



TEATRO NACIONAL D. MARIA II



Itinerary - geology of a homecoming

29 January - 12 February 2024 | Incubadora Cultural de Águeda, Portugal

Current title (development phase, 2023-24): "Itinerary - geology of a homecoming"

Performance's working title (2025): "Condominium: Ulysses"

Condominium is an invented Latin word formed by adding the prefix con- ('together') to the word dominium ('dominion', 'ownership'). Its meaning is, therefore, 'joint dominion' or 'co-ownership'. In international law, condominium is a political territory over which multiple sovereign powers formally agree to share equal dominium (or sovereignty) and exercise their rights jointly, without dividing it into "national" zones.

ARTISTS INVOLVED

ROGÉRIO NUNO COSTA

is a Portuguese performance artist, theatre director, performer, writer, researcher, pedagogue and curator based in Helsinki since 2016. With an academic background in Communication Sciences and Contemporary Art History, he has been presenting work of a hybrid and cross-disciplinary nature since 1999, exploring and problematising the fields of performing arts and literature at their intersections with philosophy, art theory and pop culture.

Within this framework, his practice builds on a critical friction between artistic and journalistic discourses, with a specific interest in autobiographical narratives, documentation practices, critical autoethnography, radical pedagogies and the politics of intimacy and care. Domesticity, relationality and the poetics of daily-life are at the core of his practice, his pieces often taking place in unconventional settings like private homes, and materialising in performative meetings, collaborative writing laboratories and one-to-one performances. A queer perspective and praxis encompasses all of the aforementioned matters and conceptual operations. Guest researcher in the Performance Studies Research Group (Minho University, PT) and Spaces of Artist Education (Society for Artistic Research). Member of Globe Art Point (FI) and associated artist at O Espaço do Tempo (PT). He has been teaching, tutoring and mentoring in numerous independent educational projects, as well as academic institutions such as University of Minho (Guimarães, PT), Escola Superior de Artes e Design (Caldas da Rainha, PT) and ArtEZ University of the Arts (Arnhem, NE). Apart from his own projects, he has been writing and directing theatre, dance and performance pieces in collaboration with other artists and companies, also playing the roles of editor, co-director and performer. His work has been produced, co-produced and supported over the years by many cultural institutions internationally.

www.rogerionunocosta.com

SCIENTISTS INVOLVED

SARA MORENO PIRES

is Assistant Professor of Public Policies at the Department of Social, Political and Territorial Sciences at the University of Aveiro and Researcher at the Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies Research Unit (GOVCOPP). She has a PhD in Applied Environmental Sciences from the University of Aveiro (2011), a Masters in Development and Planning: Environment and Sustainable Development from University College London (2002) and a degree in Economics from the University of Coimbra (2000). She is the co-founder and current President of the International Environmental Non-Governmental Organization - Common Home of Humanity, based in Vila Nova de Gaia (PT), whose mission is to recognize Stable Climate as a Common Heritage of Humanity at the United Nations. The Common House of Humanity was the first NGO in Portugal to be accredited by the United Nations as an observer member of the UN General Assembly and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). She was the scientific coordinator of the project Ecological Footprint of Portuguese Municipalities (2018-2021), awarded the 1st Cooperation Prize in the area of Territories, Economy and Culture by University of Aveiro. In 2023, she was awarded the Sustainability Award from the North American association AASHE (Sustainability Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education). Researches and publishes on sustainable development policies and indicators, territorial-based innovation and local governance, often collaborating with municipal councils, NGOs and companies in the areas of sustainable development and human rights.

<https://www.cienciavita.pt/portal/en/6C10-F99F-11AB>

ALEXANDRA POLIDO

is an assistant researcher at Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies Research Unit (GOVCOPP) at Aveiro University, focusing her research on environmental policies for the sustainable transformation of urban systems. With a PhD in Environmental and Sustainability Sciences (Universidade Nova de Lisboa), she is currently the coordinator of two projects funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology. The ENVISION project is a transdisciplinary project that aims to understand how environmental policy instruments at an urban and regional scale can promote a transformation towards a Sustainable Society. The POWER.US project explores the role of power dynamics in Environmental Assessment, and how these shape urban sustainability. Member of the pedagogical innovation project ARTE (Reflective Learning through Theater for Socio-Ecological Transformation) which aims to promote the students' transversal ability to solve complex problems in societal transformation towards sustainability through theatrical techniques. In this project, she specifically explores the techniques of Improvisation Theater and Theater of the Oppressed. Alumna in the prestigious Postdoctoral Academy for Transformational Leadership (2021-2023) financed by the Robert Bosh Foundation in association with Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the Leuphana University of Lüneburg, the Stockholm Resilience Center and the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions (DRIFT) in Rotterdam.

https://www.ua.pt/pt/govcopp/profile_205

ESTELA AIDA CASTRO

is an artists, researcher and professor. PH.D. in Communication Sciences: Communication and Arts from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (Universidade Nova de Lisboa), with a grant from the Foundation for Science and Technology. Degree in Visual Arts from the Faculty of Fine Arts (University of Porto). Currently she is a teacher in the Multimedia programme at FBAUP, an integrated member of ICNOVA and collaborator at I2ADS. She is the coordinator of (De)Monstras: Imaginaries, Corporalities and Amphibious Materialities (2023, ICNOVA) and, with Cristina Mateus, of Videodreams: Practices of Imaginaries (2022, FBA.UP). She has been working with Maria Mire in an artistic duo since 2017.

MANUEL BOGALHEIRO

is Professor at Universidade Lusófona and Guest Professor at FCSH-UNL. He holds a PhD in Communication Sciences with a thesis entitled "Materiality and technicity: Research on technical objectuality". He is an Integrated Researcher at CICANT and member of the Philosophy of Communication section of ECREA. He has edited "Crítica das Mediações Totais – Perspectivas expandidas dos Media" (Documenta, 2021), "Expressões visuais disruptivas no espaço público" (Edições Lusófonas, 2021), with Isabel Babo and João Sousa Cardoso, and "Evaluation of design-driven research" (2022) with Edite Rosa.

THE RESIDENCY

“Condominium” is planned to be a context-oriented theatre performance devised and performed by Rogério Nuno Costa in close collaboration with the audience and the team that works daily in the hosting theatres/venues. The performance is structured as a participatory forum for a collective inquiry on the expanded notion of home, brainstorming and speculating radical politics for co-inhabiting, belonging and existing, while also investing, investigating and testing sustainable and inclusive ways for moving, staying, transferring and transmitting. Designed as a series of encounters performed with minimum technicalities and the use of the stage as a meeting space (both formally and conceptually), the project aims to experiment and elaborate further on the relational/spatial operations and methods that ground a performance in situ, thus deepening its dialogue with the local, the domestic and the cooperative. In this context, the project resumes the research initiated in 2023 (and further developed in 2024) around Rogério Nuno Costa’s work “Vou a Tua Casa” [I’m coming to your home] (2003-2006), a series of performances for unusual/private places which had already anticipated ecologically sustainable operations for the production, creation, presentation, communication and circulation of live art pieces, while proposing a critical reflection on the relations between theatre, place and ubiquity. As a conclusion to this laboratorial experience, the utopian notion of condominium as a common (or commonly owned) space will be used as a strategy for imagining and experimenting new modes of conviviality – the theatre/stage as a temporary buffer zone where new possibilities for togetherness, otherness and collective care can be horizontally engineered, and a more equitable future can be anticipated and prepared. At last, the performance is meant to be scripted within a mobile/nomadic writing process inspired by the Greek concept of nostos (or homecoming), linking the cities of Helsinki, where the artist lives, and Lisbon, where the artist is willing to return, by means of transportation that are the least harmful for the environment: ferry boats, buses, trains, bikes and foot; a hardsome and long trans-European trip which will eventually coincide, both in duration and intentionality, with the time needed for the preparation of the piece. A performance “on the way” to its destination, devised as an accumulation of smaller condominiums left behind in each stopover, ultimately weaving together notions of territoriality, hospitality, identity, place, exoticness/remoteness, possession, nomadism, isolation/exile and custody.

Date of the show: October-November 2025, Teatro Nacional D. Maria II, Lisbon, Portugal

The residency brought together the artist Rogério Nuno Costa, the environmental scientists Alexandra Polido and Sara Moreno Pires, and the media arts and technology researchers Aida Estela Castro and Manuel Bogalheiro. During the residency, the participants shared and discussed various references, processes and case studies (coming from both artistic, scientific and philosophical fields) in order to find a common space for investigative and speculative work that could respond to the challenges proposed by STAGES. The sessions were prepared and carried out in a horizontal/non-hierarchical way, following the common interest of the participants in areas of action that co-exist in the intersections between art, science and technology, but also governance and participation, climate activism and radi-

cal pedagogies. The performative work "Vou a Tua Casa" was once again used as the foundational case study and the main source of inspiration for all discussions, which were conducted in the light of an expanded understanding of media science, art theory, and environmental and climate sciences, problematizing, among other issues, the fallacy of the digital as a green alternative. The ecological impact of digital culture, in its relation with theatre making and other live practices, continues to be the main challenge within our research, provoking a very stimulating but complex discussion. How can we imagine a prototype performance piece that can be produced, performed and disseminated through eco-conscious working models? Is that even possible when we have to take into account the presence and the use of the theatre (building) in its solid immanence, maintenance and social-economic impact? A first and very rough attempt to answer some of these interrogations have forced us to reconsider the motto "(re)claiming the stage", ultimately leading us to a deep, radical and uncompromising reformulation of the stage's function. In that regard, we want our performance prototype to envision the possibility of theatre (the artform) without a theatre (building), or else the theatre transmutating into a laboratory for the trying out of new living/livable experiences: a science of the experience. Based on the concept of condominium taken as a legal framework where two or more different legal regimes co-exist in the same space, the performance investigates how Theatre (now a combination of both the artform and the building) can reveal, dissect and intensify the relational dynamics that brings together audiences, artists, producers, programmers, among other agencies, around a common goal and will for social change – a well-functioning, sustainable and stable system that can mirror the ideal of a single, indivisible, intangible and dynamic planet, or "a common home of humanity". It is not possible to keep a stable understanding of the building-theatre without a stable planet (and a stable climate) that belongs to all, understood as a common heritage, and performed as a condominium.

A second structural question raised during the residency would now follow: how to govern this common home? By defining legally the different agencies and their responsibilities, the condominium transforms the overlap of the private and common interests into a symbiosis. This assumption has led us to idea of Theatre as a participatory forum, a durational social laboratory where we can test different elaborations of the concept of meeting, both as a daily professional practice, a creative tool, a working methodology, a metaphoric trope, or the ethical path towards an imaginary world. What relational, personal and intimate dynamics can a meeting unfold? What are the forces and power structures at stake? And how can those structures be revealed, dissected, reorganised, re-distributed and re-written? Moreover: how to meet in the face of global catastrophe? And how to ultimately turn the meetings' theoretical outcomes into action? "Condominium" aims to intensify the relationship between a performance-as-encounter and the various agencies that co-inhabit and/or visit a cultural building (in this case, the National Theatre), taken as a place of intensification, disruption and deconstruction of the ideas of bureaucracy, convention, history and hegemony.

In this regard, the building-theatre is “just” the meeting point for a broader endeavour to be initiated collectively: a governance system capable of restoring and maintaining a stable environment, enabling spatialities and temporalities built on multiplicity and inclusiveness, promoting decision-making policies that are participatory, resilient and empowering. There is: how can art be a means for the creation of new approaches to relationality, cooperation and democracy, also making visible what is otherwise marginal and misrepresented? “Condominium” represents our will to reinforce and make visible a community that, in a more or less wandering and serendipitous way, has been built around a common goal of mutual care and social-political change.

Whereas critical, our approach to this project is playful, as it projects the building of a safe interactive playground for a collective reflection to happen within, around and/or in relation to the building-theatre. While doing so, we want to avoid falling in the “aboutness trap”: the performance, in its artistic and para-artistic entirety, is sustainable, not about sustainability or about it being sustainable... This erratic process of “questioning the question”, or to keep asking without expecting a comforting answer, led us to an inevitable constellation of impasses and dead-ends, to an ever-growing list of theories that can only be proven theoretically. Notwithstanding, we are willing to insist on confronting and multiplying that rhetoric exercise, thus ambitioning the creation of a common grammar for a condominium theatre, or a slow theatre, sustained by 3 axis: the politics of velocity, the aesthetics of waiting and the economy of hope. More than the post-modernist cliché that states that theatre can be everything, the ubiquitous and de-accelerated assumption that theatre can be (or is going) everywhere.

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) LINKED TO THE WORKSHOP

- Overall reflection on the relation between space and territory, already initiated and further developed in the two previous phases (2023-2024);
- Re-thinking of theatre and performance practices in relation with their impact on the environment, while discussing and speculating more inclusive practices that might encourage dialogues across cultures, genders and ages;
- Contribution to the European Green Deal (including the New European Bauhaus), by encouraging the creative sectors to co-create, adopt and disseminate more environment-friendly practices, as well as to raise awareness on sustainable development through their cultural activities;
- Anticipation of new models of production, creation and dissemination for the performing arts of the future; for the short duration of this first workshop, we will concentrate on the artistic and ecological realms: new topics, modes of collaboration and touring models; plus new materialities (re-usable/recycled consumables, zero waste, adoption of non-extractivist industries, reduction of travel, etc.);
- Public debate between artists, scientists and stakeholders.

