

CONTRA|O|TEMPO RESIDENCIES

HOME

Mariana Ferreira

20TH SEPTEMBER – 17TH OCTOBER 2021

Penedo da Saudade Cultural Center, Coimbra

LINHA
de FUGA



AT HOME WE CAN HAVE ALL THE CRISES IN THE WORLD

Catarina Saraiva and Marta Rodrigues from texts and interviews with the artistic team

It all started with the writing of *Pin my places*, during the fourth theatre writing lab promoted by TNDM II - Teatro Nacional D. Maria II. A text where Mariana reflected about several ways of travelling (on and offline). Later, she proposes to start a research based on the question **“What is a home?”**, which developed, above all, from conversations around the act of changing home. This process culminates in a performative installation in March 2022 at Rua das Gaivotas 6, in Lisbon.

The founding matter of this creation is the concept of home, all the tentacles that spring from it and how it alters, transforms, expands or compresses. During this residency, the artist focused on setting up meetings with immigrant people in Coimbra, found through an open call. These were encounters in which each participant shared with Mariana Ferreira the places they considered home before migrating,

travelling to them using Google Street View and Google Earth. Recorded on video, these moments are research material for the construction of a show where “the dramaturgy is made from each participant in the project” and the artist-creator has the role of “content architect, a kind of digital choreographer who composes scores made of conversations and information”, in her own words. She discovered, in Coimbra, a connection to the natural world that she will expand, through the construction of a hybrid digital and organic world, always around the idea of construction and change of home, of place.

How was it in Coimbra?

Mariana felt in crisis. At that moment, her main interest was to know who she is and what she can do with that.

At the beginning of the project, she thought about the possibility of an installation, but gave up and started thinking about a work for the stage in order to return to the initial idea of an installation. In her creative crisis, Ágatha, her residency partner, was very important because she instigated her to think about all possible perspectives and, automatically, to discard what was not really important. She calls it the negative discovery.

Ágatha entered this process without really knowing what she was going to do. During the residency, she and Mariana developed a deep relationship that allowed her to think about her own creative process: polishing the idea with many questions and searching for the meaning of each one. She is a person of action and thus developed this creative dialogue in Coimbra also through writing, where she comes from.

What caused Mariana's crisis is related to her place of speech. What she had in her hands were interviews with non-European emigrants. Not wanting to lose such rich material, she shifted the focus from immigration to the idea of home and transfer, considering that this is a fairer and more ethical step for everyone, including her. And the questions started to change a little: what happens when there are changes, there is always something that is left behind but something that we also take with us.

What is the desire that moves us.

For Ágatha, the word desire gains other dimensions after the crisis. If before the crisis Mariana considered that desire was what moved the concept of home, after the crisis we can also talk about discomfort and inadequacy, hence also the use of dead or sick plants; any change causes discomfort, even if it can be desired. Plants gained a great symbolic value after the crisis, they are sick, unsuitable, because the conditions are not perfect, the transfer can also go wrong.

It was in the Botanical Garden, one of the many walks they took around the city, trying to find solutions and alternatives to the questions they had, that the idea of plants came up. Mariana remembered her participation with *Home* in Alain Michard's walk, in the Linha de Fuga in 2020, she remembered that at that time she had already asked herself about plants, their migration, their usefulness, their adaptation to new places, and then everything started to make sense, like an epiphany that provoked the appearance of many meanings and metaphors, as if they were writing a poem: land, land transplantation, people migrate, plants that come from far away, exoticism and with this research, all the words fit everywhere.

Mariana found the device she wants to use for *Home*, a place to be inhabited and not to be seen and consumed in a time limit. It can be inhabited in many ways and always with time for the changes to be seen, both by the creation and then by all

the rest of the team, to finally also be inhabited by the viewers. Mariana hasn't put aside the idea of the digital, she likes the choreography of the desktop, something she's been with since the beginning of the process, but now it's important to test the question between what is digital and organic and how they can coexist.

A place to be inhabited by ideas, by organisms, by plants that will be brought

into the space, that will move, have a new space to live in, that will decompose or that will grow, flourish, testing, seeing how it will be in the moment. It goes back to the initial idea of installation but now with much more sense, inside an organism that will have sound, smell, texture, vision to feed the spectator/viewer.



Foto: Francisca Laureano

We give space to the artist in residence to express what she wants to leave as her mark, her fingerprint of what was the passage through Coimbra..

Mariana leaves us her diary of the crisis and Ágatha a reflection on this experience.



Photo: Jorge Graça

20th September 2021 It's the first day of *Home*'s residency at Linha de Fuga. We see the space and I feel disconnected from this project.

21st September It's my mother's birthday. I look at the synopsis of *Home* from months ago:

Home is an art project that, through the use of digital platforms – mainly, but not only, Google Street View, Google Maps and Google Earth, wants to think about the relationships between migrant and territory of arrival, between home and freedom, between past and present and between art and transformation of society.

Starting from the idea of home and the complex process of migration, the physical, financial, psychological and emotional conditions that migrants experience, I will also address the work that Portugal still has to develop in order

to welcome them and also to address more general concepts of social justice, racism and xenophobia, integration and hospitality.

I will also analyze the role of art and culture in the lives of people before and after migration.

And I think about why this synopsis does not suit me, what has already changed, the path I have traveled. I think, as I have from the beginning, about the limits of the project, about its sensitivities and fragilities.

22nd September House-Home-Space-Memory-Future-Ideal-Desire

23rd September What do I use, what do I leave behind? Is the creative process itself a kind of migration process? Coming and going, change, adaptation, abandonment, hope, desire, projection. Where am I in this work? Why do I feel

so little connected? Where is affection and how can I find it again? I feel like dancing. I want to do a dance show.

24th September What text will I write for this? Will there be text? Do I write to seek shelter? This show was never going to have text. But maybe I need to get inside it. As Catarina and Thiago told me, I need to get closer to this object. The distance I force is to protect myself and is more ethically fragile than the presence.

What if it were an installation? I don't think I want to be present.

I look at the synopsis I had when I got here:

"Show me your home before you move to another country." This is the question that starts a series of world travels through Google Street View. From the desire for good conversation, I invite non-European immigrants in Portugal to share with me their physical, emotional and subjective places.

Home is built from the triad presence - absence - belonging, while searching and finding reflections on nationality, border, technology, memory, identity and art.

It also intends to be an intimate investigation into the meaning of the word home.

And I don't think it suits me. The immigration issue is not really the focus. Non-European immigrants? This framework and the nature of the work raises numerous questions of ethics. I am unsure about this. I always have been but now I consider this issue more complicated to unravel. Moreover, I feel that this is not what I wanted to talk about.

27th September Do not forget the house, the home. That is the starting point, the core. I have encounters with immigrant people, who show me their homes from the past and tell me all they want to tell me. Immigrants. Why not anybody? Not only immigrants, but everybody. Everyone has moves at some point, right? What if I met someone who never left the same place? Who has lived in the same house all their life? It seems more important to me now to have different experiences of home. What matters to people? Why do they decide to move?

28th September I close my eyes, think about this project and try to find myself within it. I try to see it as a house. I inhabit it, I walk inside it, I enter the rooms, I look at the old-fashioned decoration. What would I like to see inside this house?

In the videos I want the image of someone waiting or searching. I've always liked those parts. When we look in silence.

29th September "Conversations with the Academy". It was hard but it was good but it was hard. But it was good.

Tomorrow I'm going to another residency. I need to stop, I need to get away. I don't want to fight against *Home*. I want to nurture it, love it. Let it overcome me and gain an existence of its own.

4th October Agatha is with me and I feel as lost as before. But now I have someone to share my crisis with.

5th October Sometimes when I think of immigration, I see the image of a black and white TV from the 1990s. Perhaps that was when I first started to become familiar with the concept. I remember thinking, for the first time, what it would be like to be someone who moves here. Then I thought about my emigrated family. I asked myself how they felt about Portugal. If they felt special because they had two places, if they felt at home when they came during the summer holidays.

6th October I went past all the houses where I lived in Coimbra. I have a strange relationship with this city. As if there was something to be solved, some kind of grudge. I try to make peace with the city. I can make peace with friends and loves, even with myself, but how do you make peace with a city? With a country?

I thought I wanted to talk about every single house but I don't. None of these matters are important to anyone. It doesn't matter to me, that's for sure.

7th October What is home for me? Is it stability? Is it refuge? Comfort? I like to think of home as a place of freedom but that doesn't really exist. My home, now, is my house in Santa Engrácia, it's Lisbon and it's my work. Yes, my home is my work and my community. Could I leave this behind? Where would I go if I had to go? How does one even process a decision like this? Maybe freedom is this ability to choose where to go, what to leave, what to take. What to keep? What does it matter? Fernanda only had one jumper.

From the moment she left Brazil, the only thing left was that jumper. I don't know if that's the most beautiful or the saddest thing I've ever heard. What would be my one thing?

8th October I read somewhere that the concept of home is fragile and arguable. Because it's not really about home, but about us. It is always about us. Home is desire. Desire for belonging, for sociability, for community. Above all, idealization.

11th October I am now absolutely sure. *Home* is not about immigration, that is a part, a group, an approach. My God, I think this is a project (only) about moving from one house to another, changing cities, switching streets, even changing rooms within the same house. When my brother and I switched rooms, that change had a strong impact on me: I dedicated myself to reorganizing the new space, to creating new rituals, new relationships with the furniture and objects. The new view from the window, new sounds, new routes in space. The automated body in a certain space has to disconnect with the past and create new paths.

12th October I sat under the CCPS tree and I was sure I wanted dead plants. I want to have a lot of dead plants on the scene and I want to change them from place to place, from pot to pot, from flowerbed to flowerbed. Sometimes plants don't like to be moved, my mother told me. A botanical garden all dead. What will a dead

botanical garden sound like, I ask Agatha. A setting that is a greenhouse? Projected in the greenhouse, the edited videos.

Thinking about the gap between house and home is important. It is important to remember that not all people have a home, yes. But the image of home is the basis of this creation. The search for belonging, the search for happiness. The house, too, as a social site, where we reproduce models or subvert them. The house as a place of injustice or oppression VS the home as freedom.

13th October This show should be done in a greenhouse full of dying plants. Living is a constant death, as we are always leaving things behind: objects, memories, people. When we move from a house, a city, a country, there are things that stay behind and others that must come with us. During the lockdowns, there was a boom in the acquisition of plants, easily explained by the need to be in contact with the natural world.

14th October What relations?

Symbolic, poetic, political:

House - Garden/Greenhouse | People - Plants | Migration - Repatriation | Adaptation to new environments | Work Force - Function of plants.

I am interested in the way we bring plants into the house, how we pot them, how we move them, create conditions - apparently essential - for their survival. Why do we need them so much? Do they need us? How do plants adapt to survive? What mutations, what genetic adaptations?

15th October The co-existence and intersection of the digital and natural worlds is one of the conceptual bases of this project. Access to both universes is essential in the construction of an idea of home and, in general, in the composition of a more just and democratic society.

16th October Presentation Day of the performative installation *Home*.

I realized that: Without any doubt, *Home* is a performative installation. The setting is a kind of greenhouse.

There are many plants, most of them diseased, some almost dead, pieces of stone, remains of walls and statues, potsherds, empty pots, old pots, humidity. Agatha's soundscape on a loop.

Remains of typical household objects all over the space. It's a kind of bizarre mix between "civilization and garden" as if we all lived inside humid greenhouses, we were half people half plants. Projected on the walls are videos or frames or audios of the encounters I've had. Beside each one, the poetic memories.

Somewhere, also, videos that explore the relationship of people in my life with their plants. Plants as a home. Videos of plants dancing, videos of people dancing. At certain moments, I will practice performative actions, be it through the reading of texts, the creation of videos or other proposals that cohere with the small piece of this hybrid world. I am interested in expanding the concept of the creation of home, through the constant manipulation of organic matter brought into space,

highlighting its adaptive needs, as well as the decomposition that is natural to it. I write a new synopsis and for now it feels good.

HOME is a performative installation that proposes inhabiting a hybrid digital and organic space while attempting to answer the question “what is a home?”

Mariana Ferreira

Arriving with everything I have and am, a presence available for creation, immersion, exchanges. More than the equipment I had in my bag and the poetic baggage I bring with me at the beginning of a residency is what presents greater weight, sharing space with vague expectations and curiosity. And so I arrived with Mariana at Linha de Fuga in September 2021 to participate in the process of *HOME*, a project I was invited first as an interviewee, then as an immigrant, and now for the sound design. In this phase, I met with Mariana in process crises, which seemed a fragile moment but also a moment of experiencing a leap, and that's how it went. I was there as an active listener, very much like a stimulator of questions and proposals, and together we saw the project take a possible form to express what she would like to transmit at this moment. I proposed a sound space that would give atmosphere and trigger feelings of an inhabited space, with its discomforts and comforts, and I also entered the performance operating the space with Mariana, as it is already recurrent and which I love. Everything very fluid and making more sense every day while I left

new questions for the project to evolve. What I bring with me about internal and external changes, the most diverse migratory movements that I go through (and we go through) came together in this creation and from then on so much more will come.

Ágatha Barbosa / Cigarra - On the HOME residency in Linha de Fuga

TO WRITE, WRITE EVERYTHING

*Catarina Saraiva from an interview
with Mariana Ferreira and Ágatha Barbosa*

Artistic practices are a way of thinking, of putting into practice the conceptual development of an idea which allows for the development of the creation process. They are not exactly a creation methodology, but tools that define an orientation in the development of artistic creation until its completion.

In *Home*, Mariana Ferreira uses writing to help her think and solve, but her main practice is the process of interviewing several people. The collaboration with Ágatha Barbosa introduces other components. We talked to both of them to inspire us with their practices.

Mariana had never thought about her practices and, as such, does not have a firm discourse on this subject. However, Ágatha, a fellow resident in Coimbra, considers that one of her practices is precisely to always be experimenting with new working tools. In this process, Mariana interviewed many people and developed a tool that could be a practice in the future: summarising on post-its (in a very small space) what she called “poetic memories of

encounters”, something that could serve as a map of the interviewees’ emotions and, as such, be material for writing but, in itself, could also be part of a performative installation.

The interview may be a practice in Mariana’s work or, more exactly, the possibility to talk to someone about the focus of her research from her own experience.

Writing is another of her practices. This is a way of relating to the world from a very personal perspective. She uses writing to question herself, to ask questions, to highlight her doubts until she is sure of the path to take. To make a serious decision about the direction of creation, she has to put everything on paper, she has to write to search, an automatic writing, without thinking, used to search, almost like a diary of the evolution of events with a constant critical eye on all situations experienced.

Believe in the process. This is a practice that flows with discipline and consists of being open to possible changes in the direction of the project, even though it may be frightening.



This stance starts from a practice directly linked with questioning the meaning of the project itself.

Thinking about the device could be a fundamental practice: answering the question “how”, but Mariana does not take this stance as a practice. Ágatha adds that rather than practice, this thinking is more linked to survival, to the need to fit the work into a context: museum or theatre? Performance or installation? And this condition remains within each artist, as is the case of Mariana, who has a lot of content but still does not know very well how to present it, tasting the various possibilities. Mariana agrees and assumes that no matter how much she likes certain formats, the pressure of the market is heavy and conditions the presentation device when she thinks of presenting her works.

Ágatha is a musician and video maker and works very much alone, she never thought about the device, only about the content. About two years ago she started to create

together with other creators, using their music. She prefers collaboration to commissioning, so she is open to several practices: asking a lot of questions, talking a lot with the other creators, being available to put herself in other places than just musical composition, **engineering of the search**, as she calls it. Each question has a possible proposal that she intends, once again, to question. She is learning to deconstruct and she does it a lot through action. Being aware of how words can have different resonances in people, one of her proposals is always to experiment with the suggested solutions to understand if there is dialogue. When she arrived from Brazil, where she is originally from, it was very difficult for her to accept and understand that Europeans did artistic residencies on things they didn't know. Her work has always been very political and everything she has done has come from her immediate needs, knowing exactly what to do. She felt very restless, due to her awareness of the precariousness of creation,

and that many artists occupy residencies from which nothing comes out. Then she learnt how political it is for there to be spaces for art to flow as it should. In fact, that's the ideal circumstance, to have space for that creative idleness.

PRACTICE FOR SHARING

Mariana shares the exchange

- a) Having a project and a focus;
- b) To talk to many, very different people;
- c) Gather information with freedom and without judgement, free yourself from your preconceptions in listening;
- d) To let it swirl in one's head;
- e) Not having a method of how to talk, it can be face to face, alongside, in a loop.

Talking means creating discourse; when we automatically listen, we develop a way of aligning the other's thought, exercise the possibility of using the information that develops freely while talking, being able to create different stories.

Ágatha shares the gambit

It has to be used with moderation not to create addictions about precariousness.

It is the technique of using things and making things happen with what is at hand, to get around the lack of tools and conditions. It consists of decommodification because it stretches the muscles of imagination but it is directly linked to the lack of access. Therefore, it is not to be used all the time so as not to make

the condition of artist precarious, but it is an exercise that should be done.

The practice of affection is important for Ágatha and Mariana, liking what one is doing, having a good team, liking the public with whom the work relates. This meeting of affections allows for a much deeper capacity to enrich the work. If this affection exists, then there is an encounter between the individual/collective and her work, and from this affection it is possible to be tempted, to be touched, penetrated and be permeable.



Photo: Francisco Laureano



CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ACADEMY

HOME IS THE PLACE OF OUR DESIRE

On the 29th of September,
Mariana Ferreira (creator)
and Gaia Giuliani (researcher
of the Centre for Social Studies
of the University of Coimbra)
talked about privacy, transparency
and opacity, what is truth and what
is the construction of each concept
that involves building a home
in an immigration process.

From Rádio Baixa, with an audience
already present outside,
this conversation allowed an exchange
of artistic and academic perspectives
that brought up several questions
and issues. The whole session
was broadcasted in streaming
and can be seen here:



«Conversations with the Academy»
is an initiative of Linha de Fuga that promotes
a dialogue between academic and artistic
research, in collaboration with the Centre for
Social Studies of the University of Coimbra.
It takes place at Rádio Baixa.

HOME IS THE PLACE WHERE WE SHIELD OUR NATURE

ABOUT *HOME* BY MARIANA FERREIRA AT PENEDO DA SAUDADE CULTURAL CENTER

Alexandre Valinho Gigas

I returned to my parents' house - the house where I grew up and took refuge twice in my adult life. This time, I'm back for the olive harvest, to produce olive oil. Standing in the olive trees, under the rain, I think about and remember aspects of the *Home* project, by Mariana Ferreira. I saw the project grow in two movements; one at the Festival and Laboratory Linha de Fuga 2020 and now recently in a presentation at the Penedo da Saudade Cultural Center. The artist decided to treat the concept of "Home" in an artistic way. In the first presentation, I liked the use of video technology, of virtual maps, in a documentary theater device. It dealt with the concept of home from the perspective of migrants, mainly from other continents than Europe. In this latter presentation, I observed the fine-tuning of the device, both through the music/sound of Ágatha Barbosa and the introduction of natural elements, like plants and earth in the space of the presentation. Home is the place where we shield our nature.

I believe that the concept of home

is a very broad one, comprising aspects of our most intimate nature, as well as other natures that complement us in a symbiotic way. With the earth scattered on the floor of the exhibition space, I remembered a day when I took shelter in the hole of a boulder, with my research colleague. The boulder became a home for a couple of hours, protecting us from the natural elements. It was not a romantic scene, but it was also composed of affection. Home is affection, for other people or for other species with whom we share the space.

Halfway through the video presentation, I realized that one of the people interviewed had the book shelves of my house in Coimbra as backdrop. Strange effect having become aware that the shelves and the books are my home, but not that house, for the city where it is set. Home is Peace. How many people do we find living in cramped rooms, or in overcrowded houses, or in semi-ruined buildings? We forget, because of our notion of what basic housing conditions are, that those people found a home there, due to

Photo: Mariana Ferreira



the horror they have lived and observed in other corners of the planet. Perhaps those who observe and measure and judge from an Eurocentric perspective are the real orphans of a home.

Ágatha's soundscape led me through the destruction that precedes all constructions. The video roamed through streets and stories without stopping. I felt lost in the home of others; in the destruction of the idea of my home, in the city of Coimbra; in the emerging need to invent a new home, to transport these books into. Home is the search to be happy with other people. If that is too difficult, let us look at other species, because they will tell us in their languages that everyone's home is the planet where we are suspended in a vacuum. Let us listen to and see Mariana Ferreira's *Home*.



BIOGRAPHIES

Mariana Ferreira | *Artistic Direction, Creation and Interpretation* (PT)

She took her first steps in acting, completing the training course for actors at TEUC - Teatro Académico de Coimbra and graduating in Theatre at Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema, Acting branch. She participated in several plays as an actress and in 2020 wrote the play *Pin my Places*, published by Bicho do Mato Publisher and taken to the stage of TNDM II with direction by Rui Horta. She was selected for the special dramaturgy edition of École des Maîtres between August 2020 and July 2021.

Ágatha Barbosa aka Cigarra | *Musical Direction* (BR)

Graduated in Literature at the University of São Paulo and has worked as a designer, art-educator, event producer, performer and DJ. She performed in several festivals in Brazil and in many others around the world. For over 10 years she explored unique sets and her own sound cocoons. In 2016 she released the EP *Límibica* and in 2018 *Ato*, by Tropical Twista Records. She currently lives in Lisbon, where she is also involved in music and event production

Artistic Direction, Creation and Interpretation:

Mariana Ferreira

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e Keli Freitas

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Sound Designer: Cigarra

Video: Ahmed Abdelrazek

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Artistic Project Management: Daniel Matos

Production: CAMA a.c.

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