

Incidents (of Travel)
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Itinerary by Luisa Cunha

“Incidents (of Travel)” had a very curious outcome for me. When I began to mentally conceive this itinerary to follow with Pedro (and Estelle as photographer), I noticed that all the five places I had chosen had been locations where several of my works had been born. It felt strange revisiting them with my companions for the day. It was like visiting a sort of open air gallery framed by different urban environments. Except that this time, the works were shown and discussed verbally amongst us. What was being photographed was not the works themselves, but buildings or the architecture where I had lived or had been hosted in – or whose windows had helped me develop certain pieces. This happened with *It is what it is*, at Costa Caparica, or with *Words for Gardens* and *Mirror#3*, at my home in Belém. The rest of the works that compose this itinerary came out of proposals for specific sites – almost all belonging to alternative spaces such as A Montra in Lisboa or Ar.Co art school in Almada.

It was very curious, while moving from one place to the other, to be thinking to myself “here I did this piece and I used to walk by the shore of the Tagus river”, or “here I did this other work and I used to have a coffee with a *filipino* at *pastelaria Compota*, and then went for a swim at the beach”. How to describe from now on a piece like *It is what it is* without the *filipinos*? They are part of it already!

When presented to the public in exhibition spaces the works don’t show this backstory. They are naked on stage and have to stand by themselves.

1. Ar.Co and Almada

We will get to Almada by crossing the Ponte do 25 de abril; I will drive in my car. Usually I like to go in the middle lane because I suffer vertigo. Lisboetas have nicknamed this lane “the bride” because it’s painted white. Ar.Co art school is located at the left margin of the River Tagus, at the Quinta de Sao Miguel – a farm loaned to the school by the Almada city council. This venue is an extension of the independent art school originally founded in 1973. I was student and professor both in Lisboa and Almada. In each facility I produced works in different passageway areas. The last one was *Pantone*; which came after an invitation to intervene on the façade of one of the buildings in Almada in 2014. The most important experience in this school was to discover how difficult it is to deal with freedom and to work without a safety net.

2. Costa da Caparica

Also located on the left side of the Tagus, 13km away from Lisbon and with a large immigrant population. Caparica is a continuous beach going as far as 30km south. Swell from the Atlantic is consistent and there is a world-famous surf contest. Sometimes I stay at a hotel by the sea. Here I recently made a work titled *It is what it is* – it represents the gradual vanishing of the sky and the sea until they become a totally white photographic image. When I am not working I like to have a coffee and a *filipino* at the Compota pastry shop. After Caparica we will have lunch at O Cabrinha, a popular fish restaurant in Almada.

3. Belém

In Belém, still close to the river, is where the Palace of the President of the Republic can be found, as well as the Centro Cultural de Belém, the Museum of Cars, and MAAT – a new museum for contemporary art and architecture that opened last fall. I lived in this neighbourhood for two years. I liked to ride my bike by the river while I worked mentally on my piece *Words for Gardens*, produced for the Biennale of Sydney in 2004, and my first video work.

4. Montra da Estrela

I have done several projects in this alternative space. And there will be a new one in January 2017: a performance titled *Beyond the Line*. I need non-institutional spaces for my mental health, and I have a particular admiration for the spirit of this program. Alternative spaces are crucial in the Portuguese art scene. In Lisbon I collaborated with the project Old School, run by curator Susana Pomba doing another performance titled *Magnetic Needle* (2015). In Porto, the second city of the country in the north, I did an exhibition at Uma certa falta de coerência [A Certain Lack of Coherence] in 2010.

5. Largo da Academia das Belas Artes

This is an affective place for me. My grandfather, Luis Alexandre da Cunha, was an architect and the director of the School of Fine Arts in Lisbon. He was my initiation in aesthetics and life. I conceived a public art project here for the surface of the central part of the square. It consisted of the enumeration of the different architectonic elements around the Largo, from different positions on the square. This will be the last stop on our journey. After that I will invite Estelle and Pedro to join me for the “Happy Hour” at my place in Areiro. We will have Raposeira sparkling wine and – being close to Christmas – a piece or two of “Bolo de Reis”.