

*"We are the proposers: We ask for your help. Please, use this emptiness and fill it, for then we will feel full of meaning."*

Lygia Clark, 1968, *Nós Somos os Propositores*.

A starting point for researching performance is to begin from emptiness — as a momentary goal. From there, the experience of the body can take place: an interior space that connects with our exterior form. I don't dare to write "having the experience of one's own body," but rather, "being with it." This is how performing happens to be for me: an exercise of letting things in and letting them go.

How long can I perceive that emptiness without filling it with meaning? While researching performance, I often do so in two ways. One is through conceptual explorations — ideas that help us rethink our ways of living in the world and reclaim the power of our experience and existence, while questioning the values those concepts carry, by being critical of the field they contribute to. Second, by studying the dialectic of presence in an embodied way: facing the emptiness, allowing the idea of performance to become more abstract — or less known, less recognizable. Blurring my references (and coming back to them). In both approaches, I work in a processual way, creating relationships and attending to how what we do affects us.

Trying to reach a presence in the face of what feels like a void, I sense the potential of the body's minimum physical capacity — and fantasize about its maximum. I sense the range of possibilities that arises from being with the body — from the flesh and its articulation — nourished by our political and subjective selves, relating to the physical and metaphysical aspects of our presence.

An example I came across is positioning myself to look towards the sun. The face can't resist the brightness; the eyes close and start squirting. At this moment, a muscle, movement, and a physical reaction of the body can become a container for an emotion, an intention, or a decision. The head moves, the hand reacts, the body prepares to protect itself. The skin warms up, the blood rushes to the head. A pressure builds up. One can continue to resist the body's reflexes and maintain this resistance until collapse.

A performance does not have to be useful, either for those who host it or for those who see it. It can transcend the control of concepts and narrative. It might be harder to stand firm on the fragile ground of a performance that owes nothing to anyone. That tells no story, and yet, faces all the demands of being. Performance has the ability to create emotions out of nothing, and that can be the genesis of everything. In my conception and approach, I aim for the performance to become, in Lygia Clark's words, a relational object. For me, it is important that it becomes a meaningful process for the person involved in it.

This gives space to bring our intimacy into the performance — and vice versa. It's likely that one begins to discover things in this exploration where logic ceases to dictate our behaviors. We borrow things we used to do as children, we code, translate, infiltrate. We are all of a sudden confronted with this strange thing that we do, which emerges from an empty state, that we start to perform. As in many of my creative processes, that is when magic happens — sometimes by accident — and it is in these moments that subjectivity is activated, allowing us to follow it and carry it through.

Looking at the sun confronts me with the fragility, irreversibility of the matter that composes me. It is said that looking directly at it burns the retina. Home to myths of gods, the great presences of life. It is an unreachable mass that centers the planets, which humans want to study, extract, and analyze, so that our existence has a way out of our self-destruction. Poetically and metaphorically, it signals the cycle of life: After today's terror, another day will come, one in which, hopefully — with all the risks that hope carries — tomorrow's sun will mark the time to alter the course of yesterday's mistakes.