Side Effect: Potential Tensions in the Creative Process of a Videodance

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Abstract
This text presents a theoretical perspective on a practice-based project that integrates approaches from creative fields engaged with serendipity. The artwork discussed here draws on Rosalind Krauss's concept of the Expanded Field (1979), and on postmodern artistic expressions informed by the Theory of the Dérive – as discussed by authors Guy Debord (1958), Santiago Navarro (2011), and Francesco Careri (2013) – which expand the body's creative possibilities. In response to these provocations, artist Julia Soares developed a screendance piece based on Chance Operations by Merce Cunningham and John Cage, and on Rudolf Laban's movement studies. Within this process, a game emerged between chance, object, and expression, establishing tensions between the body and the domestic scene, stemming from the act of collecting blister packs of a medication. By questioning its side effects, the artist produces a poetic torsion that transforms a repetitive gesture into expression, revealing the creative potential of the ordinary.

Keywords: *dérive*; expanded field; chance operations; serendipity; screendance.

1. Introduction

> *It was always a conflict, and with the conflict movement emerges. In the body, in the house, in life. [...] Only later did I discover that the existing space between opposites generated the conflicts, as well as the way of expressing them. [...] Life in movement is in that space.*
>
> Klauss Vianna, *A dança* (*Dance*), 1990, p. 77

It is around internal conflicts – those that manifest unconsciously, but surprise us as they materialize externally – that this work develops. The artist and first author Julia P. Soares turns this kind of struggle into a generative force for movement and dance. Rooted in an almost instinctive practice of collecting blister packs from a medication taken over the past twelve

years, she recognises that, through questioning its side effects, she can provoke a torsion in which a new effect emerges: the pleasure contained in movement as it becomes art. As discussed below, the relationship constructed here between substance, sound, and gesture unfolds into a scene performed in the corridor of her home and explores, in a ludic manner, the contradictions embedded in that space, suggesting that, even within a structured daily life, poetry may arise between bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen.

To outline the theoretical paths that might speak to this practice, we begin by reflecting on the contours of postmodernism, a transitional moment in which the artists discussed in this study are situated. From the ruptures that marked the shift from modernism to postmodernism, we observe, as emphasised by Hal Foster (1987), the crisis of the modernity project, which, once absorbed by society, became the official culture and consolidated itself as tradition. In view of this and with the aim of keeping alive a project that challenged a "false normativity", Foster asks how this modern could be exceeded, proposing the following reflection: "How can we [...] progress beyond the era of Progress (modernity), or transgress the ideology of the transgressive (avant-gardism)?" (Foster, 1987, p. ix).

We therefore turn to the thought of critic and theorist Rosalind Krauss as a way of operating within the problematic outlined by Foster. The concept of the Expanded Field (1979) presented by Krauss serves not only to identify the agents and conditions that marked the historical threshold of change between modern and postmodern art, but also to propose ways of reconfiguring this relationship: enabling an understanding of the connections between art works, their expressive media, and the historical, social, and institutional contexts in which they are situated. In this sense, it becomes essential to contextualise the artistic works and research developed during this period of deconstruction and resistance to the *status quo*, which inspire and underpin the present creative process. Within this framework, the writings of Krauss, Santiago Navarro and Francisco Careri, in dialogue with the duo John Cage and Merce Cunningham, as well as with Rudolf Laban, contribute theories, experimental approaches, and methodologies that stretch the boundaries between art, body, space, and everyday life. What forms the amalgam among these authors – both theorists and practitioners – are the new modes of creation they propose, aimed at contemplating and acting within a space generated by conflict.

We shall see that what takes place in space, as suggested in the epigraph by choreographer Klauss Vianna, are gradations that exist between opposing forces – and it is precisely these gradations that interest us in the investigations carried out by our interlocutors. As Regina Miranda (2002) tells us, Laban had already identified, in the first half of the twentieth century, a problematic modernist split that produced the dichotomies of mind and body, and objective and subjective experience, leading to the conception of the body as an instrument of the mind. Laban's theories thus charted an alternative understanding by overlaying rather than opposing these dimensions, anticipating later approaches that affirmed "the primacy of lived

experience in the constitution of meaning" (Miranda, 2002, p. 22). From Miranda's perspective, it is particularly relevant to us to approach Laban's studies as a theory "in movement" (*ibid*.), one that is continually revisited and collaboratively reworked by scholars and practitioners engaging with his legacy.

Grounded in these references, which both inspire and shape this trajectory, the screendance *Side Effect* was conceived as an investigation into the expansion of the body's creative possibilities in relation to the theories of *dérive* and the Expanded Field. Its development draws on the method of Chance Operations as practised by Merce Cunningham and John Cage, alongside the dynamic qualities of movement elaborated by Laban.

All these references, while actively participating in this historical moment of ideological transition, advocate – in line with the perspective proposed by Foster – a way of making art grounded in a critical deconstruction of modern tradition (rather than in repudiation), one that "seeks to question rather than exploit cultural codes" (Foster, 1987, p. xii). This text thus offers a theoretical reflection on a practice-based project that brings together approaches from creative fields attuned to serendipity. Art lies within reach in everyday contexts, through micropolitical strategies of subverting the quotidian, creating poetic calluses from a domestic, empirical knowledge available to all.

2. Expanded Field, *Dérive* and Chance Operations: Sketches of an Approach

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, a diversity of seemingly heterogeneous works began to attribute new meanings to the then-established term "sculpture". The critic and theorist Rosalind Krauss (1979), in a discussion on the expansion of this signifier within the field of art, recognised the need to map and identify the new domain that sculptural works were occupying. She observes that, during the modernist period, sculptural production crossed the boundary of a logic that had hitherto been conventional, which defined it as necessarily fixed and stable. Since then, it became a category difficult to define, due to the multitude of diverse and insurmountable artistic manifestations it encompassed. Sculpture transformed into an abstraction, self-referential and autonomous, without a fixed location. One of the examples marking this shift, according to Krauss, is Endless Column (1937–38) by Constantin Brancusi, erected in a field in the city of Târgu Jiu, Romania. It is a proposal that blurs the definition of the pedestal, so far understood as that which supports a work of art, providing it with structure and fixity. In this overflow, Endless Column is both work and pedestal – or rather it is neither work nor pedestal. Its paradoxical nature arises from what Krauss terms the space of "negative condition" (Krauss, 1979, p. 34). In the subtlety of its artistic outcome, the work comes to be defined by what it is not, that is, through a combination of exclusions: it is thus both a non-landscape and a non-architecture. "Through its fetishization of the base, the sculpture reaches downward to absorb the pedestal into itself and away from actual place; and through the

representation of its own materials or the process of its construction, the sculpture depicts its own autonomy" (*ibid*.)

In observing this and other exercises structured according to the logic of exclusion, Krauss builds upon mapping operations from structuralist human sciences to construct a diagram of this process within the sculptural field (Figure 1). As a result, she devises an equation based on the logic "non-landscape is architecture and non-architecture is landscape," an operation she terms the "expanded field" – "a set of binaries transformed into a quaternary field" (Krauss, 1979, p. 37). The expanded field can thus be understood as the logical extension of a series of paradoxical artistic outcomes, grounded in the expansion of the term sculpture, constituting a "new" that both reflects its original condition and simultaneously extends beyond it.

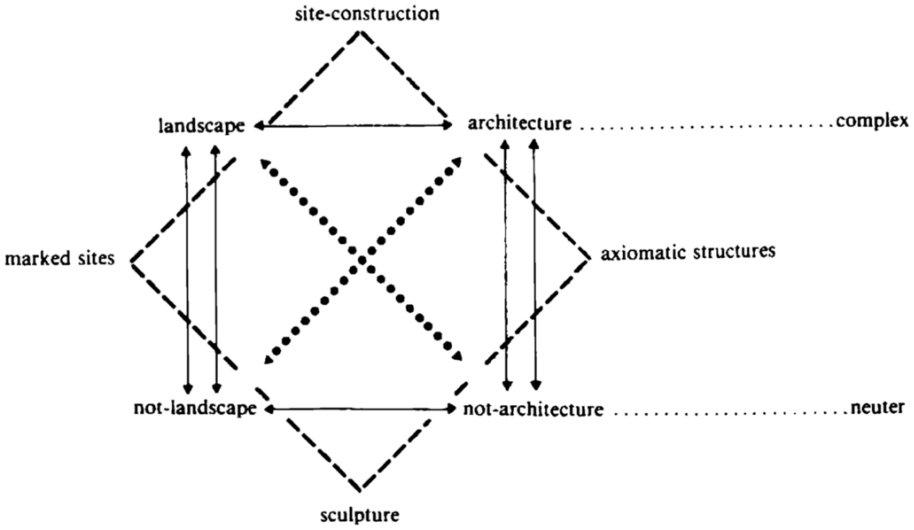

Figure 1 – Diagram of the expanded field (Krauss, 1979)

This reasoning made it possible to visualise three categories within the expanded sculptural field: (1) marked sites; (2) site-construction; (3) axiomatic structures. These categories refer both to the physical environments of these manifestations and to the ways in which they are characterised, always as non-permanent. From this segmentation, Krauss identifies and situates works by artists such as Robert Smithson, Walter de Maria, Richard Serra, and Richard Long, among others, making explicit their conditions within the expanded field. The author observes that many of these artists' works were something "on or in front of a building that was not the building, or what was in the landscape that was not the landscape" (Krauss, 1979, p. 36).

Richard Long's *A Line Made by Walking* (1967) is presented as an example of a marked site, as it follows the binary scheme formed by landscape and non-landscape. In Long's work, a line is traced on the ground through a continuous trampling action. According to Francesco

Careri – the Italian artist who draws on the tradition articulated by Krauss to develop walking-based practices in urban space – in an action where only a trace remains on the terrain and "the sculptural object is entirely absent, the act of walking becomes an autonomous form of art" (Careri, 2013, p. 30). In this assertion, the author not only corroborates Krauss's proposal but also integrates the practice of walking into the dynamics of the expanded field. In his terms, walking as an artistic practice also becomes responsible for the expansion of the sculpture signifier, inserting the body into this dynamic as an actor-object intervening in space, leaving traces and marks that are not always foreseeable. Viewed in these terms, Long's work, though it does not present a physical body in the environment, makes visible the steps and traces left by an active presence, transforming the site itself.

Aware of the body's potentialities in space, Careri, in his book *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice* (2013), undertakes an archaeology of walking practices in Western history, elaborating their expanded meanings across different artistic modalities. He traces a trajectory that begins with the movement patterns of the nomadic ancestral body, passes through the exploratory wanderings of the Dadaists and Surrealists – who established distinctive bonds between the body and the unconscious – and concludes with the works produced by the Situationist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. This archaeology is initiated intuitively with the biblical conflict between Cain and Abel, functioning as archetypes present in human modes of life since Antiquity: sedentism and nomadism, respectively. Through these figures, we reflect on how the conflict between remaining and exploring permeates human existence across different forms of collectivity, revealing a cycle defined by "two desires: to establish ourselves somewhere, to belong to a place, and to find elsewhere a new field of action" (Tiberghien *apud* Careri, 2013, p. 20).

Following this archetypal duality inherent in human nature, Careri observes how certain artistic practices provoke tensions between these poles. He notes that, in the early twentieth century, the Dadaists found in walking – through wanderings in the lesser-known parts of the city – a form of writing and a way to unsettle real space, "capable of revealing the unconscious zones and the suppressed elements of the city" (Careri, 2013, p. 29). The Surrealists, in turn, proposed wandering as a creative device. André Breton, regarded as one of the movement's founders, emphasised the practice of errancy as an important mode of expression and of apprehending the transforming urban space when he published the novella *Nadja* in 1928. In his view, erratic walking, especially at night, allowed the unconscious to flow. It was thus an activity through which body and mind could encounter the unpredictable, making space for the occurrence of poetic shocks.

By the late 1950s, the Theory of the *dérive* was developed by Guy Debord (1958), who observed the potential offered by the practice of wandering as experienced in *avant-garde* movements. Surrealism emerges as the main source of inspiration for artists practising the

dérive, who sought in walking a way to connect with the most enigmatic aspects of themselves and of common space. Under this influence, Debord's excursions gave rise to a movement, Situationism, which proposed continuous walking as a technique, placing the subject in a ludic-constructive state. This movement encouraged new forms of artistic creation within everyday life, provoking shifts in routine practices and allowing for the observation of alternative perspectives on what seemed mundane.

Believing that artistic creation should arise from practices that attune or open the body, the Situationists put it to the test: through notes and drawings, they generated new data, combinations, and sets of rules for the body within the explored environment. These activities were followed by a series of aesthetic interventions that disrupted the order considered normal in a given space. Through practical exercises, they observed how their bodies gradually let go of certain rational motives that constrained them, allowing themselves to be guided by the demands of the terrain, by the noises of the site, among other provocations (Debord *et al*., 1958).

Interested in the *dérive*, the Argentine artist and researcher Santiago Garcia Navarro observes how this practice has widened over the years, emerging as a way of exposing the body to the greatest possible range of perspectives. In fragments from his text *73 Notes on the Dérive* (2011), Navarro invites the reader, among other things, to enter a *dérive* in which the body – hypersensitised to the stimuli of the city – becomes the device that filters the flow of sensations in its relation to the environment. He argues that when we seek alternative "techniques" to let ourselves be guided, we come into contact with what is not evident, "with invisible life", becoming aware of what normally escapes us in everyday situations. It is, in part, by inviting the body into such a mode of *dérive* that the work to be presented is structured.

Thinking with these authors, we consider how the fabrication of situations between body, time, and space can enable new dispositions among them – an equation that may lead to an expanded range of possibilities for intervening in the world. By breaking with conventional rules, we argue that subjects may be transformed into agents capable of modifying both themselves and their surroundings. "We must therefore invent new techniques across all fields, visual, oral, psychological, and then bring them together in the complex activity that will engender urban space" (Debord *et al*., 1999, p. 56).

Thus, in the dialogue established here between Krauss, Careri and Navarro, we take the expanded field as the site of an updated form of *dérive*, as proposed by Navarro (2011), thereby extending the concept. Starting from the traditional notion of sculpture as broadened by Krauss (1979), we are interested in observing how the transformations set in motion from the 1960s onwards reverberate through modes of creation spanning scenic, corporeal and sound practices. We consider how these shifts produce displacements within aesthetic

configurations, leaving these signifiers open to invention and releasing them into fertile exercises of interweaving. It is from this observation that we bring into the conversation the collaborative method of creation developed by choreographer Merce Cunningham and composer John Cage (Figure 2), which stands as an example of an expanded approach to composition.

Figure 2 – Merce Cunningham and John Cage in *How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run*, 1965
(source: Merce Cunningham Dance Capsules, 2026)

In 1944, Cunningham began developing his own research into dance and choreographic composition. Drawing from both ballet and modern dance – techniques already well established – his approach, however, no longer relied on the linearity of narrative or psychological elements, nor on the music employed (Cage, 1964). The composition does not build towards a climax; the dance is self-sufficient and does not require musical support. “[...] it is assumed that an element (a movement, a sound, a change of light) is in and of itself expressive; what it communicates is in large part determined by the observer himself” (*ibid*.).[1]

Together, Cunningham and Cage allow music and dance to coexist independently within the same performance, freeing them from the need to tell a story. The works created by these

[1] From the text *A Movement, a Sound, a Change of Light* (Cage,1964). Available at: https://www.mercecunningham.org/the-work/archives-and-selected-readings/. Accessed on: 6 Jun. 2025.

artists reveal a productive experimentation across fields: in blurring boundaries, they inaugurate both a new way of composing between body/space/sound and a new way of seeing and experiencing art.

> Where other music and dance generally attempt to 'say' something, this theater is one that 'presents' activity. This can be said to affirm life, to introduce an audience, not to a specialized world of art, but to the open, unpredictably changing world of everyday living. (Cage, 1964).

Working collaboratively on choreographic pieces, both artists began to develop them through their method known as *Chance Operations*, in which artistic practices and exercises arise from decisions grounded in unpredictability. Inspired by Zen Buddhism, and specifically by the *I Ching* – a game imbued with an ethic oriented, among other things, towards embracing chance, pause, and silence – the method relies on chance to determine the elements (dance steps, sounds) of a choreography and a sound composition. In using this form of decision-making to compose, Cage would say that his responsibility became less about making choices and more about asking questions.[2]

In the proposal of these artists, musical and choreographic compositions – developed separately – are brought together only at the moment of performance, when "the two arts take place in a common place and time, but each art expresses this Space-Time in its own way" (Cage, 1964). However, there is a common denominator between the two artistic expressions: a shared temporal structure. Cage and Cunningham worked within the same rhythmic framework and agreed on certain points of the composition, establishing a dialogue that becomes comprehensible only in the act of performance. According to Cage, "when we have the independence of the music and the dance that we have, then the observer becomes the third point in a triangle, and completes the work. And each triangle is a different triangle" (Cage, 1981)[3]. In doing so, they create challenges for the dancers, who are confronted with unfamiliar sound – a stimulus not previously rehearsed – leaving room for surprise, considered essential for Cunningham (1968). Each performance is unique, and it is up to the observer to forge the link between the expressions. Thus, multiple relational triangles are abstractly drawn within the performative space-time, depending on each spectator's state, references, repertoire, and sense of bewilderment.

[2] *John Cage: An Autobiographical Statement.* Available at: https://www.johncage.org/autobiographical_statement.html. Accessed on: 6 Jun. 2025.

[3] *Chance Conversations: An Interview with Merce Cunningham and John Cage*. Available at: https://youtu.be/ZNGpjXZovgk. Accessed on: 6 Jun 2025.

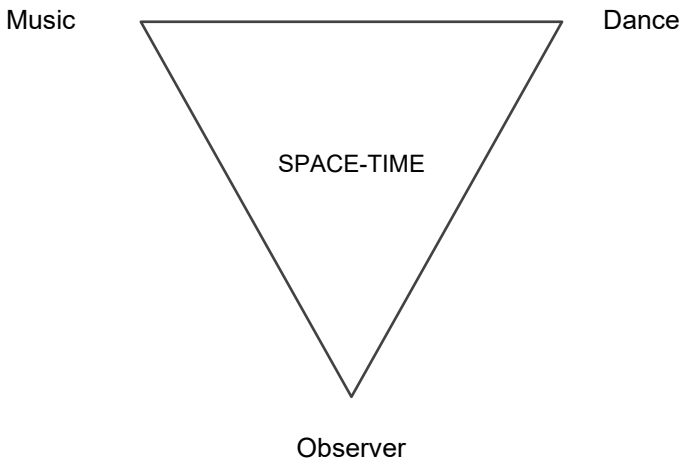

Figure 3 – Visualisation of the triangular relationship according to John Cage
(source: diagram by the authors, 2025)

Cunningham and Cage found in this method a way to free themselves from conditioned gestures and movements, encountering new possibilities through contingent combinations of compositional elements. In this process, we are interested in considering how the body opens itself unconsciously to unforeseen artistic possibilities, potentially expanding them while avoiding the repetition of patterns or predetermined styles in its creative pathways. Cunningham explains that our attention is highly selective and editorial in nature; therefore, the use of chance operations aims to release it, allowing the choreographic sequence to emerge without its command. In his own words, he states:

> The feeling I have when I compose in this way is that I am in touch with a natural resource far greater than my own personal inventiveness could ever be, much more universally human than the particular habits of my own practice, and organically rising out of common pools of motor impulses (Cunningham, 1955).

Thus, by breaking with the traditional relation of co-dependence between dance and music, their approach enabled not only new forms of hybridisation between these fields but also offered ways of exploring each medium independently. This relative autonomy opened up unprecedented tensions between areas, reverberating in experimental exercises that placed bodies in a new state of attentiveness. As we have seen, once brought together on stage, under the gaze of the audience, the artistic expressions they employed challenged conventions of performance as well as the internal logics of choreography and music.

This opening movement also resonated across other expressive media. As Beatriz Cerbino and Leandro Mendonça observe (*apud* Brum, 2012), within the expanded perception of time and space that characterised the interdisciplinary artistic practices of the 1960s, a transversal relationship between video and dance likewise emerged, dissolving the boundaries

between these languages. In this context, Merce Cunningham was one of the pioneers in exploring this rapprochement, creating experimental works of videodance[4] in collaboration with John Cage and in affinity with the spirit of the Fluxus movement, which rejected the conventions of the artwork and integrated the everyday into the aesthetic field (Brum, 2012).

Inspired by these authors, our proposal is not merely to reflect on the subversion of what is understood as sculpture, but to consider the widening of artistic expression itself. Such an expansion allows for a different gaze upon aesthetic practices that engage with the quotidian as a route towards the discontinuous, generating subtle yet incisive shifts within these environments – whether artistic or those of ordinary life. Within the dialogue developed here between the expanded field, *dérive* and chance operations, a way of approaching aesthetic modalities in their potential openness comes into view. As we shall see, their convergence results in a unique interplay between chance, word, time, sound and expression.

3. Tensioning the Quotidian

As modes of expression, we consider how artistic production can generate encounters and porosities between categories, opening up alternative conceptions of the ordinary and forms of intervention within it, while freeing these from their traditional perspectives. In this section, we therefore follow the proposition of the Situationists, who argued that “artists have the task of inventing new techniques and of using light, sound and movement – in general, all innovations that may influence environments” (Debord *et al*., 1999, p. 54). Accordingly, we understand that the combination of the three concepts outlined above offers a set of positions to be explored by artists across different fields, keeping open the possibilities of expression through diverse means. It is from this confluence that we turn, in this section, to the observation and exploration of a practical exercise in which, through a torsion of the everyday, the object is transformed into sound and movement, offering the body unexpected and expanded possibilities.

It is from this perspective that we follow the work of Julia Soares, who draws on this repertoire to devise an intervention within the domestic scene through corporeal movement. We shall see how, by establishing tensions between object, body, sound and a specific environment, the artist produces the unexpected with what is most familiar to her.

The performative proposal is guided by an engagement with elements of the artist’s daily routine and by a commitment to subverting the act of dwelling, without expectations regarding the outcome. From the tension proposed – further detailed in the lines that follow – three autonomous moments unfold, forming an analogy with the triangular diagram devised by Cunningham and Cage (1981): (1) the process of sound creation; (2) the process of movement

[4] The term videodance is used here in its historical sense, as employed in the context of experimental practices of the 1960s, preceding the later consolidation of the term screendance.

creation; and, finally, (3) the compositional outcome of the union of these two processes, which culminates in a screendance. What follows is the guiding concept of the work, articulated in the artist's own voice and transcribed in the first person:

> Through close engagement with the theories of the Expanded Field, *dérive* and Chance Operations, I came to recognise a daily commitment to something very specific: the preservation of a physical state free from pain. For over twelve years, I have taken a daily medication to alleviate symptoms caused by endometriosis. This condition involves endometrial tissue cells, which, for reasons still unknown, migrate and develop outside the uterine cavity, causing painful lesions wherever they settle. Following the diagnosis, some years ago, I began taking a daily tablet of dienogest, a substance whose action reduces the production of the affected tissue cells, thereby lessening discomfort. Alongside the act of taking the medication is the practice of recording, on the blister pack that accompanies it, the day of the week on which the pill was taken. This constitutes a form of control, an aid to memory, a guide to time. The side effects of this substance are varied, and may include migraine, depression, reduced libido and the flattening of emotional fluctuations, among others. It was these unwanted reactions – which directly affect my emotions and the ways in which I experience the world – that led me to keep the medication blister packs. They became a means of materialising not only the drug's effects on my body, but also the number of doses taken, the passage of time, the financial cost, and the commitment invested in sustaining the absence of one form of pain at the expense of others that are less predictable.

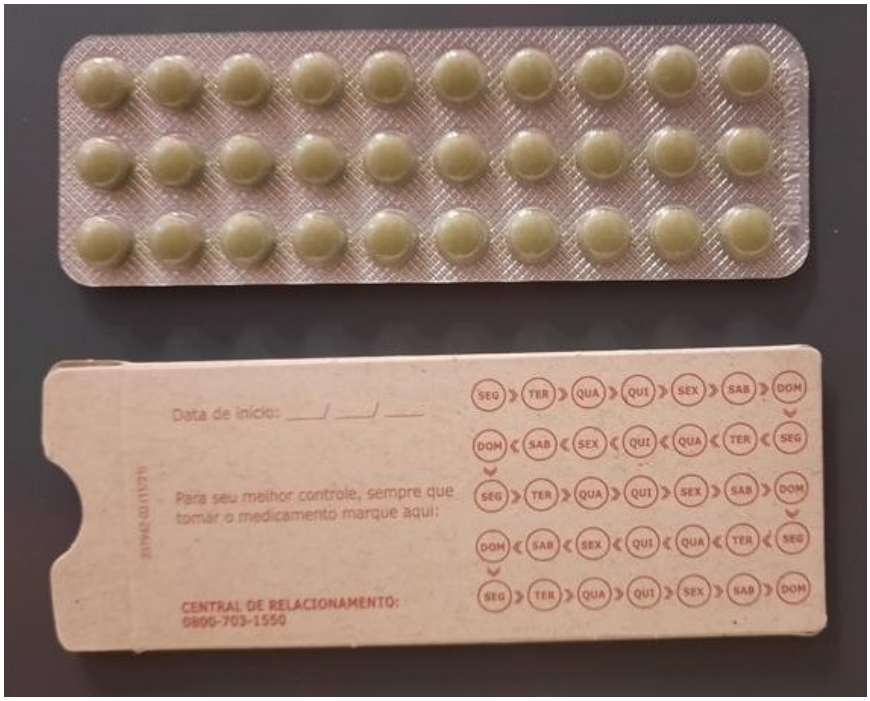

Figure 4 – Medication blister pack and daily intake tracking card
(source: photograph by the artist, 2025)

Figure 5 – Medication blister packs documenting daily intake from October 2017 to March 2025 (source: photograph by the artist, 2025)

It is from this daily practice of accumulating blister packs – marking them and producing voids between the consumed medications – that the artist's work is conceived. At this stage, the notion of *dérive* emerges through the everyday commitment to making annotations and storing the packs, allowing for possible gaps in the markings, understood as unintentional deviations produced by forgetting. Over the last six years, from October 2017 to March 2025, the artist stored seventy-eight blister packs from the medication taken. When observing the set of all the blister packs used (Figure 5), among the many forms of information they present, two aspects stand out: (1) the way the days of the week are inscribed – thirty-five circles arranged in five rows and seven columns, filled in when the medication was taken; and (2) the days on which the medication was not taken, when the circles remain unmarked. These are forms emptied by forgetting, produced in an aleatory manner.

Once again, the artist describes, in her own words, what led her into the creative process of this stage:

> By bringing together these two factors – the blank days and the seven columns of the blister pack – it did not take long for me to draw a correspondence between the seven printed days of the week and the seven musical notes (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Si)[5]. It seemed logical to transform the side effect of emotional absence into sound and movement, to seek new corporeal sensations through music and dance that could be generated from something improbable, such as medication blister packs (to remedy what has already been remedied). Sound and movement have always motivated me; they are expressive elements that alter the state of the body and may also promote other forms of healing.

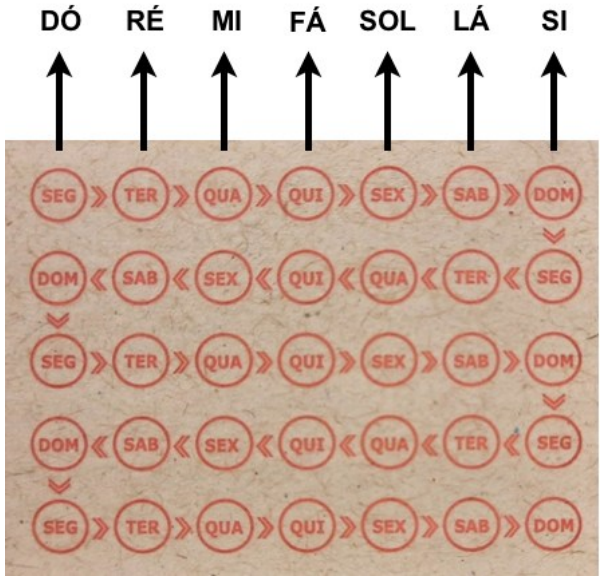

Figure 6 – Correspondence game between the medication blister pack and musical notes (source: diagram by the artist, 2025)

Thus, the random exchange produced month after month between body and blister pack – the latter marked by voids and unprogrammed variations – prompted the artist to develop a singular drawing across body, space and musical notes. The blister packs activate two internal creative pathways: a corporeal composition and a musical composition. To this end, the artist drew inspiration from the methods of Merce Cunningham and John Cage in the development of these creation processes. In line with their practice, chance as a method guides the compositional process, with time functioning as the structure that holds together the sound and movement compositions.

3.1 Process of Sound Creation

To develop the melody, the artist established a code to translate the forgotten days into sound. First, all the days of the week left blank across the 78 blister packs (the forgotten days)

[5] The note *Si* is maintained instead of the English *Ti*, as this choice enables later conceptual and linguistic developments intrinsic to the work.

were recorded in chronological order, from the earliest to the most recent. Next, as explained earlier, a correspondence was established between the days of the week and the natural musical notes: Monday was translated into C (Do), Tuesday into D (Re), and so on, up to Sunday as B (Si). Once this mapping had been defined, the decision was made to employ, in the musical composition, the chords of the C major harmonic field (Figure 7), in order to expand the possibilities for both composition and performance.

Musical code:

Day of the week	Note	Chord
Monday	Do	C
Tuesday	Re	Dm
Wednesday	Mi	Em
Thursday	Fa	F
Friday	Sol	G
Saturday	La	Am
Sunday	Si	Bb

Figure 7 – Coding for the musical composition (source: the artist, 2025)

The system of correspondences developed from the recorded sequence of forgotten days of the week and the musical chords resulted in the melodic sequence presented below (Figure 8):

Melodic Sequence:

G - Am - Em - Am - Am - Em - Bb - Am
Dm - Em - F - Bb - Dm - F - Am - Dm
F - Am - Bb - G - F - Em - Bb - Am
G - Am - Bb - Em - Bb - Bb - C - Am
Bb - F - Em - G - G - C - Bb - G
G - F - Dm - Am - C - Bb - G - Am
F - F - C - Am - Dm - G - Bb - Em
G - Bb - Em - Bb - F - C - Am - C
Am - Bb - Am - Dm - F - Dm - Am - C

Figure 8 – Chord-based melodic sequence developed from the unrecorded days on the blister packs[6] (source: the artist, 2025)

[6] For the purposes of this article, both the musical and corporeal compositions were developed only up to the 26th blister pack, in order to prevent the project from becoming excessively extensive.

For the phases of composition and execution, the artist – having no formal musical training, despite a relative familiarity with rhythms and chords – chose to work with this melodic sequence using the virtual music application GarageBand. This platform functions as a digital recording-studio environment, offering a wide range of instrumental sounds and variations without requiring technical musical proficiency from the user. The composition was structured through the combination of four distinct instrumental tracks: double bass, piano, violins, and acoustic guitar. This selection stemmed from a preference for melodic instruments available within the application rather than the percussive ones.

Based on the score derived from the pill blister packs, all subsequent compositional decisions followed the principle of placing both body and mind in a state of *dérive* – a playful, constructively exploratory condition – guided solely by the tempo set by the metronome, a key element that oriented both the musical and corporeal compositions. Harmony emerged metaphorically through a willingness to be led by the terrain – in this case, the digital keys and strings displayed on the application's touchscreen.

3.3 Process of Movement Creation

In this work, the body does not move in response to music or to pre-established individual intentions; rather, corporeal movement is also constructed through the code that propels it. To support this mode of guidance, a new guiding code was introduced, emerging from a further displacement in the deciphering of the blister packs. This code results from a procedure that begins with the initial correspondence between the days of the week and musical notes and subsequently transmutes the syllables of these notes into verbs, which are then "translated" into dynamic movement qualities associated with the theoretical–practical framework developed by choreographer and movement researcher Rudolf Laban, as outlined below.

Accordingly, the decision to transform monosyllabic notes into words (verbs) is informed by two sources: (1) the origins of solmisation and its subsequent use in certain songs, and (2) the concept of Basic Effort Actions within the Laban Movement Analysis system (LMA). According to Stuart Lyons (2007), solmisation – the process of assigning syllables to musical notes – was systematised by the Benedictine monk and choirmaster Guido of Arezzo in the tenth century in order to facilitate the reading of musical notation. The monk set the *Hymn to St John the Baptist* to music, assigning the initial syllable of each verse of the hymn to the corresponding sung pitch. Other references that draw on this principle – such as the song *Do-Re-Mi* from *The Sound of Music* (Robert Wise, 1965) and *Minha Canção*[7] from *Os Saltimbancos* (Chico Buarque,

[7] *Minha Canção* (*My Song*) is a song from the Brazilian musical *Os Saltimbancos* (literally *The itinerant performers*), written in 1977 by Chico Buarque and inspired by *The Musicians of Bremen*, by the Brothers Grimm.

1977) – also contributed to this construction as sources of inspiration, as they form part of the artist's affective repertoire.

The specific choice to work with verbs, rather than other types of words, is grounded in the theoretical–practical studies developed by Laban (1879–1958). The Laban System, or LMA, is a comprehensive framework for movement language in which movement is broken down "to its most elementary unit, comparable to the phoneme, and articulated into its most complex harmonies, organised within a language and symbolism structured in a manner analogous to a musical score" (Miranda, 2002, p. 22). It is a detailed system capable of describing the qualitative changes that emerge within a movement phrase. In summary, this language is based on four categories: Body, Effort, Shape, and Space[8]. These categories are present in varying proportions in all human movement, whether performed on stage or in everyday contexts. For the creative process developed in this work, particular emphasis is placed on the category of Effort, which refers to the dynamic qualities of movement and "expresses the individual's inner attitude in relation to four factors: flow, space, weight, and time" (Fernandes, 2002, p. 120). Each of these factors may range between two polarities and, when combined, characterise the movement's Effort dynamics. Thus, *flow* may range from free to bound; *space* from direct to indirect; *weight* from light to strong; and *time* from accelerated to decelerated. Effort qualities in human movement are always manifested as variable combinations of these factors. From the combinations of the factors of weight, space, and time, the Laban System identifies eight Basic Effort Actions, expressed as verbs used to articulate these combinatory variations: *float, punch, glide, slash, dab, wring, flick,* and *press.* For example, the verb *float* consists of a movement characterised by indirect space, light weight, and decelerated time (Fernandes, 2002, p. 153).

Immersing herself in the principle of the Basic Effort Actions, the artist, in the present creative process, makes use of additional verbs, which, in a similar yet personal manner, can be articulated through Effort factors in order to generate the gestural vocabulary inscribed in the scene to be composed. Methodologically inspired by the logic of solmisation, the selection of verbs used in this composition was guided by the search for those that begin with the same syllables (letters) as the musical notes and that refer to experiences of everyday domestic life lived by the artist, while also resonating with more commonplace, shared experiences. Accordingly, two verbs were selected for each note-syllable[9]: *Dominate / sleep*; *Recover / rebel*; *Minimise / aim*; *Fail / clean*; *Solidify / release*; *Lament / wash;* and *Silence / synchronise*. These pairs of verbs introduce tensions or oppositions, whether through semantic contrast or

[8] The categories are methodologically written in capital letters to distinguish them from the Effort factors, in accordance with LMA conventions.

[9] In this English version of the article, it was not possible to find corresponding verbs for all musical notes that begin with the same syllables as the notes themselves. However, for each note, at least one verb retains this syllabic correspondence while remaining faithful to the meanings of the original Portuguese text. In cases where this was not feasible, semantic accuracy was prioritised.

through the corporeal expressivity manifested according to movement qualities. They are intended to activate and propel the dynamics of the movements to be developed by the artist. The transposition of musical notes into verbs, which constitutes the movement code of the work, is presented in Figure 9 below.

Movement Code:

Days of the week	Musical notes	Verbs
Monday	Do	Dominate / Sleep
Tuesday	Re	Recover / Rebel
Wednesday	Mi	Minimise / Aim
Thursday	Fa	Fail / Clean
Friday	Sol	Solidify / Release
Saturday	La	Lament / Wash
Sunday	Si	Silence / Synchronise

Figure 9 – Coding for the movement composition (source: the artist, 2025)

Thus, once the verbs to be employed in the choreographic composition had been selected and associated with the sequence of forgotten days, following the same procedure used for the melodic sequence, the following corporeal phrase was formed (Figure 10).

Corporeal Phrase:

Release - Wash - Minimise - Wash - Lament - Aim - Silence - Wash - Rebel - Minimise - Clean - Synchronise - Recover- Fail - Wash - Rebel - Clean - Lament - Silence - Solidify - Fail - Minimise - Synchronise - Wash - Release - Wash - Silence - Aim - Synchronise - Silence - Sleep - Lament - Synchronise - Clean - Aim - Solidify - Release - Dominate - Silence - Solidify - Release - Fail - Recover - Wash - Sleep - Synchronise - Solidify - Clean - Fail - Clean - Dominate - Wash - Rebel - Release - Silence - Aim - Solidify - Synchronise - Minimise - Silence - Fail - Sleep - Lament - Dominate - Wash - Synchronise - Wash - Recover - Clean - Rebel - Lament - Sleep

Figure 10 – Corporeal Phrase (source: the artist, 2025)

The corporeal phrase was then recited and recorded by the artist as an audio track, functioning as a score to guide the execution of the movements and to initiate the choreographic process. The spoken verbs followed the same tempo – rigorously marked by

the metronome – as the music composed earlier. Movement was improvised in response to the artist hearing her own voice reciting the verbs in the prescribed sequence. Each verb activates specific movement qualities, as the attentive body interprets which Effort factors are implicated in each verb-action. Within this interplay, the body negotiates an internal sense of time while remaining tethered to the external rhythmic structure. Only at the end does a deliberate rhythmic desynchronisation occur: a formal choice through which the artist reflects on the unconscious rebelliousness of forgetting.

For the construction of the scene, the artist chose the corridor of her apartment – a short, narrow space of circulation. This choice was motivated by the contradiction inherent in the site: simultaneously a passageway (movement) and a condition of confinement for the body. Ordinarily empty, overlooked, and minimally expressive – a transient zone providing access to the rooms of the house – it is a purely utilitarian space, almost a non-place, yet one that, metaphorically, here, leads to a destination. Precisely because it is a space of contrast, it confronts the body with obstacles and necessitates the negotiation of calculated deviations. From the perspective of choreographer, dancer, and teacher Klauss Vianna, “changing the place where one eats or sleeps within one’s own home is a form of stimulation that generates conflict and triggers new bodily organisations in everyday life” (Vianna, 1990, p. 80). By drawing a parallel with the practice of *dérive*, the corridor becomes a territory to be explored with renewed intention. In *dérive*, as Navarro (2011) observes, the body remains in a state of attentiveness; in the present work, Laban’s technique constitutes the means through which the perception of one’s own body is expanded and intensified.

3.3 Final composition: screendance

The corporeal phrase was recorded on video multiple times, each iteration improvised under the same conditions. Within this proposition, the narrowness of the corridor was combined with the sense of confinement imposed by a vertically oriented screen. From this premise, it became possible to compose with these recordings so as to generate a single image in a horizontal format.

The two experiences, recorded independently – the melodic phrase and the corporeal phrase – were then brought together. Initially, the work was less concerned with video production, which at that stage functioned merely as a record of the event. However, through an exploration of processual exhaustion, the work began to materialise, revealing coherence through the excess and repetition. From this point a desire emerged to compose intentionally with the images produced, recognising them not only as records of experience but as choreographic material in their own right. It was through their combination that the process became legible in didactic terms and that structures were formed that, aligned through rhythm, promoted cohesion. For this reason, the resulting work was defined as a screendance – a form

often referred to in Portuguese as *videodança* (videodance) – an artistic form whose possibilities of editing and montage culminate in a choreographic composition made possible only through its relation to video. As Paulo Caldas (2009) states, screendance allows one to "dance the impossible"[10], referring to the multiple dimensions encompassed by the relationship between video and dance and to the artistic experiences it generates. Beyond understanding it as a hybrid born from the inseparable dialogue between dance and video – "as a choreographic work that exists only in video and for video" (Caldas, 2009, p. 32) – the author emphasises the importance of recognising the choreographic dimension of the compositional procedures themselves: the body, the camera, and the editing process.

Aware that screendance constitutes a well-established field in constant evolution, this work does not seek to undertake an in-depth investigation of its historical or technical foundations. Rather, it engages with the lived experience of the creative process that, through a state of *dérive*, enabled the artist to play with the outcomes that emerged. The choice of technical simplicity invests in a domestic aesthetic: produced with available resources and informed by contemporary image culture. The lighting is that which is present at the moment of the action – any adjustments being made automatically by the mobile phone camera application – while the vertical framing focuses exclusively on the corridor. This choice of framing, as well as of shot, evokes choreographies repeatedly performed and filmed for digital social media platforms.

Merce Cunningham and his dancers did not listen to the music prior to performance, thereby introducing an element of surprise. In a similar manner, in this work music and dance are perceived together only once they are combined within the video. At no point, therefore, is the dance performed in accordance with the music. The surprise so valued by Cunningham emerges through an observation of what screendance makes possible. It is at this moment that the third vertex of the triangle proposed by Cage is formed.

Thus, the final choreography, after the completion of all stages, concerns a side effect arising from forgetting, unfolding into countless metaphors: a Freudian slip, indiscipline, an intoxicated body seeking, within the artificial trace created, a means of expression. Here, the blister packs reveal gaps in time, articulating creative pauses. They impose rhythm and activate the verbs. Within this play, the outcome becomes an equation in which nothing any longer confines the body: neither time nor space, nor bodily technique, nor internal judgements, nor the clichés that dictate what is deemed unworthy of being carried forward in a choreography. This invites a reflection on how the productive correspondences established between visual, verbal, and sonic aspects give rise to uncalculated encounters (and mis-encounters): within the rhythm thus created, the artist traces actions and pauses, releases the body, and develops a dance that

[10] An explicit reference by the author to the title of Lisa Kraus's article "Dancing the Impossible" (Caldas, 2009, p. 28).

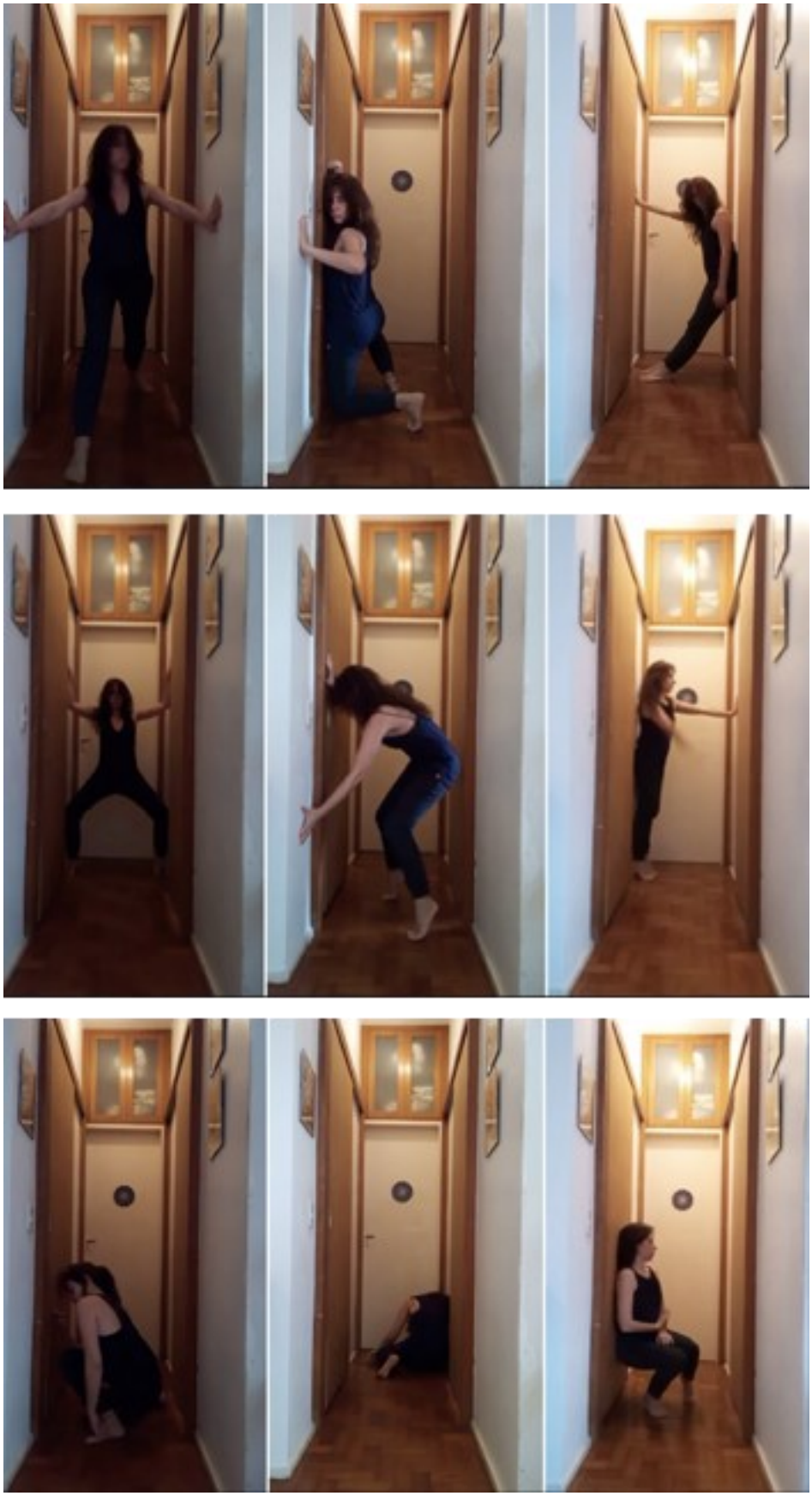

Figure 11 – Selected frames from the screendance *Side Effect* (*Efeito Colateral*; source: the artist, 2025; https://youtu.be/6mivTk24Q8w)

collides with her everyday space – subjective and domestic. In this way, freely inspired by this play between verb and expression, the artist engendered new signifiers that, in a similar manner, produce slippages that translate different modes of expressivity.

The outcome also resides in what the process itself engendered in the body. Just as in the works of Richard Long – whose aims extend beyond mere photographic or textual documentation and focus on the performance of walking itself –- the artist's practice turns towards the experiential unfolding of the process and the ways in which it affects her body. The rigid presence of measured time is bound to the daily commitment, to time as it inevitably passes. As in the work of the artist Roman Opalka (1931–2011), whose lifelong project consisted in recording the endless counting of numbers on canvas,[11] the original intention of the gesture developed in *Side Effect* is that it should continue month after month, with each blister pack consumed. There is no high point, no climax. After all, "climax is for those who are swept by New Year's Eve" (Cunningham, 1952, p. 39).

4. Final Considerations

In this work, we proposed a discussion through which a subversion of the home and a resignification of the domestic unfold in response to the production of poetic calluses within everyday life. This process operates through the deliberate unrestraining of the construction of a language in which the apparently banal and the ordinary are placed under tension, destabilising the rigidity of the pragmatic structures that govern daily life. The language thus produced assumes an experimental and ludic character, exploring the fissures of normativity. Such a construction does not occur freely or spontaneously; rather, it develops through a constant dialogue between theory and practice, shaped as certain intuitions resonate with artistic movements and reaffirm methods developed by earlier practitioners. This "balancing act" appears to configure an ideal equilibrium for artistic research within the academic field: articulating historical perspectives and practice-based languages with the subjective dimension.

When approaching the domestic context, we inevitably encounter discussions that intersect with issues of gender and practices of care related to the home. Situated between the maintenance of the body and the maintenance of the house – tasks most often associated with women's labour – the work *Side Effect*, as theorised here, enters a space constituted by countless veils that conceal an invisible, inexhaustible and essential effort that nevertheless remains largely unrecognised. These are continuous acts constituted through daily repetition, acts that organise and dominate specific bodily experiences, conditioning gestures and

[11] About the artwork *OPALKA 1965/1-*∞, see: https://opalka1965.com/fr/index_fr.php?lang=en. Accessed on: 7 Jun. 2025.

rhythms. Following a Foucauldian line of thought (2019), we consider these repetitions not only as mechanisms of bodily control – among whose effects is a form of bodily "enclosure" – but also, paradoxically, as the ongoing production of a (new) body capable of challenging historical frameworks, producing fissures and resisting modes of framing that persist in attempting to "normalise" it. It is along this path that the artist finds ways of remaining attentive to the operation of an invisible field of forces: even while tethered to the consumption of a chemical substance that renders her organism illusorily functional and undistracted, she acts by generating new outflows, other exits for herself and for the space she inhabits. In this sense, her body seems to intuit the necessity to "deviate from deviation [...] to deviate from oneself," as Navarro (2011) reminds us.

The daily habit thus becomes a trigger for movement and inspires the materiality of the gesture. Between basic actions of domestic expression – washing, cleaning, sleeping – and impulses of resistance and transformation – rebelling, lamenting and releasing – the body, even when subjected to a cycle of exhaustion, finds breaches through which to deviate, redefine its path and open space for other modes of existence. From this articulation of theoretical reflections, methods and practice, we therefore learn that art offers ways of producing torsions and new signifiers within what might otherwise appear destined solely for the maintenance of life and living.

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