the notion of touching in the work of Jean-Luc Nancy, which takes the question of phenomenology to a central place. At the time of these readings, I was starting to be engaged with this curatorial investigation on the *plazas* of sovereignty. My learning of the notion of touching according to Nancy helped me profoundly to situate the study of these hidden territories. In the following section, I will try to introduce which theoretical considerations among this term were crucial for the research and the consequent curatorial project developed in Morocco.

2.4.1. Theoretical Context of the Term

⁴⁸ The programme comprises four exhibitions, three being solo shows by Hiwa K., Carme Nogueira and Alejandra Riera, plus a group show with Chus Domínguez, Nilo Gallego and Silvia Zayas.

⁴⁹ The purpose of the exhibition series was to reopen the debate about the *form/meaning* pair through a series of artistic practices that not only address the intention of saying (i.e., what to say) but the possible collective assemblages implicit therein (i.e., how to say and to whom). The programme drew on the post-structuralist theories related to text in an effort to leave behind any essentialist vision of the relation between the art work and its signification and to examine the different collective models of production of meaning.

As already mentioned, touching by Jean-Luc Nancy proved decisive when I started to study the *plazas* of sovereignty. Besides, during my stay in Morocco it also helped me to configure a curatorial strategy of estrangement in this investigation through the organisation of a reading group that I entitled *Dispositifs of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Times of Expanding Borders* in direct reference to my interest in the two main theoretical concepts that I was using for conceptually approaching these colonial territories. Thus, the notion of touching is approached in this investigation by one main theoretical source: the way Jean-Luc Nancy employs *toucher*, which in French is associated with the noun tact and the verb to touch, beyond the critique of phenomenology in several books such as *Corpus* (1992), *The Sense of the World* (1993) and *Being Singular Plural* (1993). Besides, as I have already stated, I also followed Derrida's attention to Nancy's propositions for the term in *On Touching-Jean-Luc Nancy* (2000).

My interest in this term corresponds to two main concerns:

The first has to do with Nancy's understanding of touching as the ordering that operates within any relational disposition of elements (Nancy 1993, 59-63). In this respect, touching for Nancy can be also seen like the notion of the *dispositif* according to Deleuze (Deleuze 1992, 159), as the spatial coordinates of a cartography, a topographical network that disposes connections as much as disconnections. In other words, we can thus understand that touching functions within a defined spatial network generating relations between some things as much as divisions and separations between others. Jacques Derrida introduces us into this connotation of Nancy's touching, when he analyses the complexities involved within the act of touching by focusing on the particular interruptive experience of the syncope, a decisive concern that, he explains, runs throughout Nancy's whole work (Derrida 2000, 162). Thus, syncope, understood as a general term for a disturbance or interruption of the regular flow or rhythm, is used by Derrida as a metaphor for highlighting how Nancy claims 'a partition or even a partaking (in French *partage*)⁵⁰ of spacing' (Derrida 2000, 195) that occurs within the act of touching. With this claim, Derrida seems to pay attention to the

⁵⁰ In respect to this, Derrida notices that, 'as always with Nancy, *partage*-apportioning, sharing out, parting, partaking' signifies participation as much as irreducible partition, which for him is also to say the 'spacing of the sense' (Derrida 2000, 195).

fact that ‘something separates and interrupts at the heart of touching and contact’ (Derrida, 2000, 199). At an early stage of this thesis, this idea illuminated conceptually the *plazas* as ‘*dispositifs* of touching’, by which I mean to acknowledge them as spatial apparatuses that impose an order of touching and contact between neighbours⁵¹ and strangers, friends and enemies, things and processes, etc. However, as Nancy claims, this touching does not necessarily imply a direct contact between all of them: instead, it involves a control of that experience in which subjects, objects, processes, etc. get in contact with each other, whereas others remained divided and set apart. In sum, the attention that Derrida pays to the notion of the syncope in relation to the act of touching problematises the non-meditated proximity that tactility may promise within the context of perception as much as within the projection of any form of being-together. Therefore, for Derrida the syncope separates and interrupts within the actual place of contact, that is to say, ‘it occurs at the origin of the mere act of touching’, even though it operates as a direct ‘act of parting and sharing out of spacing’ (Derrida 2000, 129). This claim leads us to think that where we assume a direct contact we may find division, and where we presuppose division we may also uncover touching.

The second concern relates to the understanding of Nancy’s touching in correspondence to the logic of producing sense. In this respect, touching is a relational convention and separation between things as much as it involves processes of making sense out of the world. The concept of sense appears in several of Nancy’s books, for example in *The Sense of the World* and in *Corpus*, but Derrida also brings attention to this double meaning of sensing and producing meaning in *On Touching Jean-Luc Nancy*. It seems

⁵¹ It is also important to mention that for Nancy, the ‘neighbour’ (coming from the tradition of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic history and the actual connections happening between them) resides in the dialectics between the particular and the universal. In respect to these dialectics, Peter Hallward situates his reflection on the postcolonial domain circumscribing it within the limits of the ‘singular’ (universal) and the ‘specific’ (particular). For the author, these words designate two abstract poles of distinction, two fundamentally divergent conceptions of individuation and differentiation. In this respect, Hallward considers the specific to be relational and the singular non-relational. His argument lays on a sustained critique of the postcolonial and, more generally, of the singular, admitting that any viable theory of the specific, which is to say, any theory that allows for the *situated* articulation of genuinely universalisable principles, can only be developed in direct confrontation with the singular configurations active in its time. Hallward also clarifies that whereas both colonial and counter-colonial configurations operate in the medium of division and conflict, the postcolonial is generally associated with a more consensual, more harmonious domain of multiple identity, travelling theory, migration, diaspora, cultural synthesis and mutation. However, he draws attention to the fact that the postcolonial is an open-ended field of discursive practices characterised by boundary and border crossing. By the same token, he argues that nothing is more obviously opposed to singularity than a duality, and nothing is so typically and so insistently postcolonial as the refusal of all binaries. (Hallward 2001).

that Nancy uses the notion of sense instead of truth in order to highlight the constant process of producing meaning through an ongoing relationship between the body and the different elements of the world (Nancy 1997, 12-5). In short, the philosopher is trying to bring forward the critical analysis of perception initiated within phenomenology in order to shed light on the processes of building meaning out of the experience of sensing the world. Following this line of thought, according to Jean-Luc Nancy, touching could be the act through which sense as perception meets sense as meaning. Besides, his interest in making a connection between sensing and meaning seems to have an echo here with the already discussed understanding of the *dispositif* as an ideological tool for producing meaning (Althusser 1971). Considering this, perhaps the way of interrupting the controlling tendency of power has to do with restoring meaning as a common process, in other words, considering sense as a collective practice that avoids consensual preconceptions, but produces an exchange between different modes of understanding. Consequently, this connotation of the notion of touching has offered me the opportunity to reflect on the potential for producing a common understanding out of these empty territories. Within this attempt of activating collective moments of producing sense out of the empty *plazas* of sovereignty, the notion of touching should also bring our attention to the forms this commonality could gain, especially considering the way Nancy understands its mechanics of bringing together as well as producing division. In other words, the possibility of producing a common touching out of the empty *plazas* challenges the way they currently produce widespread divisions made visible for example through the abuses undertaken to migration subjects in the name of Spanish and European citizens' 'absent presence'.

Considering all this, and following perhaps Giorgio Agamben's scepticism of the counter-applications of the *dispositif* (Agamben 2009, 19), we should be more attentive to his claim for a strategy of profanation, of recovering the common use of what has been captured and separated by the *dispositif*. Following this idea, a critical opposition to the *plazas* should imply an act of profanation.

Nancy seems to be preoccupied by something similar. Precisely, when he refers to the idea of sense in relation to the perception of reality, but also to the production of meaning out of that experience (Nancy 1997, 62). He also suggests a common experience of reality and production of meaning rather than any consensual assumption

towards the way this should happen (Nancy 2008, 91). In this idea lies a new understanding of touching, beyond considering it, as argued before, in reference to the dynamics of encouraging relation as well as division between the elements. This other connotation of touching deals with the mere logic of restoring the common production of meaning, an experience that takes place between us.

Therefore, following the line of thought mentioned above, some questions start to emerge. For example, which kinds of processes are implied within the act of touching? What gets together and what gets separated? Which senses (perceptual and conceptual) are promoted and which are concealed? How can we think and produce a curatorial ‘profanation’, to borrow Agamben’s strategy, of the *dispositifs* of the *plazas*? How can we reinstitute processes of producing common meaning out of the regime of an artistic experience?

Derrida also calls attention to the process of reinstituting the divided parts or fragments that occur within the force of division implicit within the act of touching, when he points to the strategy of the detour. He indicates the importance of the footprints, marks and traces that remain within the displacement generated by the touch between some elements. For Derrida, this parting and sharing should be tracked following a *detour* towards the remains of the other (ways of sense). He says:

Such a trace would suffice to subtract sense, the senses, the senses of sense, the experience of sense and of the sharing out and parting of the senses, from any sovereignty of *presence*, immediacy, the proper and the proximate. Nothing, no presence whatsoever, without a detour. No logics of sense, and not even a logic of touch, not even an ultratactile haptics, would then yield, it seems to me, to an ontology of presence (Derrida, 2000, 130).

However, Derrida notes that ‘the need for the long detour is still awaiting us, even though we may turn and go continually from detour to detour’, ‘from one turn towards other turns and twists of touch’ (Derrida, 2000, 130). Jean-Luc Nancy in ‘Un Pensée Finie’ also refers to the need of a long detour in order to think differently and to question the function of the senses within the logic of art. Nancy says:

No doubt, a very long detour should be made here. What of the sharing (*partage*) of the senses? Can they be felt? Do they feel that they can't be? Is there a purity of each sense, or would there be no vision without a trace of touch, no touch without a trace of taste, and so on? Is there a language without a trace of one or the other? But then: how are the senses shared with regard to art? (Nancy in Derrida 2000, 130).

2.4.2. In Relation to the Control of the Flux of Migration

Thinking the *plazas* of sovereignty from the perspective of the notion of Nancy's touching and in relation to the current control of the flux of migration can take us to consider them as devices that belong to the border machine. This approach can be linked to the way Alessandro Petti refers to the border not as a line, but as a space with depth to it (Petti, 2010). Petti introduces these considerations through his own experience and that of his Palestinian family when they cross the border between Jordan and Palestine-Israel in different periods of their lives. Through his story, we navigate across the connected and disconnected parts of a well-defined machine designed to control, interrupt or stop the transit of Palestinian citizens through Israeli territory. This example helps us to understand the control of migration beyond the architectural setting of borders and the preconception of considering them just as line-demarcations between countries. This acknowledgement can be also understood in correspondence to the work of John Pickles, Sebastián Cobarrubias and Maribel Casas (2011a, 2011b, 2015) which is dedicated to the study of the control of borders in Africa by international organs and that follows an approach that is no longer based on the model of nation state's control of borders, but on monitoring the migration routes through a trans-national cartography that includes countries of departure, transit and arrival.

The topography of the surroundings of the Rock of Vélez de la Gomera leaves this clear too. The border doesn't operate through a specific architectural device. In such a context, the most outstanding feature is the invisible line sketched by our own imagination on the surface of the wet sand that supposedly connects Morocco with

Spain. This invisibility confirms the fact that the border operates as a machine that, as Petti also suggests, ‘tears apart everything that crosses it into separate, classifiable elements, only to put them back again together somehow or another when they exist’ (Petti, 2010).

We have seen through the references of some historical accounts how the occupation of the Rock of Vélez brought conflict in the region. Besides, this confrontation happened not just between those who desired to recuperate the territory and those who wanted to defend its occupation, but also within each community: firstly, in the *plazas* between military settlers and prisoners, where at moments of crisis and disease the latter preferred ‘to pass to the other side’, and secondly, within the Berber community, when there was no agreement between those who approved of making business with the Spanish occupying forces and those who completely rejected this. These examples give an account of a set of separations and divisions that appear to be active when the Rock of Vélez is occupied and becomes inaccessible to the local community.

However, we can also say that all of this does not make evident that the invisible line is not operative. In fact, we can see how in certain occasions it turns highly performative, as I mentioned before in the introduction, when in August 2012 a group of Moroccan activists of the Committee for the Liberation of Ceuta and Melilla crossed the line and raised the Moroccan flag beside the Rock (Rivas, 2015), as a direct consequence of which the Spanish media suddenly made this territory highly visible. As stated before, this incident was preceded by another, also in August of 2012, when a group of sub-Saharan migrants traversed the short expanse of water between Morocco and the *Isla de Tierra* of the Alhucemas archipelago (Ceberio, Cembrero and González, 2012). These two incidents caused an impact directly on me, firstly, by directing my attention such that I became committed to an academic research on the *plazas* of sovereignty and secondly by taking me in the company of some artists to the very same places where these incidents occurred. Following these consequences, we should admit that the invisible border on the sandy section between Vélez and Morocco actively performs, thus giving account of the fact that the border machine functions beyond any specific setting, creating a broader ‘contact zone’ where touching operates, allowing partaking as much as separation and interruption. Then again, Mary Louise Pratt also expands the term of the contact zones beyond the line-demarcations of a border area referring

consequently to those ‘social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today’ (Pratt 1991, 34). However, the author sees this term as the holder of a potentiality when she proposes considering a classroom or a course as a contact zone in which a new pedagogy can be experience. She states:

We are looking for the pedagogical arts of the contact zone. These will include, we are sure, exercises in storytelling and in identifying with the ideas, interests, histories, and attitude of others; experiments in transculturation and collaborative work and in the arts of critique, parody, and comparison (including unseemly comparisons between elite and vernacular cultural forms); the redemption of the oral; ways for people to engage with suppressed aspects of history (including their own histories), ways to move *into and out* of rhetorics of authenticity; ground rules for communication across lines of difference and hierarchy that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect; a systematic approach to the all important concept of cultural mediation (Pratt 1991, 40).

To analyse the Rock of Vélez under the notion of touching implies going back to the invisible border line and looking around or looking backwards in history and forwards into our imagination and observing the many instances of touching that take place (including those of real contact and those of division). To go back to that invisible line means to understand the way it also feeds the border machine as much as any architectural aspect of the actual fortification of the Rock.

2.4.3. In Relation to Curatorial Practice

I decided to engage with Jean-Luc Nancy’s notion of touching, because apart from the rich theoretical source that it offered me to study the *plazas* of sovereignty as border devices that operate beyond the line-demarcation between nation states, this term also opened up for me new potentialities in relation to the curatorial. In these regards,

touching as a curatorial strategy offered me the ground to refer directly to the actual division and separation that take place through being in contact with others and the possible forms of being together within that partition. This idea takes us back again to the way Mary Louise Pratt uses the term ‘safe houses’ in reference to the contact zones and the potentiality to configure ‘social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared understandings, temporary protection from legacies of oppression’ (Pratt 1991, 40).

As we have mentioned before, Vélez helps us to understand how the border expands itself beyond any architectural setting imposing division and inequality beyond its supposed circumscription. However, Vélez and the *plazas* can also be an example of the division that takes places even today between Spanish and Moroccan citizens where a cultural separation operates at many different levels, even far from any border context, for example in the marginal streets of many cities of Spain, where Moroccan youngsters find it very difficult to escape from social stigmatisation. In this sense, the reading group *Dispositifs of Touching* tried out to establish a new ground from which to configure a sovereign community of readers, a group of people that can test out sense as a free associative operation that doesn’t respond to cultural preconceptions, but also enquires about the past, present and future divisions established by territories as the *plazas* of sovereignty that we knew little about and to which we had no access. Theory in this sense helped us to construct a space in common where we could engage with past concerns that apparently didn’t have so much to do with us, but that little by little we realised had affected our lives directly. It is also important to mention that the reading group was communicated through an open call as a curatorial, pedagogical and participative experience, placing art at the centre of this initiative. Besides, the reading group declared this fact through its own mechanism where theory was read through invited artists who introduced their artistic practices. In line with this, it is important to mention that Jean-Luc Nancy also offers art as a space of possibilities when he specifically poses the question of how to recover the fragments executed by the multiple operative divisions that occur constantly. He exposes:

Anything which has been fragmented will not be either reconstituted or re-engendered. (...) But, of course, that which has been fragmented (...) has not

simply disappeared in the process of being broken down. One must know, first of all, what remains in the fragments (...) and in what direction are we to take the step from a fragmented cosmetics to an aesthetic of sensible tracing, and beyond this to the fragile permanence of “art” in the drift of the “worldly” (Nancy 1993, 124).

The reading group also offered us a curatorial strategy that need not be confronted with the parameters established by the exhibition. This precarious form, if we consider the little budget that was needed in order to make it work, offered a space for sharing and reflecting, but also for producing and learning together. Now, retrospectively speaking, we can also say that the reading group as a curatorial strategy can also offer an imaginary space for exposing possibilities and from which to reflect on the mechanism of the exhibition space in terms of the control of perceptual difference. Greek Anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis brings attention to how some sensory realities also get fragmented, classified and even erased when they reach the moment of exposure within the museum. In her essay ‘The Memory of the Sense. Historical Perception, Commensal, Exchange and Modernity’, she writes about how the numbing and erasure of sensory realities becomes crucial moments in the course of modernity. However, in her opinion, these moments of deletion can only be glimpsed obliquely and at the margins, as their visibility requires an immersion into interrupted sensory memory and displaced emotions. Therefore, Seremetakis places the logic of the museum in direct connection to the division of the senses. She explains:

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the process of collecting, staging and displaying exotica archaized the past and domesticated cultural otherness. This interiorization was mediated by a circuit of spaces of containment, typified by the urban parlor, a space which communicated with the museum and the academic study. The logic of the museum was inscribed into the parlor, and the museum itself was inhabited and enjoyed as an enlarged public living room. Following this development, the parlor-museum encapsulates Western modernity’s petrification and consumption of ethnological and historical difference. In parlor sites, items of older periods and other cultures which had their particular aromatic, tactile and auditory realities were desensualised and permitted a purely visual existence. In the process, vision

itself was desensualized and subsequently metaphorised and reduced to a transparent double of the mind unmediated by any material, spatial and temporal interference. The taming of difference through sensory neutralisation, fabricated a false historical continuity between past and present through the cover of dust. The history of the spatial devices like the parlor and the museum mediated the modern perceptual experience of culture-bound sensory alterity. The encounter with the ethnographic other was filtered by the spatial containment and sensory repression of the parlor exhibit (Seremetakis 1994, 224).

Following the influence of the parlour device into the museum *dispositif*, Seremetakis gives account of a returning influence that now goes from the museum strategies of display to the organisation of fieldwork and the knowledge abstracted from there. She explains that:

In the first decades of the twentieth century, fieldwork and ethnography were informed by the impulse to exit from spaces of epistemological, textual, and artifactual containments, such as the academic study and the ethnological museum- sites that were cultural variants of the parlor. These spatializing grids were reinforced by parlor-like sensory orientations and homogenizing representational strategies that privileged vision-centered consumption of ethnographic experience, the reductive mapping of cultural traits, and the narrative genre of static ethnographic present. This flattening of cross-cultural sensory experience into visual diagrams and atemporal spatial metaphors exported the parlor to the field site and transformed the latter into an open-air museum (Seremetakis 1994, 225).

Keeping with Seremetakis' line of thought, I would like to reflect on the potentialities that the curatorial may offer if we think about it in respect to this notion of touching that Nancy and Derrida defend. That is, an act of touching that doesn't guarantee an immanent contact, but on the contrary, promotes division and separation between the elements preventing common and unregulated interferences between them. When this argument is put in relation with the curatorial, some attention should be brought to the conditions of the exhibition context as a device that reproduces given structures of ordering without questioning them or allowing other sets of relations. Apart from this, it

can also suggest to go beyond the physical limits of that context and reflect on the ways the exhibiting methods precede the exhibition. In other words, we should revise how these procedures are implicit within the fieldwork of curating and therefore impose repetitive protocols that carry the spatial logic of the exhibition beyond its own physical site. This could mean, not just questioning, as Seremetakis proposes, the rigid rules within the exhibition milieu of imposing a certain phenomenology over the works of art based on a hierarchical visual organisation, but also, envisioning, as Derrida and Nancy suggest, other modes of practising collective organisation that expand the artistic experience beyond the repetition of preconceived patterns through which we produce exhibitory meaning. This could perhaps bring us back again to conceive the curatorial as a certain suspension of protocols and preconceived exhibitory rules in order to institute other processes of producing meaning out of the regime of an artistic experience.

2.5. Speculating on the Term Touching in the Context of this Research

2.5.1. The Work of Younès Rahmoun

I meet Younès Rahmoun at Dar Ben Jelloun on 2 June to prepare together his reading session. Some days before my arrival, I had sent him via email the Chapter entitled *Touching* from *The Sense of The World* by Jean-Luc Nancy. He confessed to me that he had not read it yet and for that reason I summarise to him what I consider the most relevant ideas in the text. After that, he starts introducing several of his works through some documentation he has brought in his laptop. During the presentation, we realise that there are many interesting connections between his work and the chapter. Nancy's text revolves around a quote he extracts from Martin Heidegger dedicated to a stone and its relation to the world through the act of touching. Nancy devotes the chapter to undoing the ideological implications that rest in Heidegger's cosmology in the quote. To my surprise, Rahmoun has used stones in some of his works. Thanks to them, the

artist alters his immediate milieu through indiscernible actions that do not aim to reach any instrumental purpose.

After this meeting, we discuss the setting for the reading and we finally decide to do it in his family's former house that is situated in the neighbourhood of Ybel Dersa and remains empty while waiting to be sold. This decision is made in relation to the work of the *Ghorfa* that Younès will present during the session.

The day of the reading, I arrive to the house with Younès earlier than the rest of the group.⁵² From one of the windows, I can see the derelict Spanish military headquarters. Younès explains to me that his grandfather emigrated from the Rif to Tétuoan to work as a Moroccan soldier⁵³ in the Spanish so-called *Fuerzas Regulares Indígenas* (Indigenous Regular Forces)⁵⁴ and that is why his family ended up living in that neighbourhood. After preparing the space, we find some time to walk around the old abandoned military building. However, we return to the house quickly as the group is about to arrive.

There are no chairs so we sit on the floor. When everybody finally feels comfortable, we announce that we will start with Younès' presentation, but interruptions will be welcome for making questions or references to Nancy's text. Our intention is to read both sources simultaneously. Immediately after this short introduction, we also mention that Younès' presentation will be in French and the discussion will be in English (the text of Nancy has been distributed in this language), but that we can also use other languages like Spanish and Darija in case we need it.

The first work Younés Rahmoun introduces on the afternoon of 10 June 2015 is the *Ghorfa*, a long-term project that the artist has developed throughout several formats:

⁵² For this series of readings, we did a new open call and the group changed to some extent, letting new people participate like the French-Moroccan artist Wiame Haddad who travelled from France to attend the reading group in Tetouán, Aymeric Ebrard who was hosted at Dar Ben Jelloun by the French Institute since May and Imma Sáez de Cámara a Spanish anthropologist originally from the Basque city of Vitoria and who works in the library of the Cervantes Institute in Tétuoan

⁵³ Younès' grandfather was a soldier from 1936 to 1959.

⁵⁴ Known also as *Regulares* (Regulars), these were formed by recruited Moroccans officered by Spaniards. They were raised for the first time in 1911 when the Spanish army was penetrating into the Moroccan hinterland through the coastal enclaves. During the Spanish Civil War, these Moroccan troops played a significant role for Franco's side.

film, drawing, sculpture, architecture and installation. In fact, he starts the session by introducing the screening of a film onto one of the bare walls of the living room that shows the artist working at the *Ghorfa*. The film is entitled *Ahad* (which means both ‘Sunday’ and ‘unique’) and was made by the French poet and musician Eymeric Bernard. It was recorded on a Sunday in 2003 and shows the artist inside the space of the *Ghorfa* doing some activities like drawing, writing, reading, listening to and playing music, thinking, doing nothing.

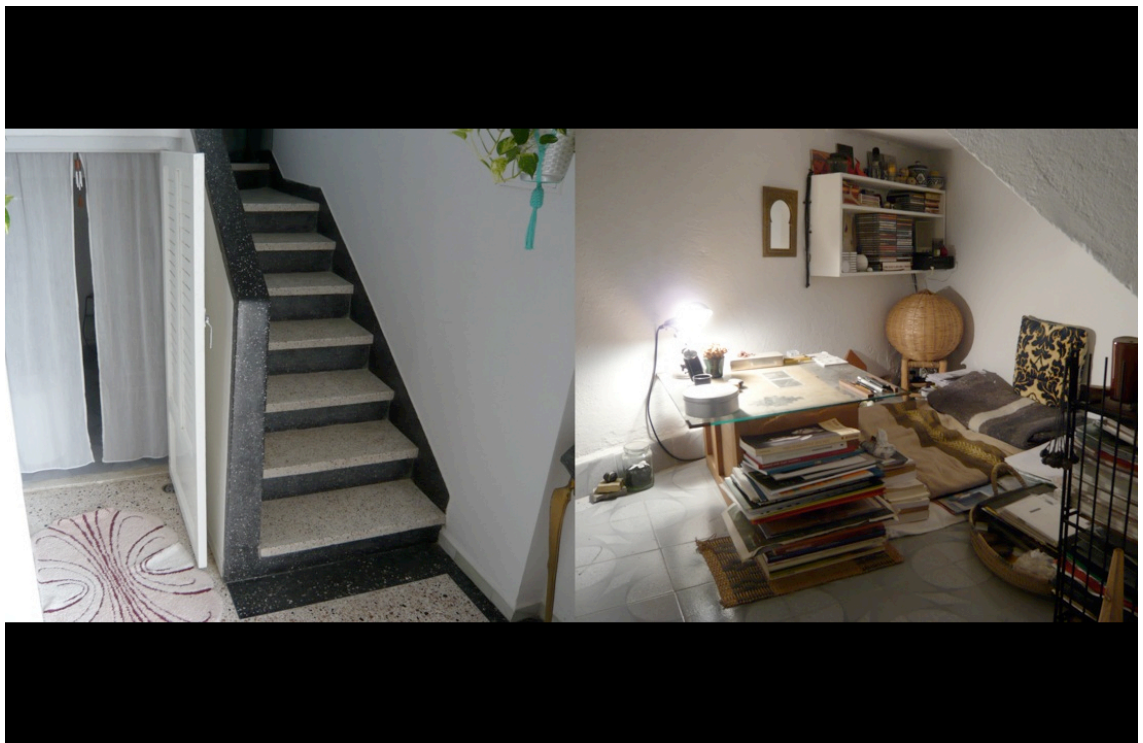


Illustration 6. Original *Ghorfa* in Ybel Dersa, Tétouan, 1998. Younès Rahmoun.

The *Ghorfa* is a room that Rahmoun made out of the empty shaft below the stairs of the house and that for a period of time, while he was still a student, he used as a studio. ‘In 1998,’ the artist explains to the group, ‘when I was still at the Fine Arts Faculty, we were too many of us at the house and I really felt in need of finding a space for working. One day, my mom emptied the shaft to clean it and paint it white. When this was finished, I asked her if I could use it.’

The name *Ghorfa* comes from a room that exists in the traditional houses of the Rif and that was normally located up on the roof outside the domestic space of the interior. The Riffian *Ghorfa* is normally a space for resting and reflecting, a free-space for men, kids

and youngster where they can be outside the women's area, which in fact comprises the whole interior of the house. The film features the extremely small dimensions of the *Ghorfa* at Younès parents' house and it also functions as a portrait of a young Fine Arts student of Tétouan who begins to establish his artistic practice identifying what is really needed within the given conditions.

The artist clarifies that the light used was artificial 'because the only natural light source comes through a little hole in the wall that communicates with the exterior and functions as a breather'. The work produced in this space during this early period was mainly drawing, a medium that allowed the artist to project the space onto the surface of the blank page as a way of transcending the circumscribed limits of the room.

One of these drawings shows this original room, its proportions, its volume, shape and the organisation of the space within it. This sketch looks like a manual for translating the real space of the *Ghorfa* into new settings. In fact, later the volume and dimensions of it will serve as a template for a series of installations that he has shown in different Biennales, International events and various artistic contexts, such as Singapore (2006), Paris (2007), the Rif (2008-09), Amsterdam (2009), Cameroon (2010), Bordeaux (2014) and Shenzhen (2014). Each reconstruction of the *Ghorfa* is faithful to the original form, proportions and positioning, but it varies in the construction materials, which get adapted to the vernacular conditions of each site.



Illustration 7. *Ghorfa*, The Rif, 2008-2009. Younès Rahmoun.

For example, in the Rif, the *Ghorfa* was built with the materials normally used in traditional housing: stones, clay and straw. Each reconfiguration involves a negotiation with the inviting institution and contact with the inhabitants or users of the chosen site, like in the Mangrove forests of Cameroon, a city for *sans papiers* who temporarily live from fishing and smuggling.

Constructed out of local materials, this version of the *Ghorfa* produced for the 2010 Triennial of Public Art of Cameroon was finally built at Douala's Art Centre and transported to the mangroves to be offered to anyone who needed it.

The negotiations that are established when an institution or a Biennale invites Younès to continue with his ongoing project of the *Ghorfa* seem to be on a different scale and dependent on each specific circumstance, a drive that comes across in all his work. This is also explained during the presentation at Ybel Dersa through the documentation of various actions undertaken with stones. For example, an action carried out in 2010 between the mountains of the Rif and the mountain of Qasioun in Damascus that consisted in taking some pebbles from the estuary of the river of Beni Boufrah and translating them to a construction site in Damascus where a pile of gravel was awaiting

to be mixed with cement.

From that same pile, the artist ended up taking some shingles back to Beni Boufrah.⁵⁵ Works like this that comprise imperceptible alterations in the landscape introduce a complex set of relations. An early work of 1996 exemplifies more clearly this complexity. Still a student, Younès Rahmoun spent that summer in Beni Boufrah and he finalised a project for college in that same location. The work consisted of painting a number of stones, which in that rural context have a specific function. These are stones of a reasonable size that have been taken from the river and are employed on top of bales of straw to keep them together.



Illustration 8. Temmoun, Beni Boufrah, 1996. Younès Rahmoun.

Held with string, they prevent the wind scattering the straw. On that occasion, the artist aimed to give new value to the stones by painting them with the same whitewash that is used for the façades of the local houses, a colour that is not pure white and looks like the colour of the straw. The negotiations to undertake this project started to happen

⁵⁵ This initiative was part of a curatorial proposal by Abdellah Karroum that included short residencies in three different locations, the Rif, Damascus and Amman. This project was initiated in November 2010, just few months before the Arab Spring protests. The work was finally exhibited at Darat Al Funun in Amman, Jordan.

within the artist's family, who, even though they could not understand the use of this, allowed him to paint the stones of their bales. The artist then approached the owner of the corner shop, for whom Younès had painted the sign for his business. When the shop owner asked him how much he owed him, Younès replied all he wanted was to be allowed to paint the stones of his bales. The shop owner also considered this pointless, but he acceded to Younès' request. 'Later, it was,' Younès explains to us, 'a bit easier with the rest. I approached the youngsters for permission and even though no one understood the utility of this, they finally allowed me to carry on.' In total, that summer Younès painted 1,433 stones.

2.5.2. A Reading Session on the Notion of Touching in Ybel Dersa, Tétouan

As mentioned before, the reading session with Younès Rahmoun took place in French, English and other languages. Everything happened quite smoothly, each participant chose the language in which she or he felt more comfortable and everybody helped each other when translation was needed. I quickly realised that this was going to be the linguistic dynamics of the reading group, a public platform that will not develop through a lingua franca, but that will shift from one language to other adapting to the given speaking conditions of all the members of this temporary 'speech community'. Mary Louise Pratt uses this notion in relation to the potentialities she envisions within the 'contact zones'. With this term, the author brings some attention to the fact that a community is always a speaking entity, however, its linguistic dynamics are usually homogenised and consequently encapsulated within a single imaginary projection of what this group stands for.⁵⁶ Contrary to this, today Pratt claims another realm: 'Now one could certainly imagine a theory that assumed different things, that argued, for instance, that the most revealing (speech) situation for understanding language was one involving a gathering of people each of whom spoke two languages and understood a third and held only one language in common with any of the others. It depends on what

⁵⁶ The author links this idea with Benedict Anderson's work of the *Imagined Communities* and with the importance of this homogenisation of language in regards to the formation of Modern Nations (Anderson 1984).

workings of language you want to see or want to see first, on what you choose to define as normative' (Pratt 1991, 38).

What follows has been extracted from the audio-recording of that disrupted conversation:

When Younès finishes introducing to the group the ongoing project of the *Ghorfa*, I decide to interrupt him and I do this in English. Although English is an uncomfortable language for most of the participants, there are some people who do not speak French, Spanish or Darija, therefore I have distributed all the texts in English. Considering the different levels of knowledge of English in the group, I take for granted that translation will be our common ground. I think this is appropriate because I am used to it, since I have been in many situations in which fluent collective debates are interrupted by translation. In fact, I like this kind of situation driven by a disrupted conversation in which authorial voices get de-structured through their constant need for translation and clarification. Before continuing, I suggest reading the quote of Martin Heidegger aloud:

The stone is without world. The stone is lying on the path, for example. We can say that the stone is exerting a certain pressure upon the surface of the earth. It is “touching” the earth. But what we call “touching” here is not a form of touching at all in the stronger sense of the word. It is not at all like *that* relationship which the lizard has to the stone on which it lies basking in the sun. And the touching implied in both cases is above all not the same as *that* touch which we experience when we rest our hand upon the head of another human being... Because in its being a stone it has no possible access to anything else around it, anything that it might attain or possess as such (Heidegger 1995, 196-97).

After reading it, I point to the fact that Heidegger's fragment is not simply introducing Nancy's chapter, but rather it becomes central in it ... 'and it holds the intention to deconstruct its approach', adds someone at the back. We start our conversation discussing the hierarchical order that Heidegger introduces in the text between the sun, us, the lizard, the stone and the earth. 'It seems like Nancy's text is trying to give some agency to the stone in order to introduce an alternative conception for touching to Heidegger's proposition,' I suggest again.

After this comment, Younès continues with his presentation until he is once again interrupted. I bring a possible entry to the text by going back to the film *Ahad* and pointing to the dominant presence of the hands in the image. I suggest seeing the hands as guides into the limited space of the *Ghorfa*, going from one object to other, from one activity to another, from drawing to meditation, from playing music to simply resting. The hands seem to be the executors of the visual montage in the film. ‘Could we think of the hands and their act of touching as a sort of montage?’ I ask to the group. ‘And in reference to the text, could we interpret touching as a sort of a relational process between the employed references (the sun-us-lizard-stone-earth)? Or even better, could we understand touching as a strategy of undoing a previously established montage?’

Bérénice suggests reading the text together again and thinking about these questions through a collective approach. As it is a short text, Bérénice proposes to read it all again. She reads the text aloud and when she finishes I bring attention to the first lines of the text after Heidegger’s quote. Nancy says:

Why, then is “access” determined here *a priori* as the identification and appropriation of the “other thing”? When I touch another thing, another skin or hide, and when it is a question of this contact or touch and not of an instrumental use, is it a matter of identification and appropriation? At least, is it a matter of this first of all and only? Or again: why does one have to determine “access to” *a priori* as the only way of making-up-a-world and of being-toward-the world? Why could the world not also *a priori* consist in being-among, being-between, and being-against? In remoteness and contact without “access”? (Nancy 1993, 59).

I express that for me this paragraph contains the ‘move’ that Nancy proposes in the text, specifically with attention to the word ‘access’ as a way of highlighting the preconceptions of understanding touching in relation to acquiring access or employing instrumental use among something. I propose then to Younès to introduce to the group his project in the Rif with the stones and the bales of straw. He accepts my suggestion and throughout his introduction, the group enjoys hearing Younès’ stories of his artistic projects in that region. We all laugh when he tells us about the reactions to the

uselessness of his actions in the rural context of Beni Boufrah where everything seems to be done with a practical purpose. His artistic intervention incited numerous questions by the local inhabitants: ‘Why do you want to paint the stones? Is it for taking an aerial photograph? Is it to prevent the birds eating the liver? Is this something to do with magic? Will you take over the bales after painting them? Why don’t you paint just the façades and take a photo of that?’

Nouha goes back again to Nancy’s text and the way he introduces the idea of gift or ‘pure gift’, and where he clarifies what he refers to exactly with this word when he says: ‘a gift without corresponding desire, neither to be perceived nor to be received as “gift”...’ (Nancy 1993, 60-1). She adds, ‘We can understand Younès’ intervention as a pure gift, even though it isn’t necessarily understood as such.’ Then the discussion turns to looking back at the *Ghorfa* within the economy of the gift. ‘The *Ghorfa*,’ Younès explains again, ‘is given to anyone to be lived as he or she wishes. For example, the door of the *Ghorfa* of the Rif remains open and some shepherds pass by and leave their things, some mothers go with their kids to spend the afternoon, some climb on top and simply stay there.’ Mariam asks, ‘What happened to the stones of the bales afterwards?’ ‘The year after,’ Younès responds, ‘some people came to ask me if I could paint their stones again. To my surprise, others have started painting the stones of their own bales. At this point, I realised my intervention was finished.’



Illustration 9. Beni Boufrah, 1996. Photo Younès Rahmoun.

The discussion expands on questions relating to issue of appropriation, access and possession, but also about contextual impact and a possible world without all these constraints. We also discuss whether or not Nancy offers in his text alternatives beyond the paradigm of instrumentalisation. Our conversation ends at that point and immediately after that, we visit the *Ghorfa* at the house.

2.5.3. Documentary Materials by Younès Rahmoun on Vélez De La Gomera

Younès Rahmoun has also been invited in the context of this research to contribute with the production of some documentary materials on the Rock of Vélez de la Gomera. In his case, he has chosen the medium of drawing for artistically approaching the given current conditions of the enclave. His drawing is rather a draft or a schema that has been executed with austerity: black inked lines sketched onto a page of his notebook put into play two different spaces the *Ghorfa* built at the fields of Beni Boufrah and Badis (the name for the Rock of Vélez in Arabic). At the top of the drawing, a closed circle drafted

out of a thick black line represents Badis. Some Arabic and French words accompany the circle: *frontières fermées*; *propriété publique privée*. At the bottom, a second circle sketched out with a dotted line with some arrows pointing towards its interior represents the *Ghorfa*. The words *frontiers ouvertes* and *propriété privée publique* accompany it. Both spaces are represented by equal dimensions, the difference between them lies in their accessibility: one stands as a closed circle, the other remains open. This drawing was made on 23 September 2015 and was shown for the first time in the group show entitled *Les Propriétés du Sol* at Khiasma (Paris) from October to December of 2015.

This contribution is included in the appendices section together with other two drawings. One of them was made on 3 October 2005. It shows the original *Ghorfa* at Ybel Dersa's house and it has the appearance of a manual for allowing further reconstructions. The shapes of various sections are accompanied by some written notes in Arabic and French. At the bottom, we can see a three-dimensional vista of the *Ghorfa* that makes us aware of several details like the furniture pieces, drawn in red ink, used in the space, and the little hole on the left top side of the room for air. This drawing works as a construction manual for the series of reconstructions that have been produced along the years. The last drawing that accompanies the series is entitled *Badiya Madina* and was made on 20 February 2012. It shows again two circles made of multiple dots. The circle at the top is of a bigger dimension in comparison to the one at the bottom and it contains within it a great quantity of small black dots, some of which have been painted over with red and green colour. The small circle below also contains black dots and some red and green ones. Some words in Arabic and French give context to the drawing: *direction cite* and *direction campagne*. A curved arrow connects both circles and it points in a double direction towards the city (the big circle) and the countryside (the smaller one). This drawing represents for the artist the movement between two realities and two communities. The black dots stand for the members of the communities who are stable, who do not move, the green and red dots are the ones who constantly move between one reality and the other. Through their movement, they make impacts over their own context causing alterations and modifications.

2.6. Conclusion

In this Chapter, the Rock of Vélez de la Gomera has been examined through the conceptual prism of the notion of touching according to French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy. This term has allowed us to analyse critically the effects of the colonial enclave on its immediate environment. Following this logic, contact and touching have been offered as key issues to unravel the history and current situation of this territory. Furthermore, touching has also been introduced as the catalyst of a group of people who gathered together through a collective reading. In this sense, the reading session with Younès Rahmoun at Ybel Dersa's house has been introduced as a real space for speculating on the possible forms of touching that may exist outside a world system based on instrumentalisation. In this context, touching was discussed away from its supposed connection to access or possession, thus giving importance to the possibility of interpreting it as a pure act of giving. Moreover, the work of Rahmoun helped this endeavour by creating a contact zone between the participants of the reading group that, as we will see, will grow during the whole project. Finally, his artistic practice also offered us the possibility of establishing contact with a context that for most of us, before this experience, remained utterly remote.

Chapter 3. The Alhucemas islands: Friendship

3.1. Introduction

This Chapter introduces the Alhucemas Islands, a group of three islets conformed by El Peñón de Alhucemas (The Rock of Alhucemas), an island occupied by a Spanish military fort, and two tiny rocky platforms called Isla de Mar and Isla de Tierra situated slightly to the west from the Peñón and located at just 50 metres away from the Moroccan coast. The Rock of Alhucemas was occupied for the first time in 1673 and it functioned as a military station and a prison for exiled regular and political prisoners. Today, it still comprises a series of buildings constructed in different historical periods, such as several military houses, traces of the old fortification, a lighthouse, a port, a water tank, storehouses and a church. The islet in total has approximately 500 metres of perimeter, being in its majority conformed by a steep cliff. The Rock is inhabited solely by Spanish military personnel. In contrast, Isla de Tierra and Isla de Mar have no housing construction: spread across their rocky surface, several lonely flying Spanish flags compose a somewhat bizarre landscape. On the nearest coast, one finds Alhucemas bay, a sandy beach considered by many as one of the nicest holidays spots of the region.

The Chapter introduces the Alhucemas islands in relation to the notion of friendship, a concept that was considered by the group in the third reading session with Dutch artist Heidi Vogels and that took place at Dar Sanâa, in the Arts & Crafts School of Tétouan. Friendship as a concept was also crucial during our visit to Beni Boufrah, specially concerning the presence of Heidi on the journey, the documentation materials I asked her to produce of this particular set of islands and the experience of the trip during the days of 14, 15 and 16 June 2015.

3.2. Context

Wednesday, 3 June 2015

Naziha comes to pick me up at Dar Ben Jellou at 1.00 pm. We need to visit several places in order to decide the site for the third reading session with Heidi Vogels.

The first place we visit is the Arts & Crafts School of Tétouan. We realise its garden could be a really good place for hosting Heidi's session. The artist and myself have decided together that her reading should take place within a public garden as the project she will introduce to the group comprises her ongoing long-term project *GARDENSOF FEZ*, an unfinished film that she is producing on the current situation of the disappearance of the public gardens in the Moroccan city of Fez.

I take some photographs of the garden of the school and of some of its artisan workshops. The organisation of the space of each workshop is quite peculiar. All of them are dominated by a table and a chair located in one of the corners of each room. This is the place from where the professor disseminates his knowledge. However, the embroidery workshop is organised differently: the women sit close to each other on two long benches situated in the right-hand-side corner at the bottom. While the men do not mind being photographed, the women ask me to avoid photographing their faces.

After visiting all the workshops, except the one dedicated to the crafting of ancient Andalusian tiles, we spend some time in the garden, enjoying all its details. Then, we enter one of the main salons of the school, which in fact connects directly with the garden through a big door. We think this room would be perfect too in case Heidi decides to project some visuals from her ongoing project on Fez. Before leaving the building, we decide to visit the exhibition room where one can find an introduction to the history of the arts & craft production in the region. Naziha calls my attention to one of the

images on display. This is a photograph of the Feddan garden, designed by the Spanish painter Mariano Bertuchi, who played an important role as Head of the Arts and Culture Administration during the Protectorate and who ended up being the director of the Arts & Crafts School from 1931. Naziha tells me that, 15 years ago, Mohamed VI ordered the demolition of this garden for security reasons, as the sovereign stays several times a year in the adjoining Royal Palace of Tétouan. She continues giving me details of the old Feddan, the way old men used to play chess on the outside tables, and how both women and men sat on the benches and chairs of the street cafes to drink Moroccan tea or coffee. Today, the Feddan has been replaced by a great esplanade: as it remains fenced, it cannot be crossed at any point. Some of the old cafes on the left side are still open and we decide to go to have tea. There, Naziha tells me how the old people make jokes about the new '*plaza*'. Some say: 'They have given us a big table up-side-down.' This is because its circumference reminds them of a big table-top, with four towers for its legs. According to Naziha, this place doesn't look Tétouan, the decorative motifs could be from any place like Egypt, Tunisia, but not Tétouan. The king is now reconstructing the Feddan in another location within the city, because the people have not forgotten and continue talking about it.

Later at home at Dar Ben Jelloun, it occurs to me that the '*plaza*' of the Royal Palace offers an interesting crossover with the *plazas* of sovereignty. In the middle of Tétouan, just before the entrance to the Medina and at the start of the *ensanche*, stands the *plaza* of the sovereign, an enormous esplanade that remains empty and inaccessible to citizens. We could think of the old Feddan as the garden of citizens, however, the context of its building pertains to a contradictory, friendly history, an architecture that comes into being through the colonial administration. In fact, the Royal Palace stands today in the same location as the former Offices of the Spanish Colonial Headquarters (in Spanish, *Alta Comisaria de España en Marruecos*). Following this contradictory history, a bit further into the middle of the *ensanche* we found another *plaza* that commemorates a

colonial figure, the Spanish dictator Primo de Rivera. The city residents of Tétouan refer to this square simply as ‘Primo’.

Before going to have some tea at the cafes beside the Royal Palace ‘*plaza*’, we visit the so-called Lovers’ Garden. This runs parallel to the walls of the ancient Medina and to a noisy highway. The garden is nice and quite popular. I remember how last April I was astonished when on a Friday afternoon the park was all of a sudden completely invaded by families and youngsters. Heidi’s session will also be on a Friday afternoon, so I think that this place will not be a good location for us, since the noise of the cars and the people will not allow us to concentrate on the text and Heidi’s work. The best option for now is the garden of the Arts & Crafts School, given that the Feddan has disappeared.

14 June 2015

We are at Beni Boufrah in Al Hoceïma. As soon as we arrive the family of Younès Rahmoun lend to Heidi and myself a pair of *djellabas* for resting more comfortably at their home. We take a photo of ourselves wearing this outfit

(Vergara, fieldwork notes, 2015).



Illustration 10. Feddan Garden. Painting by Mohamed Larbi Rahhali.

On the afternoon of Monday 15 June 2015, after visiting el Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera in the morning, we arrived by car to one of the beaches of Al Hoceïma. We parked in the adjacent vacant lot. We could sense immediately after the laid-back atmosphere of an idyllic holiday destination, but only until we set our eyes on the Moroccan military tent that dominated the entrance to the beach from the parking area.

Once inside, the landscape resembled many other beaches I had visited in my life: people walked barefoot by the shore, others played with a ball a bit further off, some even swam or had tea at the nearest beach bar. The place was not full, holidays had not begun yet as Ramadan was about to start. Younès, his uncle Mohamed and I bought a decaf and sat for a while at the bar terrace on the sand. We started dreaming together about organising an international project on the *plazas* in Beni Boufrah. Mohamed worked for the town hall and he wanted to repeat the experience of the artistic exchange with MACBA, but next time with a special focus on the islets. He was quite impressed

by my interest in these territories. He explained that he had never found anyone who wondered about the islets, not even in the area. He also mentioned the importance that the debate on the *plazas* took place in the local context. I shared this preoccupation and showed my interest in doing something together in the future. While we were chatting, Heidi had taken out all her equipment: tripod, camera, macro lenses, a microphone and the sound recording device. She had positioned the camera right on the edge by the shore and the view of her photographing the Rock was quite conspicuous. However, no one said anything. The atmosphere remained calm and peaceful, even though some of the youngsters who were playing with the ball might be Moroccan cadets. We remained on location for a while, approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Nothing relevant happened, people continued enjoying their time on the beach without paying much attention to our presence. Then we started asking each other when we should leave.

Heidi would have liked to stay more. That seemed quite short for her. I understood her precisely, considering her latest project on Fez, an unfinished film that she had been working on for at least four years then. I understood she found it problematic to start filming or photographing right after arriving on location. She would have liked to prolong the moment. That is why I had asked her to consider her contribution as not being exclusively tied to that particular moment on the beach in front of the Alhucemas Islands, but the whole journey. The notion that framed her contribution: friendship, allowed her to do so. In this sense, the term offered us another temporality that covered the reason for us all being together at that particular place.

The sun was getting quite low now and we decided to leave. We wanted to visit Younès' *Ghorfa* and we needed to do this before sunset. Heidi agreed and we went.

3.3. History

At the beginning of this research, I was struggling with the fact that I couldn't find any historical record that covered the history of the *plazas* of sovereignty as a whole. However, I realised later that the *plazas* cover the most relevant moments of the Spanish colonial presence in the north of Morocco. In fact, they offer an interesting

entry to unveil different historical passages, crucial for understanding the Spanish occupation of the area as much as for acknowledging a series of events that happened in Spain during the same period. Although it may seem distant, one can even say that some important modern Spanish incidents should be read in correspondence to certain episodes that occurred in the region of the Rif. Being conscious of the difficulty of revealing this correlation, which still appears hidden by the passage of time, I tried to hold on to the calm atmosphere at the coast of Al Hoceïma that spring afternoon, when I started reading in detail, back at the library in Bilbao, about the agitated events witnessed by this place during the early years of the Spanish Protectorate. I decided to stick to my memories of that afternoon at the beach situated right in front of the Spanish enclave and use that image of calmness as a new perspective from which to read history.

According to some sources, the bay of Alhucemas had functioned over the centuries as a recurrent setting in which the people from the nearby *cabilas*⁵⁷ and the Spaniards came in contact; a developing relationship that was only interrupted occasionally due to ‘minor incidents caused by the opponents to the presence of foreigners or by the pirate activity undertaken in the area’ (De Madariaga 2013, 129). However, in the last quarter of 19th century, European intervention appeared more evident through ‘the demands to the sultan for introducing a series of reforms that were directed to open Morocco for the international trade and the free circulation of goods’ (De Madariaga 2013, 51). This new context had direct consequences that were made visible through the presence of numerous foreigner traders in the region, who gained various types of benefit and tax exemptions, causing a considerable increase in tax payments in the *cabilas* and a subsequent uneasiness. Moreover, the installation of several Spanish and French mining companies in the Northern region following the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale⁵⁸ of 1904 further antagonised those who were opposed to a foreigner presence.

⁵⁷ According to the Spanish dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy, a *cabila* is an Arabic term employed to designate the tribes of Arabs and Berbers of the north of Africa, but also the territory in which they are settled. In this sense, a *cabila* functions as a homogeneous and independent political and social entity that occupies a determined area.

⁵⁸ This well-known agreement, to which also Spain adhered, implied the colonial organisation of the reign of Morocco dividing the areas of influence between France and Spain, but also conceding to England the influence over Egypt. The agreement left Germany without any concession, provoking thus the first international crisis in the area known as the Tangier Crisis.

The ongoing contact that developed during centuries between both the inhabitants of the *cabilas* and the Spanish military troops stationed on the Rock of Alhucemas assumes relevance when it comes to understanding the background from which the anti-colonialist figure of Abd-el Krim El Jatabi emerged. This ‘forgotten’ personage played a key role in the early days of the Spanish colonial penetration in the Northern region of Morocco, and ended-up leading the revolts against the colonial power that concluded with the declaration of the Republic of the Rif after the defeat of the Spanish in the Battle of Annual of 1921 and 1922. As a consequence, the liberation movement of Abd-el-Krim is considered a clear precursor to the anti-colonialist movements that arose after the Second World War (De Madariaga 2009, 20). However, the anti-colonial conviction of Abd-el-Krim underwent an awkward evolution, something which again seems to be framed by a constant friendly contact with the Spaniards in the early years of his life and more specifically due to the fact of his having been born in 1882 in the town of Axdir, in the *cabila* of Beni Urriaguel, which is situated just in front of The Rock of Alhucemas. His family belonged to the intellectual elite of the region as his father was a *faqīh*, an Islamic jurist, and therefore someone well-considered. Within the agitated context of the early years of 20th century, and following the Anglo-French agreement for establishing the European trade influence in the area, the father of Abd-el-Krim (also named as such) believed that Spain could play an important role for the modernisation of Morocco and, according to some authors, he started to collaborate with Spain from 1902 (De Madariaga 2013, 129). As mentioned before, Abd-el-Krim the father, like many other inhabitant of the *cabilas* close to the Spanish enclaves, was on good terms with the military authorities of Alhucemas. This also included civilians and traders and as a consequence he ended up establishing a long-term friendship with the Spanish authorities. His son, our anti-colonialist protagonist, accepted a public position in Melilla after his studies in the University of Qarawiyyin of Fez, where he worked as a teacher at a recently opened school for the children of the Moroccan families established in Melilla (De Madariaga 2013, *ibid*). In addition to his teaching position, he regularly published articles in the newspaper *El Telegrama del Rif* in which ‘he proclaimed the benefits of European help, more specifically of Spain, as a way of increasing the economic and cultural level of the Moroccan population and of taking Morocco out of the underdevelopment in which the country was sunk’ (De Madariaga 2009, 69). He even ended up working as a civil servant, undertaking duties as interpreter and informant for the maintenance of the good relations of ‘friendship and

neighbourhood' (De Madariaga 2009, 70) between the bordering *cabilas* and the area of the Spanish Protectorate. Parallel to all this, both son and father undertook other actions related to the acceptance and progress of the Spanish penetration in the region, something that didn't receive the approval of many of their countrymen who felt more and more oppressed by this foreign interference. Some of these actions helped the Spaniards with the Alhucemas landing of 1911 that had the intention of neutralising those *cabilas* opposed to colonial penetration and to prevent others joining their resistance. However, this project failed, and Abd-el-Krim the father experienced 'fierce opposition by the people in the region, leaving him in a situation of complete defencelessness and finally forcing him to take shelter on the Rock of Alhucemas for some time' (De Madariaga 2009, 74). After that, Abd-el-Krim the father remained hidden for a while in Tétouan and during this period continued collaborating with the Spanish authorities for the organisation of a further Alhucemas landing in 1913. This project also failed and left him and his family once again in a state of complete neglect. At this point, the father started to distance himself from the Spanish collaborators, even writing certain proclamations in which he encouraged the *cabilas* to resist the Spanish occupation. When this information reached the authorities, the father tried to 'persuade them that he did this as a way of recovering the people's support' (De Madariaga 2009, 76). However, a distance continued to grow between both sides, even after the father returned to Axdir and continued working for the Spaniards with the mission of 'creating in the section of Beni Urriaguel a "Spanish party" to prevent this *cabila* from joining those opposed to the advance of the Spanish troops' (De Madariaga 2009, 79). The final breakdown happened in 1916, after the failure of yet another Alhucemas landing left the father once again unprotected. At that time, the situation in the north was quite convulsive. The First World War had impacts on the area due to the discontent of Germany with the Anglo-Franco agreements. According to De Madariaga, 'Germany, being conscious of the relevant role of Islam in the French colonial empire of North Africa, tried to get the Muslims involved through the support of Turkey in a strategy against France' (De Madariaga 2009, 118). At the *cabilas* of the Rif bordering the Spanish Protectorate, the anti-French movement rose rapidly. On Spain's part, the area under its protection remained uncontrolled and its 'civilising mission' unfulfilled. The military expenses were in fact a burden for the public treasury. Finally, 'in 1920 when the two sons of Abd-el-Krim returned to Axdir from Madrid and Melilla, they declared

their non-collaboration with the Spanish troops and later joined the resistance' (De Madariaga 2009, 193).

According to De Madariaga, one of the episodes of the Rif War that has left a profound imprint in the Spanish collective memory was the killing of soldiers and citizens in Zeluán, Nador and the Arruit mountain during the Annual War of 1921. 'The Spanish press blamed these killings on the Rifian troops of Abd-el-Krim, something that still sways general opinion, but that accordingly they were perpetrated by the troops of the Eastern *cabilas*.'⁵⁹ (De Madariaga 2009, 194). This strategy of criminalising the son of Abd-el-Krim by the Spanish press might have to do with the support for the establishment of the Republic of the Rif after the Annual War gaining hold in certain sectors in Spain and the refusal by some Spanish military troops to continue with the war in Morocco. Incidents such as these hastened the coup d'état of Primo de Rivera and the Spanish dictatorship of 1923-30. On 8 September 1925, the Alhucemas' landing was finally commanded by Primo de Rivera and supported by French forces. This military operation involved the massive employment of the air force in the landing of 136 aircraft, 18 seaplanes and 6 bombers (De Madariaga 2013, 156). From that moment on, the region of the Rif was used as a laboratory for testing new developments in chemical warfare.⁶⁰

According to some authors, once the war was over and during the civil war in Spain (1936-39) 'the previously free Rif with the Abd-el-Krim brothers became the source from where to recruit combatants to support the military coup' (Aragón Reyes, Gahete Jurado and Benlabbah [eds.] 2013, 29). Following the arguments of De Madariaga, this new situation should be read in the context of the poor and miserable conditions in which the Rif was left after the colonial wars. Additionally, the bad harvest of the last years left no alternative (De Madariaga 2013, 327). However, the Moroccans recruited these feared soldiers to be sent to Spain, despite being promised they would stay in

⁵⁹ The historian Maria Rosa de Madariaga maintains this affirmation with some documents provided by Colonel Riquelme in his appearance at the Committee of Responsibilities on 30 July 1923 (De Madariaga 2009, 153-154 and 238).

⁶⁰ 'The first air attack with mustard gas took place on 14, 26 and 28 July 1923 against the *cabila* of Temsaman. The bombers intensified their attacks during 1924, continuing for the whole period of the war until 10 July 1927, officially the last day of the war. The attacks were not indiscriminate but targeted certain specific *cabilas*. However, the bombers threw chemical gases not just upon combatants, but also upon bazaars, causing numerous victims among the civil population' (De Madariaga 2013, 157).

Morocco.⁶¹ For that reason, the recruitment of the Moroccan troops in the *cabilas* did not at the beginning meet with any resistance, although that changed when they knew they were to be taken to Spain: even some Regular troops resisted. Nevertheless, in total the estimated figure of Regulars sent to Spain is 80,000 from which 9,000 came from the French area and Ifni (De Madariaga 2013, 335). This sad episode in history has left a profound trauma for many Spaniards and Moroccans and has caused important consequences that have directly affected the relationship between both communities. One of these had to do with the seizing of the concept of friendship, which across history had been employed within an ideological battle. This strategy of taking the control of what is and is not friendship has helped to perpetuate the state of power.

The historian Maria Rosa De Madariaga confers responsibility for the oblivion of Abd-el-Krim from the Spanish collective memory to a double consideration that came out within the context of the Spanish Civil War. The author points to a dichotomy between ‘the so-called “friendly and good Moroccan” (“moro amigo”, “moro bueno”) for the Franco supporters and the “Moroccan enemy” (“moro cruel”, “moro salvaje”) for the Republicans, associating both connotations with “the thousands of Moroccan combatants who participated in the Francoist lines in the Spanish War”’ (De Madariaga 2009, 19). This opposition between the friendly Moroccan and the Moroccan enemy, which was in fact a reflection of the division between the Francoists and the Republicans, prevented other previous alliances from remaining active during the Rif War that would take place later during the Spanish war. Those alliances could have been encouraged by earlier support for Abd-el-Krim and the free establishment of the Republic of the Rif that came from certain Spanish liberal political factions before the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. As De Madariaga indicates, ‘after all, the authors of the Spanish coup of July 1936 belonged to the African-militarist stock that owned its own predominance and power to the defeat of Abd-el-Krim’ (De Madariaga 2009, 19).

3.4. Considerations Among the Notion of Friendship

⁶¹ From the appendix of the military report of July 1936, AEF, Maroc 1917-40, CPC, Box 208 (De Madariaga 2013, 328).

For some time now, the concept of friendship has played an important role in my professional development as an independent curator and as a curator involved in the shaping of public institutions.⁶² In particular, my interest in this term has lain in its political implications when it comes time to exercise the potential configuration of multiple models of collectivity. That is why I have understood this term very much linked to the dynamics of knowledge production, which in fact have always worked for me as an affective context in wherein I believe curatorial practice is inscribed. Thus, we could say that friendship implies an affective economy that can feed the curatorial and therefore transmit knowledge and practice as well as create a collective ground. However, we should admit that the concept of friendship within the public sphere could as well be perceived as something dubious and promiscuous.⁶³ This comes when friendship is linked to the production of benefit and therefore throws suspicion over its employment in public matters. In spite of that, we could also affirm that it is precisely the misgivings that the term stirs up those who confirm its active political dimension related to its role in the conformation of collective experiences, new models of community and self-instituting processes of antagonism.

3.4.1. Theoretical Context of the Term

Taking into consideration the negative connotations of the term, it is important to point out the way this notion has been discussed within theory and more precisely in respect to the definition of democracy. In the confrontation of both notions (friendship and democracy) various points of tension emerged between them. First of all, an obvious tension has to do with the principle of equality that defines democracy and the condition of partiality that characterises friendship. Democracy considers citizens equally and therefore attributes to all of them the same rights and duties before the law. Contrary to

⁶² I have dedicated two public conferences to the term and its influences on a series of personal curatorial projects. The first one was presented at the symposium entitled *Producir, Exponer, Interpretar* (Producing, Exhibiting and Interpreting) at Matadero, Madrid in September of 2009 and the second one within the public debate on contemporary art organised by Can Felipa, Sant Andreu Contemporani and Sala d'Art Jove de la Generalitat de Catalunya in Barcelona in December 2010.

⁶³ I became aware of this negative connotation of the term through a personal experience, when a critical voice on certain public digital forums accused me of having worked exclusively with 'my friends' during my position as chief curator at sala rekalde in Bilbao (2006-10). This experience encouraged me to engage with the study of the term.

this, friendship does not operate through universal conditions, instead its logics come into being through the particularity of each individual and situation. Secondly, tension is produced through the idea of justice. In fact, for Aristotle, justice and friendship are closely connected because ‘friendship is implied in every social relation’⁶⁴ (Calvo Martínez 2005, 29). We could even add that justice can be interpreted as a failure of friendship, in other words, when citizens are not able to resolve their problems through friendly means they appeal to justice. Lastly, another tension between democracy and friendship comes from their vital reciprocity between both of them. This is because if we understand friendship as something essential for seeking to ensure happiness for the subject and taking into consideration that the subject appears always immersed within the collective, friendship connects the subject with democracy as a way of offering him or her a stable relation with the social context to which he or she belongs. Therefore, if friendship is indispensable for the configuration of social structures, democracy needs friendship in order to build a good life-in-common for their citizens. These tensions and interconnections between democracy and friendship help us to understand why friendship has been studied as a crucial concept since the early days of philosophy. For example, Aristotle dedicated books 8 and 9 of his *Nicomachean Ethics* to the term friendship and they have been employed as references by contemporary thinkers in order to update the concept in respect to the current theoretical debates. Authors such as Giorgio Agamben, Maurice Blanchot, Jacques Derrida, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Leela Gandhi to mentioned but a few have referred to and shared reflections on the term.

I would like to introduce some ideas that I have extracted from some of these authors with the intention of acknowledging the role of friendship within this research. After that, the term will be also read more in detail in respect to curatorial practice and also with regards to the management of the sub-Saharan migration in which Spain and Morocco have established a ‘friendly’ cooperation through an ongoing border externalisation.

I would like to start with Giorgio Agamben’s approach to the term, as we used his contribution in the reading group with Heidi Vogels. The Italian philosopher dedicates a

⁶⁴ Translated by the author.

seminar on friendship, published by the journal *Contretemps* in 2004, where he focuses on analysing its tied relationship with the very definition of philosophy. This is made obvious from the start of the essay, when he affirms that without friendship, philosophy would not be at all possible. Agamben argues this idea as such:

The intimacy of friendship and philosophy is so deep that philosophy includes the *philos*, the friend, in its very name and, as is often the case with all excessive proximities, one risks not being able to get to the bottom of it. In the classical world, this promiscuity – and, almost, consubstantiality – of the friend and the philosopher was taken for granted, and it was certainly not without a somewhat archaizing intent that a contemporary philosopher – when posing the extreme question, “what is philosophy?” – was able to write that it was a question to be dealt with *entre amis* (Agamben 2004, 2).

In this essay Agamben dedicates the effort of bringing up to date the importance of friendship for contemporary philosophy, especially after an interchange of letters with his friend Jean-Luc Nancy concerning the intention of working this same subject together. Furthermore, the publication of Jacques Derrida entitled *The Politics of Friendship* (London & New York: Verso, 1997) seems to mark a precedent for Agamben. In that book, the French philosopher also gathers some reflections on the same notion that he developed through a seminar that took place between 1988 and 1989 in Paris. Derrida’s book is completed by several passages written in response to the loss of some of his philosopher friends (among them Paul de Man) through which he treats directly concepts like heritage, interpretation and responsibility in order to engage with the concept of democracy, that for him seems only possible as something to come, as an ongoing becoming. For Derrida, friendship always implies a political dimension, as he believes ‘there is no democracy without the community of friends’ (Derrida 2005, 22).

Agamben is also interested in the political dimension of friendship and he also refers back to Aristotle’s books on friendship to reflect on the politics of consensus ‘to which current democracies entrust their fates’ (Agamben 2004, 7). Some of these reflections point to the fact that the friend is the other to oneself, its *alter ego*. He expresses this as: ‘The friend is not another I, but an otherness immanent in self-ness, a becoming other of

the self” (Agamben 2004, 6). Moreover, he calls attention to the fact that the perception of our own existence, others and the world is permanently shared out. That means that somehow perception always remains incomplete and divided. In this respect, friendship marks and gives account of such division and the need of confronting and partaking the experiences in order to complete the way we perceive our close environment and even ourselves. Here, it lays, for the Italian philosopher, the political dimension of friendship, in the way the subject constantly confronts his or her friend’s lived experiences in order to reach the perception of himself or herself, the others and the world. This happens when there is a life in common, when experiences, thoughts and conversations are shared.

In relation to this confrontation between friends, Chantal Mouffe proposes an ‘agonistic’ model of democracy in her book *On the Political* (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2005). In this contribution, Mouffe dedicates the effort of analysing the social model of today and refers to it as a ‘post-political’ society that suffers from a great dissatisfaction with the current democratic institutions. In her opinion, this is due to the fact that the democratic model has based its functioning on the establishment of a consensus. However, Mouffe points out that political life has been always rooted in conflict between different positions, an antagonism that cannot be eradicated. In this respect, for Mouffe consensus is never executed without employing exclusion. In order to transcend this antagonist model of democracy based on the confrontation between ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’, the author proposes a new revitalising model that surpasses the binary friend/enemy and for that she proposes the term adversary. Mouffe sees ‘the adversarial model as constitutive of democracy because it allows democratic politics to transform antagonism into agonism’ (Mouffe 2005, 20). The author seems to suggest the adversary as certain synthesis of both friend and enemy, something like a ‘friendly enemy’ who shares a common ethical and political ground, but differs in how this should be interpreted and put into practice. Thus, she conceives the agonistic model of democracy as an ongoing conflict between diverse interpretations of a series of common principles, in her own words, as a ‘conflictual consensus’ (Mouffe 2005, 52) that executes agreement in the principles, but disagreement in their interpretations. Therefore, Mouffe puts the emphasis in the integrative role that conflict plays in modern democracy.

Going through all these theoretical reflections, we should admit that friendship is the battlefield of politics *par excellence*. But, if so, which is the common space of friends? The Brazilian philosopher Peter Pál Pelbart in his book *Filosofía de la deserción: Nihilismo, locura y comunidad* (Philosophy of Desertion: Nihilism, Madness and Community, Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2009) warns of how the common has been turned into the very core of economical production. Due to this, Pál Pelbart claims that ‘this common is where all the captures and seizures coming out from capitalism are aimed to’ (Pál Pelbart 2009, 24). The Chapter, ‘La comunidad de los sin comunidad’ (The Community of those without Community) compiles a series of philosophical proposals on the notions of the common and community in order to figure out the way to escape of such a seizure. Texts like *The Inoperative Community* by Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Coming Community* by Giorgio Agamben, *The Unavowable Community* by Maurice Blanchot and the notion of ‘negative community’ by George Bataille help the author to formulate the idea of ‘the community of those who are alone’. This is a proposal that searches for the way through which to battle back against the recuperation of the common by late capitalism. Pál Pelbart’s ‘community of those who are alone’ is based on Agamben’s notion of the ‘whatever singularity’ (Agamben 2003, 67) through which the Brazilian philosopher envisions the possibility of setting up a new community. ‘The community of those who are alone’ of Pál Pelbart implies therefore the inconsistent multiplicity of ‘whatever singularities’ that remain distanced and diverse. His intention is directed to the search for a new community where community was not believed to exist and of calling into question the community where this is believed to exist. In short, he aims to promote the need of desiring new emerging communities, new forms of getting together that may arise from the most unexpected contexts.

Finally, and following this same line of thought, Leela Gandhi considers friendship as ‘the lost trope in anticolonial thought’ (Gandhi 2006, 14). The author goes back to the tied relationship between friendship and politics in Western thought, again through Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethic*, where a ‘close attention to the ethical obligations of *philia* and the *Politics*’ (Gandhi 2006, 28) is played, so to speak, to the political obligations of citizenship. Leela goes back to Aristotle’s conception of friendship to reveal in it a certain *homophilic* bond to fellow citizens. In opposition to this, her claim tries to search for other connotations to the term that can be extracted from non-Western

thought and anticolonial experiences, another model of friendship that is capable of proceeding without recourse to ‘a horizon of recognition’. She suggests that we are also in need of another model of the political, a contingent and nomadic model that offers an anti-communitarian community. Within this new model, the author wonders: ‘what, then, might such a friendship be?’ (Gandhi 2006, 28).

3.4.2. In Relation to the Control of the Flux of Migration

I would like to offer now some reflections on the notion of friendship in connection to the current control management of the flux of migration coming out from Africa into Europe. For this, I have to refer back to a personal experience of friendship that I have experienced in recent years though my participation in the study group called *Península*,⁶⁵ hosted since 2012 at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid). In particular, my involvement in *Península* has been developed through the line of investigation called *Colonialismo Interno*⁶⁶ (Internal Colonialism) that is focused on the analysis of the reproduction of social hierarchies within the control of borders and migration management policies of Spain. In the context of this collaboration, I learnt from geographer Sebastián Cobarrubias and anthropologist Maribel Casas the need to defend the importance of the role of borders in order to understand the current social transformations that are very much influenced by the question of migration itself. Therefore, I would like to point now to the ongoing process of externalisation of the dividing border between Europe and Africa, which establishes other social processes of

⁶⁵ The *Península* group is a debate platform on art, coloniality and curatorship related to Spanish and Portuguese history, their colonial processes and the latency of their power relations in the present. For more information, see: <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/node/42115>

⁶⁶ The *Península* group gathers within several lines of investigation and one of them is called *Colonialismo Interno* (Internal Colonialism). This line of investigation has been developed by María Iñigo Clavo, Mónica Carballas, Sebastián Cobarrubias, Maribel Casas, Sally Gutiérrez, Gonçalo Sousa Pinto, José Manuel Bueso and myself. The expression *Colonialismo Interno* was employed critically for the first time in Mexico in 1960s by Latin American authors such as Pablo González Casanova and Rodolfo Stavenhagen and has recently been revisited by contemporary authors such as Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Walter Dignolo. The term emphasises the internal dynamics of colonialism that operates within new alliances. In particular, it calls attention to the fact that former colonial policies were maintained within the rhetoric of the emerging states in Latin America after their independence. The authors claim that this colonial transference generated thus an internal strengthening of the power structures against the Indigenous and African descendant communities. A power structure that continues to be active today.

partition and coalition that are active beyond the material borders that operate as territorial demarcations. The work of Casas, Sebastián and Pickles focuses on the way the borders in Africa are inscribed within the interests of EU foreign policymakers in controlling the flow of humans coming from the South. European migration projects such as ENP (*European Neighbourhood Policy*)⁶⁷ and GAM (*Global Approach to Migration*),⁶⁸ influential think tanks on migration such as the ICMPD (*International Centre for Migration Policy Development*)⁶⁹ and semi-independent police-military bodies such as FRONTEX⁷⁰ are introduced in their research as key players in the migration control. However, this control is wielded not exclusively within border areas, but also throughout the migrant flux, that is, through the routes followed by the migrants within Africa, establishing thus a shifting zone of power and a new set of relations and collaborations between the countries of departure, transit and arrival. The role that plays the notion of friendship in the phenomenon of ‘border externalisation’ in the European Union, and in particular in the case of Spain, connects with the colonial continuities that some authors claim implicit in today’s migration management. (Mezzadra in Cobarrubias et. al 2011, 584-98). In other words, it seems the alliances of past European colonialism in Africa are still operating today in the context of the current control of the flux of migration.⁷¹ Besides, these power alliances do not reflect the relationships between citizens and communities. Contrary to this, citizens remain in fact separated and divided by the cultural, social and physical borders that have grown between them. Once again, the notion of friendship here remains seized for the benefit of a few powerful structures. Casas, Cobarrubias and Pickles propose to look at the

⁶⁷ The ENP was founded in 2004 and it functions as a distinct programme of foreign relations specifically geared to neighbouring, non-candidate countries. This coalition includes the neighbours just outside the current official limits of the EU: all North African and Eastern Mediterranean countries, parts of Eastern Europe and all the Caucasian states (Casas et. al 2011, 78-79).

⁶⁸ The GAM, founded in 2005, is central for the development of border externalisation, being the central framework for understanding common migration and border policy in relation to third countries and operating to induce and coordinate third party action. (Casas et. al 2011, 80).

⁶⁹ ICMPD was founded in 1993 and has its base in Vienna. It is one of the earliest institutions that proposed cooperation on border management between EU and non-EU countries and since the beginning has operated under an ambiguous status, not an official EU agency and something more than an NGO or think-tank (Casas et. al 2011, 81).

⁷⁰ FRONTEX was founded in 2005. It coordinates EU member state border and security policies and institutions from their headquarters in Warsaw. It also works closely with other security organisations such as EUROPOL and CEPOL (Casas et. al 2011, 82).

⁷¹ An example of this can be followed through programmes such as *The Rabat Process* which ‘provides a forum for coordination between certain EU member states and third states, as well as the EU as a whole, all working along the West African route. At the EU level, Spain, along with France, both of them former colonial powers established in Morocco, has taken a leading role in this Process’ (Casas et. al 2011, 83).

border no longer as a line, but as ‘an amalgam of member state policies and EU initiatives’, (Casas et. al 2011, 75) that conform ‘novel forms of economic cooperation and integration between countries and especially between third countries and the EU’ (Casas et.al ibid). Apart from this, the authors call attention to one of the consequences that arises from this new concept of border, that is, to an expanded ‘policing and reassertion of what is “inside” and “outside”’ (Casas et.al ibid). At this point, we should go back to the question of the political dimension of friendship and to its role within democracy. Leela Gandhi’s claim for the search of a new political model that does not reproduce the dynamics of recognition between those who are the same (in terms of nationality, race and class) can be also acknowledged in the context of today’s migration management. Within this framework, her demand can be translated into the need for a new border thinking that stops criminalising those who are different and consequently get expelled. In fact, we are in need of them, in the same way as Agamben claims we are in need of the friend in order to complete the course of perception. In other words, we are in need of the migrants in order to redefine concepts such as friendship, justice, citizenship and democracy.

3.4.3. In Relation to Curatorial Practice

The term of friendship has been crucial in the shaping of some personal curatorial projects in which education (self-education, collective learning and knowledge production processes) has played a central role. As a matter of fact, these projects have not necessarily been developed exclusively through the format of the exhibition. More concretely, on some occasions they have emerged parallel to the exhibition *dispositif* or have deactivated it temporarily with the intention of allowing other collective dynamics within the exhibition room. In other situations, they have even been initiated completely outside the limits of the exhibition. This is the case for example with the project *Dispositifs of Touching* in Tetouán, which from the start was developed outside the regime of the exhibition. As mentioned before, this was a sort of a principle that I imposed on myself when I started this research and later had to define the project for Trankat. This self-imposition had the intention of trying out other curatorial formats,

apart from the exhibition, that allowed new forms of collective configurations away from the institutionalised procedures. In this sense, my obsession had to do with the configuration of a potential new public for the *plazas* as much as constituting an affective group of people that could try out other ways of being together and share thoughts and experiences around these specific forbidden territories. We could understand this intention as a desire for breaking down the border, of searching for a new political (border) model that generates new assemblages outside the given conditions, as Leela Gandhi demands. Of course, this initiative had a modest dimension, as we were only a small group of people reading, studying and discussing ideas around the *plazas*. However, this group functioned in my imagination as a potential social model for envisioning new interactions and contacts that escape the way culture, history and politics normally regulate our way of getting together. This initiative was inspired by early precedents that I had produced in different contexts. One of these had to do with a workshop I organised together with the Basque independent curator and critic Peio Aguirre at Arteleku (Donostia-San Sebastián) in 2005. Under the name, *We Rule the School: A Community of Investigation*⁷² we aimed to define an educational situation in which the active crossover of theory and (artistic) practice could prepare the ground for a shared experience between young artists, critics, curators and anyone interested in contemporary art production.

⁷² International artists and curators were invited to introduce their practice and share relevant issues with the group concerning them. The guests were: Apolonija Sustersic, Hyunjin Kim, Haegue Yang, Pavel Büchler, Asier Mendizabal, Lars Bang Larssen, Soren Andreassen and Tone Hansen.



Illustration 11. *We Rule The School* Workshop, Arteleku, Donostia-San Sebastián, 2005. Photo by Heidi Vogels.

The knowledge transference from one practice to other and a common lived situation during the period of two weeks were the active drivers within this educational experience. I introduce now this old example because Heidi Vogels was then a young artist who applied for our workshop at Arteleku. In this context, she participated as a ‘student’ together with 14 young artists and writers and finally contributed, with no one asking her, a beautiful photographic documentation of the workshop.⁷³

This experience led me to invite Heidi Vogels to participate in the reading group in Tetouán, but this time as a guest artist who could introduce a specific practice to share with students and young participants. After the experience of *We Rule the School*, in which friendship was introduced as a concept to be considered by the group and which in the end also functioned as an active and live agent for configuring an educational project, other initiatives came along. A more recent one has to do with my involvement at Bulegoa z/b, a small institution that I initiated together with three friends in 2010 in Bilbao.

⁷³ In particular, this was the visual documentation that I used for the two public conferences on the term friendship at Matadero (Madrid) and Can Felipa (Barcelona).

Our project *EL CONTRATO* (2013-14), a reading group turned into an exhibition, is another example of this mode of working. As already mentioned, this project finished just some months before I arrived in Tétouan for the first time and it functioned as a source of inspiration for the project to be developed there. The challenge though in Morocco was to engage with a context that was stranger for me. That implied working with a new group of people and even with some artists like the case of Younès Rahmoun and Youssef El Yedidi who I didn't know beforehand. In spite of all this, friendship was growing slowly between all of us, who were strangers to each other before starting the project. However, progressively we managed to produce a comfortable and trustful space in which we could share our thoughts and impressions, a temporality that we constructed only out of texts, artistic practices, chosen places for each occasion and some time together.

3.5. Speculating on the Term Friendship in the Context of this Research

3.5.1. The Work of Heidi Vogels

Heidi Vogels arrived in Tétouan just in time to participate in the session of Younès Rahmoun. The taxi left her at the house of Ybel Dersa when we had just started the session and she was able to participate together with the rest of the group in the discussion on Nancy's text and Rahmoun's practice. The following day was her turn and we went together to prepare the salon of Dar Sanâa. We took with us the screen from Dar Ben Jelloun as she wanted to project some scenes from her film in-the-making entitled *GARDENSOF FEZ*. She began this project in 2011 in the Medina of Fez, one of the biggest and best-preserved pre-modern Arab-Muslim cities in the world. The work in particular tries to reflect on the current state of the disappearance of the gardens of Fez. Over the last thirty years, most of them have been destroyed or left to degenerate into ruins due to 'modernisation, overpopulation and a general economic decline' (Vogels and Kuipers 2015, 1). As a consequence of all this, 'the garden plots have been

turned into parking lots, the rivers have been polluted by plastic and chemical waste, a new (priced) water system has been installed and wealthy families have moved elsewhere – their luxurious Riads and palaces are now abandoned and unmaintained” (Vogels and Kuipers 2015, *ibid*). Since 2011, she has been visiting Fez trying to access the memories, stories and everyday life experiences of several people, as a way to access virtually the disappearing gardens. Her project has been sustained by ‘all manner of encounters, developed into a close community of friends, city residents, architects, historians, and other experts’ (Vogels and Kuipers 2015, 1-2). These exchanges have provided her over the years with a particular way of reading the city and its gardens.



Illustration 12. *GARDENS OF FEZ*, 2011- ongoing. Heidi Vogels.

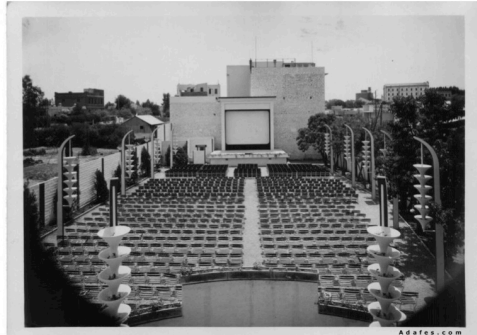
Once the group is together at Dar Sanâa, we start the session. We decide to concentrate first in the work of Heidi Vogels and then on the text by Giorgio Agamben. For that, we first gather together in the main salon of the school and then in the garden. Her presentation starts with one of the scenes from the film. It is about 1 minute in duration and we see and hear Rajae, who lives in the Medina of Fez and works as a teacher, reciting a passage from the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges’ *The Book of Imaginary Beings*. Rajae is one of the first people Heidi met when she started the project in Fez and she is the main character in the film. Thanks to her, Heidi has navigated the labyrinthine web of narrow and half-lit streets and alleys of the city, opening for her other multiple spaces and worlds based on memories, imagination and

affection. Through this short scene, the session starts to circle around the possibilities for the film. Heidi tells us how the passage of Borges' read by Rajae, which tries to express the inseparable bond between reality and virtuality, could be the opening scene of the film. The artist is interested in using it in order to introduce the connection between physical spaces, today in the process of disappearing, and imagined worlds infused by past lived experiences and mystical stories. The garden for Heidi is very much like a mirror, where we can see reflections of these imagined worlds. She is inspired to do this comparison by Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia and the way – by contrast to the notion of utopia, which refers purely to a fictional place – it opens up another world alongside ours. In the essay 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', Foucault offers several examples to introduce the term heterotopia. Together with the cemetery, the brothel and the museum, he also introduces the garden, the cinema and the mirror (Foucault 1984, 3-6). In Heidi Vogels' presentation we navigate across these three last elements, the garden, the cinema and the mirror, within the urban landscape of the Moroccan city of Fez. All three present themselves before us as an interwoven reality via a series of documents and photographs that the artist has collected over these last years.

Heidi shares with us part of the knowledge she has accumulated trying to reconstruct the stories of the forgotten gardens. She tells that the reasons for this abandonment has to do with the rapid development of the city in recent years. Documentary photographic sources are also introduced to highlight the different dynamics between the old gardens and those from today. For example, she shows us an old photograph of a garden that in the past was used to grow vegetables in between other plants and flowers, and thus allowed other forms of relations between its users. By contrast, she screens an image taken by her of a waste ground close to a stream where people now go for picnics.

This comparison helps Heidi to track the flow of water in the city and the current privatisation of this natural source that is causing serious problems. The images allow us to go from the world of a past sustainable city to the world of a city that is becoming increasingly more privatised. In this respect, the gardens in Vogels' work can be seen as an important heritage of that past, but also as potential places for recuperating a better model of the citizen's life. She refers to many different details concerning these changes that she has arrived at through multiple conversations with people from the Medina,

other experts and friends. What comes out from the images and her explanations is an affective cartography that tries to animate a vanishing reality. The gardens of Fez thus become a strong place from which to look at all these different worlds and to invoke changes that could improve the sharing of a space. This is a knowledge that comes from taking care of the gardens, of using them for collective benefits. Through her images and stories, we walked virtually through private old Riads, public gardens still existent, parking lots and even hidden grounds that seem not so idyllic. The film also aims to capture the current stories that are taking place today in these gardens. Again, this is a way of mirroring the past with the present and through that superimposition unfolding the web of affairs of love, politics and power that shaped everyday life. The stories Heidi introduces in her presentation unveil some traces of the French colonial presence as well. For example, she shows us a black-and-white image of an outdoor cinema called *Le Jardin d' Eté* from 1939. This was a cinema built by the French authorities and which was located within a public garden. This image is a good mark of how tradition and modernity crossed paths in the open field of the city of Fez during the French Protectorate. More concretely, this image can be seen as a visual and historical record of a past effort to bring together two cultural artefacts: one (the Arabic garden) coming from a non-Western tradition and the other (the cinema) from Western modernity. This image gives an extremely interesting account of establishing an encounter between both cultures, an encounter that responded to a series of colonial interests within the context of the Protectorate. However, the image today also offers another reading that has to do with the after effects of such a cultural encounter. This is a new public terrain in which the two cultural artefacts find themselves in a state of disappearance.



Cinéma Le Jardin d'Été intérieur de jour, Fez 1939



Illustration 13. Archive Images. *GARDENSOFFEZ*, 2011-ongoing. Heidi Vogels.

The mirror could be understood in Heidi's work as the intersection of both the garden and the cinema but also as another autonomous element, one that gives account of other worlds that grow parallel to reality. The mirror is the device through which Heidi introduces her encounter with many stories related to the spirits of the mysticism of Sufism. These are stories that she has collected through her contact with the people of Fez, stories that fashion another conception of phenomenology that in the context of the reading session gained special relevance when later we discuss Agamben's text. Besides, the mirror allows a break in the middle of the presentation, as soon Moroccan participants like Youssef, Nouha, Mariam, Wiame, etc. shared their knowledge about different ancient mythologies about some *djinn*s.⁷⁴

Throughout the presentation, I am impressed by Heidi's engagement with the object of her artistic research and the city of Fez, and I found it very interesting to hear her in a context in which most of the participants come from Morocco. Heidi shares her expertise regarding the current situation of the gardens of Fez with all of us. In fact, no

⁷⁴ Supernatural creatures introduced by Islamic mythology and theology.

one seems to be very familiar with that city, apart from knowing the place through visits. However, I also wonder if her attention to the gardens of Fez would have been the same if she were a Moroccan artist. Her fascination with the landscape and the multiple stories and memories seem to be fed by a certain external position. Her fascination with ‘grabbing’ the Arabic garden as a non-Western cultural form could be the trigger for making her engage with it for more than four years. While I am thinking this, I realise I have a similar feeling in respect to my own position in relation to the *plazas*. In fact, since the very beginning the impossibility of reaching them physically has been what stimulated my engagement with them. These two examples prove how an obsession for a place can turn into a strong commitment. Even though Heidi Vogels’ film is still unfinished, she mentions to the group her next step in the project: ‘I need to raise some money now for the editing.’ After four years of work, it is clear that her commitment to the gardens of Fez is still going strong.



Illustration 14. *GARDENSOFFEZ*. Film Still, 2011-ongoing. Heidi Vogels.

3.5.2. A Reading Session on the Notion of Friendship at Dar Sanâa, Tétouan

From the audio-recording of the session:

After Heidi's presentation, it is time to 'give the floor' to Giorgio Agamben. For this, we decide to go out into the garden and to read some passages of his text 'Friendship'. I propose to do the same as we did in the second session with Younès Rahmoun, that is, to read the text together aloud and to stop wherever we find something interesting. However, as the text is a bit longer than that of Nancy, I suggest we start from page number 4, precisely where Agamben introduces the painting by Serodine that depicts the encounter of the apostles Peter and Paul on their way to martyrdom. We easily get into the text and we share between some of us the task of reading aloud. We are all concentrating and no one interrupts the reading before we finish.

Aymeric breaks the silence to ask Heidi about her opinion on the correlation between her project and the notion of friendship. Heidi talks about how, for her, the project has turned into a way of living and through that it has configured progressively a community of friends who have helped her to get engaged with the work in a very special manner. She explains then that this community has given another dimension to the work and research, a living dimension that has been shared with people. She clarifies that for her it was not sufficient to discover a garden and then go inside to film it. Instead, she decided to access these places through the different people she encountered during the process. Thus, their own stories and memories provided a very particular perception of the gardens. After Heidi's appreciation I refer to the fact that every time we read a text we pay attention to certain details and leave others behind. I explain to the group that during this reading I was surprised by the tied relationship Agamben proposes between existing, perceiving and friendship. 'For the Italian philosopher,' I mention, 'it seems not possible to exist and to perceive without the friend: we need the friend in order to fulfil our existence and complete our perception.' Mariam puts my comment into context. She refers to how Agamben introduces the self in respect to the other (otherness) in the form of a deficiency. So, the other (otherness) helps the self to have an identity. She finds this contribution really interesting, the way identity is introduced as an entity that in fact has to be completed by the other (otherness). This intervention helps us to discuss the notion of the other and how within

Western culture this notion represents to certain degree a marginalised position in respect to the self. In that sense, the other is that who is radically different to the (Western) self. It is interesting to share ideas about this appreciation in a non-Western location, and in particular within a group that is actually mixed. We all agree that the friend differs from that idea of the (radically different) other. However, the friend seems within Agamben's logic not to be an autonomous being, as this notion is always introduced as the missing part that helps to achieve the self. In the same way, the self is not autonomous either, as it is always in need of the friend to be completed. Ihsane adds that the friend is the limit, the separation and the unification of both the self and the other. So, friendship is actually this intersection that constitutes the subject, something that remains mixed and makes difficult the division between the parts. In response to this, Nouha brings attention to the idea of the excessive proximity that Agamben introduces through the painting by Serodine and the way it represents friendship by an excessively close distance between the apostles who cannot see each other, but they are able to recognise themselves. Heidi sees connections between this idea of 'excessive proximity' and her project in the sense that even though she had clear what she was looking for at the beginning, with time she is still unable to understand many things and has even realised how there is always something new that constantly appears in the process. She also refers to how, for example, Rajae, her closest friend in Fez during this period, conceptually speaking, has served her as a mirror. Heidi explains how Rajae has projected many issues related to the film back to her and therefore has allowed her to appreciate things she could not have seen alone. Besides, through Rajae, Heidi talks in the film. Rajae is the catalyst of all the ideas that have developed through time. These come out in the film through moments like when she recites Borges' passage of *The Book of the Imaginary Beings*. Doing this, she opens the door to a virtual dimension that coexists with the other many experiences that have taken place. A virtual dimension that, as already mentioned, has been approached through the metaphor of the mirror.

Our conversation continues around the notion of 'excessive proximity' as I comment on the possibility that it can be interpreted as a cultural context from which we perceive and interpret things. A context that becomes invisible for us, as it is too familiar and close to the formation of our own identity. I bring up this idea in relation to the role of the diverse forms of spiritual beings that are part of the stories of the people Heidi met in Fez. I admit to the group that for me these references are quite distant and I cannot

comprehend them easily. This impossibility, although I can understand it in relation to the specific cultural context from which I see reality, does not allow me to take these references into account. Youssef then refers back to the mirror precisely at the moment a fruit falls from the tree above. Youssef claims: Newton!

We all laugh.

The mirror is discussed then as the element where we get decentred. The mirror reflects our semblance and through this reflection, we recognise ourselves at the same time that we can distance ourselves from our own image. The mirror in the film represents all the other beings that coexist with us, all the other virtual creatures that live parallel to our own reality. To look at the mirror from this perspective depends on the degree you grow with your own cultural identity. We continue discussing about the ‘excessive proximity’ and the question of culture. That is to say, about the things that constitute us and the ones which we leave behind and reject, because we acknowledge them as being too distant from us. Then Mariam brings in the question of friendship in relation to things. We talk again about the *djinn*s and other forms of virtual spirits. The conversation turns into a knowledge exchange on Sufism and its spiritual sessions. We all listen with great interest and without being too conscious about it, then friendship starts to operate as a process of (cultural) translation. Elliot refers to the fact that we have been discussing the term exclusively from the perspective of Western philosophy and asks the Moroccan participants if they know of any passages from other sources that we could also use in order to consider this notion differently. Youssef refers to the idea of friendship as a form of gathering. He adds: ‘During this session, every time we said the word friendship I was imagining a big “ship” full of friends. The film is also like a big ship.’

We all laugh again.

The session finishes with a collective exercise of writing that I propose to the group for generating the chronicle of the session.

3.5.3. Documentary Materials by Heidi Vogels on the Alhucemas Islands

Heidi Vogels' documentary contribution on the Alhucemas Islands takes the form of a series of photographic sheets that can be found in the appendices section. In those, she gives account of our stay in the bay of Alhucemas as well as the time spent with Younès Rahmoun and his family in Beni Boufrah. The photographic treatment shows a special form of visual editing that superimposes several images. Through this logic of overlapping, landscapes seem to be treated as background, while lived scenes appear as foreground. This effect can remind us of the function of the camera zooming in and out. Through this, the lens can go closer to or more distant from a scene. However, if the camera tries to get too close without the proper lens, the view gets blurred. Some of the images on the sheets are in fact out of focus, an effect caused by an excessive proximity. This unfocused effect makes us wonder about the editing resources employed in the sheets. In fact, all of them can be interpreted in relation to the discussion we had at the reading session that took place at Dar Sâana, in which phenomenology was debated as a product of friendship. The pages also include two black-and-white images, one of the cinema of *Le Jardin d'Été* from 1939 and the other of the *Jnan Sbil* gardens of Fez from 2013. These photographs – formally treated differently to the rest – introduce another conceptual approach. This could be a suggestion to read the islands as heterotopia. As with the garden, the cinema and the mirror, the islands remain outside of us. Throughout all this time, we have been moving around the *plazas*, thinking, reading, discussing and learning together about them, although still without being able to access these territories physically. By going in circles around them, the islands have started to virtually unfold for us.

3.6. Conclusion

In this Chapter, we have approached the Alhucemas Islands through the concept of friendship. This notion has offered us an entry to the historical context of these territories as much as the alliances that have taken place since their early occupation by

Spain. As a continuation, friendship has been introduced by several theoretical sources that have allowed us to consider its political dimension and also its connection to the realm of phenomenology. Finally, the term has been also put in the context of the current management strategies for controlling the flux of migration and has been read in respect to the practice of curating. Against this broad discursive background, we have introduced the work of Heidi Vogels and the reading session with her at Dar Sâana. Her project *GARDENSOF FEZ* has helped us to unfold the many layers of the notion of friendship and has also served us as a model to revise the way the *plazas* are approached in this research. Following this line of thought, the Alhucemas Islands, and the rest of the Spanish enclaves have been suggested to be considered as heterotopia, since they constantly open up new worlds alongside the ones we already know.

Chapter 4. The Chafarinas Islands: Display

4.1. Introduction

This Chapter examines the Chafarinas Islands from the perspective of the concept of display. The small archipelago, controlled by Spain since 1847, comprises three islands called *Isla del Congreso* (In English Congress' Island), *Isla Isabel II* (Isabel II of Spain Island) and *Isla del Rey* (King's Island). Situated at 2 miles from the Moroccan town of Ras el Ma (within the Province of Nador and just 7.4 miles from the border with Algeria) and 27 miles from the city of Melilla, the Chafarinas Islands provide shelter for numerous animal species.

A recent multidisciplinary research has determined that the first settlement of the islands dates from 6,500 years ago. The so-called Zafrín archaeological site undertaken in *Isla del Congreso* 'allowed the inclusion of this region in the scientific debate on the origin and evolution of its Neolithic past, on the contacts with the Iberian Peninsula through the Strait of Gibraltar, as well as on the documentation of ways of life, habitation structures and economic strategies' (Gibaja, Carvalho, Rojo, Garrido and García 2012, 3095-3140).

Out of the three islands, *Isla Isabel II* was the only one to be inhabited during the Spanish occupation, reaching a peak population of almost one thousand people. The island, that in total has an area of 15 hectares, came to have a hospital, a church, a school, a post office and a casino. The last family to live on the island left in 1986. Today, it is occupied only by a military garrison from the Regulares section and by some staff from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment of the Spanish Government. During summer, some archaeologists visit the island to work at the site of Zafrín.

The smallest islet of the archipelago is *Isla del Rey* and it has never been inhabited. The only construction there is a civilian cemetery. Once a year, a boat from the Spanish navy transports people from Melilla who want to visit the tombs of family members buried there.

The Chapter follows the common structure applied previously, diverse sources (lived experiences, historical references, theory and artistic works) give account of the forgotten enclave. In this context, the notion of display offers a conceptual entry to the enclave of Chafarinas. Inspired by the representation of this archipelago by the exhibition display currently on show at the Archaeology Museum of Melilla, the Chapter approaches the islands through an examination of the different modes of museum staging. In this line, the term display is approached through several historical exhibitory examples in order to claim an ideological implication for itself. Furthermore, the concept is also examined in correlation with the practice of exhibiting items and objects within the field of ethnography. This perspective for approaching the notion of display comes into being through the experience of a reading group session that took place during the curatorial initiative by Bulegoa z/b entitled *EL CONTRATO* developed during 2012 and 2013 at Azkuna Zentroa in Bilbao.

Moreover, the Chapter also introduces the way the term operated as a trigger for the documentary work⁷⁵ produced for the occasion by young Basque artist Marion Cruza Le Bihan during our stay in Tétouan and Melilla. Finally, the multiple conversations and visits to different museums and archives of both cities offered us a vantage point from which to approach conceptually the hidden archipelago of the Alboran sea. An entry point configured out of different display methods applied during the Spanish Protectorate, the period of decolonisation and the present time for portraying culture and life in the north of Morocco.

4.2. Context

Monday, 19 October 2015

⁷⁵ The work entails a performance character that makes it specific each time it is executed. Within the appendices section, Marion Cruza Le Bihan has conceived a visual form that tries to 'translate' the specific event realised at Trankat on 27 October 2015.

Bilbao-Madrid-MAROC. Tangier airport. Taxi. Motorway. Gala soldiers and Moroccan flags all along the way. Tétouan. Royal Palace. Feddan. Entry to the Medina, labyrinth. Trankat. Rain. El Reducto. We buy fruit with Naziha. Dinner at home, chicken with olives and lemon cooked by Fatima. Alizia shares the house with us.

Tuesday, 20 October 2015

11.00 am at Bab el Okla with Naziha. The Arts & Crafts School. The Ethnography Museum closed. The Medina in depth. School and Museum of Koran, rooftop terrace, call for pray. Centre-periphery of the Medina, hides are tanned. Wicker, hide... cemetery. Gare Routière, Plaza taxi. Possible routes to Melilla. The king opens a new bridge. A snack beside Naziha's home. Back to Dar Ben Jelloun. Feeling nervous. More options on Internet for travelling to Melilla from Tétouan. Skype with Nouha. Dinner, chicken with olives and lemon.

Wednesday, 21 October 2015

Meeting with Nouha. Communication. 11.00 am Bab el Okla, Naziha. Ethnography Museum. Bordering the Medina's walls, Lovers' Garden. Artisans' Cooperative (maroquinerie, textiles, marquetry...). Cervantes Institute, Inma shares great bibliography. Blanco Izaga and the Rifian House... Lunch at Restinga, white wine, fried fish. Chinese toys sold on the streets for Muslim New Year. Archaeology Museum. Tea at Feddan, not seen the king yet. A bus for the ministers. Back to Cervantes Institute from 17.00 to 19.00. Red wine at El Reducto. Dinner at Trankat with Nouha Ben Yebdri, Youssef El Yedidi, Younès Rahmoun and Laila Eddmane. Reviewing materials.

Thursday, 22 October 2015

11.15 am at Bab el Okla, Naziha. Abdelhalek Torres library (Instituto de Libre Enseñanza/The Free Educational Institution). Archive Mohamed Daoud, meeting with his daughter. Mohamed V National Library, do not allow us to go in. Regional Museum of the Resistance, the Liberation Army and Nationalism. Back home to work and pack our bags. 9.15 pm CTM station, the bus leaves at 10.15 pm. Two hours after, stop in a roadside bar. Some sleep while we cross the Rif through Ketama (N2). In Al Hoceïma most of the passengers off.

Friday, 23 October 2015

At dawn (ochre fog). Nador Station. Collective taxi to Beni Ensar (a police guard on board...). The border on foot with a Moroccan woman who works in Melilla. We lose her, queue for EU citizens. Passport and many questions. Once in Melilla, more walking, residential barracks for Civil Guards, Police, Bar Martínez, churros. Hotel Nacional at Primo de Rivera Street. Shower, rest. Friday afternoon, empty streets like in Tétouan. Lunch at the port, more sleep, bakery Mi Patria, Bar Madrid and La Gaviota.

Saturday, 24 October 2015

Breakfast at Lepanto. Air Force Plaza. The Old Melilla. San Fernando Tunnel, bastion. Hornabeque trench. First enclosure. Army Plaza. Display of shields and flags. Bastion of La Concepción. Museum of Military History and of the Centenary of the Spanish Submarine Military Navy. The Chafarinas on the horizon. Wall of La Cruz, fortified tower-lighthouse Bonete. Centre of Interpretation. Rains. Lunch at the port, a wedding. Museum of History, Archaeology Museum. 6 pm meeting with Antonio Bravo Nieto, outside his office a sign: OFFICIAL CHRONICLER.

Architecture lessons. An old Basque man: Alzugaray Goicoechea (Military Engineer).

Sunday, 25 October 2015

Breakfast at Lepanto. Legionnaire in his uniform. Taxi to the border. Queue. Passport... Collective taxi from Beni Ensar to Nador. We break the plan. The same taxi takes us from Nador to Al Hoceïma. Back again to Beni Ensar for the police license. Bordering Melilla and route to Al Hoceïma through N16. Collective Taxi to Tétouan. Innumerable curves and precipices. We stop at M'Tioua. Arrived at Tétouan at 4 pm.

Monday, 26 October 2015

Notebook, breakfast. Reviewing materials. Leire at the library of Cervantes Institute. Lunch with Nouha at home. Hamman with Naziha at 3 pm. Fruit and vegetables from the street stalls. Work. Cook and dinner with Nouha and Alizia.

Tuesday, 27 October 2015

Still reviewing images. Selected 2,400 items. Long Breakfast. Leire is sick. Projector tests. Naziha comes to pick us up. Visit to the School (inspired by the Spanish Free Educational Institution) at 12 noon. Lunch. The screen is unbalanced. More tests. Youssef arrives... The event is about to start at Trankat.

(Cruza Le Bihan, fieldwork notes, 2015)

Marion Cruza Le Bihan and myself reached the bastion of La Concepción in Old Melilla on Saturday, 24 October 2015. It was a cloudy day and the horizon was chiaroscuro. Once we arrived at the higher part of the fortified area, we tried to discern the archipelago as some people had assured us that on sunny days one can easily see the islands from there. The Museum of Spanish Military History is situated at that particular location and within it a specific section dedicated to the Centenary of the Spanish Submarine Military Navy is also available for public visits.

While contemplating the sea's horizon, the guard at the museum's entrance approached us and asked what we were trying to look at. We explained to him that we aimed to photograph the Chafarinas islands and, as soon as we mentioned this, he got excited. He then mentioned that he had many photos of the islands made with his mobile phone from that same location and suggested we go with him to the guard house so he could show us the images. We went to the small booth where he indeed showed us some of them. Marion took some photographs with her camera of the guard's mobile's images. He was happy and proud and led us to the main room of the museum where guns, uniforms, mock-ups and other military artefacts were on display. No one introduced the objects there: they were on their own, speaking by themselves, thus unfolding the military history in the region and welcoming any spontaneous encounter with the visitors. Once we had finished, we moved to the section of the museum dedicated to the history of the Spanish Submarine Military Navy, which stands in another building. We found a man there awaiting visitors. He was a former Spanish Colonel from the Submarine Navy and quite sympathetic. The first thing he asked us is where we came from, and when we said we were Basques, he seemed to be all right with that. The display was quite modest, comprising a single room where some panels of text and images narrated the story of the Spanish submarine history. He helped us to interpret the materials on exhibition and we felt comfortable enough to make many questions about Spanish submarines, their inner functioning and their role in the various conflicts since late 19th century. We spent around an hour with the colonel and both Marion and I agreed we had found this section of the museum much more interesting than the other. When we were leaving, we read three old signs that stand at the entrance wall to the enclosure. They read as follows:

17 JULY 1936

THE TROOPS OF THIS SUBDIVISION
INITIATED THE GLORIOUS NATIONAL MOVEMENT
TO THE CRY OF
LONG LIFE TO SPAIN'

1936 1939

SPANIARDS READ AND DIVULGE!
49,000 KILLED
247,000 INJURED
18,096 MUTILATED
THIS HAS BEEN THE CONTRIBUTION
OF THE INFANTRY
TO OUR NATIONAL CRUSADE
FOR THAT, SPAIN ASKS YOU
TO PRAY FOR THE FALLEN
RESPECT THE MUTILATED
AND CARE FOR THE INFANTRY'

OFFICIAL WAR NOTICE
FROM THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE GENERALISSIMO
ON THIS DAY THE RED ARMY CAPTIVE AND DISARMED
THE NATIONAL TROOPS HAVE REACHED
THEIR LAST MILITARY TARGETS

THE WAR IS OVER

BURGOS, 1 APRIL 1939, YEAR OF THE VICTORY

FRANCO THE GENERALISSIMO⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Translated by the author.

4.3. History

After our visit to the bastion of La Concepción in Melilla and its museums, we met Antonio Bravo Nieto,⁷⁷ director of UNED (The National Distance Education University) of Melilla. He has been one of the scholars responsible for the multidisciplinary research on the Zafrín archaeological site undertaken in the Chafarinas Islands between 2000 and 2005 by the Institute of Mediterranean Culture. The Archaeology and History Museum of Melilla, also situated at the bastion, has on display a staging of the Neolithic shack excavated in the archaeological site of the Chafarinas and some of the ceramic fragments found during the research.⁷⁸

However, before meeting the scholar, we visited the Archaeology and History Museum of Melilla to examine the logics of the display that gives account of the scientific archaeological investigations on the Zafrín site. Our meeting with Bravo Nieto was brief, but interesting. As we had already visited the museum, he proposed to take us to his office and then drive us around the city centre in order to show us some buildings from the *Art Nouveau* and *Art Deco* movements in Melilla, a cataloguing endeavour he developed for his PhD research. In response to my interest in the islands of the Chafarinas, he gave me a present, a couple of volumes of the magazine *Albaba* entitled *Chafarinas: El ayer y el presente de unas islas olvidadas I y II* (Chafarinas: Past and Present of some forgotten islands I and II) (2013). These volumes have helped me to approach the history of human inhabitation of the islands, which according to the latest archaeological investigations, began more than 6,000 years ago.

⁷⁷ Antonio Bravo Nieto has collaborated in different research projects with various universities and institutions like: UNED, University of Malaga, National School of Architecture of Tétouan, Melilla studies and the Mediterranean Culture Institute. His works contain the following thematic subjects: *Art Nouveau* Architecture and *Art Deco* of the Autonomous City of Melilla, Morocco Architecture from the 19TH to the 20TH Century, Military Architecture and Fortifications from 16th to 19th Centuries, History and Art from Melilla and Its North African Environment and Archaeology and Prehistory. In 2004, he was named as official chronicler of the Autonomous City of Melilla. For more information, see: <http://www.abravo.es/>

⁷⁸ I got to know about this archaeological finding through the Ceutan architect Carlos Pérez Marín with whom I got in contact in Tétouan thanks to Heidi Vogels and Younès Rahmoun. Pérez Marín introduced me to Bravo Nieto and through this connection I decided to approach the Chafarinas Islands, conceptually speaking, from the notion of display. Guided by this notion, Marion Cruza Le Bihan and myself explored different exhibits in various museums and private archives and institutes of Tétouan and Melilla.

Through the volumes of *Aldaba* magazine, I learnt that, due to the lack of water in the islands after the Neolithic period, the historians identify two different moments in relation to human occupation of the archipelago. The first corresponds to the 3rd Neolithic, during the second half of the 5th millennium BC; the second to the Spanish occupation of 1848 (Bellver Garrido 2013a, 95). Between these two distant moments, historians can only speculate about the possible contact with the islands by sailors and accidental visitors (Bellver Garrido *ibid*).⁷⁹ Some theses claim that the interruption of inhabitation after the Neolithic era is due to a possible transformation of the coast that turned continental territory into the archipelago. This geographic alteration might have caused the coastline to recede by two miles (Bellver Garrido 2013a, 97). Furthermore, the arguments in favour of the inhabitation of the Chafarinas during prehistory are also sustained by fragments of ceramics found in *Isla del Congreso*, an island uninhabited during the period of the Spanish occupation. The decorative forms of these pottery fragments correspond, in the opinion of archaeologists, to the Neolithic period: decorative patterns (fish bones, zigzags, velvety, etc) that are read as ‘recognisable marks of geographically identifiable cultures’ (Bellver Garrido 2013a, 104).

There were five excavations in the early 2000s, the last one including an intensive investigation on the *Isla del Rey*, one of the two uninhabited islands of the archipelago during the Spanish occupation. Despite its ‘virgin’ condition, no findings could be located there, possibly due to the prolonged erosive process that has affected this island (Bellver Garrido 2013a, 95-124). This aside, scientists, historians and other researchers believe that the *Isla Isabel II* was probably also inhabited in the Neolithic period, but that the intensive human occupation of 1848 seems to have erased all traces. Finally, over 1,000 ceramic fragments have been found on the *Isla Congreso* (Bellver Garrido 2013a, 119), some of which are on display at the two new Museums of *La Peñuela*, the Archaeology and History Museum and the Ethnography Museum, both situated in the old fortified town in Melilla.⁸⁰ The Zafrín archaeological site has a dedicated room

⁷⁹ For following some historical argumentations of such contacts during Medieval times, please read: Aragón Gómez, Manuel: *De Las Tres Ínsulas a Jafarín. Las Islas Chafarinas y Su Entorno en la Antigüedad y Medioevo* and Gámez Gómez, Sonia: *Las Islas Chafarinas a través de la Cartografía del Siglo XVI a la Ocupación* both in Bravo Nieto, Antonio; Bellver Garrido, Juan Antonio; Gámez Gómez, Sonia Eds. *Chafarinas: El ayer y el presente de unas islas olvidadas I Aldaba n° 37, 2013* pp. 125-55 and pp. 157-90.

⁸⁰ In 2007 the Archaeology Museum and the Ethnography Museum opened their doors in the old warehouses of *La Peñuela* (built in 1781) situated in the ancient fortified Melilla. The opening of these two museums belongs to a special plan of rehabilitation of the fortified area of Melilla initiated in 1992

within the Archaeology Museum, where the staging of Neolithic human life is realised by a combination of fake props and original findings. Everything is behind glass and in display cabinets, therefore the division between the visitor/spectator and the displayed objects is clearly manifest. One is made conscious of the distance between the viewer and the exhibits; a distance that is not apparent when one walks around the site of the old fortified town of Melilla, which has been turned into an open-air museum. This might put us in mind of the arguments of Greek anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis with respect to a circular influence between strategies of display within Anthropology and Ethnography museums and the organisation of fieldwork and the knowledge gained from it. As we have seen in Chapter 2, Seremetakis pays attention to the organisation of the museum display, which prioritises sight over the other senses. Inside the museums of Melilla, vision also prevails, like the experience of walking around the old fortified area, which is no longer a place for living but a place for exhibiting the past of the city.⁸¹

Some of the essays gathered in the volumes of *Aldaba* magazine introduce the investigation progresses during the various archaeological digs. However, an incident reported in Juan Antonio Bellver Garrido's article entitled 'La Prehistoria De Las Islas Chafarinas A Través De la Arqueología' (The Prehistory of the Chafarinas Islands through Archaeology) caught my attention. This has to do with the interruption of the excavations during 2002 caused by the diplomatic crisis of Perejil (Bellver Garrido 2013a, 112). Even though the author does not give details about the relationship between the Perejil crisis and the archaeological excavations undertaken in the Chafarinas, apart from their interruption that same year, we can interpret from this detail, once again, that the history of the Spanish enclaves of the Northern coast of Morocco continue to be completely interlaced.⁸² In fact, we could agree that the weft and warp of this interwoven geography cross various historical layers composing a rich

with the help of local, federal and European governments (Moreno Peralta, Bravo Nieto and Bellver Garrido 2012).

⁸¹ Seremetakis's arguments have been introduced in Chapter 2 of this thesis in respect to the notion of touching when examining the *plaza* of Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera. See pages 90 and 91.

⁸² Another article of the volumes gives us more detail about the impact of the crisis of Perejil on the research carried out in the Chafarinas. With the crisis, the Spanish Government paid some attention to the Chafarinas Islands ordering troops of Regulares from Melilla to occupy the islets *Congreso* and *Rey* and patrol the whole archipelago (Esquembrí 2014b, 40).

and varied spatial-temporal surface that allows us to confront the present with the past and the past with the future.

As we have argued in previous Chapters, the occupation of the minor *plazas* like Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera and the Alhucemas Islands were subject to antagonism since their early years, mostly due to the high costs of the maintenance of such enclaves (Moga Romero 1983, 13 and De Madariaga 2009, 48). The questioning of the continued occupation of the *plazas*, which increased during 18th and 19th centuries (De Madariaga 2009, 48), prevented Spain from formalising the occupation of the Chafarinas, even though the connection between Melilla and the archipelago was quite apparent through the extraction of raw natural materials like wood and stone for construction purposes (Gámez Gómez 2013a, 182). However, the year of the Spanish occupation of the Chafarinas Islands situates us in a specific historical moment, which saw an unstable political situation in Spain related to the failed 1848 revolution in Madrid,⁸³ with some of those detained ending up in exile on Chafarinas (Esquembri 2013a, 193). Besides this, the Spanish government's interest in actualising the occupation of the archipelago around the mid-19th century corresponded with an increasing feeling of defencelessness in the light of France's growing colonial interests in Algeria and the fear that French forces would occupy the islands (Gámez Gómez 2013a, 185-186). Within this geopolitical context, the Chafarinas proved their strategic value. However, the occupation of the islets required a very complex system of precautions that included the continuous transportation and storage of water, food and tools. The operation also demanded the construction of an extensive port connecting the *Isla de Isabel II* and *Isla del Rey* by a bridge (destroyed years later by storms and never rebuilt) and the occupation of some Moroccan land on the nearby coast, later called *Cabo del Agua* (today, known as Ras el Ma), which would serve as a free port for supplying the islands with the necessary goods. During the second half of 19th century, efforts were put into revitalising the economy and life of the Chafarinas and the rest of the Spanish *plazas* (Esquembri 2013a, 191). We should interpret this endeavour in relation to the growing European colonial interest in North Africa at that particular period of history. However, as with the rest of the *plazas*, the community of the Chafarinas was initiated in part as a

⁸³ Not all European countries experienced the revolutionary movement of 1848. Through the shockwaves of the revolution in France, across the Pyrenees there were some stirrings in Catalonia, an attempted uprising in Madrid and a military mutiny in Seville. However, except in Madrid, the extent to which the republican movement was involved is unclear (Rapport 2008).

place for imprisonment. By the 1884, the *Isla de Isabel II* had a population of 600, of which 186 were confined (Esquembri 2013a, 210), most being political prisoners from the anarchist⁸⁴ and military⁸⁵ insurrections that occurred within Spain and in its overseas colonies, such as Cuba and the Philippines. These prisons on the Chafarinas and the other *plazas* were final closed in 1906 (Esquembri 2013a, 217). However, in 1926, during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-30), various opponents of the regime were confined on the *Isla de Isabel II* (Esquembri 2014b, 27), thus returning it to its penitentiary status. Detained without trial, these were four intellectuals whose ideas ran contrary to those of the dictatorship: Luis Jiménez de Asúa (Professor of Criminal Law of the Central University of Madrid and director of the commission for writing the articles of incorporation during the 2nd Spanish Republic [1931-39]); Francisco de Cossío y Martínez Fortún (playwright, novelist, and essayist, who also studied Law at the Faculty of Valladolid); Arturo Casanueva González (lawyer and poet); and Salvador María Vila Hernández (student of Philosophy and Law and follower of the philosopher Miguel de Unamuno). All were unfairly deported, but the cases of Luis Jiménez de Asúa and of Salvador María Vila Hernández stand out, since their deportations were linked to the protests of some academics carried out when Miguel de Unamuno was dispossessed of his chair for his opposition to Primo de Rivera and subsequently exiled to Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands (Domínguez Llosá 2013b, 129-34). Being writers, all of the four deported produced written accounts (newspaper articles, novels, chronicles) out of their experiences of exile. Through them, we can approach the geographical taxonomy of the islands and get to know about their social life, their people and their hospitality. Moreover, an anecdote describing a collective work undertaken by the four is also reported. This concerned the making of a monument dedicated to Miguel de Unamuno, which was erected on the *Isla de Congreso*, the same islet where the Zafrín site has been excavated. This precarious proto-monument survives today only as a photographic account, but in certain way we can say it functioned in its day as a form of display that marked the site of exile, but also a site for free speech and thought on an island called *Congress* that since prehistory has been uninhabited. This contradictory image again introduces interesting crossovers with the

⁸⁴ By the end of 19th century, the Chafarinas became the place for the confinement of anarchists who took part in bomb attacks, like the one undertaken in Barcelona in 1896 (Esquembri 2013a, 216-17).

⁸⁵ Most of the deported were intellectuals, professionals or wealthy people who followed an independent ideology. According to the historians, (Esquembri 2013a, 216), the treatment varied between regular prisoners and those deported, who were allocated in different buildings. When the wars of Cuba and the Philippines ended the deported returned to their countries of origin.

original term for designating these Spanish enclaves: ‘*plazas* of sovereignty’, a place of sovereignty that remains empty and forbidden.

The end of the civil population in the archipelago dates from 1986 (Esquembri 2014b, 37), the same year that the sea route between Melilla and the Chafarinas was closed and the Spanish Immigration Law became effective.⁸⁶ Today, only a reduced military garrison occupies the islands, operating in short watches. The process of erosion of the past is at work, while the future waits in search of other forms of inhabitation.

4.4. Considerations Among the Notion of Display

As mentioned earlier, in this Chapter the concept of display offers a conceptual entry into the enclave of the Chafarinas Islands. This arose out of my encounter with the Zafrín Neolithic site of the Isla del Congreso through the form of an archaeological exhibit. However, this decision was also realised through a prolonged commitment with the study of the notion of display that I conducted some time before visiting Morocco, through the curatorial initiative of *EL CONTRATO* undertaken with my colleagues from Bulegoa z/b.

⁸⁶ The Spanish Immigration Law (Ley Orgánica de Extranjería) of 1 July 1985 was approved surrounded by controversy related to its more political approach to illegal immigration. This law became effective on 1 April 1986, strongly restricting the rights of those immigrants who did not possess legal residence. The generalising character of this new law, which brought together for the first time what was before spread out in numerous, distinct laws, coincided with the entrance of Spain into the European Union on 1 January 1986. This temporal coincidence may be relevant if we try to understand the interests behind the definition of the Schengen Area.



Illustration 15. *EL CONTRATO* at Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao, 2013-2014. Curated by Bulegoa z/b.

More than a theme in itself, *EL CONTRATO* was approached as an area of study to develop conceptual core issues related to the ‘agreements’ established from modernity up to the present within four different areas of practice: 1) the practice of curating, 2) art criticism, 3) social theory and 4) contemporary dance and choreography. Under this conceptual framework, applying the logic of the contract to curating implied rethinking some of the physical, spatial and conceptual resources, instruments and artefacts whereby this practice has gradually taken shape over the course of history, among them the exhibition, the white cube, the installation, the institution, the museum, education, the collection, the archive, the book, the text and the context. Besides, for us, thinking about curating in contractual terms consequently meant accepting the existence of a kind of regulation of the conditions in which these resources are employed. This also implies acknowledging the limits and possibilities generated when they are directly activated in the public sphere, and even the successes and inefficiencies related to this use that lead in the long term to new derivations and transformations. Therefore, *EL CONTRATO* was based on the assumption that this regulation occurs *de facto*, albeit tacitly, and hence we focused our efforts on becoming aware of the normalisation of our professional practices in order to be able to project other scenarios and relations: in the case of curating, *vis-à-vis* its protocols and instruments; in the case of criticism, choreography and sociology, *vis-à-vis* theirs. The re-examination of ‘the

contracts of curating' within this framework of reflection left them revolving, as already mentioned, around three notions: the *dispositif*, the display and the archive. This approach offered us the opportunity to consider in depth the subtle dividing line drawn within the practice of curating between the *dispositif* and the display, taking the archive lastly as the complex model of synthesis between the two.

4.4.1 Theoretical Context of the Term

The word 'display' is often used untranslated in Spanish when talking about issues related to the curating of an exhibition. The term derives etymologically from the Latin *displicare* (originally 'scatter' or 'disperse', but later, in medieval times, 'unfold' or 'explain') and the old French *despleier*. In Middle English, it meant *unfurl* or *unfold*. Following these etymological roots, we can argue that a display can be understood as an 'unfolding' of elements – materials rendered visible – that implies a certain act of unwrapping. In this line of interpretation, the putting into practice of this unfurling of objects in the exhibition space can be compared to the logics of theatre, in which objects, props and subjects unfold themselves within the stage set. In some instances, the exhibit is built on a small scale and remains protected by a display case as if it were an architectural model; on other occasions, its construction is on a large scale, creating a broader setting that invites the viewers/actors to experience it through their own bodies. In both cases, this unfolding, however concise or expanded it may be, implies ideological lines, a structure that represents in three dimensions the rules and strata of an institution, and in this sense an organisation that develops into a specific form, an unfolding that reveals the spatial rules that construct the exhibition as a *dispositif*.

In respect to the numerous confusions that operate between both concepts, *dispositif* (the exhibition as a well-defined artistic format) and display (the spatial and relational logics between the exhibits), we can think of the dividing line between them as a straight, profiled line that achieves an effect by virtue of the fact that it establishes a binary hierarchy, or it may be envisaged as a formless meander that forges numerous points of connection or contact between them. The clean line of the first option may call

to mind the thin wooden shelf shown in a photograph of Room 3 of the Salon d'Automne exhibition of 1905 in Paris.

A shallow ledge situated approximately 120 cm above floor level runs along the wall of the space, dividing the upper part from the lower, with canvases on both sides and creating a curvilinear or zigzagging logic among the works. The shelf in Room 3 contrasted, however, with the wooden dividing lines employed in other Rooms of the Salon, which in fact functioned exclusively as wide skirting boards that separated two distinct areas: the exhibiting from the non-exhibiting zone. In contrast to this, the ledge of Room 3 was employed as a furniture device where pieces of pottery stand harmoniously demonstrating the desire to create an intersection between the two areas of the wall and activating a dialogue between various formats, in this case between painting and ceramics.

The Belgian architect and art critic Frantz Jourdain, with the help of a number of artists, among them Matisse, Rouault and Bonnard, was the initiator of the Salon d'Automne, which was a response to the conservative nature of the official Paris Salon and thus became a reference for the artistic developments of early 20th century. The photographic views of the Rooms of the Salon of 1905 also show important advances in respect to the form of exhibiting works, and details like the above-mentioned shelf are evidence of the transformations made to the exhibition space to display the very latest art of the time. In particular, if we concentrate our efforts on visualising that shelf in relation to the various works exhibited around its boundary, we can see that its line sends the viewer's gaze in many different directions. The image of Room 3 of the Salon d'Automne, as described, helps us to guess at the whys and wherefores of the dynamics of the gaze, though we need to visualise the show during its opening hours, full of people moving through the space and looking at the exhibits. In this imagined scenario, the line drawn by the shelf guides spectators in their search for the most appropriate viewpoints from which to enjoy each work. Thus, if a spectator decides to focus his or her gaze on the pictorial itinerary of the exhibition, his or her body will need to activate a certain kinetic vision between the works, creating a visual toing-and-froing between those placed above and below. On the other hand, if he or she wishes to observe the pictorial work in relation to the ceramics, he or she must use a kind of zoom-in, zoom-out movement,

drawing closer to view the small-format pieces that stand on the shelf and then standing back to enjoy the paintings hanging on the wall.

The desire to influence the spectator's gaze by having an effect over their bodily movement was a key factor in the design of a suitable exhibition *dispositif* for showing avant-garde art of the first half of 20th century. The *Abstract Cabinet*, the exhibition space conceived by El Lissitzky between 1927 and 1928 in one of the Rooms of the Landesmuseum in Hanover crystallised in the most obvious manner the display's kinetic effect on the exhibition *dispositif*. This room revealed the aim adopted by every modern exhibition *dispositif*, which was to spark the spectator's artistic experience by means of its constructional elements. In fact, the *Abstract Cabinet* was intended as a dynamic space, a setting with mobile parts in which the spectator was called on to interact with some of the constructional elements in order to set the exhibition in motion as a mechanism of mediation in relation to the artworks. Examples such as this explain the role of kinetics in modernity, which came to be used to symbolise a kind of individual and collective emancipation. Other avant-garde figures like Frederick Kiesler, László Moholy-Nagy and Herbert Bayer were to apply similar design methodologies that would conceive the 'exhibition not as a timeless, idealised space, but rather as a representation experienced by the observer who is moving through the space at a specific time and place' (Staniszewski 2001, 26). This dynamic interrelation between the moving body of the spectator and the works on exhibition was considered to be crucial for the production of meaning. So, in that case, and according to some authors like the art historian Mary Anne Staniszewski, 'Bayer's, Kiesler's, Lissitzky's and Moholy-Nagy's installation methods were all intended to reject idealist aesthetics and cultural autonomy and to treat an exhibition as a historically bound experience whose meaning is shaped by its reception' (Staniszewski 2001, *ibid*). As argued by Staniszewski, these advanced methods for designing the exhibition display differed although with the strategies deployed during the so-called 'laboratory years' of the Museum of Modern Art in New York by its founding director Alfred Barr. In fact, the inaugural exhibition of the museum, *Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh* from 1929 also contributed 'to the production of a particular type of installation that has come to dominate museum practices, whereby the language of display articulates a modernist, seemingly autonomous aestheticism' (Staniszewski 2001, 61). Some of the design resources employed on that particular occasion were: covering the walls with natural-

coloured monk's cloth (a form of loose-weave cotton); installing paintings at approximately eye level on neutral wall surfaces in spacious arrangements that didn't follow any symmetrical order; organising the works according to chronological or intellectual principles; and adding wall labels that served as a textual premise for the aesthetic validity of the exhibited art works. Barr's method searched for the creation of a certain kind of 'field of vision' (a term that was earlier employed by Herbert Bayer) but as Staniszewski suggests, with the intention of habilitating seemingly autonomous installations in neutral interiors for what was conceived as an ideal, standardised viewer (Staniszewski 2001, 66). This method, contrary to other previous experimental kinetic models of display – like the *Abstract Cabinet* by El Lissitzky (1927-28), *Leger and Trager* and *L and T* designed by Kiesler (1924 and 1926) –, proposed an arrangement of works that treated the viewer as an immobile, atemporal being, a model that conceived the spectator and the art work equally autonomous from the environmental context. A premise that contradicted the intentions of the installations of El Lissitzky and Kiesler and later others such as Bayer (e.g. *Exposition de la Société des Artistes Décorateurs*, 1930) and Moholy-Nagy (e.g. *The Room of Our Time*, c. 1930), which emphasised the importance of the relationship between the spectator, the art works and the environment in which they were placed. Apart from the different details of both models of display, an ideological interpretation can also be assumed in respect to them. Again, art historian Mary Anne Staniszewski considers that 'the aestheticized, autonomous, seemingly 'neutral' exhibition method of Barr 'created an extremely accommodating ideological apparatus for the reception of modernism in the United States' (Staniszewski 2001, 70). In her opinion, 'the viewing subject in Barr's installations was treated as if he or she possessed an ahistorical, unified sovereignty of the self – much like the art objects the spectator was viewing' (Staniszewski 2001, *ibid*). In opposition to this, the author interprets El Lissitzky's installations in relation to the suggestion of the reception of art as being inextricably intertwined with a particular viewer at a particular moment and thus, by implication, with the processes of history (Staniszewski 2001, 68).

It is interesting to notice that these two, opposed modern ideological display models differ in the type of interaction with the movement of the bodies of the spectators through the space of the exhibition. In addition to the arguments of Mary Anne Staniszewski, I would like to add a very different concept of movement developed by the Slovenian philosopher Bojana Kunst in her essay 'Dance and Work: The Political

and Aesthetic Potential of Dance' (2011, 47-59), which we considered within the project *EL CONTRATO* in the second session of the reading group, moderated by Isabel de Naverán and Beatriz Cavia, prior to the exhibition. Kunst examines movement from the viewpoint of the evolution of modern dance and proposes that while it may establish the pace of modernity, it does so in a rhythmic manner and at a tempo affected by capital. In the display models described above, including the shelf from Room 3 of the Salon d'Automne, the movement of the spectator seems to be the corporal trigger for allowing interpretative action in respect to the art works by the spectator. However, according to Barr, while the body movement allows the viewer an autonomous aesthetic experience from which to create meaning, for El Lissitzky, Bayer, Moholy-Nagy, etc. corporeal movement gives a sense of belonging to a specific spatial-temporal situation, placing the viewer in a historical framework that helps to construct interpretation. As Staniszweski suggests, the installation methods of Barr have 'become the norm within 20th century modern museum practices, so common and so standardised that its language of form and its function as a representation have become transparent and invisible' (Staniszewski 2001, 66).

As we have seen in Chapter 1 of this thesis, there are three possible ways to understand the term *dispositif*,⁸⁷ which derives from the Latin *dispositus*, in philosophical terms: firstly, as a network that establishes order and control between different elements; secondly, as an apparatus or set of rules devised to regulate, classify and produce subjectivity; and lastly, as a mechanism intended to influence the production of meaning and to determine what is true and what is not. According to these interpretations, seeing the exhibition as a *dispositif* means to question the relationship it establishes between objects, subjects and truth, in other words, to question the protocols that are activated in the exhibition space in the agency between objects and subjects.

The second option with regard to the dividing line between the understandings employed in respect to the notion of *dispositif* and display invites us to imagine this distinction as a shapeless doodle, which, in a complex manner, gives rise to numerous relationships between the two. This option may be introduced in opposition to a specific model of showing works and materials in the context of an exhibition, the ethnographic

⁸⁷ During the reading group of *EL CONTRATO*, we studied the term *dispositif* through two essays, 'What is an Apparatus?' (2006), by Giorgio Agamben, and 'Governmentality' (1978), by Michel Foucault.

display, which we took as a reference when it came to exploring this notion of display during the reading group of *EL CONTRATO*. Specifically, we focused on the modern evolution of the ethnographic display, taking as our starting point two museum contexts that are closely related but which could, to a certain extent, be regarded as contradictory: the former Musée du Trocadéro and the new Musée de l'Homme.

In this case, during the reading session dedicated to the term, we did not use documentary photographs to introduce these examples but instead employed other sources in the manner of pretexts to imagine their dynamics in relation to the exhibitions and classification of objects. Some of these materials were provided by us, the organisers – such as James Clifford's essay 'On Ethnographic Surrealism', published in *The Predicament of Culture*, and *The Tarde Durkheim Debate* video (2007), with Bruno Latour as Gabriel Tarde and Bruno Karsenti as Émile Durkheim –, while other materials emerged from the conversation during the reading. These materials helped the group to understand the shift Clifford introduces in his essay between the displays of the Trocadéro in the 1920s, which were in keeping with the aesthetics of Ethnographic Surrealism, and those of the 'modern Palais de Chaillot [that] incarnated the emerging scholarly paradigm of ethnographic humanism' (Clifford 1988, 135). Clifford's analysis calls for a critical look at the way cultural products are displayed and classified and so he uses the example of the Trocadéro, its jumbled disorder, its lack of scientific contextualisation, as a model that in his opinion 'encouraged the appreciation of its objects as detached works of art rather than as cultural artefacts' (Clifford 1988, *ibid*). Clifford addresses Ethnographic Surrealism as a policy of cultural critique that attempts to arrive at the everyday and familiar by means of a certain sense of amazement, in other words, by distorting the methodologies initially applied to the other and turning them back on oneself. This strategy of changing the position between the subject and object of contemplation was a technique used by the Collège de Sociologie with the intention of generating reflection on the methodologies of the human sciences when extracting data, classifying them and in some cases exhibiting them in museum contexts. Clifford calls through Ethnographic Surrealism for an exercise in declassification of the museum in which artistic methodologies are employed to call into question the supposed objectivity of science.

Another example can help us now to support the second option of conceiving the notions of display and *dispositif* beyond the dichotomy model. The example comes again from some exhibiting methods employed at MoMA during 1940s by director Rene d'Harnoncourt. Following Barr's early experimental timeless display methods, d'Harnoncourt explored other strategies for exhibiting ethnographic artefacts at MoMA in New York. Some of his strategies included: displaying ethnographic objects 'in the same manner as great masterworks of modernism had been exhibited' (Staniszewski 2001, 88), using modern and neutral white-painted pedestals and clean vitrines; allowing native rituals through the re-enactment of forms (Staniszewski 2001, 97); or using white cylinders instead of mannequins for example in order to show ponchos and blankets in the exhibition *Indian Art of the United States* (1941) with the intention of avoid 'associations with natural history habitat groups, which might have suggested that Native Americans were being presented as specimens' (Staniszewski 2001, *ibid*). Strategies like the ones mentioned, which followed some precedents applied by Barr when experimenting with the exhibition of modern masterpieces, tried to decontextualise ethnographic objects from their cultural context in order to prevent any 'unified or totalised presentation of these objects and their cultures and encourage, the power of display as a means to transform these institutions from mere "depositories" of treasured objects into vital cultural centres' (Staniszewski 2001, 98). Furthermore, the exhibiting treatment of these cultural artefacts as if they were modern artworks could also be interpreted as a way of activating a critical reflection upon the existing hierarchies between modern Western art and Indigenous art. However, despite these positive achievements, the ethnographic exhibiting model at MoMA replicated once again the same problems as the masterworks exhibiting model, that is it treated the spectator as a subject outside any historical process.

As a conclusion, we could say that thinking about the relationship between the *dispositif* and the display in formless terms – in other words, in non-dichotomous terms – can imply turning things around and swapping their positions. By this, I do not mean that these terms, *dispositif* and display, are interchangeable and hence one and the same thing, but that *neither* is the bearer of truth. The display, inasmuch as it unfolds layers and strata that were once hidden, makes the functioning of the *dispositif* visible and exposes it. The *dispositif*, as the machinery of mediation, is hidden behind the display,

making the intentions of its operations opaque, acting through its wrapping in order to remain a machine, to intercede between the subject and the object, between the spectator and the artwork.

4.4.2. In Relation to the Control of the Flux of Migration

We can apply the notion of display and its functional methodologies with respect to the ongoing migration crisis of migration that takes place around the *plazas* of sovereignty. I intend to look at the forms of unfolding and making visible of the *plazas* as *dispositifs* of control in very particular moments, for example when a diplomatic crisis, a political or activist demand or an illegal return of migrants take place. In this sense, we can understand these moments of visibility as forms of display that reveal layers and strata of a hidden machinery of mediation. The *plazas* as *dispositifs* of control hide through these display moments, trying once again to conceal the intentions of its operations of control, turning opaque its mode of acting with the sole intention of remaining as a machine, an apparatus of control that intercedes between subjects, and also objects, dividing and classifying all of them in respect to a given hierarchical order.

Two different models of display stand out in relation to the Chafarinas Islands. The first is the display of the archaeological Zafrín site at the History and Anthropology Museum of Melilla; the second is the precarious monument to Miguel de Unamuno built during the imprisonment of the four intellectuals during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. The first display follows the procedures of arranging objects, props and fragments of pieces in order to stage a scientific hypothesis. The protocols used try to sustain the scientific truth in order to project the image that science produces out of past forms of life. In this case, the stones, the clay fragments of supposedly domestic utensils and the contemporary props give evidence through institutionalised protocols of the archaeological conclusions arising from the field findings. Some of these protocols include the division between the viewer and the objects exhibited through glass cabinets, information signage and roped-off areas, which make visible the division between two zones: the exhibiting and the non-exhibiting. The movement of the body of

the spectator here is reduced to the intention of getting closer to the exhibiting area and its resources: going closer to the glass cabinets, directing attention towards the signage, staying outside the roped-off area. However, the body movement is experienced as a smoothed transition, which starts long before the moment when one arrives in that particular room dedicated to the Zafrín site. In fact, this movement begins when the spectator enters the old fortified area of Melilla, which as mentioned earlier has been rehabilitated into an open-air museum. Both in the general area and in the museum, the spectator's movement is guided by the signage, getting closer or remaining distant according to the dictates of the display methods. However, from one of the top terraces of the fortified area, the viewer can look backwards, thus escaping the itinerary of the open-air museum and finding instead the city of Melilla and its surroundings. At the edge of the urban landscape where suburbia finishes, a straight line marks two zones: the urban and the non-urban. This line corresponds to the Melilla border fence, the construction of which was begun in 1998. Like the Chafarinas Islands that can remain hidden from the site of the Museum of Military History when the fog is thick, the Melilla border fence tries to become invisible through the fog that emanates from the means of display employed in the old fortified area.

The second display follows a subtler form of arrangement. The monument was reduced to a number of stones gathered around the original site. As we have already seen, the *Isla del Congreso* has suffered over time from erosion (Bellver Garrido 2013a, 95-124), which is why no archaeological evidence has survived. For that same reason, the monument to Miguel de Unamuno has also disappeared, leaving nothing behind apart from a photograph documenting its construction. However, the photograph only came to light in the context of the magazine dedicated to the prehistory and history of the islands. Therefore, this monument dedicated to free speech and thought at Congreso Island appears as an anecdote, as a non-important device deserving less attention than the archaeological findings. In this sense, the monument, being more attached to the life of the prisoners of the Chafarinas in 1926, becomes an object that arrives from the past to the present as a non-relevant form to be kept within the parameters of a history museum. A cultural artefact from the past that deserves no archaeological excavations.

These two forms of display can help us to understand the logics of visibility and invisibility within the context of a museum or the exhibition as a *dispositif*. The two

examples also suggest we hold to question the logics of visibility applied with respect to the *plazas* in the context of migration, when for instance, an incident, a protest, the arrival or the expelling of some migrants occur. This questioning should be directed to the means that make some things visible while others remain opaque. In other words, to challenge the power of display when the machinery of the *dispositif* enters a moment of crisis.

4.4.3. In Relation to Curatorial Practice



Illustration 16. *El CONTRATO* at Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao. General Vista.

When it came to transposing *EL CONTRATO* to an exhibition format, we were determined to make the *dispositif* visible through the construction elements themselves. Special mention must be made in relation to this logic that included a number of decisions taken in collaboration with the artist Luca Frei, who was responsible for designing the exhibition installation. These decisions included making the mental map

of the exhibition visible, linking the reading sessions with the sections of the exhibition and situating the heart of the mediation machinery in the central area of the room at a considerable distance from the entrance door, thereby initially leaving the spectator to circulate freely from work to work. In fact, the spectator's circulation through the room once again helps us to understand the effects of the display on the exhibition *dispositif*. The plan designed by Frei makes it easier for us to draw some of the routes, though at times it seemed as if the spectator had to go through walls in order to continue the connection between the works.



Illustration 17. *EL CONTRATO* at Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao. Exhibition Diagram. Designed by Luca Frei.

In the plan, we can also see the position of the reading group in the central area, an extensive zone in which no works were displayed, making it an empty space that was suggested as a pause. In fact, this central space was conceived as a place where circulation could be temporarily halted and as a venue for activities other than those of contemplating the exhibits, such as reading, conversation, resting, listening, etc. This mediation *dispositif* was modestly activated each time a spectator took one of the household chairs and sat down, interrupting his or her visit, or more spectacularly when a large group of people formed a circle using these chairs in order to read together and

to share ideas about a text related to one of the exhibits during a new reading group set up on the occasion of the exhibition.

Unlike the other constructional elements described earlier that arise from examples of the past avant-garde (such as the narrow shelf on the wall of the Salon d'Automne, which directed the flow of bodies in the exhibition space, or El Lissitzky's room, which more directly suggested experiencing modern art through the logic of movement), in this area spectators were invited to take a break and to rest their gaze on a number of disparate details thanks to the unexpected views offered by a beach chair or a low wooden stool: separate items of furniture – in keeping with Luca Frei's proposal for the installation – that interrupted the visitor's contemplative action as a form of movement through the space, and an attempt, perhaps, to paralyse the action, as if it were a theatre scene, just as Brecht did in epic theatre by using interruption as a form of distancing effect (Benjamin 1998, 99-100).

In the context of the exhibition of *EL CONTRATO*, an interrupted scene was able to occur, for example, during the second reading session, which focused on the text of the film and agreement of *Femø Women's Camp 2008* by Sweden artist Kajsa Dahlberg, moderated by the Bilbao-based artists Pablo Marte and Daniel Llaría, specifically at the moment when the conversation shifted towards questioning the role of the group in the exhibition space. The contradiction that emerged from this situation was to do with interpreting the presence of the group from the perspective of the object or subject of contemplation. An intersection of gazes that gave rise to an odd situation: the group turned the text into images while itself becoming an image in the eyes of the spectators spontaneously making their way through the room, looking at the works on display.

Grasping the functions of both the *dispositif* and the display in the exhibition space practices the potentiality demanded by Agamben in his essay 'What is an Apparatus?' in relation to the strategy of profanation when reviving the common use of elements divided and captured by the *dispositif* (Agamben 2009, 19). The profaning of the exhibition machine of mediation might, therefore, consist of making the rules governing its functioning visible by means of the display, thereby facilitating the continuity of a policy critical of the act of exhibiting or showing objects and works of art. Thus, also leaving visible that the objects and subjects within the exhibitory realm belong to a

specific time and context. A context that today is shaped by global capitalism. However, the neutrality of the gallery space provides a false impression of a disengaged continuity with any historical process. Against this, the exhibiting treatment should activate a critical reflection upon the current conditions in which the spectators as subjects are inscribed.

4.5. Speculating on the Term Display in Respect to this Research

4.5.1 The Work of Marion Cruza Le Bihan

Marion Cruza Le Bihan was the last artist to travel with me to Tétouan. In fact, she arrived when the reading group was already over. However, I invited her to contribute to document the last visit to the *plazas*, the Chafarinas Islands or, more accurate, to approximate to them conceptually through the notion of display. For that, we decided to access the Chafarinas from Morocco via Tétouan, instead of through Melilla via a direct flight from Madrid. Like in the rest of the visits, we wanted to approach the *plaza* through Moroccan territory as a way of getting immersed into the context.

Consequently, Marion arrived with me at Dar Ben Jelloun on 19 October 2015 and left the day I returned home on the 28th of the same month. Once in Morocco, we divided our time into two parts. During the first, we stayed in Tétouan, where we visited several public museums, libraries and public and private archives, including: the Arts & Crafts Dar Sanâa School Museum, the Ethnography Museum, the library of the Cervantes Institute, the Archaeology Museum, the Abdelhalek Torres Library, the Mohamed Daoud Private Archive and the Regional Museum of the Resistance, the Liberation Army and of Nationalism. For the second part, we crossed the mountainous region of the Rif by a public bus that took us to Nador, a small town close to the border at Beni Ensar. From Nador we shared a collective taxi that drove us to the border, where we had to cross on foot after undergoing a long examination by the Moroccan and Spanish police. We crossed the border on a Friday in the early morning, having been advised

this would allow easier access. We walked with a Moroccan woman who commuted every day to Melilla for domestic labouring and who kindly helped us to find our way to the EU citizens' queue. Once on the other side of the border, Marion suggested we keep walking to the centre of the city and later, back in Bilbao, she remembered this stroll as one of the best experiences of the whole trip. The stroll allowed us to shed the anxiety generated while explaining our presence to the border police. Suspected of being journalists, we had to face numerous questions about our professions, the material with which we were working and the type of research we were doing in that area. Thanks to the tiredness of the police, who were about to finish their night shift and who themselves became stressed by the answers we were providing, which only created more confusion, they eventually allowed us to cross. During our walk, we found Bar Martínez, where we had some *chocolate con churros*⁸⁸ and took a moment to call our families. In Melilla, as already mentioned, we visited several museums: the Old Fortified Area and its Centre of Interpretation, the Military History Museum with its adjacent section dedicated to the history of the Spanish Submarine Military Navy, the Ethnography Museum and the Archaeology Museum. These visits helped Marion gather materials for the documentary work that she would produce out of the trip and later present as a public event at Trankat on 27 October 2015 and at Tabakalera (Donostia-San Sebastián) on 20 May 2016 as part of the seminar *Dispositifs of Touching: A Curatorial Research on the Plazas of Sovereignty* that accompanied my contribution to the exhibition *The Day After* by Maryam Jafri at Tabakalera.⁸⁹

The invitation to Marion Cruza Le Bihan to contribute to this research was inspired by her previous work entitled *1020 Items*, a performative piece developed in 2014 out of a large series of approximately 1020 images that belonged to the personal archive of the artist. The work functioned as a live image montage in real time that was presented in the context of the independent platform called *Club Le Larraskito* in Bilbao. The title of this work corresponds exactly with the structure of its score. Cruza Le Bihan proposes a lineal arrangement of images organised in different series, a repetition of similar and failed snapshots. Together with their rapid succession, one after the other, the similarity between them causes the effect of movement in the image. The work has a performative

⁸⁸ Typical Spanish breakfast of hot chocolate with fritters.

⁸⁹ For more information, see: <https://www.tabakalera.eu/en/dispositifs-of-touching>

dimension, as each time it is activated the artist produces the work for the occasion. The effect resembles a *moviola*, which becomes even more obvious when Cruza Le Bihan alternates between the forward and back keys or goes from one snapshot to the next through the clicking of the keyboard, emphasising the visual rhythm between images. The work thus becomes a raw apparatus for the construction of visual sequences that allows her to work with the subtleties of the snapshots: the changes of light, the focus, the framing, the brightness and further within the entire composition and the different heterogeneous qualities of each photographic series, the contrast and overlapping between the images and series, and so forth. In sum, Cruza Le Bihan's apparatus of montage and projection allows the viewer to experience an image that gets assembled as a live process for the duration of its projection. Furthermore, while activating this device as a live performance, the artist records with a video camera what happens on the computer screen, thus making a new image (a document) with the specific sequences produced during the process of montage.



Illustration 18. *La Métamorphose des dieux*, 2014. Marion Cruza Le Bihan.

1020 Items belongs to an ongoing body of work by the artist dedicated to paying

attention to the logics of montage as a performative operation of assemblage between elements that may not have any relation between each other. The work shares a common interest with a later project that I found particularly relevant to this PhD research. In May 2014, after the presentation of *1020 Items*, the artist found in a second hand shop in Bilbao an original copy of the book *La Métamorphose des dieux*⁹⁰ (1957) by André Malraux. The author, known for his connections to Surrealism and to figures like André Breton, Demetrios Galanis, Jean Cocteau and Max Jacob among others, was involved in several expeditions into unexplored overseas areas, where he extracted treasures that he later aimed to sell to art museums in Europe. This practice took him to jail, but also made him rich. The shop where Cruza Le Bihan found Malraux's book is located at Sabino Arana Avenue in Bilbao, close to her mother's apartment, an area situated by the main entrance to the city. Months before this find, the concrete motorway ramp, which gave access to the city, was demolished⁹¹ after years of protests by the neighbours.⁹² The artist extracts images from the book as a critical gesture towards Malraux's cultural plundering, and, in parallel, documents the void left by the demolished ramp and the haphazard urban environs of Sabino Arana Avenue. The work follows a similar structural mechanics to *1020 Items*, although with differences. This time, a large number of snapshots arising from these two distinct sources, the book and the city, get assembled following the precepts of the performative montage of the previous work. However, the new work, taking its title from Malraux's book, was finally showed as an installation in Azkuna Zentroa in June 2014,⁹³ sacrificing the live character but paying attention to the parallel viewing of the two diverse sequences. This was done with the use of two screens, asking the viewer to be responsible for the editing of both series of images.

⁹⁰ 10,250 copies were printed, of which 10,000 were numbered. The copy used by Marion Cruza Le Bihan was number 494.

⁹¹ The demolition took place in July 2013. After Franco's dictatorship, the name of Sabino Arana, founder of the Basque Nationalist Party and father of Basque Nationalism, was substituted the for previous name of the Avenue, Juan Antonio (Primo de Rivera).

⁹² The protests started in 1991.

⁹³ *La Métamorphose des dieux* was shown as part of the exhibition *Cuando de repente la curiosa descripción toma otro rumbo* (When Suddenly the Curious Description Changes Direction) curated by myself in the context of the T-FESTA (Art T-shirt Festival) #2. The title of the exhibition is taken from a sentence by Clifford with reference to the poem of Dadaist William Carlos Williams in his introduction to the book *The Predicaments of Culture*.

4.5.2. A Reading Session on the Notion of Display from the Project *EL CONTRATO* at Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao

The following has been written following the audio-recording of the session:

2 September 2013, some time before travelling to Morocco for the first time, a group of people gather that afternoon for the 7th reading session of *EL CONTRATO*, dedicated to the notion of display. The moderators of this session are Beatriz Cavia and myself and the text to be read and discussed collectively is James Clifford's Chapter 'On Ethnographic Surrealism', published in *The Predicaments of Culture* (1988). As moderators, we start explaining a new methodology for elaborating the minutes of the session.⁹⁴ For this occasion, after an introduction by ourselves, we propose to work in two groups in order to develop the reports. Beatriz Cavia explains to the group that this idea comes from the intention of configuring a sort of a fieldwork document of the actual experience of the session, which is to be done through the sharing, within each group, of diverse references inspired by the text that can be placed in dialogue with it. We explain to the group that this proposal is inspired by the structure of the text chosen for the session, which in fact can be seen as a collage of references that the author employs as a way of portraying a specific cultural moment relevant to his arguments. After this explanation, we suggest introducing the reasons behind choosing this text, which was done by Cavia and myself, in a similar way to Clifford's text, that is, introducing other references and examples. Besides, we also mention the fact that the text can be seen, within the framework of *EL CONTRATO*, as a site for discipline crossovers through the dialogue between Surrealism and ethnography that the author refers to within the avant-gardes of 1920s.⁹⁵ In respect to my own interests, the selection of the text is argued in relation to a previous session in the project dedicated to the

⁹⁴ From the beginning of the reading group of *EL CONTRATO*, minutes were produced as a way of documenting the discussions and the experience of each session. So far, we, the organisers, have asked for, at the beginning of every meeting, two volunteers to elaborate the minutes of the day. Once they were appointed, they started taking notes. The minutes were read to the following session, being the first thing to be shared as a way of establishing a conceptual link between the readings and the conversations.

⁹⁵ This crossover had also a performative dimension, as we, the moderators are committed to practices as such, in the case of Beatriz Cavia as a sociologist who teaches at UPV/EHU University of the Basque Country and myself as a curator.

notion of *dispositif*⁹⁶ and my intention of reflecting on their differences and specificities through the conceptual framework of ‘the contracts of curating’. In the case of Beatriz Cavia, apart from the historicity that Clifford proposes between the artistic avant-garde and the irruption and questioning of anthropology as a discipline through other forms of doing ethnography (like Ethnographic Surrealism), she is interested in paying attention to all the materials the author uses to elaborate his arguments. In that case, she refers to Clifford as a relevant figure within the postmodern anthropology movement and someone who early on claimed anthropology as a textual practice, as a form of writing in which art, in contrast to science, also had a function. However, she also brings into the discussion the paradoxes of the Musée de l’Homme. In this respect, she points out that although in the text the museum is highlighted by its avant-garde practices during 1930s, it is not mentioned that the museum exhibited, until the 1970s, the skeleton, skull and body caste of Sara Baartman.⁹⁷ More concretely, Beatriz Cavia mentions that this contradiction runs in parallel to the intention of questioning the forms of classifying cultures, concepts in respect to art and science.

In parallel with Cavia’s arguments, I add some references to the context of the International Exposition of Paris of 1937, the year and the context in which the opening of the Musée de l’Homme took place. The new museum that was set up in the *Palais de Chaillot*, the same building as the former Trocadero Museum, will also be one of the institutions considered by the Surrealist authors associated with the magazine *Documents* (Georges Bataille, Michel Leiris⁹⁸, Marcel Griaule, etc.). These authors will try to relate art to human sciences as a form of de-institutionalising and applying a self-criticality towards their own disciplines and practices. The theme of the International Exposition of 1937,⁹⁹ ‘Art and Technology in Modern Life’, also seems relevant in this

⁹⁶ So far, I have worked with this notion in two different reading group projects, for *EL CONTRATO*, where it was approached through the idea of revising ‘the contracts of curating’ and for *Dispositif of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Times of Expanded Borders*, where the term responded to the demands of this PhD research.

⁹⁷ An African slave woman from the Khoikhoi ethnic group, brought in Europe and exhibited as a freak show attraction.

⁹⁸ After the Dakar-Djibouti expedition, Leiris worked as ethnographer in the Musée de l’Homme until 1971.

⁹⁹ As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Spanish Pavilion designed by Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa was one of the most notable pavilions of the Exposition because of its technical modular and low budgeted construction that was a consequence of the difficult circumstances of the Spanish Civil War and the participation of artists like Picasso and Calder. The Spanish Pavilion is argued as an exhibition *dispositif* in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

inaugural context of the museum, where the influence of art together with scientific technological advances were placed at the centre of modern living. In response to my argument, Cavia refers to the (technological) advances that occurred within the discipline of anthropology at that particular moment of history, specifically within the exhibition of the Dakar-Djibouti expedition (1933), where a new paradigm emerged in which the subjective point of view of the author appears as part of the scientific report. The new fictional text within ethnography, where subjectivity entered through the form of comments or even dreams, transformed the field-notes into a new documentary form for scientific research.¹⁰⁰ Cavia explains, ‘this original form of documentation will project into the future a new line of study within ethnography that will place the focus on the forms of life of oneself as if he or she were the other.’ In respect to the display, we discuss with the group the differences between the Trocadero, based more on spontaneous arrangements proper to a Cabinet of Curiosities, and the Musée de l’Homme, which showed a clear attempt to institutionalise the Trocadero’s unstructured display within the limits of a science museum. At this point, Miren brings our attention to the influence of Clifford’s view regarding the two models of exhibiting and proposes a completely different approach. She argues that the distinction between both models is in fact shaped by the postmodern canon, which places them as oppositional. She suggests that perhaps the two museums were not so clearly distinctive at the time. Prior to a process of classification, a process of accumulation is needed in the context of a museum when it opens its doors; therefore, she proposes conceiving both museums as the continuation of one and the same project. In that case, the Cabinet of Curiosities of the Trocadero could be seen as a proto-museum. Miren argues again, ‘The collage as a method of display in that context could be also acknowledged as an accident, but we are now interpreting it from the postmodern perspective of Clifford’s text.’ The discussion becomes focused on the possibilities and limitations of applying the forms of being of a proto-museum onto the forms of working of an institutionalised museum as a critical challenge. Furthermore, we try to imagine the actual logics of display of both museums, given that the text is not accompanied by images. In conclusion, and as part of that collective imaginative exercise, we share some films and documentary fragments.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ *L’Afrique fantôme* (1934) by Michel Leiris is a good example of this new form.

¹⁰¹ The group proposes to watch the following fragments of films and documentaries: *Les statues meurent aussi* (1953) by Chris Marker and Alain Resnais; the final scene, recorded in the Musée de l’Homme, of *Chronique d’un été* (1961) by Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch; the film *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1945) by Maya Deren; and *Fuego en Castilla (Tactilvisión del páramo del*

4.5.3. Documentary Materials by Marion Cruza Le Bihan around the Chafarinas Islands

Marion Cruza Le Bihan's documentary materials around the Chafarinas Islands departs from the notion of display in order to conceptually portrait them. As mentioned before, the materials gathered by means of a series of photographic accounts of the different items and display models from the museums and archives visited were presented as a live performance, first at Trankat in October 2015 and later at Tabakalera in May 2016. The piece changed each time, having a specific tempo and with some alterations in the resulting sequences, with the addition and subtraction of certain images. For the appendices section the artist has conceived a visual form that tries to 'translate' the specific event realised at Trankat. This form includes some pages designed as contact sheets where all the items used for the first presentation of the work can be seen. This contribution is also accompanied by a video recording of the computer screen while the piece was executed at Trankat. This documentation can be found in the enclosed DVD that accompanies this dissertation.

espanto) (1958-60) by José Val del Omar. As organisers, we bring the reference of *The Tarde Durkheim Debate* (2007) with Bruno Latour as Gabriel Tarde and Bruno Karsenti as Émile Durkheim. This video is introduced in reference to the debate between Bruno Latour and Philippe Descola on the construction of the modern epistemology division between nature and culture, which during the reading session is suggested in line with Clifford's argument about the artificial division between art and science. The video represents through a re-enactment the debate between Tarde and Durkheim that took place in the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Science of Paris in 1903, soon after the school was founded. In this foundational debate on sociology, Tarde's vision lost, while Durkheim and Weber's won. Their argument prioritised the structure and the macro system over the micro gestures of the individual when trying to configure a definition of what the social implies. Contrary to that, Tarde defended the micro, the so-called monadology or the minimum unities of analysis to explain the social. Latour claims that Tarde was not just defending the small, the micro versus the macro, but the network, the relations between the elements, when trying to define the social. This argument seems to have been excluded from the history of sociology and it can be interpreted in line with the changes Clifford proposes within ethnography in the 20s and 30s, with practices like Ethnographic Surrealism, where attention was paid to little gestures including those coming out from the subjectivity of the researcher. Other examples like this include the Mass Observation Project in the UK also founded in 1937, a broad archive with materials coming from the everyday life elaborated first by academics and researchers and later by regular citizens.

4.6. Conclusion

In this Chapter, the notion of display has offered a point of entry to the Chafarinas Islands. Display here has been approached from two different realms: the first coming from human sciences and the different models for showing scientific findings and conclusions (in the case of the Isla del Congreso in relation to the archaeological site of Zafrín and its staging within the Anthropology Museum of Melilla); the second related to the hanging and exhibiting of artworks across different avant-garde examples, which give account of the evolution of this particular medium. We have also reflected on the ideological implications of any display and its effects towards the idea of the individual and societal values. In this line, the nuances between the notion of display and *dispositif*, a term that was introduced in Chapter 1, have been also considered, establishing two ways of approaching them: through binarism and through a formless relational dynamic. These two modes of interpretation have helped us to acknowledge the means of display and its logics of visibility, so connecting two different contexts: the exhibition and the border area of the *plazas* of sovereignty. In this respect, the work of Cruza Le Bihan has helped us to examine through images the variations of several museum displays in Tétouan and Melilla. A conceptual strategy that has been suggested here as a way of accessing a territory, the Chafarinas Archipelago, that today remains inaccessible to citizens. Chafarinas unfold then as a forgotten cartography that we approach by alternative means, like the visuality that emerges from the numerous exhibits within Old Melilla museums. In this context, the history of the area is packaged by the logics of display. However, certain narratives and images, from the past and the present, fell outside that prefabricated account. Outside the museums, the islands remain hardly visible in a sunny day from one of the point of the hill, while the Melilla border fence stands well discernible from another point. The chapter navigates the dialectics that emanate from what is visible and invisible within a landscape on display.

Chapter 5. Saint-Bernard: *Lieu de Vie*

5.1. Introduction

This Chapter is dedicated to a specific site outside the scattered geography of the *plazas* of sovereignty. This place, Saint-Bernard, is not an island or a rock, nor is it an archipelago. Saint-Bernard is a neo-Gothic Roman Catholic Church situated within the Goutte d'Or neighbourhood of the 18th arrondissement of Paris, at the junction between Rue Saint-Bruno and Rue Affre. At this location, on 28 June 1996, a group of 300 African residents and workers without papers, mostly originating from Mali, Senegal, Guinea and Mauritania initiated an occupation as a form of protest against the immigration policy of the government of Jacques Chirac and the unjust forms of democracy existing at that time. The occupation of Saint-Bernard was preceded by the occupation of several sites during that year: the church of Saint-Ambroise, Paris, 18 March 1996; the Japy Gym in the 11th arrondissement of Paris, 22 March; and the disused warehouse of the SNCF (the French national railway company) at Rue Pajol.¹⁰² This series of actions caught the attention of the media, initiating the widespread adoption of the term *sans-papiers*. Finally, on 23 August at 7.30 am, and under a deportation order, the police broke down the main door of the church of Saint-Bernard with axes and hammers and started to violently vacate the premises. This evacuation resulted in 220 detentions – including 210 undocumented citizens, of which 98 were men, 54 women and 68 children – who were led to the Centre of Immigration Detention in Vincennes.

This Chapter introduces the site and the movement of asylum seekers and immigrants without papers in France in the mid-90s in relation to the last reading group session, which was organised in the mountains of Saf Saf, Tétouan. With the collaboration of Moroccan artist Youssef El Yedidi, the session was dedicated to the term *lieu de vie* (communal lifespaces), introduced by Félix Guattari in relation to his work at the Clinic

¹⁰² Before the third occupation, the group moved to the Cartoucherie Theatre in Vincennes, on the initiative of theatre director Ariane Mnouchkine.

La Borde. This last phase of the thesis combines two different locations and tempos¹⁰³ to shed some light on the way the *plazas* have a profound effect on the lives of certain citizens who challenge the national demarcations established by the EU. In this context, the work of Argentinian Paris-based artist Alejandra Riera is introduced in connection to both the site of Saint-Bernard and the term *lieu de vie*. Although Riera didn't accompany me on any of my visits to the *plazas*, her work stands in this research as a relevant reference that I could not dismiss. Riera's acceptance of my invitation to contribute to this last part of the thesis allows us to approach the position of those who suffer the violent exclusion enacted by the *plazas* of sovereignty. However, that position, embodied by the subject who does not necessarily have a fixed nationality, today puts into crisis the whole status of the enclaves, thus linking them to Bataille's definition of sovereignty as NOTHING (Bataille 1993, 197-427).

5.2. Context

Tuesday, 2 June 2015

Yesterday, after arriving in Tétouan for my second visit and when Naziha left Dar Ben Jelloun, I had a meeting with Youssef El Yedidi to define the last reading session that we will do together at his studio¹⁰⁴ in Saf Saf on Saturday, 13 June. During the meeting, we shared the following ideas:

¹⁰³ The idea of introducing the site and history of the church of Saint-Bernard arises from a meeting with the group *Internal Colonialism* in Santander, Spain, in the summer of 2014. More specifically, it comes from a conversation with scholar Sebastián Cobarrubias who, after hearing of my intention to structure the Chapters through a series of visits with artists to the *plazas* of sovereignty, suggested adding a new trip and Chapter introducing the long series of failed and dangerous arrivals to these territories by sub-Saharan migrants. His suggestion followed the line of his own research with Maribel Casas on the migration crisis in the area and the thousands of failed arrivals only occasionally reported in the media. I really liked Cobarrubias's suggestion, but in the end, instead of introducing a specific arrival that I could have found through the media, I decided, influenced by my friendship with Alejandra Riera, an artist who got very close to the *sans-papiers* movement of the 90s in France, to introduce the migration crisis through the protest at the church of Saint-Bernard: that is, to focus on the migration crisis within Europe at a point in time where the migrant subject is still in danger of deportation.

¹⁰⁴ The studio is within a precarious rural construction without water or electricity. There, the artist keeps a universe of found objects, originating from both nature and waste. He mentions that when he has visitors, something that happens quite regularly, they produce a big disturbance, mixing the recycling waste with the biodegradable, thus undoing the balance established in the ontological bewilderment of the place. I mentioned to him that I hoped not to cause too much trouble when we were there.

- The group will walk together from the city to the mountains and will try to arrive at the studio by 11 am.
- The reading session will have a longer duration than the rest of the sessions. At least, we would like to work from 11am till 7 pm, but if necessary, we could also have dinner there.
- We discuss what to do with the food, how to organise lunch and dinner in a place where there is no electricity or water. Moreover, the session will take place two days before Ramadan and we also talk about the possibility of bringing that to the session. Youssef introduces an idea that relates to a friend of his who sells sweets and second hand books in the streets outside the Medina. He could bring some Moroccan sweets and books.
- For the session, I tell Youssef that I would like to work with two different texts:
 - Guattari, Félix:** ‘La Borde: A Clinic Unlike Any Other’, in *Félix Guattari: Chaosophy. Texts and Interviews 1972-1977*, Sylvère Lotringer (ed.), David L. Sweet (trans.). Los Angeles: Jarred Becker and Taylor Adkins. Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 2009.
 - Ceberio, Mónica; Cembrero, Ignacio; González, Miguel Ángel:** ‘The Last Remains of the Empire’, *El País*, 17 September 2012.
- Through the reading of these two texts, (the group will have read Guattari’s text before the session, while we will read aloud together for the first time the article from *El País* in Saf Saf) we will open the discussion on issues related to my investigation.
Youssef agrees with my proposal and adds a new one that again relates to his friend, the bookseller. On Monday, 8 June, Youssef will visit the bookseller and will propose him to collaborate with us. In case he agrees, we will meet him again for selecting some books from his collection to be used for the session.
- We finally share ideas about some collective exercises that we could try during the session with the books selected from the bookseller’s catalogue. For example, we mention that we could read certain fragments aloud, as if we were within a theatre play rehearsal, even using all the languages employed during the sessions (English, French, Darija, Spanish)

in order to play with the polyphonic nature of the group. Finally, we decide to leave this decision for later, when we visit the bookseller.

(Vergara, fieldwork notes, 2015)

I have never visited the church of Saint-Bernard and I didn't plan any visit to it as part of the thesis. However, I have experienced some kind of mental travelling to that place through the work of Alejandra Riera. I got to know personally the artist and her work through my invitation to her to participate in the programme of exhibitions *La Forma y El Querer-Decir* (Form and Meaning)¹⁰⁵ that I curated at MUSAC (León) in 2012-13. An anecdote, related to this programme that occurred during my first visit in the summer of 2011 to Riera's studio in Paris prior to her installation at MUSAC, could help us now to introduce some relevant issues related to the church of Saint-Bernard and this Chapter. During that period, I was immersed in the reading of Derrida's essay 'Form and Meaning: A Note on the Phenomenology of Language' due to the fact that, as previously mentioned, I had decided to depart from that essay in order to build the curatorial context of the whole programme. In fact, this initial period of reading, guided by my own appreciation of the correlation between the essay and some artistic practices was exclusively what I could offer to the artists invited at that particular moment of research prior to the opening of the exhibitions. Riera's answer to my proposal for defining a curatorial programme revolving around ideas related to Derrida's essay came soon after we finally met in Paris. She gave me an A4 sheet of paper on which she had printed a photograph of Jacques Derrida taken on 25 July 1996. The image, printed in colour, showed a frontal view of the philosopher at the church of Saint-Bernard during the press conference that he gave, together with lawyers and spokespersons of the associations committed to the movement of asylum seekers and immigrants without papers, as a form of support to the collective protest. This photograph, printed spontaneously on that occasion by the artist onto an A4 sheet, had been previously

¹⁰⁵ Laboratorio 987, the space of the museum that hosted the cycle, aimed to serve as an active space for experimentation, reflection and speculation devoted to exploring the new forms of contemporary production, as well as their capacity to stimulate different processes of collective reflection, correlation and transfer of knowledge, all of which are necessary when conceiving artistic practice as an active agent of producing knowledge rather than a conveyor of hidden meaning to unravel.

discarded by her and therefore not included among the images-texts included in her book *Maquetas-sin-cualidad* (Maquettes-Without-Qualities),¹⁰⁶ published on the occasion of her solo show at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, from 12 November 2004 to 16 January 2005. I had taken Riera's book with me during that visit, so I immediately recognised her criteria for dismissing that specific image. The frontal relation between the philosopher and the camera lens broke down the logic of the disposition of a series of 'partial views'¹⁰⁷ that conformed the *Maquetas-sin-cualidad*. Those images, which situate the viewer's point of view in the face of an act of displacement, as a rule also avoid the main event referred to within the image caption. In other words, the 'partial views' draw on secondary and everyday components as a form of portraying 'a landscape of political events that tries to cross the little histories in the present rather than in the past.' (Riera 2005, 21)

I expressed my gratitude for that present and kept it between the pages of Riera's book, understanding that we would soon start working together.

5.3. History

As mentioned previously, my connection to the occupation of Saint-Bernard comes through my friendship and collaboration with Alejandra Riera. Even though we have never directly approached her experience and implication with the *sans-papiers* movement during the 90s in any of the works we have shown together, it has constantly appeared indirectly through different forms and diverse occasions, thus demonstrating

¹⁰⁶ The *Maquetas-sin-cualidad* compose a device that contains multiple voices through the original form of a discontinuous arrangements of photographs and legends, texts, references, video-documents and stories of practices. The book was published in Spanish, Catalan and French, but not in English. However, there is an English essay on Riera's book published in *Afterall Journal* by Angelika Bartl. (2009).

¹⁰⁷ *Vues partielles* (partial views), the title for Alejandra Riera's solo exhibition within the *Form and Meaning* programme, is a concept conceived by the artist to approach the relationship that is established between writing and history. The term was firstly coined by the artist in the book *Maquetas-sin-cualidad*. Specifically, the resource of the *partial views* in the *Maquetas* operates on two different levels: on the one hand, by proposing an exercise of reframing, thus creating a fragmented perspective of a set of original images, and on the other hand, by arranging a visual shift through a series of groupings and ungroupings of images, texts, legends and sources, in an effort to reflect on the power relations that are established between image and text or between history and writing.

the impact this event has had on her and her work. For me, the *sans-papiers* movement of those years remained strong despite of the passage of time. In 1997 I was living in London and studying for my Master's degree at Goldsmiths College. At the time, the migration crisis drew attention to the attempts by some immigrants to enter Britain through the Channel Tunnel. In this context, the *sans-papiers* movement, its debates and activist actions in Paris and London naturally were filtered into the academic milieu. I remember wondering then about what pertinent theoretical and artistic tools could be utilised in order for this movement to have a repercussion within the Spanish artistic field, precisely when there was no connection between postcolonial theory and artistic and curatorial practices. This preoccupation has accompanied me ever since, leading me to enquire about the appropriate curatorial modes for activating a space of reflection on the migration crisis within the border conflict area in the north of Africa. One of the forms of expressions that I employed recently for bringing my own interest in the *sans-papiers* movement of the mid 90s within the public sphere materialised in a conference that I presented in the context of the international seminar entitled *No Hay Más Poesía Que La Acción: Teatralidad Y Disidencia En El Espacio Urbano* (There Is No More Poetry Than Action: Theatricality And Dissidence In Urban Space) organised by Artea and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS) on 12 and 13 April 2013. The conference,¹⁰⁸ which introduced the work of Riera in connection to the occupying actions of 1996 in Paris, presented an occasion to share openly with the artist common concerns about the movement and to learn through her experience about specific relevant issues that today one could miss when approaching that particular event. For example, when it came to the publication of the conference, Riera pointed out to me certain ideas that I was misusing: terms and words that within the *sans-papiers* collective had been evidently reflected upon and discussed profoundly. One of these terms was the word illegal¹⁰⁹ (i.e., illegal immigrant) that the collective rejected completely. Instead, other words were preferred as part of the urgency for claiming their own condition: not simply as immigrants and asylum seekers, but also as residents and workers who for the most part had been living and working in France for a prolonged time. These corrections and specifications that Riera pointed out made me aware of the

¹⁰⁸ The conference was later published in Sánchez, José A. and Belvis, Esther: *No Hay Más Poesía Que La Acción: Teatralidades Expandidas Y Repertorios Disidentes*. Mexico City: Toma, Ediciones y Producciones Escénicas y Cinematográficas: Paso de Gato, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ It is important to mention that the word illegal for referring to the migrant subject has been avoided in this thesis as a way of being complicit with the critical reflections undertaken by the *sans-papiers* movement of late 90s in Paris. The word only appears as part of other references.

need to approach the history of the *sans-papiers* movement through the protagonists' own experience. For this reason, the historical references used for this section correspond to the following written accounts published at the time by the spokespersons of the movement: 'The *Sans-Papiers* – A Woman Draws the First Lessons'¹¹⁰ by Madjiguène Cissé, and 'The Struggle of the *Sans-Papiers*: Realities and Perspectives'¹¹¹ by Ababacar Diop. With them, I propose putting the stress on the use of certain terms and words while rejecting others, but also I would like to give emphasis to the forms of organisation that the collective put into practice, with the precise intention of bringing some connection to the conceptual framework of this Chapter, which is given by the term *lieu de vie*. In fact, I learnt about this term through a text by Félix Guattari on the specific alternative organisational form put to work in the context of the Clinic La Borde.¹¹²

The article 'The *Sans-Papiers* – A Woman Draws the First Lessons' by Madjiguène Cissé still performs its pedagogical meaning. Even today we can learn from the text about the reasons and the achievements of a fight that is also relevant for the present. However, a fight that seems difficult to imagine happening today due to the passivity of the European governments and citizens in respect to the current Syria refugee crisis. Against this indifference, the text can be read as a lesson from the past for looking at the crisis of the present, an example that asks us directly about the type of democracy in which we live. The first thing that we learn from the text is where the *sans-papiers* of Saint-Bernard came from and why they were all living in France. Cissé begins her article referring to the importance of answering the recurrent question in order to unveil the colonial reasons behind their arrival.

We are all from former French colonies, most of us from West African countries, Mali, Senegal, Guinea and Mauritania. But there are also among us several Maghreb people (Tunisians, Moroccans and Algerians); there is one man from Zaire and a couple who are Haitians (Cissé 1996).

¹¹⁰ Original French version published in *Politique*, revue, no. 2, October, 1996.
<http://www.bok.net/pajol/madjiguene2.en.html>

¹¹¹ 4 April 1997. Translated by Iain Nappier.
<http://www.bok.net/pajol/sanspap/sptextes/ababacar2.en.html>

¹¹² Alejandra Riera has also developed a close relation with La Borde through her contribution as a volunteer within it. This relation appeared reflected indirectly in some of the works showed in the installation *Partial Views* at MUSAC in 2013.

To answer that question implies, as she writes, a ‘site inspection’ (Cissé 1996), that is, the tracking of a profound geographical network constituted by the French colonial power of the past and of the present. For that, Cissé places migration as the result of past colonial abuses, but also of present neo-colonial measures that through the Western neoliberal model of economic development the rich countries of the north continue exploiting and controlling the so-called ‘independent African countries’. With this introduction, the spokeswoman of the *sans-papiers* points towards a necessary awareness in respect to the responsibility of migration, bringing it to the very centre of the social life of France and consequently of Europe. However, far from going solely in the direction of identifying those bodies responsible for the crisis of migration, Cissé takes the line of introducing what the group has learnt from the fight. Something that, in my own opinion, is again full of a pedagogical spirit, written perhaps for future generations that find themselves in similar situations. In this respect, Cissé talks about the importance of the *sans-papiers* being autonomous, in other words, speaking for themselves and not through any existing organisations for helping immigrants. She states it clearly: ‘If we had not taken our autonomy, we would not be here today’ (Cissé 1996). In fact, we learn from the text that this claim for autonomy, far from isolating the group into its own specific battle and distancing it from other struggles, opened a dialogue with other groups (e.g., with the ACT UP advocacy group, the Women’s Centre in Paris and the trade unions)¹¹³ and brought together common concerns about democracy and the current infringements of fundamental rights. So, in this sense, the issue of autonomy allows Cissé to pose the problem of migration as a concern of French society and not exclusively as a dilemma of a marginalised group. Then, she explains the way they organised themselves as a sovereign body, that is, the inner mechanics of the group’s self-government. This was achieved through assemblies, which, as she mentions in the text, initially were only attended by men, and through the election of delegates, mainly ‘heads of the families’ or headmen as if reproducing the structure of ruling regions and villages in Africa. All these existing procedures were soon called into question, thus transforming the very concept of the group in the search for an adequate

¹¹³ After the eviction from Saint Ambroise Church, the *sans-papiers* received support from diverse sectors as humanitarian organisations, the radical left and several trade unions. Soon later, they were provided with accommodation in the LCR bookshop (a Trotskyist organisation), on the premises of the postal trade union Sud-PTT and those of the Droit Devants! Group and then after in the empty rooms of the SNCF railways in the Rue Pajol. For more information, please go to: <http://www.noborder.org/>

form of self-governing. Finally, Cissé adds that out of ten elected delegates, the group kept only two: Cissé herself and Ababacar Diop. Cissé also draws attention to the important role of women within the fight, something that happened gradually, from having little presence in the early assemblies to later organising their own meetings that ‘enabled them to play an important role in the direction of the struggle’ (Cissé 1996). This was evident at some point in the fight, when the men considered going home, influenced by the priest of SOS-Racisme who suggested they submit their own case files to the Ministry of Interior (Cissé 1996). The women took a stand against that option and moved into the Women’s Centre in Paris, forcing the men to rethink and re-join the struggle together. Other actions were then carried out by the women of the *sans-papiers*, like the women’s march on 11 May and the occupation of the town hall of the 18th arrondissement. Cissé links all these experiences with past struggles in Africa, such the youth movement and trade unions of May 1968 in Senegal or the struggle of the railwaymen’s wives, of Malian and Senegalese origin, in 1947 against the imprisonment of many strikers who took part in the conflict with the colonial administration, or even the demonstrations organised by the National Coordination of women in 1988 against the rigging of the Senegalese elections. In sum, experiences of struggles that were scarcely known in Europe and ended up being mostly dismissed by written history. With these references, Cissé empowers herself in the writing, claiming her own position as a spokeswoman for the movement, which has a long tradition of struggle behind it. The final part of the article is dedicated to issues related to integration and respect, and the reasons behind rejecting the notion of the ‘underground’ (or clandestine), which they immediately understood to have ‘a very strong negative charge’ (Cissé 1996). Contrary to this status, which they considered imposed upon them by others as a stigma, they made themselves visible in order to let people know they were there and had been living and working in France for a long time, paying their taxes: not simply immigrants recently arrived in the country but workers trying to live decent lives like anyone else.

The spokesman for the group, Ababacar Diop, in his article ‘The Struggle of the *Sans-Papiers*: Realities and Perspectives’, points to a similar concern when he refers to the status of ‘illegal’ that was imposed on them. He expresses the group’s refusal to accept that term, even though they do not have legal papers (Diop 1997). With this refusal, he seems to highlight the existing juridical contradiction that becomes clear when some of

them became classified as illegal under the new legislation¹¹⁴ of the government of Jacques Chirac. With this seemingly capricious state of legality, Diop makes visible the contradictory law that establishes who is a legal citizen and who is not, ‘creating the very illegals it was supposed to be removing’ (Diop 1997). We should take into account, that this text was written one year after the occupations had taken place, something relevant if we compare this text with that of Cissé, which was written the same year as the occupations. Through Diop’s text, we find out about the immediate effects of the actions undertaken by the group and their repercussion in juridical terms. Diop refers, for example, back to the issue of autonomy raised by Cissé, and how ‘the regularisation process’ anticipated by the mediators actually produced no results. This demonstrates once again the importance of the *sans-papiers* speaking for themselves. However, Diop also expresses how their own claims often went unheard, for example when on the 40th day of the hunger strike of some *sans-papiers* during the occupation of Saint-Bernard, the authorities offered them a dozen or so residence permits in return for ending their campaign (Diop 1997) or when, prior to their eviction from Saint-Bernard, ‘the government asked the Council of State to determine whether the *sans-papiers* had a “right” to regularisation’ (Diop 1997), a request to which France’s supreme constitutional authority did not reply, but rather let the State decide ‘to grant regularisation if it chose¹¹⁵’ (Diop 1997). With all these contradictory details, Diop clearly denounces the French legislation for trying to raise concerns ‘about the type of society we want’ (Diop 1997). With this comment, Diop once again tries to bring the migration problem outside of its own specificity and link it to other problems present in society that affect all French workers and citizens. In that respect, he poses questions regarding the supposedly egalitarian condition of French democracy, especially in respect to the draft law of Debré,¹¹⁶ which tried to undermine the rights of legal immigrants by making their residence permit conditional on ‘the absence of disturbance to public order’ or violating the civil rights of French people ‘by establishing police

¹¹⁴ The legislation seems to have come about as a result of the new demands for flexibility of the global labour supply in the context of the previous crisis of the second half of the 70s and the following restructuring of employment in the 80s. In this sense, the *sans-papiers*’ struggle was seen by many workers in connection to the growing precariousness and insecurity of employment that was starting to affect the majority of French people.

¹¹⁵ After the eviction of Saint-Bernard, 24 people were finally deported (Diop 1997).

¹¹⁶ The Debré Law, which gained its name from the then Minister of the Interior, provoked a spectacular reaction, as when 66 film-makers held a press conference and made an appeal for civil disobedience against it. For more information, see: <http://www.noborder.org/>

files on those who accommodated foreigners'¹¹⁷ (Diop 1997), something that the spokesman compares to the Nazi era of 1940s.

Finally, on 1 June 1997 the left-wing won the elections and soon after Ababacar Diop announced that he had secured Jospin's agreement to the legalisation of the *sans-papiers* of Saint-Bernard. In all other cases, the government proposed a case-by-case legalisation. A little later the Pasqua and Debré laws were repealed and the so-called Chevènement Law, named after the new Minister of Interior, was published on 24 June 1997, under which the case-by-case examination was implemented. Despite these achievements, some activists were critical of the new situation, mainly due to the fact that the *sans-papiers* were only granted temporary permits and that the case-by-case legalisation could be also employed as a way of police registration. The struggle continued, turning to new forms of activity.

5.4. Considerations Among the Notion of *Lieu de Vie*

The term *lieu de vie* is extracted from a particular text by Félix Guattari entitled 'La Borde: A Clinic Unlike Any Other'¹¹⁸ dedicated to introducing his own experiences at the clinic La Borde situated 10 miles south of Blois in the Cour-Cheverny district, at approximately one hour south of Paris (Guattari 2009, 176). The discovery of this term came about through my interest in the experimental organisational modes developed at the clinic under the direction of psychiatrist Jean Oury. However, my reading of Guattari's text came about by accident through the reading of yet another text, the article 'The Last Remains of the Empire' (Ceberio, Cembrero and González 2012). This accidental crossover caused an interesting intertextuality between both sources, bringing in an unpredictable dialogue between, on the one hand, Guattari's introduction of the concept of *lieu/x de vie*¹¹⁹ in reference to the developments undertaken within

¹¹⁷ This imposition corresponded to the modification of Article 1 of the Decree of 1945, which thanks to the movement of civil disobedience was finally withdrawn, even though the rest of the law was approved by Parliament.

¹¹⁸ Originally published as 'La Borde Un Lieu Psychiatrique Pas Comme Les Autres', *La Quinzaine Littéraire* 250 (1977) pp. 20-21.

¹¹⁹ The term is also linked to the practice of French educator Fernand Deligny, who also worked at La Borde and later put into practice a new experimental mode of caring for children with autism in Cévennes

Psychiatry in 1960s of the so-called communal ‘lifespaces’ (Guattari 2009, 188) such as La Borde, and, on the other, the forbidden *plazas* of sovereignty, territories that have been emptied of population but which continue being monitored by military forces. The reading on both sites, in origin completely disconnected from each other, mixed the dynamics of the two places in my own imagination, bringing me to speculate about the transformation of the deregulated and opaque Spanish enclaves into potential future spaces for collective life. Furthermore, the potentiality of this transformation remained and became the drive for my study of these colonial territories. More concretely, this speculative desire came about under the influence of Guattari’s description of the experimental procedures tested at the clinic, which introduced the desire to invent a new mode of self-organisation. This aspiration should be also read in relation to the configuration of a new institutional form, the clinic, that is not exclusively dedicated to the treatment of psychosis, but that also strives for the transformation of subjectivity.¹²⁰ Finally, the self-reflexivity employed at La Borde – its own procedures for analysis that avoid to take anything for granted – can help us, in the context of the study of the *plazas* of sovereignty, to project them not necessarily within the same institutional parameters of the clinic, but to probe them in respect to their own constraining condition and therefore also question the type of democratic system that sustains sovereign places as such.

5.4.1. Theoretical Context of the Term

In his text, Guattari gives no direct definition for the notion *lieu/x de vie*. However, he describes some of the practices carried out in the clinic and introduces other models employed outside of it, which taken together help us to understand the radical changes employed during 1960s against the institutionalised practices of psychiatry. From my

and to the Belgian educator and psychoanalyst Maud Mannoni who initiated the School of Bonneuil dedicated to the care of children and adolescences with autism and psychosis. Other relevant names in connection to the term are Ronald D. Laing and David Cooper who were responsible for Kingsley Hall, an experimental anti-psychiatry project developed in London.

¹²⁰ Félix Guattari directly points out to the fact that he does not suggest extending the experiment of La Borde to the whole of society. Yet, he adds that subjectivity, at any stage of the *socius*, does not occur by itself, but it is produced by certain conditions that in final terms can be modified through multiple procedures even in a way that can finally channel subjectivity in a more creative direction (Guattari 2009, 182). Through this comment, we can interpret that his own interest lies in changing the conditions that sustain the production of subjectivity.

perspective, one of the most relevant experimental forms applied at La Borde is related to the gradual desegregation not only of the doctor-patient relationship but also between the medical staff and service personnel (Guattari 2009, 179). Through the invention of a new institutional machine that worked under a rotating structure, in La Borde service personnel were required to be integrated with medical work and, reciprocally, medical staff were drafted for material tasks such as cleaning, cooking, dishwashing, maintenance, etc. (Guattari 2009, 178). This rotation brought about a mini-revolution, as Guattari calls it, allowing a new schedule where medical staff together with service workers, and at some point even patients, shared duties such as giving injections, organising meetings, running workshops and conducting sporting activities (Guattari 2009, 179). In this respect, La Borde instituted a new form of organisation that aimed to institute individual and collective responsibility as the only remedy to bureaucratic routine and passivity generated by traditional hierarchical systems (Guattari *ibid*). Following this line, Guattari introduces the term ‘seriality’, which he presented as fashionable at the time and that according to Jean-Paul Sartre pointed out ‘the repetitive and empty character of a mode of existence arising from the way a practico-inert group functioned’ (Guattari 2009, 180). Following this line of thought, Guattari defends La Borde as a model that stands in opposition to the ‘serialised’ collective life, a life in common that is driven by the repetition of rigid schemas, which in turn comes out of ‘a ritualisation of the quotidian as much as a regular and terminal hierarchisation of responsibility’ (Guattari 2009, 181). Contrary to this seriality within society, Guattari proposes to dream of life outside any empty repetition, in other words to redirect it in the sense of a constant and internal re-creation.¹²¹ This suggestion introduces La Borde as an attempt to building up an institution that aims for the production of new forms of subjectivity that no longer attends to repetitive canons. With suggestions such as this, we can realise that the revolutionary changes at La Borde directly concerned the transformation of the existing practices and institutions of psychiatry and through these changes envisioned the configuration of an alternative mental health model that

¹²¹ He later connects this re-creation with an ethico-aesthetic pragmatics, which, according to the philosopher, should follow four imperatives: *irreversibility* (authenticity of the event-encounter), *singularisation* (open to the occurrence of the rupture of meaning under a new constellation of references), *heterogenesis* (in the search for specificity) and *necessitation* (the obligation of an affect, percept or concept to be actualised and the impossibility of being translated into any hermeneutic) (Guattari 2009, 193).

differentiated itself from the ‘antipsychiatry’ movement.¹²² However, La Borde allows us also to acknowledge the need for new forms of institutions and in this guise the clinic can function as an example for reflecting upon social life, thus seeing the problems of psychiatry as not just an isolated sphere that affects only patients, families, medical staff and service workers, but society as a whole, since the rejection of cultural and existential difference is a result of a social responsibility that has grown out of ‘a continuum where one finds racism and xenophobia’ (Guattari 2009, 188). Furthermore, the clinic La Borde can also be employed as a model for thinking new ways of changing the conditions that sustain the production of contemporary subjectivity. Through the rotation of roles, duties and therefore responsibilities, La Borde aims to produce a new collective life within itself that avoids the repetition of established hierarchical structures. This new form of organisation allows new conditions of sociability within the clinic, something that according to Guattari was truly beneficial for all. However, he seems to aim to reach other spheres and to also treat them within their own specificity. This claim further appears in the text where he refers to the term ‘institutional analysis’ that he developed in the early 1960s. He says:

One can only dream of what life could become in urban areas, in schools, hospitals, prisons, etc, if instead of conceiving them in a mode of empty repetition, one tried to redirect their purpose in the sense of permanent, internal re-creation (Guattari 2009, 182).

Lines such as this remain strong within my own imagination, dreaming also of what life could become in the *plazas* of sovereignty, if we could try to re-create life outside their own empty excluding status, thus configuring new conditions for the production of a social life outside repetitive standardised hierarchical forms

5.4.2. In Relation to the Control of the Flux of Migration

¹²² Guattari refers to the fact that even though he kept friendship with people such as Manonni, Laing and Cooper and they were for him a source of inspiration, he never agreed with their brand of ‘anti-psychiatry’ (Guattari 2009, 182). Instead, his interest, together with that of Oury, went more into launching a movement that effectively engaged mental health workers and patients (Guattari 2009, 186). This direction was in tune with Jean Oury’s early training days with François Tosquelles at the psychiatric hospital of St Albans, one of the precursors of institutional psychotherapy.

The concept of *lieu de vie*, as it has been introduced here in relation to the experimental work developed at the clinic La Borde, will now be discussed in relation to the control of migration executed by border territories such as the *plazas* of sovereignty. For this, I would like to recall the clinic's 'constant activity of calling things into question' (Guattari 2009, 179) in order to highlight Guattari's suggestion of analysing each event, word or practice under creative terms, that is to say, outside the repetitive use of hierarchical protocols. In other words, I would like to employ the term *lieu de vie* here for paying attention to the fact that power begins performing through the use of language. Following this argumentation related to the power of language and trying to apply creative means to revise notions relevant for this Chapter, we could propose interpreting the notion of the border through the material expression of a body. In other words, we suggest approaching the border as a specific body that has a life in itself. Besides, we could also do the opposite, that is, we could consider the human body as if it were a kind of border that also performs division between separated realities.

Departing from the idea of envisaging the border as an autonomous body leads us to consider it, not exclusively in architectural terms, that is as a constructing device for spatial partition, but also in relational terms, as a tool for self-reflection about its own capability for disposing division as much as the classification between objects, subjects and social realities. In this respect, the border can be seen as an autonomous apparatus, capable of producing life conditions within subjects and objects, therefore causing a confinement between the distinct divided parts. This mode of interpreting the notion of border is inspired by contemporary authors such as Giorgio Agamben, Sandro Mezzadra, Brett Nielson and Federico Rahola who have tried to articulate new theoretical perspectives around the border as a specific *dispositif* of control. More concretely, Giorgio Agamben, in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* pays attention to the established division between natural life and political life and how such a division, which in certain ways can also be considered as a border between both realities, is translated into some kind of power that penetrates bodies and all forms of life (Agamben 1998, 4, 5, 10, 20). Both Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson refer to the border as a method for the examination of 'the material circumstances at hand, which, in the case of borders, are ones of tension and conflict, partition and connection,

traversing and barricading, life and death' (Mezzadra, and Neilson 2008). Furthermore, when it comes to analysing the politics of management of migration in the dividing line between Europe and Africa, authors like Mezzadra and Rahola, as mentioned before, propose a temporal conception for the notion of border. This conception suggests a continuity between the colonial past and the present control of the migration flux executed by Europe through the externalisation of its borders in the Maghreb and in various sub-Saharan countries.¹²³

Apart from these references that suggest the border as a governing body that causes direct impact on its most immediate milieu as much as indirect effects into far temporal and distant realities, understanding, instead, the body as a border can take us to revise, for instance, Descartes' split between mind and body. The reconsideration of Descartes' division can then again be employed not only in physical or psychical terms, but also in relational ones, thus referring to the violent hierarchical dividing classifications that such a modern canon generated between objects and subjects coming from the 'civilised' Western world and the 'savage' world. Moreover, the body as border can simply entail the minimum condition for allowing a dialogue between two subjects, as Mikhail Bakhtin proposes within his theory of enunciation that is argued with respect to the configuration of a 'border between the self's words and the words of the other' (Lazzarato 2005, 68).

This understanding of the notion of border when it comes to producing meaning between two subjects that reply to each other is precisely where the reflection made by Austrian philosopher Stefan Nowotny in his essay 'The Multiple Faces of Civis: Is Citizenship Translatable?' (Nowotny 2008) gets inscribed. In fact, the essay analyses a dialogue that another author enounces as a debt towards a missing interlocutor. More specifically, Nowotny refers to a conference entitled 'What We Owe to the *Sans-Papiers*' (Balibar 2013) that Etienne Balibar read in 1997 in an event organised in solidarity with the movement, the previous occupation of Saint-Bernard in 1996, the hunger strike undertaken by some *sans-papiers* and the consequent deportations that occurred after the evacuation executed by the police. In his essay, Nowotny refers to the argumentation of several linguists in order to unfold the different meanings that have

¹²³ For more information on the European externalisation of borders in Africa, see Chapter 3.

been dismissed within the translation process of the word citizen that in most languages gains its meaning in relation to the spatial reality contained within the word city. Nowotny remarks that if we search for the Latin root of the word citizen we arrive at the primary term of *civis* from which *civitas* (city) derives. So, there we can find the problem of translation, as city derives from citizen and not the other way around. According to Nowotny's argument, within the Latin roots 'one is *civis* in relation to another *civis*, before being *civis* in relation to a city' (Nowotny 2008). In this sense, a citizen cannot be anything by himself or herself, as he or she needs another citizen in order to become as such, that is, the word *civis* indicates the notion of a co-citizenship. This reflection is unfolded by Nowotny in relation to the text Balibar read in the context of solidarity with the *sans-papiers* of the Saint-Bernard movement in 1997, that is, one year after the occupation, when some of the participants had already been deported. Nowotny then explains the debt Balibar expresses publicly in respect to the *sans-papiers*. He focuses on three different concerns. The first two have to do with the collective's strategies of becoming visible and claiming to speak by and for themselves. Nowotny argues how Balibar brings attention to the configuration by the group of an autonomous representation that confronted previous stigmatisations, demanding therefore other forms of participation within the French social sphere. Besides, such determination for becoming visible is also argued as an act of resistance against the illegal regime that is imposed on the *sans-papiers*, thus calling into question the terms under which society is defined. Finally, the last concern places the debt in connection to the missing meaning of the term citizen, once again, not in relation to the word *civitas* (city) but to *civis* (co-citizenship), a way of regaining this notion not just as an institutional construct that is imposed from above, but as a collective exercise that responds to a life in common.

Following a similar exercise of examining terminologies, we could direct our attention now towards the notion of *sans-papiers* and try to interpret it under new creative basis. For example, we could revise the term within the imaginative context of a theatrical stage. Following this interpretative logic, the *sans-papiers*¹²⁴ could be understood as those interpreters deprived of a performing role within a theatrical context. Or even better, the *sans-papiers* could be those interpreters who are not only dispossessed of

¹²⁴ In Spanish, the word *papel* from *los sin-papeles* can mean both paper and a theatrical role.

intervening in the dialogues or monologues that come together during the staging, but that, through their own lack, still take part in the construction of the social dramatisation. In this sense, we can consider that those who have no papers belong to the social theatre, however, without having the opportunity to perform by themselves: in other words, to access the representational regimen by their own means. Following this logic, the *sans-papiers* are those who get relegated to the margins of the scene, to the opacity behind the lighted stage. However, it could also be interesting to add something to this argumentation, if we consider the *sans-papiers* not only as relevant figures that operate within the back-stage, but, precisely because of their own non-interpretative status and in fact from their own position outside representation, we could even see them as those who help to reveal the whole theatrical montage. According to this idea, their non-interpretative position, once visible, could bring light into the constructive mechanics of the theatrical scene, the hierarchies between the roles, the disposition of the bodies within the stage, the hidden parts behind the illuminated and the dark sides. In this creative scenario, the form for the *sans-papiers* to irrupt into the scene could be read as a dissident inactivity capable of making visible what sustains the theatrical setting.

5.4.3. In Relation to the Practice of Curating



Illustration 19. *Partial Views* at Musac, León, 2013. Exhibition by Alejandra Riera as part of *La forma y el querer-decir* programme.

Could the exhibition space become a *lieu de vie*? Can we get away the ‘seriality’ under which such a space is governed? What kind of creative terms do we need for that? In order to try to answer these questions, I would like to introduce an experience at MUSAC while installing the work of Alejandra Riera for her solo exhibition *Partial Views*¹²⁵ within the programme *Form and Meaning*, which included in addition other works and elements, namely the *film-document*¹²⁶ *Enquête sur le/notre dehors (Valence-le-Haut) < 2007 - ... >*¹²⁷. The event went as follows:

¹²⁵ Riera employs this term in the context of this new work as a logic of certain reflective distancing at the time when she starts a long-term working process at the Fontbarlettes neighbourhood of Valence, France.

¹²⁶ *Film-document* is how Alejandra Riera refers to her videos and films, because she is interested in bringing in certain dialectics between fictional/essayistic film forms and documentary filmic types.

¹²⁷ This film-document was developed through a long process of exchange between the artist and the inhabitants of the marginalised neighbourhood of Fontbarlettes in Valence, reflecting an ‘image of collective thought’ (in conversation with the artist 2012) and also resulting in a publication about the idea of inhabiting and the very act of producing and authoring something in common. Even though, this work was initiated in 2007, the artist would not start producing any material until years later.

17 January 2013. Two workers from the Carwi glassworks in León (Spain) cut a clean hole in the glass window of the exhibition space at Laboratorio 987. The rectangular form of the hole is in the centre of the window, at a not too high level. Through the hole, the cold winter wind sneaks in reaching the faces of the viewers when they get near the table that the artist has placed against the window and where she is showing some images, documents and objects brought from her own experience in Valence and the clinic La Borde.

The opening in the glass resembles, although smaller, the rectangular shape of the screen that has been built for the occasion on a light plastic structure. In this screen, the *film-document* produced by Alejandra Riera together with some inhabitants of the Fontbarlettes neighbourhood of Valence is projected. The artist has rejected projecting it directly onto the walls of the museum.

The hole in the glass thus functions as a citation of the filmic device constructed for the occasion, but also of another hole with a rectangular shape that the artist photographed at La Borde. An irrational cut, we could call it, like the term Gilles Deleuze uses for referring to the rupture caused in between filmic sequences and which ‘determines the non-commensurable relations between images’ (Deleuze 1989, 213). A hollow that interrupts the smooth surface of the window’s glass, letting the fresh air from the street enter through the fissure. An incision within the exhibition space that seems to suggest suspending the functioning rules of the exhibition *dispositif*, allowing a permeable relation between both inside and outside realities. A striated opening in the architecture that calls us together to change the function of the *dispositif* (De Naverán and Vergara 2016).

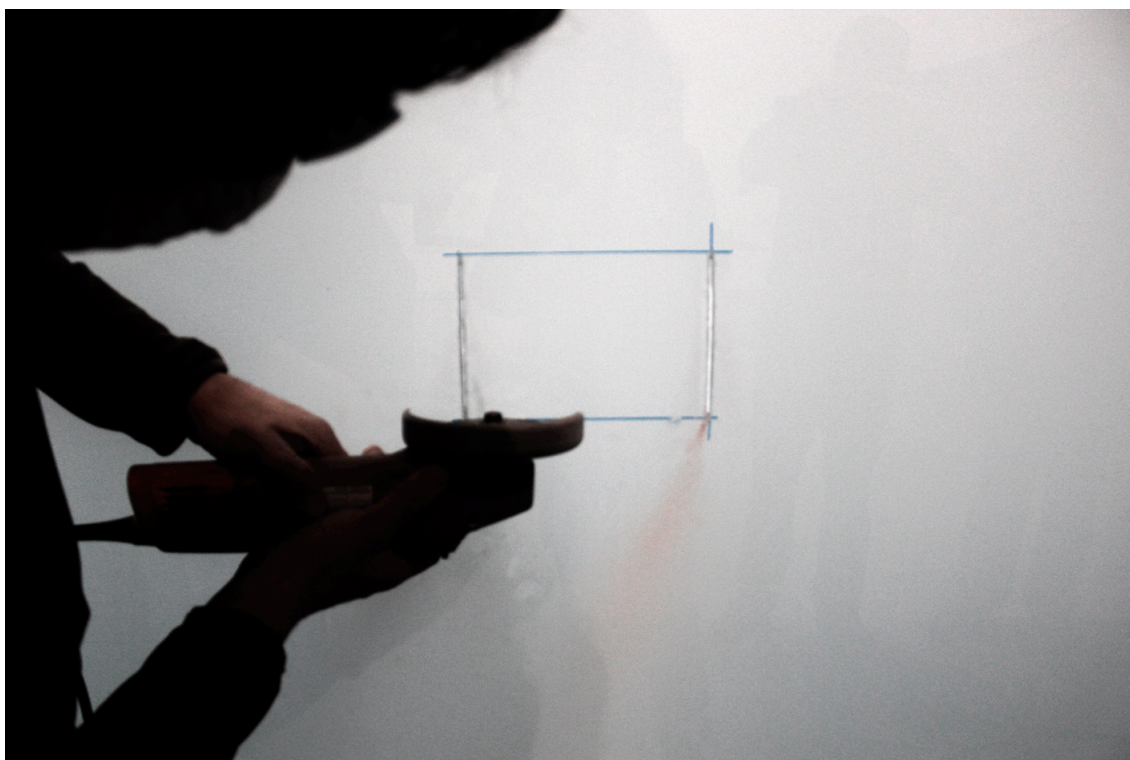


Illustration 20. *Partial Views*. Musac, León, 2013. Alejandra Riera.

The exhibition display at MUSAC allowed screening the film for the first time within an art institution. It is important to mention here that the display, configured as a dialogue between Riera and artist Andreas Fohr, consisted of a series of arrangements within the exhibition space that followed a self-imposed general rule: to avoid by any means screening the film-document *Enquête sur le/notre dehors* directly on the walls of the museum. At the same time the display functioned as an ensemble of exercises that critically reflected on the limitations of presenting an artistic practice of this kind inside a contemporary art museum. Finally, the film was accompanied by other materials like the ‘non-audible’ and ‘non-visible’¹²⁸ version of the same *film-document* and other objects that emphasised the imposition of power on the subaltern within the representational parameters of a museum.

¹²⁸ This was the only version of the *film-document* projected during the 2012 triennial *La Triennale* at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. The film *Fiction poétique heyala helbestane* shows the projector while it is beaming the original *film-document*. The resulting image is a close-up view of the apparatus emitting a moving image onto the glass of its own lens that is too small and blurry to be watched. There is no sound, as no speakers were installed during the shooting of this version, which has the same duration as the original film.

5.5. Speculating on the Term *Lieu de Vie* in Respect to this Research

5.5.1. The Work of Alejandra Riera

An image shows us the consequence of the occupation by the *sans-papiers* of the disused SCNF warehouse in Paris. A group of citizens, mainly originating from Africa, but also from Europe, have been photographed after being expelled from the occupied building. They all appear seated, quite close to one another, remaining motionless. We cannot clearly discern what kind of action is being carried out by them at that precise moment. They could be showing passive resistance through a collective sit-in or they could simply be waiting while the police finish with the eviction. The camera does not look at any facial expression, but to the positions of the bodies, arranged together in an improvised manner in an external public space. Soon, one realises that the image has been taken from within, as we can figure out that behind the place where the camera is standing there are still more people seated.

The photograph belongs to the book *Maquestas-sin-cualidad* by Alejandra Riera and through it I became aware of her own personal implication in the *sans-papiers* movement of mid 90s in France. Without asking her directly, I started to write about this photograph and her implication in the movement that is revealed within the book. It was sometime later before we finally talked directly about the experiences the artist lived with the *sans-papiers* and about her own personal archive developed during those actions, which has never been shown within an artistic context.



Illustration 21. *Maquetas-sin-cualidad*, 2004. Alejandra Riera.

A long caption accompanies the afore mentioned image, which exceeds the space of the text-box that, following the design precepts, introduces a particular logic within some parts of the book. The rectangular shape of the text-box has the same dimension as the rectangular shape as the image, something that happens on any page where image-text appears combined. In this case, the caption is presented as the exception to the rule and it reads as follows:

May 1996, the warehouse of the SCNF (French railway company) occupied by the 300 undocumented expelled from Saint-Ambroise church in France under the agreement of Cardinal Lustigier, as a result of a meeting with a group of mediators, conformed by intellectuals and former residents, as well as the former ambassador Stéphane Hessel, during which he asked the undocumented to give all the requested information needed for configuring some dossiers for getting the police applications that, according to Hessel, ought to offer the regularisation of the majority. In the article of 29 August 1996 entitled ‘Le Récrit d’un médiateur, les immigrés et nous’, published at Le Nouvel Observateur n° 2074,

Stéphane Hessel describes this event as follows: ‘We went to Pajol to say to the families’ delegates: “Look, there is a real improvement, they are going to examine all your cases. So, go, go with your papers, reveal yourselves, they are going to examine you. Naturally, the police from now on will know everything about you, but that is not a problem and we have the impression that they will regularise a great number of people.” We assumed a great responsibility. And they cheated on us. That is why I was so furious on 26 June. At that moment, there had been people already on hunger strike for 8 days. They said: “But, what are we waiting for? What are our mediators doing?”

r) continuation. The delivery of a resident permit is subordinated to the following payments: a fiscal official stamp of 200 francs, corresponding to the residency tax (article of the financial law n° 9.1322 from 30/10/91); chancery tax of 650 francs x 2, i.e. 1,300 francs (article 3 of the decree n°97 165, of 24/02/97) and the global fee for a medical check-up of 1,050 francs (decree of 17/03/97 as appeared on the Official Journal of 26/03/97). This means that each adult needs to pay 2,550 francs. This sum does not correspond to the amount requested from the members of the EU¹²⁹ (Riera 2005, 129).

On page 153 of the book, one can continue reading other passages concerning the inner situation of the *sans-papiers* during their actions undertaken in 1996. On this occasion, the text appears outside any text-box, avoiding a direct relational shape with the images. It shows two different registers, in smaller fonts and italics, some excerpts from Madjiguène Cissé’s text ‘The *Sans-Papiers* – A Woman Draws the First Lessons’ are included. In regular and bigger fonts, Alejandra writes:

(...) The energy of friendship ought to be its own strength to presence or proximity. The clairvoyance of the photographer does not consist of “seeing” but of being there.

24th of March of 1996, Eye witness, at dawn, on the day of the expulsion and evacuation by the police from the Japy Gym in the 11th arrondissement of Paris (occupied after the expulsion from Saint-Ambroise church), several people, we went to interpellate together with the group regarding our presence in that place.

¹²⁹ Translated by the author.

That day, no photographs were taken. Images arrived much later, between 1996 and 1997¹³⁰ (Riera 2005, 153).

Above, we find an image which in fact does not correspond to the text below. A crowd waits outside the main door of a big church. No more people seem to fit inside. Later, Riera explained to me that this image corresponds to some of the photographs she shot during Derrida's press conference at the church in support to the movement and the hunger strike. In fact, this particular image substituted finally, in the book, the frontal image of the philosopher made by the artist and handed to me when I visited her in Paris. Contrary to that other frontal image, this one is aimed towards capturing the presence of the philosopher at Saint-Bernard church without showing him directly, thus avoiding a frontal view of him, offering therefore a partial view of the event. In her own words: 'The image tries to show another angle of the event that tries to search for the micro-history of things, something that comes through in the *Maquetas* in many different forms.'¹³¹

On page 154, the account continues:

The confessionals have been turned into wardrobes; the apses, where the saints and the virgin stand, into spaces for gathering and drinking tea; the nave into an immense sleeping room. Very likely, the Saint-Bernard church on few occasions will have been so crowded. A group of photographs have finally ended up configuring a personal archive. None of those images have a commercial use, they were given to the people who requested them and were only published when they gave their consent. Some images of the undocumented people on hunger strike at Saint-Bernard church (photographs that belong to the archive) were used, at the request of the group, within important meetings, for exposing their situation to public opinion (please, see the banners carried out by the undocumented and published, among others, in *Libération*, 8 August 1996¹³² (Riera 2005, 154).

¹³⁰ Translated by the author.

¹³¹ 8 May 2015, in conversation with the artist.

¹³² Translated by the author.

An image accompanies the text above in which we see a pregnant woman looking ahead. We cannot see the object of her sight, but if we follow its direction we find first a black stain and later another image that appears folded by the binding of the book. The image shows precariously, due to its own position in the book, some people sleeping on the floor of what seems to be the nave of Saint-Bernard church. The image was made without flash, and again exemplifies the complicity between the artist and the group, since, apparently, they did not allow anyone to make photographs like that during the occupation. Riera once again explains to me the reasons behind this image: ‘I was interested in showing the plasticity of the place when it turned itself into a lifespace’ (Riera, in conversation, 8 May 2015).

5.5.2. A Reading Session on the Notion of *Lieu de Vie* in Saf Saf, Tetouán

Today is Saturday, 13 June. We are meeting with the group at 9.30 am and we will depart soon, walking to the hills of Saf Saf. However, we have just realised that last night the hour changed due to the fact that Ramadan is about to begin. Some phones indicate an hour less, others two hours less. We decide to wait at a café until everyone has arrived. We finally reach the place around midday. To walk here from the city of Tétouan has taken us approximately an hour and a half. The very last stretch of the path takes us through the forest. The dense vegetation has prevented us from walking firmly, but has also allowed us to rid ourselves of the temper of the city and enter another mood. At the place, there are two cabins, and both are quite cosy, despite not having water or electricity. Chickens walk freely in the adjacent space. There are also some lakes quite near and someone proposes to swim at some point later during the day. The bookseller has arrived earlier, bringing with him sweets and books. Some people start eating them, while others explore the place. Nearby, we find the display that Youssef and the bookseller have set up with the second-hand books. They rest beautifully on top of a large rock. We decide to allow some free time before we start. Some people decide to go swimming, others eat the sandwiches we brought with us while taking a rest.

The following is extracted from the sound-recording of the session:

Soon after the break, we start with the reading of the chronicles written during Heidi Vogels' session at the garden of Dar Sanâa. People have brought with them different text formats, reports as prose, poems and even video. The minutes refer to Vogels' presentation, but some of them connect with the previous sessions bringing some interesting associations between all the readings. After the exchanging of the minutes, we get going with our last meeting. For that, I explain to the group that on this occasion, I would like to draw attention to the term *lieu de vie*, which is referred to in Guattari's text and in my own work developed within my PhD research. I propose then to open the discussion around both topics and in order to achieve this I ask some people in the group to help me with reading aloud the article from *El País* of 17 September 2012 by Mónica Ceberio, Ignacio Cembrero and Miguel Ángel González. Finally, four people share the task of reading aloud: Imma Sáez de Cámara, Heidi Vogels, Laila Eddmane and Elliot Brooks. For the reading, we use the extended English version of the article, so everybody can follow it. The article begins to be read in a resonating Spanish accent, continues with a Dutch intonation, to be followed by a Darija pronunciation and ends in clear American English. The intention behind this polyphonic sharing comes from the desire to activate a certain psycho-geography through the act of reading. In fact, the first question after it concerns the reasons behind the existence of an extended English version of the original Spanish article. Inma speculates about it referring to Gibraltar and its intentional connection with the Spanish *plazas* of sovereignty. The conversation breaks into multiple directions.

After this moment of free talking, I try to share with the group my interest in the notion of *lieu de vie* and the way I have employed this reference in order to use it as a model for enquiring into other terms, the first being the very notion of sovereignty,¹³³ the

¹³³ Prior to the production of my fieldwork in Morocco, I dedicated my efforts to the study of different terms, one of them being the notion of sovereignty. During the study, I approached it through diverse interpretations by various authors. Among them, I would like to mention Giorgio Agamben and his proposition of critically reviewing the condition of exceptionality of the figure of the sovereign in *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998). Another reference of study was Achille Mbembe's contribution in 'Necropolitics' (2003) where he places the final expression of sovereignty in the capacity of dictating who shall live and who shall die. Besides, I also arrived to Jean-Luc Nancy's expression of 'sovereignty without sovereignty' in the Chapter entitled 'War, Right, Sovereignty –Techne' from his book *Being Singular Plural* (2000). For Nancy, sovereignty is introduced as a non-sovereignty that gets defined by the emptiness of the place of sovereignty by a neoliberal political economy. Then, I continued exploring this idea about this void of sovereignty through the reading of Peter Pál Pelbart's essay 'A Community of Those Without a Community' (2009), where the Brazilian philosopher adds a new

meaning and the mode of (self) governing and its incongruent sense when referred to the Spanish enclaves. I also express how communal ‘lifespaces’ such as La Borde or even the collective experience we are creating through the reading group imply a radically opposite model to the *plazas*. In this sense, these contrary examples help us to approach the enclaves through what they are not, or even better, through what they could be if they were transformed. Aymeric then intervenes bringing in the differences between the French word ‘*lieu*’ and the English word ‘space’. For him, *lieu* has a location, it is grounded, but it also allows gathering without an enclosure, without borders. In other words, *lieu* implies specificity. Contrary to this, he argues that ‘space is a more general term, a wider concept that entails certain abstraction’. Heidi shares with the group the notion of *genius loci* from classical Roman religion, which also means place, but at the same time contains its own essence within it: a spirit of place.

I make clear that, in my own opinion, artistic practice can offer other methods in comparison to anthropology, journalism, etc... when approaching, for instance, forbidden spaces such as the *plazas*. Through art, I suggest, ‘we can criticise their status, as other disciplines do, but we can also project new imaginative possibilities for them and through that ability propose a completely different regime’. I realise, while I am listening again to my own words through the sound recording of the session, how my research has taken artistic practice as a very specific path through which I have approached the *plazas*. I am for example referring to our trip to the Riff with Younès Rahmoun’s family, where we had the chance to establish a connection between Vélez de la Gomera and the *Ghorfa*, or even Trankat, which offered me the possibility of establishing a relationship between my proposal and the specific artistic context of Tétouan, at the same time allowing that my own project feeds and contributes to that context. The discussion now examines what kind of impact art can have over these territories. Nouha asks me whether what I am trying to achieve is a real transformation. We all wonder about what transformation really implies. I mention that, for example,

understanding of sovereignty in relation to the logic of uselessness, arguing that the condition of the useless is a real possibility for the common, that is, a commonality that should occur away from any economic interest. Finally, Pelbart’s argument took me to the reading of Georges Bataille’s *The Accursed Share Volume II and III: The History of Eroticism and Sovereignty* (1993) where he defines sovereignty as NOTHING, proposing sovereignty in terms of the potential of uselessness. In sum, Bataille’s ambiguous concept again recalls the critical argument of the emptying of the place of sovereignty by the regime of political economy as much as it leaves open to our imagination the redefinition of the notion of sovereignty. Following Bataille’s ideas, I projected through my study of the term sovereignty this NOTHING as a formless possibility of reinventing new modes of (self) governing.

discussing the enclaves in different contexts like the UK, Germany, Spain or Morocco, as I have already done on different occasions, can be in certain sense conceived as an ongoing transformation. Aymeric adds that perhaps the *plazas* are simply a pretext for a utopia, while Inma wonders if we could consider the body, our own bodies in fact, as *plazas* of sovereignty. The conversation breaks up again into multiple voices.

It is almost 3.30 pm (or 2.30 pm, according to some watches, and we still continue to be a bit confused by the hour) and we would like to finish here and give way to the exercise of writing the chronicles. In order to do that, we approach the display of the books in their natural setting and we start reading their covers. There are books and magazines in English, Spanish, German, Arabic and French. They have all entered Morocco ‘illegally’ through the borders at Ceuta and Melilla, the bookseller explains to us. They are ‘*les sans-papiers livres*’ I suggest.

5.5.3. Documentary Materials by Alejandra Riera on the Collective Gathering at the Church of Saint-Bernard, Paris

Alejandra Riera contributes to this Chapter with a selection of pages of her book *Maquetas-sin-cualidad* (French version) where text and images introduce the *sans-papiers* movement during mid 90s in Paris. The selection comprises:

- Page 116: Blankets for an occupied building belonged to the Insurance company GAN by the Association DAL (Rights for housing).
- Page 119: Shooting of the film *Intégration à l’africaine* by Michael Hoare.
- Page 123: Partial view over a protest action undertaken at the Cash Converters store at rue de la Roquette, Paris on 11 February 1998.
- Page 129: Sit-in of May 1996 outside the warehouse of the SCNF.
- Page 152: A quote by Zahia Rahmani on friendship and another by Giorgio Agamben on the refugee.
- Page 154 and 155: Saint-Bernard
- Page 186: (3rd Maquette) The waiting room of the Centre of Immigration

Detention, Vincennes.

- Page 192: Centre Georges Pompidou during the peaceful occupation of the *sans-papiers* for making visible their movement and discussing the issue of free circulation.
- Page 208-09: Two images together. *Las Meninas* by Velázquez and the women of the *sans-papiers* group of Saint-Bernard when they occupied the Town Hall of the 18th arrondissement of Paris.
- Page 293: A photograph about the *sans-papiers* movement.
- Page 302: A sequence from the film *Blow-up* by Antonioni where a group of black people wearing traditional clothes appear as extras.
- Page 305-317: 5th Maquette, about the film-document with Madjiguène Cissé in Senegal.

It is important to mention that these materials appear in the book in relation to other struggles and references. This contribution helps us to navigate a small part of the whole project dedicated to critically exploring the potentialities of writing on the history of the present.

5.6. Conclusion

This last Chapter has been dedicated to the place of Saint-Bernard, one of the sites occupied by the movement of asylum seekers and immigrants without papers during 1996 in Paris and the term *lieu de vie*. The chosen location has helped us to introduce the *sans-papiers* movement of the 90s in Paris as a form with which to approach the position of those citizens without papers that suffer the imposition of borders applied through *dispositifs* of control such as the *plazas* of sovereignty. The term has helped us to explore a model of communal life that was aimed as an enquiry about the repetitive protocols that sustain social hierarchies and configure other ways of creating collectivity. We have then tried to apply the term, first to the history of the struggle of Saint-Bernard, and then to the object of study of this research – the *plazas* of sovereignty – in order to envision them as places for re-inventing a new form of life in

common. In other words, the term *lieu de vie* has helped us to confirm what they are not yet, but could be at some point in the future. In this context, the work of Alejandra Riera has also been introduced in connection to her book *Maquetas-sin-cualidad* and the materials gathered on the *sans-papiers* movement. A special contribution by Riera is included in the appendices section regarding this specific line of work.

6. Conclusions

This dissertation examines the territorial exceptionality of the *plazas* of sovereignty and configures a curatorial position in respect to such an examination.

Following this double attempt, this investigation includes the development of a specific project entitled *Dispositifs of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Era of Expanding Borders* in North Morocco as much as its own transference into the writing structure of this PhD thesis. For that, five Chapters introduce five different sites together with five notions. Four of these locations correspond to the *plazas* of Perejil Island, Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera, the Alhucemas Islands and the Chafarinas Islands. However, the last Chapter introduces a different setting away from the specific geography of the Spanish enclaves of the Northern coast of Morocco, but, as we have argued, related indirectly to them. This place is the church of Saint-Bernard situated within the Goutte d'Or neighbourhood of the 18th arrondissement of Paris, one of the locations occupied by the movement of asylum seekers and immigrants without papers during the mid-90s in France. With the introduction of this site, the fraught and more often doomed arrival of sub-Saharan migrants at these territories is considered within the research as well as the way the Spanish enclaves of Northern Morocco apply their own dynamics of control over the migrant subjects who represent an ultimate challenge to the ambiguous border demarcations established by them. The five notions introduced in the Chapters have been, in order of appearance, *dispositif*, touching, friendship, display and *lieu de vie*. Each of them has emphasised certain issues related to the *plazas*, allowing us to approach their complexity from different angles and theoretical considerations. Apart from this, each Chapter introduces a series of experiences lived with a guest artist around each enclave. Again in order of appearance, these have been: Xabier Salaberria, Younès Rahmoun, Heidi Vogels, Youssef El Yedidi, Marion Cruza Le Bihan and Alejandra Riera. Finally, the Chapters are also completed with other sources and contents drawn from diverse fields of knowledge and practice that include:

historical and contextual references, artistic and curatorial works, reading group sessions, site-visits and documentary productions undertaken by the invited artists.

This thesis progresses like a walk through all the different sites in which past, present and the desire for imagining a future meet. In this sense, in Chapter 1 we approach the intensely invigilated coastal area where Perejil Island is situated through my visit with Basque artist Xabier Salaberria. This moment is then confronted with the recent and not so recent history of that same location, that puts into place the islet within a cartography of diplomatic interests (political and economic) in different moments and through the agency of diverse countries such as Spain, Morocco, Algeria and the USA. Besides, the notion *dispositif* contextualises the enclave into a greater context in which the *plazas* start to be acknowledged as apparatuses of control of migration but also as devices for preserving the definition of what sovereignty is and what it is not. The *plazas* as *dispositifs* are then interpreted in correspondence to the control of the flux of migration and to curatorial practice, trying to figure out their power dynamics in the first context and the possibilities for curatorial work and research in the second. In addition to this, the practice of *parrhesia* or free-telling is introduced with reference to Foucault (2011) and in connection to the reading group sessions that conform one of the parts of the curatorial project undertaken in Northern Morocco. Thus, the work of Salaberria and the reading session with him at the roof of Dar Ben Jelloun house in the Medina of Tétouan helps us to try out this free-telling, leading to discussions about the notion of truth with respect to the *dispositif*, while also speculating about the non-Western social apparatuses.

The itinerary continues in Chapter 2 through the visit to Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera with Moroccan artist Younès Rahmoun, his uncle Mohamed Charchaoui, his wife Laila Eddmane and Dutch artist Heidi Vogels. This site, approached through a much calmer landscape than the cliffs close to Perejil, offered us a view from above to the Rock of Vélez and the invisible line that divides Morocco from Spain. In the Chapter, historical references introduce the living conditions of this enclosed territory during 18th century. Concretely, a medical report of 1744 on one of the epidemic contagions within the enclave offers us detail about the difficult conditions on the Rock, its isolation and oblivion in respect to Spain. These historical accounts are then followed by the notion of touching (Jean-Luc Nancy) which offers a new theoretical entry for analysing the

colonial model of occupation of the *plazas* of sovereignty. Nancy's argumentations for the term help to consider the *plazas* as touching devices that establish division as much as contact. Following this line of thought, the strategy of the detour (Derrida 2000), that is, of tracing the footprints, marks and traces, is suggested as an artistic strategy against the constant dividing effects of touching. Besides, the notion of touching allows us to place the *plazas* in respect to the control of migration and curatorial practice, firstly, by paying attention to the invisible line of the border at the sandy section of Vélez de la Gomera and secondly by attending to the division that the senses have created within the formalisation of the concept of fieldwork and the museum. In addition to all this, the work of Younès Rahmoun helps in this Chapter to speculate further with the term touching in respect to this research, specifically in connection to some of his works developed in Tétouan and in Beni Boufrah (the Rif). The reading session organised with him at his family house at the neighbourhood of Ybel Dersa continues with this same focus on the term touching and the discussion leads us to read touching in relation to issues like appropriation, access and possession and to try to imagine a system of relations beyond instrumental use, beyond capitalist exchange and value. The work of Rahmoun opens a speculative field within the reading group which projects utopian alternatives for social organisation beyond borders, the model of nation-state and capitalism.

In Chapter 3, the Alhucemas Islands are approached during our visit with Heidi Vogels to the bay of Alhucemas in the province of Al Hoceïma. Vogels takes this moment and the entire trip to the Rif with Younès Rahmoun and his family as the temporal context from which to find her own way for participating in this research. Under such temporal conditions, the notion of friendship also gives shape to her contribution. The calmness of the landscape of that day is recalled in contrast to the turbulent historical incidents that occurred in the same location during late 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, an intertwined history between Spain and Morocco and between the near *cabilas* and the Spanish military troops stationed on the Rock of Alhucemas unravels progressively. Furthermore, following the historical line of this place, the term friendship seems to give form to the most relevant events, thus making visible the complex long-term relationship and collaboration established between the Spanish authorities and the anti-colonial figure of Abd-el-Krim El Jatabi. This early friendship turned into a colonial enmity. During the Spanish Civil War, the anti-colonial struggle, which found support

within certain Spanish liberal and progressive sectors, fell into oblivion and the friend/enemy dichotomy with respect to the participation of Moroccans in the Spanish war was eventually defined by the victors, the ‘friends’ becoming associated with the combatants who participated on the Francoist side. An effect that, some authors (De Madariaga, 2009) interpret as a consequence of the African militarist stock that emerged out of the defeat of Abd-el-Krim. This historical background is read later in correspondence with a theoretical analysis of the term friendship, precisely from its own interpretations within political philosophy. Within this context, references to the term from Aristotle, Agamben, Mouffe, Pál Pelbart and Ghandi help to examine its own relevance in respect to the notion of democracy and is even suggested as ‘the last trope in anticolonial thought’ (Ghandi 2006). Furthermore, friendship is also explored in respect to the context of migration control and in this sense the work of Casas, Cobarrubias and Pickels is introduced in relation to its own contradictory status within the phenomenon of ‘border externalisation’. Following which, friendship is considered with regards to curatorial practice. For that, some personal curatorial projects, in which the notion of friendship and its own implications with the configuration of collective and participatory processes, are introduced. Finally, the work of Heidi Vogels, developed in the city of Fez since 2011, helps to continue speculation on the term friendship and its connection to this research. The work, an unfinished film on the disappearance of the gardens of Fez, is shared in the third reading group session of the project at the school of arts & crafts of Dar Sanâa in Tétouan, together with the reading of the text *Friendship* (2004) by Giorgio Agamben. The discussion focuses on trying to unravel the implications of an ‘intense proximity’ that takes place at the core of every politics of friendship.

Chapter 4 introduces the last stop within the journey to the *plazas* of sovereignty, the Chafarinas Islands, carried out together with Basque artist Marion Cruza Le Bihan. This last enclave is introduced with the term display and traces the itinerary followed from Tétouan to Melilla from where the islands are finally approached. This term corresponds to several concerns within this research. First of all, it gives account of the existing exhibition of the Zafrín site undertaken at the Chafarinas during early 2000s within the Archaeology Museum of Melilla. The islands are examined through the form of an archaeological display and its public dynamics of exposure. The accompanying historical references come from the multidisciplinary investigations undertaken in the

islands with respect to the archaeological findings and reported in two volumes of the magazine *Aldaba* (2013). Thus, some accounts are offered in relation to the research on the early living conditions of the Neolithic period in the archipelago, when the islands were still connected to the mainland coast. References to this period of prehistory are followed by other more recent accounts that give knowledge of the efforts put into bringing life back to the archipelago, once it was formally occupied by Spain during mid-19th century. Partly as a prison colony, partly as a defence against French colonial power, the archipelago and its social life are introduced in connection to a series of insurrections that occurred in Spain during Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. Finally, the end of the civil population of the islands is dated to 1986, the same year as the establishment of the Spanish Immigration Law that initiates a more political approach to immigration from Africa. With all these historical references as background, the notion of display is then introduced in correspondence to the practice of curating, more concretely with the curatorial project *EL CONTRATO*, that I developed within the collaborative work of Bulegoa z/b in 2013 and 2014. In this respect, the reading session organised around this notion at Azkuna Zentroa (Bilbao) in 2013 is added within the Chapter in order to contribute to the discussion developed on the term and its implications within the trajectory of exhibition making and its possible readings and connections with the term *dispositif*. Following that early debate, display is then acknowledged through canonical modern examples of exhibiting, trying to arrive at the ideological connotations that stand within them. In addition, the notion of display and its multiple forms are also approached from the field of ethnography and again various modern examples give accounts of its ability of mediation within the field of human sciences and exhibition making. Finally, the term is again put back into the context of the Chafarinas Islands and the exhibition at the Archaeology Museum of Melilla. From here, the display helps us to examine the line that divides where a display starts and where it ends, in other words, how fieldwork becomes an exhibit and vice versa, how the format of the exhibiting display ends up giving form to research. Thus, we finally reflect on considering the ideological effects of the display that take place beyond the museum, more concretely, in relation to this Chapter, within the old fortified town of Melilla, from which the Melilla border fence that can be seen from that location seems to intentionally occupy the non-exhibiting area of the old fortified surroundings. The work of Marion Cruza Le Bihan helps to establish the guidelines for the documentary production related to the Chapter. In this sense, a visit to several museums, archives and

institutions from Tétouan and Melilla are undertaken in order to explore the notion of display and its conceptual role within the research. Finally, the production is presented as a live event at Trankat (Tétouan) during Cruza Le Bihan's stay in Morocco.

Chapter 5 introduces a new site outside the geographic location of the Spanish enclaves of Northern Morocco, the church of Saint-Bernard, one of the buildings occupied by the movement of asylum seekers and immigrants without papers in the mid-90s in France. This place and the history of such occupation are introduced together with the notion of *lieu de vie*, a concept extracted from the text 'La Borde: A Clinic Unlike Any Other' by Félix Guattari (2009). Contextual references then give some background to the Chapter and the reasons for introducing this place in connection to the *plazas* of sovereignty. The intention behind this decision is presented in correspondence with the aim of approaching the many failed attempts to arrive on these forbidden territories by sub-Saharan migrants, which were only occasionally reported by the media. This approach is then expressed as a way of considering within the research the subject who undergoes the violent processes of exclusion that the *plazas* employ as *dispositifs* of control within the management of migration in the area. In line with the historical events at the church of Saint-Bernard, the work of Argentinian Paris-based artist Alejandra Riera is introduced and her relationship with the *sans-papiers* movements of the 90s in France. The historical references employed within the Chapter derive from two texts written in 1996 and 1997 by the spokespersons of the movement, Madjiguène Cissé and Ababacar Diop. The texts express a series of claims that today can still be acknowledged as relevant and full of pedagogical potentialities.

The theoretical notion that accompanies this Chapter has been extracted from a text by Guattari with reference to his own experience at the clinic La Borde. However, *lieu de vie* (collective *lifespaces*) is not a term invented by the French philosopher, but a notion that was common at the time within the 'antipsychiatry' movement. The text of Guattari helps us in this context to introduce ideas such as the need to avoid 'seriality', that is the ritualisation of the quotidian as much as the hierarchisation of responsibility and the need for the re-creation of new patterns of behaviour and therefore the invention of new models of organisation. In addition, the text also introduces the necessity of a constant self-reflexivity that within the context of this research is also redirected towards the actual democratic system that sustains sovereign places such as the Spanish enclaves.

Following Guattari's arguments, the notion *lieu de vie* is read in respect to concerns related to migration and the *sans-papiers* movement of the 90s and in relation to curatorial practice, through the specific collaboration established with Alejandra Riera at the exhibition programme *La forma y el querer-decir* (Form and Meaning) at MUSAC, 2013. Riera's work *Maquestas-sin-cualidad* (Maquettes-Without-Qualities) and the fourth reading session in the mountains of Saf Saf (Tétouan), organised together with Moroccan artist Youssef El Yedidi, offer the opportunity for speculating on the term *lieu de vie* this time in connection to the *plazas* of sovereignty. A collective experience that happened around books that had entered Morocco 'illegally' through the borders of Ceuta and Melilla and that allowed us to imagine the potentialities behind transforming the *plazas* into collective *livespaces*.

The thesis establishes a set of methodologies of knowledge-production that generates findings about the *plazas* of sovereignty that concern their current contemporary context but include also other transversal struggles. Some of these struggles belong to history like the anti-colonial movement initiated by the figure of Abb-el Krim El Jatabi in the area of Al Hoceïma in 1920s, where the rock of Alhucemas is situated, or the participation of the *Indigenous Regular Forces* in the Spanish Civil War between 1936-1939, some other belong to the present, like the "hot-returns" that take place around the *plazas* nowadays and that are hardly reported by the media.

The thesis produces a research that lives within the field of paracuratorial practice, especially in relation to the critical inputs and reflections that it offers in connection with the power relationships inherent to artistic and curatorial fieldwork and exhibitory work. In respect to this, the study sustains itself within a friendship network which politically claims another mode of production for curatorial practice, a situated practice that offers other ways of collaborative processes and other forms of practicing organisation beyond the institutional setting.

Lastly, the research produces a specific psychogeography through a variety of tools like the site visits, the reading group sessions, the performative dialogue within the sessions between art works and theoretical texts, the collective speculation that emerges from that, etc. This peripatetic quality of the research allows to navigate different contexts that include for example the everyday life of the Medina of Tétouan, the life of other

rural areas in the Rif or the hard conditions of the border of Melilla. Besides this, the thesis also allows to read collectively canonical Western thinkers with a decolonial intention, in which these Western thinkers are rethought within the group by the means of local knowledges and urgent debates that relate to the specific artistic and political context of North Morocco. In this sense, the thesis uses the collective act of reading as a truly speculative force through which not only decolonise theory but institute a collective mode of producing and sharing curatorial knowledge.

6.1. Contributions

This work contributes to the study of the *plazas* of sovereignty from a curatorial perspective. For that, the production of a specific project developed within the framework of this investigation has been carried out. The process of this study includes the following attainments:

- The consolidation of a curatorial position towards the examination of the logics of control of the *plazas* of sovereignty. To this end, attention is paid to several historical sources in order to highlight the power dynamics of the *plazas* within specific historical periods of the Spanish occupation in the Northern area of Morocco. In this respect, a series of historical episodes are ‘curatorially’ selected that relate to each enclave. In this sense, history is employed in order to understand the present conditions of each territory examined. The historical background helps us to situate ourselves within a postcolonial temporality, that one of our contemporary present, which is in fact absolutely affected by historical colonial circumstances.
- The exploration of a contextual background that helps to examine the current status of the *plazas* today. This contextual information derives from the result of a specific fieldwork developed for the research, which includes several site-visits, conversations and documentary materials. The context, therefore, gives account of a situated entry point to the *plazas* that is established through an

ongoing dialogue with the invited artists. This open dialogue helps progressively to conform a curatorial position for the investigation.

- The configuration of a mode of working with theory that implements the curatorial approach for this research. This implies giving theory an important role for studying the *plazas* from an early stage. In this sense, theory becomes not just an external tool, but a device that is in correspondence with a practice. Therefore, theory is not limited to a personal process, (the writing of a thesis). Instead, it is employed for searching other modes of configuring a collective experience. In addition to all this, theory offers me the possibility to institute my own practice within the research through the proposal of a specific term '*Dispositifs* of Touching'. This term also helps in the conformation of a curatorial stance from which to study and discuss the *plazas*, but also to see and make visible these territories. This ephemeral formation functions as a self-instituting practice¹³⁴ where criticality¹³⁵ plays an important role.
- The development of a curatorial project for studying the *plazas* of sovereignty. The project offers the opportunity to ponder the practice of curating beyond the confinement of the exhibition format. This implies searching for alternative conditions of working that allow other forms of activating a dialogue between artists, places and publics (Puwar and Sharma 2012, 45). The project activates modestly the conditions of a para-institutional¹³⁶ platform in imaginary terms. This is an ephemeral institution, precarious, temporal and educational that formalises itself and is activated firstly from a personal research and then through a collective study on the *plazas*. The project offers a specific form of study that intends to bring light on the obscurity of these territories, but also

¹³⁴ With this idea, I don't refer to the traditional model of alternative art spaces, but to other types of projects and small organisations that put the emphasis on pedagogic and alter-academic forms. For an introduction to this model of working, see (Lütticken 2015, 5-19).

¹³⁵ I would like to point out again here to the notion of criticality by Irit Rogoff from her essay 'From Criticism to Critique to Criticality' (2003) and the way she highlights the performative dimension of our actions or stances in respect to a cultural object or moment (Rogoff, 2003).

¹³⁶ I use this term (para-institutional) with reference to the way Sven Lütticken refers to the way some contemporary institutions confront the neoliberal institutional tendency. He calls them alter-institutional or para-institutional organisations. The author also introduces the term 'translocal organisations' that he borrows from Marion von Osten to point to how these entities 'defy the known boundaries between art practices as well as those between art practices and between institutions, creating relational work/life models that insist on other ways of doing culture' (Lütticken 2015, 7-8).

ends up becoming speculative and experimental. Furthermore, the project conforms a place for gathering, for meeting positions, thoughts, experiences and sensibilities. An opportunity for learning and showing, for letting knowledge circulate from one to another, without getting fixed and turning hegemonic. Finally, this collective ground contributes discreetly to conform the collective *lifespace* that the *plazas* prevent from happening within themselves. The Spanish strongholds, a spatial reference that the group shares without touching it, without reaching it physically, as they remain forbidden for us citizens, is offered now as the home for other subjects and places, histories and contexts, dreams and experiences.

- The dissemination of some public awareness and critical debate on the *plazas* of sovereignty. This entails the configuration of a public sphere that grows modestly thanks to a group of participants, some friends and other followers. This public endeavour contributes to making visible the invisible power dynamics of the Spanish enclaves and to opening some public reflection around the opacity of these territories.

6.2. Public Presentations and Dissemination

This investigation has been accompanied by several public events offering some visibility at different stages. These activities have included: public lectures, presentations, seminars, installation formats, etc. In chronological order, these events have been:

Lecture entitled ‘El cuerpo es frontera: la práctica artística como epistemología disidente’ (The Body as Border: Artistic Practices as Dissident Epistemologies) within the context of the international seminar entitled *No Hay Más Poesía Que La Acción: Teatralidad Y Disidencia En El Espacio Urbano* (There Is No More Poetry Than

Action: Theatricality And Dissidence In Urban Space)¹³⁷ organised by Artea and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS), Madrid, on 12 and 13 April 2013.

<http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/activities/there-no-other-poetry-action>
<https://teatralidadesdisidentes.wordpress.com/seminarios-pasados/no-hay-mas-poesia-que-la-accion/>

- Conference *Two Vocabularies in Contact: An Inventory of Terms and Images that Interrupt Each Other* in dialogue with Samia Henni, architect and PhD student at the Institute of History and Theory of Architecture, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, within the programme *About Capital and Territory III* organised by ArteyPensamiento and UNIA, International University of Andalucía, Seville, on 2 December 2013.
http://ayp.unia.es/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=848
- Conference *Touching the Curatorial: On Collective Processes of Making Sense* at the International Conference *Curatorial Things: Cultures of the Curatorial*, organised by the Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig and Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 1 November 2014.
https://www.hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/veranstaltung/p_109620.php
- Public Presentations of the project *Dispositifs of Touching: Curatorial Imagination in the Times of Expanded Borders* at Trankat, Tétouan, on 13 April 2015 and 27 October 2015.
<https://trankat.wordpress.com/2015/04/>
- Seminar with students of the Master de Investigación y Creación en Arte INCREARTE (Master of Investigation and Artistic Creation in Arts) at the University of the Basque Country, UPV, 13 July 2015.

¹³⁷ The seminar included the following participants: Rabih Mroué, Adrian Heathfield, Rolf Aberhalden, Maaïke Bleeker, Héctor Bourges, Simon Bayly, Ana Vujanovic, Leire Vergara, Jordi Claramonte, José Antonio Sánchez, Fernando Quesada, Victoria Pérez Royo, Óscar Cornago, Esther Belvis and Isabel de Naverán.

- Participation in the exhibition *The Day After* by Maryam Jafri with the case study and installation *No Day After*, organised by Tabakalera, Donostia- San Sebastián from 15 April 2016 to 24 June 2016.
<https://www.tabakalera.eu/en/node/8942>
- Conference *The Plazas of Sovereignty: A Curatorial Investigation in Process* within the exhibition *The Day After* by Maryam Jafri organised by Tabakalera on 19 May 2016.
- Seminar *Dispositifs of Touching* with Younès Rahmoun, Mohamed Larbi Rahhali, Marion Cruza Le Bihan and Xabier Salaberria at Tabakalera within the exhibition *The Day After* by Maryam Jafri organised by Tabakalera on 19 and 20 May 2016.
<https://www.tabakalera.eu/en/dispositifs-of-touching>



Illustration 22. Installation *No Day After* in *The Day After* by Maryam Jafri, Tabakalera, Donostia-San Sebastián, 2016. Leire Vergara with Xabier Salaberria, Younès Rahmoun, Heidi Vogels and Marion Cruza Le Bihan.

6.3. Future Lines of Investigation

The research developed in this PhD thesis offers a precedent within my own curatorial practice for establishing a methodology of investigation, production and dissemination of knowledge beyond the parameters of the exhibition framework. In this sense, my intention now is to focus on exploring further the achievements explored in this thesis. Some possible lines of work include:

- Continuing with the exploration of the methodology of the reading group as a curatorial tool. In other words, finding other ways of experimenting with it for the configuration of collective and participatory processes of curatorial study. At the moment, several initiatives undertaken in collaboration with Bulegoa z/b follow this direction. This is the case of the project *The Book to Come* produced by our organisation in collaboration with book designer Filiep Tacq between 2015 and 2017. The project draws upon the methodology of the reading group to study five books by Marcel Broodthaers, which the artist conceived as autonomous artworks and aims to explore the book as a living entity.
<http://www.bulegoa.org/en/outskirts/the-book-come>
- Expanding my curatorial investigation on former colonial Spanish territories in Morocco as for example in the Western Sahara. This may be possible through the collaboration with Spanish artist Federico Guzman within the framework of his ongoing collaboration with ARTifarati, Festival of Art and Human Rights of the Western Sahara and the Arts School of the Sahara. His work was recently shown at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia from 16 April to 30 August 2016 and at San Telmo Museo Donostia-San Sebastián from 8 April to 3 July 2016. The artist has already invited me to configure a proposal within this project.

7. Appendices

The bibliography and works shared with the group were as follows:

First session:

- Deleuze, Gilles: 'What is a Dispositif?' in *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, (Timothy J. Armstrong, ed.). New York: Routledge, 1988.
- O'Doherty, Brian: *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. University of California Press, 1999.
- Works by Xabier Salaberria.

Second session:

- Nancy, Jean-Luc: 'Touching', in *The Sense of the World*. Minnesota: The University of Minnesota, 1997.
- Works by Younès Rahmoun.

Third session:

- Agamben, Giorgio: 'Friendship', *The Online Journey of Philosophy Contretemps*, 5 December 2004.
- Works by Heidi Vogels.

Fourth session:

- Guattari, Félix: 'La Borde: A Clinic Unlike Any Other', in *Félix Guattari: Chaosophy. Texts and Interviews 1972-1977*, (Sylvère Lotringer, ed. / . David L. Sweet, Jarred Becker and Taylor Adkins, trans.). Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 2009.
- Ceberio, Mónica; Cembrero, Ignacio; and González, Miguel Ángel: 'The Last Remains of The Empire', *El País*, 17 September 2012 http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/09/17/inenglish/1347895561_857013.html
- Works by Youssef El Yedidi.

Site-visits:

- Perejil Island (with Xabier Salaberria)
- Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera (with Younès Rahmoun)
- The Alhucemas Islands (with Heidi Vogels)
- The Chafarinas Islands (with Marion Cruza Le Bihan)

Contributions by:

- Xabier Salaberria
- Younès Rahmoun
- Heidi Vogels
- Marion Cruza Le Bihan
- Alejandra Riera

Chapter 1

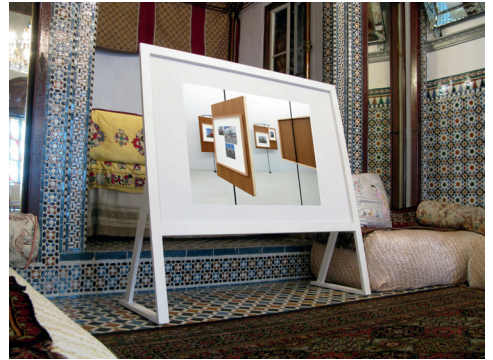
Reading Session with Xabier Salaberria
at Trankat, Tétouan

Site-visit to Perejil Island

Contribution by Xabier Salaberria

Reading Session with Xabier Salaberria at
Trankat, Tétouan





Site-visit to Perejil Island







Chapter 2

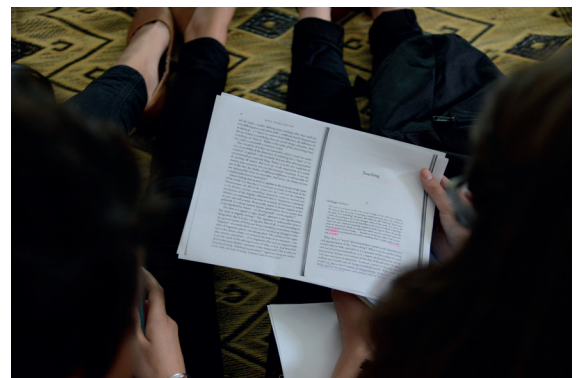
Reading Session with Younès Rahmoun in
Ybel Dersa, Tétouan

Site-visit to Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera

Contribution by Younès Rahmoun

Reading Session with Younès Rahmoun
in Ybel Dersa, Tétouan







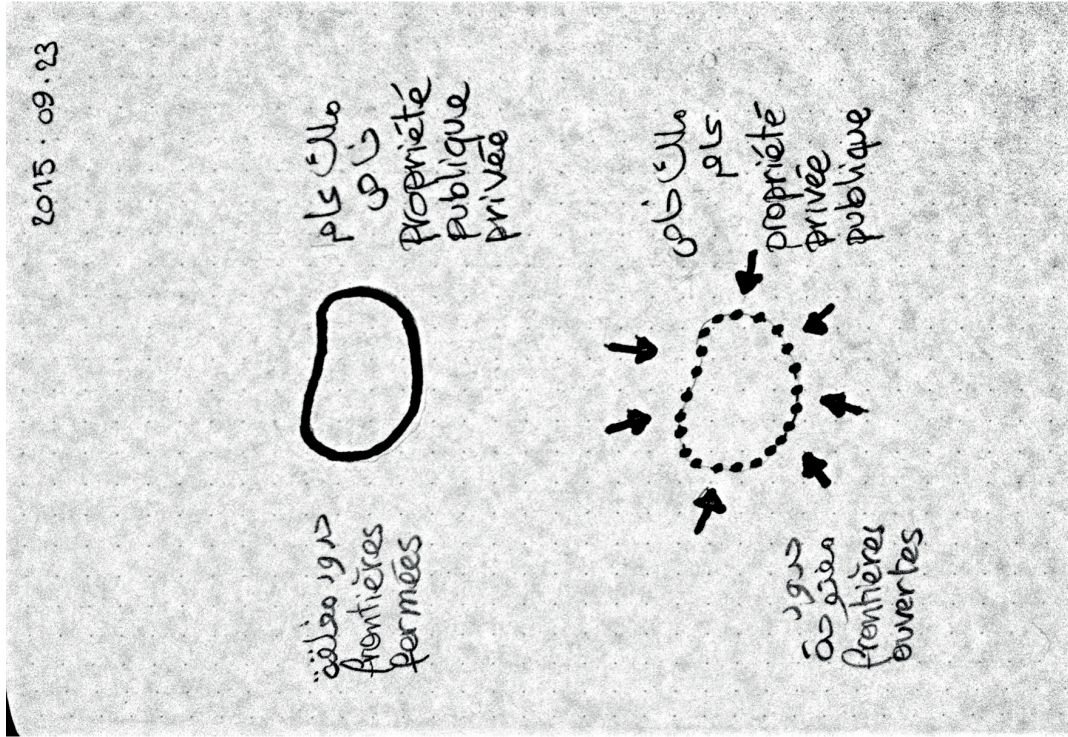


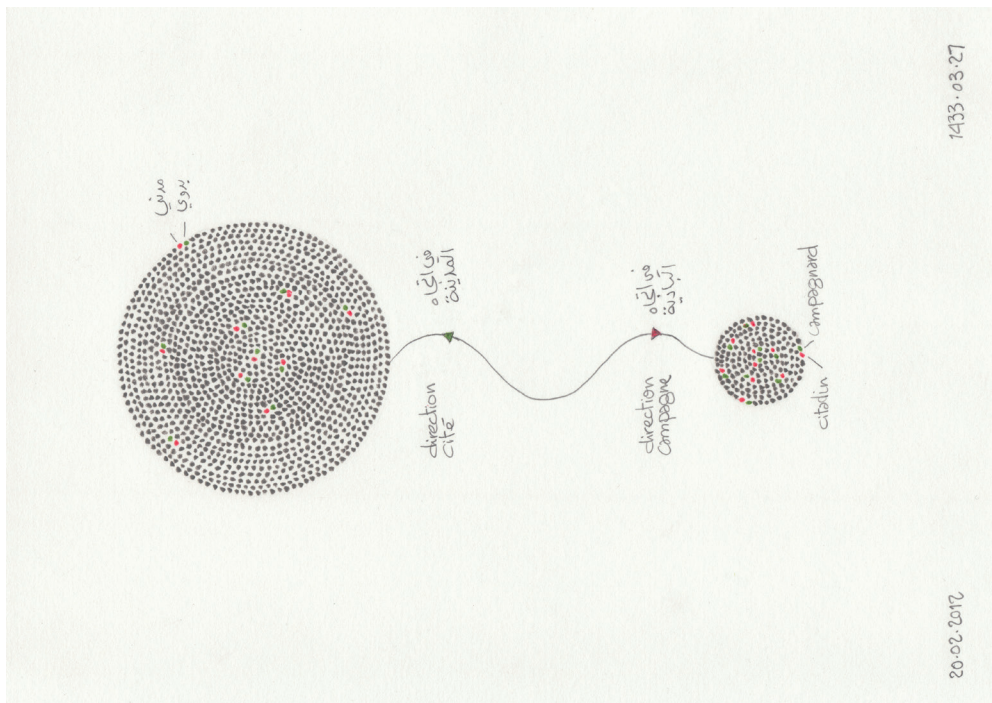
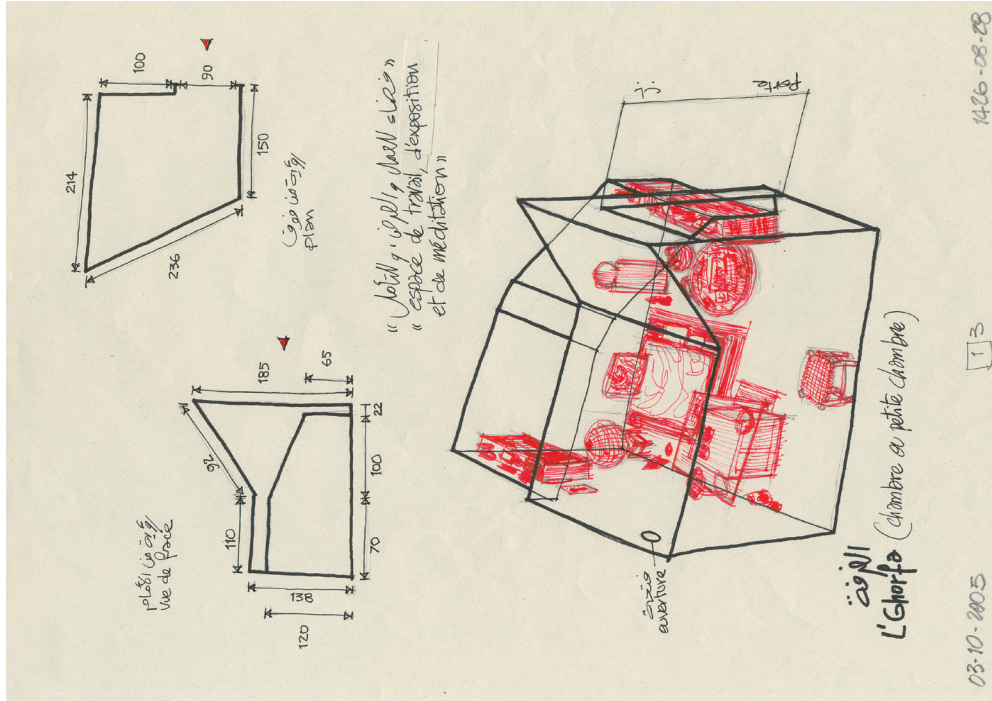
Site-visit to Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera











Chapter 3

Reading Session with Heidi Vogels
at Dar Sanâa, Tétouan

Site-visit to The Alhucemas Islands

Contribution by Heidi Vogels

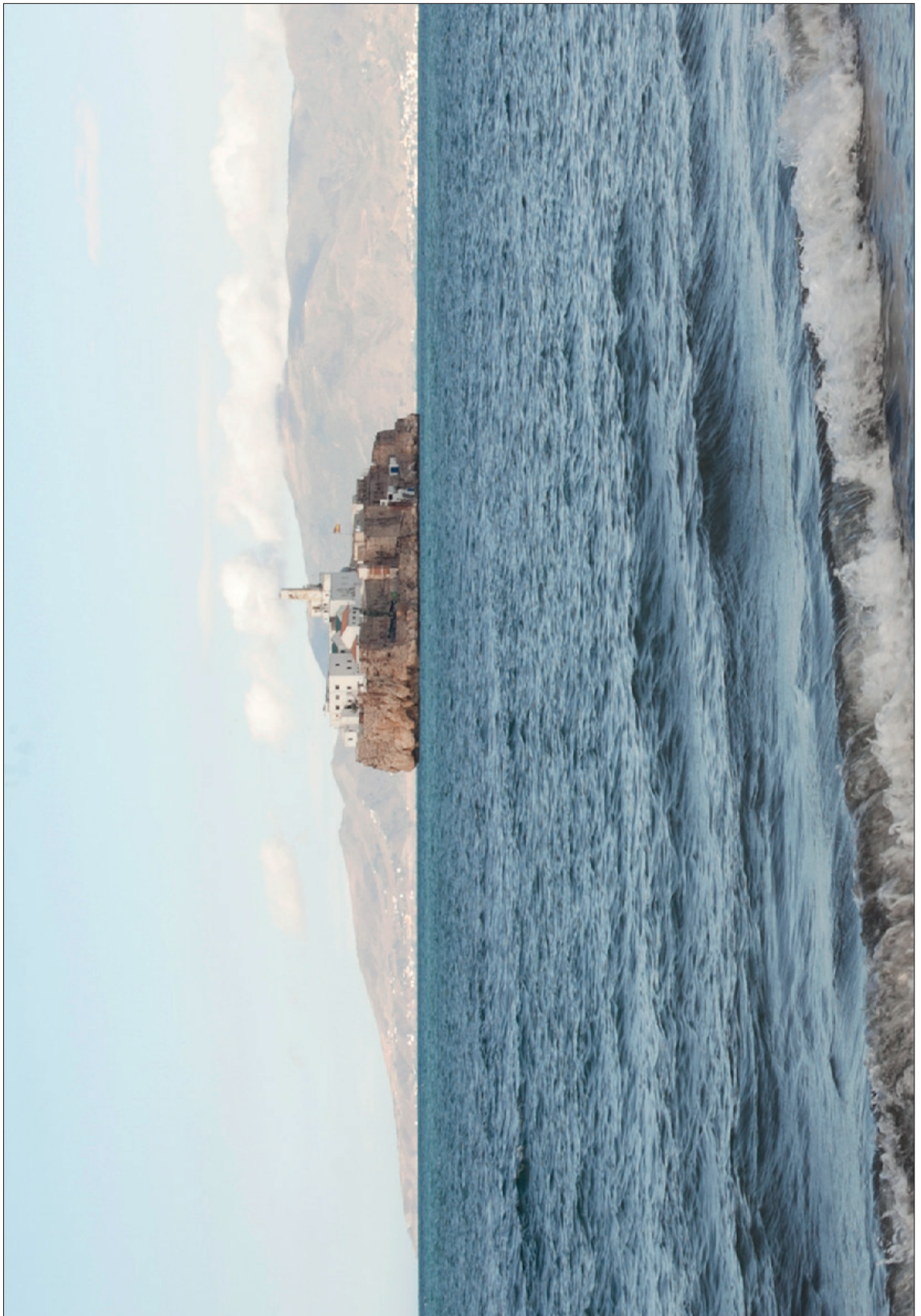






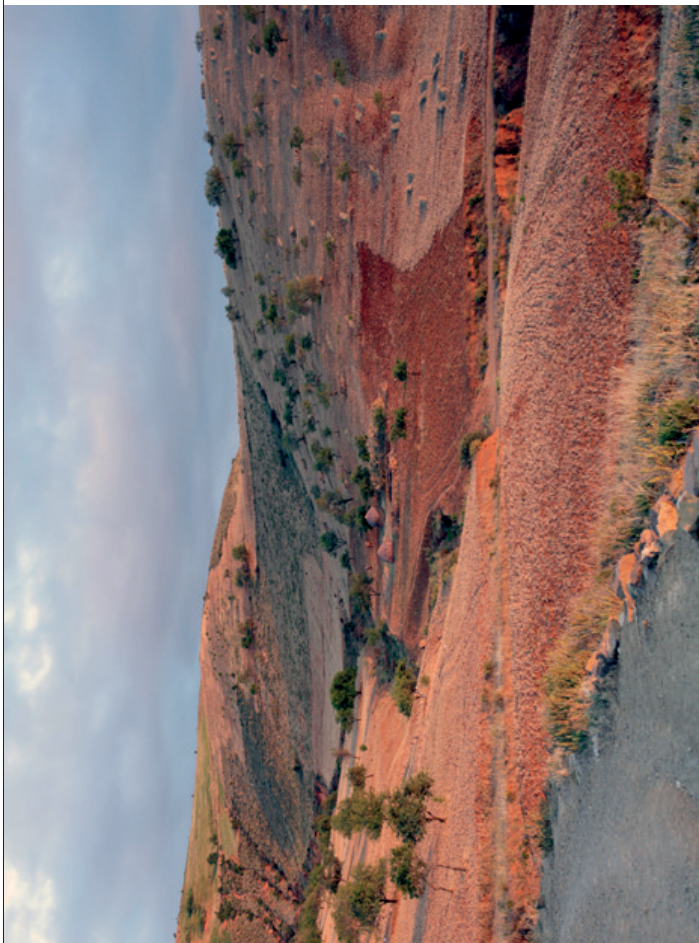
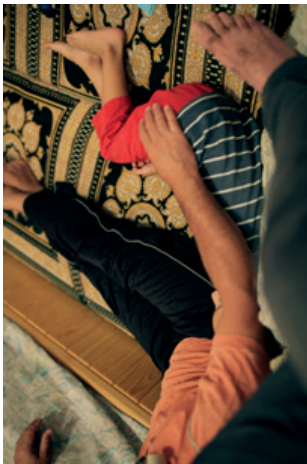


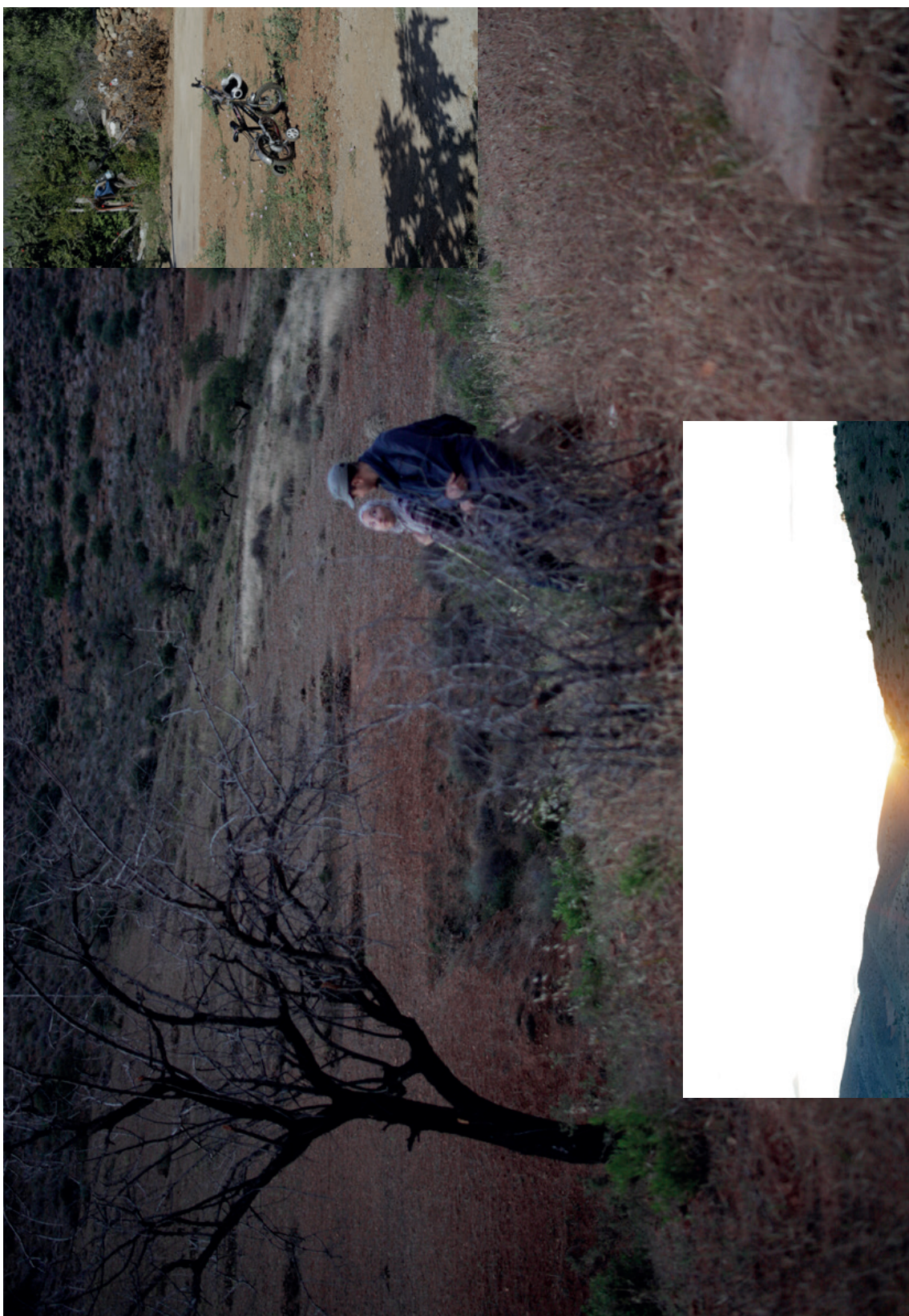




Contribution by Heidi Vogels





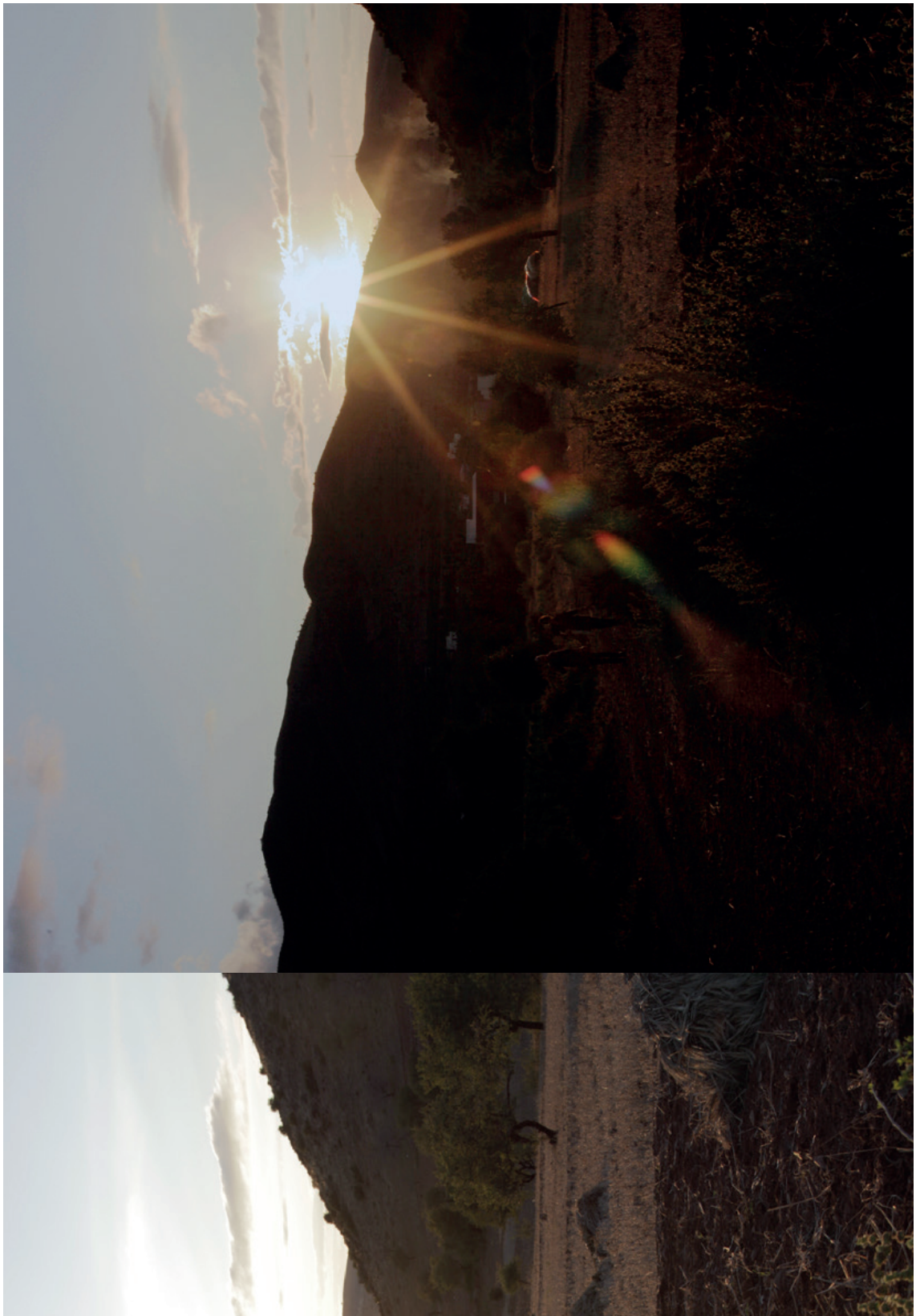




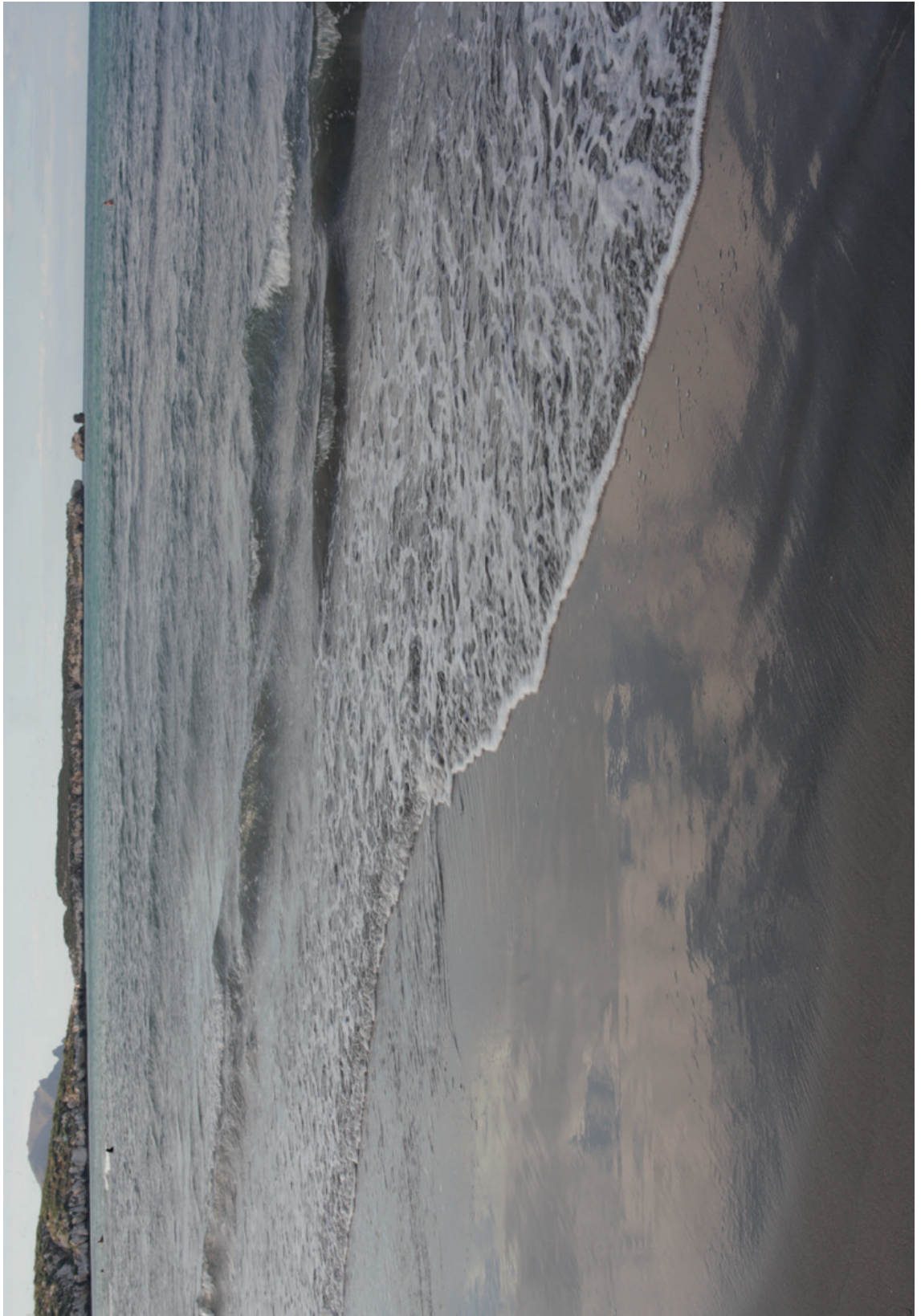
Cinéma Le Jardin d'Été intérieur de jour, Fez 1939

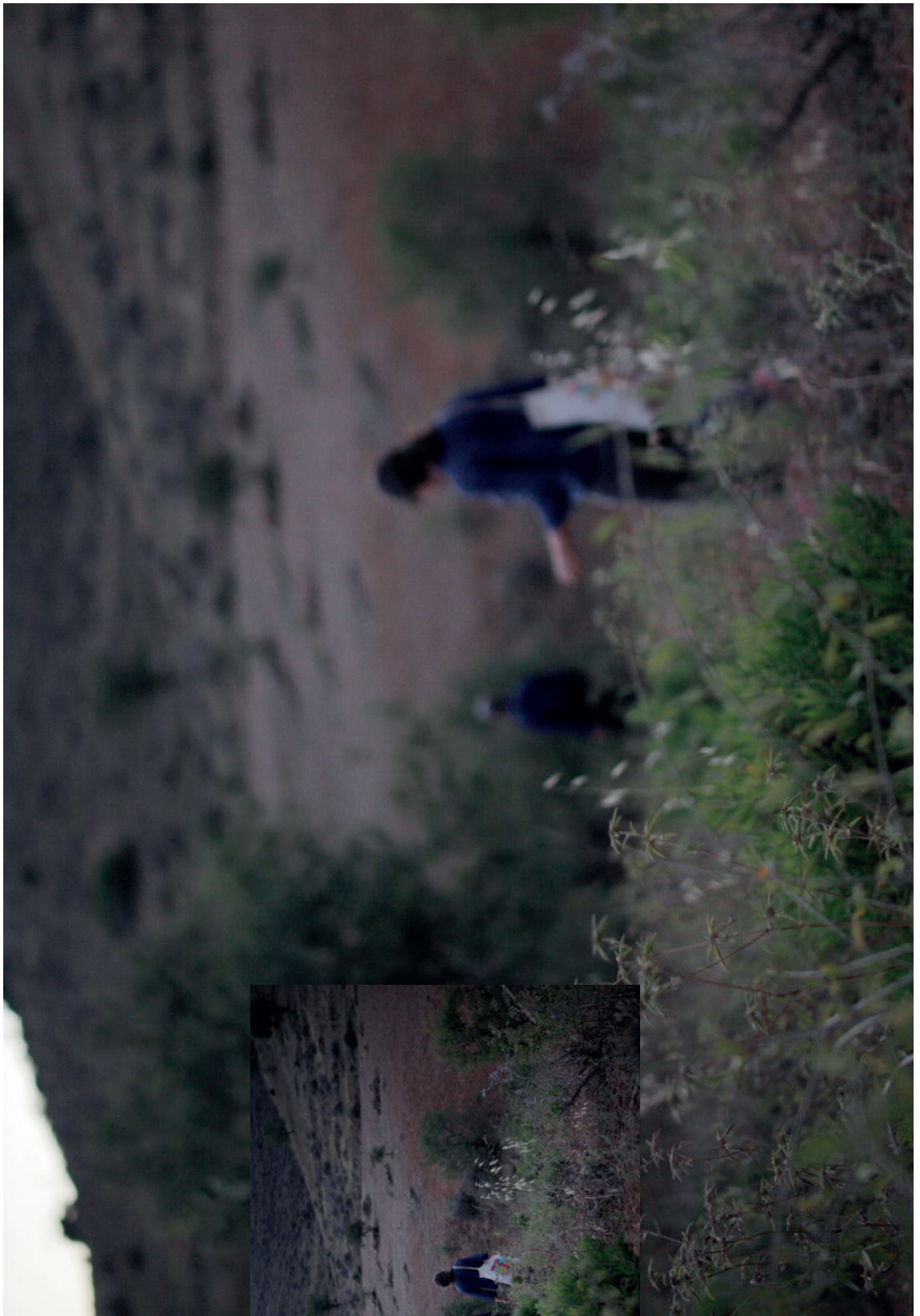


Jnan Sbil gardens, Fez, October 2013













Chapter 4

Reading Session at Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao

Site-visit to The Chafarinas Islands

Contribution by Marion Cruza Le Bihan

Reading Session at Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao



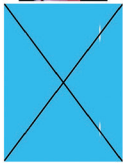



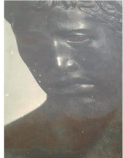


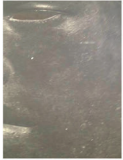
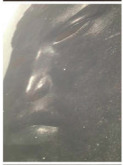
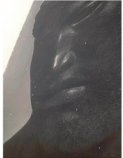

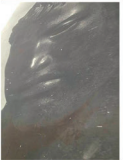





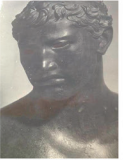














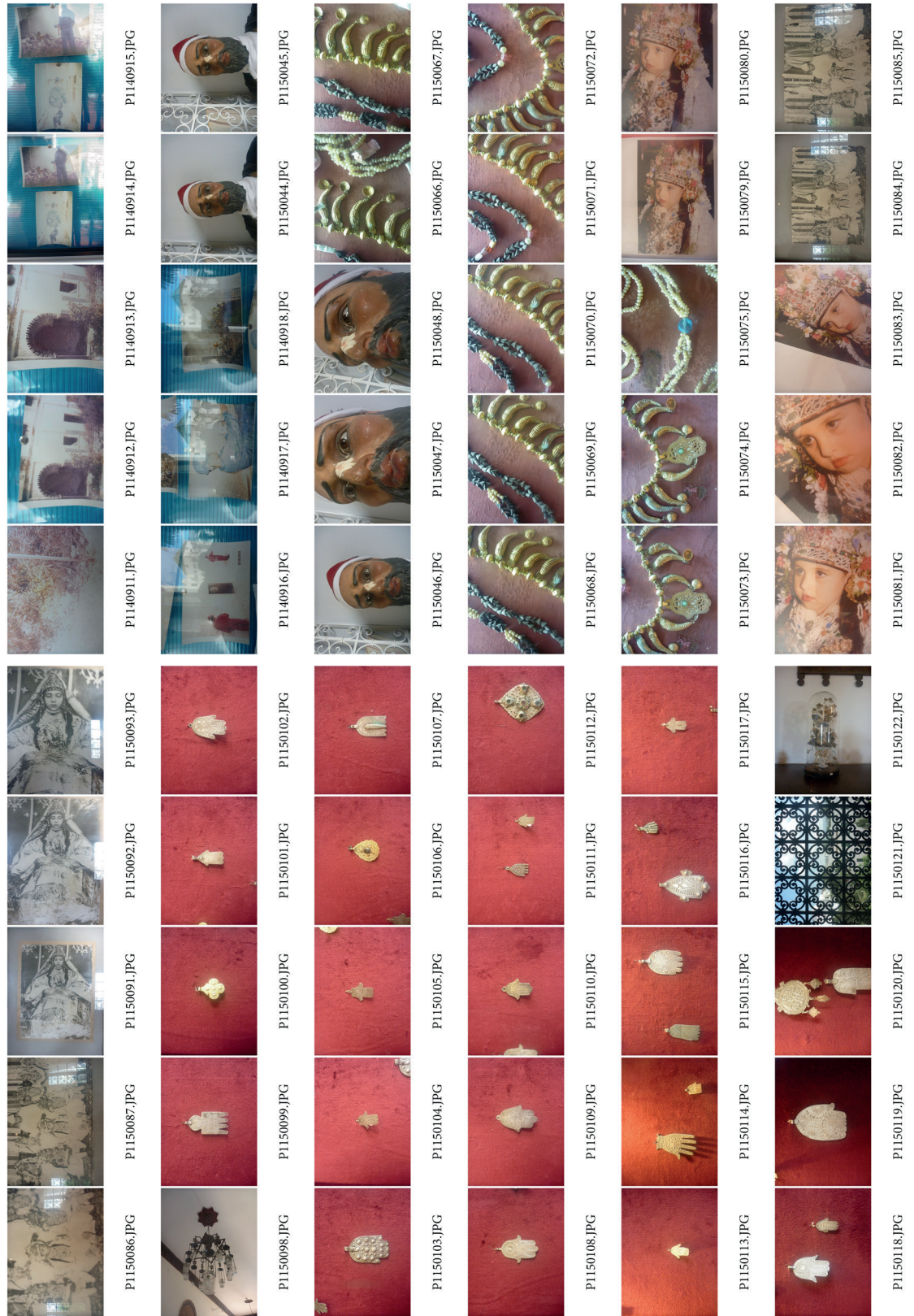




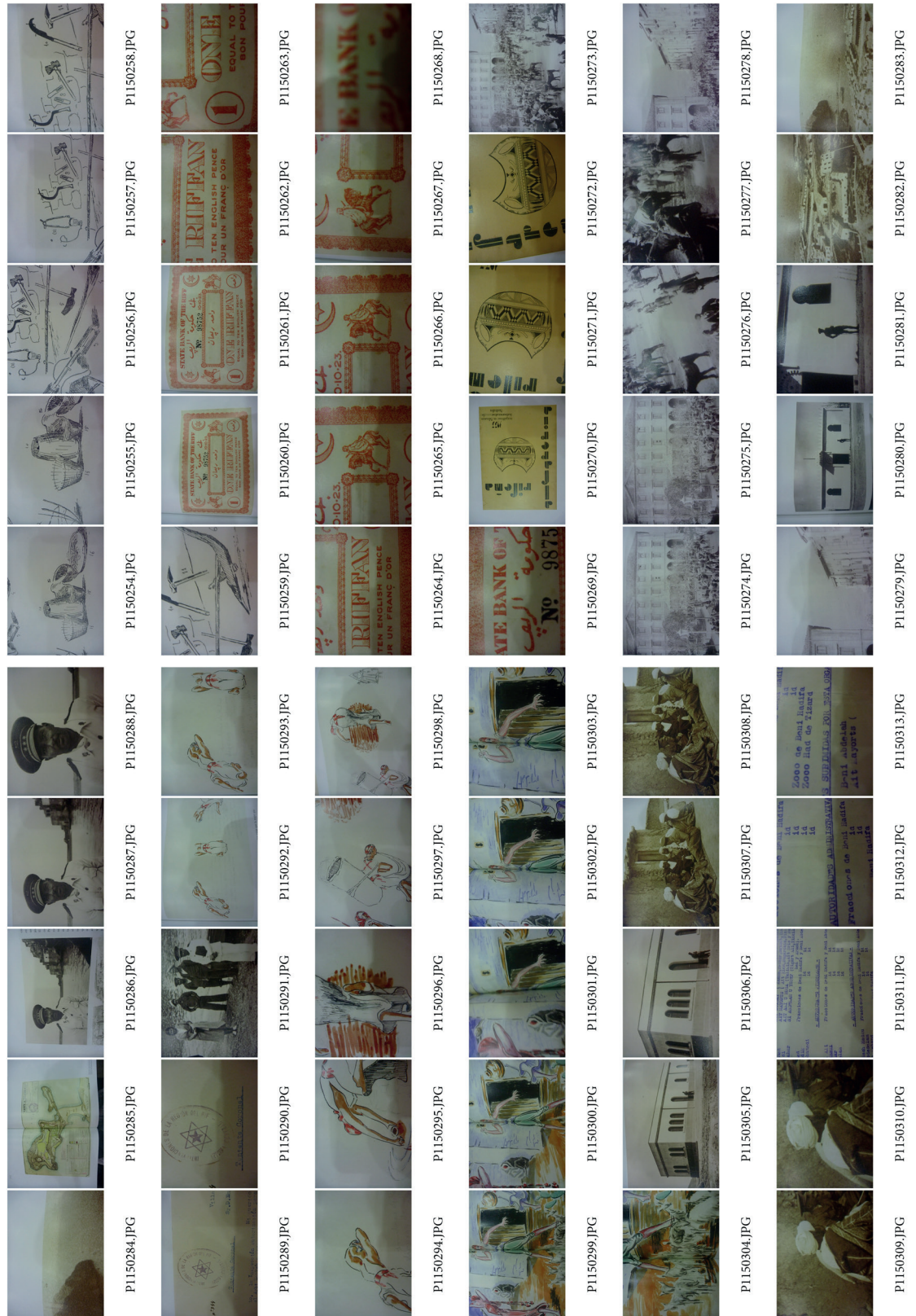




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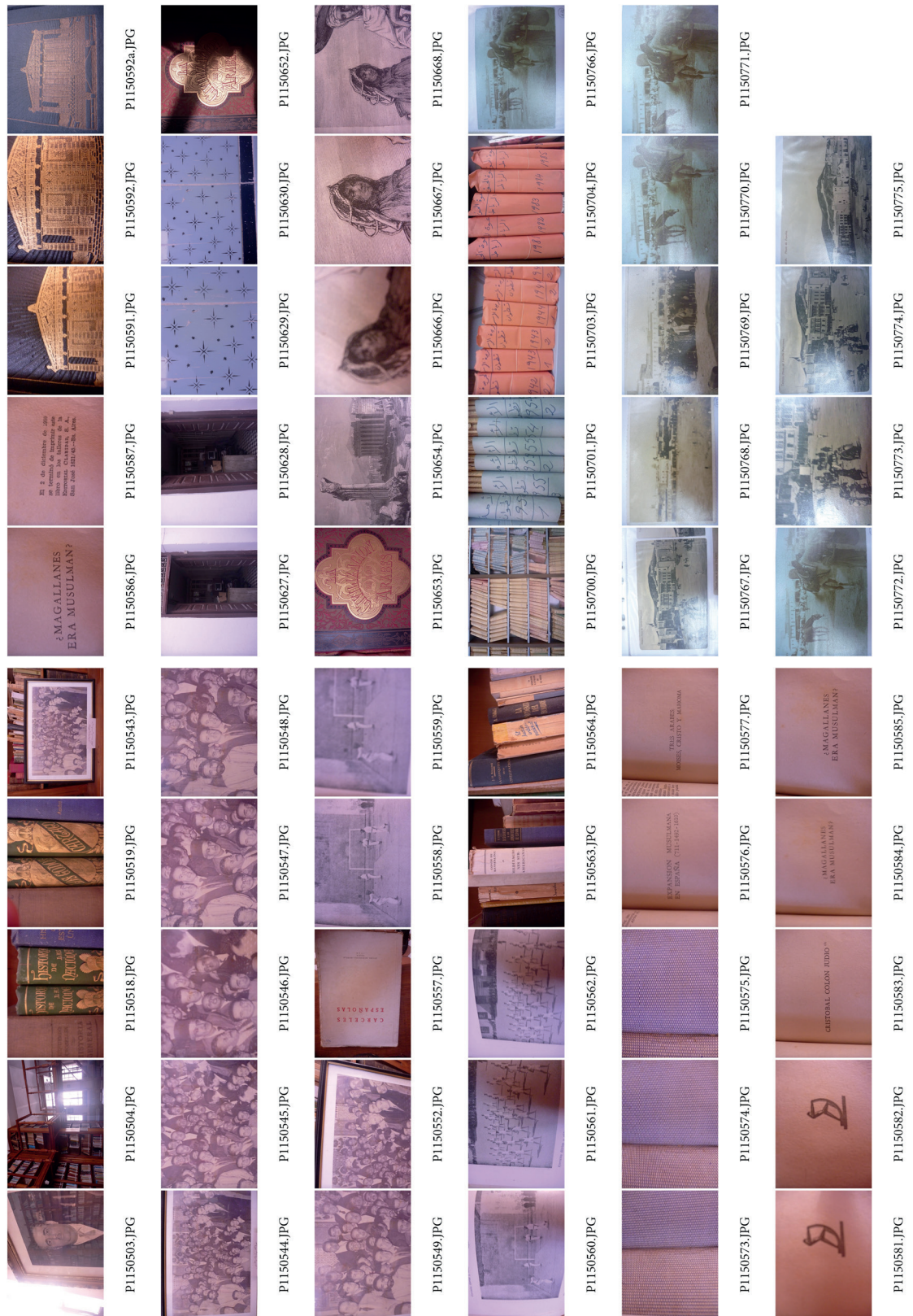




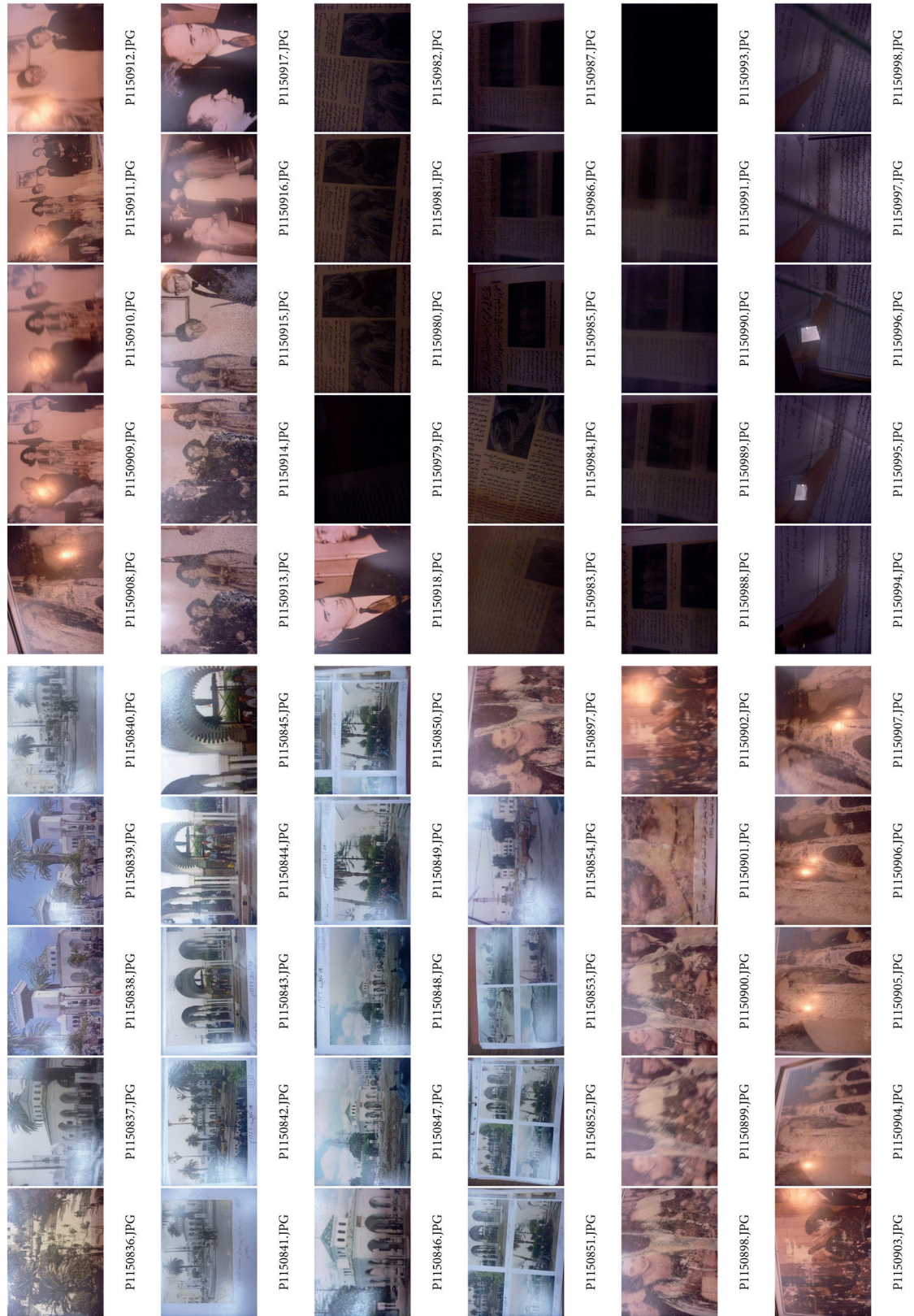


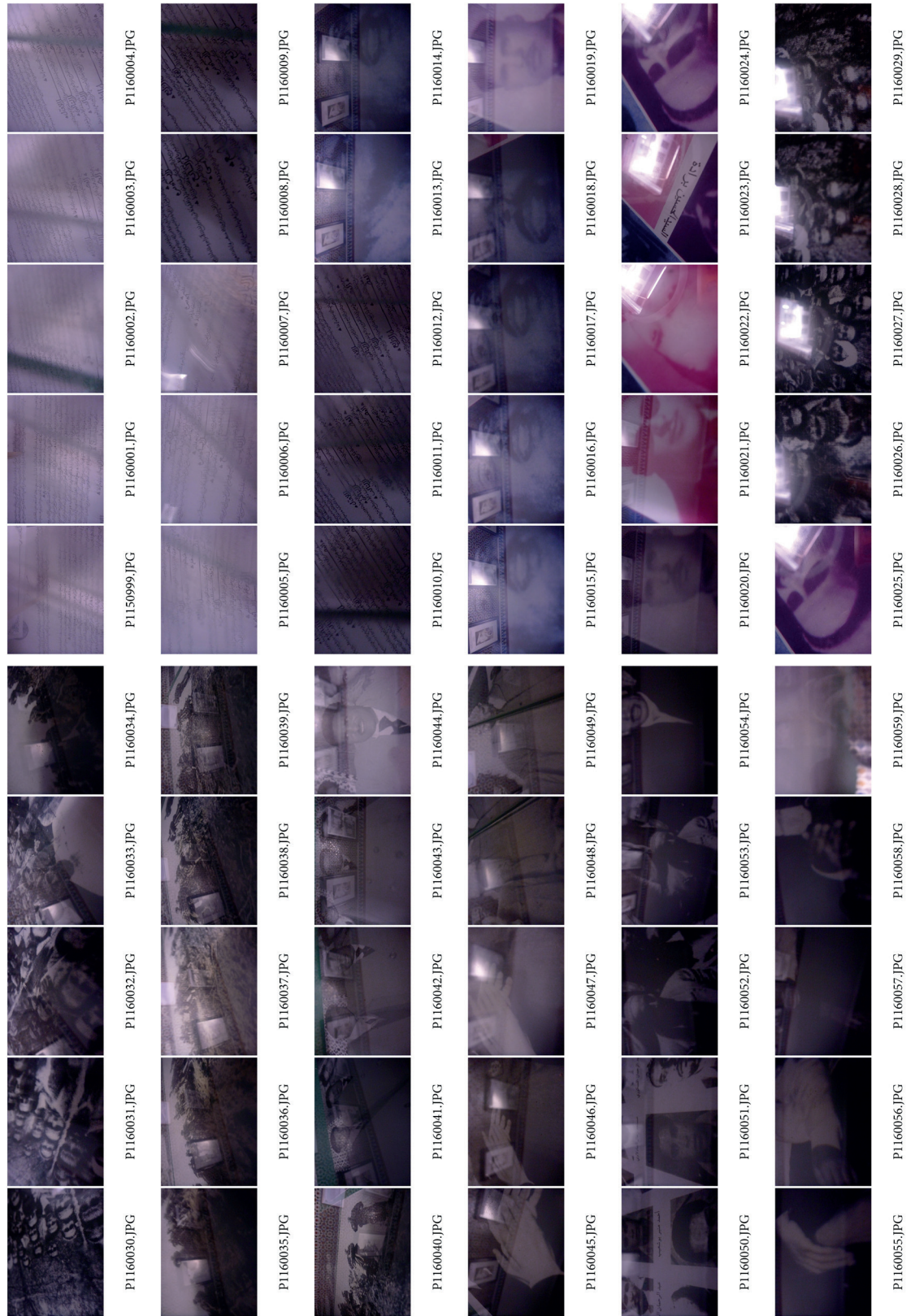


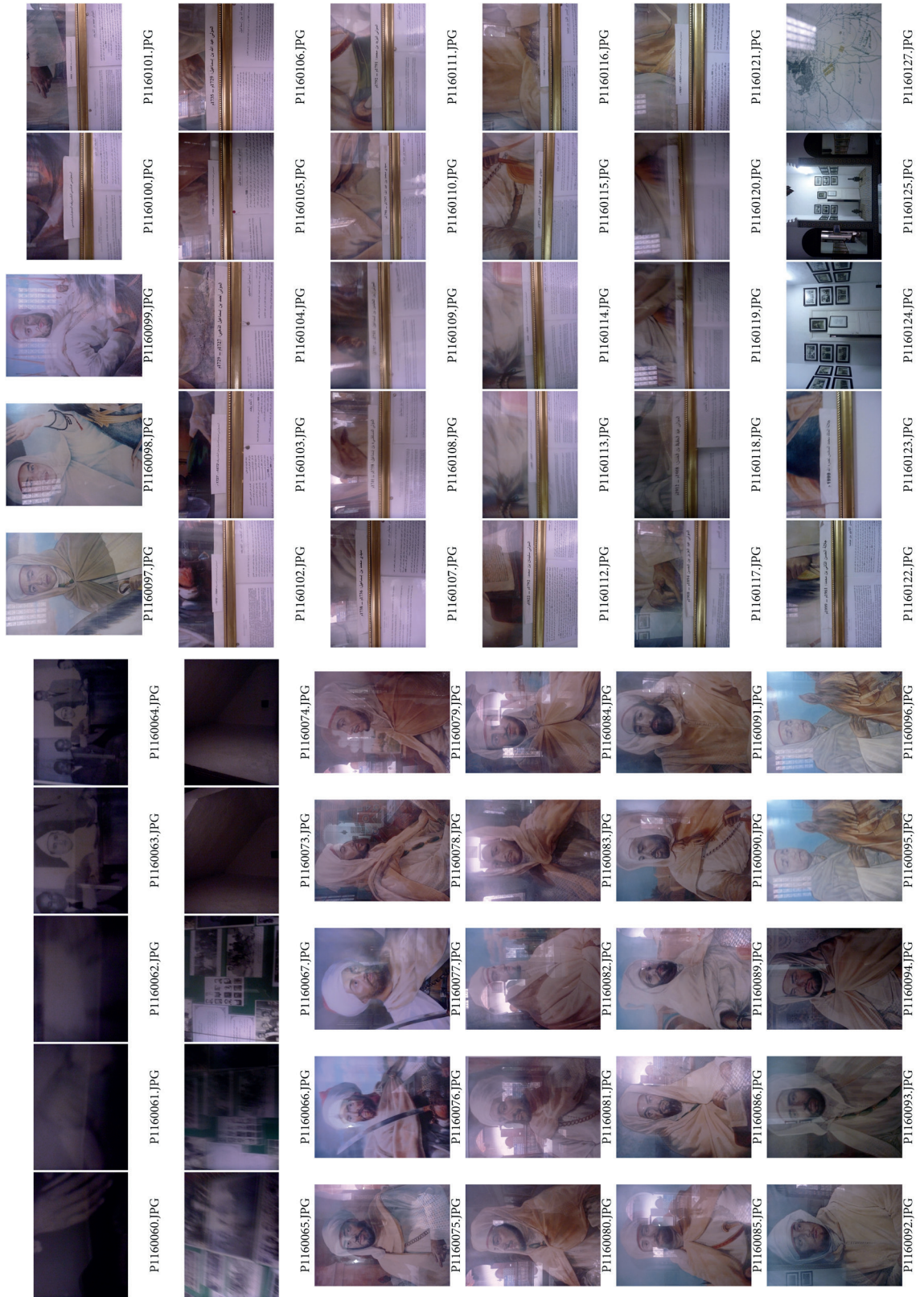


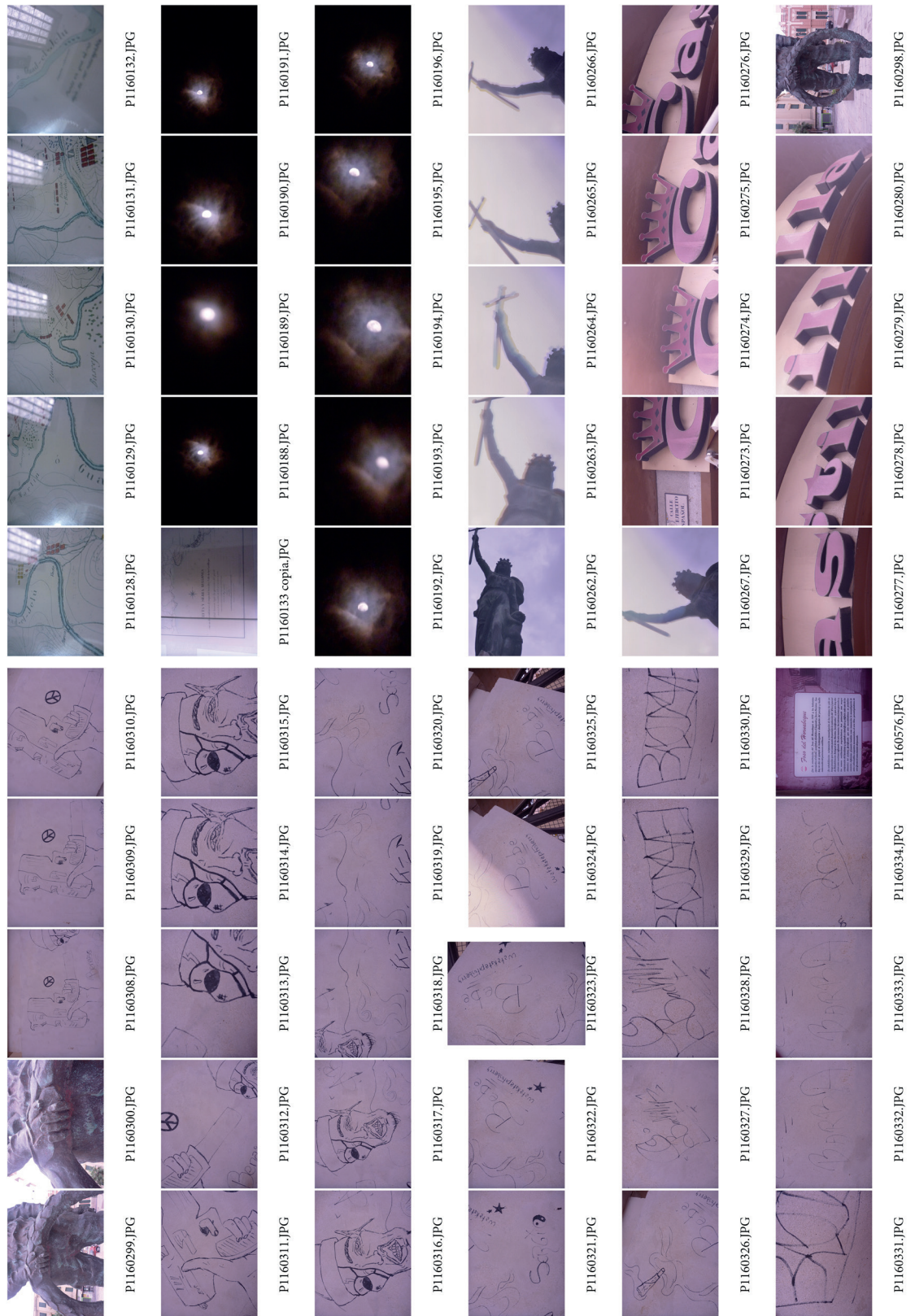




















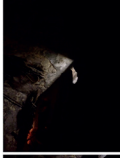


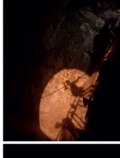





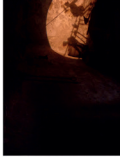


























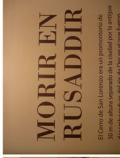

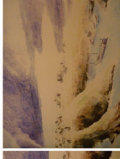







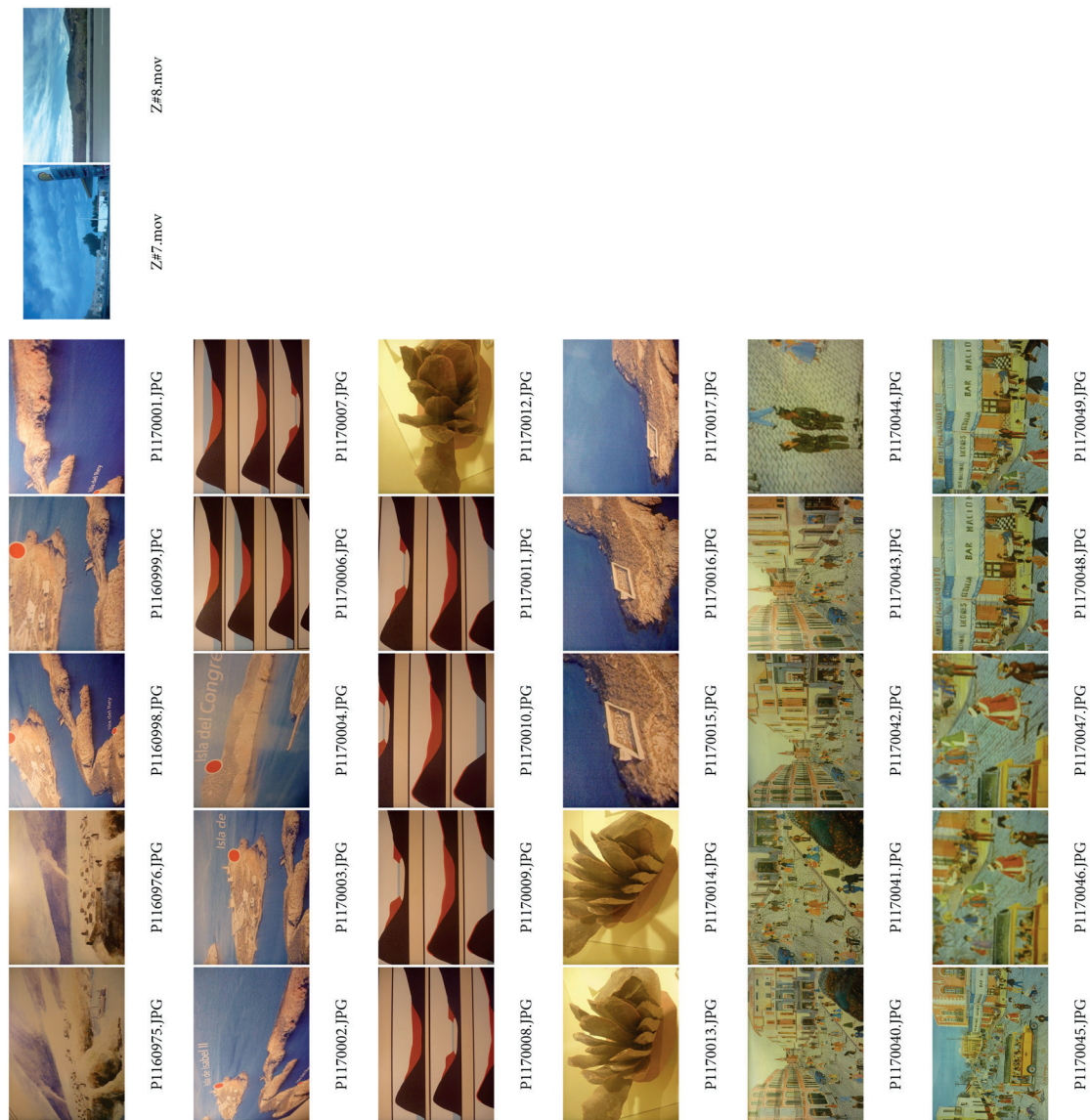






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Chapter 5

Reading Session by Youssef El Yedidi
in Saf Saf, Tétouan

Contribution by Alejandra Riera









¶ Couvertures dans une chambre d'un immeuble de six étages vides appartenant à une filiale du groupe d'assurances GAN, sis au 37 Boulevard Malesherbes 75008, Paris, *autorequisitionné* par l'association DAL (Droit au Logement), mars 1995.

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Contribution by
Alejandra Riera

¶ Tournage d'une scène du film vidéo *Intégration à l'Africaine* de Michael Hoare, co-produit par Avenir Vivable et Viridiana, Paris 1997-1998 ; dans laquelle Abdallah Thiam visionne des images le concernant, avant de donner son point de vue actuel sur les événements qu'il a vécus en 1992 avec sa famille lorsqu'ils campaient avec d'autres familles africaines sans logis à Vincennes pour réclamer l'accès au logement social pour tous.

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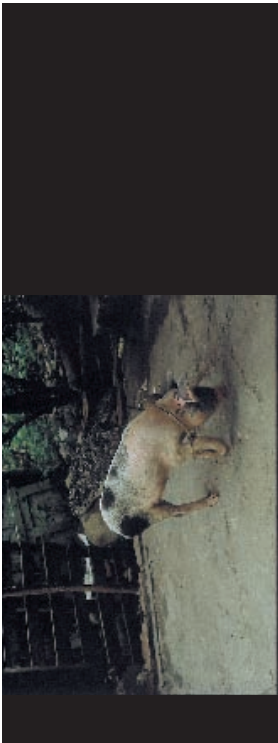


m) Vue partielle d'une des vitrines du magasin Cash Converters, rue de la Roquette, Paris, quelques jours après l'action du matin du 11 février 1998, consistant à investir le lieu pour sortir avec précaution, mais très rapidement, tous les objets se trouvant dans les vitrines et dans les rayons, pour les étaler ensuite dans la rue, provoquant une réaction très violente de la police qui a procédé à plusieurs interpellations et à l'incarcération de quatre personnes dont un chômeur, condamnées par la suite à 7 mois de prison avec sursis et à 100 jours de T.I.G. (travaux d'intérêt général).



n) Mai 1996, entrepôt SNCF occupé par les 300 sans-papiers expulsés de l'église Saint-Ambroise en France avec l'accord du cardinal Lustiger, lors d'une réunion avec un collège des médiateurs réunissant des intellectuel(les), des anciens résistants), ainsi que l'ex-ambassadeur Stéphane Hessel, au cours de laquelle ce dernier a demandé aux sans-papiers de donner tous les renseignements nécessaires afin de constituer des dossiers destinés à obtenir des convocations de la police qui devaient, selon lui, aboutir à la régularisation du plus grand nombre. Dans « Le récit d'un médiateur, les immigrés et nous », article du 29 août 1996 paru dans Le nouvel Observateur N°2074, Stéphane Hessel raconte ainsi cet épisode. Nous sommes allés à Pajol à ce moment-là, dire aux délégués des familles : écoutez, voilà, il y a un progrès réel, on va examiner tous vos cas, allez-y. Allez-y avec vos papiers, découvrez-vous, vous allez être examinés. Bien sûr, la police à ce moment-là contrôlait tout sur vous, mais c'est bien, et nous avons le sentiment qu'on va essayer d'en régulariser le plus grand nombre. Nous prenions une lourde responsabilité. Et nous avons été jués. C'est pour ça que j'étais si furieux le 26 juin. A ce moment-là, il y avait des gens qui étaient déjà en grève de la faim depuis huit jours. Ils disaient : mais qu'est-ce qu'on attend ? Que font nos médiateurs ?

n) suite. La délivrance d'une carte de séjour est subordonnée au paiement de : un timbre fiscal de 200 francs, correspondant à la taxe de séjour (article 41 de la loi de Finance n° 91 1322 du 30/10/91) ; de la taxe de chancellerie de 650 F, x 2 soit 1300F, (article 3 du décret n° 97 165 du 24/02/97) ; et de la redevance forfaitaire pour la visite médicale de 1050 F (arrêté du 17/03/97 paru au Journal Officiel du 26/03/97). Cela signifie que chaque adulte doit déboursier 2550 francs. Cette somme ne correspond pas à celle demandée aux membres de la C.E.E.



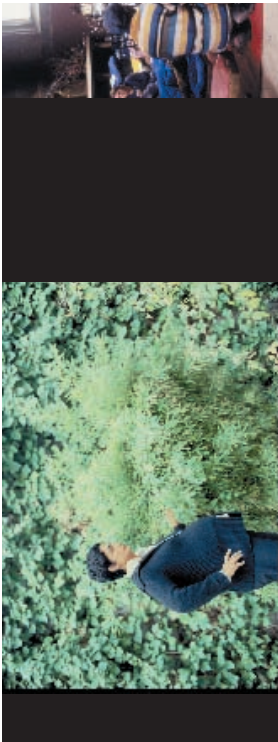
Sur l'amitié

Des langues sans pays

La femme de Moze a une technique très appréciée. Elle est experte en histoires et légendes. Elle ne sait ni lire ni écrire. On lui a transmis le monde en fables. De fait, toutes les abstractions lui sont permises. Elle a une certitude bien ancrée, tous les éléments de la nature parlent. Cela ne veut pas dire qu'elle entend des voix, non, elle dit que ça parle et ça lui convient. Vous pouvez tenter de la convaincre qu'il en va autrement des choses d'ici, elle vous embarque tout aussi vite sur le dos d'un poisson qui des heures durant vous fera traverser les continents, vous transformera en fille de roi, en roisigou survolant les cimes, en lampe à huile, en pomme roulant tout autour du monde pour finir sur le pont d'un bateau qui vous déposera là où vous devez arriver. La femme de Moze a accepté toutes les explications, rien n'ébranle sa conviction ; il faut faire du monde un chant. 15 avril 1999, « La femme de Moze, ou comment la mère et ses histoires... », Moze, Zahia Rahmani

voix - parole - langage - économie

Le réfugié doit être considéré pour ce qu'il est. C'est-à-dire rien de moins qu'un concept-limite qui met radicalement en crise les fondements de l'État-nation et, en même temps, ouvre le champ à de nouvelles catégories conceptuelles. (...) La survivance politique des hommes n'est pensable que sur une terre où les espaces auront été "trouvés" et topologiquement déformés, et où le citoyen aura su reconnaître le réfugié qu'il est lui-même. (1993. Moyens sans fin, Giorgio Agamben).



Les confessionnaux sont devenus des armoires : les absoldées des saints et de la Vierge, des espaces de rencontre où prendre le thé ; la nef, un lieu d'accueil, un immense dortoir. Rarement sans doute l'église Saint-Bernard aura été aussi pleine.

Un ensemble des photographies a fini par se constituer comme une sorte d'archive subjective. Aucune de ces nombreuses photographies n'a fait l'objet d'une utilisation commerciale, elles ont été données aux concernés, et ce n'est qu'avec leur accord qu'elles ont été publiées. Des photographies des grévistes de la faim de Saint-Bernard (faisant partie de cet ensemble), ont été utilisées à la demande du collectif dans des rassemblements importants pour faire connaître leur situation à l'opinion publique (voir les pancartes portées par les sans-papiers, parues entre autres dans Libération du 8 août 1996).

Au fond, la Photographie est subversive, non lorsqu'elle effaie, révulse ou même stigmatise, mais lorsqu'elle est pensive.





r) suite. Matin du mois d'avril 1997. Espace d'attente construit en face du Centre de Rétention de Vincennes. Redoute de Cravei, Avenue de l'École de Joinville, 75012 Paris, métro Château de Vincennes terminus, bus 112 direction la Varenne, arrêt Joinville Le Pont.



r) suite. 11 janvier 1997. Façade du Centre Georges Pompidou lors de l'occupation pacifique du hall d'entrée par un groupe de sans-papiers dans le but d'ouvrir des espaces de visibilité à leur mouvement et débattre sur la question de la liberté de circulation.

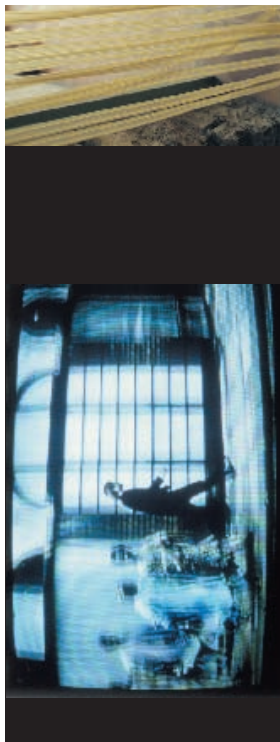




x) n) suites Espace partial. Décembre 1995.



n) suites. Photographie couleur. Des femmes du collectif des sans-papiers de Saint-Bernard communiquent à travers les interstices des portes fermées de la Mairie du 18e arrondissement occupée à leur initiative. Photographie N/B de la couverture du livre de Madjiguène Cissé, *Parole de sans-papiers*, éditions La dispute, Paris, 1998.



façade du théâtre – co-existe avec le slogan d'une banderole des sans-papiers – de l'autre côté du mur. Ce jour-là, nous étions *plusieurs* à être venus écouter Madjiguène Cissé annoncer sa décision de rentrer continuer sa lutte en Afrique. « Consciemment ou intuitivement, des milliers d'hommes et de femmes se sont placés à nos côtés » : « à nos côtés » définissant pour elle un positionnement politique possible. Elle parlait d'un espace de cohabitation. Elle n'a jamais vraiment adhéré à l'idée du parrainage républicain⁴, elle préférait parler, s'il le fallait, de jumelage.

Cette image réunit plusieurs moments d'usages alternés d'un même espace qui n'ont pas été nécessairement partagés. Mais quelque chose du passage des uns et des autres reste dans l'air. Les proximités qui naissent dans l'espace créé par cette image ne sont pas directes, mais elles se font à travers ce que ces espaces ont abrité : une fois une pièce de théâtre, une autre fois une assemblée, ou encore un dortoir provisoire.

Ce théâtre avait autrefois été un point d'accueil des sans-papiers et ce jour-là, il s'était à nouveau ouvert. C'est pour marquer une présence supplémentaire et provisoire que des banderoles ont été apportées (« 14-18, 39-45 ils sont morts pour "la France" », avaient-ils leurs papiers ? »).

Comment se tiennent ensemble, dans ce moment de croisement temporaire, à gauche de l'image le titre bien inscrit sur le mur du théâtre, « Et soudain des nuits d'éveils, création collective en harmonie avec Hélène Cixous », et à droite de l'image l'anonymat partagé par des colonisés « morts pour la France », peut-être même sans-papiers, qui se retrouvent de l'autre côté du mur, en dehors de la scène ?

D'un côté, le titre. Nos titres, nos habitudes, nos harmonies qui n'ont de place que pour retenir un seul nom propre même lors d'une création collective. De l'autre côté, un sort collectif sans nom, celui de n'avoir pas pu échapper à la mort. S'il reste possible de discuter ou de se battre pour changer les rapports, les hiérarchies entre personnes, cela paraît bien moins évident avec un Etat qui peine à se souvenir de tous ses morts. Ce que ces côtés ont en commun c'est leur apparition soudaine, la temporalité nomade, le besoin de circulation, (une banderole sera déplacée sitôt la réunion finie, elle ne s'attache pas à un lieu fixe ; l'inscription en lettres très fines en haut du mur restera la durée d'une saison et soudain les nuits s'éveilleront ailleurs).

Doïna voit d'autres choses : « le temps de l'hospitalité, le temps d'un accueil provisoire, le moment d'une fête d'adeux, l'instant d'une photo. Une photo qui ne montre personne, mais juste un coin dans l'espace entre deux phrases. Un portrait de la "proximité" comme moment d'absence, de "quelque chose dans l'air" pour les uns et pour les autres "coïncé entre l'éveil et la mort." »

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