

Przemieszczenie
Displacement

Paper and enamel within print-base practice

Marta Agnieszka Bełkot,
Doctor of Philosophy in Art and Visual Culture
Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto, 2025.
FCT

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Displacement

Paper and enamel within print-base practice

Marta Agnieszka Bełkot
PhD Thesis in Visual Arts submitted to the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP) for the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts.

Supervisor: Full Professor Maria Graciela Cabral Machado.
Co-supervisor: Associate Professor Teresa Maria Castro de Almeida

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There was a lot of cooking, mixing, spreading, transferring, smelling, testing, trying, translating, laughing and failing. This experimentation encouraged us, artists, to enable any creative vision in tangible form. I would like to dedicate this thesis to the most devoted printmaker and friend I have ever meet, the late Sandra Costa Brás, who made me feel at home, here, in Portugal.

Everybody has a song which is no song at all: it is a process of singing, and when you sing, you are where you are.

All I know about method is that when I am not working, I sometimes think I know something, but when I am working, it is quite clear that I know nothing.

Cage, J. (2009). *Silence: Lectures and writings* (p. 126) (1st ed. 1961). Marion Boyars.

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My Parents, sister and brother for getting interested in what I do.

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ABSTRACT

Displacement; place; memory; printmaking technological reconstruction; photomechanical processes

The concept of *przemieszczenie* (Polish), translated as *displacement* in English, is explored as a key element between technological processes and conceptual enquiry. This practice-led research project investigates displacement both as a subject and as a method within contemporary artistic practice. It is approached not merely as physical movement or uprooting but as a layered condition, encompassing physical, emotional and cultural dimensions which permeate the entire creative process. Rather than defining it as a singular event, the notion is understood as a continuum: between absence and presence, the center and the margins, memory and materiality, the old and the new. Framing the issue locally, narratives about personal histories were sought and descriptions of home, place, marginalization and institutional care provided context to simultaneously situate one's own role as artist-researcher. Central to the project is an examination of how this condition can become a generative force in visual arts, particularly through the shifting and contextualization of technologies and narratives within its framework.

Technological shifts, focusing on obsolete 19th century photomechanical industrial processes and materials – such as surface-prepared papers, lithographic inks and crayons, *gillotage* relief printing, photographic enamel and lithophane – are considered in an archaeological approach, seeking to reveal the complexity of these materials and techniques and the richness of industrially produced artefacts, often overlooked in modern artistic practice. These historical methods are not only revisited but reactivated through a contemporary lens. A series of experiments assesses the viability for reconstruction, possible permutations with emerging digital tools and the use of environmentally responsible practices while sustaining the essential spirit of traditional printmaking. Through this lens, displacement becomes a concept situated between dualities: analogue and digital, industrial and handmade, artistic and functional, obsolete and contemporary.

RESUMO

Deslocamento; lugar; memória; reconstrução tecnológica de gravura; processos fotomecânicos

O conceito de *przemieszczenie* (polaco), traduzido como *deslocamento* em português, é explorado como um elemento-chave entre os processos tecnológicos e a investigação conceptual. Este projeto de investigação orientado para a prática investiga o deslocamento como tema e como método na prática artística contemporânea. É abordado não apenas como movimento físico ou desenraizamento, mas como uma condição multifacetada, abrangendo dimensões físicas, emocionais e culturais que permeiam todo o processo criativo. Não o definindo como um evento singular, a noção é entendida como um continuum: entre ausência e presença, o centro e as margens, memória e materialidade, o antigo e o novo. Enquadrando a questão localmente, foram procuradas narrativas sobre histórias pessoais e descrições de casa, lugar, marginalização e cuidados institucionais que forneceram contexto para simultaneamente considerar o papel do artista-investigador. No centro do projeto está uma análise de como esta condição pode tornar-se uma força geradora nas artes visuais, particularmente através da mudança e contextualização de tecnologias e narrativas dentro da sua estrutura.

As mudanças tecnológicas, com foco em processos industriais fotomecânicos e materiais obsoletos do século XIX – tais como papéis com superfícies preparadas, tintas litográficas e crayons, impressão em relevo *gillotage*, esmalte fotográfico e litofania – são consideradas numa abordagem arqueológica, procurando revelar a complexidade destas técnicas e a riqueza material dos artefactos produzidos industrialmente, muitas vezes ignorados na prática artística moderna. Estes métodos históricos não são apenas revisitados, mas reativados através de uma lente contemporânea. Uma série de experiências avalia a viabilidade da reconstrução, possíveis permutações com ferramentas digitais emergentes e o uso de práticas ambientalmente responsáveis, mantendo o espírito essencial da gravura tradicional. Através desta lente, o deslocamento torna-se um conceito situado entre dualidades: analógico e digital, industrial e artesanal, obsoleto e contemporâneo.

This thesis is (mostly) written in English, while the thinking and researching happened in Silesian dialect, Polish, English, Portuguese and French. Due to these specific conditions, I have tried to make my thought process as clear as possible, opting for a more direct message rather than poetic discourse, which I could only dare to do using my mother tongue.

I had used translation and spell checking in DeepL, as well as the GPT chat, for clearance and flow.

The placement of image captions in this thesis is intentionally varied. Captions may appear in different positions on the page rather than adhering to a single convention. This subtle displacement is a considered design choice, intended to draw attention to the spatial relationship between text and image and to the way meaning is formed through layout as well as content.

_ MAP (index)

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INTRODUCTION

After completing a seventy-two-hour performative drawing entitled *Diaspora* (2016) as part of my supplementary Master's diploma in relief printing (*Immigrating*, ASP Katowice, Poland), I began my defence by introducing a simple object: my backpack. Its presence symbolised my transient, unsettled state at the time, as I moved between temporary accommodations for many months (Boronów, Katowice, Kraków, and Maciejkowice), since I had no permanent home on my last year of master. Migration was at the centre of my interest at that time. While it is often analysed through statistical or geopolitical lenses, my research prioritised the emotional dimension, the alienation, adaptation process, and persistent longing that accompany the migrant experience.

My move to Portugal marked a transition from theoretical exploration to lived experience. At this stage, the backpack resurfaces as a metaphor for the portable self, a container of memory, identity and continuity. My current research focuses on what we carry with us, both materially and emotionally, when we leave *home* indefinitely.

I was born in Silesia,[1] Poland, in 1989, into a Silesian family who already had a one-year-old daughter and would welcome a son four years later. For the first years of my life, being Silesian was unnoticeable, until I started attending children's catechism classes. The Polish spoken in that classroom, like in every institution in Silesia, did not match the language[2] I knew at home, the dialect that everyone around me used daily.

I was almost four, but I remember being asked: Who has already seen the sea? There was nothing wrong with that question. I raised my hand. The teacher asked, *Where?* I proudly answered: Na Kiju[3] (a small lake near my village). I heard a collective laugh. I felt confused and afterwards, deceived. At that time, I dreamed of seeing the sea; possibly it was my father's love of fishing that sparked that desire in me. Perhaps because the Baltic was so far away, my parents made it easier by taking us to the lake. Or perhaps it was simply my own joy at seeing such a large body of water relative to my size at the time that led me to believe it was the sea. Either way, that moment taught me more than geography. I discovered that I did not speak Polish as it was spoken in the classroom, but Silesian dialect, the language of my home and community. I also realized that I lived deep inland, far from the sea I longed for. Now, living in Porto, with the ocean just outside, I feel I am answering the wonder of my four-year-old self, who once mistook a lake for the sea but never stopped dreaming of access to endless water.

This is where my own displacement begins. In my own hometown. To be Silesian (Upper Silesian, to be precise) is to belong to a historically complex region of Poland, the borderland with the Czech Republic, famous for its coal mines and metallurgical industry. There are many doubts about the origin of the name *Śląsk/Silesia*: it might come from the mountain or the river called *Ślęża*, but the idea which is more appealing to me is that it is derived from the tro-

1 Silesia - a historical region located in Central Europe, on the territory of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Germany which was in turn under the Polish, Czech, Austrian and German control. (Siwek & Kaňok, 2000)

2 In 2024, the Polish Sejm and Senate passed a bill to recognise Silesian as the second regional language in Poland, alongside Kashubian. However, the bill was vetoed by the President.

3 Small lake in Hadra, municipality of Herby, near Boronów village, access through the forest.

ponin Ślęża where Sil[4]– was originally a term for sea, lake, peaceful water.[5] Silesia – a historical region – has a rather speculative past when it comes to statehood,[6] being under non-Polish rule for 610 years. Not to forget the very important historical fact that from 1795 (after the Third Partition of Poland) to 1918 Poland was divided between Prussia, Austria, and Russia (Upper Silesia was under the rule of Prussia) making it disappear from the map for 123 years.[7] How-

4 In contrast, the suffix -ing, because of the transformation of names in Eastern European languages, gave rise to the ending -*ęża* (Udolph, 1995). The name Silesia therefore has neither Germanic nor Slavic origins, as the name of the river Ślęza belongs to Old European hydronymy (Babik, 2001). 'Polish linguists: M. Rudnicki, then T. Lehr-Splawinski, historian W. Semkowicz and S. Rospond rejected the hypothesis of the origin of the name Silesia from the Germanic tribe of Silings, and opted for the native origin of the base and derived it from the common word ślęg, moisture, and wetness. In contrast, the form of the name of the river, the mountain, remains unexplained to this day: Ślęza, Ślędza or Ślęża?', [in:] Rudolf Fischer. *Onomastica slavogermanica*. University of Wrocław. 2007. t. XXVI. 2007. s. 83.

5 Old European (German: Alteuropäisch) hydronymy (river names) - hydronyms in hypothetical Old European languages. The term was introduced by Hans Krahe (1964) to denote the language of the oldest reconstructed layer of hydronyms in central and western Europe from the pre-Germanic and pre-Celtic periods.

6 Poland had Silesia for 345 years before losing it in 1335 to the Bohemia/Czech Republic (1335-1526), Austria (1526-1740), Prussia/Germany (1740-1922), with different parts belonging to Poland and Germany respectively (1922 - after the Third Silesian Uprising - 1939), Germany (1939-1945) and from 1945 - Poland again.

7 Historically Poland had gone through many changes, alliances and wars. Therefore, after this long period of disappearance form the map, the idea of borders brought a lot of discussions and conflicts. Polish cartographer Eugeniusz Romer (1871-1954) elaborated the Geographic-Statistic Atlas of Poland (1916) suggesting its terrain closer to what it was before 1795, which at a time was much bigger than it is today. His project was criticized and rejected; the shape of Poland and Silesia we know today is very different from the one he had proposed.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de Fran

Figure 1 | A. Belloguet, *L'Europe animée* (1870) [Humorous black-and-white lithograph, dimensions 46 × 65 cm]. Printed by Lemercier & Cie, Paris.

ever, not completely, as satirical maps of Europe from that time symbolically reflect the existence of Poland (Figure 1).[8] The maps of cartographers and satirists therefore deal with a missing country that never truly went away, enfolding various tensions and sympathies of European politics (Figure 2).[9] In the same way, despite the shifting of borders and the disappearance of the name Poland from official documents, the spirit of its people remained, making it possible after decades to return. This disappearance of my country from the maps of the world has the characteristic of being muted, blurred, collapsed, and yet everything survived. Everything that is Poland, or from my point of view, Silesia in Poland. Our culture, our traditions, our identity.

It feels appropriate to present the index of this thesis as a map, not merely as a symbolic reference to the fractured past of my homeland, but as a gesture toward movement and stasis, presence and absence, representation and ephemerality. Though the structure of this work follows a systematic progression, the index does not function as an instruction manual. Instead, it operates as a conceptual cartography, a visualization of a process of thought, anchored in three spatial metaphors: (1) *No Man's Land;* (2) *The Sea*, and (3) *The Island*. These three chapters are not literal descriptions of physical territories, but rather forms of mental geography, akin to what Franz Ackermann refers to as a *mental map* (Figure 3).

This map (index) stands in as a representation of *terra incognita*, a landscape that has yet to be fully charted, both geographically and intellectually. The act of mapping in this context is a provisional gesture, a sketch, a visual form of thinking. It is not an authoritative chart, but a symbolic approximation, an effort to navigate and give shape to abstract or intuitive knowledge. It is an attempt to make visible what is newly encountered or previously neglected, be it experiences, ideas, or zones of knowledge, that lie outside conventional boundaries and comfort zones. *Terra incognita, or unknown land*, thus unfolds across multiple registers. It refers not only to unexplored regions of land or sea, but also to intellectual and cultural domains that remain inaccessible, obscured, or systematically excluded from dominant narratives. In this sense, it becomes a fitting image for doctoral research in general, and for this thesis in particular: a sustained engagement with what is not yet fully mapped, where inquiry proceeds through uncertainty, partial visibility, and the gradual articulation of new conceptual terrain.

The first chapter *No man's land* opens with a fundamental question: *What is place?* At the heart of this inquiry is the recorded voice of my father, recalling the Bełkot family house, a place that no longer exists. The inclusion of the original Polish transcription of his short, emotionally restrained, yet deeply symbolic speech marks the beginning of an intimate and collective journey into displacement. His words act as a focal point for both the personal and the historical, conjuring up the multifaceted complexities of Silesian identity, memory and belonging. Displacement, as explored here, does not arise solely from external events or historical forces. Instead, it emerges through everyday encounters with objects, memories and language. The absence of the house, in this sense, operates not only as a loss to be mourned, but as an aperture through which the mechanisms of dislocation, emotional, cultural, epistemological, can be made visible.

8 Presenting Poland as a grave and its people as the deceased was a common way of depicting the demise of a country, or more figuratively, *burying it alive*. Indeed, this is how many Poles, particularly Polish poets [i.a. Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855); Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849); Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–1859); Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821–1883)] came to view their country's fate (Davies, 1982). It is, therefore unsurprising that Poland's ultimate return to the European map was sometimes described as a *resurrection*.

9 In this Italian map, published originally in Bologna circa 1871, Poland is shown as a shackled fair lady on the ground, holding on to an anchor (traditionally a symbol of hope). The figure, usually referred to as Polonia, is chained by the iron belt around her waist to three oppressors: Russia again is a giant dwarf holding a knife dripping with blood, while an Austrian soldier and the Prussian Kaiser are considerably smaller. Note the little men at the feet of the Russian Tsar – they are serfs who rejoice after the abolition of serfdom which took place in the Russian Empire in 1861, and in the Polish Kingdom in 1863. The Italian verse (here translated into English) carries a rather sad lesson: *Poland / Tied in shackles, at the feet of her tyrants / The name of Nation honours her no more… / She can't rise up! She can't avenge herself / Who carries like a mule, deserves to be beaten.*



Figure 2 | Manfredi Manfredo, *L'Europa Geografico-Politica Veduta a Volo d'Oca* (Bologna, c. 1871) [Color lithograph, dimensions 47 × 67 cm].

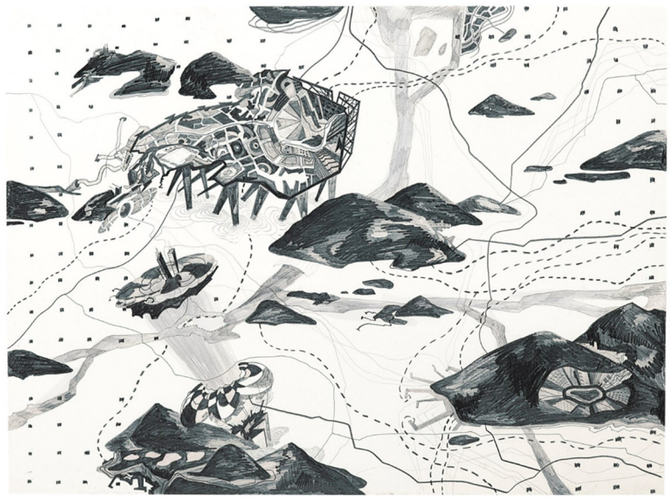


Figure 3 | Franz Ackermann, *Mental Map* (2001) [Graphite on paper; dimensions 60.3 × 81 cm]. From the series *Permanent Weekend*.

The house is a structure without presence, but with affective residue. It becomes a placeholder for what cannot be easily articulated: the sense of being between locations, between times, and between selves.

What does it mean to be out of place? This question frames a broader investigation of displacement, understood not as a singular act of removal but as a complex interplay of memory, materiality, language, and affect. *What do things know?* Objects, fragments, traces, and materials bear witness to lives, histories, and emotions; they carry residues of experience that often escape narrative or conscious recollection. As cultural anthropologist Igor Kopytoff argues in *The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process* (1986), objects are not static or inert but move through different regimes of value and meaning over time, shaped by processes of commoditization, use, neglect, and recontextualization. In this sense, things can be understood as repositories of social relations and lived histories, registering forms of knowledge that exceed verbal articulation.

This chapter contains a reflection between three voices: that of my father, Monica Rodrigues Reis (Monica RR) – my alter ego – and mine. Monica RR does not represent a separate subjectivity but functions as a discursive device, an internal interlocutor through whom conflicting emotions, displaced identities, and fragmented recollections are externalised and critically examined.

This first chapter thus establishes a framework in which place, displacement and meaning of things are conceptualised not merely as a spatial or historical phenomena, but as an ontological and aesthetic condition. It proposes that being *out of place* can be understood not only as a symptom of dislocation but as a generative site of inquiry. In this context, *No Man's Land* is not a literal terrain, but a metaphorical and conceptual zone, a space of ambiguity in which the self is both split and recomposed through narrative, material absence, and artistic intervention.

Subsequently the second chapter *The Sea* reflects on an artistic practice underpinned by technological, intricate processes, derived from a particular way of thinking, through making. The technological archaeology,[10] as the inception for this investigation, pinpoints my interest in processes which are obsolete and commercial. Therefore, the act of a recreation of 19th century technologies could be perceived as itself an act of displacement, movement of such. Not only does this involve the displacement of knowledge – centuries-old, often-forgotten techniques – but it also entails the shift of practices from the semi-industrial or commercial domain into the hands of the artist. As Canadian communication theorist Marshall McLuhan (1964), author of *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, argued, older technologies (especially media technologies) often become visible as cultural forms, including art forms, after they have been rendered functionally obsolete, while artists are also at the forefront of exploring and experimenting with new technologies and shaping their cultural and aesthetic significance. Therefore *przemieszczenie* (*displacement*) is a key element between the technological world and the conceptual standpoint, between obsolete and modern, analogue and digital, global and local, personal and communal, functional and artistic.

My first encounter with Portuguese soil happened due to Erasmus exchange between Faculty of Fine Arts in Katowice (ASP) and Faculty od Fine Arts Universtiy of Porto (FBAUP) (2014/2015). As the MA student in printmaking, I had mixed feeling about the importance of printmaking in Portugal´s high education system. Here, everything seemed different, smaller, perhaps more complicated. It was a bit as if printmaking had not found its place on the Portuguese art map. It was then that I encountered Professor Graciela Machado and Professor Paulo Almeida, who directed my interest towards more classical printmaking and performative actions. After finishing my MA in Poland (entitled: *Immigrating*, 2016), I returned to Porto (2017), first making an internship, then working over a year (2018/2019) as a printmaking technician under the wing of Professor Machado, to later in 2019 start my PhD. Since 2017, Professor Machado and I have been researching tirelessly, fascinated by old masters, recipes, papers and techniques. Soon, we established the reference image that would accompany our experiments and later serve as a standard for all researchers in the field: a volcanic landscape captured by Professor Machado in Iceland in 2008 (Figure 4). It is a barren scene, devoid of vegetation or any markers that might define it as a specific place or invite a return. The displacement of technological possibilities merges with the terrain itself, offering a range of representational possibilities. Initially unfamiliar and uneasy, the landscape gradually became a compelling subject, repeatedly reinterpreted through the complexities of different photomechanical and photographic methods. Each method shapes the scene differently, revealing variations in texture, depth, and perception, and demonstrating how the medium mediates our understanding of the terrain. The research methodology we employ also diverges from conventional practices, setting itself apart from those typically found at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Katowice or the FBAUP in Porto. We have deliberately broadened our approach to printmaking, emphasising the mastery of techniques that fall outside the conventional scope of academic printmaking. We view printmaking as a conceptual and material language open to dialogue with other disciplines, in which the process itself influences the outcome.[11] This shifts the focus from product to process and from reproduction[12] to transformation, which is physical and temporal conceiving a vision of a process of translating a contemporary printmaking culture to an academy where printmaking may or may not always remain a marginal topic.[13]

When in October 2020 I made a short visit to my homeland – Boronów for an important family event (COVID19 pandemic time) I felt different, disconnected, left behind. It was a strong feeling, a displaced feeling of not being at home anymore. I came back to Portugal with: *Wszechobecne poczucie nie przynależności* (*A pervasive sense of not belonging)* , and this became an echoing manifesto in my head. Like a mantra that was constantly reminding its presense, like it was necessary not to forget this feeling. Back in Portugal, I experienced an overwhelming sense of emptiness, shaped both by personal loss and broader global uncertainties. The absence of my close friend, her sudden death marked this period with particular intensity, intertwining private grief with a wider context of instability. These years were especially challenging, not only on an intimate dimension but also from a global perspective. The COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing wars, extreme weather events, and the accelerating effects of climate change have deeply influenced contemporary subjectivities. Even when not directly affecting

10 The Pure Print Archeology research group, developed from the Pure Print project (2021–) at FBAUP, applies a methodology grounded in technological archaeology to investigate historical and experimental printmaking practices. By reactivating forgotten or overlooked techniques, it fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and documents processes in ateliers, archives, and museums, developing experimental artistic practices that intersect with contemporary concerns. Through seminars, workshops, residencies, exhibitions, and experimental publishing, the group both preserves and expands the heritage of printmaking while demonstrating its relevance and adaptability in the present era, creating a dialogue between historical processes and contemporary creative inquiry.

11 Experimental and research-based approaches to printmaking are evident internationally, including the activities of the Centre for Fine Print Research and the IMPACT International Printmaking Conference (Bristol), as well as the long-standing research and training programs of the Tamarind Institute (Albuquerque); at a local level, this has also been reflected in the Pure Print Archeology research meeting initiated by the research interest group at FBAUP (Porto).

12 Printmaking has long been associated with reproduction, as a medium capable of producing multiple copies of a single image. Early theorists such as American art historian and curator William M Ivins, Jr. (1953) emphasized this aspect, but contemporary scholarship has expanded the understanding of print beyond mere duplication. As Beat Wyss and Ernst Rebel discuss in *Perspectives on Contemporary Printmaking* (Pelzer-Montada, 2018), print simultaneously embodies the trace of the artist's hand, the materiality of the surface, and the particularities of the process, which resist reduction to simple reproduction.

13 Printmaking occupies a marginal position in many art institutions today, despite significant geographical and national differences. While Poland has maintained a strong educational and cultural presence for printmaking, many art schools elsewhere have reduced or closed print studios over the past few decades in response to shifting institutional priorities and economic pressures.

one's immediate circumstances, such phenomena impose a heightened awareness of precarity, displacement, and vulnerability. Within this framework, the feeling of not belonging that I described as a personal mantra resonates with larger social and historical conditions. Few experiences are as profoundly displacing as war or environmental catastrophe, whose psychological consequences extend far beyond immediate material loss, shaping how individuals and communities conceive of home, security, and identity.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is necessary to acknowledge the broader global context of displacement and crisis; however, the analytical focus rests on the deterioration of wellbeing resulting from local displacement, specifically the transition from home to institutional care. This form of relocation is particularly significant as it frequently entails the loss of autonomy, intimacy, and familiarity that define one's sense of being at home. In February 2022, I experienced this dynamic through the loss of Erika, my grandmother and aunt, who was transferred to a nursing facility following a hip fracture. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, direct contact was severely limited: telephone access to her room was unavailable, and staff did not provide alternatives through mobile communication. Correspondence was therefore reduced to letters, a medium insufficient to mitigate the profound isolation she endured. Her final months, spent in unfamiliar surroundings and deprived of meaningful social contact, exemplify the acute vulnerability that accompanies institutional displacement.

This experience has directed my research toward the conditions of elderly individuals living within institutional frameworks. It raises a series of critical questions: What becomes of the comfort zone when the domestic sphere is replaced by institutional structures? How do elderly negotiate the loss of independence and purpose? In what ways are loneliness, isolation, and alienation manifested in these contexts? Ultimately, does institutional displacement engender in the elderly the same pervasive sense of not belonging that I have elsewhere identified as a defining feature of dislocation?

Consequently, the third chapter, *The Island*, constitutes a response to the encounters I experienced during a month of visits across three different institutions. The chapter is written in the first-person singular, yet it incorporates and reveals a multiplicity of voices. The title itself draws on both metaphor and neurology: from a neurological perspective, the part of the brain responsible for empathy is the insular cortex (also referred to as the insula or insular lobe, from Late Latin insularis, derived from Latin in-



Figure 4 | From left to right: Transfer paper with embossed lines used for indirect gillotage techniques (2020, 21 × 29,7 cm); tests on bichromate photosensitive paper developed with lithographic transfer ink (2017, 21 × 29,7 cm); Gillotage printed as zincography (2020, 21 × 40 cm). All examples were developed by the author and Graciela Machado. Reference image: Graciela Machado, *Island* (2008).



Figure 5 | Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Untitled* (*the map of the land of feeling I–III*), fragments (2008–2011) [Scroll with digital printing, lithography, chine collé, and screenprint; dimensions approx. 91.4 × 849.6 each].

sula, meaning *island*). Thus, *The Island* functions simultaneously as a metaphor for isolation and displacement, and as a reference to the neurological foundations of empathy. Displacement, in a broader psychological sense, involves a continuous negotiation between movement and stasis, absence and presence, belonging and estrangement. By framing the issue locally rather than globally, I foreground narratives that emerge from personal histories, prompting questions about home, place, and mental wellbeing. This localized focus allows the chapter to operate not only as a collection of testimonies but also as a reflective inquiry into my own physical and mental experience. In this way, *The Island* becomes both a metaphorical and methodological device. It illuminates specific manifestations of alienation, isolation, and loneliness within institutional contexts, while simultaneously situating my own role as artist-researcher. The approach aligns with participatory and dialogical practices in contemporary art, where empathy is both a methodological tool and an ethical challenge. Empathy, as I understand and pursue it here, unsettles the fixed position of the researcher, requiring an openness to shifting one's standpoint in relation to the participants. In the art context, this is particularly significant: artistic practice itself can be understood as a form of displacement, challenging stable notions of identity, space, and belonging. This dynamic calls into question notions of self-efficacy, interbeing, and transience, and frames art-making as a space where displacement and belonging are critically negotiated.

Semantic and cultural values of home, are studied, focusing on the Polish phrase *bycie u siebie* – a term that loosely translates to *being at home*, yet carries nuanced implications of familiarity, intimacy and ontological grounding. In contrast, the English expression *make yourself at home* is analysed as a socially coded and performative utterance, suggesting provisionally and polite displacement rather than belonging. This linguistic juxtaposition illustrates the instability of *home* as a category and highlights the cultural variability embedded within notions of spatial and emotional rootedness.

These chapters were formed through what might be termed a geographical imagination, a mode of inquiry that does not adhere to fixed borders but instead reveals shifting states of mind. They explore what it means to be uprooted, adrift, or isolated in a world marked by unstable boundaries and fragile certainties. Through this framework, the map is no longer a record of settled knowledge, but a diagram of conceptual movement, a spatial index of thought in motion, or the *Map of the land of feeling* (Figure 5).[14]

I am therefore proposing an original approach to the meaning of displacement understood as a strategy combining autobiographical displacement, an approach to technological archaeology and the theme of the meaning of home in sociological and artistic terms, enfolding its poetic aptitude to engage and unite in artistic practice. I am proposing a time-consuming technological practice as a response to the flood of images that are seen every day at every turn

14 Rirkrit Tiravanija, interview fragment about the works: *I would say that each of them are different periods of life. The first one has a lot of stories about coming to America, or trying to stay in America. The last one is kind of like trying to leave America. [Laughs] Or something, you know, or not worrying anymore about having to be anywhere in a sense.* Print/Out, track 13/17. https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/265/3424

through access to the vast technology of the fast-paced modern capitalist, neo-liberal world. In a world of technological prevalence can we consider technological reappraisal as a legitimate creative resource? How does a technological perspective on the creative process affect artistic thinking? What motivates or inspires a research practice focused on time-consuming technological reconstruction in the contemporary era? And how does technological research become relevant in the digital and educational spheres?

In contemporary printmaking, the technological reappraisal of historical techniques emerges as a vital creative resource. Engaging with printmaking processes not only as a seemingly transparent medium but as a complex interplay of materials, tools and procedures invites a deeper understanding of artistic thinking. Research practices that focus on the painstaking reconstruction of traditional printmaking methods challenge the artist to reconcile historical fidelity with contemporary expression.Such technological inquiry provides insights into the tactile, material, and procedural dimensions that are often overlooked in digital workflows, while simultaneously offering pedagogical value for students, practitioners and educators. By investigating these processes, artists and researchers illuminate the ways in which technological knowledge can expand aesthetic possibilities, inform hybrid practices, and ensure the continued vitality of printmaking in both physical and digital realms.

Printmaking intensifies the above mention through the logic of the trace. The matrix – the plate, block, or stone – is central to the act of making. It is touched, carved, wiped, and pressed, involved in an intimate choreography of contact. And yet, once the print is pulled and the edition complete, the matrix is hidden, stored away, sometimes even discarded. It is both origin and residue. The prints live on, while the matrix falls silent. American anthropologist and scholar James Clifford, in *Notes on Travel and Theory in Routes* (1997), reveals how theory itself is shaped by movement, between locations, disciplines, materials and experiences. Clifford argues that *theory travels*, it is built not from fixed truths, but from *encounters*, *translations*, and *routes* rather than roots. Working with printmaking, memory and materiality performs this exact motion: it builds theory not from abstraction but from proximity, from touch, from the lived relationship with objects and processes. The matrix becomes a site of theory-in-motion – a thing that anchors meaning even as it recedes from view.

It is here, in this void, that printmaking emerges, not as a craft or medium, but as a conceptual structure – a way of working that understands reversals, mirrors, and absences. Artist Jennifer L. Roberts, in her book *Contact: Art and the Pull of Print* (2024), foregrounds *reversal* as a defining transformation in printmaking, demonstrating how the physical processes of making and transfer carry conceptual as well as material implications for contemporary art. In Chapter 2 *The Sea*, this metaphor expands. The sea, like the print, is both fluid and fixed, an archive of movement. Techniques from the 19th century reappear in fragments, like objects washed ashore. Some processes have been lost to obsolescence or secrecy, others linger, half-preserved. To work with them today is not simply reproduction; it is recovery, retranslation, and reinterpretation. Printmaking, too, occupies a marginal space. It is often excluded from mainstream discourse as too technical, too repetitive, or too material. Yet these qualities are precisely what enable printmaking to explore processes, time, and transformation, allowing it to operate simultaneously as a conceptual, experimental, and relational practice. In this sense, the themes of *No Man's Land* and *The Sea*, touch. Displacement is not only geographical, technical, linguistic, or emotional; it is also artistic, occurring across disciplinary, institutional, and critical/discursive dimensions within the contemporary art field. What is printed is never quite what was intended, and it is perhaps in that gap – that ghost – where meaning emerges.

This brings us, eventually, to Chapter 3 *The Island*. If *No Man's Land* marked absence, and *The Sea* marked movement, *The Island* becomes a site of encounter, between artist and community, between tradition and care. Here, I work with older people living in institutional settings, people whose stories and identities have often been marginalised or forgotten. The island is local, yet isolated. A place of intimacy, fragility and shared making. Nonetheless the institutional, economic, and political complexities surrounding it, it remains remote in lived experience. Together, these chapters trace a movement through space, memory, and material: from the erased place to the ocean of process, to the small island of care. Always returning to printmaking as a method of sensing, translating and remaining – in contact.

1

NO MAN'S LAND[1]

No Man's Land commences here, not with definitive answers, but with inquiries into the notions of permanence and the presence of absence. We often engage with *places* that no longer physically exist or have become unrecognisable erased by war, renamed by politics or abandoned through displacement. And yet, they remain. Not in stone or soil, but in the accumulated layers of memory and meaning passed through generations. These are places built not solely from geography, but from relation, society, story, and longing. We do not inherit places as static coordinates; we participate in their making, even across distance and time.

1 *Noun*: an area or strip of land that no one owns or controls, such as a strip of land between two countries' borders, especially in a war. [S] a situation or area of activity where there are no rules, or that no one understands or controls because it belongs neither to one type nor another. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionar°y/english/no-man-s-land

DIS(PLACE)MENT

The fundamental human condition of being unable to choose where or in what circumstances our existence begins leads to the overarching dilemma of *place*. This involuntary beginning binds us to places that came before us, embedding our identities in environments shaped by memory, loss and tradition before we can comprehend or articulate them. For Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (ca. 384–ca. 322 B.C.) *place* (the Greek *topos*) *takes precedence of all other things*.[2] Without *place*, things would not be able to exist. *Place* therefore defined by its boundaries, is absolute and objective, it helps explain motion and change in nature by giving everything its proper context or orientation (Idem.). The word *place* is one of the most versatile in the English language. It can signify a physical location (*What places did you visit?*), a psychological state (*I'm not in a good place right now*), a marker of social position (*People should know their place*), a space within memory or thought (*I can't quite place it*), or even a measure of appropriateness (*There's a time and place for everything*) and on and on (Steele, 1981, p. 5).

Place is not an abstract point inside a neutral space: it extends far beyond its physical attributes, involving a deeper engagement with human experience. German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1951) refers to a conception far from a geometric or cartographic notion. *Dwelling*, in this sense, doesn't just describe the physical occupation of a building but instead a mode of existence, a way in which each of us relate and care for the world, a way to transform space into place, imbued with meaning and belonging. Authentic building its one which creates and preserves places: a bridge not only inserts itself in space, it connects banks, opens paths, and provides a system of relations inside a place which only fully exists as long as it's lived and experienced. Place is inseparable from the authentic building; it doesn't just raise structures but instead opens spaces for existential experience. Heidegger – interested in laying an ontological foundation for the discussion – neglected however the concrete and tangible experiences of place. Authors such as American philosopher Edward Casey expand this view towards a memorial and sensorial dimension of the experience. Place reports to a sensible and historic mesh in which bodies move and individual and collective memory anchor themselves; textures, sounds, smells and stories play a role (1993).

In the *Poetics of Space* (2014), French philosopher Gaston Bachelard introduces to the discussion of an intimate and imaginative dimension, not present in either Heidegger or Casey's views. He builds on an understanding of places as a reservoir of poetic images which shape our interior lives, our home, bedroom or favourite corner are not just architectural configurations but instead places where we project our memories and affections, capable to nourish our imagination and protect us from the outside world. So being, places are inseparable from our sensorial and emotional experiences and they bind our intimacy just as much as the walls and doors of our homes. This perspective underlines the importance of a symbolic aspect to the concept of place, showing that place needs to be perceived as both material reality and affective landscape.

Place can also be perceived outside the boundaries of spatial, intimate or individual experience. A broader framework can be deployed: one which accounts for social relations and their mutable condition. A place is not just scenery, it is a field of forces and transformation, where political and economic interests act, where resistance and struggles take place, a ground for structural forces that shape how we live and assign meaning. Authors such as the French philosopher and sociologist Lefebvre argue, existential experience, memory, and imagination of place can only be fully understood by accounting for the social and historical processes that produce them (1991). This is particularly evident in Silesia, where 20th century shifts in borders, sovereignty, and industrial regimes profoundly shaped everyday spatial experience. Power struggles between states, changing economic systems rooted in

2 The phrase is taken from Aristotle (Physics, 208b35) after Calvi Rollino, A. (2019). *Place and space: A philosophical history.* Rethinking Space and Place.

heavy industry, and competing ideological narratives were inseparable from how individuals understood, remembered, and inhabited their homes.

In *Space and Place: The perspective of Experience* (1977), Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan explores the relation between space and place from the starting point of human experience. Space is a broad concept, open and undifferentiated, a field of possibilities. Space is abstract, impersonalized and empty of meaning until experienced. Places emerge when space is appropriated, known, lived and given meaning by people. Place is a space that acquires identity through familiarity, safety, and meaning, serving as a hub for human experiences of belonging and stability. Our senses, perceptions and emotional responses – fears, joys, doubts – directly influence how we understand and construct places. They are therefore, carriers of memories, personal experiences which together compose an emotional landscape. It is a dynamic process, socially mediated, with borrowed meanings, negotiated symbolic tokens, culturally and collectively sustained. As humans, between our need for stability and desire for freedom, we frequently travel between places and spaces, managing our existence through the exploration of the unknown (space) and the attachment for the familiar (place).

Place thus ceases to be neutral, unnoticeable, and becomes measurable, visible, marked. It is not only marked in our cognitive ability, but also it becomes a part of our understanding of the world. Blurred land, unknown terrain, tall and heavy building, the point on the map, trace – it is part of us. We are made up of traces, encounters, sounds and shapes. We are build-up of memories and forgetfulness, of things, words and people. Doreen Massey (1995) has argued that *place* is a social construct. In her view, *we actively make places* and our understanding of them is shaped by the society in which we live (Massey, 1995, p. 50). In this view, place is constructed through interactions, relationships, and the stories we tell. It is made and remade through memory, movement, and lived experience, through familiarity and repetition, through naming and revisiting.

Spaces and places are not homogeneous or static, they are a social construct, they are crossroads where multiple trajectories, stories and relations meet; the ground for groups with different levels of

power to act, resist and claim meaning. With that in mind, social inequalities play a role. The experience of space differs according to gender, social class, race or sexuality. Women, for instance, produce particular places and assign meaning which reflects gender inequalities in public space, private or work space. Places are simultaneous products and producers of social identities, not necessarily instruments of control. This way, one can perceive the conceptualization of place as an open field where political claims take place, where marginalized groups reassign their position, where hegemonic meaning can be challenged (Massey, 1994).

Modernity has conversely transformed the relation between individual and place. Sociologist Anthony Giddens in *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991) approaches the topic through a process he calls *desembedding*: the shifting of social relations from their local and fixed contexts in space, towards abstract systems of organization and communication where technology plays a key role. In the modern world, people can interact and build their identities independently of their physical location. Consequently, place is no longer the main reference towards constructing identity. This process is now fluid, reflexive and mobile with individuals no longer anchoring their personas so decisively to a fixed geographical location. What defines their identity is ongoing self-reflection and choice (what communities they join, what values they adopt), not the place where they physically live; for example, someone may reside in a small rural town yet primarily identify as a digital nomad, an environmental activist, or a member of an online creative community whose norms and relationships are formed and maintained across global networks rather than local space. The modern world has also seen the emergence of transient places, generic and emptied of identity, history or lasting social relations. Globalization, instant communication and mobility gave birth to places such as airports, hotel chains, roads, supermarkets or shopping centers; places projected aiming passage, consumption, the ephemeral, where social relations become superficial and functional as opposed to rooted and meaningful (Augé, 2016). The anonymity and solitude of its experience is the defining aspect as what French anthropologist Marc Augé has termed: the *non-place.* For being deprived of rooted social relations, these places do not carry memory or shared meaning; they lack emotional and social resonance. A sort of collective amnesia takes places, a sense of oblivion weakens heritage, tradition and community bonds (Augé, 2015).

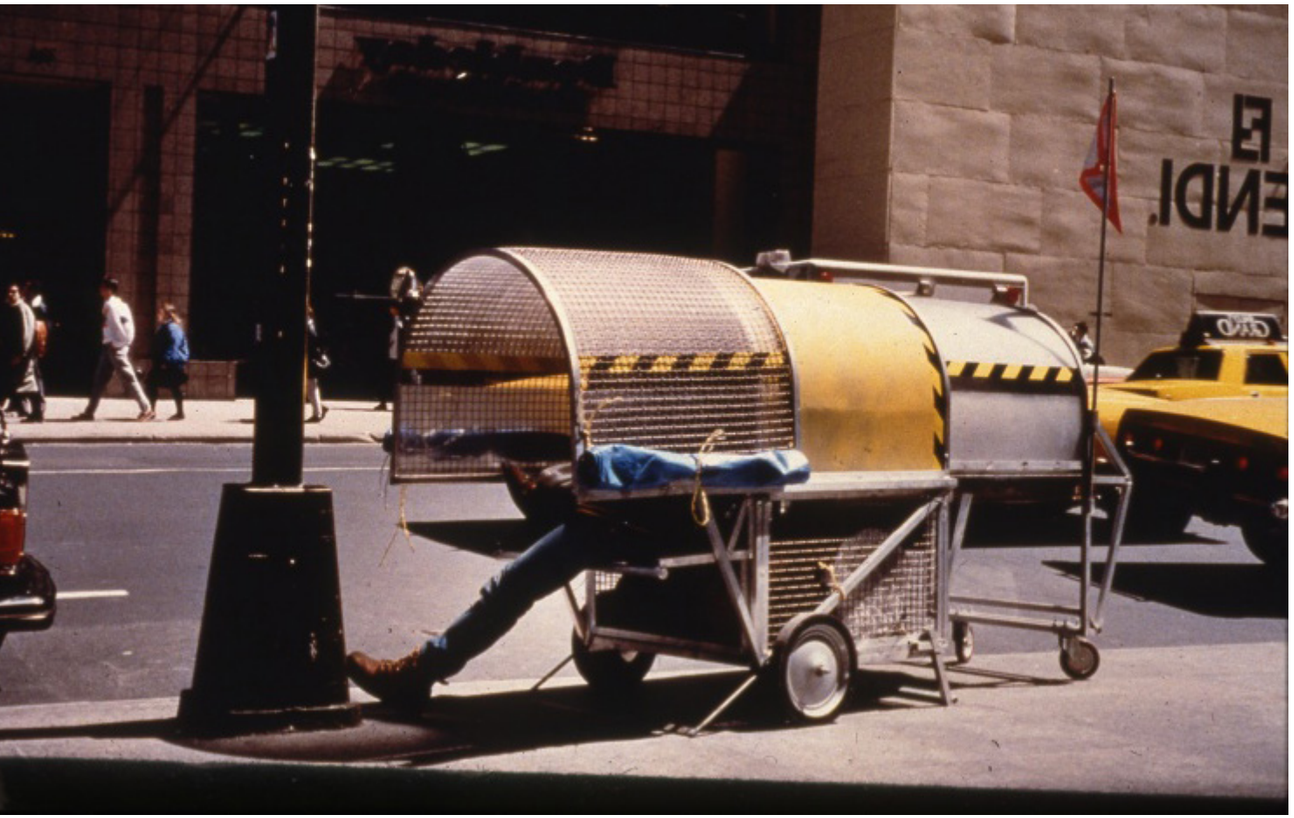


Figure 6 | Krzysztof Wodiczko, Vehicle for the Homeless (1988–1989, New York) [Aluminum, steel mesh, sheet metal, and plexiglas; public art / survival vehicle; approx. dimensions vary].

Without this premise, the author argues that the experience of place becomes fragmented, memory threatened, narratives diluted, identity eroded, and ultimately, we progress towards a cultural and spatial homogenization.

Composed landscapes of belonging and displacement take shape, they become the norm, no longer the exception. However, one could argue that the emergence of new forms of intercultural spaces – in themselves organized through language, politics and aesthetics – opens new opportunities: an opening towards a fertile ground to create new ways of being in the world (Bhabha, 1994). An identity on the move where for migrant communities

and diasporas particularly, place is equally produced locally as it is transnationally through communications networks and circulation of images (Appadurai, 1996). Along the same lines, this process constantly produces new vulnerabilities such as identity tensions or alienations. A who belongs where question comes to the fore. Place, for these communities, and its symbolic negotiation, does not imply necessarily a literal return to a place of origin or cultural background. Instead, a *homing desire* expresses an aspiration to create a sense of home inside an environment of displacement and identitary multiplicity (Brah, 2005). Along this line, displacement is not only defined by loss or alienation, but also through possibility for recomposition, negotiation and *re-territorialization*.[3] Ugandan-British sociologist Avtar Brah introduces the idea of *diaspora space* as a space where the histories and trajectories of migrants and non-migrants intertwine, revealing that all places are, in some way, shaped by histories of mobility, colonialism and cultural exchange. This concept emphasizes that diaspora is not a marginal or peripheral condition, but constitutive of modernity itself and contemporary geographies (2005).

More recently the discussion moved from displacement explained through classic processes of migration, war or natural catastrophes to the possibility of a larger set of structural mechanisms across politics, economics or technology. Authors such as Dutch-American sociologist, economist, and urban theorist Saskia Sassen (2014) introduce the concept of *expulsion* to designate not only a marginalization but a systemic and often irreversible removal of people, communities and ecosystems from the possibility to inhabit the social, political and economic space. Place becomes more than an identity and cultural point; it becomes an arena of vital relations which, when severed, bring about not only physical displacement but also lose the ability to stay visible and functional inside the networks that sustain life. When expulsions happen, places are transformed into absence: farming land taken by corporations, neighbourhoods and communities destroyed by financial gentrification or desertification, territories degraded by pollution or rising sea levels. This perspective allows to considerer the social space, not only as one of interconnection but, also, one with mechanisms of production of exclusion in order to separate and explore often evoking progress and development. Place, then, requires a social-materialist discussion that understands space as shaped by both material conditions and power relations.

3 The term *reterritorialization* is drawn from Deleuze and Guattari, French philosophers whose collaborative work explored concepts of desire, power, and social organization through innovative frameworks such as *rhizomes* and *assemblages* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). In this context, reterritorialization describes the process by which flows of identity, meaning, or social relations are re-established or re-grounded in new contexts after being uprooted.

Drawing on *Rebel Cities* (2012), distinguished professor of anthropology and geography David Harvey argues that the city constitutes a central arena for contemporary social and political struggle. Investment, planning and reorganization of space follow capital accumulation often generating processes of privatization, expropriation and exclusion, directing the transformation of the urban landscape towards consumption and global tourism. The *right to the city* is denied when its inhabitants are treated as obstacles to real estate appreciation and the functions of the city are subdued to financial capital. Whoever controls the land, infrastructures and planning decisions also controls urban life: cities become battle grounds of the destruction of ways of living (Harvey, 2012).

French philosopher, historian, and social theorist Michel Foucault (1995) has revolutionized the understanding of space demonstrating that it is not solely a neutral scenario where history and society take place but instead an arena where a social practice takes places within relations of power. Foucault focusing on hospitals, schools or prisons showed how architectural spaces are projected to exert control and discipline over bodies, on which power is materialized directly. Space is then a strategic tool for normalisation, surveillance and regulation of individuals. Spatial confinement is an integral component of the social construction of deviance.[4] The space occupied by the *outsiders* becomes a symbolic extension of a marginalized (institutional confinement) or symbolic (access lost to spaces of social status or power) group or individual, reinforcing segregation and blocking full social participation of such groups or individuals (Becker, 1966). American sociologist Howard Becker efforts brought about an understanding of the role of majority groups towards those regarded as outsiders, shedding light into what is a dynamic and bilateral relation, emptying the notion of a full individual responsibility for social exclusion.

Understanding the dynamic, relational nature of social exclusion, Polish artist living abroad (mostly USA) Krzysztof Wodiczko (born 1943) translates these insights into public interventions that make visible those marginalized by urban life. Wodiczko responds to those rendered invisible, creating interventions that reveal and confront social exclusion. The *The Homeless Projection* (1986–1987) utilised building façades as temporary *matrices*, onto which the

4 Deviance is understood as a pattern of norm violation, with different norms producing different social categories: religious norms give rise to heretics, legal norms to criminals, health norms to the sick, cultural norms to the eccentric, and so forth (Scott & Marshall, 2009, p. 175).

voices and stories of marginalised individuals were projected. His work focusses on the experiences of marginalised groups such as the homeless, refugees and war veterans.

Rather than aiming to create a better world, Wodiczko designs projects such as *Vehicle for the Homeless* (1988–1989) (Figure 6), or *Poliscar* (1991) (Figure 7) (created within the idea of Greek *Polis* – City) that seek to raise awareness of social issues. The vehicles were designed to facilitate survival on the streets, serving multiple functions and providing shelter and tools for activities. However, most importantly, the vehicles were intended to stimulate public discussion about homelessness. Simultaneously, they were designed to facilitate communication among homeless people, alert them to potential dangers and enable them to share opinions. He, among many works dedicated to marginalised, created xenology-based[5] instruments for the homeless, veterans, and socially marginalized, functioning as extensions of the body between nature and artifice. From 1992, he developed the *Wanderer's Staff*, a small monitor and speaker allowing immigrants to communicate personal stories. This evolved into *The Spokesperson for the*



Figure 7 | Krzysztof Wodiczko, POLISCAR (1991) [Mixed-media public art / mobile sculpture; dimensions vary].

5 1950s: from Greek xenos stranger, foreigner, (adjective) strange. Noun: xenology – the scientific study of alien biology, cultures, etc. Oxford Languages online source.

Stranger (1994), mounted on the face to mediate between recorded and direct speech; As Wodiczko explains:[6]

What I design are devices and instruments that equip and empower people, giving them the opportunity to communicate and open up to others, even if those others – that is, us – may not always want to hear it. At the same time, they also give us the chance to approach them – not directly, but through what exists between us and them.

In this way, public space becomes a place where social experiences are realised.

In *History of Madness* (2006), Foucault demonstrates how the institutional confinement of the mad, the definition of madness and their place on the wider social arena is a politic and historic construction; one which serves and preserves above all things social order. Moreover, the spatial exclusion reinforces their stigma, enabling a further dehumanization and marginalization. The idea of *stigma* is a powerful one and extremely impactful on the possibilities for resistance and movement of democratization of access to social rewards and mitigation of social inequalities. How an individual, group or community is socially placed is just as significant as the way that same individual, group or community places itself. Often, stigma acts as a stain on an individual's identity, altering the way they perceive themselves. Psychiatric hospitals, prisons, ghettos, etc, constitute places of exclusion which limit social mobility and egalitarian social contact, despite acting often as refuge (Goffman, 1963). Stigma, then, acts as a defining force of frontiers creating material and symbolic segregation. Often, historically, the ways in which this segregation presents itself – much like the canary on the mine – reveal much about a society´s willingness to share social capital, the weight of its power and ideological structures and the capacity to critically look at itself in the mirror.

6 From the interview video: *The Engineer of Art - Krzysztof Wodiczko*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdgRV99FiGY&t=2s



Figure 8 | Private family archive, Kij (small lake in Hadra municipality), near Boronów village, Silesia, Poland (c. 1945) [Photograph; dimensions 9 x 12 cm].

PRZEMIESZCZENIE (essay)[7]

Na zdjęciu[8] przedstawiony jest stary dom, na Kiju (Figure 8). *Przed nim stoi mój dziadek Bernard. Dom pochodzi z dziewiętnastego wieku i dzisiaj nie ma już po nim śladu. Ten dom był domem bliźniaczym, a więc mieszkały w nim dwie rodziny. Mój ojciec Jerzy tam się urodził i wychowywał. Dziadek Bernard otrzymał ten dom od księcia Hohenlohe (niemieckiego właściciela gruntów i terenów na Górnym Śląsku) z racji, że był jego pracownikiem, gajowym lasu. To miejsce, gdzie stał dom jest szczególne, ponieważ tam się urodził mój ojciec i do tego miejsca z dużym sentymentem powracam. To co pozostało, to fundamenty z wyraźnym elementem zabudowy – ziemianką. Ziemianka to zewnętrzna piwniczka do przechowywania warzyw i owoców w lecie i zimie. Myślę, że symbolem tego miejsca jest stara, około trzystu letnia lipa, która do dzisiaj tam rośnie. Zachowały się jeszcze pozostałości ogrodzenia i posadzone przez dziadka orzechy laskowe i drzewa owocowe. Domu nie ma, pozostaje jedynie miejsce – wspomnienie po ojcu, dziadku, babci i wujku.*

Historia mojej rodziny, mojego dziadka i tego jak trafił do tego domu jest dość skomplikowaną historią. Bernard Bełkot urodził się pod Olesnem w 1899 roku. Jako młody chłopak brał udział w ostatnim roku I Wojny Światowej. Pod przymusem jako żołnierz niemiecki walczył pod Ypres. Ta bitwa (bitwy) pod Ypres zapisała się w historii, jako pierwsze miejsce, w którym użyto gazów bojowych. Po powrocie z wojny brał czynny udział w Powstaniach Śląskich a po rozstrzygnięciu plebiscytu w 1921, w którym mieszkańcy Śląska opowiadali się za chęcią należenia do państwa Niemieckiego lub państwa Polskiego, on, jako powstaniec opowiedział się za mieszkaniem na Śląsku w państwie Polskim. Miejsce, w którym się urodził – Wojciechów, pod Olesnem w efekcie plebiscytu pozostało w granicach państwa Niemieckiego, więc jego ojciec (mój pradziadek) zamienił się gospodarstwem ze Ślązakiem proniemieckim mieszkającym na Hadrze. Ten dom nadal stoi, ale nigdy nie miał większego znaczenia dla mojej rodziny, gdyż to nie był dom rodzinny, a dom zamieniony. Kiedy Bernard Bełkot ożenił się z babcią Bertą, dostał od swojego pracodawcy (Księcia Hohenlohe) dom pod wynajem, właśnie ten dom, którego już nie ma.

W sierpniu 1939 (początek II Wojny Światowej) dziadek Bernard został zaciągnięty, jako żołnierz Polski, rezerwy Polskiego wojska z jednostką z Tarnowskich Gór do obrony przed Niemcami. Jednostka ta wycofując się na wschód, 17 września 1939 w pierwszym dniu najazdu Związku Radzieckiego na Polskę, dostała się do niewoli Radzieckiej. W Listopadzie tego

7 The text is about a very specific place where my family comes from. I am using my father's words here to venture into the home of my ancestors, English version beneath.

8 Fotografia wydrukowana w: Caderno II DEPÓSITORIO DOCUMENTAÇÃO E PÓS-PRODUÇÃO FOTOGRÁFICA in: Machado, G., Almozara, P., & Belkot, M. (2023). Couzas e pilhas. i2ADS edições.

DISPLACEMENT (essay translation)

The picture[9] shows an old house, on Kij (Figure 8). *In front of it stands my grandfather Bernard. The house dates from the 19th century and today there is no trace of it. This house was a semi-detached house and so two families lived there. My father Jerzy was born and grew up there. My grandfather Bernard received the house from Prince Hohenlohe (the German owner of land in Upper Silesia) because he was his employee, a gamekeeper in the forest. The place where the house stood is special because my father was born there, and I return to this place with great affection. What remains are the foundations, with a distinct building element – the dugout. A dugout is an outdoor cellar for storing vegetables and fruit in summer and winter. I think the symbol of the site is a linden tree, about three hundred years old, which still grows there today. The remains of the fence and the hazelnuts and fruit trees planted by my grandfather still remain. The house is gone, only the place remains, a memory of my father, grandfather, grandmother and uncle.*

The story of my family, my grandfather and how he ended up in this house is quite a complicated story. Bernard Bełkot was born near Olesno in 1899. As a young boy he took part in the last year of the First World War. Under duress, as a German soldier he fought at Ypres. This battle(s) at Ypres went down in history as the first place where different gases were used as weapons or in battle. After returning from the war, he took an active part in the Silesian Uprisings and after the plebiscite in 1921, in which the inhabitants of Silesia opted for belonging to the German state or to Poland, he, as an insurgent, opted for living in Silesia in the Polish state. The place where he was born – Wojciechów, near Olesno as a result of the plebiscite remained within the German state, so his father (my great-grandfather) swapped the farm with a pro-German Silesian living in Hadra. This house is still standing, but it never had much significance for my family as it was not a family house, but a swapped house. When Bernard Bełkot married my grandmother Berta, he was given a house for rent by his employer (Prince Hohenlohe), the very house that is no longer there.

In August 1939 (the beginning of the Second World War), Grandfather Bernard was enlisted, as a Polish soldier, in the reserves of the Polish army with a unit from Tarnowskie Góry to defend against the Germans. This unit, retreating eastwards, was taken prisoner by the Soviets on 17 September 1939, on the first day of the Soviet invasion of Poland. In

9 Printed in: Caderno II DEPÓSITORIO DOCUMENTAÇÃO E PÓS-PRODUÇÃO FOTOGRÁFICA in: Machado, G., Almozara, P., & Belkot, M. (2023). Couzas e pilhas. i2ADS edições.

samego roku, rząd niemiecki (nie będący w tym czasie w stanie wojny ze Związkiem Radzieckim) wskutek porozumienia międzypaństwowego (podpisanych umów), wyciągnął z niewoli polskich żołnierzy pochodzących ze Śląska, w tym dziadka Bernarda. Po powrocie z niewoli radzieckiej dziadek natychmiast musiał zameldować się na komendzie Policji w Lublińcu, już wtedy Niemieckiej. Tego samego dnia został zamknięty w więzieniu w Lublińcu przez niemieckich żandarmów z racji powzięcia przez nich informacji o udziale dziadka w powstaniu śląskim. Z niemieckiego więzienia oswobodził go książę Hohenlohe, gdyż był niezbędny do pracy w lesie, a że był to czas wojny mężczyźni w większości byli na froncie. Do końca II Wojny Światowej dziadek Bernard pracował jako gajowy, jednak jego dwóch synów pod groźbą wywozu do Oświęcimia zostało powołanych do Wermachtu (wojska niemieckiego): mój ojciec Jerzy (1924–1994) po skończeniu 19 lat w 1943 roku został skierowany na front zachodni do Francji. Początkowo był w Nicei a w 1944 jako żołnierz niemiecki brał udział w bitwie (inwazja) w Normandii, gdzie dostał się do niewoli Amerykańskiej kolejno przerzucony do Anglii i skierowany do wojska – Polskiej jednostki pancernej w szkockim Wick. Tam, do końca wojny przygotowywał się w formowanej jednostce do walki przeciwko Niemcom. Niemieckim żołnierzom pochodzenia Śląskiego, którzy przeszli do wojska polskiego w Anglii zmieniano nazwiska, gdyż w przypadku dostania się do niewoli niemieckiej jedyną pewną dla dezertera była śmierć. Mój ojciec Jerzy Bełkot, nazywał się Jerzy Gruszka. Wrócił na Śląsk w marcu 1946 r. Jego brat Wilhelm Bełkot (1928-2005 r.) został powołany do Wermachtu, jako 16-latek, 12-go stycznia 1944 r. tydzień przed wyzwoleniem terenów śląskich spod okupacji niemieckiej. W ciągu tego tygodnia Wilhelm został przerzucony do Królewca, gdzie został załadowany na statek do Szczecina. Statek ten płynął w konwoju w tym samym dniu, w którym został zatopiony niemiecki duży statek handlowy WILHELM GUSTLOFF transportujący mieszkańców i żołnierzy niemieckich (w katastrofie tej zginęło około 10 tysięcy ludzi). Wujek jako żołnierz niemiecki w Niemczech dostał się do niewoli amerykańskiej, a po zakończeniu wojny przerzucony przez Włochy do Egiptu, gdzie ukończył polską szkołę podstawową i zawodową. Wujek po wojnie osiedlił się w Anglii.

Ta historia jest na tyle ciekawa, że mogła się wydarzyć tylko na Śląsku. To śląski żołnierz walczył pod przymusem w niemieckiej armii w I wojnie światowej, tan sam śląski żołnierz walczył przeciwko Niemcom w Powstaniach Śląskich, następnie w obronie Polski w II wojnie światowej, dostając się do niewoli radzieckiej. Z niewoli radzieckiej prosto do więzienia niemieckiego. To żołnierz, który musiał oddać swoich chłopców do wojska niemieckiego pod karą śmierci.

November of the same year, the German government (which was not at war with the Soviet Union at the time), as a result of an interstate agreement (agreements signed), took Polish soldiers from Silesia out of captivity, including Bernard's grandfather. Upon his return from Soviet captivity, grandfather immediately had to report to the Police Headquarters in Lubliniec, already German at the time. On the same day, he was locked up in prison in Lubliniec by German gendarmes because they had found out about his participation in the Silesian Uprising. He was freed from the German prison by the Duke of Hohenlohe, as he was needed for forestry work, and as it was wartime the men were mostly at the front. Grandfather Bernard worked as a gamekeeper until the end of the Second World War, but his two sons were called up into the Wermacht (German army) under threat of being sent to Auschwitz: my father Jerzy (1924–1994) was sent to the Western Front in France in 1943 after turning 19. Initially he was in Nice and in 1944, as a German soldier, he took part in the battle (invasion) in Normandy, where he was captured by the Americans then transferred to England and sent to a Polish armoured unit in Wick, Scotland. There, until the end of the war, he prepared in a unit being formed to fight against the Germans. German soldiers of Silesian origin who went over to the Polish army in England had their names changed, as death was the only certainty for a deserter if he was taken into German captivity. My father, Jerzy Bełkot, was called Jerzy Gruszka. He returned to Silesia in March 1946. His brother Wilhelm (Bill) Bełkot (1928-2005) was called up to the Wehrmacht, as a 16-year-old, on 12 January 1944, a week before the liberation of the Silesian area from German occupation. During that week, Wilhelm was flown to Königsberg, where he was loaded onto a ship for Stettin. This ship was sailing in a convoy on the same day that the German large merchant ship WILHELM GUSTLOFF transporting German residents and soldiers was sunk (about 10,000 people died in this disaster). As a German soldier in Germany, Uncle was taken prisoner by the United States army and after the end of the war he was transferred via Italy to Egypt, where he completed a Polish primary school and a vocational school. Uncle settled in England after the war.

This story is so interesting that it could only have happened in Silesia. A Silesian soldier fought under duress in the German army in the First World War, the same Silesian soldier fought against the Germans in the Silesian uprisings, then in the defence of Poland in the Second World War, ending up in Soviet captivity. From Soviet captivity straight into a German prison. He was a soldier who had to surrender his boys to the German army under penalty of death.

Transcribed text of a recording of a story told by my father, Krzysztof Bełkot, about a photograph showing his grandfather in front of a house that ceased to exist many decades ago.



Figure 9 | Marta Bełkot, *Bornów* (2022) [Gum printing on paper with coal; piece of coal; dimensions 200 × 140 cm; work in process].

Place is not simply geographical, but existential. It begins, always, with the body, with the recognition of proximity and distance, of inside and outside, of safety and exposure. Subsequently through memory, imagination, language and narratives, *place* carries meaning beyond its physical form, at times gaining more significance in absence than in presence. With simplicity yet affection, my father speaks of one such *place*. It no longer stands, yet it is still *made* each time we speak of it; a place securely closed in paper as a vehicle of time. It is the place where generations of our family once lived and which we used to religiously revisit every year with our uncle Bill, who was born there and stayed in England after the Second World War. This place, located in Silesia, near Boronów – my homeland – now has simply been taken over by nature. The remnants of the house, the fence, and the old linden tree remain as witnesses to the lives of displaced families whose histories have been altered and whose names have been changed. This place was important to me when I was a child. It was full of subtle symbols, as well as moments of celebration and reunion that we eagerly awaited. We heard stories about war, loss, survival and ancestors with whom we had no personal acquaintance. This place, surrounded by forest near a small lake, played a key role in

developing my empathic understanding and ability to coexist with something invisible, yet real. The distinct absence of my great grandfather and the house in question illustrates how the presence of lost, of invisible or partially forgotten objects and people can leave a lasting imprint on one's sense of self.

Place, defined as an individual's immediate surroundings, is a key determinant of human identity and a source of security (Bańka, 2014). The formation of ties to a place, or the erosion of such ties, has been the subject of research across multiple disciplines. In today's fast-paced, mobile world, where people are constantly on the move and experiencing life in a more fragmented way, the concept of place is undergoing a significant transformation (Wnuk, 2011, p. 47). As indicated in previous section many aspects of individual and social life are becoming increasingly deterritorialised, with few fixed points of reference (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Conversely, there is a growing phenomenon of processes that transcend established boundaries, territories and cultures. Some researchers have described this phenomenon as a widespread experience of cultural homelessness, dislocation and displacement (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999). In *The Lure of the Local*, American writer, art critic, activist, and curator, Lucy Lippard (1997) presents place as a *text of humanity*, where nature, culture, history, and ideology intersect and are experienced from within. She argues that our identity is deeply tied to these relationships, and that uprooting, through migration or displacement, weakens our sense of self and connection to history and nature. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask: to what extent, if at all, are ties to place maintained? Do these ties disappear when living environments change and people are displaced, or are they continuously redefined in response to new circumstances?

In my work *Bornów*1 (Figure 9)[10] by mirroring images taken from the forest of my homeland I try to shed light into lost memories of one's place of birth, of memories that are fleeting away. By using *gum printing*[11] – a historical photographic process and Silesian coal as a black pigment; I try to reflect on the loss of identity. This work is done in a way that allows me to duplicate and add elements endlessly. It is also planned to be placed on the base of a steel plate and burned, to disappear, to lose, to change, only to emerge again reshaped into a new surface.[12] This cycle, of fading and returning, of burning and becoming – speaks to the unstable nature of identity shaped by migration, dislocation, and familial silences. The

10 In Silesian dialect Bornów is Boronów, my hometown.

11 Gum printing is a 19th century photographic process based on the use of arabic gum, dichromates salts and pigments such as watercolours or gouache. For this work I substitute the pigments with coal.

12 For the time being, the work is on paper.

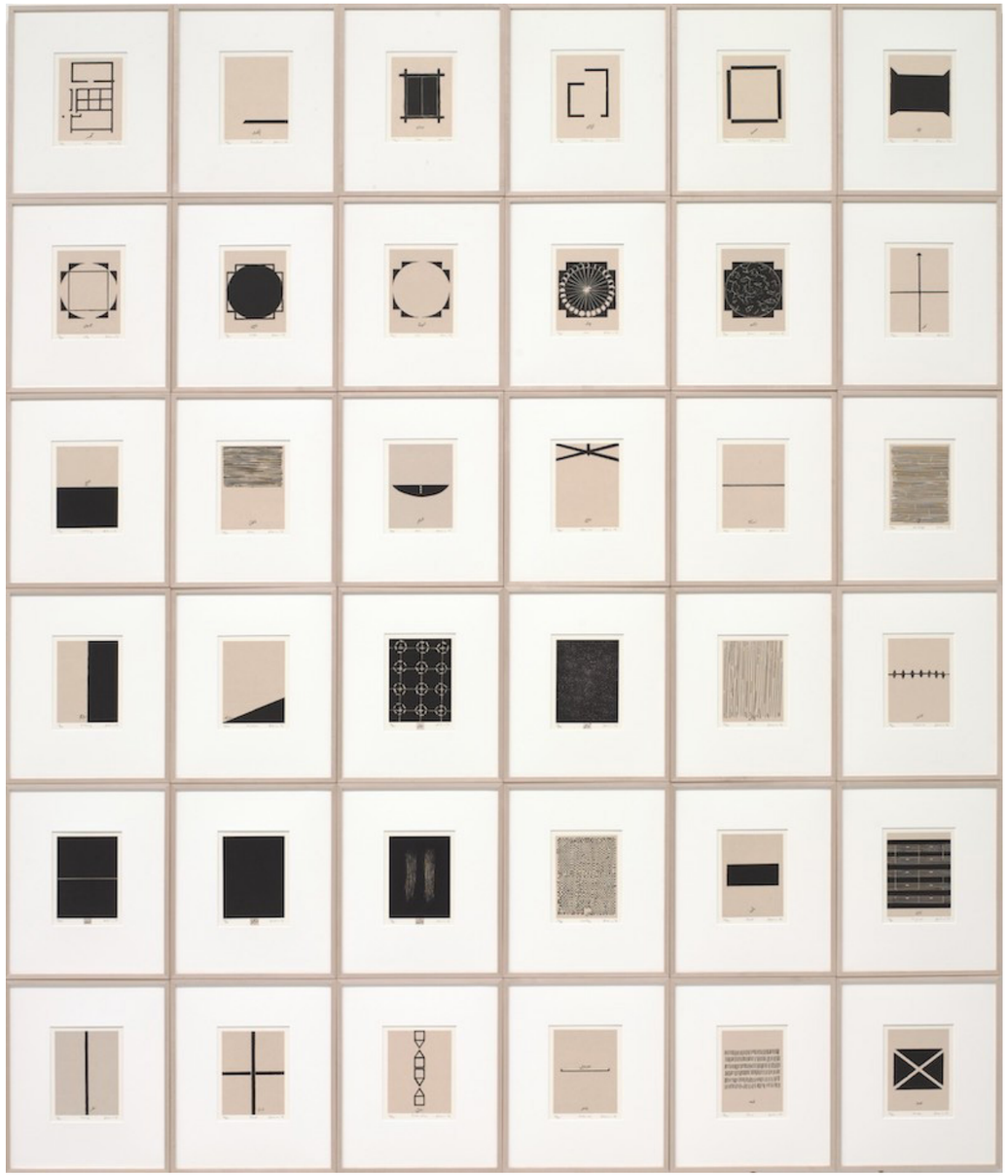


Figure 10 | Zarina Hashmi, *Home is a Foreign Place* (1999) [Portfolio of 36 woodcuts on Kozo paper mounted on Somerset paper, featuring Urdu text; individual sheets dimensions 40.5 × 33 cm; often exhibited as a 6 × 6 grid; titles include *Home, Threshold, Door, Entrance, Courtyard, Wall, Sky, Earth, Sun, Moon, Stairs, Axis, Morning, Dawn, Dew, Afternoon, Stillness, Hot breeze, Evening, Shadows, Clouds, Dust Stor, Rain, Fragrance, Night, Darkness, Despair, Country, Dust, Language, Journey, Road, Destination, Distance, Time, Border*].

work is an attempt not to fix history in place, but to accompany it as it continues to move, across time, across generations, across the materials we leave behind. This cycle of fading and returning, of burning and becoming, embodies the unstable nature of identity shaped by migration, dislocation, and intergenerational silences. The piece does not aim to fix history in a single place; rather, it engages with history as a living, mobile process, moving across time, across generations, and across the material traces we leave behind.

Displaced individuals experience a disjunction between the emotional meaning once attached to a former home and the unfamiliarity of new environments. Place, in this context, becomes fragmented and provisional, a site of longing, loss, or reconstruction. Vietnamese-US-French film-maker, music composer and writer Trinh T.Minh-ha Trinh (2011) argues that home becomes *a projection of longing*, rather than a physical location. The provisional and the fragmented extend to one´s memory. In *Oblivion* (2015), Marc Augé likens the processes of forgetting and remembering to gardening: weeding and cutting off unnecessary branches. Plants are a metaphor for memories. One selects them and chooses which to get rid off immediately so that the others can grow and flourish better. As they reach the final stage of flowering, the plants seem to forget themselves as they are forced to change shape. In this context, the flower represents the forgetfulness of the seed.

The Indian-born artist Zarina Hashimi (1937–2020) has devoted much of her practice to exploring themes of displacement, memory, and loss. Born in Aligarh, she was ten years old when the Partition of India (1947) forced the family to migrate, an experience that left an indelible mark on her sense of belonging. Working in printmaking (mostly woodcuts and intaglio prints) and paper sculpture, Hashimi developed a minimalist graphic language. *Home is a Foreign Place* (1999) (Figure 10) was inspired by sense of dislocation, the feeling of going home, shifted from place and position and the confusion about where actually the *home* is. The series comprises thirty-six woodcut prints, each print pairing an abstract image with a single Urdu[13] word like *Dhaliz* (*Threshold*), *Hadd* (*Border*), *Mulk* (*Country*), *Darwaza* (*Door*), or *Dopahar* (*Afternoon*), carrying cultural and personal weight. *All the words I have chosen are triggers for memory... I do realize that the home I'm talking about has become a foreign place to me, but I revisit it with*

13 A language spoken primarily by Muslim South Asians (It is the official national language of Pakistan).

the help of language (Pesenti et al., 2012). *Urdu is home* (Hashimi and Burney, 2018).

Hashimi often reminisced about her mother's garden in Aligarh, a place of great emotional significance to her. In several of her works and statements, she suggested that, despite becoming geographically inaccessible due to displacement, the garden remained vivid in her imagination. Hashimi (2018) movingly describes the celebration surrounding the planning and planting of the garden, as well as the *aadab* (etiquette) of respect. In the evening, they would wait to hear the night-blooming flowers open, but then they would have to retreat. The night belonged to spirits and djinns, who enjoyed the garden's beauty (p. 22). In this sense, the garden is not merely a natural space, but an affective archive. It holds the memory of a maternal presence, domestic intimacy, and cultural belonging. In *Letters from Home* (Figures 11 and 12), Hashimi draws inspiration from her sister Rani's letters, which link her to the family she had been separated from. In the Fourth Letter, Rani writes about leaving her house, now that her children have grown and moved away from their home in Pakistan. With her daughter married and her son studying in the United States, the house felt too large for her and her husband. She concludes, *my little sister, please don't cry, but when you come to the house it feels like home, and I missed you very much when you didn't visit this spring.*[14]

These letters evoke significant moments, memory, and longing, shaping Hashimi's reflections on what it means to be apart from one's home. When she visited her sister's house, Rani would lead her to the garden and ask, *Remember this fragrance?* The garden was filled with plants and flowers from their childhood home in Aligarh, creating, in a sense, a shared home across distance and time. As Hashimi explained, *Many people have asked why I titled this portfolio Letters from Home when I have never lived in Pakistan. For me, home is not a place. It is wherever the people you care about most are waiting for you.*[15] By repeatedly evoking her mother's and sister's gardens, Hashimi demonstrates how memory selects and cultivates fragments of the past. The garden becomes not a fixed location, but a reconstructed interior landscape – a fragile yet enduring projection of longing. By repeatedly evoking her mother's garden, Hashimi demonstrates how memory selects and cultivates fragments of the past. What endures is not the garden as a fixed,

14 Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, Haryana, India. (n.d.). *Letters from Home* – Zarina Hashmi.
15 Idem.

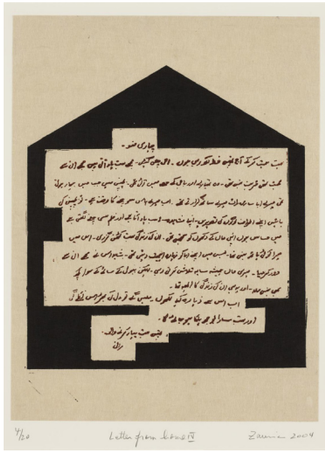
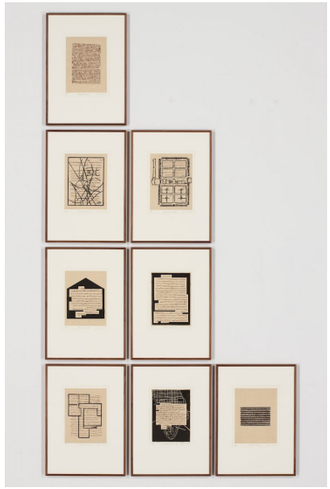


Figure 11 | Zarina Hashmi, *Letters from Home IV* (2004) [Woodblock and metal-cut print on paper; dimensions 57 × 38 cm].



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Figure 12 | Zarina Hashmi, *Letters from Home* (2004) [Portfolio of 8 woodblock and metal-cut prints on paper; dimensions of each 57 × 38 cm].

physical place, but as a reconstructed interior landscape, a lasting projection of longing.

Crucially, the process of cataloguing and reordering memories is neither neutral nor historically accurate. Memory, particularly collective memory, is influenced by present identities, expectations, and desired narratives. According to a French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1992), memory is situated and formed within a group context. What and how we remember is determined by emotional, cultural, or ideological coherence. We become aware of events through hearing, reading or seeing them, even though we may not even experience them directly. The author metaphorically expresses this collective memory as:

I am like passenger on a boat. As the riverbanks pass by, everything he sees is neatly fitted into the landscape. But suppose he loses himself in thought or is destructed by his traveling companions; he concerns himself only occasionally with what passes along the banks. Later on, he will be able to remember where he has travelled but few details of the landscape, and he will be able to trace his route on a map. Such a traveller may recover some forgotten memories or make others more precise, but he has not really had contact with the country through which he passed.

(Halbwachs, 1992, p. 53)

This applies not only to individuals but also to cultures and communities, which shape memory around symbols, rituals or ruins that reflect shared values. German sociologist, philosopher, and critic Georg Simmel in his 1911 essay *The Ruin*, argues that ruins uniquely reconcile nature and culture, past and present. They represent the only remaining trace of the human will's struggle with natural forces (Simmel, 1958, p. 261). The ruin, he suggests, is unlike any other aesthetic form because it bridges past intentions and present perceptions. It allows for a confrontation with decay and beauty, namely a certain idealization or pacification of itself. Broader forms of artistic expression evoke different reactions and feelings. The same expressions integrate individual/collective narratives distinctively.

Cuban-born American artist Félix González-Torres (1957-1996) photograph of two empty, indented pillows (*Untitled*, 1991) (Fig-



Figure 13 | Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled* (1991) [Photograph of two empty, indented pillows; original work usually displayed as an outdoor billboard; dimensions vary with installation (dimensions approximately 318 × 691 cm at typical billboard scale)].



Figure 14 | Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled* (*Lover Boys*) (1991) [Blue-and-white spiral candies in clear wrappers, endless supply; overall dimensions vary with installation; ideal weight 355 lb.].

ure 13) explores the relationship between absence and presence as a means of expressing memory. His minimalist aesthetic conceals emotional and political depth, with everyday items taking on the significance of loss and intimacy. A photograph of two pillows bearing bodily impressions displayed on a large billboard evokes memories of absent loved ones. What initially appears to be a simple image of a domestic setting becomes a monumental billboard of intimacy and grief. Here, memory does not reside in representation, but in what remains: the indentation of a head, the fold of fabric and the silence of absence. González-Torres transforms the quiet residue of everyday life into sites of remembrance, making absence materially visible. These works were created in the context of the AIDS crisis and are inseparable from the artist's identity as a gay man who ultimately died of the disease. The cultural panic, social rejection, and personal vulnerability surrounding AIDS intensify the meaning of his minimalist gestures – for example, the whiteness of bed linens carries both personal and public resonance, evoking mourning, intimacy, and the societal neglect of those affected. In his series of *Candy Works,*[16] (1990–1993) (Figure 14) the piles of wrapped

16 Such as *Untitled* 1990 (Fortune Cookie Corner); *Untitled* 1990 (A Corner of Baci); *Untitled* 1990 (USA Today); *Untitled* 1991 (Welcome Back Heroes); *Untitled* 1991 (Revenge); *Untitled* 1991 (Lover Boys); *Untitled* 1991 (Lover Boys); *Untitled*1991 (L.A.); *Untitled* 1991 (Placebo); *Untitled* 1991 (Rossmore II); *Untitled* 1991 (Ross); *Untitled* 1991 (Throat); *Untitled*1991 (Blue Placebo); *Untitled* 1991 (Public Opinion); *Untitled*1991 (Portrait of Ross in L.A.); *Untitled* 1991 (Para un Hombre en Uniforme); *Untitled* 1991 (Portrait of Dad); *Untitled* 1992 (Portrait of Marcel Brient); *Untitled* 1992 and *Untitled* 1993 (Placebo – Landscape – for Roni).

sweets gradually diminish as viewers take pieces away, enacting a slow, participatory form of dislocation and loss. These works utilise the poetics of disappearance or changes in a manner aimed to evoke collective and personal interaction. In a certain form it symbolises the spread of information, as much as of a virus or epidemic. This blurs the line between private mourning and shared responsibility. By integrating absence and presence in such subtle ways, González-Torres shows that memory is relational, emerging through the interaction of bodies, objects and collective experience.

In contrast to Gonzalez-Torres's material and interactive installation, German artist Floris Neusüss, used in his practice photogram, a camera-less photographic technique, which is made by placing an object in contact with, or at short distance from photosensitive surface in the dark and exposing both to light. Where the object blocks the light, either partially or fully, its shadow is recorded on the paper. In his work *Bin Gleich Zurück* (*Be Right Back*) (1984/1997), (Figure 15) Neusüss explores presence and absence through the photogram's capacity to record traces of the body. The photogram, in this sense, becomes a medium uniquely suited to themes of memory, absence, and embodiment, capturing not the object itself but its ephemeral presence, much like a shad-



Figure 15 | Floris Neusüss, in collaboration with Renate Heyne, *Bin Gleich Zurück*, (*Be Right Back*) (1984/1997) [Photogram with wooden chair; Dimensions 86 × 106.2 × 262.1 cm].

ow or trace. In Neusüss's work, the absent figure lingers through light and chemistry.

Artistic and material expressions have long been mobilized as ideological tools to reframe and retell visions of the past. Just as personal objects can transform into sentimental anchors for memory, cultural artifacts, monuments, literature, paintings, can be strategically employed to construct narratives that serve political ends. In the historical period evoked by my father, this manipulation of memory was particularly explicit: history was deliberately bent toward glorification, national pride, and the invention of heroic figures. These narratives were not innocent; they were designed to provoke specific emotional responses, pride, loyalty, sacrifice, that in turn legitimized the power of dominant groups. This ideological repurposing of memory echoes Halbwachs's claim that collective memory is shaped not just by the past but by the needs of the present (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 40). In this way, aesthetic expressions, whether personal souvenirs or national monuments, do more than recall; they reshape. They are never neutral. Just as the ruin for Simmel becomes a space for reconciling the past with the present, so too do these artistic forms become vehicles through which communities – and regimes – narrate, glorify, and even sanitize their histories.

French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's understanding of memory and forgetting present both as interwoven forces. In *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004), Ricoeur stresses that forgetting is not simply the absence or loss of memory, but often a necessary condition for remembering. He distinguishes between active forgetting, an intentional act of erasure or repression, and passive forgetting; a kind of latency where memories fade or become dormant, yet remain within reach (Ricoeur 2004, pp. 412–419). Ricoeur's concept of the trace, the residual mark of a past event, helps bridge internal recollection with external materiality.

Displacement as relocation profoundly shapes how we feel, position ourselves and recall the realities to which we left behind. This process places us in an intermediate state, a transition or temporary condition. Often, in the long term. *Les Rites de Passage* by French ethnographer and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep (1909) approaches the closed connection between identity formation, changes in social status and movement. The concept of *limen*

(Latin for *threshold*) refers to decisive life transformations such as the passage from childhood to adulthood or a passage from the familiarity of a place to the strangeness of another. Van Gennep highlights tree stages in these rites of passage: (1) *rites de separation* in which an individual is separated from his community and present circumstances; (2) *rites de marge* where ambiguity emerges from a stage of transition and, finally, (3) *rites d'ágrégation* where the individual is reintegrated in a community or social structure.

The second stage is here particularly relevant; often lived as a sort of limbo; often incorporating a sense of uncertainty and transformation potential. The individual is no longer in their previous state but has not yet acquired a new one; it is a state of transition, being *betwixt and between* a suspension between two worlds that is full of uncertainty yet, also has the potential for transformation (Turner, 1987). Swedish-based professor emerita of education, originally from Poland, Agnieszka Bron (2000) also refers to this idea of suspension when analysing the experiences of emigrants. She proposed the metaphor of *floating* to describe the feeling of suspension in liminal states. She pointed out that people living between cultures, often shaken out of their rooted identities, function as if they are adrift on an uncontrollable boat. Direction is uncertain, steering is difficult, and decisions about where to go are suspended. The water stretches endlessly in every direction, making it impossible to disembark from this metaphorical boat. Only by finding a new life orientation or making a decision can movement be given meaning and direction. The author uses this concept to analyse the reconstruction of biographies of expatriates in contexts of change, shedding light into the way in which movement between cultures affects individual identity and life trajectories.

To be displaced often means to exhibit a sense of floating, difficulties in integration, and displaying a sense of alienation uprooting, isolation and loneliness. According to American social psychologist Melvin Seeman's classic view *On the meaning of alienation*, 1959), there are several forms of alienation, including powerlessness, a sense of senselessness, a sense of anomy, a sense of self-alienation and a sense of loneliness (isolation). These elements often coexist; for example, loneliness may be accompanied by a lack of control over one's life or an inability to express one's needs. Such experiences are particularly pronounced in patients with schizo-

phrenia, who struggle with a dramatic narrowing of social bonds and an intensifying sense of alienation (Jakubik & Piaskowska, 2000). In *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, Daniel Paul Schreber, German judge (1903) comments on his own struggle allowed for developments in psychiatry and psychoanalysis (Freud, 1911–1913). Foucault's (1961) illustrates historical practices of excluding and isolating those perceived as *mad*, from medieval depictions of the 'ship of fools' to modern disciplinary institutions. Foucault reminds us that every culture has its mechanisms for separating those who do not fit into the prevailing norms.

Displacement, liminality and the psychological experience of alienation inspire reflections on spaces inhabited by those who are physically or socially displaced. Initially, I planned to work directly with psychiatric patients, but restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic rendered such engagement impossible. In response, I attempted to initiate correspondence projects through physical letters, delivered in person to psychiatric hospitals in Porto, after attempts to communicate via email remained unanswered. This act of walking to deliver letters acquired symbolic resonance: it inscribed presence into space and operated as a performative gesture, echoing practices of artists who use walking, drawing or marking as interventions in the landscape. Richard Long's walking



Figure 16 | Marta Belkot, *Puzzle of the Asylum* (2022–∞) [Gum printing with coal; dimensions 64 × 48 cm].



Figure 17 | Marta Belkot, Puzzle of the Asylum (2022–∞) [Metal plates; Largest plate 42 × 33 cm; dimensions and overall arrangement vary].

works, for example, emphasize the line as both a physical trace and an inscription of experience onto the environment (Long, 1990), while Hamish Fulton frames walking itself as an aesthetic practice, where the journey creates meaning without a permanent object (Fulton, 1999). Such precedents situate walking and correspondence as embodied forms of mapping, layering subjective traces onto institutional thresholds. Yet, the projects were declined, underscoring institutional boundaries that regulate access to vulnerable populations and redirecting my practice toward elderly care contexts (see Chapter 3 *The Island*).

Following these refusals, my focus shifted to the Mental Hospital in Lubliniec, Poland – a site inaccessible to walking practice but resonant as a symbolic locus of psychiatric care – alongside the abandoned Montalto Sanatorium in Valongo, Porto. *Puzzle of the Asylum* (2022–∞) (Figures 16 and 17) centers on the Psychiatric Hospital in Lubliniec, Poland, and reflects on the impossibility of direct engagement, foregrounding the perspective of the outsider who navigates institutional absence. Drawing on Gabriella Giannachi's (2012) theorization of embodied simulation and empathetic discourse, the work investigates how empathy, absence, and forms of sympathetic imagination can mediate our relation to restricted spaces and their unseen inhabitants. Employing gum bichromate photographic, printing, I rendered the façade of the Lubliniec hospital (Figure 16), while its floor plan was etched into metal plates and arranged as a puzzle (Figure 17), a strategy that emphasizes fragmentation, modularity and the instability of meaning.



Figure 18 | Marta Belkot, *Casa em migalhas* (*Home in crumbs*) (2022–∞) [Relief print on paper; dimensions 76 × 58 cm; one of a series of three].

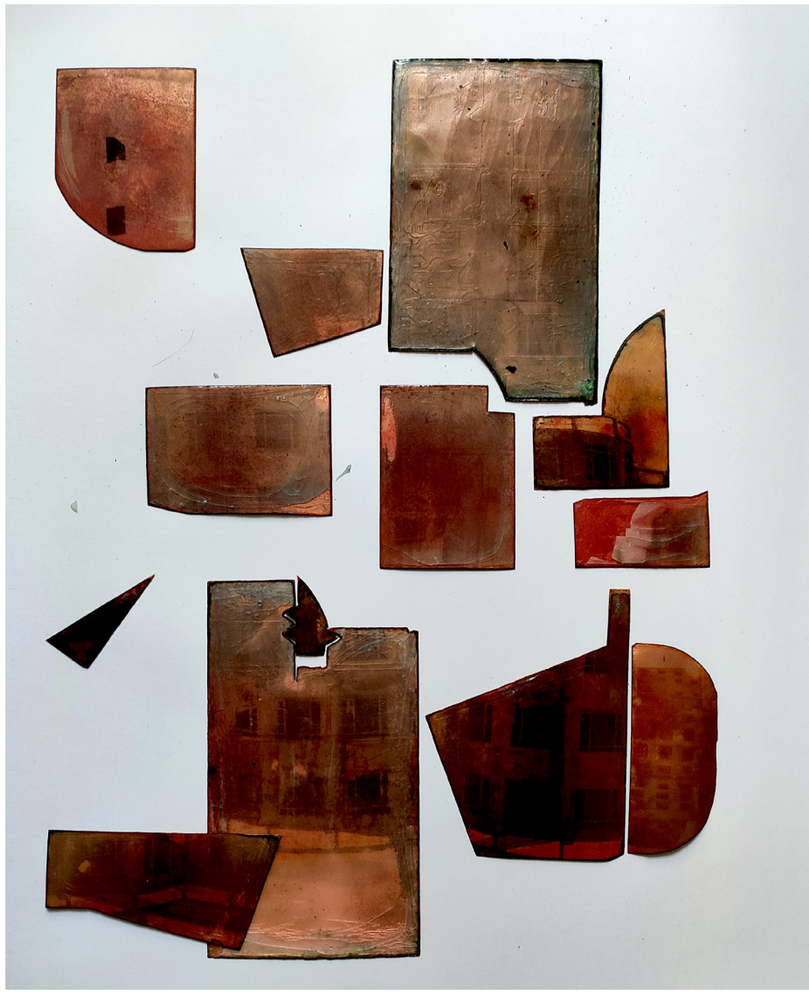


Figure 19 | Marta Belkot, *Casa em migalhas* (*Home in crumbs*) (2022–∞) [Photo-enamel; largest plate 24.5 × 14 cm; dimensions and overall arrangement vary].

Another such place is the abandoned Montalto Sanatorium in Valongo, Porto, where vulnerable individuals were once compelled to leave their homes for institutional care. The work *Casa em migalhas* (*Home in crumbs*) (2022–∞) (Figures 18 and 19) was produced at National School of Art and Design – ENSAD, in Limoges, France, using ceramic kilns. The shape of the work was based on the plan of the Montalto Sanatorium designed by Portuguese architect José



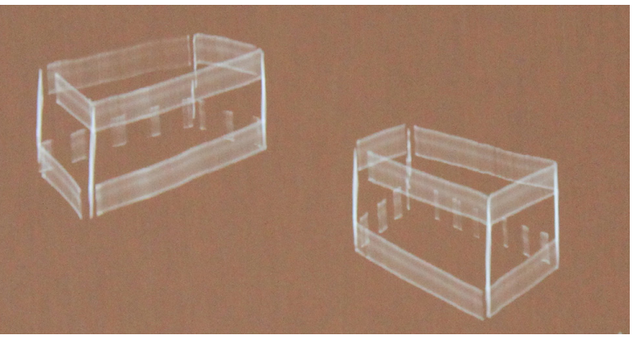
Figure 20 | Marta Bełkot, *Uma casa que não foi chamada casa* (*A home that was not called home*) (2022–∞) [Gum printing with ceramic powder and brick; dimensions 100 × 63.5 cm; series of four].

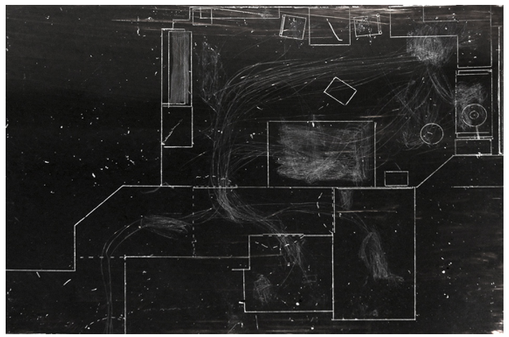
Júlio de Brito (1896–1965). The rooms of the sanatorium's floor plan, close in a copper plate, at first etched into relief (gillotage) were printed as a solid construction (Figure 18). Then the matrix was treated as photo-enamel. The new design allows for the variation of the order of the elements, constructing a non-existent map of the Sanatorium or *home* (Figure 19). The distorted photograph of the place, gradually transformed into an almost imperceptible plane, fragments, disintegrates, and ultimately vanishes.

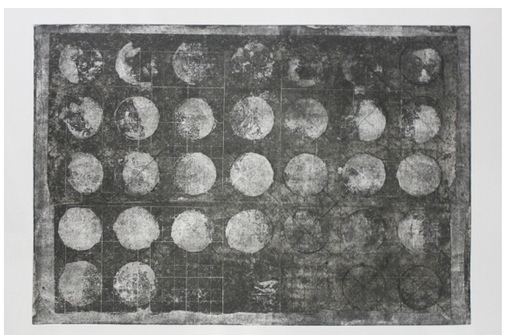
With *Uma casa que não foi chamada casa* (*A home that was not called home*) (2022–∞) (Figure 20), I zoomed in on the focus of employing the gum bichromate printing technique, replacing the first layer pigment with ceramic pigments founded in garbage in France during my exchange and the second layer with fragments of brick from the abandoned site. The darker first layer represents the sanatorium itself as a reproducible mirror module; the orange second layer evokes the sky above, referencing the burnt ceiling. The work interrogates home – permanent or temporary – and explores places that are not initially home but may become so. Its layered and transformable process embodies the instability of home, identity, and place, materializing alienation and isolation while preserving traces of presence, memory, and vulnerability. By engaging with these traces, the work reflects, and records lives lived at the margins, negotiating thresholds of belonging and social integration.

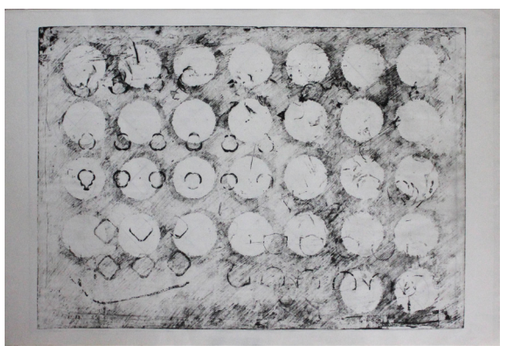
Before the works related to sanatorium and psychiatric institutions, I developed an alter ego under the name Mónica Rodríguez Reis, whose practice emerged during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the first works created in this frame was the film *Isolation* (2020) (Figure 21), which depicted the life of a sea turtle, Bambi, confined within the four walls of a domestic aquarium. This metaphor of confinement simultaneously reflected the human condition of being locked within our own homes during global lockdowns. Bambi's life was in permanent quarantine, while for us, isolation was only a temporary interruption in our daily routines (Figures 22 and 23). He was bred in captivity, unfamiliar with the natural environment from which he derives, highlighting











↖
Figure 21 | Mónica Rodríguez Reis, *Isolation* (2020) [Video; online exhibition].

←
Figure 22 | Mónica Rodríguez Reis, *Our Quarantine* (2020) [Drawing on varnished metal plate and transparent acetate; dimensions 50 × 34 cm; online exhibition].

← ←
Figure 23 | Mónica Rodríguez Reis, *Capacity 120 L* (2020) [Drawing; dimensions 20 × 33 cm; online exhibition].

←
Figure 24 | Mónica Rodríguez Reis, *Moon Cycle* (2021–2022) [Soft-ground, intaglio, and lithography; dimensions 70 × 50 cm; two works from a series of twelve].

↓
Next page
Figure 25 | Ada Zielińska, *Home Office* (2021) [Photograph].

a parallel between human restrictions imposed by governmental regulations and the turtle's forced containment. In these conditions, isolation incorporates a crucial temporal dimension: it is only acceptable as a temporary suspension of freedom. A permanent or long-term suspension would contradict fundamental biological and social imperatives, underscoring how our status as social creatures is precariously suspended – a reality often overlooked in the domestication of other species.

The work explores the psychological experience of restricted movement and the fragility of freedom, translating the universal condition of isolation into a poetic and visual allegory. In Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Gregor Samsa awakening to find himself transformed into a useless and deformed insect, an extreme metaphor for alienation and loss of agency. His circumstance reflects the constraints imposed on individuals within rigid systems: as a society, we often must follow established guidelines, unable to alter our conditions or assert full self-determination. Similarly, both Bambi and humans under lockdown experienced a suspension of autonomy, highlighting the fragility of control over life and environment (Kafka, 2003).

Alongside *Isolation*, Mónica RR developed the *Moon Cycle* series (2021–2022) (Figure 24), using zinc plates and intaglio printmaking techniques to explore temporality, transience and loss. The cyclical phases of the moon became metaphors for life's fragility, inspired by the death of a close person and the awareness of the suddenness with which life can end. This alter ego functions as a quiet presence in my practice, reminding me of estrangement from the local context; by adopting the name Mónica Rodríguez Reis, I, Marta Belkot, merged with a Portugese identity while simultaneously maintaining a sense of foreignness. In this way, Mónica RR embodies a form of doubled subjectivity, both belonging and not belonging, understanding and not understanding the foreign language, that extends my inquiry into displacement, memory and the instability of home.

This figure resonates with theoretical reflections on estrangement and identity. Bulgarian-French philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva's (1991) notion of the stranger within, emphasizes the foreignness at the heart of subjectivity where identity is shaped by continuous negotiation with otherness. Italian-Dutch philosopher Rosi



Braidotti's (2011) concept of the nomadic subject similarly frames identity as fluid, hybrid and in constant motion, never entirely fixed in one place or body. The creation of an alter ego also aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) idea of becoming-other, where artistic practice involves deterritorialization and reterritorialization, generating subjectivities that exceed singular identity. Through these lenses, Mónica RR becomes not only a pseudonym but also an artistic strategy of estrangement; a means to inhabit another position and reflect on vulnerability, belonging, and displacement.

A different form of displacement emerges in artist Ada Zielińska's *Home Office* (2021), created for the law firm White & Case during the pandemic. In response to the company's deserted headquarters in Warsaw, Zielińska transformed a vacant conference room on the 38th floor into a temporary living space (Figure 25). Equipped with only a mattress, clothes, books and a computer, she inhabited the abandoned corporate environment for a week, wandering the empty floors in her pyjamas and documenting the surreal experience with a self-portrait.

The work reflects displacement in both literal and psychological terms: the inversion of home and office, the inhabiting of a space outside its intended function and the blurring of private and professional boundaries. Zielińska's actions resonate with Marc Augé's notion of *non-places* – anonymous, transitional sites like offices and airports, which she temporarily reclaims through her bodily presence. Her gestures also recall Michel de Certeau's reflections on everyday practices, where walking, wandering or inhabiting become ways of subverting and re-appropriating institutional spaces.

In this sense, *Home Office* can be placed in dialogue with Sophie Calle's *The Hotel* (1981), in which Calle worked as a chambermaid in a hotel, secretly documenting the personal belongings, habits, and spaces of the guests. By recording traces of private lives in a transient, public environment, she transformed a temporary hotel room into a site of intimate observation and relational engagement, highlighting the tension between presence and absence, public and private, and creating a subtle form of surveillance as artistic practice. Both works highlight how inhabiting spaces outside their expected use destabilizes the boundaries of public/private, work/domesticity, belonging/alienation. Yet, displacement can also take on a more somber and conflicted dimension, as in



Figure 26 | Ilya Kabakov, *The Toilet* (1992) [Photograph of installation; occupying a functional restroom space].

Ilya Kabakov's *The Toilet* (1992) (Figure 26). Unlike Zielińska's playful inversion, Kabakov reconstructs a communal Soviet toilet as a paradoxical home: a living space furnished with beds, tables and traces of domestic life inserted into a public facility. Here, the dislocation is not temporary or voluntary but emblematic of the impossibility of privacy and the loss of *home* under Soviet enforced communal life. Told through Kabakov's autobiographical voice, *The Toilet* becomes both personal and collective – an architecture of exile, memory and estrangement (Boym, 2001). Seen together, Zielińska, Calle, and Kabakov each expose different dimensions of displacement: playful re-appropriation (*Home Office*), intimate infiltration (*The Hotel*) and enforced unhomeliness (*The Toilet*). All three works reveal how fragile the concept of *home* can be, how easily it shifts, and how spaces never meant to be homes carry within them both traces of presence and the impossibility of true belonging.

The word *przemieszczenie* in Polish does not have an exact equivalent in English. On the one hand, *przmieszczenie* (neutral gender) does not have such a strong connotation to forced movement or resettlement as the English *displacement*; on the other hand, the Portuguese guese *deslocamento*[17] has shared meaning with Polish *przemieszczenie*.[18] Nevertheless, it could be translated into English

17 Priberam. (n.d.). Deslocação. In *Dicionário Priberam da Língua Portuguesa (Priberam Dictionary of the Portuguese Language).*

18 *Deslocação: Acto ou efeito de deslocar ou de se deslocar. = Deslocamento. Mudança de lugar. = Transferência. (Act or effect of displacing or of moving oneself. = Displacement. Change of place. = Transfer.)* Idem.

as *displacement* or *movement*, depending on the context. The word *displacement* generally means moving or shifting something from one place to another, both in a physical and metaphorical sense. The word *movement*, on the other hand, can mean *movement* or *displacement*, both in a literal and symbolic sense. The concept is somewhere in between. The significance of the inclusion of the Polish word *przemieszczenie* in the title is intended to pinpoint my own *displacement*. Not only the physical *displacement* migrating from Poland to Portugal, but also *displacement* as an internal clash in the context of language translations, in which the meanings are somewhat different. According to historical and contemporary dictionaries (Niedźwiedzki & Król, 1909; Tomaszczyk, 2009), *przemieszczenie* denotes concepts such as displacement, dislocation, movement, relocation, or transfer, while the verb *przemieścić* emphasizes the act of moving or translocating from one place or position to another. The etymology, tracing roots to words such as *suwać* (slide), *mieścić* (hold), and *ciec* (drip) with the prefix *prze-*[19], highlights the nuanced semantic and cultural resonance the term carries in Polish.

Transforming one's mother tongue into a foreign language profoundly shapes not only how one communicates, but also how one thinks, feels, and forms identity. As Polish-born Canadian-American writer Eva Hoffman articulates in *Lost in Translation* (1988), the shift from Polish to English is not simply linguistic – it is ontological, affecting how she experiences memory, emotion, time and the emotional price of recreating oneself. She describes the disruption of exile, the sense of uprootedness, the post-war Jewish experience of cultural dislocation, and so the cost of not understanding a new language.

I've become obsessed with words. I gather them, put them away like a squirrel saving nuts for winter, swallow them and hunger for more. If I take in enough, then maybe I can incorporate the language, make it part of my psyche and my body. I will not leave an image unworded, will not let anything cross my mind till I find the right phrase to pin the shadow down. (Hoffman, 1989, p. 216)

Her obsession with mastering English is a means of psychic survival, yet it simultaneously estranges her from her inner self, revealing how language and subjectivity are fundamentally entangled. Linguist scholar such as Aneta Pavlenko (2006) have extensively studied this phenomenon, arguing that bilinguals often report a split sense of self with different emotional registers tied to each language. Her research in *Emotions and Multilingualism* demonstrates that many bilinguals experience their first language as more emotionally resonant and their second language as more distanced, often used in formal, professional or academic settings. This mirrors Islandic singer Björk's (1965–)[20] own distinction: Icelandic is what she feels in, while English is a language she visits to work. Linguistic anthropologists such as Michael Silverstein and Elinor Ochs have shown how language is not just a tool for describing the world but a medium that shapes social experience and personal identity. This perspective is grounded in the idea of language socialization, which explores how language acquisition always happens within specific cultural frameworks, and therefore learning a new language also entails internalizing a new cultural logic. The dissonance many migrants and bilinguals feel is not merely about vocabulary but about inhabiting different systems of value, politeness, intimacy and expression.

From a philosophical perspective, Jacques Derrida's notion of the monolingualism of *the other* [21] (1996) offers another angle. He writes: *I only have one language; it is not mine.* Derrida, a French-speaking Algerian, captures the alienation inherent in living in a dominant language that historically acts as a symbol of colonialism. His phrase speaks to the colonial, diasporic, or minority subject's experience of linguistic survival, where the language one uses is both a means of inclusion and a reminder of exclusion. Cognitively, recent studies in psycholinguistics (e.g., Keysar et al., 2012) suggest that thinking in a second language can produce emotional detachment, often called the *foreign language effect*. This detachment can affect moral decision-making, emotional recall and interpersonal relationships. These findings add another layer to Hoffman's, Björk's and Derrida´s observations: the emotional valence of language is not merely subjective; it is neurologically and socially conditioned.

There are different reasons for displacement. Some reasons are tragic and beyond our control, like losing a loved one or a relationship ending. When I found the doll's house and the suitcase, I thought of my Iranian heritage. It is always with me, even though I now live in Manchester as a proud citizen of this diverse city. My heritage is my home. It is as if I packed in in it my suitcase at age of 21.[22]

19 *prze-* – attested from the 14th century, meaning through; during, in the course of; for the purpose of, for; because of; on account of; by means of; with the help of (Boryś, 2005, p. 487).

20 Bearn (2002) in *The Daily Telegraph* discusses Björk's reflections on language and life.

21 Derrida defines *the other* as the linguistic, cultural, and historical structures that precede the individual, shaping language, thought, and identity while introducing an inherent asymmetry between self and language (1966).

22 Rajabi (n.d.) discusses Rethinking the Grand Tour at Manchester Art Gallery.



Figure 27 | Mahboobeh Rajabi, *Suitcase* 1920–1930 [Photograph of object, dimensions unknown].

British-Iranian artist Mahboobeh Rajabi found a wooden doll's house and vulcanised fibre *Suitcase* (*1920–30*) (Figure 27) symbolizing the complexities of migration and heritage. Rajabi interprets these objects as extensions of personal memory and identity, demonstrating how objects can carry the sense of home across time and space.

William Blake's portraits of *Homer* (Figure 29) and *Dante*[23] from his *Heads of the Poets* series depict the intimate link between artistic creation and exile. Homer, through the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, embodies narratives of war, wandering and the search for belonging, while Dante's portrait articulates the profound personal and political consequences of banishment and the enduring longing for his beloved Florence. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante gives voice to the pain of exile:

You shall leave behind all that you love
most dearly, and this is the arrow
that the bow of exile shoots first.

(Paradiso, Canto XVII, 55–57)

Blake's engagement with Dante's work can be traced back to the early 1780s, when he produced two preliminary drawings of *Ugolino*. These studies later evolved into the twelfth engraving of *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* (1793) (Figure 28). The scene, taken from *Inferno*, depicts *Ugolino* and his four starving children imprisoned together. Beneath the image, Blake inscribed the caption: *Does thy God, O priest, take vengeance like this?* (Erdman, 1982, p. 33). By reinterpreting Dante's episode, Blake shifts the

23 Observation of the artworks *Suitcase*, *Homer*, and *Dante* in *Rethinking the Grand Tour exhibition*, Manchester Art Gallery, 24 November 2022 – 31 December 2025. The exhibition presents historical works alongside contemporary artists revisiting this legacy through the lenses of displacement, highlighting the ongoing influence of migration, heritage, trade, and empire on our perception of culture.

focus from moral judgment to the unbearable suffering of exile, imprisonment and hunger. Ugolino's torment becomes symbol of punishment for betrayal and illustration of displacement, alienation and the silence of divine justice.

Polish poet and a novelist Czesław Miłosz (1911–2004) in an introduction text to the exhibition catalogue *Exile* (1988) by Josef Koudelka[24] (1938–) says that *There is a period when we refuse to recognize that our displacement is irrevocable and no political or economic changes in the country of our origin can bring about our return* (p. 8). Subsequently, we gradually become aware that exile is not just a physical act of crossing state borders; it becomes an integral part of our identity, transforming us from within and becoming our fate. The human mass, in all its variety, gradually transforms into something recognisable as it acquires distinct features. Over time, a foreign language becomes familiar, with indi-

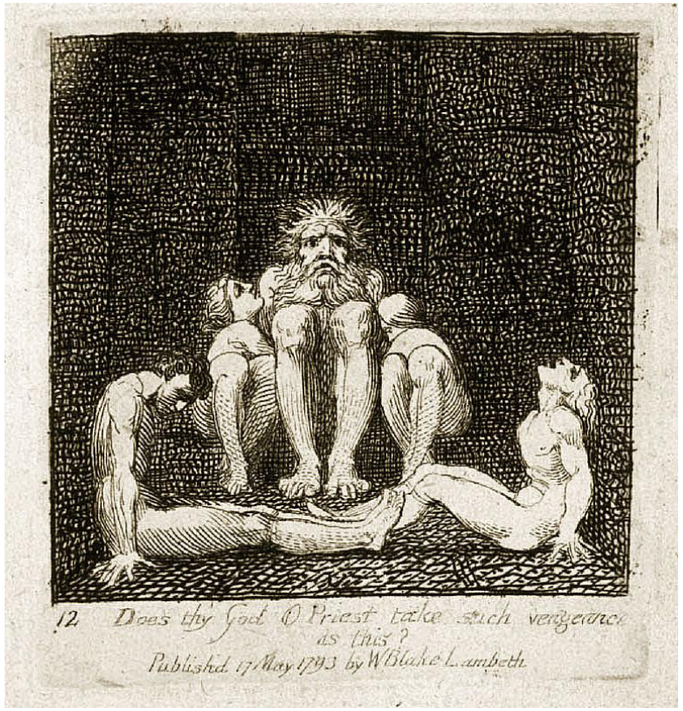


Figure 28 | William Blake (1757–1827), *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*, Plate 12 (1793) [Etching and engraving on paper; dimensions approx. 14 × 14 cm].

24 Josef Koudelka (b. 1938, naturalized French 1987) is a Czech photographer and a leading representative of the humanistic and poetic tradition in European photography in the second half of the twentieth century (MAGNUM Photos, n.d.).

vidual words appearing here and there, coming to mind like razor blades and cutting thoughts into small pieces. These pieces later form sentences, clothed in our new identity. Every population displacement, whether forced or voluntary, brings with it a certain number of adaptation-related difficulties. Although it is possible to communicate using simple body language in an initial period, a communication barrier emerges, shaping our new perception of reality as observers.



Figure 29 | William Blake (1757–1827), *Homer* (c. 1800–1803) [Tempera on canvas; dimensions 40 × 84 cm]

In my view, learning a new language involves a certain kind of loss: a loss in translation, a loss of memory or of words that express what others perceive, and a loss of connection to a coherent, intelligible whole. Language, as one of the available symbolic systems, not only establishes cultures and regulates social interaction, but also provides a shared framework from which we interpret and survey the world (Taylor, 1985). This void should not be understood negatively; rather, it can function as a tabula rasa,[25] a blank slate in which consciousness, belonging, and discernment are constructed. Although filling this emptiness may seem impossible at first, over time it occurs intuitively, so that one eventually inhabits what was once foreign almost seamlessly.

25 Tabula rasa is described in epistemology and psychology as a supposed condition that empiricists have attributed to the human mind before ideas are imprinted on it by the reaction of the senses to the external world of objects (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.).

THE LIFE OF OBJECTS

What does it mean to belong? Places, objects, images, or words are not neutral, they carry fragments of who we are. The processes of remembering and forgetting shape our understanding of the world and the history that preceded our existence. Photography can evoke vivid memories of places and of our ancestors: although with deceptive accuracy its invention allowed a more realistic depiction of reality that no earlier medium could aspire to. As French literary theorist Roland Barthes reflects in *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1981, p. 73)[26] a single image of his mother as a five-year-old in the *Winter Garden Photograph* becomes an expression for grief and recognition. He refuses to reproduce it in the book, arguing that its power lies in what it reveals only to him, a personal truth that cannot be shared or translated. In this image, he discovers the essence of his mother's kindness, a presence both haunting and final.

Similarly, Polish writer Marcin Wicha (1972–2025) in his book *Rzeczy, których nie wyrzuciłem* (*Things I Didn't Throw Out*), comes to terms with the remnants of his mother's life: her books, furniture, and everyday objects. Like Barthes, Wicha navigates loss through fragments. However, while Barthes finds emotional truth in a single photograph, Wicha finds it in the act of sorting, remembering, and ultimately deciding what to keep and what to discard. These seemingly ordinary items form a map of his mother's intellect, convictions, absence and presence. Both authors suggest that memory is not static, but is conjured through things that trigger emotion, association and sometimes silence.

There is a desire for connection through objects (Stewart, 1993). Objects do not merely represent the past; they perform it, re-enacting the presence of those who are no longer there. As sociologist Susan Stewart writes, in *On Longing* (1993 p. 136) the souvenir 'displaces the point of authenticity as it itself becomes the point of origin for narrative' (p. 136). This suggests that the object preserves an experience and subsequently transports it to a different

26 *I cannot reproduce the Winter Garden Photograph. It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the ordinary.* (Barthes, 1981, p. 74)

context. In the video piece entitled *Dad's Stick* (2012) [HD video] (Figure 30), the artist John Smith focuses on three apparently mundane objects given to him by his father. Of note is a stick used for the application of paint, which has accumulated layers of colour over the years. The artist made an incision in the object and employed a magnifying lens to capture an image. This image reveals sophisticated encapsulation of time, encompassing decades of house painting. Utilising minimalist narration and close-up imagery, Smith metamorphoses the stick into a conduit for personal and historical involuntary archives.

This phenomenon may be compared to the experience described by Marcel Proust in his work *In Search of Lost Time*, in which the taste of a madeleine (sponge cake)[27] dipped in tea unexpectedly revives a whole world of child hood memories. This phenomenon, however, does not stem from deliberate recollection; rather, it is what Proust termed *mémoire involontaire*, involuntary memory, a bodily, sensory stimulus that re-animates both time and emotion. As Proust writes, *the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls ready to remind us, waiting and hoping for their moment, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unfaltering, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection.*

(Proust, 2016. Vol. 1, p. 45).

27 *Little scallop-shell of pastry* (Proust. 2016, p. 44).



Figure 30 | John Smith, *Dad's Stick* (2012) [HD video; 5 min; colour, sound].

Reflecting on our current way of life reveals the close tying of our existence to objects, regardless of our profession. Things have always been intertwined with our daily activities. It seems impossible to imagine day to day life without them. Our material and temporal being-in-the-world is by definition a hybrid experience, a variety of temporal references. The present does not consist solely of elements from a single epoch; rather, it forms a multi-temporal field in which remnants of the past accumulate and remain active (Olsen, 2013). Norwegian archaeologist Bjørnar Olsen extends this line of thought by urging us to treat things not merely as symbols of human meaning, but as entities with their own histories, presences and agencies. In *In Defense of Things* (2010), he argues that objects do not disappear when forgotten or stored away; they endure, they *remember* in their own material way. That is: memory does not only reside in our minds or narratives; it also resides in things themselves, in their durability. I am reminded of a teapot and two floral glasses that once belonged to my aunt, Erica. She gave them to me during what turned out to be our final meeting, intuitively sensing that we might not see each other again. Alongside these, she offered me a white ceramic mug I had always used during visits – an object steeped in familial continuity, having once belonged to her own great-grandmother. I declined, out of a desire to resist finality, insisting there would be another visit and that I would still need something to drink from.

Through the chemical fixation of images, photography was the first technology in history to automate hand-eye coordination, also enabling the mechanical reproduction of existing images in combination with printmaking techniques. Photography not only placed the visual image at the centre of a wide range of social, cultural and scientific practices, it also radically changed the relationship between time, motion, by whom and where visual images were taken. From the time of its invention photography has shaped, moulded and emerged new societies, being used in every sphere of life from war reports, expeditions, natural catastrophes, to criminal, commercial, artistic, utilitarian, as well as in the affirmation and construction of personal identity, biography, social sta-

tus and memory (Ritzer, 2007). Memory, with the possibilities of its preservation through visual image, provides the great privilege to photography of being a deceptively documentary instrument. Its power lies in its apparent ability to record reality but as mentioned by Barthes (1981), also to change its content.

Photography introduces an ontological uncertainty into modern society by converting lived presence into a fixed object of representation; in this process, the subject is transformed into an image that can be viewed, circulated, and interpreted independently of the person depicted (Barthes, 1981, p. 13). Photographs never

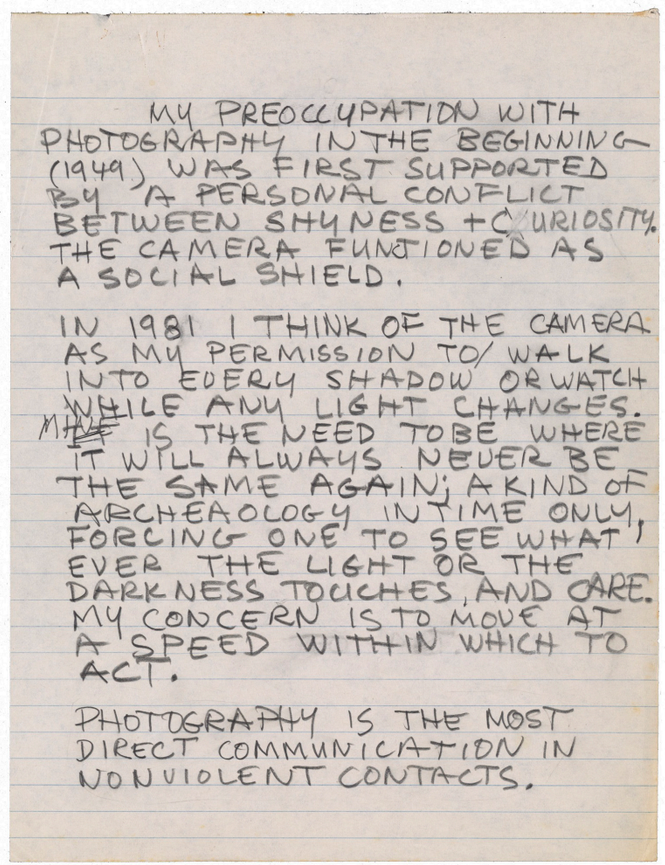


Figure 31 | Robert Rauschenberg, *My preoccupation with photography* ... (January 1981) [Handwritten draft; manuscript].

exist in isolation, they are always seen in a context that determines their meaning (Berger, 1972). Whether placed in a newspaper, a family album or an art gallery, the image's frame (literal and metaphorical) profoundly shapes its interpretation. Photographs are not passive representations of the world but active mediators of meaning and memory, reshaping our perception with time and experience (Flusser, 1983, p. 8). Photographer and writer Susan Sontag, in *On Photography* (1977) acknowledges its documentary power, and anesthetizing effects, as the more we see, the less we feel. This paradox lies at the heart of photography's role in memory as it preserves, but it also flattens; it clarifies but can also desensitize.

Flusser's critique echoes Proust's reflections on involuntary memory, though with a technological shift. Where Proust discovers memory in the ephemeral taste of a madeleine, Flusser sees a culture increasingly reliant on fixed, technologically stored memories, forgetting the unstable, fluid character of lived recollection. In this sense, the photograph becomes both a trace and an interruption of memory: an object that reveals and conceals, simultaneously. Photography enables the preservation of images of loved ones offering comfort in mourning and coping with death. This longing for permanence led, in the 19th century, to the development of photographic enamel, glazed, durable, and resistant to decay, for commercial purposes. Still visible in European cemeteries today, these photographic memorials endure even as the knowledge of their technique fades, much like the memories they were meant to preserve.

While early photography was often understood as a trustworthy document, this assumption has been questioned since the medium's beginnings and increasingly theorised, particularly from the 1970s onwards (Sontag, 1977; Tagg, 1988). Critiques of photographic realism have addressed photography's technical, ideological, and cultural conditions of production long before the advent of digital technologies. As editing tools proliferate and images circulate without fixed origin or stable context, the legibility of photographs as objective evidence has come further into question.

At the same time, this shift is not absolute. Although not directly concerned with documentary truth, German artist, filmmaker,

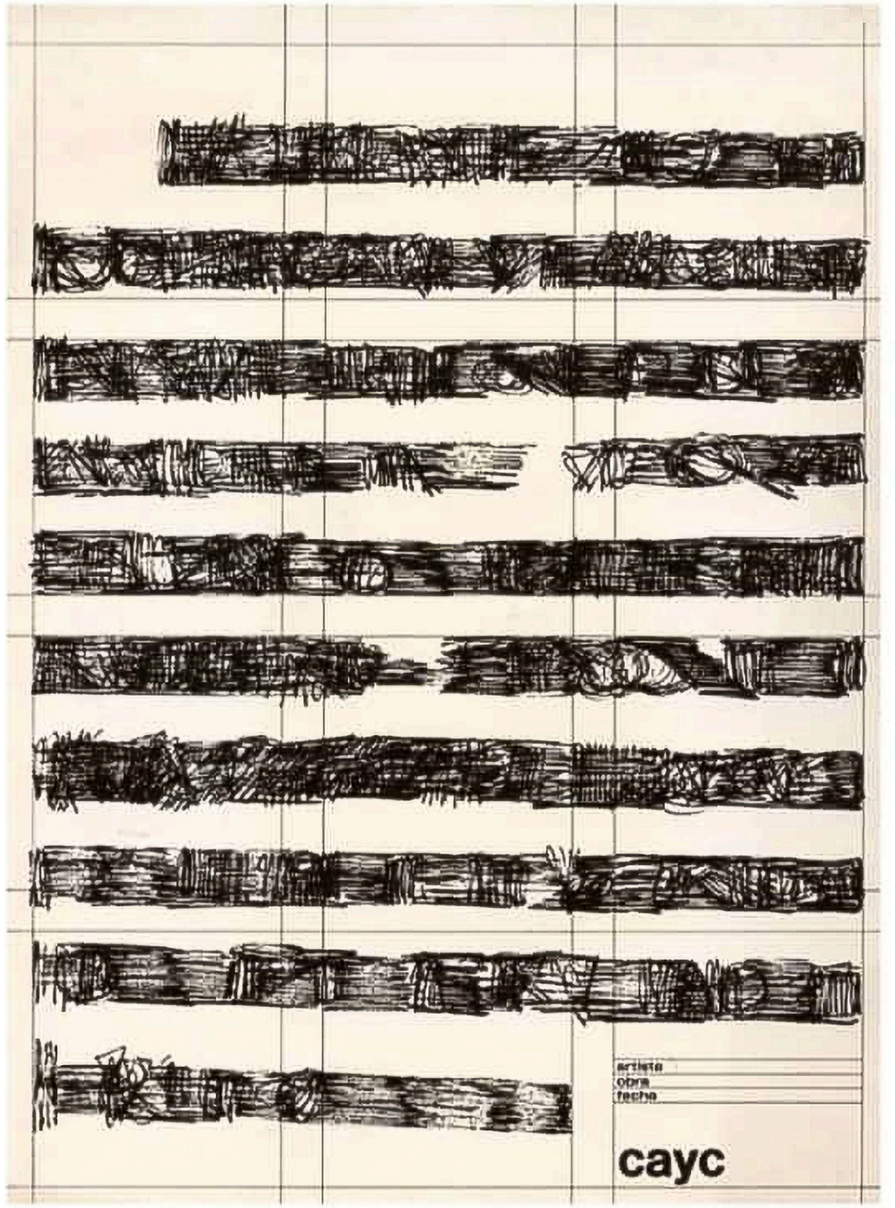


Figure 32 | Marta Bełkot, *No Title* (2019–2020) [Mixed media, gum printing, black lithographic ink, tape; series of 40; dimensions vary from 29 × 21 cm to 51 × 39 cm].

and media theorist Hito Steyerl argues in *In Defense of the Poor Image* (2009) that contemporary images are defined by compression, degradation, and accelerated circulation, while still maintaining a claim – however fragile – to a relationship with reality. This condition is visible in social media imagery, which often presents itself as authentic documentation while being heavily staged, filtered, or digitally manipulated. Despite these instabilities, photographs continue to play a crucial – if precarious – role as documentary evidence in journalism, activism, and legal contexts, where their truth value is simultaneously relied upon and persistently contested.

If photography today operates in tension between its documentary status and the instability of meaning, this tension is not limited to photographic images alone but applies more broadly to inscription-based practices that rely on trace, material support, and procedures of reading. Both photography and other forms of inscription do not guarantee immediate or unambiguous legibility; rather, meaning emerges conditionally, depending on time, context, and specific modes of interpretation. Questions of visibility, evidentiary value, and delay therefore extend beyond photography and become equally relevant to practices of writing.

The term *sympathetic* ink refers to a type of invisible ink that becomes legible only when exposed to a specific chemical agent. Unlike photography, where the problem often lies in excess visibility and contextual instability, sympathetic ink operates



→

Figure 33 | Mirtha Dermisache, *Página de un libro* (*Page from a Book*) (1974) [Offset print on paper; dimensions approx. 27 × 21.7 cm].



Figure 34 | Marta Bełkot, *Waiting. Cartography of Waiting / Cartografia de Espera / Kartografia Oczekiwania* (2019–2020) [Mixed media, transfer ink, paper and gummed tape on prepared surface papers with bichromate photosensitive solution; series of 12; dimensions 70 × 50 cm].

through postponement and selective revelation. In both cases, however, meaning is not given directly but is produced through a particular procedure – technical, temporal, or interpretive – that enables visibility. Writing letters to someone in the traditional way has the power of sympathetic ink favoring the required intimacy of a secret and sharing similarities with an analog photographic procedure, where time becomes a component of the process itself.

My work *No Title* (2019–2020) (Figure 32) is an attempt to construct ink, code, or pattern, to represent the very intimate, personal information, white deliberately operates through the construction of written messages that appear textual yet remain coded. The work is structured as if it contains language while systematically withholding semantic resolution. In this respect, *No Title* engages with the logic of delayed revelation associated with sympathetic ink as a procedural model in which meaning is present yet inaccessible, contingent upon conditions that remain undisclosed. This approach aligns with Roland Barthes's[28] dcc

28 Roland Barthes (1971, March 28) wrote to Mirtha Dermisache, describing her asemic works as "illegible writings" (in F. Bruno, 2018).

(1971) discussion of the work of Argentine artist Mirtha Dermisache whose practice he described as: (...) *forms that are neither figurative nor abstract, forms that could be called illegible writing, which leads readers to formulate something that is neither a specific message nor a contingent form of expression, but, rather, the idea, the essence, of writing.* This form of asemic writing resists comprehension and foregrounds writing as a material and temporal process rather than a communicative one (Figure 33).

My work *Waiting, Cartography of Waiting* (2019–2020) (Figure 34) is the continuation of the same attempt to operate within written yet coded messages. It mobilises the notion of sympathetic as an ethical and relational orientation toward others. The work developed alongside my practice of writing and posting handwritten letters to individuals whose stories I wished to hear, inviting forms of response grounded in attentiveness and empathy rather than interpretive mastery.

The series incorporates photosensitive materials whose responsiveness to light recalls the early photographic experiments of English scientist, inventor, and photography pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot, who observed that treated papers darken in sunlight in a manner comparable to the tanning of human skin (Talbot, 1844). This material sensitivity reinforces the work's concern with exposure, vulnerability, and temporal change.

The aim of this process was to capture the confessional potential of writing while acknowledging its fragility and indeterminacy. The work articulates expectations – concerning its participants, their narratives, chance encounters, uncertainty, and distance – only to suspend or release them. The photosensitive materials and their intermediate states reflect a central premise of the work: the inevitability of delay, the unforeseen, and the absence of complete control. Each mark, smudge, and layer of ink or tape evokes a letter that may never be read and a response that may never arrive. In this sense, the work becomes a meditation on waiting, understood not as a passive condition but as an active state charged with anticipation, anxiety, and the weight of time.

In traditional print workshops, this transitional phase is materially recorded. The displacement begins at the source matrix (point A), is temporarily captured on transport or specially prepared pa-

per and is ultimately transferred onto a final matrix (point B). The intermediary material, while ephemeral, retains traces of both origin and outcome, becoming an archival record of the transition itself. Similarly, in analogue photography, the in-between is constituted by light. It mediates the image altering the chemical structure of the photosensitive emulsion. As American art critic and art theorist Rosalind Krauss observes (1977) *every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by the reflection of light onto a sensitive surface*. A photograph is, therefore, a kind of icon or visual likeness that has an indexical relationship to its object (Krauss, 1977, p. 75). The photograph, then, is not merely a representation but a trace, reflective, fleeting and worn, a material residue of what once was. This in-between space resonates with the workings of memory. Like transfer paper – a type of paper used in printmaking to temporarily carry ink from a matrix to the final support – or a photographic emulsion, memory is transitional, unstable, and selective. It records, retains, fails to retain, imagines, distorts, and forgets, operating in the intermediate space between past and present selves. In this sense, memory functions materially and conceptually like print media: it is contingent on processes of mediation, susceptible to alteration, and dependent on both technique and context for its legibility. As Australian artist Deidre Brollo observes, contemporary print practices often explore this instability of memory and forgetting, highlighting the ways in which prints can document, distort, or defer recollection (Brollo, 2018, pp. 196–206).

The invention of photography had a profound impact on the relationship between artists and scientists. Images produced by the camera were not only faster and more accurate, but, crucially, could be created by scientists themselves (Daston & Galison, 2007). Nevertheless, scientific drawing persisted well into the late 19th century, even where photogravure or photolithography allowed for cheaper and more precise reproduction. Photography tended to be preferred in subjects that were controversial or otherwise prone to mistrust. The changes extended beyond image-making, reflecting a loosening of ties between scientists and artists. The expansive industrial development of the 19th century led to the production of high-quality materials for artistic use (artists could now easily purchase the necessary substances and pre-formulated inks for drawing and printing, eliminating the need to study and prepare these materials themselves). At the same time, market forces encouraged acquisition over personal experimentation (Cumming, 1948). While these developments mark a historical separation between artistic practice and scientific image-making, they also establish a material and conceptual framework that later artists would critically re-engage. In particular, the increasing availability of standardised materials and mechanical processes created the conditions under which questions of touch, trace, and embodied contact could be reintroduced as deliberate artistic strategies (Krauss, 1977).

Betty Goodwin was the child of Romanian immigrants who settled in Montreal. Her family background carried the memory of migration, cultural dislocation and survival. *Parcel series* (1969-70) (Figure 35) represents a decisive shift in her practice, where everyday materials were transformed through printmaking into carriers of memory and feelings. Using soft-ground etching, she passes through the press object in a direct contact with the soft ground applied to the metal plate before etching and printing, producing impressions that foreground process, texture and trace. She directly engages the reintroduction of touch, pressure, and embodied contact within mechanically mediated processes. The resulting images resemble wrapped bundles, objects simultaneously ordinary and charged, evoking ideas of containment, fragility and

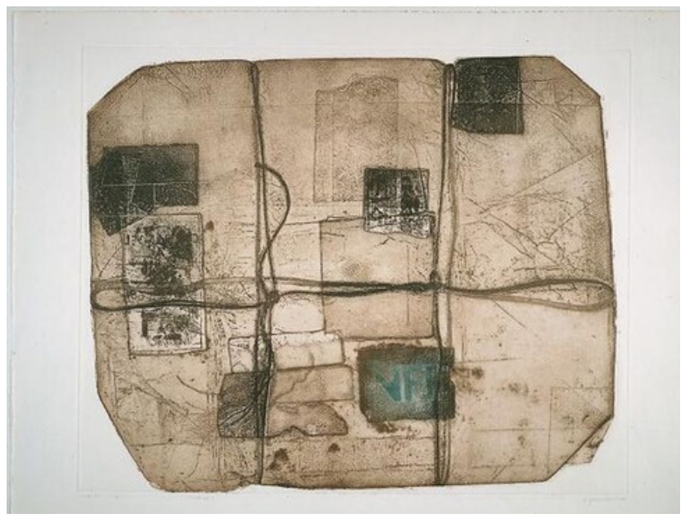


Figure 35 | Betty Goodwin, *Parcel Seven* (1969) [Soft-ground etching and etching in brown and blue on woven paper; dimesions 49.8 × 65.2 cm].



Figure 36 | Marta Bełkot, *Souvenir de voyage* (2022) [Gum printing; 18 stripes; dimensions 16 × 100 cm].

displacement. The parcels can be read as metaphors for the body itself-wrapped, bound and marked by external pressure – anticipating Goodwin's later *Vest* and *Swimmer* series in which garments and figures similarly function as vessels of vulnerability and memory. By treating the parcel as both a physical object and an index of absence, Goodwin collapses distinctions between materiality and meaning, reproduction and creation, situating her work within broader debates on memory, embodiment and the instability of form.

Just as Barthes saw photography as an index of loss – a medium haunted by the inevitability of time, challenging the assumption that photographs provide direct, stable access to reality (Barthes, 1984) – printmaking, especially in its photomechanical forms, shares this paradoxical nature. Like the photograph, the print is both proof and absence. Scholarly work on prints has highlighted this dialectical quality of the imprint, in which the mark made by contact both indicates the presence of a touch and simultaneously indicates its absence (Didi-Huberman, as discussed in Pelzer-Montada, 2018). It is a trace of something no longer there, a matrix impression left behind, replicated yet distant from its origin.

In the case of the family house, which no longer exists, the only possible image is one created not from direct sight but from memory and transmission – what is handed down, translated, and re-formed. Photomechanical print processes emerged in the 19th century primarily to stabilize and reproduce photographic images, giving them material endurance and enabling wider distribution. Yet in doing so, they also introduced layers of mediation: what we see is no longer simply the light that touched a surface but the translation of that light into chemical tone, etched metal, and printed ink. There is always a gap, a delay, a deferral in the translation from original event to reproduced image.



Figure 37 | Dario Robleto, *The Boundary of Life is Quietly Crossed* (2012–2013) [Installation view photography].

In that sense, printmaking – especially when it engages with memory, the archive, or the invisible – offers not only a means of reproduction but a language of loss (Didi-Huberman, 2018). Each impression carries within it the potential to repeat, but also the awareness that no repetition is ever perfect. This aligns with Gilles Deleuze's (1994) concept of repetition as difference, in which repetition is not the return of the identical but inherently involves variation and difference, revealing new aspects of what is repeated. Just as no story of the lost house is ever quite the same, each print is both faithful and estranged.

Printmaking is thus not merely a craft of image-making but a metaphor for remembrance: it relies on matrices, negatives and positives, pressures and absences. Like the stories my father tells – stories that print the house into being for a moment – prints work from what is no longer there and, in doing so, make it momentarily present. The printmaking matrix, placed in a drawer after its use, is not erased; it exists in latency, holding the traces of touch, labour, and intent. Olsen's material ontology reframes our relationship with objects, not as static representations of loss, but as active participants in a world of affect and memory. The matrix is not just a tool; it is a thing that matters, that bears witness to what was and what can become again.

This idea of the sensory trace is mirrored in the printmaking process, where physical contact leaves behind marks, imprints and textures that are more than visual, they are haptic records of time and intention. Like the madeleine, the print is a residue of touch and the matrix that made it, is its silent witness – retired, stored but charged with the potential to recall. Proust's insight bridges beautifully with Stewart's idea of the souvenir as a displaced object of longing and with Bjørnar Olsen's defence of the material endurance of things. The print matrix, no longer active but still intact, functions like Proust's madeleine: its material presence holds the possibility of unbidden remembrance. Even hidden in a drawer, it holds the sensuous memory of pressure, heat and friction – the bodily dialogue between artist and object. And if, as James Clifford suggests, theory itself travels – constructed not from universals but from partial, embodied experience – then one's use of the

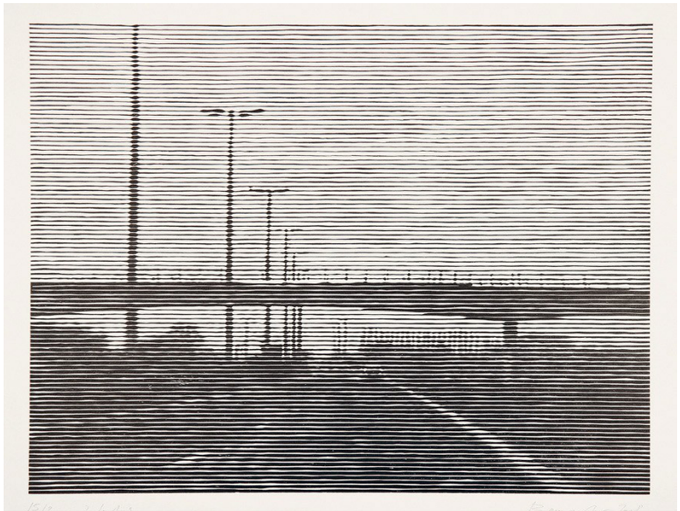


Figure 38 | Christiane Baumgartner, *Gent* (2008) [Woodcut on Zerkall paper; dimensions 53 × 75.6 cm].

matrix, with all its tactile and temporal specificity, becomes a way of thinking through memory. In this light, Proust does not merely offer a literary anecdote but a model for how material traces – like prints – can summon the self and its histories into the present.

Drawing on Stewart's analysis of the *souvenir* in *On Longing* (1993), where it functions as a mediated object transforming material fragments into a narrative space of memory, my work *Souvenir from Voyage* (Figure 36) similarly mobilizes materiality to reactivate memory through fragmentation. Stewart emphasizes that the souvenir does not reproduce experience directly, but constructs meaning through partial and displaced traces that stand in for lived time and place.

The work is informed by my journey back to Portugal after a three-month exchange in Limoges, France, during which I witnessed the aftermath of wildfires across Spain and Portugal. This experience, along with photographic studies of the damaged ceiling of the burnt house in Porto, was translated into an abstract, tactile form.

The work consists of 18 pieces made using bichromate gum printing, by applying several layers of pigments. The layering resists the flattening of memory, embedding temporal disjunction, material fragility, and repetition into the work. The strips' arrangement allows for variation with each installation, echoing the shifting landscapes of the journey and the architectural traces of the burnt house. Rather than presenting a coherent visual narrative, the piece preserves fragmented traces alongside the emotional and temporal weight of the journey. In this way, *Souvenir from Voyage* becomes a record that resists forgetting.

The act of printing, layering, pressing, absorbing, echoes the slow accretion of memory. It is not a coincidence that printmaking historically dealt with both communication and preservation: it is a language of duplication but also of ghosts. In my own work, I use materials such as coal, porcelain, glass and enamel. Although these materials are not usually associated with printmaking, they are the result of a combination of techniques that enable hybridisation allowing for new context. They are symbolic and mnemonic. They are the things that remain. This material persistence is felt in the work of German artist Christiane Baumgartner, whose woodcuts translate fleeting digital moments, vehicles passing, landscapes

scrolling, into laborious, hand-carved impressions (Figure 38). Her prints do not simply record the instant; they trace its passage, transforming ephemeral events into enduring marks.

American artist Dario Robleto approaches this theme through poetic reconstruction. *The Boundary of Life Is Quietly Crossed* (2012–2013) is organised around vitrines and display cases that frame the works as fragile fragments of evidence. The centrepiece, *Things Placed in the Sea Become the Sea*, comprises hybrid sea urchins assembled from stretched audiotape (featuring recordings of heartbeats and retrograde space probe signals), salvaged vinyl LPs and remains of marine life. These spiky, shimmering forms serve as

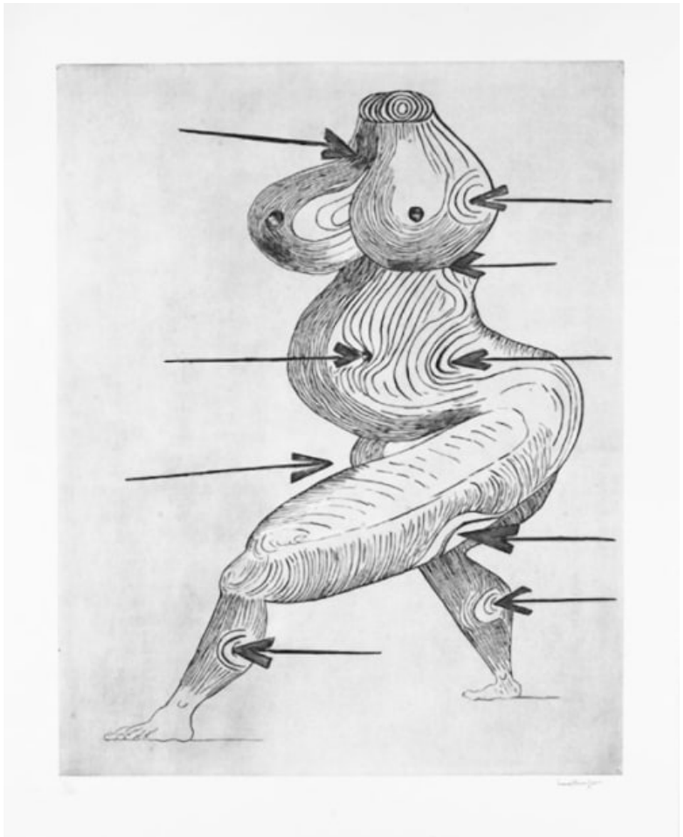


Figure 39 | Louise Bourgeois, *Sainte Sébastienne* (1992) [Dry point; approximately 120.5 × 94.5 cm]

memorials to fading transmissions, pulses and technologies, each one a miniature shrine to human loss and endurance. Robleto uses a variety of materials in his work, including letters, melted vinyl and powdered bone, to reassemble forgotten gestures into offerings that carry the weight of love, absence and hope.

French artist Louise Bourgeois's work, deeply interwoven with autobiographical threads, reveals how memory and recollection falter, blur and stretch over time. Her drypoints, engraved and drawn images, record the fleeting visions she described as, catching flies in flight, in her diaries (Figure 39). Like her sculptures, which are organic and ambiguous and shaped by fantasy and memory, her prints expose the unstable forms that surface from remembrance. She gathered, stripped down, deconstructed and reassembled, transforming printmaking into a process of loss and recovery. This is especially evident in *Sainte Sébastienne*, her reinterpretation of the martyr pierced by arrows as a female figure. First attempted in 1990 and revisited repeatedly, the work evolved through cropping, photocopying and transfers to copper plates. Each iteration added another layer, transforming the image into both a wound and a talisman: a visual memory reshaped by time. Bourgeois reimagines classical imagery from a feminine perspective, exploring the tension between passivity and aggression, rejection and the psychological siege one can endure. She returns again and again to the residues of family, trauma and longing.

Printmaking, as a medium, lends itself to engaging in physical-material as well as mental-emotional thematics of trace and loss. The matrix, the plate, stone or block are held close throughout the process. It is in form of a touched, carved, inscribed, inked and wiped; it absorbs the body's gesture, pressure and intent. Yet in the final stages, the matrix disappears. Normally it does not accompany the prints it has produced, instead, it is stored away, filed, or forgotten. As American art professor Kathryn Reeves argues in *The Re-vision of Printmaking* (2018), printmaking speaks in *the language of the trace*, the image is always a residue of contact, something no longer present, highlighting the medium's embodied, material, and relational nature (Reeves, 2018, p. 80).

The body, as a matrix of habitual actions, is crucial for habitual memory or, in other words, for bringing the past into the present. Things are involved in this process not only as a means of completing the action but also because they make the material action and experience familiar and predictable (Olsen, 2013). Printmaking is a form of translation, from one surface to another, from memory to mark. It works in layers, in opposites, black and white, negative and positive, absence and presence and almost always it the mirror side. The word *matrix* shares a linguistic root with mater – mother (Reeves, 2018). In this light, the matrix can be seen as a metaphorical womb: a site of origin, of nurture and ultimately, of separation. The print is born from its matrix but must leave it behind to exist in the world. As in Barthes' photograph or Stewart's souvenir, what remains is a fragment, something that gestures toward what is no longer there. Printmaking, then, becomes a medium not only for reproduction but of remembrance. It holds the presence of touch and the ache of its passing.

2

THE SEA

Now realization, I think, is thought and feeling together. Because feeling itself is completely unable to act, and thought also is unable to act, but thought and feeling combined create a kind of realization. This realization can be said to be a sense of order, a sense of the nature of sense.

Kahn, L. I. (1991). *Louis I. Kahn: Writings, lectures, interviews.* Rizzoli International Publications (p.82).

THE FEELING

William M. Ivins, Jr[1] (1881–1961) at the beginning of his book *How Prints Look* (1943), uses the words of Plotinus (204/5–270 A.D.):[2] *Remember that there are parts of what it most concerns you to know which I cannot describe to you; you must come with me and see for yourselves. The vision is for him who will see it [sic].* As much as these words made sense to William Ivins in the context of his book, so much do Plotinus' words resonate with us as we explore printmaking techniques, where knowledge needs to be experienced, not only by physical engagement, but also by observation and vision. Although what Ivins was referring to was not so much knowledge of the technical aspect of printmaking, but the recognition of technique by looking at the final product (print), we[3] believe that the awareness of the practicing printmaker can shake the perception of the history and art.

Looking at primary sources such as the original treatises, manuals and notes of the nineteenth-century masters, a practising printmaker can easily relate, connect and synchronise certain information, through the specific sensation that comes from experience. Many products like cameras, films, inks, transfer or prepared surface papers were fast commercialised, as evidenced by an abundance of adverts at the beginning or the end of art and craft books and manuals from the 19th and 20th century. David Cumming in his book *Handbook of Lithography* (1948) in the context of making of ink, suggested to rather buying than to do it yourself.[4] Even with a step-by-step description and detailed illustrations, the formulae for the production of a lithographic drawing ink, crayon or transfer ink, as well as a prepared surface paper or photographic enamel, seem rather difficult to execute, not only because of the enormous leap in time involved, but also because of the very specific tensions within the obtaining of patents or commercial licences that existed and probably prevented the old masters from writing honestly, with the most ingenious ways of hiding indispensable details of the processes.

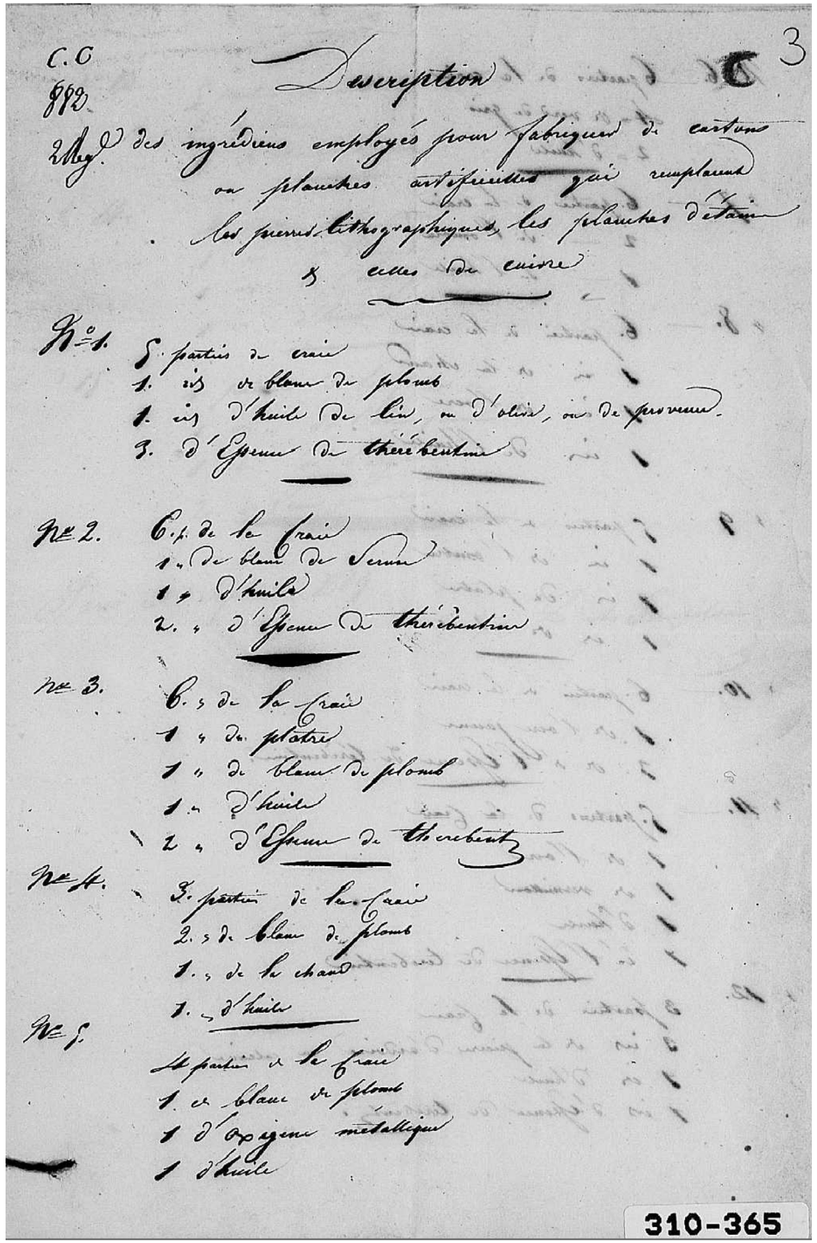


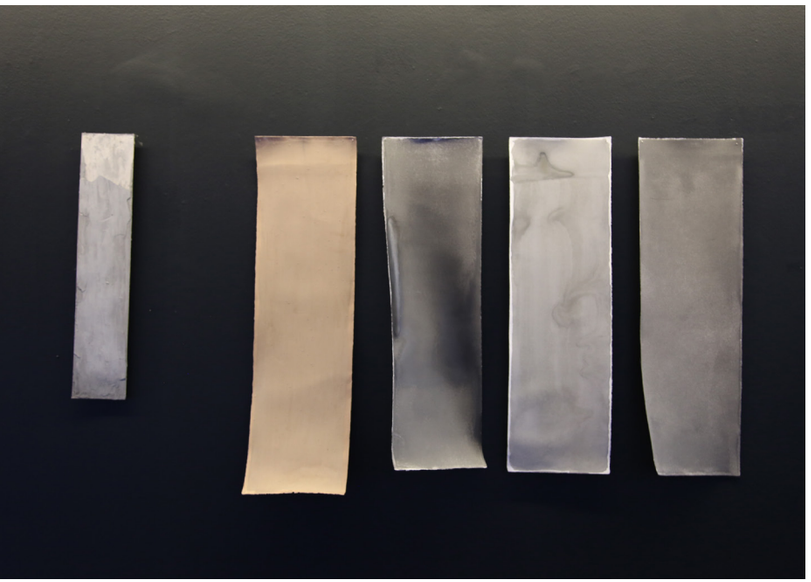
Figure 40 | Aloys Senefelder, French patent for stone paper (filed 1819, issued 1820) [Patent no. 1844 (1BA1258), (1BA1258(1); reproduced document].

1 William M. Ivins, Jr (1881–1961) was a curator and one of the first art historians to promote an approach to prints that went beyond the then typical connoisseurial approach to understanding prints, in the department of prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

2 Plotinus (205–270 CE), ancient philosopher and founder of the Neoplatonic school; see Armstrong, *Plotinus, Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

3 This Chapter is mostly written in the second person plural, reflecting the collaborative nature of the work and research. Here, the processes were shared, transparent, and collective.

4 *(...) it is not advisable that private individuals should attempt to make them, except in the way of experiment. They may all be bought from manufacturers who make these inks as a special line of business and are therefore better able to give a reliable and more equal quality than could be obtained by an amateur, however careful he might be* (Cumming, 1948, p. 20).



← →
Figure 41 | Marta Belkot and Graciela Machado, Examples of stone paper, produced for *II Bienal de Ardósia do Valongo* (2021) [Exhibition view, GroundLAB: Ensaios sobre a ardósia, Fórum Cultural de Ermesinde, Ermesinde, Porto District, Portugal].

The inventor of lithography,[5] Aloys Senefelder (1771–1834), himself published a patent[6] for stone paper that could have replaced limestone – light, easy to transport, simple to make – but did he really want people to know how to do it? (Figure 40) As we recreated his fifteen recipes,[7] we realised that probably not (Figures 41 and 58). Not only were some of them impossible to apply to the desired surface because we had to manipulate within the original recipe to make them spread, but also their potential as a matrix was not of great capacity.[8] As practitioners, we can simply sense certain obstacles when recreating various processes and recipes where intuition seems to be an indispensable part of the recognition and process. This aligns with philosopher Michael Polanyi's (1966) concept of *tacit knowledge*,[9] which he describes as knowledge that we possess but cannot fully articulate. Polanyi famously stated, *We can know more than we can tell* (p. 4) highlighting the implicit nature of much of our knowledge. Photographers Maskell and Demachy in the book *Photo-Aquatint or the Bichromate Process* (1901, p. 41), comment on the experience of the maker, which touches the heart of the matter:

In the preparation of the coating mixture and its application to the paper, a certain amount of practice will teach a good deal. For instance, the right consistency for coating

5 The process of lithography (Aloys Senefelder invention, 1797) in brief consists of drawing or painting with greasy crayons and inks on limestone. The stone is etched and when moistened with water, the traces of ink repel the water and remain dry. Oily inks applied with a roller adhere only to the drawing and are repelled by the wet parts of the stone (Mayer, 1930, p. 377).

6 INPI, French patent no. 1844 (1BA1258), (1BA1258(1), *Procédé de fabrication de planches artificielles à imprimer, appelé papyrographie*, SENEFELDER (1819). https://archives.inpi.fr/brevets?detail=429048

7 Bełkot and Machado, Papel-pedra [Stone Paper] (2023), in Litografia in situ: Pedra e Papel, pp. 138–140.

8 Or at least the capacity he claimed for the ones he produced by himself.

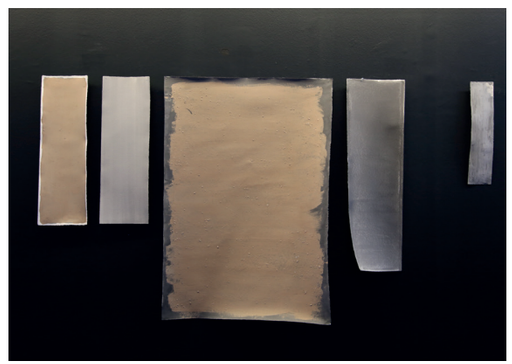
9 Tacit knowledge denotes knowledge acquired through practice and experience, operating implicitly through embodied skills and perceptual judgment rather than through formalized rules or verbal explanation (Polanyi, 1966).

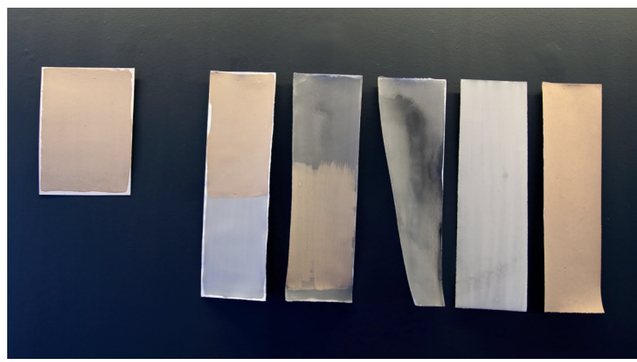
will be instinctively recognised without the necessity of weighing and measuring. One finishes by feeling what is the right proportion. It cannot be explained. It is like the knack of an engraver wiping the plate with the palm of his hand – he feels that it is right – while another man doing the same thing would do it wrong.

The *feeling* seems indispensable to a decision process; it is when intuition comes into play in the creation of art.

The feeling is formed not only by observation, but know-how contact with tools and materials, the rhythms of gestures and tactile responses that shape an artist's perception. Philosophical discourse on the senses has repeatedly emphasized the unique epistemic role of touch in grounding human knowledge of external reality. While vision, hearing, smell and taste can be deceptive, touch uniquely affirms external reality, as it directly engages us with resistance, texture and solidity. In his theory of sensation, written in 1754[10] Etienne Bonnot de Condillac[11] is arguing that *Knowledge forms and develops solely through sensory experience*. Condillac viewed the sense of touch as a central way to explore how our experiences shape the way we perceive the world (Lajer-Burcharth, 2017, p. 88).

Artistic practice can be understood as a mode of knowledge production, a form of philosophy in action, where insight emerges through embodied, sensory engagement with materials rather than through predetermined objectives (Barrett, 2007). In his essay, Professor Cameron Tonkinwise[12] examines the epistemology of making, arguing that creative practice is a form of knowing distinct from abstract or universal knowledge. Drawing on British academic and writer Paul Carter's Material Thinking (2004), Tonkinwise (2008) uses the phrase, *makingly knowing*[13] to point





10 *Traité des sensations* (1754; Condillac's *Treatise on the Sensations*, 1930) after: (Amini, 2023).

11 Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715–1780), French philosopher, psychologist, logician, and economist; see the entry in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

12 Professor Cameron Tonkinwise teaches Service Design and researches Sustainable Design at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

13 From the article: Tonkinwise, C. (2008). Knowing by being-there making: Explicating the tacit post-subject in use. *Studies in Material Thinking*, 1(2).







Figure 42 | Marta Bełkot and Sandra Costa Brás (late PhD student), Documentation of collaborative recreation of prepared surface papers for examination within the Gillotage and photolithography processes (Winter 2020) [Sandra Costa Brás residence, Porto, Portugal].

out a type of intelligence that does not result from knowing, but from not-yet-knowing; that is, from repeatedly performing an activity, working with different materials and experiencing different variations, encountering obstacles and understanding their properties. *Makers know. (...) They know that they know, or feel that what they are feeling is type of knowing (...)* Tonkinwise emphasises that makers possess a unique, practical knowledge of materials that is distinct from scientific understanding. This knowledge concerns what materials can become rather than what they are. It emerges through hands-on experimentation and iterative composition. It is inherently conditional, tied to specific experiences and possibilities and cannot be fully predicted or abstracted. This knowledge is important because it enables innovation: through this tacit, material-centred insight, makers reveal potentialities in materials that few others perceive, producing new and significant outcomes. Crucially, no expertise is singular; as Tonkinwise notes, tacit knowing arises from three interrelated sources, the material properties and their possibilities, the embodied skills of practitioners, and the empathetic negotiation inherent in co-creative work (Figure 42). In such contexts, knowledge and action emerge through relational processes in which participants attune to one another's embodied judgments, negotiate differences in intention and interpretation, and collectively shape outcomes that no single participant fully determines. Australian artist, writer, and academic Estelle Barrett (2007) argues that *knowledge is derived from doing and from the senses* (p. 1). She stresses that within studio-based research, innovation often derives from emergent, unpredictable processes, shaped by subjective and relational concerns. Far from being opposed to *explicit knowledge,*[14] tacit knowledge functions in tandem with it, manifesting as intuitive, situational skill (Polanyi, 1969; Bourdieu, 1990). These processes allow researchers to encounter perspectives, situations, and phenomena that are not easily captured through conventional methods, making visible social realities that are often marginalised or overlooked. In this sense, artistic research holds an interdisciplinary potential: by bringing into view marginal or unrecognised social realities, it reinvents relations and contributes to the evolution of research practices capable of addressing complex contemporary issues (Carter, 2004; Rowe, 2003). American sociologist Richard Sennett (2008) emphasizes that craftsmanship involves a deep, often unconscious, understanding of materials and processes. This form of knowing is grounded in contact – understood not only as physical proximity, but as an epistemological condition in which knowledge emerges through embodied encounter rather than detached observation. As Jennifer L. Roberts (2021) argues in relation to print, contact names the moment in which material,

14 Explicit knowledge is a term popularized by Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (1995) to describe knowledge that can be codified, articulated, and transferred. Its conceptual roots lie in Michael Polanyi's (1966) distinction between tacit and articulable knowledge

body, and history meet, producing meaning through pressure, transfer, and trace. It is through such proximity that artistic research reinvents relations and generates forms of knowing attuned to complexity and materiality.

Learning and pursuing traditional printmaking techniques with its multi-disciplinary potential is a philosophical and material initiation. As printmaking theorist Kathryn Reeves observes in her chapter *The Re-vision of Printmaking* (2018) in Perspectives on Contemporary Printmaking (ed. Ruth Pelzer-Montada), *touch always results in a print*, reminding us that the body is not the centre of discourse, but a locus embedded within historical and material relations. Reeves further highlights that prints operate simultaneously as traces, identities, evidence, and reproductions, underscoring their capacity to hold multiple meanings and temporalities at once. As artist and scholar, Ruth Pelzer-Montada (2008) observes, printmaking has shifted from a focus on mechanical reproduction to a conceptual and tactile orientation, focusing on the surface as a site of tactile and material engagement, highlighting the tension between physical presence and the flatness of digital images, the surface becomes both materially and intellectually activated. While this is only one important aspect of contemporary printmaking, it demonstrates how artists increasingly work with materiality and process to produce meaning (Pelzer-Montada, 2008).

Contemporary practice also produces meaning through the reconstruction of lost techniques and materials that have fallen out of use or become obscure due to industrial secrecy, commercial obsolescence, or fragmented knowledge. This requires recovering lost or encrypted formulas, decipher ambiguous manuals and reconstructing processes, turning the artist into a craftman, historian, a media archaeologist and detective. In printmaking language, *we bleed* when the margin of the print is excised. The margin, and the identification with the marginal, are deeply embedded within the printmaking psyche (Reeves, 2018, p. 73), reflecting how engagement with overlooked or peripheral elements of the medium — and by extension with marginalized social realities – contributes to meaning-making.

TECHNICAL, TECHNOLOGICAL

In *The Painter of Modern Life*, French poet, essayist, translator and art critic Charles Baudelaire (1863) says that an artist must be the spiritual citizen of the universe. This meant that the modern artist had to possess necessary qualities such as constant observation, a deep interest in contemporary subjects and a genius of curiosity comparable to that of a child. The Impressionist artists were much less critical than Baudelaire, but Degas (1834–1917), with his rare curiosity, was the exceptional one, engaging in experiments considered strange by most of his colleagues. His monotype *Heads of a Man and a Woman* (*Homme et femme, en buste*), c. 1877–1880 (Figure 43), exemplifies the experimental nature of his practice, in which unusual inking, wiping, and transfer techniques produce subtle textures, tonal variation, and spontaneous effects. What really seems to have motivated Degas was something more fundamental – a fascination with the technical as such (Reff, 1976). He assumed the existence of a mystery. Today, everything is more than ever readily available, but still the technical, complex processes of the 19th century are often difficult and extremely time-consuming, and for this the curious and resilient mind seems indispensable. In the time of Baudelaire and Degas, huge industrial devel-

Figure 43 | Edgar Degas, *Heads of a Man and a Woman* (*Homme et femme, en buste*), c. 1877–1880 [Monotype on paper; dimensions 7.2 × 8.1 cm].



opments and endless inventions were an extremely fascinating factor. Even today, some of these processes, technical as such, commercial, photomechanical, reproductive and obscure, are more than fascinating and, thanks to the digital revolution, easily accessible and therefore available for recreation.

But why? Why spend so much time and energy recreating 19th century photomechanical inventions? Why go back to times where everything was analogue when we have such technological and digital possibilities, today? Especially when most of these technologies have never been in the hands of artists, or perhaps largely because of that? Well, there is no direct answer that explains the fascination with technology as such, either decades ago or today. However, this return to obsolete or superseded technologies is not unique to this research, but resonates strongly within contemporary art and wider cultural practice. Many artists, including Christian Marclay, William Kentridge, Vera Molnar, Luke Fowler, and Dario Robleto have deliberately engaged with outdated media and historical technologies as part of their artistic methodologies (Kernbauer, 2022; Parikka, 2012; Cubitt, 2014). Such practices are often discussed through the lens of media archaeology, where historical technologies are approached as active sites of knowledge rather than as nostalgic remnants (Parikka, 2012; Zielinski, 2006). For those who enjoy the world of materiality, which through technology and selected techniques can aptly express an aesthetic and conceptual point of view, vital and complex technological processes open a rich and delightful world of prompted hybridisations.

The need to reconstruct certain steps and processes from 19th century manuals places us – the artist-researchers – at the crossroads between material research, the digitisation of information, and the artistic drive for creation. Among the main motivations for this methodological approach is the desire to restore material processes, to challenge dominant narratives about the linear progress of print media, and more broadly, to make ourselves more resilient and informed in the face of contemporary conditions of production and knowledge. Such an attitude towards technology and technique not only situates printmaking in a specific context but also opens up its interdisciplinary potential. The re-evaluation of obsolete commercial techniques and discontinued materials – such as transfer papers, prepared surfaces, stone paper, inks, and crayons – alongside forgotten processes like gillotage, photo enamel, or lithophany, constitutes a form of *technological archaeology*.[15]

15 See Introduction, p. 20, foodnote 10.

In this context, technological archaeology refers to a methodological approach that combines critical historical inquiry with hands-on material reconstruction, through which obsolete photomechanical and authographic printmaking techniques are experimentally reactivated within contemporary practice. This line of inquiry has been developed over more than a decade at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP). As previously outlined by Graciela Machado and Paula Almozara (2024) technological archaeology encourages consideration of material properties and physico-chemical interactions. Engaging with complex procedures, specialized equipment or revisiting early workshop practices, sometimes in dialogue with photography, shows how hands-on research can deepen our understanding of these media and their links to contemporary practices (Machado & Almozara, 2024) (Figures 44 and 45). This approach aims to uncover the hidden layers of media history through practical engagement, challenging linear narratives of progress and restoring the tactile intelligence embedded in early industrial processes. Beyond its

Figure 44 | *Pure Print Archaeology* (PPA), *1st research meeting (2023)* [3-day session dedicated to photomechanical and innovative printmaking practices; FBAUP and Marques da Silva Foundation View from the accompanied exhibition in *situ* — *ex situ*; oMuseu FBAUP].



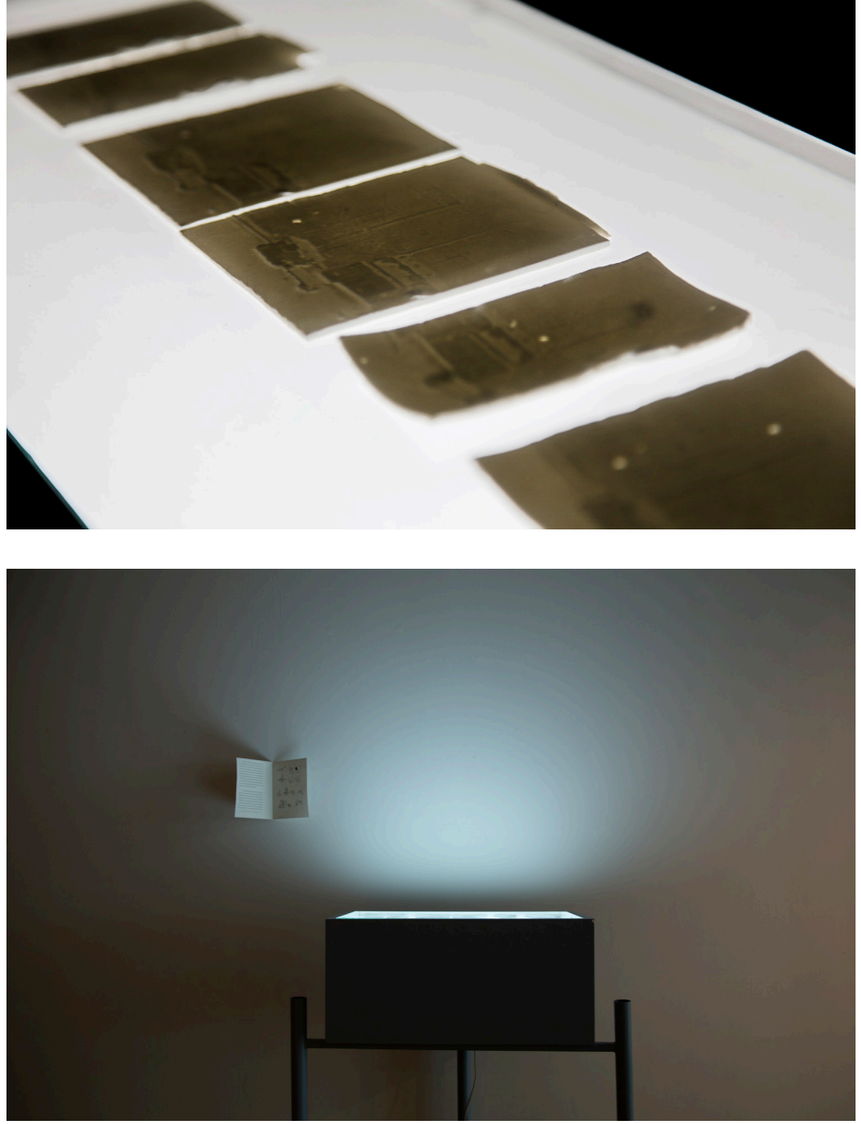


Figure 45 | Marta Bełkot, *Lithophane research project* (2023) [Pure Print Archaeology (PPA), 1st research meeting; 3-day session dedicated to photomechanical and innovative printmaking practices; View from the accompanied exhibition in situ — ex situ; oMuseu FBAUP].

technical and aesthetic value, such engagement carries cultural, social, and political significance: it interrogates assumptions of technological determinism, highlights marginalized or forgotten modes of production, and makes visible the human labour and material conditions embedded in early industrial and artistic practices (Parikka, 2012; Kernbauer, 2022; Cubitt, 2014). By doing so, it encourages reflection on how contemporary media infrastructures are historically conditioned and whose knowledge and labour have historically been acknowledged – or erased – within these systems. In this context, reconstruction is not merely a technical exercise; it becomes a tactical method for engaging directly with the latent potential of historical media. It embodies an active refusal to treat these materials and methods as obsolete or irrelevant, reflecting their broader cultural, social, and political significance. Through dynamic, hands-on laboratory activities, we sought to uncover the essence of these processes, how they were designed and constructed, and to explore aspects that have traditionally been overlooked by mainstream media archaeology.

Such an approach aligns with the work of Siegfried Zielinski, Jussi Parikka and Wolfgang Ernst, whose writings emphasize the critical role of archives and digital media in preserving, reinventing and recontextualizing obsolete techniques and practices. In Digital Memory and the Archive, Ernst and Parikka highlight how digitalization enables a reactivation of media histories, creating new points of tension and dialogue between past and present technologies (Ernst, 2013; Parikka, 2012; Zielinski, 2006). Zielinski draws upon thinkers like Bataille, Blanchot, Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault to argue for *giving all that is heterologous*[16] *a chance* (Zielinski, 2006, p. 26) by embracing experimental practices that push boundaries beyond the formalised. In the context of this work, contemporary printmaking techniques and theirs fusion with different media, the experiments executed, navigate toward the incalculable and the unknown recovering not just materials, but lost epistemologies and ontologies embedded in print history. This reconstruction redirects attention toward richer, more nuanced grounds than the classical, often unreconstructed approaches to printmaking. Moreover, it foregrounds the shared histories of print and photography, revealing their intertwined development and mutual influence.

The displacement of these processes from their original 19th century context into the 21st century, now propelled by digitalization, creates fertile ground for interme-

16 Heterologous is used here in the sense developed by Siegfried Zielinski to describe elements of different origins—historical, material, technical, or epistemological—brought into productive relation. Rather than implying unity or linear development, heterology foregrounds difference, experimentation, and the coexistence of multiple temporalities within media practices.

diality within the visual arts. It fuses traditional printmaking with contemporary reinterpretations of the *old*, blurring boundaries between analogue and digital. Far from being slow or nostalgic, this tactile and experimental engagement encourages reflexivity: a two-way interaction between artist and material, between the textual and physical properties of the object. It becomes a process of thinking where analogue, digital, and conceptual realms intersect dynamically (Parikka, 2012; Ernst, 2013). This practice also contributes to an ecology of media, wherein no single element or technique can be fully understood in isolation. Each strand participates in a complex system of relations, feedback loops and transformations. To reconstruct a process like gillotage is to trace not just technical steps but to engage with a broader media network – one that spans historical epochs and technological paradigms. Such reconstruction demands both rigorous scholarship and artistic intuition, fostering new dialogues between material history and contemporary practice. In this sense, reconstruction becomes an act of recovery, of technical intimacy and of resistance to forgetting. It is precisely in these forgotten margins that contemporary printmaking finds its speculative and conceptual strength. In accelerated times, as theorised by German sociologist Hartmut Rosa (2013), this palpable approach promotes reflexivity – a two-way interaction between the artist and the materiality of the object; its textual and physical properties are in contrast to the digital image and the effect of visually imposed emotion,[17] here affect is generated primarily through visual stimuli rather than through reciprocal material engagement. Slow expansion of obsolete techniques becomes a process of thinking: one where the realms of analogue, digital and conceptual intersect.

17 Wagner (2010) argues that *the expanding possibilities of the electronic arts are shaping new forms of experiences, in which touch is the effect of visually imposed emotion* (pp. 77–78).

PRINTMAKING, THE MATRIX

The progress of mankind through the ages can be divided into three primary stages of development, each of which spans thousands of years. These milestones can be categorically grouped under the following broad headings, Speaking – Drawing – Printing (Hunter, 1947). Undoubtedly, the development began with the use of vocalisation as a means of communication. With the drawing or writing method of thought-communication – guided by the unprecedented ingenuity of the hand – came the scratch, the outline or mark; moved on to the written form to, only later, find the fast way of multiplication: printing (Hunter, 1947). In the preface to her book *Gutenberg and the Art of Printing* (1871), the 19th century American writer Emily C. Pearson offers a fascinating insight into the perception of print in the early modern period, likening it to *the telescope of the soul*. Just as optical instruments bring objects closer together and increase their visibility, print facilitates communication with the minds of past and present, thus preserving the thoughts of the present for future generations.

Printmaking is one of the artistic media characterized by the use of two surfaces – one for working on and another for printing upon – where the image-bearing surface (the matrix) can be fashioned from a diverse array of materials, including clay, wood, stone, metal, or fabric; occasionally, multiple materials are utilized together for creating a single printed image (Dawson, 1981, p.6). When an oily substance such as ink or oil paint is applied to a smooth, non-absorbent surface and pressed onto paper, the result is a print – a literal transfer of the greasy traces onto the paper. Because of its manual, unique nature, this type of print is called a monotype, meaning that only one print can be taken from the surface. It is virtually impossible to reproduce the same greasy drawing on a smooth surface once it is been used for an impression unless the surface is mechanically or chemically treated to allow renewal without the need for redrawing (Ivins, 1943). The methods of treating the printing surface (the matrix) to reproduce[18] drawing, painting or photography and the way it is printed, are called graphic/printmaking processes or techniques. Depending on the working surface, the treatment might be mechanical, chemical or photomechanical. Once we use tools to cut, engrave or draw the line or grain by our force we mechanically bear the image upon the matrix. If we need to chemically alter the working surface, such as etching the stone or metal plate, we classify it as chemical printing process. Manipulation within the photographic image (digital or analogue) transferred onto a matrix, by using photosensitive substances, films or plates are considered the pho-

18 See Introduction, p. 21, foodnote 12.

to-mechanical printing techniques. Importantly, each of these techniques originated in different historical periods and entailed a wide range of applications, requiring different levels of pressure for printing and distinct types of presses (Chappell, 1970, p. 6). For example, the printed image, or more precisely the transfer of the image obtained on the matrix to the paper using ink, can be classified as (A) relief/letterpress, (B) intaglio, (C) planographic and (D) permeographic. The first one prints the raised image; the second one, prints the lower etched areas; the third lies flat with the surface of the stone or plate and the fourth penetrates the mesh. Introduced by Senefelder (1771–1834), the inventor of Lithography, the transfer paper and other specialised commercial papers significantly changed printmaking, enabling hybrid processes. Therefore, the image was transferred from surface-to-surface from technique to technique, breaking free from the limitations of previous methods entering the reach and fascinating world of variety (Acton, 1990). The transfer technique allowed the image to become mobile, adaptable and modifiable across multiple supports, something previously unattainable (Twyman, 1990).

The earliest form of printmaking can be seen in ancient cave and tomb *paintings*, engravings and drawings, dating back thousands of years, which show an interest in recording what one sees or perceives as seen.[19] Unique iconography developed in both Western and Eastern hemispheres as engraved and scratched lines filled with earth colors, are an important human expression (Ross at al., 1990). The remarkable discoveries made all over the world, as the *oldest known drawing* found on a tiny rock in South Africa (dated at 73,000 to 45,500 years old), the *wild pig* in Indonesia (Brumm et al., 2021), as well as some of the best preserved paintings in the world, the handprints, bisons and horses from the Altamira cave in northern Spain (dated at 35,600 years old), Foz Coa's rock carvings in Portugal (more than 20,000 years old) or the Lascaux paintings in France (17,000 years old), bear witness to the history of people´s desire to communicate. The simplest and first known use of the stencil was by far the hand itself. The ink was spat or blown while the hands blocked the part of the wall to leave its shapes, or hand has served as a matrix by simply dipping in the ink and printing on the surface (Dawson, 1981, p. 122).

Throughout history, the purpose of print and printmaking has undergone a remarkable evolution. Initially it was used for utilitarian purposes, such as the Sumerians' carved relief stamp[20] (4000 B.C.), which could be pressed or rolled onto moist

19 South African archaeologist David Lewis-Williams (2002) proposed an interpretive framework centred on the shaman, suggesting that cave art reflects a complex cosmos of parallel or overlapping worlds, in which certain individuals could directly contact the world of the dead for practical purposes, aided by animal-shaped spirit helpers. Major twentieth-century interpretations include art for art's sake, totemism, Henri Abbé Breuil's hunting magic, and the structuralist theories of André Leroi-Gourhan and Annette Laming-Emperaire (Clottes, 2016, 2020).

20 Also cylinders of lapis lazuli, alabaster and other materials.

clay to leave an imprint of a presumably authoritative signature (Ross et al., 1990). Embossing seals and currency in ancient Mesopotamian and Assyrian cultures or later printing decorative motifs or disseminating religious narratives are of first evidence of the use of the oldest printmaking technique – relief. Such practices may be understood as forms of proto printmaking, where the logic of impression and reproduction emerges long before the invention of formal print technologies. As early as in the 6th century A.D. in Egypt and 8th century A.D. in the Far East, the first woodblock prints for dyeing textiles were made, which in 13th century were brought to Europe (Dawson, 1981, p. 50). The invention of paper in China as early as 107 B.C. had opened the possibility of multiple printing and the dissemination of images and information. The earliest dated print on paper comes from China, the Buddhist illustration 828 A.D. (Dawson, 1981; Gascoigne, 1986) while there is no evidence of woodblock printing in Europe before 1400. This time lag is largely explained by the dependence of relief printing on efficient paper manufacturing, which was not properly established in Europe until the mid-fourteenth century (Ross et al., 1990; Griffiths, 1980).

The discovery of the Americas and the opening of Europe to the Atlantic Ocean and the *Mundus Novus*[21] were followed by profound changes in the perception, control and cartographic representation of the world. This has been described as both a spatial revolution and a radical shift in the conceptualization of the globe (Ricci, 2021). Martin Heidegger famously remarked: *The fundamental event of modernity is the conquest of the world as an image. From now on, the word 'image' means: the collective image of representational production [das Gebild des vorstellenden Herstellens]* (2002, p. 71). This perspective underscores the centrality of images in narrative, cultural and political discourse. During the late Middle Ages, new techniques for representing objects and people influenced the visual culture of icons and religious imagery. Printmaking, with its innovative techniques such as woodcut and engraving, played a crucial role in this transformation (Belting, 1994, p. 410). It was used to produce inexpensive devotional objects to meet the growing demand for private images, enabling the mass production of images making them more accessible and influential in shaping the modern age (Ricci, 2021).

21 *Mundus Novus* (Vespucci, 1504) is one of the most famous early travel accounts of the Americas. It is a short letter attributed to Amerigo Vespucci, written around 1503–1504 and widely circulated in Latin across Europe. Vespucci sailed as part of a Portuguese expedition to explore the coast of South America around 1501–1502, serving as a navigator and observer. He described coastlines, stars, and distances, which helped improve cartographic knowledge and contributed to cartographers like Martin Waldseemüller (1507) labeling the continent America.

With the invention of the printing press,[22] printed matter became central to the dissemination of political and cultural ideas, the facilitation of scientific discovery and the shaping of public opinion (Gascoigne, 1986; Eisenstein, 1980). Print, therefore, was not merely a technological innovation in reproduction; it redefined the very structures of communication, fuelling social revolutions and reshaping collective imagination (Febvre & Martin, 1976; Ivins, 1953). Yet the impulse to imprint, to leave a mark, to repeat a gesture, to transmit a visual sign, long predates Gutenberg. From prehistoric hand stencils to engraved petroglyphs, human expression has always been tied to the material act of transferring an image onto a surface (Ingold, 2007; Robinson, 1995). Seen through this broader lens, *technological archaeology*[23] is not simply a tool for reconstructing 19th century techniques, but a critical framework for rethinking the origins and functions of print. Are technological archaeological studies focused on pre-Renaissance engraving, and in particular rock art and other more indigenous forms, still to be done, or are they already taking other directions? Our language of engraving tends to reduce the field to conventional technical methods, sometimes even forgetting that they already exist within this broader field that we call engraving, since they aim at the multiple, and such approaches may obscure the diversity and sophistication of pre-modern and non-industrial devices. I believe that studies on these proto techniques are underway. It invites us to abandon the notion of a historical void before mechanical printing and to embrace a continuum of imprint-based practices, from the tactile gestures of early humans to the industrial processes of the modern age, as part of a shared cultural and material heritage of printed expression.

Marshall McLuhan argued in The Gutenberg Galaxy (1962) that the printing press not only revolutionized communication but also restructured patterns of thought and social organization. He argues that the invention of movable type represented *the decisive moment in the change from a culture in which all the senses partook of a common interplay to a tyranny of the visual* (p. 136), suggesting that technology not only conveys information but fundamentally reconstitutes human perception and social structures. However, it was during the Renaissance that printmaking really flourished opening a space for artistic exploration and the spread of knowledge, which significantly altered the landscape of European intellectual life (Ross Et Al., 1990; Dawson, 1981; Griffiths, 1980). The ability of printing to preserve knowledge and enable the accumulation of information fundamentally changed the mentality

22 Introduction in Europe (1440), by the goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg.
23 See Introduction, p. 20, foodnote 10.

of early modern readers with repercussions that transformed society. Ancient and medieval scribes had faced enormous difficulties in preserving the knowledge they already possessed, which, despite their best efforts, inevitably became more corrupted and fragmented over time. With the advent of the printing press, the accumulation of knowledge became possible for the first time (Eisenstein 1979, p. 33). From its origins as a means of preserving and transmitting knowledge, printmaking has continually adapted to new materials, techniques and contexts, making it a medium of transformation (Wyss 2018; Rebel 2018).

Yet what part does it play in contemporary art? Does it continue to absorb new realities, address urgent issues and provide new perspectives? Printmaking seems to exist in a perpetual state of liminality, straddling disciplines, eras and categories. Although it rarely takes centre stage in discussions that define the art world, it is precisely this quiet persistence that makes it compelling. Existing as if in an ethereal state – neither erased nor wholly perceptible – printmaking is caught between the weight of its heritage and the need to demonstrate its ability to evolve and adapt in order to meaningfully express something about the present era. We are not glorifying printmaking; we are merely acknowledging its fragile presence and ephemeral beauty. Despite our doubts, we are trying to make sense of it. Can we still believe in its capacity to resonate? As Paweł Frąckiewicz (2008)[24] once asked, can we recognise the significance of printmaking as a poetic language displaced from its original function? Is its ability to move between the old and the new, the analogue and the digital, the obsolete and the contemporary, the commercial and the artistic and the craft and the conceptual, precisely because of its marginal status?

Today, printmaking no longer belongs solely to presses or editions. It has entered the realm of intermediality, transforming many *art houses* into interdisciplinary laboratories (Frąckiewicz, 2008). As Ruth Pelzer-Montada (2008) points out, printmaking has undergone a conceptual turn; it is no longer bound by its tools, but rather liberated by its potential to question reproduction, authorship and materiality. Similarly, artist Paul Coldwell (2010) argues that contemporary prints are not defined by ink on paper alone, but by the concept of the matrix itself: transfer, layering, trace and memory. He demonstrates that printmaking is a medium with mobility, able to move and act between, and therein lies its creative power. The identity of printmaking is to balance between media, strategies, history and mo-

24 Prof. Paweł Frąckiewicz, The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design, Department of Printmaking Studio of Lithography and Printmaking Promotion.

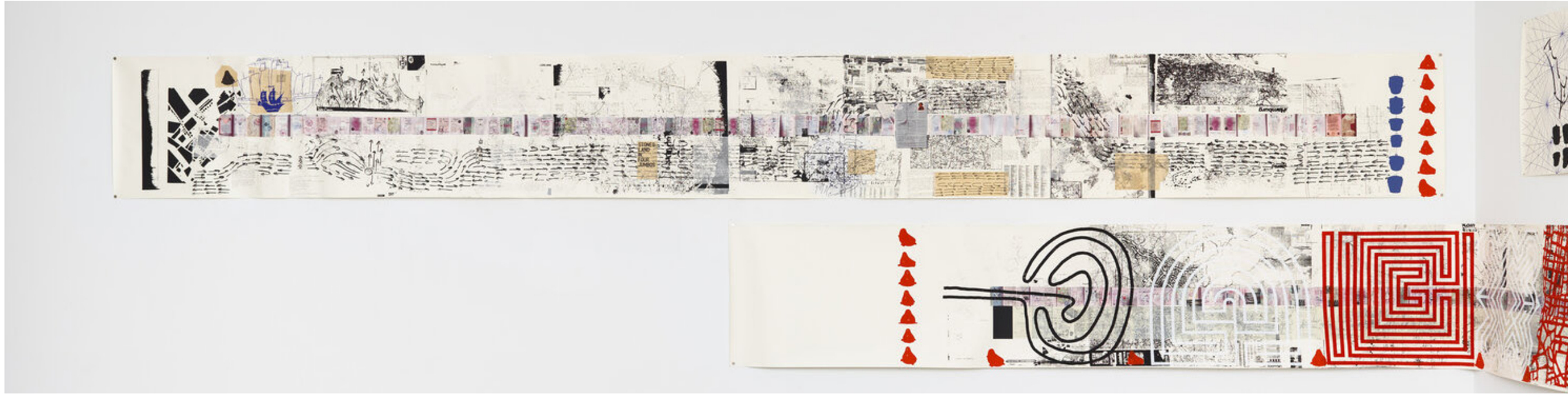


Figure 46 | Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Untitled*, 2008–2011 (*The map of the land of feeling*) *I* & *II* [Scrolls with digital printing, lithography, chine-collé, and screenprint; dimensions 91.4 × 849.6 cm each].

dernity, between touch and idea, between practice and research. In our fast-paced world, printmaking teaches us to slow down, inviting reflection while it connects memory and innovation. Coldwell (2010, p. 27) mentions the transformation within Lithography in thr early 1960s through the establishment of a number of workshops focusing on the medium (Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Pratt Graphic Canter or Universal Limited Art Editions): contributed to experiments within print and openness for hybridization. Robert Rauschenberg's contribution is immense in extending the boundaries of printmaking: for example in his series *Hoarfrost* (1974), newspaper images were printed on to overlaid silk chiffon and incorporated in collage paper bags. Revisiting obsolete techniques such as photo-enamel, gillotage, stone and prepared surface papers, transfers, and drawing inks and crayons represents both resistance and reinvention, an approach developed through research at FBAUP. The objective is not to preserve obsolete forms, but to rediscover the forgotten elements of visual culture and to understand their original significance. It is also to explore their potential relevance today.

Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija (1961–) explores what printmaking might become by prioritising experience, process and encounter over fixed objects. In *Untitled* 2008–2011 (*The map of the land of feeling*) *I* and *II*, (Figure 46) he produces a hand-drawn facsimile of his passport, continuously adding pages to reflect the passage of time and changes in life. The work's monumental scale heightens the intimacy of the passport and emphasizes transformation and material engagement, while also foregrounding the displacement of objects and identity across spaces. The passport becomes both a material record and a conceptual framework, highlighting how personal and relational histories can be inscribed, shared and reconfigured. In his artistic practice Tiravanija interconnects different techniques, technologies and media displacing focus from permanence to repetition endured in multiple interactions. In printmaking, an impression is left on a surface. In Tiravanija's practice, the impression is social, on memory, interaction and community. While the print remains a material object, the focus shifts toward the experiential and relational dimensions it generates, a perspective informed in part by Tiravanija's Thai background and

its engagement with communal practices. While printmaking displaces an image from its matrix to produce multiple iterations, Tiravanija displaces everyday acts, cooking, sharing meals, communal gatherings – into the gallery space, transforming ephemeral experiences into relational impressions.

As Jussi Parikka (2012) reminds us, media archaeology is not solely focused on the past. Rather, it considers the materials, forms and temporalities that have been excluded from mainstream narratives. By reworking these forgotten techniques, we are broadening the scope of what printmaking can mean today rather than merely looking back. So, can we still believe in the enduring potential of printmaking as artists, researchers and observers? We strongly believe that we can. By recovering its material memory and reactivating outdated techniques, printmaking can serve as a form of media archaeology. In printmaking, this constitutes not only a conceptual alignment but also a material and practical imperative. Printmakers are constantly required to understand, manipulate and often reconstruct the processes they engage with. The very nature of printmaking involves grappling with tools, materials, and procedures that demand technical depth and historical awareness. In this sense, the medium holds within it a kind of material knowledge, a hands-on obligation to know how things are made, what conditions produce them, and how they can be transformed. This thesis draws on a series of research projects conducted over recent years, each contributing to a broader understanding of the relationship between printmaking, materiality and place, with a particular focus on the theme of displacement. Among these, particular emphasis is given to paper, especially transfer, coated and stone paper, transfer and drawing lithographic inks, photo-mechanical commercial metal relief print (gillotage), traditional photographic enamel on metal and lithophane; moreover, working *in situ*, far from a well-equipped printmaking studio where the need to create one's own tools arises. The production of an image – with its formal, material and conceptual complexity – often depends on collaborative and situated processes, involving multiple participants, materials, and contexts, and highlighting the relational and co-creative nature of contemporary art practice. The direct involvement of those engaged in material research broadens the scope of available solutions and increases the expressive plasticity of printmaking practices. Rather than serving as the subject of a single article, these insights culminate in the synthesis presented in this thesis, where practical experimentation and historical reconstruction are interwoven.

THE PAPER

I prayse the man, that first did Paper make,
the onely thing that sets all vertues forth:
It shoes new bookes, and keeps old workes awake,
much more of price than all this world is worth;
Though partchment duer, a greater time and space,
yet can it not, put paper out of place:
For paper still from man to man doth go:
when partchment comes in few men's hands, you knowe.
(...)
In open shewe, then sundry secrete toyes,
makes rotten ragges, to yeelde a thickned froth:
Then is it stampt, and washt as white as snowe,
then flong on frame, and hang'd to dry I trow:
Thus paper streight, it is to write upon,
as it were rubde, and smoothde with slicking stone.[25]

Thomas Churchyard (1588)

Paper is the extraordinary result of turning worthless rags into a valuable commodity (Ellis, 2015). Paper which came to supplant parchment[26] was known to the Chinese before the second century A.D., though in Europe, the first paper mills start operating in 11th century in Spain and spread to Italy in the late 13th. Before the fifteenth centuries, the trade routes (so called *Silk Route*), between Asia and Europe were long and difficult, often taking years where goods were passing from country to county, hand to hand, language to language. Yet the Chinese art of making paper did not travel that route; it was brought by Arabs (Hirsch, 1967, p. 20). When it comes to paper, we cannot forget the drawing and writing instruments and their diverse designs, historically developed for use on different types of paper.

A significant aspect of handmade paper is the watermark, derived from the process of embedding a filigree, a delicate design formed by metallic threads, into the wire mesh of a mould or roller. During the papermaking process, areas of the sheet

25 Poem by Thomas Churchyard (1588) entitled: *A Discription and playne discourse of paper, and the whole benefits that Paper brings, with rehersall, and setting foorth in verse a Paper myll built nere Darthford, by a High Germaine, called Master Spilman, Ieweller to the Queenes Maiestie*. Consists of 353 verses printed in a volume of fifteen pages, with a framed title page, and refers to the paper mill of John Spilman the first paper manufacturer in England. Although it does not claim to provide a theoretical history of production, it appears to be of interest as the first description of the craft in the English language.

26 A high-quality material for writing and drawing, obtained from untanned animal skin, still manufactured in the United Kingdom, although now rare and not commonly used. See William Cowley Parchment, online.

that coincide with the filigree receive fewer fibres, resulting in greater translucency when viewed against light. The watermark thus functions both as a form of material authentication and as a historical trace; an imprint that anchors the paper in a specific time, place, and lineage of production. As Foucault (1972) suggests through his concepts of *archaeology* and *genealogy*, such marks serve as non-verbal indicators of layered histories and discursive conditions. The enduring value of paper lies not merely in its material properties, but in its capacity to preserve and transmit marks, whether written, drawn, or printed, across time and space. As a medium, paper has facilitated the circulation of knowledge, the stabilization of administrative and legal systems and the diffusion of political and cultural movements. Its affordability and portability have historically made it one of the most democratic media, capable of moving ideas across both geographic and social boundaries.

However, as Derrida (2005) contends in *Papier machine*, paper's status as the dominant medium of cultural inscription is increasingly challenged by digital technologies. In Part IV of the text, titled *Paper is Part of the Picture*, Derrida reflects on the material and symbolic significance of paper in the age of electronic mediation. Although paper is susceptible to tearing and physical degradation, he argues that it endures as a symbol of resilience, embodying a complex temporality wherein the fragility of the medium is juxtaposed with its enduring epistemological and cultural force. Derrida further emphasizes the necessity of visual scrutiny and technical knowledge in understanding paper-based works, especially within artistic and archival contexts. Identifying the materials and techniques employed by artists is not merely an act of classification but a fundamental method for interpreting the semantic and affective dimensions of creative practices.

Marco Polo's travel accounts include early descriptions of paper-based currency in 13th century China, printed notes used in commerce (Hirsch, 1967, p. 20). This moment exemplifies the transformation of paper from a medium of inscription into a vehicle of economic trust and exchange, further underscoring its significance across domains. Despite being the most materially vulnerable among message-bearing media, paper has demonstrated an extraordinary capacity for displacement, transfer and preservation. Its tactile and sensory qualities, texture, grain, opacity and surface variation, invite a form of engagement that digital media often lack. These properties, however, do not ensure the legibility of content that is particularly made by hand, but they do allow for a tangible experience of reading, printing prepared and written digitally, viewing or handling a document. Watermarks, stains, scribbles and the marks of time all contribute to its narrative texture.

In 1975, Robert Rauschenberg travelled to Ahmedabad, India, to work with the Sarabhai family and local artisans at the Gandhi Ashram, a project that exemplifies the movement of materials, techniques, and collaborative knowledge across contexts. Building on his 1964 visit with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, he experimented with local materials and techniques, creating works such as the *Bones* and *Unions series*. The collaborative process involved his studio team from Gemini G.E.L. as well as the Sarabhai family, who contributed with both labour and ideas (Rauschenberg Foundation, 2025; Ikegami, 2018).

Works like *Capitol* (*Unions*) (1975) (Figure 47) reflect Rauschenberg's exploration of materiality, impermanence and the social and political dimensions of making art with local resources. Rag-mud, a mixture of tamarind seeds and fenugreek, was shaped and dried in the intense summer heat of Ahmedabad, evoking the traditional mud huts of the region. *Quorum* (*Unions*) (1975), *Little Joe* (1975) and *Box Cars* (1975), made from handmade paper, bamboo and fabric, explore materiality, not merely as supports but as active media, carrying both historical resonance and contemporary experimentation. Rauschenberg's residency demonstrated how materials could mediate cultural exchange and how site-specific, collaborative production could blur boundaries between domestic, communal and artistic spaces. Through these practices, his use of handmade paper became a method for investigating both physical and conceptual displacement, linking local craftsmanship to global artistic networks (Rauschenberg Foundation, 2025).



Figure 47 | Robert Rauschenberg, *Capitol* (*Unions*), 1975 [Materials: rag-mud, bamboo, silk, string, glass, and teakwood; dimensions 86.4 × 135.9 × 10.2 cm].

TRANSFER/PREPARED SURFACE PAPER

In printmaking, *transfer* describes the technical and material process of moving an image or content from one surface to another. By contrast, *transport* usually refers to the physical relocation of materials, tools or even people. Considering technological issues in the context of movement, transport or displacement enables us to explore how images, gestures or meanings shift across space, time and context, generating new interpretations and connections that transcend purely physical relocation. Technically, *transfer* within printmaking involves moving ink, light or pigment from one medium to another. Poetically, however, the image emerges through this transport across time and meaning.

Transfer paper is a specially coated sheet designed to temporarily hold an image or drawing that can then be transferred to another surface, such as a lithographic stone, metal plate or final print support. This intermediary function made it a fundamental tool in many printing and reproduction processes from the 19th century onwards. Different from ordinary drawing or writing papers, transfer papers are chemically treated to release the ink or pigment upon contact with another surface, often through pressure or moisture. Nevertheless, it may still be used by artists as a final drawing or printing paper. It is also noted that for an autographic transfer, no special paper is required; ordinary writing paper, when used with the appropriate ink, can serve the purpose, although the results are generally inferior compared to those achieved with dedicated transfer papers. Depending on their intended function, transfer papers were produced with different sizing and coatings to optimize performance. Following Rhodes (1924) recipes and explanation (p. 49) as well as Lemercier (1899), such transfers could then be printed from a stone or metal plate, letterpress block or light-sensitive transfer paper and could include lithographic writings and crayon drawings. Transfer papers existed in a wide range of varieties, enabling transfers from stone to stone, stone to plate, or plate to stone. Among these were Rhodes described recipes for copperplate transfer papers, letterpress-to-stone transfers, photolithographic transfer papers, lithographic writing papers and grained transfer papers, each designed to meet specific technical and artistic needs (Figure 48). Their appearance and efficiency marked the beginning of further technical development, leading to more complex industrial counterparts.[27]

André Beguin, in his *Dictionary technique de l'estampe* (1973), presents the *report* (transfer) as the transfer of a drawing from one surface to another and from papers onto stone, metal or wood. Emilie Dacier in *La Gravure Française* (1944) in the glossaries of the techniques wrote:

(Orginal version) *Report (papier de.) Papier préparé spécialement pour que le dessin qui y est tracé puisse être reporté sur la pierre lithographique et tiré ensuite comme un dessin tracé directement sur la pierre. C'est le procédé dit autographie. (*En) *Transfer paper, paper specially prepared so that the drawing traced on it can be transferred to the lithographic stone and then printed as a drawing traced directly on the stone. This process is known as autography.*





Figure 48 | Marta Bełkot and Graciela Machado, Examples of transfer, prepared surface, and stone papers, 2019–2024 [varied dimensions].

27 The physical volumes of Transfer Paper, *Papier Gillot I*, *Papier Gillot II*, and *Book of Specimens* are available for consultation at the Printmaking Workshop, FBAUP, and via the open-access repository.

One of its earliest and most impactful applications was map printing, for the cartographer, could prepare his drawing on paper in the usual manner, using appropriate ink. The right facing image was then transferred from the paper to the stone (later zinc), where it was reversed. After the stone had been properly prepared, the image could be reproduced in multiple copies.

Among the transfer processes that expanded technological possibilities, surface-prepared papers hold particular significance. Their appeal lies not only in their distinctive textures, the transfer possibilities they provide which stimulate drawing and mark-making, but also in the fact of being uncommon for the artists of its time (Devon, 2008). Developed primarily from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, their use was concentrated in specific areas of print and image production, including commercial lithography, illustration, photographic reproduction, and technical printing, rather than in fine art practice alone. Whether industrially produced or handmade, lightly or heavily[28] coated, prepared surface papers or process papers are a multifunctional innovation. They supported hybrid forms of transfer printing, served varied purposes (e.g., *papier procédé, scraperboard*), and proved valuable in the development of photomechanical reproduction processes (Bełkot & Machado, 2019).

Coating paper is a practice with ancient origins. Early papermakers frequently applied a layer of pigments blended with colloids to one side of the sheet, primarily to create a smoother surface suitable for fine calligraphy. The earliest documented examples of this technique can be traced back to China around 450 CE (Reyden et al., 1993). One of the prominent users of such coated papers was Hercules Segers (Dutch, ca. 1590–ca. 1638) a visionary 17th century experimental painter and printmaker. He produced highly individual landscapes using transfer-based printing methods and prepared papers, techniques that departed from established printmaking conventions of his time (Figure 49). His preparation of the surfaces comes probably from the need for variety where both representational and imagined scenes from nature and still lives are completely original and otherworldly. This versatile and experimental approach is considered as a way of dealing with financial problems due to expensive canvases and papers; very likely he was using even the bed sheets. His works are considered a precursor to modern art (Orenstein, 2017).

28 Components include colloids such as animal glues (derived from protein colloids like collagen) and vegetable glues (from substances such as starch and gums), mixed with pigments, plasters, clays, earthy materials, turpentine, linseed oil, and/or dichromate salts for photosensitivity.

Since Alois Senefelder's (1771–1834) discovery of lithography at the end of the 18th century, which sparked the idea of transfer and coated paper, such materials have played an important role in the history of printmaking. As he mentions, transfer:

(...) is peculiar to the chemical printing, and I am strongly inclined to believe, that it is the principal and most important part of my discovery. In order to multiply copies of your ideas by printing, it is no longer necessary to learn to write in an inverted sense (...)

Senefelder (1819, p. 256)

Transfer thus made it possible to write and draw in a natural way, without the need for mirror thinking, thereby lowering technical barriers and allowing artists to focus more directly on gesture, composition, and expressive mark-making within the printmaking process. It was him who began the search for a paper-coating substance that would first transport information/images and then serve as a matrix to replace the limestone[29] (Senefelder, 1819). He devoted many years to refining this *stone paper* matrix, yet despite its promise, the invention failed to achieve commercial success. Although his successors – particularly in the industrial sector – adapted and improved prepared papers for use in printmaking, Senefelder's paper matrix itself quickly fell into obscurity, abandoned within a year due to disappointing results (Engelmann, 1835, pp. 155–158).

Before that, tissue transfer was used in ceramics, which in certain instance could contribute to the development of Senefelder innovation. Sr John Sadler and Guy Green



Figure 49 | Hercules Segers (Dutch, ca. 1590–ca. 1638), *Valley with a River and a Town with Four Towers*, ca. 1626–1627 [Line etching and drypoint printed in dark green on a cream-tinted ground, pen in grey ink, with grey wash; dimensions 20,7 × 33,2 cm].

29 Alois Senefelder developed, with considerable enthusiasm, a series of formulas for so-called stone paper, patenting fifteen versions that deliberately contained minor inaccuracies to prevent others from reproducing them as effectively as he could. Senefelder himself commercialised this material; however, in comparison to lithographic stone, it proved technically limited, allowing only about ten impressions before becoming unusable. For the patent see page 96, foodnote 6.

in 1756, swore an affidavit in Liverpool attesting that they had successfully printed and produced over one day *twelve hundred Earthenware tiles of different patterns*, thereby staking their claim to the invention of the technique (Jewitt, 1865, p. 148). For many pre-photographic reproduction processes, a simple version of transfer paper based on natural colloids such as egg white, gum Arabic, gelatine starch or flour is sufficient. In these cases, the paper facilitates the transfer of inks drawn or transferred onto lithographic stone or plate to another surface enabling the crossword of techniques. For obsolete, more complex and commercial papers like *Gillot, Michallot or Angerer*, the cover mixture usually is heavier based on plaster, gypsum, clay and/or kaolin, as well as various other pigments (Bełkot & Machado, 2019) (Figure 50).

After the discovery of photography, possibilities for image transfer expanded into multiple forms, connecting photography and printmaking through shared technological developments, notably the positive–negative process based on image transfer via sensitised paper, introduced by Henri Fox Talbot in 1839 (Benson, 2008). Drawing on glass – as the first step to invent photographic processes – was employed by the Nicephore Niepce brothers in 1816, Hercule Florence in 1833 (Hercule Florence. Le Nouveau Robinson, 2017) or, later, by José Júlio Rodrigues in 1879 (Rodrigues, 1879), remaining a very effective method to provide a series of essential alternatives to the usage of commercially available products such as *true grain*.[30] The last indicates a new understanding in combining historical printmaking techniques and photography, fundamental to enlarge the scope of contemporary print, based on artistic practice (Stanley, 2010).

Paper Gillot, which became of particular interest for this research, was initially patented by Firmin Gillot in 1850 as gillotage and conceived for use as a non-photographic transfer paper. In the late 1870s, Charles Gillot (Firmin's son) developed a new drawing medium, initially called papier procédé or scraperboard, which allowed the effective reproduction of halftones and enabled the photographic transfer of images onto a line block for printing (Sievers, Muehlig, & Rich, 2000). Gillotage is one of the techniques that relies on these specially prepared papers. Firmin Gillot created transport papers embossed with lines, stipples or grain, which not only facilitated the artist's work but also preserved the original image during reproduction (Figure 51). The exceptional quality and precision of Gillot's papers earned him recognition at the Paris Exhibition of 1867 (Gamble, 1900).





Figure 50 | Marta Bełkot and Graciela Machado, (close-up) Examples of direct toner transfer on heavy coated, line-embossed Gillot papers (2019–2020) [reference image: Graciela Machado, Island, 2008; dimensions 21 × 29.7 cm].

30 True-Grain was launched as a commercial product in 1993 following collaboration between Autotype and Curwen. It is a high-quality textured polyester drafting film that holds tone.





Figure 51 | Marta Bełkot and Graciela Machado, Examples: left, heavy coated, Gillot paper with indirect toner transfer; right, plain and line Gillot paper with indirect toner transfer; FBAUP (2017–2019) [reference image: Graciela Machado, *Island*, 2008; dimensions 21 × 35 cm and 21 × 29.7 cm].

Together with his son for many years, they completed and extended the use of gillotage first with the application of photo-lithography and photographic procedures, where the manipulation of size of the image was possible and later, with the application of the photosensitive mixture directly on metal plate (patented in 1874, after Firmin´s death), made the process easier and quicker (Gamble, 1900). The Studio: *An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art* (1893) listed by an expert seven types of papier gillot (or papier procédé or scraperboard): (1) Black diagonal line, (2) Black straight lines, (3) Black aquatint line, (4) White diagonal lines, (5) White straight lines, (6) White aquatint line, and (7) Canvas-grained, white. These papers were designed for a simplified procedure in the photomechanical reproduction of images, making it possible to photographically transfer designs into a relief block and, consequently, to print them (Figure 51). *These blocks are direct engravings, costing at most one-third of the price for half-tones*, an expert noted (Chefdeville, Hill, & Rawen, 1893). We can understand the great capability and flexibility that this process offers, through its range of prepared surface paper and adaptability to new discoveries of its time. Although machine-coated grounds were widely used as tools for illustration and reproduction, Georges Seurat's well-known interest in textured papers, demonstrates a different approach. His use of Gillot's commercial paper, coated with white pigment, embossed horizontally and printed with vertical black lines, appears to be limited to a single drawing. Thus, outside the commercial sphere of printing efficiency, the use of customized hand-coated grounds on paper for drawing or printmaking remained rare within the context of fine art.[31]

For decades, new techniques based on remaking transfer papers or heavily coated papers did not endure in time (Sommers, 1977). This was largely because hybrid printmaking allowed information to be reproduced efficiently, opening numerous

31 Pennell appreciated the textured transport appeal and artistic use of original lithography (Stiber Morenus, 2004).

opportunities for commercialization. As a technological process, it was largely overlooked by both artists and industry, following a logic of efficiency that, over time, was replaced by newer technologies, including digital methods. This might justify why it was never incorporated in the artistic field. It is reasonable to assume that its occurrence in a strongly oriented industrial context, where its function was to massify print production (Benjamin, 2008), hindered any possibilities of transition to the artistic atelier. In itself the logics involved contradict fundamentally the ones of the artistic field through the search of reproductions in scale, machinery and the partialization of work. Literature on the impact of the print as a key effective reproductive tool was widely expressed by Walter Benjamin, William M. Ivans, Jr., David Kunzle, and, most recently, Chandra Mukerji (Weisberg, 1986). When writers highlight these functions, the aesthetic aspects of the print usually become either unimportant or extraneous. Print now is not anywhere close to the political, media and reproductive function of this historical context. The political, economic and commercial baggage attached to these technologies are no longer an inhibition and therefore, recreating and repurposing those processes to a pure artistic form based on manual production instead of an mechanic one, might present promising results and flourish its aesthetic dimension (Didi-Huberman, 2004). The fact that these processes are in its essence time consuming and multi staged – don't necessarily represent discouraging factors, rather promising since the intermediate results they produce could themselves be considered potential final artifacts.

Following Senefelder, we recognised the enormous artistic potential of paper and its unique possibilities with incredible aesthetic appeal. The work of reconstructing papers resulted in several lines of research, starting with transfer paper (2015, 2017) (Figure 57). Subsequently we reconstructed the Gillot paper (2017, 2018) (Figure 52) which provides for photomechanical functions. The reconstruction of Gillot paper led to the creation of *The Book of Specimens* (2019) (Figure 53), representing a significant advance in reprographic and photographic techniques. This work incorporated electrographic and lithographic transfers, photopolymer films and plates, offset printing, hybrid methods, as well as photolithographic papers, lifting papers, and the use of paper as a printing matrix. The attempt to replicate the stone paper (2019, 2020) was based on Senefelder's improved recipe (Figure 54), in which we adjusted the amounts of substances to allow for homogeneous distribution. The second at-

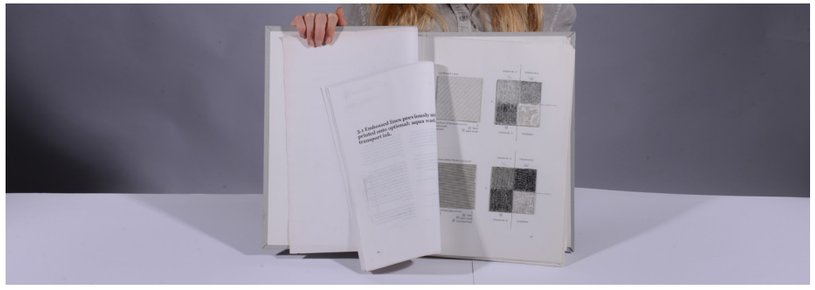


Figure 52 | Graciela Machado and Marta Bełkot, *Papier Gillot I: Manual production of prepared surface papers for process. Scraperboard and printmaking transfer paper* (2019) [Physical book of specimens].



Figure 53 | Graciela Machado and Marta Bełkot, *Papier Gillot II* (2019). [Physical book of specimens].

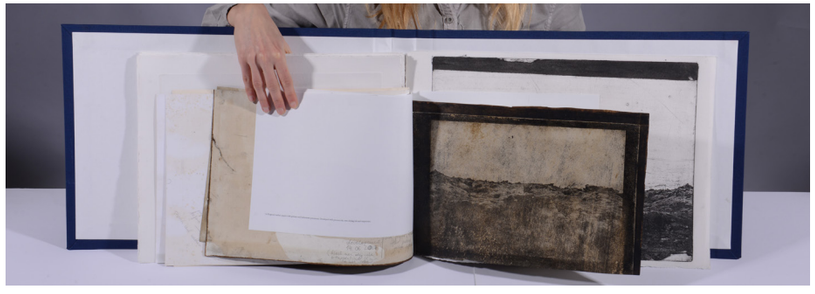


Figure 54 | Graciela Machado and Marta Bełkot, *Book of specimens* (2019). [Physical book of specimens].



Figure 55 | Marta Bełkot, Graciela Machado and Cristiana Macedo, Documentation of prepared surface, Gillot, and stone paper matrices screen-printed with lithographic inks (2022) [dimensions variable].

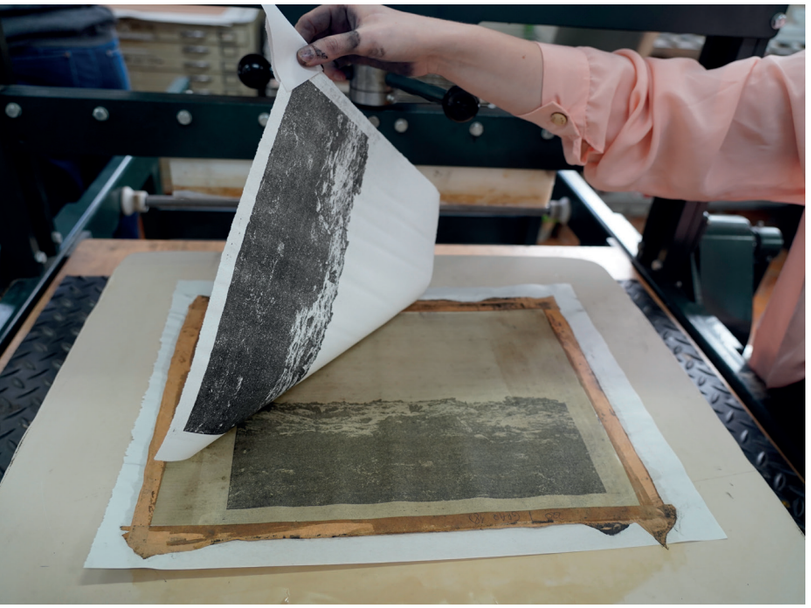


Figure 56 | Marta Bełkot, Graciela Machado and Cristiana Macedo, Documentation of tests on printing from prepared surfaces, Gillot, and stone paper matrices screen-printed with lithographic inks (2022) [dimensions variable].

tempt (2020) was based on the use of natural animal glues and casein, following the identification of Géricault's recipe (Taylor et al., 2020). Then, for the *II Bienal da Ardósia de Valongo*[32] (2021) we created a series of surface papers prepared together with stone paper, using slate as pigment and within the *SHS project*[33] (2022) we made a recreation of Senefelder's fifteenth patent recipes[34] followed the expedition to forming miners' areas: Arouca and Regoufe[35] to collect earth pigments that allowed to create a wide range of colours and layers. Consequently, after first unsatisfactory results in production of Diazo salts in collaboration with the University of Science under the guidance of Junior Researcher Natércia Teixeira,[36] Porto, (within SHS project), we arranged online meetings with the author of the article that inspired us to do so – Fabio Parmeggiani (Department of Chemistry, Materials and Chemical Engineering G. Natta Politecnico di Milano) (Parmeggiani, 2014). After the complex explanation and hints that facilitated the process, we were able to successfully produce Diazo salts from less toxic components and improve photosensitive Ozalid paper. Diazo salts in certain respects can play and alternative to bichromate salts, being less toxic. The researchers expand in 2024, and work is being conducted, focusing on improvement and stability of stone paper matrix.[37]

The first practical tests aimed to evaluate stone paper as a printing matrix by comparing papers produced and cured happened between 2019 and 2020. Five handmade lithographic inks, prepared using Portuguese recipes and 19th and 20th century lithography manuals, were employed. Locally collected soot replaced the lampblack pigment (traditionally used for commercial inks), while stone papers were compared against traditional lithographic stones. The inks met commercial standards and stone papers containing casein exhibited superior performance during printing. Using an improved recipe derived from Senefelder and Géricault, incorporating natural adhesives, we[38] produced an edition of approximately twelve satisfactory prints from a single paper matrix (Bełkot et al., 2022). A second trial during the II Valongo Slate Biennial (2021) involved in situ[39] printing with handmade white inks and black lithographic crayons (produced as a continuation of ink research) using a portable lithographic press designed by PhD candidate (FBAUP/

32 Machado and Bełkot (2023) discuss inks, prepared papers, and printing processes in *Cadernos Tecnológicos I*: *Litografia in Situ* [*Technological Notebooks I*: *Lithography In Situ. Inks, Prepared Papers, and Printing*].

33 SHS – *Soil health surrounding former mining areas: characterization, risk analysis, and intervention* (NORTE-01-0145-FEDER-000056). Funded by NORTE 2020 / European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

34 See p. 121, foodnote 29.

35 Coordinated by Professor Graciela Machado.

36 Prudente, Bełkot, Macedo, and Teixeira (2023) discuss the synthesis and application of photosensitive diazonium salts (pp. 73–81).

37 Testes within Workshop *Litography in situ* em Tétouan, Marroco, 2024 and ATELIER NOMADE: in situ lithography 2025. See: https://gravura.fba.up.pt/home/noticias/

38 Marta Bełkot (PhD student) and Rafaela Lima (Master student).

39 Bełkot, M. (Director), & Machado, G. (Organizer). (2021). *Lithography in situ* [Video]. Produced as part of the Technological Residency GroundLab: 2nd Valongo Slate Biennial, i2ADS/GroundLab.

i2ADS) António da Silva.[40] Difficulties in printing were encountered, though it remained unclear whether they arose from the paper or from limitations of the press. The final practical tests focused on assessing the suitability of various prepared surface papers, including stone paper as matrices. Two lithographic inks, previously reproduced in our research on historic lithographic ink production, were employed for these tests: a dark ink created during the 2020 reconstruction of *Mil Segredos de Oficinas* (1925), and a white ink prepared from a Senefelder recipe (Cumming, 1948), in which lampblack was replaced by titanium white for the II Bienal da Ardósia de Valongo (2021). Both inks were mixed with ground white varnish and printed. The same reference image that was used throughout the experiments to ensure consistency and comparability across different papers and transfer processes with screen printing on the aforementioned papers[41] (Figures *55* and *56*).

Unexpectedly, the best-performing matrices were not stone papers, but Gillot papers manufactured in 2020, as well as transport papers coated with a photosensitive substance (bichromate salts), both of which were highly durable and capable of producing consistent print editions. In the evaluation phase (2023), we tested the suitability and performance of surface-prepared papers, including stone papers reconstructed over six years, we confirmed their effectiveness and functionality (Figure *56*). Working with stone paper offers several advantages compared to traditional lithographic stone. Its light-weight facilitates a wide range of possibilities, from easier handling and printing to conducting studio work in natural settings, or in situ, echoing Senefelder's (1819) observation: *Hundreds of plates stacked on top of each other do not take up as much space as a single stone and can therefore be easily stored or transported.* However, this type of matrix also presents limitations. It is less stable and durable than stone, images fade more quickly, and areas intended to remain white often absorb ink. Reproducibility is limited: while traditional stone can yield several hundred or even several thousand prints, stone paper allows only a few or, as Senefelder suggested, dozens of impressions. Despite these constraints, the originality of the matrix and the subtle nuances that emerge due to its imperfections provide a significant source of inspiration. These characteristics encourage artists to experiment, refine and adapt the formulas to achieve desired effects (Machado & Almozara, 2023 p. 92–105) (Figure 58).

40 Da Silva, Bełkot, and Machado (2022) discuss the use of Valongo's black slate (ardósia) for lithography in JOCEP do Painting – Journeys in Contemporary European Painting, Porto, 2022.

41 Executed by Marta Bełkot (PhD student) and Cristiana Macedo (Master's student).





↑
Figure 57 | Marta Belkot, *Transport paper preparation* (2023).

Figure 58 | Marta Belkot and Cristiana Macedo, Recreation of Senefelder's 15 recipes for stone paper (2023) [dimensions 25 × 35 cm].

In contemporary studios, the production of gum-coated transfer paper is no longer a routine task for draftsmen or printmakers (Figure *57*). Today, its use is largely limited to a single commercially available type,[42] in stark contrast to the seven varieties catalogued by John Sommers in 1977.[43] This type of paper, wheather is it a transport, heavy coated or stone paper can not only facilitate the work but certainly contribute to the aesthetic choice of where and how to use it. By re-evaluating methods based on the use of local resources and organic compounds in an archaeological approach to experimenting – with raw materials such as resins, gypsums, clays, organic adhesives, pigments – alternatives to traditional techniques for obtaining images including photographic and non-photographic processes – have been revived. Prepared surface papers are highly versatile. Following historical recipes in their German, English, French, Polish, and Portuguese forms, their function can be redirected according to the printmaker's intentions. When reconstructing these papers, the printmaker is not limited to their original or intermediate uses: they can be employed for their original purpose, or as a final printing or art paper. Additionally, a painted or layered surface can easily modify the underlying structure of the paper, giving new life to previously used sheets and allowing for extended use while creating new aesthetic and conceptual meaning.

42 Dolphin Lithography Transfer Paper

43 Sommers (1977) describes various transfer papers, including Charbonnel Jeune (yellow), transparent, matte, and glossy papers, as well as prone gummed label paper, Yellow English heavy transfer paper, and Rives lithographic transfer paper.

THE INK

The complement of Transfer Ink is Transfer Paper–the one cannot do without the other.
(Cumming, 1948, p. 20)

Ink and paper are two essential materials in the printing process. While the primary function of ink is to form the image and influence its visual and material qualities – including tone, opacity, texture, and layering, paper – due to its uniform nature – is chosen to receive that image. Although in printmaking context paper is not the only material onto which ink can be transferred, it remains the one that most simplifies and guides the operation (Gamble, 1933).

With the rise of industrial ink production in the 19th century, artists gradually lost direct contact with the raw materials used in nearly all techniques. The composition of even the most common drawing and printing inks, tusches and crayons became obscure. While advancements in chemistry and industry enabled the refinement of paints and deepened the understanding of their formulation, the availability of high-quality, ready-to-use materials simultaneously weakened the artist's connection to their constituents. Of the numerous lithographic drawing ink brands from the mid-20th century, Vanhymbeeck, Lemercier, Stroeger, Charbonnel, Korn, and Rohrer & Klingner, only the last three survive today. The techniques and proportions of manufacturing such inks were often closely guarded by practitioners, reflecting both professional pride and the commercial value of proprietary knowledge. Across historical recipes – from Senefelder to Hulmandell, Knecht, and Lemercier – the formulations were carefully balanced to ensure water solubility, stone adhesion and visibility, while also resisting chemical degradation (Champour & Malepyre, 1875; Lehner, 1902). Lithographic crayons function similarly but are solid sticks, varying in softness depending on the wax and shellac ratios and are applied differently to achieve distinct artistic effects (Senefelder, 1819; Rhodes, 1914).

Before the invention of lithography, and with it the development of lithographic crayons and inks (tusche), artists relied on traditional drawing media such as chalks and crayons. As Robert Dossie described in *The Handmaid to the Arts* (1796), these were bound not only with pigments but also with a surprising range of additives: ale or beer, gum tragacanth, gum Arabic, animal glue, milk or oat milk, sugar, olive oil or linseed oil. Soap, derived from saponified oils and fats, was used almost exclusively for cleaning, while waxes mixed with pigments functioned as painting media

(Ward, 2008). Lithographic crayons and inks differ from ordinary ones in that they are acid-resistant (Lehner, 1902). Senefelder's experiments focused on developing a drawing ink for stone, which he named *chemical ink*. This ink adhered strongly to the stone's surface while resisting the action of acid during etching. At the same time, its soap-based composition allowed non-image areas to be washed away and kept receptive to water, ensuring that the drawn image could be repeatedly inked and printed. This chemical balance between adhesion, resistance, and repellence made it possible to take multiple proofs from a single drawing. The properties of lithographic inks (tusche) and crayons depend on the chemical composition of their ingredients. Yellow beeswax, for example, is highly acid-resistant, giving it a smooth texture and good adhesion. Flaked shellac provides hardness and elasticity. Mutton fat (tallow) provides the necessary greasiness and softness while Marseille soap, which contains soda (sodium hydroxide), increases the porosity of the stone. This allows the fat to penetrate, giving the ink a smooth, slippery quality and making it water-soluble. Mastic provides fluidity, resins offer tackiness and solidity, potassium nitrate gives hardness and elasticity while lampblack stipulates a dark colour and solidity (Bréguet, Lemercier, Mayer). Traditionally, these ingredients were heated together, formed into small pellets, and stored dry to extend shelf life. Although lithographic crayons have a similar effect to ink on the stone, there is one key difference: they adhere to and penetrate the stone less effectively. They are used in the form of drawing sticks whose softness varies depending on their wax and shellac content (Senefelder, 1819). Ink and crayons must contain the correct mixture of materials for the necessary fat-receptive and water-repellent areas to be deposited (Mayer, p. 380). The inks can be applied in various ways – not only on stone or transfer paper but also on drawing paper – through dabbing, stripping, splashing or spraying, with each method offering distinct visual effects (Rhodes, 1914).



Figure 59 | Marta Belkot, *Lithographic crayons, and Valongo slate pigments* (close-up) (2021) [Exhibition: *GroundLAB: Ensaios sobre a ardósia,* Fórum Cultural de Ermesinde, Valongo, Portugal].

In lithography, the choice of colour is introduced only at the final stage of the process. Historically, lithographic inks and crayons were almost exclusively dark, most often black or deep brown, since these colours provided the most reliable reference for practice and for assessing the light qualities of Solnhofen limestones. Lampblack, the primary pigment, contributed a subtle solidity and texture without compromising the ink's performance (Mayer, 1991). Senefelder (1819), in the chapter *Hard Ink of Borax,* suggested that colour could be added after boiling in order to produce coloured inks. However, lighter-coloured inks were rarely used and remain uncommon today. The reason lies in the fact that the drawing on the stone (or transfer paper) is only an intermediate surface: during the printing process the drawing on the limestone disappears, reappearing on the paper in the chosen colour. This explains why colourful crayons or drawing inks are absent from the market. Nevertheless, when working with alternative lithographic stones such as local black slate, the production of white crayons and autographic inks becomes necessary in order to make the drawing trace visible on a dark surface.

In response to the lack of transfer and coloured drawing inks or crayons on the market, and to gain insight into printmaking, we decided to start manufacturing our own inks. As the research progressed, a wide range of transfers and prepared surface papers for the photolithography and gillotage processes were finalised.[44] The first step in the ink-making process involved preparing transfer inks using recipes dating back to the late 19th century (Wilkinson, 1888; Vidal, 1893; Lemercier, 1899).



Figure 60 | Marta Bełkot and Rafaela Lima, Documentation of ink cooking (2021) [From the left: cooking pot; right: shellac heated over fire to activate melting with greasy substances, as it does not dissolve in animal fat at moderate heat. Experiments conducted outdoors due to dense smoke, FBAUP]. →

Figure 61 | Marta Bełkot, Documentation of cooking ink during technological residency at the II Bienal de Ardósia de Valongo (2021) [Casa Museu de Oliveira, Valongo, Portugal].

44 See Section Transfer/Prepared Surface Paper, pp. 114–127.

This elaborate process involved not only cooking and mixing but also ensuring that all the ingredients were present as, some such as the mutton fat, had to be prepared in advance.[45] The inks proved highly effective throughout the gillotage reconstruction process. In 2020, at the FBAUP facilities, we produced black, grey, and white lithographic crayons following historical recipes by Senefelder and Lemercier. *In La Lithographie Française* (1899), Lemercier provides detailed descriptions of crayon preparation. For the white crayon, we adapted his *Formula No. 4*, chosen for its consistency, which allows for easy handling. The original recipe combines wax, tallow, soap, potassium nitrate, and water; for the white version, lampblack was replaced with titanium white. The resulting crayons proved highly effective, demonstrating both practical usability and fidelity to the historical technique (Bełkot et al., 2023). Portuguese ink recipes illustrate the evolution of lithographic materials over time. French influence was strong in 19th century Portugal, with many technical manuals imported and locally adapted (Loureiro, 2001). A comparison between early works such as *Bibliotheca do Povo e da Escola* (1888) and later manuals like *Mil Segredos de*



45 The ingredients used were rubbing ink, lithographic ink, lithographic varnish (Charbonnel), mutton fat/tallow, beeswax, soap, shellac, turpentine, bitumen, white resin (colophony) and lampblack pigment.



Figure 62 | Marta Bełkot and Katarzyna Harciarek, Documentation of crayon no. 3 cooked within the Ink Station project for the *Atelier Nomade* (2024) [Pure Print Archaeology, Marques da Silva Foundation, Porto, Portugal].

Oficinas (1925) reveals a shift from simple four-ingredient inks – wax, soap, shellac, and lampblack – to more complex formulas that closely mirror Senefelder's autographic inks, incorporating ingredients such as mutton fat, bitumen and soot. In 2021, we[46] reproduced a series of dark lithographic inks based on the original recipes from lithographic reference books[47] and Portuguese manuals, using soot as a pigment to produce five slightly different inks and corresponding crayons (a dry form of ink) (Figure 60). For the II Bienal de Ardósia de Valongo (2021), we[48] created four white lithographic drawing inks and black slate pigment was also employed to reproduce Senefelder's crayon no. 7 and Brégeaut's first crayon (1850), resulting in earthy shades of black, red, and yellow (Figures 59 and 61). These experiments included in-situ testing (Figure 63), which demonstrated the flexibility of the inks and their suitability beyond conventional workshop settings, effectively bridging historical methods with contemporary artistic practice. The materials, including the black slate crayons, were tested by students and consistently yielded high-quality and satisfactory results (Bełkot et al., 2023).

46 Marta Bełkot (PhD student) and Rafaela Lima (Master student).
47 followed Villon's 1932 (p. 47) recipe.
48 Marta Bełkot (PhD student)

In 2024, the research entered a new phase with the *Ink Station*[49] project, which was part of the *Atelier Nomade*.[50] As a performative gesture – a deliberate, visible act in which the process itself carries meaning, emphasizing the material, temporal, and embodied dimensions of making (Phelan, 1993; Auslander, 2006) – we[51] prepared and cooked lithographic inks in the historic setting of the Marques da Silva Foundation (Figure 62). This approach treated the production of ink not only as a technical task but also as a research method in its own right, revealing the embodied knowledge and historical practices embedded in lithographic materials. We then shared these freshly made inks with participants, who wandered the streets of Porto with sheets of prepared stone paper, creating drawings in real time. This transformed

49 We used Senefelder and Lemercier recipe (Cumming, 1948, p. 42)
50 *Atelier Nomade* BIP Program (Blended Intensive Programme, Erasmus+), with participation of students, researchers, and faculty from Faculdade de Belas Artes da U.Porto (FBAUP), École Supérieur d'Art et Design de Saint-Étienne (Esadse), Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles (ArBA-EsA), and RWTH Aachen University, and invited collaborators. Planning Committee: Graciela Machado, Rui Vitorino Santos, Júlio Dolbeth. Organization: Graciela Machado, Marta Belkot, and David Lopes – Pure Print Archeology (PPA). Casa-Atelier José Marques da Silva, Porto, Portugal. https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2425517/2439186
51 Marta Bełkot (PhD student) and Katarzyna Harciarek (PPA colaborator)



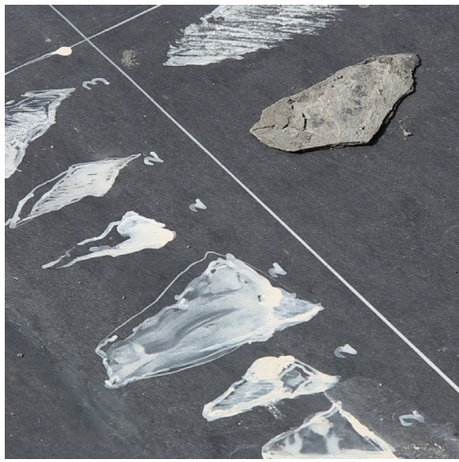


Figure 63 | Marta Bełkot, Graciela Machado, and Antonio da Silva, Documentation of lithography in situ (2021) [Stone paper and black slate testing, with tailored inks and crayons; experimentation with two portable lithographic presses; Empresa das Lousas de Valongo; II Bienal de Ardósia do Valongo (i2ADS, GroundLAB), Portugal].



Figure 64 | Marta Bełkot, *Rota do pão* (*Bread Route*) (2021) [Metal mold, crayons, white string; project in process; dimensions variable; exhibited in *GroundLAB*: *Ensaios sobre a ardósia*, Fórum Cultural de Ermesinde, Valongo, Portugal].

the city into a living workshop, blending historical printmaking techniques with a performative, participatory exploration of materials and place.

The process was challenging, as ingredients often resisted melting and blending, but the resulting inks offered remarkable visual qualities and could be successfully printed from lithographic and alternative stones. The reconstruction of drawing inks, touches and crayons in the contemporary printmaking workshop extends the range of recipes and ingredients illuminating a largely forgotten facet of printmaking and drawing. Artistic experimentation validates these methods revealing a complex, multilayered approach to image production. Identifying recipes and manipulating ingredients reconnects chemistry and printmaking in the artist's hands, expanding the possibilities of image production through collaborative processes and providing greater plasticity and creative flexibility.

It is from this foundation that my work *Rota do Pão* (*Bread route*) (2023) (Figure 64) emerges. The work employs lithographic crayons reconstructed from two-hundred-year-old recipes pigmented with black slate powder, a material intimately linked to Valongo, a mining area in the region of Porto with a long history of slate extraction. Their heavy load of oily substances produces a subtle, fragile line, almost disappearing as it is drawn. Cast in metal moulds, the crayons are designed for repetition, echoing the daily gestures of labour. Suspended on the wall, the crayons trace an irregular cartographic line corresponding to the 13 kilometres between Valongo and Porto – a path once walked countless times by bread sellers carrying their goods to the market. Retracing this route transforms the act of walking into drawing, mapping distance through fragile inscription. At the same time, the line becomes a quiet reminder of what lies beneath: the black slate mines and the human lives sustained and consumed by extraction. Thus, the revival of forgotten recipes and the act of walking converge – chemistry, memory, and landscape intertwining to give form to histories that are both material and ephemeral, visible and vanishing.

LITOGRAPHY IN SITU

This research adopts a working model grounded in the complexity of *in situ* practice, emphasizing engagement with local environments rather than the controlled conditions of a conventional printmaking studio. In regions with a long tradition of quarrying and stone trade, the landscape itself provided abundant material for experimentation. Rather than transporting stones into the studio, many could be used directly on-site, reducing preparation and fostering a more immediate interaction with the material. This approach opens new possibilities for outdoor work, extending lithography beyond the conventional workshop and situating artistic practice within the rhythms and contingencies of place.

These possibilities were explored during the *Flash Residency* in Anadia, Portugal (2020), where we experimented with irregular calcularium stones (Figure 65). Conventional processing methods, such as acids, were replaced with accessible local alternatives like lemon juice, while rollers were substituted with improvised dabbers. The practical challenges encountered during these experiments sparked a deeper interest in the construction and historical lineage of the dabber. Initially devised from cloth, the instrument enabled printing on uneven stones and revealed the necessity of a tool that could mediate between hand, ink and surface. Building on this insight, in collaboration with Tiago Cruz (Superior Technician in the Services of the Wood, Metal and Stone Workshop, FBAUP), we developed a refined prototype modeled on Engelmann's *Traité théorique et pratique de lithographie* (1839, plate 44). The handle was carved from Robinia Pseudoacacia, an invasive tree felled in the faculty (FBAUP) garden, chosen for its resistance and workability. The head was filled with rags, felt, and soft leather, producing a tool that performed efficiently on lithographic stones, gillotage plates and relief matrices (Figure 66).

The dabber's[52] long history, documented across cultures under names such as frotton, tampon, baren or mobang, reflects the interplay of material, form and function. Its evolution – from round to flat, from cloth to felt or leather – demonstrates how tools adapt to both technical demands and the embodied gestures of printmaking. Variations in shape, material, and weight influence the pressure applied, the texture of the printed surface, and the overall visual outcome, highlighting the tool's role in shaping both the process and the aesthetic of the print. The first fieldwork in Bairrada informed the production of a traditional rounded dabber,



Figure 65 | Marta Bełkot and Graciela Machado, Documentation of printmaking in situ during Flash Residency (29–30 July 2020) [Alternatives to stone lithography; Anadia, Portugal].

51 Bełkot and Machado (2022) discuss the painter's muller and hand-tool archaeology in *Lithography Expanded: Metal* [Book in preparation], Chapter ***From Painter's Muller***.



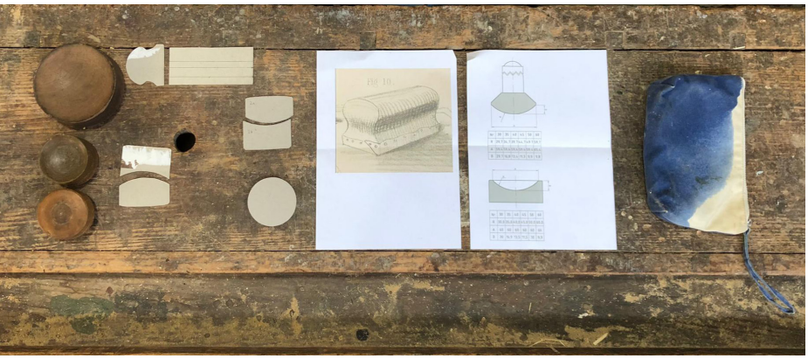


Figure 66 | Marta Bełkot and Tiago Cruz, Documentation of the construction of a lithographic dabber after Engelmann's Traité théorique et pratique de lithographie (1839) (2023) [Handle carved from Robinia pseudoacacia; felt disc, textile filling, and leather cover secured with nails; wooden mallet shown as tool used for final assembly; FBAUP].

←
Figure 67 | Marta Bełkot, Tiago Cruz, and Norberto Jorge Ogórek, Documentation of the development of a flat lithographic dabber and a metal-forming tool for the photo-enamel process (2022) [Original wooden tool borrowed from a family photo-enamelling workshop; historical reference drawing after *Every Man His Own Printer* (1859); templates and component studies; produced within the tutorial Ferramenta a Ferramenta, FBAUP].

developed to ink uneven stones and respond to the irregular surfaces encountered. During the technological residency at the II Bienal da Ardósia de Valongo (2021), which initially focused on the production of inks and the exploration of black slate, the importance of the dabber as a key tool became evident through in-situ experimentation. As the research progressed, attention shifted to the use of a portable lithographic press, constructed by António da Silva, a PhD candidate at FBAUP. Testing flat alternative stones in this context revealed the need for a more precise instrument. Here, the team refined the dabber producing a rectangular elongated version for precise pressure modulation in hand-printing, based on historical references from *Every Man His Own Printer; or Lithography Made Easy* (Waterlow & Sons, 1859). These projects were codified in the collaborative tutorial *Ferramenta a ferramenta* (*From Tool to Tool*),[53] where a metal stamping mould used in photo-enamelling was also developed. This small collaboration emphasises the intersection of printmaking, wood, metal and stone workshops in the creation and reinterpretation of historical tools (Figure 67).

Using local black slate as a lithographic matrix, alongside its naturally occurring color variations for coating papers, gum printing, inks and crayons, the research opens a broad spectrum of experimental possibilities. These materials allow for creative exploration while simultaneously serving as a lens into local collective memory and historical narratives. Reconstructing 19th century commercial printing materials and examining vernacular craftsmanship illuminates the processes through which knowledge is transmitted across generations, framing *in situ* practice as both experimental and deeply connected to historical and cultural contexts. The Pure Print Archaeology interest group (i2ADS, FBAUP) consequently continuous with such incursion, touring them into intense explorations[54] or groups activities (*Atelier Nomade*),[55] producing documentary and artistic works. Within this framework, *in situ* lithography emerges as a dynamic practice, negotiating materiality, technique and cultural history in a single, integrated gesture.

52 The first rounded dabber, designed for inking uneven stones, was developed in collaboration with Senior Technician Tiago Cruz at the FBAUP Wood and Metal Workshop and was inspired by insights from the Bairrada fieldwork. This initial experiment was followed by the tutorial *Ferramenta a Ferramenta*, during which two additional instruments were produced by Tiago Cruz and Professor Norberto Jorge: a flat dabber for hand-printing on level surfaces and a wooden tool for bending metal, used in the photo-enamel process (Norberto Jorge & Tiago Cruz, FBAUP; https://i2ads.up.pt/eventos/ferramenta-a-ferramenta/).

53 Bełkot (Director) and Machado (Organizer) (2024) present Pedra de Pedreira [Video], i2ADS/Pure Print Archeology project. https://vimeo.com/1099690834

54 Bełkot (Director) and Machado (Organizer) (2025) present *Cantanhede Atelier Nomade 2025* [Video], i2ADS/Pure Print Archeology project. https://vimeo.com/1099700868 or https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/3348830/3348831

Collaboration has played a central role in printmaking since its origins, reflecting both the technical complexity of the medium and the communal nature of workshop practice. As Griffiths (1996) notes, the print workshop historically functioned as a site of collective labour, where artists, printers and technicians worked together to achieve results unattainable individually. From early European printshops — where artists, engravers, block-cutters, and printers shared labour to produce complex images — to twentieth-century studios such as *Atelier 17*, founded by Stanley William Hayter, or the American workshop *Gemini G.E.L.* collaborative environments enabled experimentation and editions that artists could not realise alone (Fine & Brown, 1984). In the introduction to *Collaboration and its (Dis)Contents*, Art historians and curators Meredith A. Brown and Michelle Millar Fisher (2017) foreground collaboration as a complex, relational, and historically undervalued practice in art and scholarship. They challenge the dominant narrative of the solitary creative genius and emphasise the generative potential of collective processes, highlighting the interdependence of participants' skills and ideas without privileging individual authorship. This perspective helps to understand collaborative printmaking not as a secondary phenomenon to individual mastery but as a core site of knowledge exchange and innovation in contemporary practice (Brown & Millar Fisher, 2017). In situ approaches further extend this collaborative ethos, as the unpredictability of working outside conventional studios demands flexibility, shared problem-solving and attentiveness to local materials and conditions. Working with such conditions is where making becomes both a form of research and a collective negotiation of possibilities. Collaboration in printmaking is therefore not merely a pragmatic endeavor but an epistemic process, generating conditions in which technical skill, historical knowledge, and creative risk-taking converge (Shemilt, 2009).

BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHY

The elementary spirits have studied to fix these transient images: they have composed a most subtile matter, very viscous, and proper to harden and dry, by the help of which a picture is made in the twinkle of an eye. They do cover with this matter a piece of canvas, and hold it before the objects they have a mind to paint. (...) This impression of the images is made the first instant they are received on the canvas, which is immediately carried away into some dark place; an hour after, the subtile matter dries, and you have a picture so much the more valuable, as it cannot be imitated by art nor damaged by time.

Tiphaigne de la Roche, C.-F. (1761) pp. 95–65[56]

Long before the invention of photography, the *elementary spirits* knew how to fix an image taken directly from nature. *When powdered silver nitrate [lapis lunaris] is exposed to the sun, it becomes as black as ink*, wrote Sala[57] in a pamphlet published in 1614. Hornberg[58] dipped cattle bones in a solution of silver nitrate and black-



Figure 68 | William Bache (1771–1845), *Unidentified Woman and Unidentified Woman 2* (c. 1803–1804) [Black cut-coated paper silhouettes, mounted on neutral paper; dimensions approx. 7.9 × 7 cm each]

55 Published in 1760 novel *Giphantie* by Tiphaigne de la Roche would in an extremely persuasive way describe the process that we know today as Photography

56 Angelo Sala was the first one to record the darkening of silver nitrate in exposure to sunlight. In *Septem planetarum terrestrium spagirica recensio* (1614), Sala reported that *Si lapidem lunearem pulveratum ad solem exponas instar atramenti niggerimus* (When powdered silver nitrate is exposed to sunlight, it turns black as ink).

58 Wilhelm Hornberg on the 4th September 1694 exhibited to the Academie Royale des Sciences in Paris among other things a small marbled box made of beef-bone. Having dipped the bone in a solution of nitrate of silver and blackened it by exposure to the sun, he gave it a marbled pattern by laying bare parts of the whitish bone beneath the blackened surface. It remains a speculation whether either of these two scientists realized that the blackening of silver was due solely to the sun's light, and not to its heat. Homberg's contemporary, Robert Boyle, quite clearly attributed the effect to the air, and even a century later Count Rumford argued that all changes produced in bodies exposed to sunlight were due to heat and not to light - although before this ample proof had been forthcoming to the contrary (Gernsheim & Gernsheim,1969, p.30–31)

ened them by exposure to the sun in 1694; both observations, while seeming to clearly attribute the effect to sunlight, did not provide clear confirmation. Baldun's[59] invention of the *bringer of light* – phosphorus – and later Schulze's[60] *bringer of darkness* – scotophorus – as a result of a chemical error, recognized the darkening of the silver nitrate by sunlight (Gernsheim &Gernsheim, 1969). Still that knowledge even if made people aware of the possibility of transferring these observations to other fields, did not arise yet. Tiphaigne de la Roche seems to have been the first to think of printing images from nature when he wrote his novel *Giphantie* in 1760. He may have been familiar with the camera obscura and aware of the chemical discoveries of the time, but we can assume that his interpretation of such an event was beyond the expectations of his century. Rudolf Arnheim (2004, p. 5) commenting on the gestalt theory in his book *Art and Visual Perception* noted that *all perception is also thinking, all reasoning is also intuition, all observation is also invention*. Tiphaigne de la Roche's imaginative modus operandi certainly combines thought, intuition and invention in a way that would probably place him in the realm of clairvoyant or science fiction today. The *elementary spirits* are the forerunners of what we now call photography.

As elementary spirits, were taking their paintings from nature, Musician and engraver Gilles-Louis Chrétien in less than thirty years (1783) invented the *physionotrace*, a wooden instrument connected to a pantograph[61] that allowed the draughtsman to literally trace the profile shape of the face and automatically translate it to a smaller scale for copper engraving (Newhall, 1982). This extremely rapid invention was preceded by a remarkable cut-portrait technique called the *silhoutte*;[62] the *physionotrace* combined a silhouette and a detailed engraving in one. It was cheap, fast and mechanised the production of portraits (Figure 68).[63] It can be argued that the *physionotrace* was the ideological precursor of photography, although it had nothing to do with the technical development of the medium (Fraud, 1974) but more with the profound idea of the democratization of art.

59 *Believing that the darkening was attributable to the mixture of chalk and nitric acid-essential ingredients in making phosphorous by Balduin's process.* (Gernsheim, 1955, p. 31).

60 The aqua regia – nitric acid that Schulze used in his repetition of Baldun´s experiment was impure: It contains silver. When he dissolved chalk in it he produced a complex of calcium nitrate and silver carbonate. To his amazement the compound turned deep purple on exposure to sun´s rays. He documented that the reaction had been caused by light rather than heat.

61 Pantograph, instrument for duplicating a motion or copying a geometric shape to a reduced or enlarged scale. It consists of an assemblage of rigid bars adjustably joined by pin joints; as the point of one bar is moved over the outline to be duplicated, the motion is translated to a point on another bar, which makes the desired copy according to the predetermined scale. Source: Encyclopædia Britannica.

61 The silhouettes were a by-product of the engraving process, functioning as an intermediary similar to transfer paper, capturing essential outlines and tonal information for reuse or further manipulation.

63 The National Portrait Gallery (NPG) album was created by Mr. William Bache in New Orleans, between 1803 and 1809, as a record book of silhouettes. The album is notable for the diverse community represented ranging from the prominent families to freed slaves. A partial index of names appears in the back. The album was selected for treatment to appear in the NPG exhibition, Legacy: Spain and the United States in the Age of Independence 1763–1848.

As the 18th century industrial revolution established capitalism as a dominant mode of production characterized by factory work and complex division of labour, people started to produce more at a lower cost. This change fundamentally transformed societies, it became possible for middle class citizens to acquire products previously reserved only for aristocracy. To meet the demand for portraits, the art of its production also become increasingly mechanised. The *physionotraces* supplanted replaced the time-consuming miniature painting, the earliest portrait form that expressed the individualism of the client and could be carried in a small box. Although miniature portraits often idealized the sitter and sometimes simplified features to reduce production costs, mechanized methods quickly gained popularity due to their efficiency and affordability (Gernsheim & Gernsheim, 1969; Fraud, 1974). Lithography, invented in 1797 by Alois Senefelder in Germany and introduced a few years later in England and France, represented a significant step in making art more widely accessible, enabling a broader audience to engage with printed images. It quickly became one of the leading technologies for reproducing illustrations in magazines and newspapers, although photography would later emerge as the medium capable of reaching virtually everyone (Fraud, 1974).

Before the invention of the camera, people learned about the world through drawing, paintings and prints made by artists to document their observations from worldwide expeditions (Kossoy, 2006). Many of these excursions ended in death due to unknown diseases, difficult and unpredictable circumstances or unfortunate weather conditions. Hercules Florence (1804–1879) was one of the few to survive the Langsdorff expedition (1821–1829) – a scientific journey into the Brazilian hinterland. It was internationally reported as one of the most important scientific expeditions of the 19th century. Despite many hardships and tropical diseases,[64] the naturalists, artists, botanists and scientists produced more than two thousand pages of visual information, leaving a vast legacy of intrinsic knowledge (Barman, 1971 p. 79).[65] Accurate representation of reality was an indispensable indicator of talent and ability to undertake such journeys. Hercules' meticulous recording of the expedition's discoveries places him, along with other artists, in a tradition that celebrates the reciprocal relationship between art and science. This link was root-

64 Like Beriberi disease, caused by a deficiency of vitamin B1 (thiamine) in the bloodstream, affects the nervous system and can lead to numerous health complications, including memory loss, blindness, and psychosis.

65 All the archives were kept in Russia until rediscovery in 1930 (Barman, 1971, pp. 67-96).

ed in the ideals of the Renaissance and consolidated during the Enlightenment, when rationality prevailed and knowledge took precedence (Alonso, 2010, p. 42).[66] The 18th and 19th centuries were a period of tremendous change: world views and methods of acquiring knowledge about nature and society were no longer subject to religious dogma about creation but about the complex natural phenomena of evolution.

Commonly used by the artists of that time, known from centuries was a simple optical instrument for obtaining an inverted real image. The camera obscura has been credited by scholars, such as Jonathan Crary, with establishing the paradigm of the status of the pure observer (Crary, 1992) during the 17th and 18th centuries was without question the *(...) most widely used model for explaining human vision, and for representing the relation of a perceiver and the position of knowing subject to the external world.* (Crary, 1992, p. 27). Historian of photography, collector and photographer Helmut Gernsheim (1986) in *A Concise History of Photography* noted that what we know today as the photographic camera originates precisely from the camera obscura, *(...) which was originally as its Latin name implies, a dark room with a small hole in the window-shutter through which an inverted image of the view outside is projected on the opposite wall or a white screen.* Another alternative to support an artistic calculation of representation of nature was the *camera lucida* invented by the English scientist William Hyde Wollaston in 1807. This ingenious device consisted of a glass prism suspended from a brass rod at eye level, with a sheet of drawing paper laid flat underneath. By looking through a small opening above the edge of the prism, the artist could see both the subject and the paper at the same time. His pencil would then be guided by a virtual image. Unlike the camera obscura, the camera lucida shared only its name and basic function. It was also conveniently portable and became a popular tool for travellers and artists alike[67] (Newhall, 1982).

Hercules Florence's, just like others piomeers od photography; Thomas Wedgwood's, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce's, William Henry Fox Talbot's and Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre's, initial experiments focus on what was in common use like the camera obscura, the camera lucida and in his case information he acquired from a young pharmacist[68] about the properties of silver nitrate. His great interest was to sensitize paper and to *printing via the action of light* where the image was copied by contact with a glass matrix (Kossoy, 2017 p. 42). Before coming up with the term photography – years before it was used elsewhere – in 1830 Hercules

66 Rodríguez Alonso, A. (2010). Unveiling the Langsdorff expedition. In Exhibition catalogue *Langsdorff expedition*. Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil

67 Basil Hall used to document his American travels using camera lucida, he believed that these instruments help the amateur to omit the misery of wrongly calculated perspective, proportion and form (Hall, 1829).

68 Joaquim Corres de Mello (1816-1877)



Figure 69 | Hercule Florence (1804–1879), *Photograph of nine pharmacy labels* (c. 1833) [Contact copy with photosensitive paper; one of Florence's earliest experiments with photosensitive paper; many early images darkened and survive only in textual records; dimensions 21.0 × 29.4 cm].

Florence was immersed in a series of inventions, mainly printing experiments on polygraphie, inimitable paper or pulvography[69] and working with photosensitive papers treated with a layer of soot (Figure 69). Besides silver by-products, he uses gold chloride[70] to photosensitise the paper and ammonia to fix the image (Brizuela, 2017 p.327). Perhaps the explorer´s desire to record nature in its most rigorous, austere form inspired the early days of photography in his mind. In 1833, six years before the Daguerreotype and two years before Talbot *photogenic drawings*, he discovered *photography*. The so-called: isolated case of the discovery of photography in Brazil (Kossoy, 2006) as we know now did not mark its visibility at the time of its invention as it did not appear in the early history of photography. He encountered the same challenges faced by other inventors working in this field, particularly the inversion of the image (the negative) and its impermanence, as the image continued to darken over time. Compounding these technical difficulties was the fact that his inventions went unrecognized, causing him profound distress when he later discovered that similar developments were taking place in France (Fregni Nagler, 2017, p. 49). He blamed his lack of recognition on his isolation and exile, limited access to suitable materials, and the absence of interest in photography in the society in which he lived.

The first real attempts at photography with a camera began in April 1816. At that time, Niépce managed to capture images from the camera obscura on paper coated with silver chloride. However, the pictures appeared as negatives, with light and shadow reversed. To fix them, he used nitric acid, but over time this caused

69 Polygraphie (1829–1832) A duplicating process for documents, combining text and images; Inimitable Paper (1830) A kind of security paper intended to prevent counterfeiting, using chemical treatments and unique textures. Pulvography (1830s) printing process using powdered pigments pressed into paper. Instituto Hercule Florence. https://ihf19.org.br/pt-br/hercule-florence/inventos/poligrafia?utm_

70 *(...) an innovation that, until now, has no record in the endeavours of other precursors.* Instituto Hercule Florence. https://ihf19.org.br/en/hercule-florence/inventions/photography



Figure 70 | Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (1765–1833), *View from the Window at Le Gras* (1826 or 1827) [Heliograph; dimensions 16.7 × 20.3 cm].

the images to whiten and fade. Although he was pleased with the sensitivity of silver salts, two major problems remained: how to make the image permanent and how to obtain a positive picture. Niépce's photographs on paper from 1816 marked real progress compared with Thomas Wedgwood's earlier experiments, which had failed to capture camera obscura images and produced pictures visible only by candlelight. Furthermore, Niépce already understood the idea of printing positives from negatives – an approach later perfected by Talbot. He also tried to create direct positives by bleaching various substances, but none were sensitive enough to light. At the same time, he experimented with capturing images on metal plates and stone, using light to decompose different acids and create printing surfaces. He believed this method would be even better than paper negatives, since engravings allowed for multiple copies and were more durable. Yet despite many attempts, Niépce admitted that these efforts were unsuccessful (Gernsheim & Gernsheim, 1969).

Before Wedgwood in England and Nicéphore Niépce in France made their first attempts, many experiments were undertaken in both the optical and chemical components of photography (Gernsheim & Gernsheim, 1969). The fading of early images and their transience focused attention on various substances and surfaces, including asphalt, carbon ink, paper, glass, metal, natural resins, oils, varnishes and silver salts, in the desire to immortalise representations. Knowledge of printmaking, particularly lithography, brought the concept of photography closer to reality for its early inventors. Bitumen of Judea, an integral part of lithography, played a central role in his Niépce's early (1814) experiments. In 1827, he successfully produced the first photograph: *View from the Window at Le Gras*, by hardening the bitumen with light to create a chemically stable image where unhardened areas were dissolved with oil of lavender (Figure 70). It acted as a photosensitive medium that hardened under light, while unexposed areas remained soluble. This first photographic attempts bridged the mechanical logic of printing with the emerging chemical art of photography.

In parallel, Niepce's early experiments in Europe, the discovery that Jewish bitumen on any surface is sensitive to light[71] (Pinsard, 1897) and Florence's experiments in Brazil, have all explored ways to capture and multiply images using light. Florence's early work in bookshop and printing press may have had a significant

71 Laying the foundation for photolithography.

impact on his approach to innovations. The skills and mindset he gained from producing and circulating texts and images directly informed his later inventions relating to printing and duplication. At the same time, Niépce was experimenting with bitumen of Judea, a material well known in engraving and lithography to create permanent images using light. In both cases, the familiarity with printing techniques provided the technical and conceptual foundation for light-sensitive processes. These parallel paths highlight how early photography emerged directly from print culture with light serving as both a medium of representation and a tool for reproduction.

The onset of photography[72] is dated to the first half of the 19th century and since then the process of obtaining photographs has been evolving and improving in every aspect (Gernsheim, 1986). Once cameras became widely available, people seek to invent methods of reproduction that would decrease the cost of commercial printing (Gascoigne, 1986). Invented forty years apart, lithography and photography emerged from the same background, generated by industrialized multiplication and reproduction of images (Howe, 1998). Both claimed capabilities beyond mere copying. This history of the relationship between printmaking techniques and photography is full of intersections and distinctions, seeking knowledge with the accuracy of the representation, pinpointing a new beginning for the discoveries of unknown parts of the world.

Early photogravure[73] plates and maps were the product of years of accumulated skill and technical refinement. One significant example is the Duke de Luynes' expedition to the Dead Sea region, documented in *Voyage d'exploration à la Mer Morte* à *Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain* (1874) and published long after the expedition itself (Figure 71). Beyond its historical importance in Middle Eastern studies, this monumental work is widely regarded as a milestone in the development of photography and the photobook, giving visibility to the French photographer Charles Nègre, a key pioneer in the art of photogravure. The urge to document the unknown not only fueled innovation but also drove inventors and explorers to

72 In 1827 Nicéphore Niépce successfully printed the view from his room known as the *View from the Window at Le Gras*. In 1835, William Henry Fox Talbot developed his first successful paper negatives – so-called photogenic drawings – which laid the foundation for the calotype (Batchen, 1997). Just a few years later, in 1839, Louis Daguerre introduced the daguerreotype process, while Talbot presented his calotype method, establishing the parallel paths of early photography (Rosenblum, 2007).

72 Photogravure is a 19th century printmaking technique in which a photographic image is transferred onto a metal plate (usually copper) using a light-sensitive gelatin tissue. The plate is then chemically etched, creating microscopic recessed areas that hold ink. The image is printed by wiping ink into these etched grooves and printing it on a press, like an etching (Gascoigne, 1986).

assume enormous risks. Salomon August Andrée's ill-fated balloon expedition to the North Pole in 1897 epitomizes this spirit of perilous ambition. Like many ventures of the era, it ended in tragedy: the remains of the team were discovered three decades later, accompanied by personal belongings and nine undeveloped photographic films. The extreme Arctic temperatures had preserved this fragile evidence, turning the photographic material into a posthumous witness of both human aspiration and vulnerability (Andrée at all., 1930).

Still, photolithography was not patented until 1852, when a group of French innovators – the printer and lithographer Joseph Lemercier, the optician and photography entrepreneur Louis-Charles Lerebours, and the chemists François Barreswil and Auguste Davanne – presented their description of the process to the French Academy of Sciences on the 28 of June and secured the patent in July of the same year. Their procedure consisted of covering the stone with a solution of Jewish bitumen in ether and exposing the prepared surface under a photographic negative. The stone was washed with ether to remove unexposed bitumen, corresponding to the white areas of the drawing, and then acidulated and treated according to standard lithographic procedures (Villon, 1932, p. 503).[74]

The same idea later was recreated by Robert Macpherson from Scotland and resident in Rome, who just like the previous inventors used the lithographic stone to support the bitumen layer and patented the photolithography process in papal government in 1853 (Munsterberg, 1986, p. 150). This process was not yet perfect and research

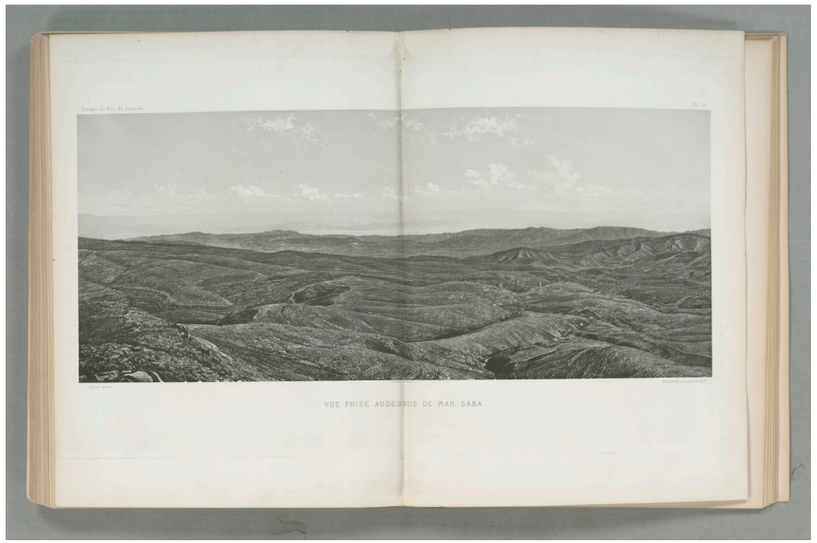


Figure 71 | Charles Nègre (1820–1880, Platemaker), *Vue prise audessus de Mar Saba* (1874) [Photogravure; book dimensions 20 × 47.5 cm; photograph by Louis Vignes (1831–1896); edited by Melchior, marquis de Vogüé (1829–1916); book dimensions 20 x 47.5 cm]. From *Voyage d'exploration à la Mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain* (Vogüé, Ed., 1874).

74 This process was not generalised and was completely erased by Poitevin's procedure (Villon, 1932, p. 503)



Figure 72 | Marta Bełkot and Graciela Machado, Experiments with one of the earliest photolithography photosensitive dichromate papers (2017) [reference image: Graciela Machado, *Island*, 2008; dimensions 21 × 35 cm and 21 × 29.7 cm].

continued. In 1854, Herman Halleux succeeded in fixing darkroom images, including animated subjects, onto lithographic stones. For architectural objects, a moderately weighted stone was grained, impregnated with a weak iron sesquioxide oxalate solution, and kept moist. After exposure, the latent image was fixed with ammonium carbonate and rinsed to remove soluble salts. The stone was then etched with oxalic acid, inked and printed like a standard lithograph (Hammann, 1857). In 1855, M. Poitevin patented a new process abandoning Judean bitumen and exploiting the light-sensitive reduction of chromic acid salts, mainly potassium dichromate, in organic media. His method applied layers of albumin, gelatin, gum arabic or similar substances combined with alkaline or metallic dichromates. After drying, a negative was placed on the sensitized surface or exposed in a darkroom to create a photochemical image, producing stable and reproducible proofs (Hammann, 1857) (Figure 72).

From that point onward, improvements were largely incremental: the discovery of photolithography had been firmly established. In a brochure published in 1862, Poitevin described his photolithographic printing technique in detail. A stone was coated with a mixture of albumen and potassium bichromate and exposed under a photographic negative. After exposure, the stone was lightly wetted and rolled with lithographic ink. The ink adhered only to areas where the light had rendered the mixture insoluble, leaving the whites of the image unaffected. The stone was then treated with a dilute acid solution, gummed and dried, following the same procedures as a conventional lithographic drawing. The resulting prints could then be produced using standard lithographic methods. (Pinsard, 1897). Seen in a broader context, this development exemplifies how art and science moved forward hand in hand. As Pinsard (1897) observed, throughout the 19th century – that *in the great struggle for truth and the quest for a perfect knowledge of nature, printmaking continues to advance, strong and confident, towards a future that promises the greatest achievements.* Printmaking evolved through a continuous cycle of discovery, refinement, disappearance and revival. Each new process was measured against its speed of execution and the cost of production, factors that determined its survival and dissemination.

GILLOTAGE

Typographic chemical etching (org. Gravure chimique typographique) as the Portuguese scientist, academic and politician José Júlio Bettencourt Rodrigues (1843–1893)[75] broadly called Gillotage, was a 19th century technique based on obtaining the relief on a metal plate by several stages of deep etching. Invented in 1852[76] by French printmaker and inventor Firmin Gillot (1820–1872) under the name of Panicography, later Gillotage, known also as *The French Process* or *The rolling up Process* (Gamble, 1900). The original steps involve using a lithographic transfer of an image drawn and processed on stone by the means of transfer ink and transfer or gillot paper onto a metal plate, avoiding the undercutting of the raised areas of the design needed to obtain a relief printing plate (preventing lateral etching). Many important inventions predated the development of gillotage. Poet, painter, engraver, and visionary William Blake (1757–1827), in his *Illuminated Printing* (1788), transformed the image and text into a copper metal plate, protecting the drawing/writing area from acid with stop-out varnish achieving a relief, suitable for letterpress printing (Phillips, 2018). Still his process remains mysterious. The invention of lithography (1797) was preceded by Senefelder's (1771–1834) experiments with an acid-resistant medium to protect lines and etch limestone into relief. Niepce's (1765–1833) experiments with sensitising bitumen and its acid-resistant properties to etch metal plates into relief (Gamble, 1900) were important not only for reproduction processes but also for the invention of photography. Firmin Gillot also considered the methods of Tissier, who used a lithographic stone to create a relief and anastatic printing, which involved re-using printed images to transfer them onto zinc plates (Tissier, 1839; Pinsard, 1897). An overview of *gillotage* printed images reveals a striking continuity with the expressive qualities of lithographic drawing media (Duchâtel & Bénédite, 1907), while simultaneously functioning as a relief-printed output on metal, suitable for letterpress reproduction.

75 José Júlio Rodrigues in the book: *La Section photographique et artistique de la direction générale des travaux géographiques du Portugal*, describes the processes used in Portugal in 1877 for photogravure reproduction in intaglio and relief, with or without halftones.

76 INPI, French patent no. 9679 (1BB9679), *Panéiconographie, ou art de reporter sur tous métaux, comme sur pierre, soit en creux, soit en relief, toute épreuve de lithographie, typographie ou gravure, et de reproduire ces reports au moyen de la presse typographique*, GILLOT (1850). https://archives.inpi.fr:443/ark:55749/1ef041c36ef764fea4c70050568c1d46.moteur=arko_default_63f395e1547dd

To investigate the diverse contexts of gillotage we[77] positioned ourselves as practical researchers, uniting material experimentation with historical analysis. This approach demanded the reconstruction of processes that originally developed beyond the boundaries of the conventional printmaking studio (Machado et al., 2022). By adopting a hybrid methodology, combining technical skill, collaborative practice and archival research, we sought to operate within three foundational printing techniques: lithography, etching and relief. Together, these practices provided the groundwork for a deeper exploration into the technological archaeology of gillotage (Figure 74). This process required the painstaking re-creation of materials long absent from the market: transfer papers and prepared surface papers, transfer inks and crayons, mutton fat and nut gall decoctions. Reconstructed from interpretive technological sources rarely associated with fine art printmaking, these materials exemplify both the rigor and the inventiveness demanded in recovering practices on the edge of disappearance. In this way, the work became an act of resistance, confronting scarcity, divergence and obsolescence, while transforming such limitations into fertile ground for new artistic possibilities. Collaboration within the studio members reminds us of the history of printmaking being deeply embedded in workshop culture, where knowledge circulates through collective practice rather than individual mastery. Such collaboration is a place where patience, dialogue and mutual trust allow the group to extend beyond technical recovery toward creative reinvention and space of resilience, capable of sustaining both historical inquiry and contemporary artistic exploration.

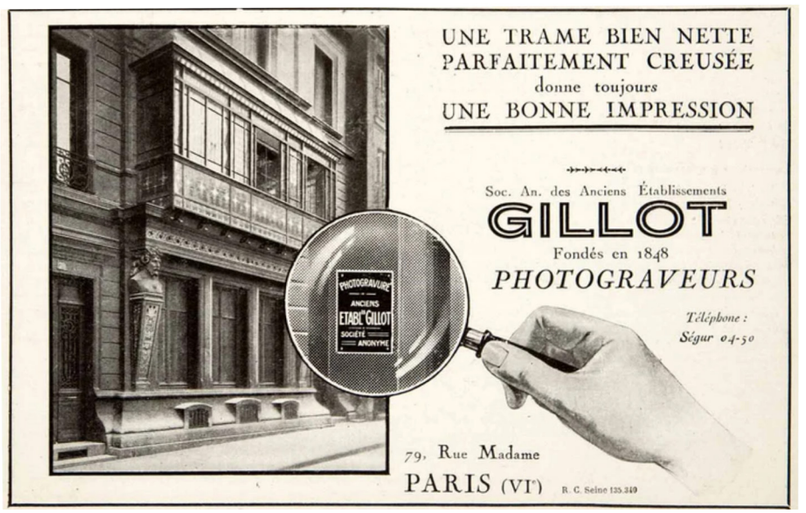


Figure 73 | Advertisement for the Gillot Company, depicting the company premises at 79 Rue Madame, Paris (1926).

77 Marta Bełkot (PhD student), Sandra Costa Brás (late PhD student), and Professor Graciela Machado

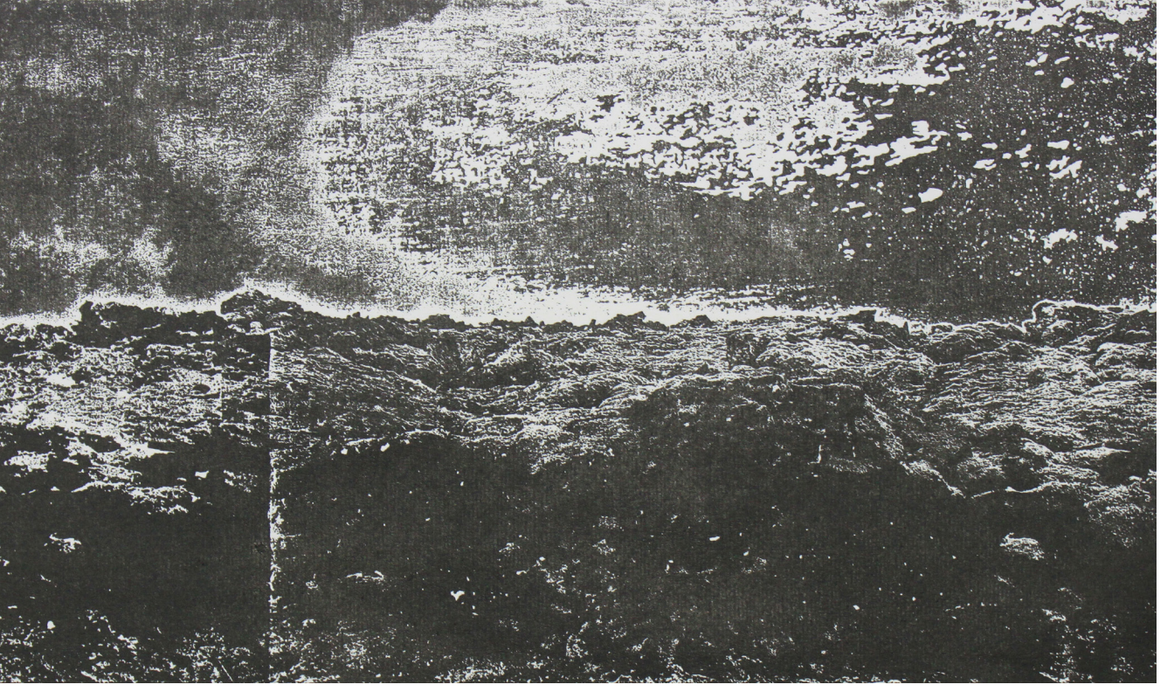


Figure 74 | Marta Bełkot, Graciela Machado and Sandra Costa Brás, Gillotage plate printed as zincography (2020) [reference image: Graciela Machado, *Island*, 2008; dimensions 21 × 35 cm].

For the first twenty years of its existence, *gillotage* served as a pre-photographic reproduction process and laid the foundations for modern photogravure in the commercial industry of the 19th century. The process involved transferring an image drawn and processed on a lithographic stone onto a metal plate, followed by several deep etching stages. Gillotage can be distinguish as indirect and direct. Indirect versions consist of: (1) transfer from stone to zinc plate by the use of transfer paper; (2) transfer from paper to zinc plate; (3) from photopolymer plate to zinc plate (in straight contact under the press); while direct gillotage can be characterise by: (1) drawing directly on zinc plate and (2) drawing with crayon on grained zinc plate (Figure 80). Therefore, it is possible to work from a variety of surfaces using transfer paper and transfer inks. This unique technique, with its ability to accurately reproduce the chalk grain and even brush strokes for additional effects, replaced lithography as a means of printing popular imagery.[78] The prices were reasonable at the time of its success, encouraging artist to reproduce their works by its means especially for illustrative magazines or as an edition of China ink or crayon works (Figure 75).

Still, the early methods of achieving the relief on metal plate concentrated on the etching of zinc and copper were, not only tedious and inaccurate, but required a lot of training. The main difficulty arose from the fact that the chemical removal of metal by the action of nitric acid from non-image areas goes in all directions. Thus, etching the surface of the plate runs not only in the desired direction to achieve the depth required for satisfactory printing, but also sideways, causing a reduction in the width of the lines and dots of the printed image. Mechanical weakening of the dot, lead to it collapsing under the pressure of the printing press (Borth, 2022). Gillot found the way to protect and strengthen the *walls* of the appearing relief surface by means of laborious resin dusting, fixing it with heat and rolling up ink process. His success was repeated in many different countries with certain alteration of the dusting substances. In the United States the powder was dragon blood, in the United Kingdom the Bitumen Judaic, still all the resinous deposited etch-resistant material substances achieved success in preventing lateral etching.

78 Bełkot, M., Machado, G (2024) *Gillotage, the know-how of the technique*, in Machado, G., Bełkot, M: Lithography expanded: metal (under construction) i2ADS publications.



Figure 75 | Édouard Manet, *At the Cafe* (1874) [Gillotage on beige wove paper; dimensions 26.4 × 33.3 cm].

My work *Reflection* (2020) (Figure 76) is a contemporary artistic interpretation of the 19th century gillotage process. Working in a printmaking studio, the piece relies entirely on handmade techniques, in contrast to the commercial contexts in which gillotage was historically used. The work was produced from seven plates created using the gillotage method, printed through different presses and techniques – etching, relief, and lithography. This unusual versatility is conceptually significant: it demonstrates that a single matrix can yield multiple visual and tactile outcomes, echoing the adaptability of modern technology, in which information can be transmitted, transformed, and experienced across various platforms and locations. The images themselves depict fingerprints transferred from acetate in contact with a computer keyboard, materializing the traces of human touch while referencing the flow of information through digital networks. These fingerprints function on multiple levels: literally, they record the physical gestures of the hand; conceptually, they evoke the human presence embedded in mediated interactions and highlight the interplay between touch, memory, and communication. The circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic add an additional layer of meaning, reflecting isolation, disconnection, and the desire to leave tangible traces of oneself in both physical and digital spaces.

The multiplicity of plates and printing methods further reinforces the conceptual dimension. While each plate originates from the same source, the different printing techniques emphasize distinct qualities: relief prints highlight tactile interaction, etchings capture fine detail, and lithographs reveal subtle surface textures. This





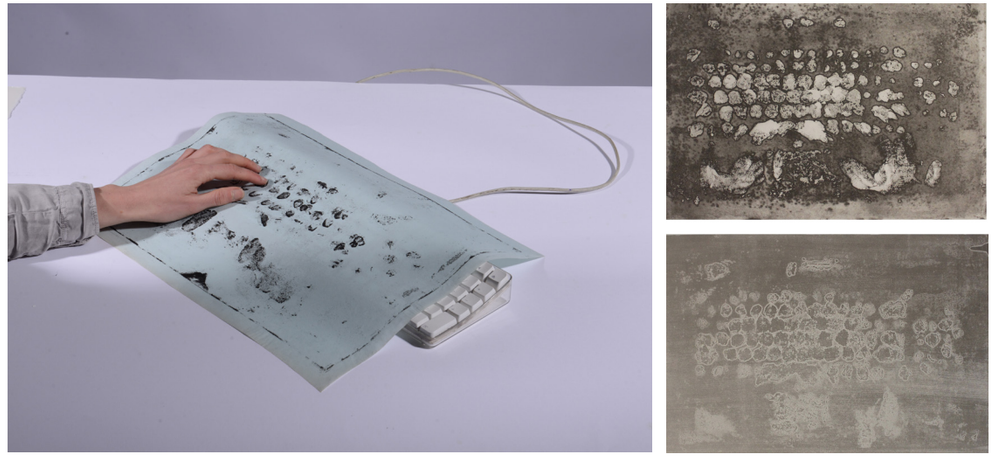


Figure 76 | Marta Bełkot, *Reflection* (2020) [Selection from seven gillotage plates printed in edition of 38 on different types of paper; dimensions 24 × 45 cm to 45 × 65 cm].

variation mirrors the multiplicity of contemporary communication channels and the layered ways in which humans interact with information. By translating historical technique into a modern context, Just as gillotage process preserved the integrity of delicate reliefs, this work preserves traces of human presence, inviting viewers to touch and interact with it, leaving their own marks behind.

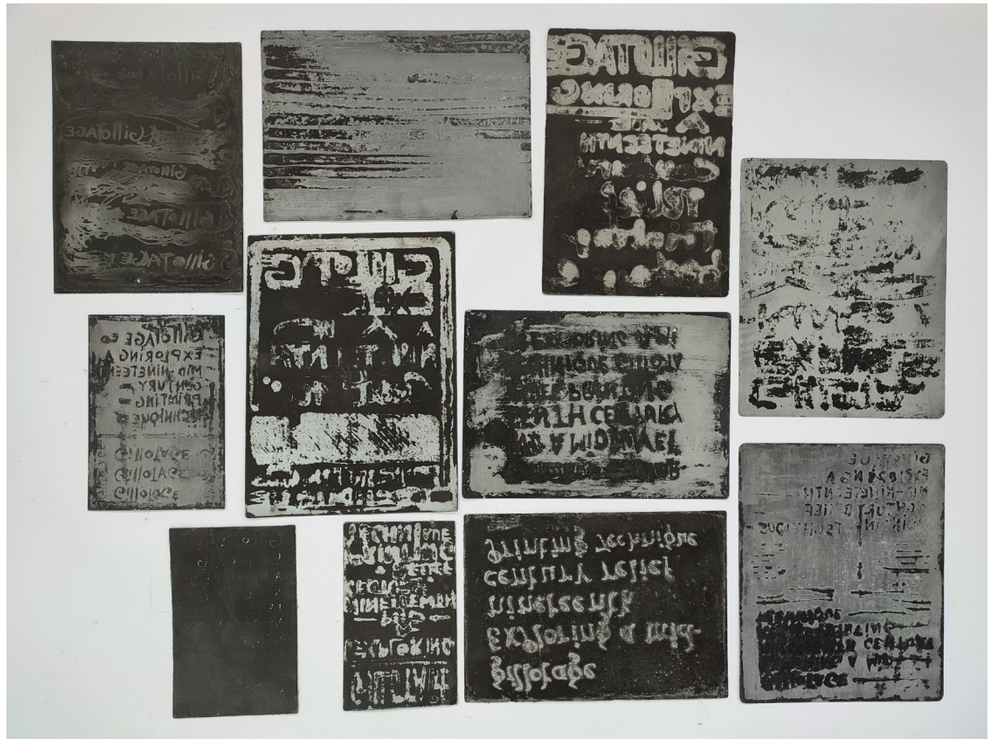
This contemporary exploration of gillotage illuminates the dialogue between past and present, revealing how historical techniques can acquire new meanings in modern contexts. Tracing these developments underscores the inventive spirit of 19th century printmakers, whose technical experiments laid the groundwork for both commercial and artistic practices that continue to inspire contemporary explorations. Over time the gillotage evolved first into photolithography and then into direct development of the image using a photosensitive solution on the metal plate.

Figure 77 | Marta Bełkot and Sandra Costa Brás, Collaborative work on the recreation of gillotage: gumming and resin dusting, (2020) [FBAUP].

Line photoengraving (gillotage) emerged as the preferred option in the commercial sector, offering a more economical and faster alternative to the dominant relief printing method of that time mid-19th century. Today, it can be seen seen as a refreshing alternative to the prevalent halftone-dominated method of mechanically reproduced images in fine art printing. However, when we set out to reconstruct the gillotage processes (Figures 77, 78, 79 and 80), we encountered a hurdle – the transfer papers and inks we needed were no longer available on the current market. This scarcity highlighted the ways in which historical printmaking techniques depended on materials and combinations that have since become obsolete, prompting us to investigate not only the process itself but also its historical evolution and adaptations.

The typographic features of the metal relief matrix led to combine the gillotage with letterpress printing, turning it into the first option when it came to reproducing illustrations in the commercial sphere, being a cheaper alternative to relief printing methods such as wood engraving or copper engraving. In 1872, Gillot´s son Charles improved and patented its new combination with photographic reproduction, based on the use of bichromate gelatin or sensitized bitumen,[79] applied and developed directly on to zinc; no transfer of image was needed anymore and therefore reproducing drawings and making prints, was facilitated.

Figure 78 | Marta Bełkot and Sandra Costa Brás, Collaborative work on the recreation of gillotage: etched zinc plates (2020) [dimensions vary, largest 21 × 30 cm].



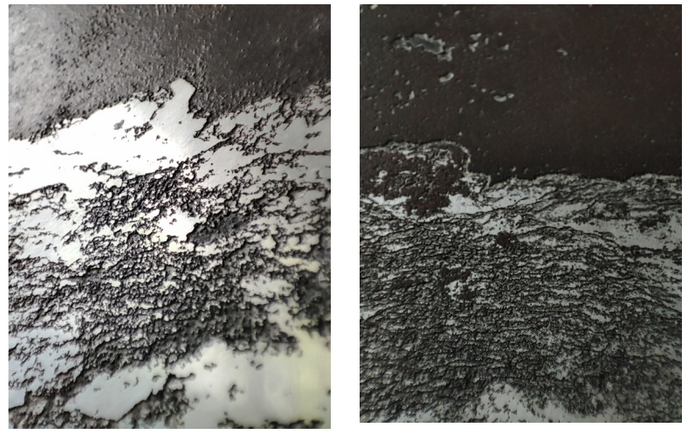


Figure 79 | Marta Bełkot and Sandra Costa Brás, Collaborative work on the recreation of gillotage: etched zinc plates (2020) [close-up].

Like other photomechanical inventions of the 19th century, *gillotage* was driven by the pursuit of speed, efficiency and lower costs in print reproduction. Its predecessors, wood engraving, copperplate engraving, etching and lithography, each represented an incremental step towards developing a medium capable of producing affordable, effective prints. In an era of groundbreaking discoveries in many different commercial and scientific fields, there was an urgent need to establish a process that could reproduce images quickly and disseminate knowledge widely. Copper or wood engravings were time-consuming for the craftsman executing the matrix. After the matrix was completed, etching remained a relatively slow printing method, because the ink had to be carefully applied and wiped from the plate before each impression. By contrast, relief or lithographic printing can be executed more quickly, as the ink is simply rolled onto the surface. Lithography in particular was efficient; the only limitations were the cost of Bavarian limestone and transportation issues.[80] *La Société d'encouragement in France* announced an enterprise for someone who could find a lighter-weight substitute for limestone and a reusable matrix. Despite the fact that stone paper (carton-pierre), a Senefelder invention, was of a great promise, it was not adopted due to its imperfections (Engelmann, 1835, pp. 155–158). Zinc soon proved more effective than paper, as the plate could be polished and

79 According to the Conservation and Art Materials Encyclopedia Online (CAMEO, n.d.),In 19th century photomechanical processes, bichromated gelatin refers to gelatin treated with a bichromate (potassium dichromate) that hardens when exposed to light and washes away where unexposed, a principle used in collotype and early photolithographic printing. Sensitized bitumen (bitumen of Judea) is an asphalt-based coating that similarly hardens under light and was used in early photogravure and related techniques to transfer images onto metal plates.

80 Lithographic and typographic processes are incompatible; Lithography requires a smooth, chemically prepared surface and water-repellent ink, whereas typography involves applying ink to the raised elements of fonts. The two processes also require different types of press: a lithographic press applies even pressure to a flat surface, while a typographic press imprints convex fonts. Therefore, it is not feasible to combine them within a single process.



Figure 80 | Marta Bełkot and Sandra Costa Brás, Collaborative work on the recreation of gillotage: direct gillotage (2020) [drawing directly on a grained zinc plate; FBAUP].

reused. This gave rise to zincography,[81] which is sometimes also referred to as gillotage – a term encompassing a variety of similar photomechanical processes. Since the etched layer on zinc was not particularly deep, the process relied primarily on ink to protect the surface, making it compatible with existing lithographic presses. At a time when the mobility of lithography was crucial, zinc offered significant advantages: unlike heavy limestone blocks, which were cumbersome to transport, zinc and paper plates were lighter and more practical, particularly for political or military expeditions. The search for alternatives to stone was likely motivated by these logistical challenges, although the high cost and limited availability of Bavarian limestone, which dominated the trade, may also have played an important role. Before long, most countries had identified and exploited their own lithographic stones, though these varied widely in quality. While gillotage relied on chemical alteration of zinc plates through etching to create a surface suitable for repeated printing, photo enamel[82] demonstrates a parallel concern with modifying metal surfaces, albeit through heat rather than acid. In both processes, the practitioner manipulates the metal itself to produce a stable, functional surface capable of supporting another medium – ink in the case of gillotage, enamel in the case of photo enamel.

81 Machado et al. (2023) discuss zincography and the applications of photoengraving in relief.
82 See next Section *Photo enamel*.

PHOTO ENAMEL

Then come the technical questions and their application to the many and difficult manifestations of the craft. The author enters into infinite details which may appear puerile to those broken-in to the tricks of the trade, if one may employ the term sacred to various little secrets, property of each shop, handed down with the furniture from the master to the foreman who takes over(...)

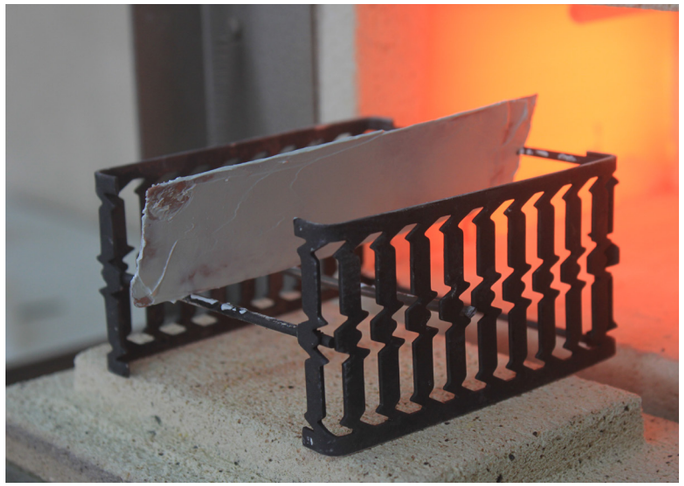
Millenet, L.-E. (1926) (Preface).

Dictionaries generally list five primary meanings for *enamel*: a vitreous material applied to metal or porcelain; a work executed in such a material, such as a fine cloisonné enamel; one of various glossy lacquers or varnishes used on leather, paper, wood, metal and similar surfaces; a cosmetic or paint for the face designed to imitate the natural gloss of the complexion; and the hard, glossy, calcareous outer layer of the teeth. Beyond these, the literature frequently references enamelled bricks, stoneware, terracotta, tiles and glass. In all cases, the term *enamel* denotes a surface that is considered both beautiful and durable or often one quality reinforcing the other (Carpenter, 2016).



The process of enamelling consists in coating the surface of earthenware porcelain, glass metal or any other substance that will bear to be raised to a high temperature with a layer of melted glass (Figure 82). In the *Art enamelling on metals* (1901) H.H. Cunynghame recalls that the origin of the name *enamel* is doubtful as well as its use. We call household tableware as enamelled, as well as painted bikes and even make up (hundred years ago) got that name. Enamelling as a process used properly seems to require for the glass to melt on the surface of the object, relatively high temperature starting from 500°C.

Enamel consists of a mixture of minerals and fluxes with added pigments which, when applied to a metal substrate and fused at a temperature of around 800–900°C, form a vitreous coating. The history of ceramic and enamel-on-metal prints dates back to the 1750's with the adaptation of images from copperplate engraving (Petrie, 2011). While the enamel technique itself is known from ancient Egypt, enamelled photography emerged in the mid-19th century as a method to preserve images from damage and soon became an exclusive product for the aristocracy (Harker, 1982). The most described method of producing enamel photographs is *dichromate dusting method*.[83] In 1839, Mungo Ponton discovered the light sensitivity of solutions of potassium dichromate on paper through chemical and physical observations. This process relies on the reaction of dichromate with colloids, which lose their hygroscopic properties when exposed to light. In early photo enamel, this process involves collodion transfer from glass to a metal surface.[84] The first patent, titled: *Vitrification des images photographiques*, (*Vitrification of photographic images*) was published in



← ←

Figure 81 | Marta Bełkot, First test on the recreation of photo-enamel (2021) [first layer of enamel applied via dusting and wet application on copper and zinc; dimensions approximately 4 × 11 cm; experiment subject to failure; FBAUP].

Figure 82 | Marta Bełkot, The firing process at 900 °C (2022) [plate before firing; FBAUP].

83 TThe traditional nineteenth-century dichromate dusting method is described in Campana's *Recipes for Ceramic Photography to Be Burnt Into Porcelain or Glass* (1948).

84 What unites ceramic and printmaking – and is crucial for this research – is the underlying technology that enables the transfer of images from one surface to another namely, the transfer technology.

1854 by Bullot and Catin.[85] That same year, M. Lafon de Camarsac[86] announced his method for creating coloured enamel photographs. Although his description was unclear, it included key elements of the carbon process, demonstrating the connection between the development of photographic printing and new ideas in durable and decorative media.

The technological re-creation of enamel combined with print has recently been examined by Hoskins (2011), who highlights the challenges of maintaining traditional processes under contemporary demands. Following Hoskins, we assert that *the best artwork is a combination of content, visual aesthetic, and tactility of the artefact.* Similar studies have been undertaken by McCallion (2017) in his doctoral thesis and by Moseley (2012), who reconstructed photomechanical print processes. At FBAUP, Rocha, Machado, and Almeida (2017; 2018) have introduced innovative approaches to glass printing and enamels. These works demonstrate the potential of combining historical techniques with digital methods, expanding the possibilities for innovation and accessibility. Photo enamel is often seen in Western cemeteries as oval or rectangular portraits on grave markers or as commemorative plaques. Its popularity comes from its strong resistance to weathering, though the exact durability can vary depending on the enamel process and materials used.

The starting point of the research was a survey of existing photo-enamel companies that had declined significantly in recent years. We attempted to contact closed down establishments throughout Portugal, using online databases as our primary resource (Figure 84). While some sites had been converted to alternative uses, the majority remained oudated. This preliminary exercise highlighted a key dilemma: the preservation of Portugal's valued heritage was threatened by a shortage of skilled practitioners, making their whereabouts elusive, in other words, they remained *ghosts*. Subsequently, it became clear that the surviving companies were not inclined to share their expertise readily. Indeed, in one poignant case, an individual expressed an unwavering determination to keep his knowledge secret, even at the cost of his own demise. This conundrum raises several questions: what hidden wisdom was he (they) preserving? Why was it so difficult to reveal the intricacies of the process? And why was gaining access to the surviving companies such a formidable challenge?

85 INPI, French patent no. 21631 (1BB21631), *Vitrification des images photographiques*, BULOT & CATTIN (1854). https://archives.inpi.fr:443/ark:55749/1ef03cee052f635c9b7f0050568c1d46.moteur=arko_default_63f395e1547dd

86 INPI, French patent no. 20230 (1BB20230) *Fixation et coloration des épreuves photographiques par les procédés céramiques*, CAMARSAC & SAINT-FRANÇOIS (1854). https://archives.inpi.fr:443/ark:55749/1ef03cf9c7e46e8ca9e20050568c1d46.moteur=arko_default_63f395e1547dd



Figure 83 | Marta Bełkot, Refined test on the recreation of photo-enamel (2022) [first layer of enamel applied via dusting and wet application on copper; testing different enamel brands; dimensions vary; FBAUP].

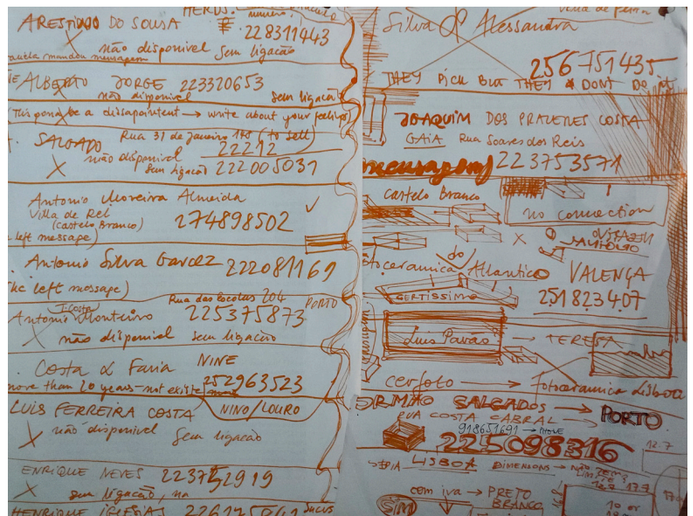


Figure 84 | List of contacts that accompanied our first attempts to find small family businesses, both still existing and non-existing, in Portugal (2020).



→
Figure 85 | Marta Bełkot, *The Family Tree* (2022) [eighteen photo-enamel plates; dimensions approx. 13 × 7 cm; wooden box and leather case].

Figure 86 | Examples of traditional Portuguese photo-enamel provided by Joana Conceição Vaz Rainha Mateus at the Museu Casa da Imagem (2021).

↓
Figure 87 | Marta Bełkot, *The Family Tree* (2022) [detail; eighteen photo-enamel plates; dimensions approx. 13 × 7 cm].

The origins of such businesses often lay within a family framework with ancestors importing arcane techniques from foreign lands, thereby establishing a lineage of proprietary methodologies. As a result, the craft took on an almost sacrosanct dimension, intertwined with family heritage and business prerogatives. In particular, enamellers functioned as artisans rather than progenitors of the visual narratives they captured; their work was instrumental in manifesting the mnemonic expressions entrusted to them by their clients. It became clear that the enclave of Porto's enamel industry was supported above all by a single-family lineage that permeated successive eras while maintaining a precarious foothold in the contemporary milieu. This research also underscored the transformation of the enamelling profession in response to contemporary technological advances. Traditional skills such as film development, retouching and printing have largely been supplanted by rapid digital processes, reducing reliance on specialized expertise and darkroom facilities (Figure 88).

My work *Family Tree* (2022) (Figures 85 and 87)[87] extends this reflection on heritage, continuity and memory into my own practice. This series of small enamels, combining photography and painting, draws on a 19th century photo-enamelling technique. I adapt this method to explore the persistence of memory, not only as a personal inheritance but also as a fragile ecological and cultural legacy. The work interlaces photographs: of the forest from my homeland with images from Porto's oldest garden, Quinta de Campo Belo, in Gaia, Porto. This site embodies a layered



87 For more images see: https://www.crafthub.eu/material/the-family-tree/

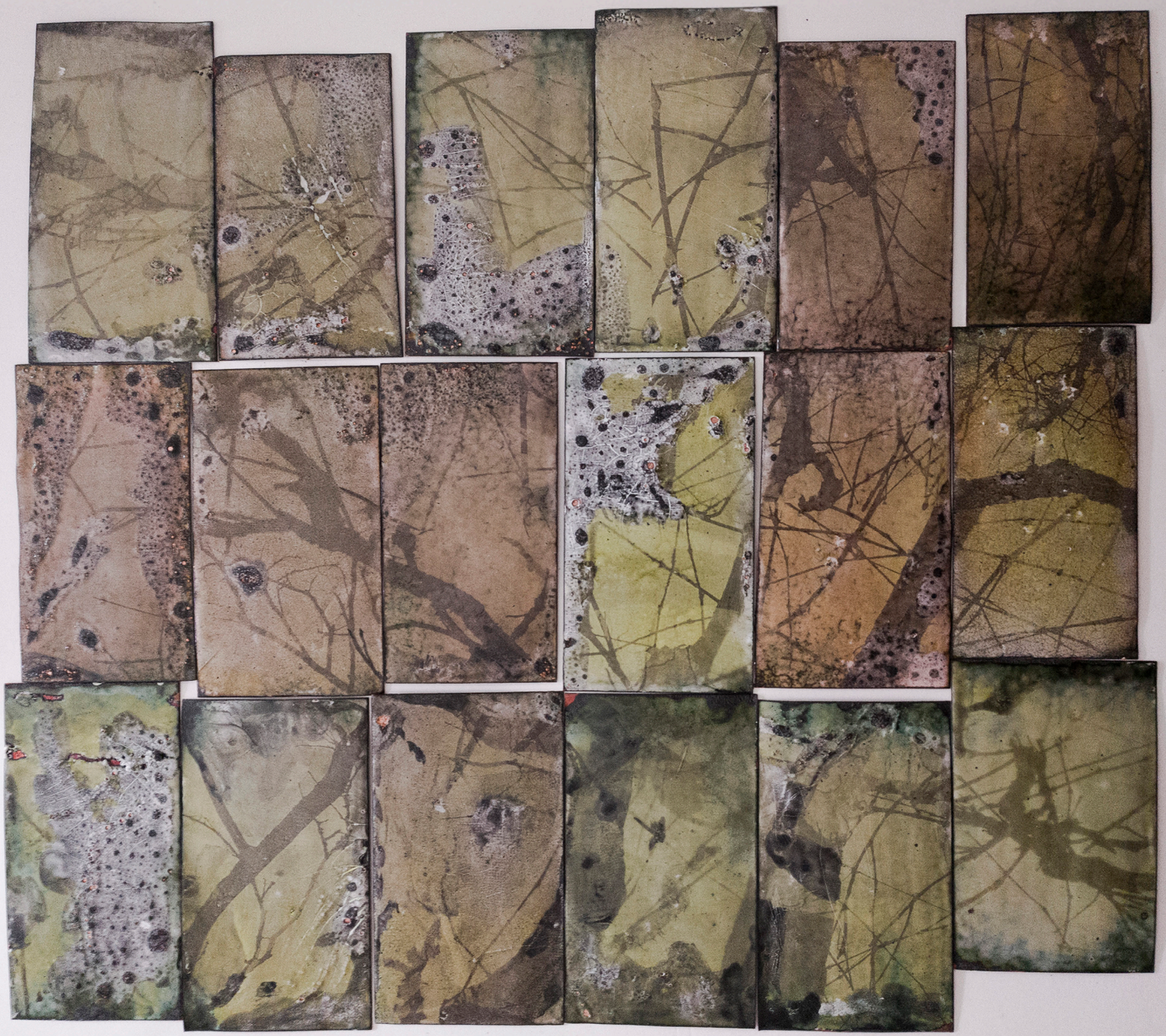




Figure 88 | Meeting with Portuguese photo-enamel ex-specialists from Porto (2022) [Maria Manuela Sacramento's private possession: exterior arrangement of enamel-making materials during the interview].



Figure 89 | Meeting with Portuguese photo-enamel ex-specialists from Porto (2022) [Maria Manuela Sacramento and Joaquim Costa at FBAUP performing the enamel process; action captured on film by Patricia Almeida].



Figure 90 | Meeting with Portuguese photo-enamel ex-specialists from Porto (2022) [image produced during the process by Maria Manuela Sacramento and Joaquim Costa; filmed by Patricia Almeida].

history of displacement: its camellias, now naturalized in Porto, were originally brought from Japan centuries ago. They stand as living testaments to migration – rooted yet uprooted, still yet in motion. In a similar way, *Family Tree* negotiates the tensions between permanence and loss, continuity and rupture. The overlapping images of my place of origin and of a space in Porto marked by botanical migration and cultural history, reflect displaced memories, replanted and in dialogue with the present. Covered with glass, the pieces symbolize an attempt to protect memory, while simultaneously pointing to the vulnerability of ecosystems, communities, and cultural legacies. *Family Tree* questions how we can preserve not only images and traditions, but also the social and environmental context that sustains them. Just as family businesses in enamelling once bound together work, memory and survival, *Family Tree* meditates on the continuity and rupture of such ties. Memory, like heritage, becomes displaced, re-rooted in new soil, always at risk of fading, reframed in new contexts, at once fragile and enduring.

The research unfolded as a process of hands-on investigation, rooted in meetings, fieldwork, and collaborative training with experts across Portugal and France. To establish a point of reference, two long-standing Porto-based companies were commissioned to produce photographic enamels, offering original examples of professional craftsmanship. This practical grounding was complemented by extensive archival research, such as consultations with Ana Paula Machado Santos at the Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis, Joana Conceição Vaz Rainha Mateus at the Museu Casa da Imagem (Figure 86) and Aida Ferreira at the Centro Português de Fotografia. First-hand contact with José Escoval – the owner of small enamel company in Gaia - enriched contacts and understanding of the Portuguese photo-enamel industry, while site visits to cemeteries such as Prado de Repouso, Lapa, Agramonte and Ovar Municipality provided vital historical documentation of the technique in situ.

The preliminary stages of the research included reconstructing organic sealants and testing their resilience by transferring drawn images onto glass.[88] The first practical photo-enamel experimentation was based solely on 19th and 20th century thesis and instructions (Piquepeé, 1890; Cunynghame, 1901; Geymet, 1885; Ward, 1895; Duchochois, 1893; Solomon; Grünwald, 1910) (Figure 81). Subsequent trials involved preparing enamel-coated copper plates, testing lead-white enamel and lead-free (Fig-

88 Technological systematization in FBAUP (2020) under coordination of Professor Graciela Machado and Professor Teresa Almeida executed by: Marta Bełkot, Casanda Perreira and Andreia Perreira.

ure 83) firing and experimenting with 19th century dichromate dusting methods on both glass and metal. The iterative processes of improvement required comparative testing of commercial enamel brands, exposure times, degreasing treatments and water baths. Both the dichromate dusting method[89] (Figure 91) and the traditional Portuguese photo-enamel process (based on collodion transfer) demonstrated by specialists Joaquim Costa and Maria Manuela Sacramento, proved successful and were carefully documented within i2ADS/GroundLab for future dissemination (Figures 89 and 90).[90]

The research further expanded through a complementary period abroad at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Art in Limoges (ENSAD) (May–August 2022) under the supervision of Professors Arnaud Dubois and Delphine Gigoux-Martin. This international exhange provided access to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Limoges and the Musée National Adrien Dubouché, as well as to the Enamel Biennale (Impertinente Rencontre Internationale 2022 email-metal) and the École des Métiers d'Art, (courses and work-study programmes in ceramics, leather goods and metal



89 Following the step-by-step description in Glass on Metal (1985, vol. 4), as well as consultations of several nineteenth- and early twentieth-century technical manuals on the subject.

90 Almeida, P. (Director), Bełkot, M. (Organizer), and Machado, G. (Organizer) (2022). Foto esmaltagem direto – Marta Bełkot_2022 [Direct Photo Enamelling – Marta Bełkot_2022], video presentation in Pure Print Archaeology – 1st Research Meeting, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto. URL and Almeida, P. (Director); Bełkot, M. (Organizer); Machado, G. (Organizer). (2022–2025). *Foto Esmaltadores* [*Photo Enamellers*] (Video). Research documentation.



Figure 91 | Marta Bełkot, Film frames of reconstruction of the photo-enamel by dichromate dusting method (2021) [Captured by Patricia Almeida, FBAUP].

←
Figure 92 | Interior of the Soyer Émaux company workshop, France (2022) [Visit courtesy of Professor Guy Minard (ENSAP)].











Figure 93 | Marta Bełkot, Photographs from cemetery *Prado do Repouso*, Porto (2020–2023) [deteriorated enamel found on graveyard front and back].

← ←

Figure 94 | Marta Bełkot, Photographs from cemeteries; *Prado do Repouso* and *Lapa*, Porto (2020–2023).

enamelling) offering opportunities to engage directly with artists, enamellists and industry specialists such as Soyer Émaux (our enamel supplier) (Figure 92). Visits to cemeteries in Limoges and Paris, interviews with practitioners, such as Marie Helen Soyer, Paul Bufron, attendance at the posthumous exhibition of Henri Chéron in Solignac and exchanges with contemporary artists like Sophie Zénon, further broadened the scope of the inquiry.

Today, the majority of European companies specialising in memorial imagery for funeral contexts are committed to digital formats, using special substrates to transfer images onto various media such as metal or porcelain. As a result, the former tools and specialised roles of enamelling have largely become obsolete, a change shaped by technological, social, and economic factors rather than an inexorable march of progress (Parikka, 2012).Therefore, through first-hand interviews with those involved in the industry, our aim was to shed light on the genesis of these companies, the uncertain Portuguese heritage (Queiroz, 2002)[91] and, above all, the process.

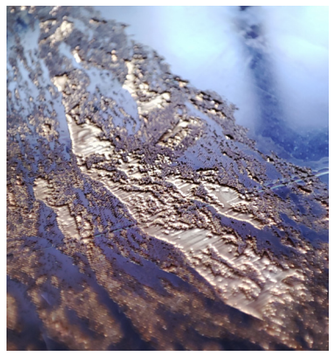
91 For further reading, see Charpy, M. (2020). Patrimoines incertains: Hietografias et récits familiaux dans la France du XIXe siècle. *Photographica*, No. 1 – 2020, *Patrimoines photographiques, matière de l'histoire.*

When considering the utilitarian use of enamel for grave markers, at first glance, the difference between enamel on ceramic and enamel on metal can appear minimal; well-preserved examples often make it difficult to distinguish between the two. However, the production processes are significantly different. The composition of the enamel varies depending on the substrate and the firing methods differ as well. Ceramic enamels require prolonged kiln firing with gradual temperature increases and decreases, often taking several hours to complete. In contrast, metal enamels can be fired in a stove within a matter of minutes, reflecting the distinct thermal properties and practical requirements of each material. Once they reach a certain level of deterioration, the background becomes more visible and it becomes feasible to distinguish them (Figure 93).

Despite their different material origins and traditional uses, photo-enamel and prepared surfaces papers can, at particular stages of the process, appear visually and materially strikingly similar (Figure 94) Paper is traditionally associated with artistic practice, whereas enamel has long been used for decorative or functional









purposes. This convergence creates a productive space for experimentation, where distinct materials begin to echo each other, suggesting new possibilities for artistic expression. This naturally raises the question of what motivates a fine art student to explore enamel and how its unfamiliar properties could introduce new possibilities to printmaking. The introduction of photopolymer film in combination with enamel is closest to fine art printmaking. The metal matrix must be prepared similarly to a printing plate, with only minor adjustments to the depth of etched tones and lines. Once the plate is ready, instead of inking, enamel is carefully dusted across the surface, fired and polished. This process often requires multiple repetitions to achieve satisfactory results. In this way, a photographic image can be transferred onto a metal plate via photomechanical processes and subsequently transformed into a photo-enamel, with reduced toxicity compared to traditional methods (Figure 95). This combination of field research, practical experimentation and international exchange allowed for a holistic engagement with the material and cultural histories of photo-enamel. The project not only revived historical processes but also opened space for reimagining enamel within contemporary printmaking practice, foregrounding its potential as a medium of displacement, memory and artistic reinvention.

My work *Flash* (2021–22)consists of sixty-nine individual enamelled images, each measuring 12 × 9 cm, a size corresponds to a standard used in late 19th and early 20th century large-format photography. It can be presented in different configurations depending on the space and context, either arranged side by side or stacked horisontally or vertically. Their small scale allows for shifts between visibility and concealment, echoing historical modes of handling and viewing photographic objects (Figure 97). Flash draws on negatives mistakenly received from a photo shop and reinterprets them through the 19th century technique of photo-enamelling. The photographs, taken by an unknown photographer during journeys I never undertook, allowed me to engage with a process historically embedded in commercial practice, where enamellers routinely worked with images they had not authored. In its traditional use, photo-enamel served to fix memory in durable form, particularly in the funerary portrait, where the representation of life is frozen in an artefact of permanence. By reactivating this method, I displace its commemorative function, producing not static memorials but dynamic images reframed through the position of an observer retracing someone else's vision. In this respect, the work resonates



Figura 95 | Marta Bełkot, Prepared Surface Paper and Photo-Enamel Tests (2020–2023) [Experimental studies examining the aesthetic relationship between prepared surface paper and photo-enamel, revealing close visual and material correspondences across different stages of the process].

Figure 96 | Example of photo-enamel on copper, produced through photopolymer film, etching, enamel dusting, firing, and polishing, FBAUP (2023-2024).

Figure 97 | Examples of enamel applied on copper under the guidance of photo-enamel ex-specialist Maria Manuela Sacramento, FBAUP (2023).

with the practice of German artist Joachim Schmid, whose long-standing engagement with found photography similarly questions authorship, memory and the circulation of images within photographic culture.

Applying this technique to anonymous travel photographs creates a sense of dislocation. The enamel surfaces resonate with this estrangement; they bear traces of another's gaze yet are mediated through my hands and exist in a state of limbo between permanence and erasure. Like the blurred, half-legible faces in the oval frames of Porto's cemeteries, the resulting images exist in a state of in-betweenness. They belong to someone, yet to no one; they preserve presence while simultaneously making absence palpable. In this way, memory itself appears displaced – severed from its origins, reassigned to a stranger and made to inhabit a new context. The process evokes a language and a journey that are not mine. By reframing someone else's memories as oblique black-and-white images, the work considers the instability of remembrance and the fragile nature of representation. These enamelled surfaces, alluring in their material permanence, echo the cemetery portrait as the ultimate holder of memory – yet they also signal its inevitable fading and drift into the unreachable.



Figure 98 | Marta Bełkot, *Flash* (2021–2022) [Photo-enamel on metal. The work comprises sixty-nine individual enamels, dimensions 12 × 9 cm].

LITHOPHANE

Lithophane – invented in the early 19th century (Europe), consists of a unique three-dimensional image, formed in very thin porcelain which changes its appearance when exposed to certain lighting conditions, becoming more visible and revealing more detail. This technique gained recognition all around word, recognized by its highly developed manufacturing skill. In Portugal lithophane was introduced between 1860 and 1869 by Vista Alegre Porcelain Factory (founded in 1824), the first industrial unit dedicated to producing porcelain in the country. In former times, this technique was strongly related with printmaking achieved by relief on wax or engraving on copper, as a multistage sophisticated form of an art made by specialised craftsmen. Improvements introduced bichromate gelatine in order to create the negative on the plaster mould needed to cast the porcelain with high temperatures thus ensuring the required transparency.

During my internship at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Art (ENSAD) Limoges, France, I learned the lithophane technique from Professor Guy Meynard, based on the 19th century dichromate photosensitive gelatine process (Figure 101). This method not only bears similarities to the prepared-surface paper technique which relies, on mineral- and earth-based raw materials, but also connects closely to the broader spectrum of photographic processes explored within this research.





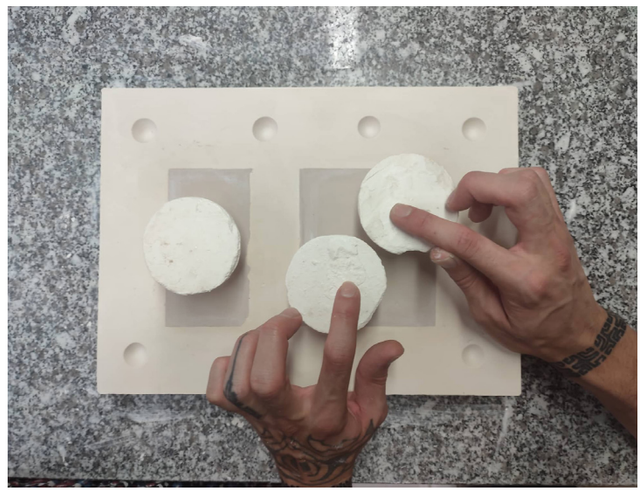


Figure 99 | Introduction to lithophane porcelain techniques, ENSAP, Limoges, France (2022) [The process involved developing a photographic image in photosensitive gelatin (relief), creating a gesso mould from it, and producing an imprint using liquid slip-cast porcelain]

The learning curve of lithophane sparked the idea of linking two seemingly disparate pre-photographic inventions from the 19th century. On one hand, we have gillotage – a method producing innovative reliefs on metal plates – and on the other, lithophane, which relies on relief to create varying thicknesses in porcelain slip casting. Both techniques were originally pre-photographic, semi-industrial, and commercial in nature. It is striking to consider that a gillotage relief plate could have produced exceptional results in lithophane if the two inventions had ever intersected – but, as far as we can deduce, such a convergence never occurred before.

My work *Water* (2020-2025) (Figure 99, 100 and 102) consists of 49 *gillotage* plates (28 × 18 cm), 14 plaster molds, slip-cast porcelain, video and found objects. The project originated with a focus on mental health, taking inspiration from Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961). In this work, Foucault traces the historical exclusion of the mentally ill, with the 15th century motif of the *Ship of Fools* serving as a metaphor for practices of displacement and foreclosure. During the COVID-19 quarantine, these ideas gained renewed relevance, as conditions of isolation, alienation and loneliness framed the initial conception of the work. Discarded Tetra Pak cartons, collected over the period of confinement, were crumpled and manipulated to create irregular textures, which were then inked and transferred onto zinc plates. These plates were etched using the gillotage process (a relief-etch technique), producing matrices whose surfaces echo the rippling, fractured quality of water. The resulting series aimed to evoke the sensation of drifting across an endless ocean. While the technical instability of the method – marked by the constant risk of losing the image and the need for compromise during printing – introduces an inherent fragility into the process. As the project developed, its meaning shifted in response to the sudden death of a close friend. What had begun as a reflection on exclusion and mental illness came to address more directly the precariousness of life itself. The resistance of the medium, the sense of instability and the impossibility of securing permanence became metaphors for loss and impermanence, underscoring how easily what seems present can disappear.



Figure 100 | Marta Bełkot, *Water* (2020–2025) [forty-nine gillotage plates (28 × 18 cm), fourteen plaster molds, litophany slip-cast porcelain book, video, and found objects; top: view of the printed work on paper, from the individual exhibition WORK IN PROCESS / SHOWING MAKING, Livraria Térmita, Porto, Portugal (2022–2023)].



The work culminated in the creation of a porcelain artist book during a residency at ENSAD Limoges and later FBAUP, Porto. Using the lithophane technique and slip-cast in porcelain, the book pages were taken from plaster moulds obtained from previously etched gillotage plates. The resulting translucent *pages* resemble light passing through ice, embodying both fragility and endurance and extending the project's meditation on displacement, isolation and the fleeting nature of life.

By reconstructing artisanal, pre-industrial methods and materials, in contexts based on practical research, combined with the application of information found in digital theses or archives, new, fully integrated approaches to highly creative and experimental print production were developed, extending the current boundaries of print media research. Nevertheless, such operational circumstances can be understood as an invitation to experimentation, contradicting the original use of print production as a means of reproduction. Thus, by accumulating technological skills as tools of expression in an artistic language, the artist becomes erudite in the translation of experiences and skills. Often the choice of technique becomes a transparent translation to the manifestation of meanings, responding to a given problem. Understanding the wealth of know-how opens the door to understand in-and-out.

In this sense, the technique itself becomes a vessel for memory, an analogue for human experience, and a site of becoming, in the Deleuzian sense, where human experience is not fixed but continuously transformed; themes of fragility, transmission, and transformation resonate through the process, reflecting broader questions of heritage belonging and the ongoing creation of meaning (Bankston, 2017). Just as endangered techniques are at risk of being displaced by modern technologies, so too are communities, particularly the most vulnerable ones. This idea is reflected in the next chapter, *The Island*, where the lives of older generations embody a similar precarious balance between permanence and loss.





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Figure 101 | Marta Bełkot, *Water* (2020–2025) [Photograph of the found object in Cortegaça beach].

Figure 102 | Marta Bełkot, *Water* (2020–2025) [above: plaster molds, underneath; found object; view from the individual exhibition *WORK IN PROCESS / SHOWING MAKING*, Livraria Térmita, Porto, Portugal (2022–2023)].

3

THE ISLAND

In physical terms we inhabit space, but in emotional terms we are inhabited, by memory. A memory composed of a space and a time, a memory inside which we live, like an island between two oceans - one the past, the other the future. We can navigate the ocean of the recent past thanks to personal memory, which retains the recollection of the routes it has traveled, but to navigate the distant past we have to use memories that time has accumulated, memories of a space that is continually changing, as fleeting as time itself.

Saramago, J. (2010). The notebook (p. 4). Verso.

HOME

The house transcends its role as a mere physical object, it serves as the structural embodiment of what has traditionally been associated with home, delineating the boundary between the inside and the outside, the private and the public. Home is a special kind of place, one where there's a clear distinction between house as a physical structure and home as a social, cultural and emotional construct. In many ways, it signifies a pause in movement (Tuan, 1977). If house implies an architectural form, home implies existential meaning. In repetition, in habit, in day-to-day practices, shaping it through time, we build layers of symbolic meaning in its materiality. We register those layers in our memory: a hanging picture, a cared piece of furniture, a family cooking pot, a worn-out sofa. In many ways, it constitutes a sensible archive of life, of life shared, transcending the present moment, conferring to us a sense of establishing roots. Its permanence, intimacy, and nurturing character make the home a meaningful place, shaping and grounding our identities. It is a place of deep social and emotional investment, the center from where we organize the world (Tuan, 1977). To speak of home as place is to acknowledge its dual role: it is never only a location, but also a lived environment shaped through memory, emotion, and everyday practices (Easthope, 2004).

According to Yi-Fu Tuan, if home organizes our personal lives, monumental building shape social consciousness amplifying human imagination beyond individuals. They help condense symbols to reinforce group cohesion (1977). Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa (2005) contends that architecture is *the art of reconciliation between ourselves and the world,* (p. 72) suggesting that buildings mediate our relationship with our surroundings through sensory experiences. He emphasizes that *architecture is essentially an extension of nature into the man-made realm, providing the ground for perception and the horizon of experiencing and understanding the world* (p. 41). This perspective underscores the house's capacity to evoke a profound connection between individuals and their environment, transforming it from a mere shelter into a space that resonates with human experience and emotion. Architecture enables us to locate ourselves in space and time by providing a perceivable and experiential dimension. In this sense, architecture becomes a means of *domesticating* the infinite, enabling us to inhabit and understand it. Its essence lies in the perpetual interplay of interior and exterior spaces, the physical and the spiritual, and the conscious and the unconscious, as well as sensory interaction (Pallasmaa, 2012, p. 23).

Let us consider the nature of house as being different from a house, and being different from home, for home can only exist when people are in it. They are the creators of home. You don't build a home. You build a house. At best, if you build a house, there comes out of it a sense of a way of life, a reflection of a way of life which inspires your own way of living. The greater the way of life, the more free is the way of living.

(Kahn, 1973, p. 249)

American architect Louis Kahn's reflections highlight the inherent mutability of spaces, suggesting that architectural environments cannot be reduced to predetermined functions but instead evolve in response to lived experience. A bedroom, initially conceived as a place of rest, may be reconfigured into a site of care; a kitchen may extend beyond its utilitarian purpose to become a place of community. Such transformations demonstrate that meaning is not fixed within design, but generated through use, contingency and human need. For Kahn, the enduring value of a space, or of any work of art, resides not in its measurable efficiency but in its openness to the unmeasurable, to intuition and wonder (Kahn, 1991).

Kahn's reflections on the mutability of spaces resonate strongly with my work *No Title* (2022) (Figure 103). This work consisted of a recording through a pinhole of the ceiling of my flat, during my stay in France. The ceiling transforms the domestic environment into a space of perception and reflection. Just as Kahn observed,

that a bedroom or kitchen gains meaning through use and human interaction, the apartment ceiling – ordinarily mundane – becomes a lens through which interior and exterior, stillness and movement, converge. The video *No Title* (2022) (Figure 103) can be exhibited in multiple configurations, exploring the relationship between viewer, space, and perspective; for instance, it may be presented on a bed or projected from a bed onto an overhead surface inviting the spectator to take a seat or to lie down, creating a bodily engagement with the image. The work incorporates ambient street noises and shifting patterns of light, which move at varying speeds and suggest a subtle, performative rhythm. A small aperture in the window merges the interior and exterior worlds, producing an ambiguous visual field in which the play of light reflects events occurring both around and, metaphorically, within us. By capturing transient light, fleeting sounds, and subtle gestures, the video emphasizes that the significance of space emerges through lived experience, attentive observation, and embodied perception, rather than through fixed functional definitions.

Figure 103 | Marta Bełkot, *No Title* (2022) [Video H264. View from exhibition: *in Fresta, Fenda ou Ruído (Crack, Gap, or Noise*), Casa-Museu Abel Salazar, Porto, Portugal; displayed on ceiling].



Not only the visual elements of building or the architectural features encompass what the experience of home is. It is shaped by our everyday activities, such as cooking, eating, socialising, reading, sleeping, storing items and enjoying more intimate moments. We encounter buildings, approach them, position ourselves in relation to them and move through them, using them in the context of our needs and relationships. Rather than being an end, architecture initiates, directs and organises our behaviour, giving meaning, creating connections and enabling or constraining us. In this sense, the real experience of architecture is expressed through verbs rather than nouns: approaching and facing a building; entering it; looking through a window; and being in a warm, lived-in space. Architecture becomes an inhabited space that transcends physical form and formal design (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 63). Experiencing architecture involves all the senses, not just sight. For instance, smell can evoke memories of places more vividly than sight can, and our bodies unconsciously perceive scale by projecting our own rhythms onto the built environment. In this way, architecture resonates with us as a lived space, shaping our memories, imaginations and sense of belonging through the intimate dialogue between our bodies and places (Pallasmaa, 2005).

Pierre Bourdieu's essay *The Berber house* (1970) is a great example on how spatial organization embodies wider symbolic structures reproducing a set of wider social and cultural order. The Berber house then, becomes a microcosm of the universe, a place in which hierarchies, binaries, values and relations are inscribed, learned and transmitted through daily practice. Central to the author´s analysis is a principle of binary oppositions in which the house is divided according to contrasts that mirror broader aspects of the society in which it is inscribed: (1) inside/outside where the interior signifies protection, honor and privacy, while the outside exposes individuals to public life and risk; (2) high/low where the upper, drier part of the house is associated with masculinity, order and culture, while the lower part, darker and damper, associates with femininity and nature; (3) light/dark where brightness connects to publicity, work and honour, while darkness with intimacy, reproduction and secrecy. In this way, the home works as a solidifier of broader social roles, a place in which dispositions towards certain sets of behaviour tend to feel natural when in fact, they are deeply socialized. To live in such place is to absorb, almost unconsciously, the ordering principles of a larger society. Thus being,

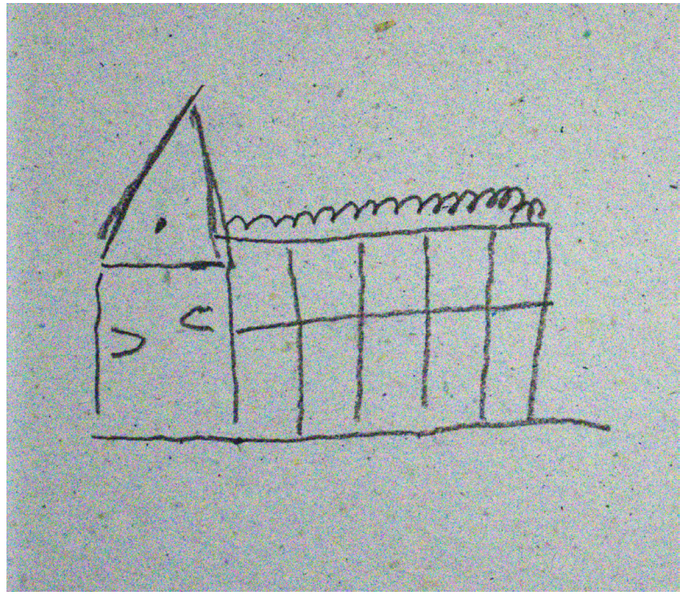


Figure 104 | Drawing of a house by Alcina – one of the participants in the correspondence workshop at Centro Social Paroquial de Águas Santas—in response to the question *What does house mean to you?* (2023).

architecture operates as a symbolic operator, a public tool through which society reproduces itself (Bourdieu, 1970; Bachelard, 2014).

At the very thought of drawing a house, geometric forms spring to mind: basic, simplified and standardised. I see it clearly: a square with a triangular roof - as if an image encoded in our collective memory could tell the whole truth about what a home *should* look like and what it should be associated with. However, this representation is culturally specific and most relevant within European contexts; notions of home and its visual encoding vary significantly across different societies and architectural traditions. Drawings of homes are motifs that are reworked in kindergarten and school as a seemingly natural way of representing family and place of origin. It is as if all the truth about home is encapsulated in these simple lines that separate us from danger and the outside world.

Often, however, even if presented in a schematic and repetitive manner, it conceals the truth far away from its simplicity. Home can mean many things to different people (Sieber, 2017). It can signify a sense of safety and security for some, and a sense of insecurity and complications for others. It is a variable, fluid concept, but also dual – understood as an object and people; something mine and not mine; an intimate and public place. Henri Lefebvre (1991) sees the home as part of a broader *production of space* not only a place of individual life, but also a product of social, economic and political practices. While the home may be a refuge, as already stated, it is also part of a network of institutions, norms and rules. This is particularly evident in the context of life in care institutions, even private ones which are still governed by schedules and rules.

Figure 105 | Graciela Machado and Marta Bełkot, *Escola/Szkoła/School* (2021). [Prepared surface paper with photogravure, found window object; various prints; dimensions 21–32 cm; View from In situ: artefactos 2021/2022, Oficinas de gravura, FBAUP, Porto, Portugal].





Figure 106 | Graciela Machado and Marta Bełkot, *Escola/Szkoła/School* (2021). [Prepared surface paper with photogravure; wall installation with various prints, dimensions 21 × 32 cm; View from the exhibition *GroundLab – Residências Artísticas e Tecnológicas*, II Bienal da Ardósia de Valongo, Fórum Cultural de Ermesinde, Portugal].

For some, this predictability provides a sense of security, while for others it represents a loss of freedom and intimacy. Many care home residents find that adapting to established rules and schedules simplifies their daily lives: staff attend to their needs, routines become more manageable and relatives are less burdened. In this way, institutional order can offer older adults, who are often reliant on the help of others, a degree of peace and reassurance. However, for some, conformity to these structures is a source of discomfort. When the emotional and relational dimensions of life are neglected, basic physiological care dominates everyday experience, leaving these other aspects inaccessible. In such cases, residents may experience a sense of disconnection or even a gradual loss of self.

The collaborative project *Escola / Szkoła / School* (2021), by the author Marta Belkot and Professor Graciela Machado, draws inspiration from a building whose history reflects broader patterns of institutional transformation: from a private home to a school, and now abandoned (Figure 107). Developed during a technological residency at the II Bienal da Ardósia de Valongo, paper is treated not merely as a surface for drawing or printing, but as a conceptual and material medium for reconstructing wall-like structures that echo the building's architecture (Machado & Belkot, 2023). Its materials and architectural character became central to exploring

how spaces embody social and functional change (Figure 105). The technological residency sought to develop and test a set of lithographic protocols grounded in vernacular materials, most notably, black slate. The core of this research project emerges not merely as a creative endeavour but as a precise methodological inquiry into the role of material specificity and locality in contemporary printmaking. The intention was not only to revisit a historical relationship between printing and stone but also to critically reframe the stone itself, its geography, tactility and labour.

Escola / Szkoła / School (2021) is a project based on prepared-surface paper layered with earthy materials, including powdered stone, extending the work beyond the simple application of coating to the paper toward a spatial installation (Figure 106). It works as a surface for printing or transferring as much as an installation mimicking the black slate commonly used for protecting the walls. The attempt to replicate the textures of plaster or masonry resembling a kind of false stone that remains in ten-

Figure 107 | Graciela Machado and Marta Bełkot, *Escola/Szkoła/School* (2021) [Photograph of the abandoned house in Valongo, with visible silhouettes of black slate, used as a reference space].



sion with what it imitates. As the process evolves, each applied layer expresses heterogeneity, paralleling the local geology and its logic of simplicity and resourcefulness. The ideas of these tactile gestures reflect both the spatial context and the embedded knowledge systems connected to the territory – practices that have been overlaid and obscured by subsequent developments. The very act of constructing this hybrid paper embodies the gestures of landscape-making, including natural phenomena like sedimentation, cracking and erosion. The silhouette – artifacts from The *Escola/Szkoła/School* (2021) project – serve as functional elements. They hold photographs taken along access roads leading to the slate quarries, where the first stories of hidden mineral stacks were collected.[1] Through these photographs and materials, the work evokes rural dwellings and modes of subsistence oriented toward self-sufficiency. Mounted on walls or scattered across textured surfaces, they speak to the expressive power of matter and methods that are increasingly suspended in time. Some are stored as samples on pieces of salvaged window frames from collapsed buildings in Arouca, a mining region where abandoned houses disintegrate soon after they served their purpose (Figures 105 and 106).

To understand how this prepared paper preserves the memory of such homes, one must return to traditional techniques of drawing and painting used to construct pictorial grounds. These supports, made from basic materials like water and flour-based vegetal glue, bind the earth pigments and fix them to the surface. This natural base allows for structural complexity through the printing of relief textures or by leaving surfaces untreated. Once installed, their interaction with humidity causes unpredictable changes creating living, reactive forms. Since the paper's surface is mineral-infused, it evokes the materiality of traditional partition walls that framed slate panels. This material mimics and reinforces an image of apparent fragility and simplicity that, paradoxically, mirrors the resilience of traditional construction – homes made of wood, earth and other available materials, often finished with local plasters. The installation directly references one such home, which was previously a family residence, then a school, and is now abandoned (Figure 107).

The artistic process used here offers a critical lens on how practices of making can be re-examined through a kind of ontological and

1 Bełkot (Director) and Machado (Organizer) (2021) present *Lithography in situ* [Video], Technological Residency GroundLab: 2nd Valongo Slate Biennial, i2ADS/GroundLab. https://gravura.fba.up.pt/home/investigacao/

interdisciplinary technological archaeology. In this specific example this involves not only introducing new materials but reactivating symbolic and technical gestures tied to slate as a cultural and material artefact. What began as an effort to produce stone-like paper evolved into a poetic dialogue with vernacular architecture: portable, modest and deeply rooted in the landscape. Their silhouette forms embody a slow culture of making shaped by collective memory, skill and craftsmanship that bridges the vernacular and the scholarly. The *Escola/Szkoła/School* (2021) project pays tribute to this layered legacy by reconstructing it in and through fragile materials, drawing attention to both the endurance and precariousness of cultural and material memory, of a place that once was someone's home.

Kahn's attention to the particularity of materials resonates strongly with the principles of vernacular architecture where structures emerge from the direct use of locally available resources and from the embodied knowledge of communities. Just as Kahn valued the colour of bricks shaped by specific soil and firing conditions, vernacular building traditions reflect an intimate dialogue between material, place and human labour. These practices are not concerned with abstract universals but with the pragmatics of dwelling: how to span, shelter and sustain life using what is at hand. In this sense, vernacular architecture is both a response to necessity and a record of cultural identity inscribed in matter.

This sensibility extends into the notion of a vernacular archive where memory and history are constructed not through grand monuments or official records but through everyday objects and local practices. Working with communities by gathering daily items – those often overlooked in institutional archives – constitute a way of grounding research in lived experience. Such gestures transform ordinary artefacts into carriers of collective knowledge, much like vernacular buildings transform raw materials into meaningful shelters. Both approaches emphasize proximity, resourcefulness and care, affirming that the most profound expressions of culture are often embedded in the modest, the familiar and the local.

While these vernacular gestures emphasize materiality and local knowledge, they also raise questions about how dwelling and domestic space are shaped by broader social and institutional



Figure 108 | Doris Salcedo, *Uprooted* (2020–2022) [804 dead trees and steel; dimensions 300 × 65 × 50 meters].

frameworks. Scholar and architectural theorist Julia Robinson (2006) distinguishes between *home* and *institution* in architectural discourse, highlighting how built environments encode cultural values by both fostering intimacy and security or producing alienation and control. Viewed in this light, this reflection on the institutionalisation of dwelling offers a visual metaphor for how political, social, and architectural frameworks can undermine the intimacy and sense of belonging traditionally associated with the concept of home.

Sociologist, social psychologist and writer Erving Goffman´s concept of *total institution* becomes relevant here: a social world in which all aspects of life are conducted under a single authority, in a closed, surveilled and highly regulated environment. Prisons, hospitals or monasteries are all examples of institutions where

the impact and arrangements on the self are pondered, though the author focuses on psychiatric hospitals. He argues that these types of institutions create a world in which autonomy is minimized and bureaucratic order replaces individual freedom. People are treated collectively rather than as individuals; there is a clear distinction between inmates or patients and staff with different access and privileges, rigid schedules designed by administrators and constant observation which shapes behaviour. The admission process is the beginning of a process of dismantling identity: physical examinations, uniforms, confiscation of personal belongings are meant to ensure compliance and break ties with the outside world in a process the author calls the *mortification of the self*. Once inside, the inmate develops strategies to deal with the institutional life: (1) withdrawal, avoiding engagement with staff or fellow inmates; (2) conversion, embracing the institutional identity completely; (3) colonization, making the best of the institution's offerings and accepting it as *confortable* and last, (4) rebellion, by openly defying the rules and preserving self-respect, enduring nevertheless the punishment it might bring. On top of those general approaches, there is what the author calls *secondary adjustments*. Small pockets of personal freedom which, not breaking the rules decisively, carve out some autonomy helping then to preserve a sense of self within the institutional framework (Goffman, 1991).

Columbian artist Doris Salcedo's *Uprooted* can be productively interpreted through Henri Lefebvre's theorization of the production of space, which insists that space is not a neutral container but rather the outcome of social, economic and political processes (Lefebvre, 1991). Her Colombian context is significant, as the installation resonates with the histories of displacement and political violence that have shaped domestic and public life in Colombia. From this perspective, the installation materializes the tensions between the symbolic promise of home as refuge and the structural forces that undermine it. The familiar silhouette of a house, painstakingly assembled from dead trees, dissolves into a dense and impenetrable thicket, visually enacting how migration, displacement and wider institutional structures destabilize the very notion of domesticity. In this sense, Salcedo stages a critique of how the home, often idealized as private and stable is in fact contingent upon broader power relations that can render it fragile or untenable.

According to this perspective, home is less a place we occupy and more a state of being that reflects our relationship with the world around us. Bachelard wrote that *our house is our corner of the world* (2014, p. 26) – a place where *we can dream in peace* and where our intimate history is stored in the form of nooks, attics and cellars. For him, each of these spaces is a *memory drawer* in which not only objects, but also layers of emotions, memories and dreams are deposited. Home is thus not a neutral object; it is a shell of memory that shapes our sense of being in the world. Bachelard reminds us that losing a home means losing a dream space. When the place that used to *inhabit* us is replaced by a regulated and safe space devoid of personal nooks and crannies, we begin to lose ourselves. This is because, in the symbolic sense, home is not the walls, but the memory that lives within them.

From a sociological perspective, local displacement reflects the social constraints and structures that shape people's daily lives and sense of security. Psychologically, it involves adapting to new conditions and losing familiar landmarks in one's living space – something that is particularly acutely felt by the elderly or chronically ill. At the same time, however, local displacement provides an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of place and the rituals of daily life that were previously fixed elements of an individual's existence. This lays the groundwork for analysing the complex meanings of home, possessions and space in the contexts of old age. Displacement and related changes in the perception of place are important areas of research in sociology and psychology. According to sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's theory, an individual's living space is dynamic and subject to constant transformation, which affects their identity and sense of security. A change of residence, especially in old age, can lead to *local displacement*, i.e. moving within the same community. However, this is associated with significant existential and social consequences.

The current housing situation highlights the significant discrepancy between the symbolic significance of home and the economic and social realities. In an era of gentrification and housing crisis, owning a house, flat or studio is often an unattainable dream. Instead of providing a sense of security and rootedness, space has become a source of anxiety and frustration. Instead of being a *holy haven*, it is becoming a luxury commodity that is only accessible to a select few. Moving from place to place and from contract to contract has become commonplace for most residents of large cities, not only expats. Fear of losing one's home and rising prices mean residential life takes the form of constant temporariness. Bauman (2006) coined the term *liquid* modernity to describe a contemporary society in which traditional structures and long-term stability have become flexible and uncertain. Unlike the solid modernity of the past, where social roles, careers, and communities were relatively stable, liquid modernity is characterized by ephemeral relationships, transient identities, and uncertainty. In this context, everyday life lacks guaranteed foundations, and individuals must constantly adapt to change, making stability increasingly difficult to achieve. Housing insecurity is part of a wider context of precarity. Short-term contracts, rising rental prices and a lack of tenant protection mean that the daily lives of many people are filled with anxiety and uncertainty. Stability has been replaced by an unpredictable and fragmented way of life. Contemporary housing is the most visible example of this; an increasing number of young adults are unable to plan a future that includes owning their own home.

In this context, home is not just a philosophical or symbolic concept but a fundamental human right. However, neoliberal housing policies geared towards privatisation and profit maximisation systematically restrict access to this right. The housing crisis reveals that housing is treated as a means of capital accumulation rather than a fundamental right. The consequences are not only economic but cultural, too. Losing a home or being unable to own one's own space can undermine the processes of constructing individual and collective identities. Displacing communities from their neighbourhoods also erodes social bonds, the sense of place and local traditions. Gentrification impoverishes diversity by homogenising space and subordinating it to the logic of capital. Home, whether owned or rented should be a place of intimacy and security. However, the modern world forces millions of people to live in a constant state of temporariness. This undermines the sense of *being at home* and perpetuates social inequalities. Therefore, the struggle for the right to housing is about more than just having a roof over one's head; it is also about having the right to stability, community and a sense of belonging. When home is taken away, through illness, old age, economic constraints or the need to move, humans not only experience the loss of a place but also of a part of their identity.



Figure 109 | Donald Rodney, *In the House of My Father* (1996–1997) [Photograph, C-print on paper, mounted on aluminum; image dimensions: 12,2 × 15,3 cm].

This instability invites a closer reflection on what it means to *be at home*. The semantic and cultural values of home can be examined through the Polish phrase *bycie u siebie*, which literally translates as *to be at one's own place*. However, this rendering only partially captures its meaning. In Polish, *bycie u siebie* does not require a specific physical location; rather, it denotes a state of emotional and existential comfort, familiarity, and ontological grounding. One can be *u siebie* anywhere – in one's own dwelling, in a field of knowledge, another's space, or even in public environments – as long as a sense of belonging is present.[2]

English offers expressions such as *to be at home, to feel at home*, or *make yourself at home*. The first two express a personal sense of comfort and rootedness, while the last is performative: it is addressed to someone who does not normally belong in a space and follows its unspoken social rules. This distinction highlights both the cultural variability and the instability of home: Polish encodes a fluid, internally grounded sense of belonging, whereas English separates emotional experience from socially coded performance (Tischner, 1990). *Bycie u siebie* thus exemplifies a notion of home that is as much existential and emotional as it is spatial.

Leaving one's home, therefore, becomes a boundary experience: it involves crossing a physical threshold and entering another dimension of existence. The new place, often unfamiliar, becomes both a refuge and a challenge, requiring one to rebuild a relationship with the space. In extreme cases, it is a transition towards ultimate

2 Poradnia Językowa, Zakład Współczesnego Języka Polskiego, Instytut Filologii Polskiej i Logopedii, Uniwersytet Łódzki (n.d.) discuss the meaning and context of the expression *być u siebie* (https://www.poradnia-jezykowa.uni.lodz.pl/szczegoly/byc-u-siebie

change – such as old age or illness – which brings about profound transformation. The fragility of this transformation often places one at risk. Homelessness, despite being often characterized and portrayed as an individual's misfortunes and misshappens, is not an accidental condition but a predictable outcome of systemic and structural changes. Often, the public discourse casts the homeless as either shameful victims or dangerous deviants (Hopper, 2003); in other words, worthy of our pity or fear. The persistence of mass homelessness in a wealthy society signals not just a policy failure but a moral crisis about whose lives are valued and cared.

In his work, *In the House of My Father* (1996) (Figure 109), British-Jamaican artis Donald Rodney explores the fragile nature of home through an intimate and physical lens. The work is a photograph of a miniature house sculpture made from the artist's own skin, collected during his treatment for sickle cell anaemia – a condition that predominantly affects people of African, Caribbean, Eastern Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Asian ancestry. By doing so, Rodney intertwines the ideas of the body and domestic space, highlighting both fragility and the desire for protection. This exploration of intimacy and corporeality is further developed in a companion piece, *My Mother. My Father. My Sister. My Brother* (1996–97). Despite its simple structure, it incorporates the essential elements of a house: a roof, walls, a door and a window. These structures embody features evoking shelter, seclusion and provisional security. The tiny sculpture rests in Rodney's palm, emphasising care, vulnerability and presence, as well as the possibility of loss. The fragility of the house, entwined with its direct connection to the body, highlights the distinction that many people perceive between a house and a home. The body itself becomes a dwelling place: a space into which one retreats to negotiate intimacy, protection and identity. At the same time, the work gestures towards the impermanence and unsustainability of both the body and the home, while also asserting a sense of defiance in the face of illness. Rodney's piece encapsulates the tension between fragility and resilience, revealing the intimate politics of inhabiting, surviving and persisting within protective yet provisional structures.

CORRESPONDENCE

This concern with how experiences of inhabiting and endurance are shaped by conditions of protection and impermanence informs my own artistic practice. The *Correspondence* Project[3], conceived as an individual, socially engaged artwork, focuses on elderly residents living in institutional settings who have been locally displaced from their former homes. The project operates within a field of practice commonly described as socially engaged art (Bourriaud, 1998; Kester, 2004). In acknowledging the critique of *participatory art* by British art historian and critic Claire Bishop (2012), the project remains attentive to questions of authorship, power, and representation, resisting the assumption that participation alone constitutes an ethical or politically effective artistic strategy. By addressing participants who have been relocated within their immediate communities yet removed from familiar domestic environments, the project explores how meanings of home are articulated, remembered, and reconfigured within frameworks of institutional care.

The *Correspondence* Project was planned as a collaboration with one of two target groups: (1) people with mental illness, or (2) elderly residents. The choice of these groups was informed by an observation of the conditions and routines offered within certain institutional settings. The target participants were therefore individuals who had been locally displaced from their previous homes and who, for various reasons, required 24-hour care. Selection of participants was influenced by the disposition of staff within the artistic activities department and, in particular, those holding decision-making positions, ensuring that ethical and practical considerations guided access to the project.[4]

In 2023, I managed to gain access to three different care institutions[5] inhabited by elderly people, where I planned to conduct

3 See Apendix B, pp. 280–287.

4 Attempts to contact psychiatric hospitals in the Porto area—including Centro Hospitalar Conde de Ferreira and Casa de Saúde de Santa Catarina (CSSC)—were unsuccessful. Pandemic restrictions disrupted standard procedures, making access difficult. Contact with Magalhães Lemos Hospital did not lead to a response, and attempts to reach Casa de Saúde S. João de Deus in Barcelos also failed. Cooperation with the Psychiatric Hospital in Lubliniec, Poland, was rejected after a personal meeting with the director.

5 Centro Paroquial Nª Srª da Natividade de Pedrouços, Porto; Centro Social Paroquial de Águas Santas, Porto, and Perfeito Amor - Lar para 3ª Idade, Lda, 2023, Porto.

a series of artistic workshops and to eventually establish an exchange of letters, as originally envisioned for the project. However, the project did not anticipate such high levels of illiteracy. Certain activities were therefore conducted in a simplified manner, relieving participants of tasks based on writing and allowing them to respond orally. The name *Correspondence* reflects this original intention, designed to extend the exchange over time and foster ongoing dialogue and creative engagement beyond the workshops. The artistic activities and the questions the project addressed focused on the meaning of home, including where participants feel most comfortable and what they miss. The answers, alongside the creative work produced, emerged as one of the highlights of the project. The meaning of objects, feelings, hopes, narratives around the institutionalized life, the chair in which they never sat before or the sheets in which they never layed before, the novelty of it all were some of the insights of these encounters..

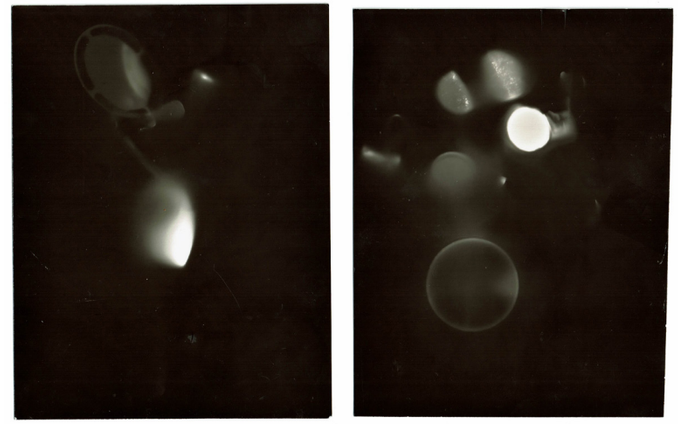
Life in an institution, be it a psychiatric hospital or a nursing home, is characterised by varying degrees of dependence on the part of the person who is locally displaced from his or her permanent residence. The fundamental difference, however, between those who reside in hospital and those in care homes is the change to temporary vs. permanent. In hospital, a person is in for a certain period of time, in which convalescence, improvement in health status determines release. In a nursing home, you stay for good. The fact of losing what is *mine* to what is *shared* can decisively determine the well-being of residents (Niezabitowski, 2015). During the meetings with elderly people, which lasted more than a month, I had the opportunity to get closer to the participants, to become more familiar with the culture of the place and the rules of care institutions but also to reformulate the project planned for these activities. The reformulation aimed at better adapting to the participants' possibilities. Capacities not only physical, but also mental. Thanks to this experience, I believe I am capable of better planning future collaborations as well as activities that could more effectively improve the quality of life of institutionalized people. I am convinced that this kind of artistic activity, which shows interest in what the participants have to say, in who they are, who they used to be, how they feel and what they miss, not only improves the memory processes of the elderly, but also brings the residents closer together.



Figure 110 | Documentation of the workshop with elderly participants at Centro Paroquial Nª Srª da Natividade de Pedrouços and Centro Social Paroquial de Águas Santas, Porto (2023) [Personal objects brought by participants to create photograms].

Thanks to this collaboration, I obtained satisfactory interaction with the residents as well as inspiring answers to questions. The cooperation brought me closer to the previously only imagined daily life of a displaced person in the later stages of life. In addition to joy, fulfilment and contentment, I noticed something of resignation, ineffectiveness, depression and a marking of time towards the inescapable. Resignation was often combined with an unwillingness to cooperate, a lack of self-confidence which was combined with a belief in ineffectiveness. Physical and mental fatigue very often figured as an excuse. Tasks, heavily simplified at times, were perceived negatively as something belittling, something that is *dedicated to kindergarten children*. I would also guess that distrust provoked anger. In a place where the elderly were less happy, treated in a low-key way,[6] implementing an activity plan was quite a challenge. Many residents had no choice but to participate in the activities, which was not aligned with the project's philosophy and was beyond my control. Forcing them to engage despite limited physical ability or lack of interest can be counterproductive, as activities of this kind are not intended to include all residents. Therefore, the attitude of the staff, the pos-

Figure 111 | Photograms from workshops with elderly participants at Centro Paroquial Nª Srª da Natividade de Pedrouços, Centro Social Paroquial de Águas Santas, and Perfeito Amor – Lar para 3ª Idade, Lda, Porto (2023).



6 Perfeito Amor - Lar para 3ª Idade, Lda [care house].

sibility to adapt the project to the needs of the inhabitants, the interest in the project and a possible reform of the project based on the needs of the specific site, are very important aspects to future planning of activities.

Shifting the project to a workshop-based format allowed for a more hands-on approach. A variety of techniques were explored, beginning with photograms and silhouette drawing, then progressing to disposable cameras, secret notebooks, monotypes and drawing. Each method offered a different material and experiential dimension, encouraging participants to express memory, imagination and personal history through tactile processes. These exercises were carefully designed to awaken the participants' desire to share their stories, accumulated wisdom and even advice. Through a collective and playful act, the activities created a safe space in which participants could move beyond passive spectatorship and instead become active contributors. The use of simple, accessible materials facilitated spontaneous expression, while the variety of techniques respected the diverse capacities and preferences of the group. In this sense, the workshops not only generated artworks but also enacted a form of social architecture, constructing temporary communities of exchange where experience and memory were transmitted across generations.

The implementation of the project required significant adjustments from what was initially planned. The original idea to work with gum bichromate papers proved unfeasible: because the paper was handmade and unpredictable and given the reduced mobility of participants, the process required a degree of control and flexibility that was not possible in this context. Instead, the project shifted toward more accessible methods, using commercial photographic paper to produce photograms. Participants were asked to bring meaningful objects to the sessions, which were then placed directly onto the paper to create images (Figure 110). Then we discussed the personal significance of the objects they had brought. Many participants arrived unprepared, either because they had forgotten or because the instructions had not been communicated clearly in advance. Nevertheless, this element of unpredictability revealed a great deal about the spontaneous relationship between people and their everyday possessions. While some participants brought photographs and family artefacts, others offered more everyday objects such as watches, car keys, glasses, wedding rings

or just hands. Though ordinary, these items acquired symbolic weight within the activity, serving as tangible traces of personal histories and relationships. However, the process of creating photograms proved technically challenging. The method required swift movement and precise handling of light-sensitive paper, a rhythm that clashed with the participants' more contemplative approach. Consequently, the results were inconsistent, yet the experiment still captured meaningful impressions (Figure 111). Rather than focusing on the technical perfection of the images, the activity emphasised the act of exchange, the translation of intimate



Figure 112 | Documentation of the workshop with elderly participants at Centro Paroquial Nª Srª da Natividade de Pedrouços and Centro Social Paroquial de Águas Santas, Porto (2023) [Participants used metal stencils (matrices) to create a pair of identical parts of a memory card through drawing and colouring repeated forms, which later constituted the work Sinto um vazio]., 2023, Porto.

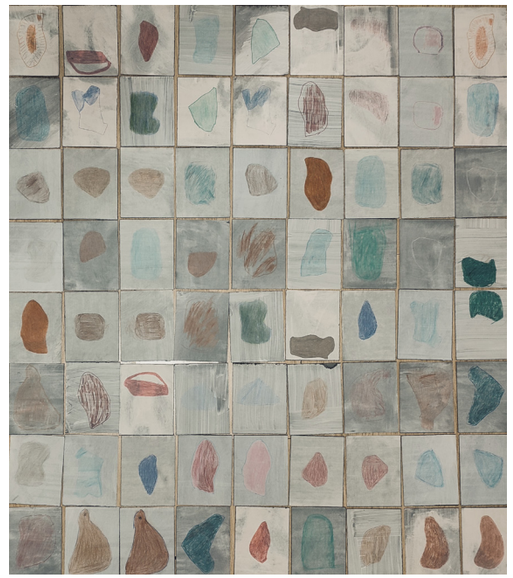


Figure 113 | Marta Bełkot, Vasconcelos, João, Helena, Arlinda, Duarte, Alzira, Varela, Peneda, Fernanda, José, Alcino, Maria, Laurinda, Augusto, Elvira, Ester, Emília, António, América, Alzira, Amélia, Ana, Arminda F., Zé Marques, Dulce R., Alcino F., Maria Amelia, Domingos, Fernanda, Graça, Rosa, *Sinto um vazio* (2023) [Color drawing on seventy-two cards; dimensions 13 × 16.5 cm].

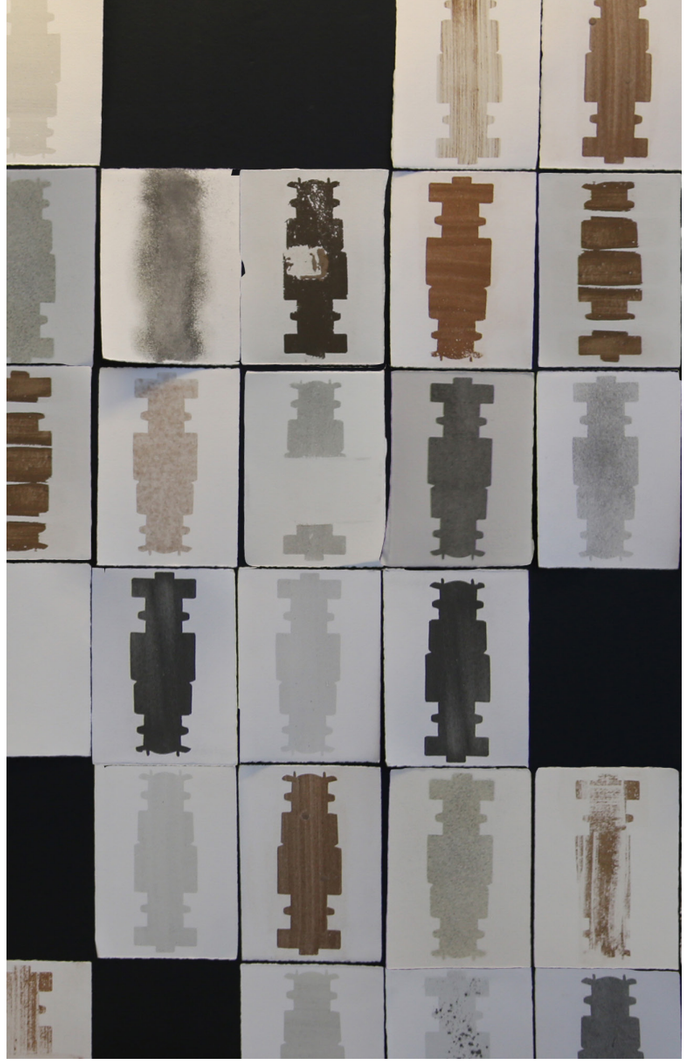


Figure 114 | Marta Bełkot, *Memory Cards* (2021) [Gum bichromate printing, 53 pares; dimensions 14.5 × 19cm; View from the exhibition *GroundLab – Residências Artísticas e Tecnológicas, II Bienal da Ardósia de Valongo*, Fórum Cultural de Ermesinde, Portugal].

objects into fragile photographic shadows. This moment of transfer emphasised the instability of memory itself, where presence and absence continually overlap.

Subsequently, participants worked on creating a memory card game, a simple activity in which pairs of cards are matched by recall. Players take turns flipping two cards at a time, trying to find identical pairs; the game engages visual memory, concentration, and attention, while also providing a playful and social context for cognitive stimulation. This idea emerged from earlier explorations with natural materials and playful forms during the II Biennale of Ardósia in Valongo. The work *Memory cards* (2021) (Figure 114) initially was inspired by vernacular architecture, local resources as the black slate (its capacity to work as a pigment), small local businesses (like toy store or bakery) which contributed with materials such as metal cut-outs from toys production. This idea of the memory card resurfaced during workshops with the elderly. Using metal stencils (matrices) shaped like imagined islands, participants were invited to create pairs of cards by colouring and drawing within the templates, attempting to make each pair as identical as possible (Figure 112). The islands functioned as a metaphor for personal, isolated spaces of memory, while the subtle differences that inevitably emerged between pairs emphasized perception, attention to detail, and the fragile, shifting nature of memory. The act of producing these cards became both a creative and reflective exercise: participants engaged with their own memories while noticing variations, repetitions and patterns in the shapes and colors they created. In this way, the cards functioned not only as a playful medium but also as a tool to evoke recollection, connection and the delicate interplay between presence and absence.

This activity turned into a joint work: *Sinto um vazio* (2023) (Figure 113). Although it came from a game, it required concentration, memory recall and visual acuity; here encapsulated together. The paper cards are fragile, and repeated use causes them to wear and deteriorate slightly. Their physical structure serves as a metaphor for memory – ephemeral, fragile, and requiring careful handling. The cards were created collaboratively by thirty two participants: Vasconcelos, João, Helena, Arlinda, Duarte, Alzira, Varela, Peneda, Fernanda, José, Alcino, Maria, Laurinda, Augusto, Elvira, Ester, Emília, António, América, Alzira, Amélia, Ana, Arminda F., Zé Marques, Dulce R., Alcino F., Maria Amelia, Domingos, Fernanda,





Figure 115 | Documentation of the workshop with elderly participants at Centro Paroquial Nª Srª da Natividade de Pedrouços and Centro Social Paroquial de Águas Santas, Porto (2023) [Creation of Secret Notebook and distribution of pictures from disposable cameras].

Graça, Rosa, and Marta Bełkot. Each participant brought their unique perspective to the shapes and colors, giving the deck both a deeply personal and collective character. Arminda (born 1962), one of the participants, poignantly described her feelings, saying: *Sinto um vazio* (*I Feel Emptiness*), when asked what she missed the most. This phrase inspired the title of this work, which reflects the emotional themes observed throughout the project. It expresses a profound sense of loss and longing, capturing the absence – of familiar places, objects, and sometimes even of oneself – that many participants conveyed.

A particularly significant development arose from the use of disposable cameras. By entrusting participants with these cameras, the project made their authorship more visible, shifting the focus so that they were recognized as image-makers within the constraints of their institutional setting. The images, once developed, were reintroduced in subsequent sessions and integrated into *secret notebooks* constructed from archival papers and envelopes. These notebooks became repositories for photographs, drawings and written responses to prompts such as *What do you miss the most?* (Figure 115) They offered a space that could preserve a personal expression beyond the reach of institutional scrutiny. Functioning as intimate mnemonic devices, the notebooks enabled participants to negotiate themes of absence, longing and presence within a tactile and durable form. The idea of secret notebooks grew from the *recorders* I have developed throughout this PhD. A recurring practice in my research is to write and draw on various surfaces, sometimes in notebooks but more often on loose sheets of paper, recording and collecting what I sense and hear (Figure 116). These fragments seem beyond my control, persisting briefly before being left behind or displaced. I often forget their importance, only to rediscover them and delve in once again. They lack objectivity and rigor; they are bits of thought and unconscious scribble, a field of struggle and relaxation, of information and play, constantly lost and found. Yet they remain a persistent, ever-present part of the process.

The final phase incorporated monotype printing and drawing, centered on the motif of the house. Participants were invited to produce drawings or imprints using cardboard templates, which facilitated the creative process while allowing for subtle variations and personal expression. The house motif was chosen to engage participants with familiar and meaningful spaces, encouraging re-



Figure 116 | Marta Bełkot, A set of four recorders divided by academic year, capturing the substantial part of the research undertaken between 2019 and 2023/24.

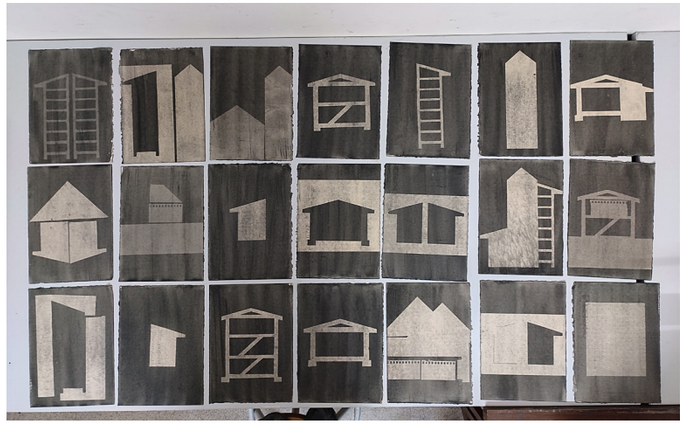
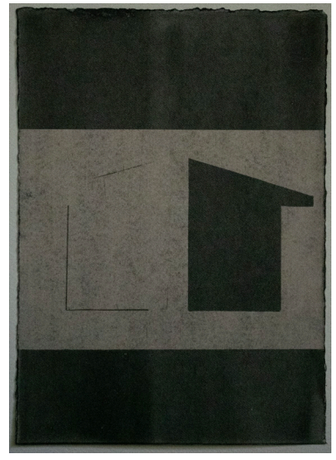


Figure 117 | Marta Bełkot, *Atrium* (2023) [Gum printing; set of 44 pieces, dimensions approximately 18 × 25 cm].

flection on the personal and emotional dimensions of home (Figures 119, 120 and 121). In parallel, participants were asked to reflect on their life experiences and offer advice or messages for younger generations, situating their personal narratives within an intergenerational context. They expressed these insights through words, drawings, or creative responses, sharing wisdom that emphasized respect, care for others, humility, perseverance, and appreciation for relationships. These contributions reveal an enduring concern for social connection and intergenerational dialogue, illustrating how creative activities can bridge generational divides.

These same templates were later reused in my work *Atrium* (2023) (Figures 117 and 118), in which I explored a shifted concept of house. The term *Atrium* refers to the central space of a dwelling – a place of circulation and encounter – serving as a metaphor for local displacement and communal spaces in institutional contexts. Using gum printing and coal as a pigment, I sought to evoke the material, sensory, and emotional qualities of domestic spaces-tracing the interplay between structure, memory, and the intimate traces left by daily life. By repurposing the templates, I maintained continuity between the participants' creative contributions and

Figure 118 | Marta Bełkot, *Atrium* (2023) [View from the exhibition Eidoteca, Fundação Marques da Silva, Porto, 2025].





O que casa significa para ti?
What does house mean to you?

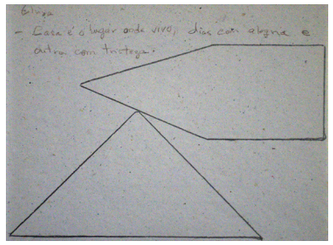


Figure 119 | Drawings and writings from participants in response to the question: *O que casa significa para ti?* (*What does house mean to you?*) Elvira: *Casa é o lugar onde vivo, dias com alegria e outras com tristeza.* (*House is the place where I live, with some days full of joy and others with sadness*).

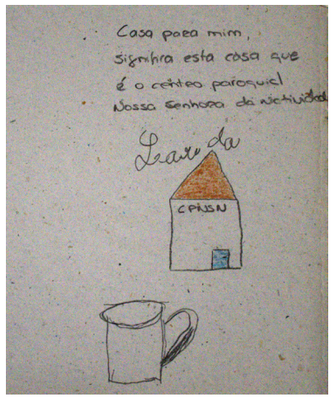


Figure 120 | Drawings and writings from participants in response to the question: *O que casa significa para ti?* (*What does house mean to you?*) Augusto: *Uma casa significa para mim família, significa também dormida, comida, roupa lavada, e alegria, bem-estar, ajudar o pai e mãe na casa, e trabalhar para ganhar dinheiro.* (*A house means family to me. It also means having a place to sleep, food, clean clothes, joy, well-being, helping my parents around the house, and working to earn money*).

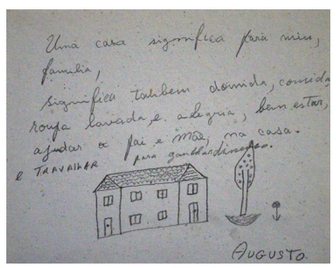


Figure 121 | Drawings and writings from participants in response to the question: *O que casa significa para ti?* (*What does house mean to you?*) Laurinda: *Casa para mim significa esta casa que é o Centro Paroquial Nossa Senhora de Natividade.* (*House, for me, means this house, which is the parish center Nossa Senhora de Natividade*).

my own artistic investigation, highlighting how collaborative processes can inform and extend personal artistic practice.

When asked what they missed the most, participants frequently cited companionship, health, family, money and love, reflecting both practical and emotional dimensions of absence. Others highlighted freedom, autonomy and the enjoyment of past experiences, underscoring the importance of personal agency and the impact of institutional living on daily life. When asked about the meaning of house, they emphasized both practical and emotional dimensions. For some, house is associated with family, daily routines and care, including shared meals, washing clothes and supporting parents or children (Augusto, Amélia) (Figure 120). For others, house is linked to social spaces and community, such as the parish centre that provides connection and belonging (Laurinda) (Figure 121). Several participants highlighted the emotional qualities of house (home) – a place of comfort, well-being, peace and joy, where both happiness and sadness are experienced (Elvira, António, Emília) (Figure 119). Across these reflections, house emerges as a multifaceted concept: a space for practical life, social connection, emotional security and personal fulfilment. These responses underscore how the idea of house continues to play a central role in participants' sense of identity and well-being, even within institutional settings. It illustrates that *house* is not merely a physical space, but a locus of memory, relationships and emotional grounding.

The divergence between the planned and realised stages of the project highlights the necessity of methodological flexibility in socially engaged artistic practice. While the original framework privileged historical photographic processes and mobility-based exploration, the realised project foregrounded adaptability to institutional constraints, material accessibility and participants agency. The resulting body of work – photograms, memory card games, disposable camera photographs and secret notebooks – represents not merely artistic artefacts, but sites of translation between memory and form, individual and collective experience, presence and displacement. In this sense, the project demonstrates that the artistic medium extended beyond photography or printmaking to encompass the relational dynamics of exchange, storytelling and play. What ultimately emerged was a participatory exploration of memory's fragility and resilience, situated within the lived realities of ageing, care and the shifting boundaries of home.

COMFORT ZONE

The concept of *comfort zone* is defined as the psychological space, whether internal or external, in which an individual feels safe, comfortable and predictable. In the context of marginalisation and gentrification, local communities, particularly older people, experience the daily erosion of their comfort zones. As British urban geographer and academic Loretta Lees et al. (2008) explain in their study of gentrification, urban regeneration is often presented as an improvement but results in forced displacement. This cuts people off from the networks and neighbourhoods that have long provided them with security. The elderly, in particular, are increasingly forced to live in care homes as housing prices rise and the tradition of multi-generational households disappears. Whilst these institutions may be considered necessary on occasion, they are seldom perceived as comfortable. These environments are characterised by their management and regulation, which can be described as sterile and over-regulated. Moreover, these environments are disconnected from the rhythm and memories of life before displacement. The comfort zone is therefore not an endpoint. It is a threshold. It teaches us about ourselves, not only where we come from, but also what we carry within us and what we resist. Most importantly, it can teach us to navigate the comfort zones of others with greater empathy as theirs may be very different from our own.

In developmental psychology, the comfort zone refers to a state in which individuals' function within familiar conditions that feel safe and predictable. While this stability can foster a sense of ease, it also limits opportunities for growth, as no new challenges are encountered. Stepping beyond this state – into what is often called the *learning zone* – introduces stress and uncertainty yet also creates the necessary conditions for development and personal growth. In Flow: *The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990), Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi discusses the concept of *flow*, a state of heightened focus and immersion in activities. He emphasizes that optimal learning and growth occur when individuals are engaged in tasks that stretch their current capabilities. This balance between skill and challenge is crucial for entering the flow state, leading to personal development and satisfaction. To step out of the comfort zone is not always a choice. For many, especially in marginalised communities, it is imposed through economic hardship, housing crises or need for special care, loosing independence. The concept of being out of place, becomes a lived condition rather than a metaphor. As sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1999) highlights, *habitus*, the deeply ingrained habits and expectations shaped by one's social context, is disrupted when people are forcibly removed from their environments. When a neighbourhood undergoes gentrification, or when elderly residents are relocated to care homes, their habitus no longer fits the new social architecture. To be out of the comfort zone, then, is not about growth or adventure. It is about estrangement. It is the slow erosion of agency when one's voice is no longer heard in decisions about home and care. And yet, even outside of this zone, people find ways to maintain rituals, small gestures of continuity, like rearranging a room to mirror the old one, or brewing tea the same way each morning. These acts are not trivial but acts of resistance.

The residents of the local community with whom I have worked, were moved from homes to institutional settings due to different reasons. Their narratives often revolve around loneliness, longing for family members and validation of the necessity of the situation, even if in disagreement with what their inner voice tells them. There are many satisfied and happy residents with awareness of, and agreement for the situation. Many believe that this is the best option for them, which make them confident about the new home. Nevertheless, the full scope of their emotional experience is hard to grasp. As Doreen Massey (1994) reminds us, place is always relational; it is built not just from geography but from interactions, continuity and memory.

Vernacular archives are intimate constellations of memory – unofficial, everyday collections of objects, stories and gestures that are preserved and activated not by institutions but by individuals, families and communities. These archives are embedded in the domestic, the ephemeral and the deeply personal: a folded letter kept in a drawer, a photograph worn from touch, a recipe never written down but known by heart. In the context of participatory artistic practices with elderly people in care institutions, ver-

nacular archives emerge not as static repositories of the past, but as living, performative acts of remembering. Most often, things called *important* are a reflection of someone´s memories manifesting themselves personified and within reach; an often symbolic heirloom. Considering this point, it is worth mentioning the institutional limitations as to which objects people can relocate with themselves. These restrictions often include limits on the quantity and size of personal belongings, prohibitions on items considered unsafe – such as sharp tools, candles, or electrical appliances – and the exclusion of furniture or objects that may obstruct shared spaces or conflict with institutional regulations. Memory, however, is not always stored in formal documents or objects but rather carried in bodies, in language, in silence and in repetition. The elderly are keepers of vast vernacular archives of memory that risk disappearing – not because they lack meaning, but because they fall outside both institutional frameworks of care and broader historical systems of archiving.

Figure 122 | Marta Bełkot, *I'm not even sure if I'm here* (2022–2025) [Examples of some of the seventy glass pieces; dimensions vary, the largest approximately Ø 12.5 × 5 cm].



Biographical projection (Strauss, 1987) plays a crucial role in shaping how we navigate displacement. As Romanian-born American professor Marianne Hirsch's (1997) theory of postmemory suggests, personal and inherited memories of place and loss continue to shape individual identity long after the original experience. For elderly residents of institutional settings, personal photographs, letters and heirlooms act as carriers of narrative conveying not only who they were but also the lives and identities they continue to inhabit.

Biographical projection refer to predictions or expectations about one's life informed by interpretations of past experiences. This line of research helps to understand identity, character and actions, illuminating how memories – both personal and inherited – mediate present experience and guide future orientation. *Self-efficacy*, a concept developed by psychologist Albert Bandura (1997), refers to a person's belief in their ability to influence events and outcomes in their life. In the context of marginalisation and local displacement, self-efficacy is not only about the individual's inner capacity; it is also shaped by structural conditions. If elderly people are moved from their homes without consultation, if decisions are made for them rather than with them, their sense of efficacy diminishes. Empowering marginalised voices means not just listening but building structures where those voices can shape outcomes. Whether in housing policy, urban planning or artistic practice, fostering self-efficacy is essential to resisting the erasures which come along with displacement.

Sometimes I have days when I'm not myself. In the morning, I woke up and I was someone, in the afternoon I was someone else, and now I'm not even sure if I'm here.

Mr. José, age 78.

The project *I'm not even sure if I'm here* (2021–2025) began with a simple wooden tool once used by photo-enamellers to shape copper before enamel was applied (see page 140, Figure 66). Thanks to the generosity and guidance of photo-enameller,[7] I gained the opportunity to experiment with and borrow this object. Although modern techniques, such as ceramic backgrounds and waterslide transfers, have largely rendered it obsolete, it holds enormous value for me: it is worn by time, marked by hands, and rich in history. I began by replicating it in wood to honour its original utilitarian

7 Courtesy of Joaquim Costa – Fotocerâmica Digital. https://www.fotoceramicadigital.com/

function.[8] However, I soon realised that what interested me was precisely the loss of utility and how objects – like people – change over time. Initially, I experimented with distorted lenses, drawing inspiration from the shape of the tool itself, but it was only when I decided to cast it in glass that my vision came into focus. Meanwhile, I met former photo-enamelling specialists[9] who generously lent me more of these tools, differing in size, which enabled me to expand the project.

The title *I'm not even sure if I'm here* was inspired with a comment made by Sr. José one of the elderly participants while being asked to write advice for younger generations.

Over the course of the project, I produced seventy glass pieces, referring to the number of elderly people met during *Correspondence*. The glass is recycled and came mostly from bottles I used, as well as few I found. It was then melted down and remade. Working with reclaimed glass required extreme conditions and precise craftsmanship, including the use of strong moulds and porcelain pots, as well as temperatures between 1075 and 1175°C. The moulding and casting process was extremely layered, involving plaster casts of the original tool, silicone moulds, beeswax models, gel-flex interventions, silica/plaster moulds and porcelain pots. Each phase records a transformation, an inscription, an erasure or a reformation or translation from one stage to the other, mirroring the way in which memory and identity are repeatedly changed upon and altered over time. The wax stage of the process remains conceptually central: as Georges Didi-Huberman, French art historian and theorist, notes (Dürring, von, Didi-Huberman, & Poggesi, 1999), wax also moves in the sense that it permits the inscription, the duplication, and the temporal as well as spatial displacement of forms, which impress themselves into it, transforming, effacing, and reforming themselves infinitely – just as memory is formed, forgotten, and reformed over time. *I'm not even sure if I'm here* (2021–2025) does not document a past; it dignifies transition: from utility to duration, action to presence, and matter to meaning.





Figure 123 | Marta Bełkot, *I'm not even sure if I'm here* (2022–2025) [Work in process: wax and Gel-Flex moulds, and preparation of plaster and silica moulds for kiln-cast glass].

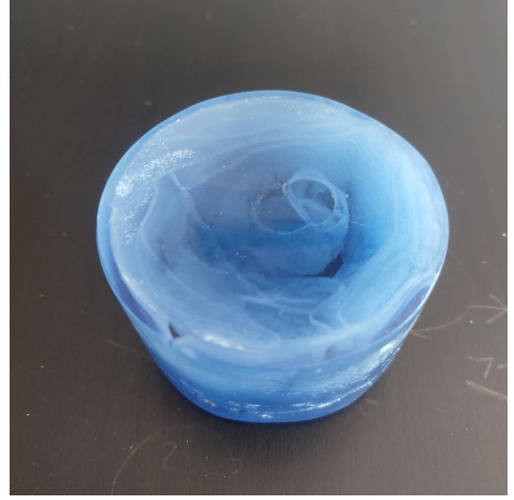


Figure 124 | Marta Bełkot, *I'm not even sure if I'm here* (2022–2025) [Example of one of the seventy glass mould pieces; dimension Ø 7 cm × 3 cm].

These glass objects retain the shape of the original instrument but not its function. They stand as distorted lenses: they do not clarify vision but reveal gaps in perception, deformations of time and the partial nature of remembrance. Their fragility and persistent presence echo the lived condition of ageing: delicate, often diminished in capacity, yet still resonant with experience and history. The pieces were polished by Sr. José, a craftsman from Marinha Grande (Portugal) with extensive experience and perfectionism enriching, with his own mark, the objects envisioned. The installation is displayed on a local black slate,[10] not only for its material capacity but also for its cultural meaning, entering a dialogue between inscription and erasure, matter and unreliable memory.

Ageing involves not only a natural reduction in physical and cognitive function, but also social and environmental challenges, including local relocation, such as moving to a care institution or changing residence in later life (Higgs, 2000; Walker, 2005).

8 See Chapter 2 *The Sea*, Section *Lithography in situ*, pp. 142-143, Figure 67 and foodnote 52

9 Joaquim Costa, Maria Manuela Sacramento Ex photo enamel specialist

10 See Appendix A, pp. 278-279



Figure 125 | Roman Opałka, *Opałka 1965/1– ∞. Détail 918554 – 943954* (1965–2011) [(close-up) oil on canvas; dimensions 196 × 135 cm].

Figure 126 | Roman Opałka (Counted Pictures) *Work in Progress* (*The Face of Roman Opałka*) (1965–2011) [Photographic self-portrait; silver gelatin print; dimensions 32 x 24 cm].

Figure 127 | Koji Kamoji, *Silence and the Will to Live* (2018) [Installation; large-scale raw aluminum plates, stone pathways].

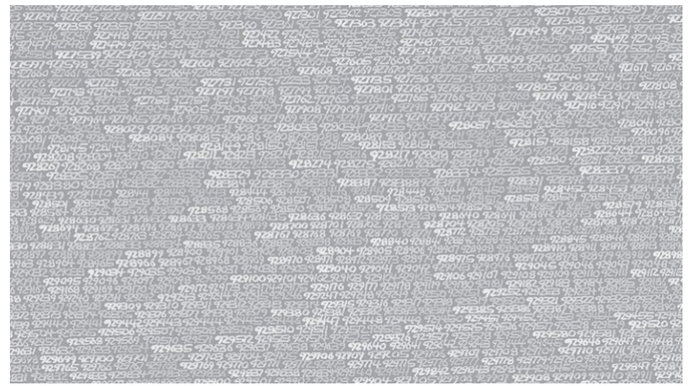
Such displacement often results in a loss of autonomy, a reduction in routine activities and diminished decision-making capacity, which can negatively affect an individual's sense of competence or self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Older people who experience sudden changes in their environment may face fragmented memory, diminished control over daily tasks and marginalisation within social spaces, compounding feelings of isolation and exclusion (Gilleard & Higgs, 2010). In this context, ageing can be understood as a continual negotiation of comfort and discomfort: older adults are frequently required to operate outside their established comfort zones, encountering new routines, social structures and physical limitations that demand adaptation, resilience and recalibration of their identity and agency.

Japanise aritist living in Poland Koji Kamoji's artistic practice addresses the phenomenology of ageing through minimalism, fragility and the careful modulation of presence. His installations *Silence and the Will to Live* with metal imitating the water, articulate the passage of time reflecting how later life concentrates attention on essentials and compels engagement with situations beyond habitual ease. Polish artist Roman Opałka's work, in contrast, engages with temporality through relentless accumulation. In his lifelong project of numbering canvases sequentially until his death, Opałka externalizes time as a continuous, irreversible process. While Kamoji emphasizes stillness, silence and reduction, Opałka foregrounds continuity, repetition and persistence. Both approaches,

despite formal differences, offer complementary reflections on old age as a site of transformation, where memory, presence and temporality intersect – and where stepping outside comfort zones, whether socially, spatially or temporally, shapes lived experience and artistic representation alike.

... what I call my self-portrait is made of thousands of working days. Each one corresponds to a number and to a precise moment in which I stopped painting.

Roman Opałka





CONCLUSION

American filmmaker David Lynch (1946–2025), when asked by US singer Patti Smith (1946–)[1] about the origin of ideas, responded:

I get ideas in fragments (I am always saying). It's as if in the other room, there's a puzzle, all the pieces are together, but in my room, it just flips one piece at a time into me. And the first piece I get is just a fragment of the whole puzzle, but I fall in love with this fragment, and it holds a promise for more.

This metaphor provides a compelling framework through which to consider the trajectory of outcomes accomplished over the period of this PhD research, unfolding as a constellation of interconnected open-ended, mutable elements subjected to transformation in form, shape or meaning. Displacement, in this sense, is not simply spatial or geographical but also conceptual: a continuous shifting between fragments, moments and materials forming a methodology and a metaphor, privileging becoming over closure, openness over definiteness. By engaging with both obsolete techniques and marginalised voices, my practice situates itself within a field of in-betweenness. Printmaking here is not only a medium but also a metaphor: its marginal position within contemporary art echoes the social marginality of those who inhabit the fringes. Both reveal how fragility can be generative, how obsolescence can be reactivated and how displacement can open possibilities for new forms of relation and meaning.

Within this framework, all the attempts to recreate and reevaluate obsolete technologies and products function as both technical experiment and conceptual extension. The processes were grounded in the history of photomechanical invention, revisiting materials once essential to drawing for reproduction and print-based outputs. In the contemporary moment, digital media competes with historical reproductive processes and tangible forms of artistic creation as part of a broader technological trajectory. Digital image-making offers wider accessibility, lower costs and relative ease of use: it avoids the toxicity of chemicals, the laborious and physically demanding procedures and even the *messiness* traditionally associated with printmaking. Especially in moments such as the COVID-19 pandemic, digital methods proved advantageous requiring no specialised studio facilities and little technical knowledge of materials. Yet the essence of printmaking practice resists such acceleration. It positions itself against the proliferation of instantaneous images and the overlapping flood of information, instead insisting on slowness, tactility, and attentiveness. The need for a tangible image-form for the subtle material choices of paper and ink draws practitioners back to the richness of 19th century printmaking techniques, many of which are today forgotten.

What were purely commercial photomechanical techniques in the mid-19th century have been transformed into deliberate aesthetic strategies in the contemporary printmaking studio. While precision machines once dominated production, these processes are now reimagined by the hands of resilient students and artists. Detached from their original commercial purpose, 19th century photomechanical methods, which were originally developed for fast, meticulous reproduction, now bear little resemblance to the high-precision artefacts they once produced. In their modern form, such techniques often relinquish their utilitarian function, making room for improvisation and on-the-spot decision-making. Prepared surface papers, for example, which were historically designed to facilitate image transfer, are now valued for their tactile qualities. They are used as unique supports for drawing and printing, offering textures that are no longer commercially available. Gillotage, once used for speed and cheap production in a commercial context, now can be revived by artists and used in letterpress studios to create a variety of images and texts. Photo enamel, with its technical specificity and its intention to withstand time and the elements – historically and commercially linked to funerary practices – can now be understood, within this project, as a tool positioned between exercises: an interim matrix that mediates the transition from image to glazed object.

Immersion in the technological world of the 19th century demands patience, risk-taking, and material intimacy, qualities intrinsic to historical photographic processes and increasingly rare in an age of frictionless digital reproduction.These processes foreground delay, tactility and embodied skill, situating artistic creation in a stance which resists the dematerialisation and speed of digital culture. In this sense, 19th century photomechanical techniques are no longer obsolete technologies; they are critical voices in contemporary printmaking, enabling a rethinking of reproduction not as efficient, but as experimental, time-bound and deeply engaged with material practice.

In contemporary art, printmaking continues to occupy a liminal space, absorbing new realities, addressing urgent social and cultural issues and offering alternative perspectives. Its fragile yet persistent presence invites reflection on its continuing capacity to resonate. Rather than progressing towards a predetermined resolution, this research project establishes an intuitive hierarchy or a *makingly knowing* approach, where process and responsiveness take precedence over fixed outcomes. Displacement, as a continuous shifting between fragments, moments and materials reflects the instability of place, of memory, identity and presence. Printmaking emerges as a quiet yet persistent practice of resistance. Each trace and impression is both record and gesture, articulating an ongoing negotiation between loss and perseverance, between *no longer* and *not yet.* While producing prints, objects and installations extend these evidences, yet it is printmaking – with its paradoxical condition of repetition and ephemerality – that most powerfully catalogues these tensions.

1 BBC *Newsnight's Encounters* (2014) [Video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oBrjN-kdXM

LIST OF SOURCES OF IMAGES

Figure 1 | A. Belloguet, *L'Europe animée* (1870) [Humorous black-and-white lithograph; dimensions 46 × 65 cm]. Source: Gallica, BnF. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53093117z

Figure 2 | Manfredi Manfredo, *L'Europa Geografico-Politica Veduta a Volo d'Oca* (c. 1871) [Color lithograph; dimensions 47 × 67 cm]. Source: Pamono. https://www.pamono.eu/italian-serio-comic-map-of-europe-1871

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Figure 119 | Drawings and writings from participants in response to the question: *O que casa significa para ti? (What does house mean to you?)* Elvira: *Casa é o lugar onde vivo, dias com alegria e outras com tristeza. (House is the place where I live, with some days full of joy and others with sadness).* Source: Author.

Figure 120 | Drawings and writings from participants in response to the question: *O que casa significa para ti? (What does house mean to you?)* Augusto: *Uma casa significa para mim família, significa também dormida, comida, roupa lavada, e alegria, bem-estar, ajudar o pai e mãe na casa, e trabalhar para ganhar dinheiro.* (A house means family to me. It also means having a place to sleep, food, clean clothes, joy, well-being, helping my parents around the house, and working to earn money). Source: Author.

Figure 121 | Drawings and writings from participants in response to the question: *O que casa significa para ti? (What does house mean to you?)* Laurinda: *Casa para mim significa esta casa que é o Centro Paroquial Nossa Senhora de Natividade. (House, for me, means this house, which is the parish center Nossa Senhora de Natividade).* Source: Author.

Figure 122 | Marta Bełkot, *I'm Not Even Sure If I'm Here* (2022–2025) [Examples of some of the seventy glass pieces; dimensions vary, the largest approximately Ø 12.5 × 5 cm]. Source: Author.

Figure 123 | Marta Bełkot, *I'm Not Even Sure If I'm Here* (2022–2025) [Work in process: wax and Gel-Flex moulds, and preparation of plaster and silica moulds for kiln-cast glass]. Source: Author.

Figure 124: Marta Bełkot, *I'm Not Even Sure If I'm Here* (2022–2025) [Example of one of the seventy glass mould pieces; dimension Ø 7 cm × 3 cm]. Source: Author.

Figure 125 | Roman Opałka, *Opałka 1965/1– ∞. Détail 918554 – 943954* (1965–2011) [(close-up) oil on canvas; dimensions 196 × 135 cm]. Source: Christies. https://www.christies.com/privatesales/roman-opalka#highlights-section

Figure 126 | Roman Opałka (Counted Pictures) *Work in Progress (The Face of Roman Opałka)* (1965–2011) [Photographic self-portraits; silver gelatin prints; dimensions 32x 24 cm]. Source: Marchand-mercier. https://www.marchand-mercier.com/explorations-blog/2020/5/5/roman-opalka

Figure 127 | Koji Kamoji, *Silence and the Will to Live* (2018) [Installation; large-scale raw aluminum plates, stone pathways]. Source: Zachęta – Narodowa Galeria Sztuki. https://zacheta.art.pl/en/wystawy/koji-kamoji?galeria=1

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Exhibitions Forming Part of the PhD

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Bełkot, M. (2022, December 9–2023, January 14). *WORK IN PROCESS / SHOWING MAKING*. Livraria Térmita, Porto, Portugal. Curated by Miguel Seabra.

Bełkot, M. (2021, November 25–29). *Memory Cards* (gum printing). Solo presentation within *Cubos de las Tentationes em Natural: time, space, and physical matter* [Cubes of Temptations in Nature: Time, Space, and Physical Matter]. FIG Bilbao International Printmaking and Art on Paper, Palacio Euskalduna, Bilbao, Spain. Curated by Graciela Machado.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Bełkot, M. (2025, April 7–May 30). *Atrium* (photosensitive paper); *dormant* (video). In *EIDOTECA*. Organized by Graciela Machado and Pure Print Archaeology (PPA). Casa-Atelier José Marques da Silva, Porto, Portugal.

Machado, G., & Bełkot, M. (2025, April 7–May 30). *Casinha* [Little House] (installation). In *EIDOTECA*. Organized by Graciela Machado and PPA. Garden at Casa-Atelier José Marques da Silva, Porto, Portugal.

Bełkot, M., et al. (2025, April 7–July 12). *Sinto um vazio* [I Feel Emptiness] (drawing). In *6ª*

Bienal Internacional de Arte de Gaia [6th International Art Biennial of Gaia]. Organized by Agostinho Santos. Quinta da Fiação de Lever, Gaia, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (2025, January 7–February 30). *Cantanhede* (video). In *Atelier Nomade*, BIP Program (Blended Intensive Programme, Erasmus+). Participation of students, researchers, and faculty from FBAUP, ESADSE, ARBA-ESA, RWTH Aachen University. Casa-Atelier José Marques da Silva, Porto, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (2024, December 10–2025, February 21). *Pedra da Pedreira* [Quarry Stone] (video); research projects on ink [ink specimens by type and color], paper [stone-paper specimens], and tools [tools from tools]. In *Pedra Papel Guerra* [Stone, Paper, War], artistic research exhibition promoted by Pure Print Archaeology (i2ADS/FBAUP). Porto, Portugal. Organized by Graciela Machado, David Lopes, João Carlos Garcia.

Bełkot, M. (2024, January 29–February 2). Research projects on ink, paper, and tools: results from the first 'Nomadic' atelier. In *Arts and Crafts Aujourd'hui*. Participation of students, researchers, and faculty from FBAUP, i2ADS, Pure Print Archaeology, ARBA-ESA, ESADSE. Fundação Marques da Silva, FIMS, Porto, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (2023, July 5–19). *Waiting* (photosensitive paper); *Family Tree* (photo-enamel, wooden box). In *CraftHub – Craft Skills and Processes | VICARTE*. Biblioteca FCT NOVA, Caparica, Lisbon, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (2023, April 24–May 31). *Correspondence* (mezzotint). In *Sopa da Pedra*. Organized by Ateliers Mompilher. Armazém Fundo, Térmita, Porto, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (2023, April 18–28). *Water* (gillotage; lithophany; branch and textile found on the beach of Cortegaça); Flash (photo-enamel); Projeto de investigação sobre tinta [Ink Research Project] (specimens by type and color); Projeto de investigação sobre gillotage [Gillotage Research Project] (matrix and print specimens); Projeto de investigação sobre litofania [Lithophany Research Project] (porcelain specimens); Projeto de investigação sobre esmalte fotográfico [Photo-Enamel Research Project]. Directed by P. Almeida; organized by M. Bełkot and G. Machado - Video documentation: *Foto Esmaltagem Direto – Marta Belkot_2022*. In *Pure Print Archaeology – 1st Research Meeting*. Curated by Graciela Machado and Paula Almozara. Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto (FBAUP), Porto, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (2023, February 18–April 30). *Casa em migalhas* [*Home in crumbs*] (photo-enamel, relief); *Uma casa que não foi chamada casa* [*A House that was not called a house*] (bichromated gum, pigment from brick). In *Memórias de Pó* [*Dust memories*]. Museu Municipal de Valongo, Porto, Portugal. Curated by Graciela Machado, Domingos Loureiro, António Regis da Silva.

Machado, G., & Bełkot, M. (2023, February 18–April 30). *Reserva* and *Okno* [Reserve and Window] (window frame, prepared surface papers); *Escola/Szkoła*/School] (installation, artist book, prepared papers). In *Memórias de Pó*. Museu Municipal de Valongo, Porto, Portugal.

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Bełkot, M. (2022, April 24–May 16). *Place-no-place* (bichromate gum, photopolymer). In *Sopa da Pedra*, organized by Ateliers Mompilher: Alexandre A. R. Costa, Miguel Seabra, Jorge Fernando dos Santos, and Hugo Brito. Armazém Fundo, Térmita, Porto, Portugal.

Monica, R.R. (2021, November 9–12). *Moon Call* (offset plate printed with powder ink). In *Light Prints*. Galeria Cozinha, FBAUP, Porto, Portugal. Curated by Ana Margarida Rocha.

Bełkot, M. (2021, September 19–November 30). *Memory Cards* (bichromated gum); *Rota do pão* [Bread Route] (metal mold, colored crayon, white thread). In *GroundLab, Residências Artísticas e Tecnológicas – II Bienal da Ardósia de Valongo* [GroundLab, Artistic and Technological Residencies – II Valongo Slate Biennial]. Fórum Cultural de Ermesinde, Portugal.

Machado, G., & Bełkot, M. (2021, September 19–November 30). *Sem título* [Untitled] (prepared surface papers, installation). In *GroundLab, Residências Artísticas e Tecnológicas – II Bienal da Ardósia de Valongo*. Fórum Cultural de Ermesinde, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (2020, September 12–October 25). *Waiting. Cartography of Waiting* (photosensitive papers, mixed media); Reflection [Reflection] (gillotage and prepared surface papers). In *Revolver*, exhibition of PhD students, FBAUP, Casa das Artes, Porto, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (2021, April 25–June 11). *Waiting. Cartography of Waiting* (photosensitive papers, mixed media). In *6th International Art Biennial of Espinho*, Câmara Municipal e Junta de Freguesia de Espinho. Museu Municipal de Espinho, Portugal. https://museumunicipal.espinho.pt/pt/exposicoes/bienal/

Bełkot, M. (2020, June). *Reflection* (gillotage matrices). In *Avesso, do Avesso, do Avesso*, online platform: http://avesso.virose.pt/marta/

Monica, R.R. (2020, June). *Isolamento* [isolation] (video, metal matrix, drypoint, photography, and drawing). In *Avesso, do Avesso, do Avesso* [Inside Out, Inside Out, Inside Out]. Online platform: https://avesso.virose.pt/monica/

VIDEO / FILM / PERFORMANCE WORKS

Bełkot, M. (Director); Machado, G. (Organizer). (2025). *Cantanhede* (video). Presented in *Atelier Nomade* BIP Program (Blended Intensive Programme, Erasmus+), with participation of students, researchers, and faculty from Faculdade de Belas Artes da U.Porto (FBAUP), École Supérieur d'Art et Design de Saint-Étienne (Esadse), Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles (ArBA-EsA), and RWTH Aachen University, and invited collaborators. Planning Committee: Graciela Machado, Rui Vitorino Santos, Júlio Dolbeth. Organization: Graciela Machado, Marta Belkot, and David Lopes – Pure Print Archeology (PPA). Casa-Atelier José Marques da Silva, Porto, Portugal.

Bełkot, M., & Harciarek, K. (2024). *Ink Station* (performance). Organized by G. Machado. *Atelier Nomade*, Pure Print Archaeology (PPA), Marques da Silva Foundation, Porto, Portugal. A performative gesture in which lithographic inks were prepared and cooked in the open air. Freshly made inks were shared with participants, who used them on prepared stone paper to create drawings across the streets of Porto, transforming the city into a living workshop that combined historical printmaking techniques with collaborative, participatory exploration of materials and place.

Bełkot, M. (Director); Machado, G. (Organizer). (2024). *Pedra da Pedreira* [Quarry Stone] (video). Presented in *Pedra Papel Guerra*, artistic research exhibition promoted by Pure Print Archeology (i2ADS/FBAUP). Organization: Graciela Machado, David Lopes, João Carlos Garcia. Casa-Atelier José Marques da Silva, Porto, Portugal. https://vimeo.com/user65031551

Almeida, P. (Director); Belkot, M. (Organizer); Machado, G. (Organizer). (2022–2025). *Foto Esmaltadores* [Photo Enamellers] (Video). Research documentation.

Almeida, P. (Director); Belkot, M. (Organizer); Machado, G. (Organizer). (2022). *Foto Esmaltagem Direto – Marta Belkot_2022* [Direct Photo Enamelling – Marta Belkot_2022] (Video). In *Pure Print Archaeology – 1st Research Meeting*. Curators: Graciela Machado and Paula Almozara. Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto (FBAUP), Porto, Portugal.

Bełkot, M. (Director), & Machado, G. (Organizer). (2021). *Lithography in situ* (video). Technological residency, in *GroundLab: 2nd Biennial of Ardósia de Valongo*, coordinated by Graciela Machado, i2ADS/GroundLab. https://vimeo.com/650051354

SPECIMENS AND RESEARCH OBJECTS

Note: These works consist of physical paper book specimens created for research and teaching in printmaking, documented online for reference. They serve as research objects and educational resources available for consultation at Printmaking Workshop, Faculty of Fine Arts University of Porto (FBAUP).

Machado, G., Rocha, A. M., Bełkot, M. (2012-2019). *Transfer Paper specimens* [Physical book of specimens].: https://hdl.handle.net/10216/85534.

Machado, G., & Bełkot, M. (2019). *Papier Gillot I: Manual production of prepared surface papers for process. Scraperboard and printmaking transfer paper* [Physical book of specimens]. https://hdl.handle.net/10216/123417

Machado, G., & Bełkot, M. (2019). *Papier Gillot II* [Physical book of specimens]. https://hdl.handle.net/10216/123413

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Machado, G., & Macedo, C., Bełkot, M. (2022). *Papirografia a partir de fotocópia – Volume I* [Physical book of specimens]. https://hdl.handle.net/10216/141324

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APPENDIX A
Exhibition Documentation

This appendix documents the exhibition *Out of Place*, presented on 19 December 2025 at 10:00 AM at Museu FBAUP, Avenida Rodrigues de Freitas 265, Main Building, 2nd floor, Porto, Portugal. The exhibition accompanied the public defence of this doctoral thesis and is included here following the request of the examination committee.

Out of Place was conceived, curated, and presented by the doctoral candidate, Marta Bełkot, who developed and presented the work both under her own name and through her artistic alter ego, Monica RR.

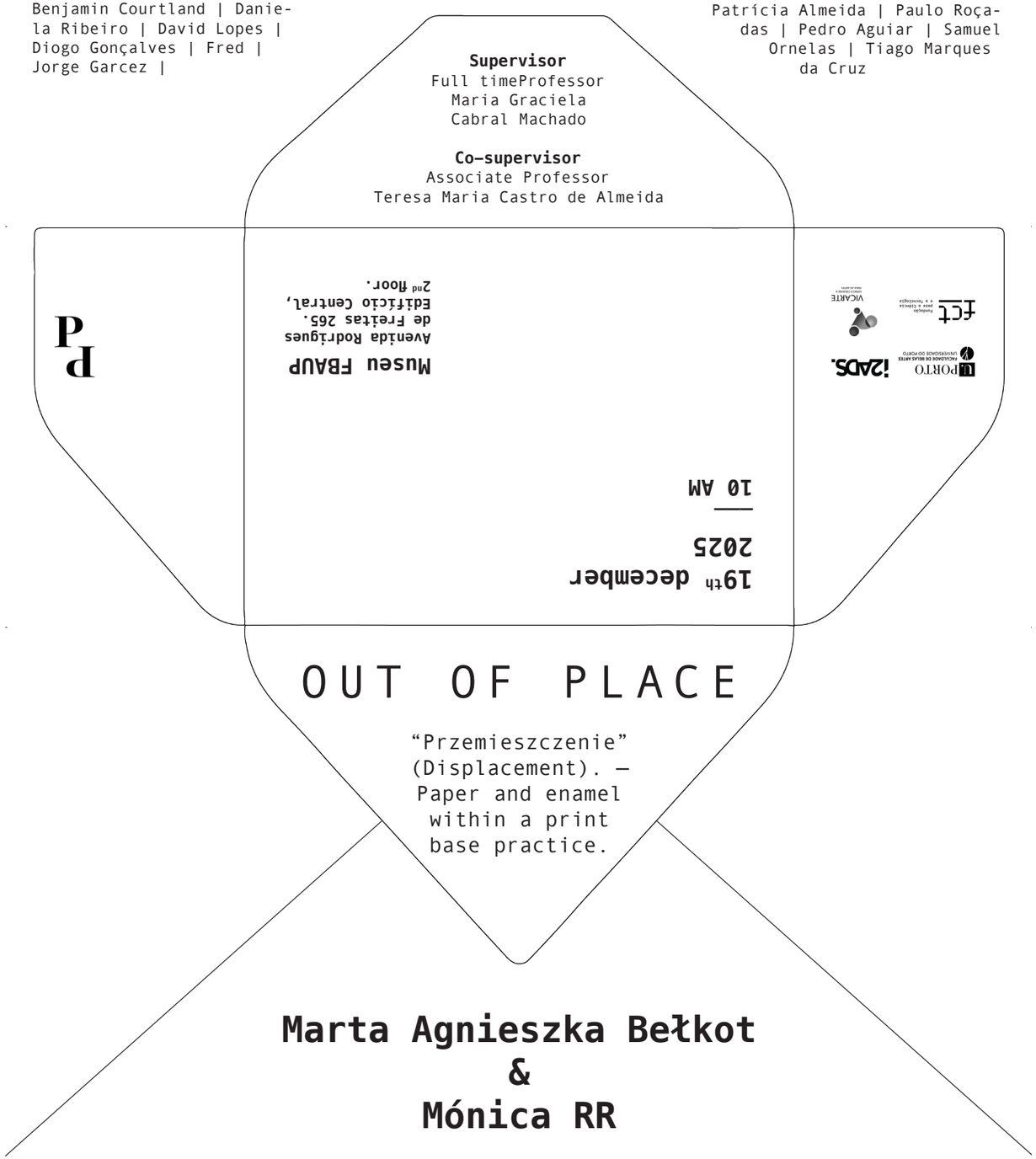
The exhibition handout was designed by David Lopes.

Exhibition documentation photography was produced by Diogo Gonçalves and the author.

The materials included in this appendix provide visual and contextual documentation of the installation as presented on the day of the defence.

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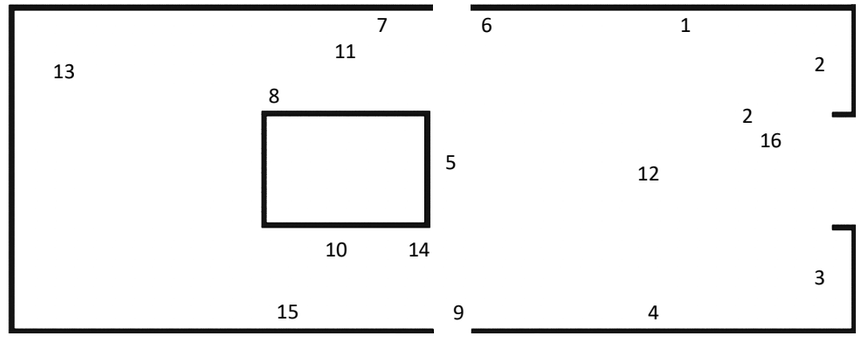


The concept of przemieszczenie (Polish), translated as displacement in English, is explored as a key element between technological processes and conceptual enquiry. This practice-led research project investigates displacement both as a subject and as a method within contemporary artistic practice. It is approached not merely as physical movement or uprooting but as a layered condition, encompassing physical, emotional and cultural dimensions which permeate the entire creative process. Rather than defining it as a singular event, the notion is understood as a continuum: between absence and presence, the center and the margins, memory and materiality, the old and the new. Framing the issue locally, narratives about personal histories were sought and descriptions of home, place, marginalization and institutional care provided context to simultaneously situate one's own role as artist-researcher. Central to the project is an examination of how this condition can become a generative force in visual arts, particularly through the shifting and contextualization of technologies and narratives within its framework.

Technological shifts, focusing on obsolete 19th century photomechanical industrial processes and materials - such as surface-prepared papers, lithographic inks and crayons, "gillotage" relief printing, photographic enamel and lithophane – are considered in an archaeological approach, seeking to reveal the complexity of these techniques and material richness of industrially produced artefacts, often overlooked in modern artistic practice. These historical methods are not only revisited but reactivated through a contemporary lens. A series of experiments assesses the viability for reconstruction, possible permutations with emerging digital tools and the use of environmentally responsible practices while sustaining the essential spirit of traditional printmaking. Through this lens, displacement becomes a concept situated between dualities: analogue and digital, industrial and handmade, obsolete and contemporary.

[ENG]





1. Marta Bełkot, *Atrium* (Latin), *Antryj* (Silesian), *Átrio* (Portuguese). [2023]. Gum Printing (coal pigment).

2. Marta Belkot, *Water* [2020-2024]. Porcelain book, black string, desk, chair.
— *Water*, [2020=-∞] (2022) Video H264, Cortegaça, Portugal. Video taken during collection of objects.
— *Water*, [2020=-∞] (2022) (porcelain book cover) A branch and textile found on the Cortegaça beach.
— *Water*, [2020=-∞] (2022) Lithophane porcelain page, light.

3. Marta Belkot. T*he Family Tree*, [2020] Photo-enamel.

4. Marta Bełkot "*Souvenir de voyage*". [2022]. Gum Printing.

5. Marta Bełkot, *Bornów*, [2022]. developed as gum printing with coal.

6. Marta Bełkot. *Puzzle of the Asylum* [2022-∞], metal plates and Gum Printing.

7. Marta Bełkot, *Uma casa que não foi chamada casa.* [2022-∞] *A home that was not called home* [2022-∞]. Gum Printing. ceramic powder, brick.

8. Marta Bełkot, *"Casa" em migalhas.* [2022-∞], relief print.

9. Marta Bełkot, *Non Plces.* [2021], gum printing.

10. Mónica Rodrigues Reis, *Isolation.* [2020]. video.

11. Marta Bełkot, *No Title*, [2022]. Video H264. (projection on the ceilling)

12. Mónica Rodrigues Reis. *out of place.* [2025]. white tape,

13. Marta Belkot *"I'm not even sure if I'm here"*, [2022 - 2025] glass and black slate installation.

14. Mónica Rodrigues Reis. *Our quarentine Home.* [2020]. Etching ground on metal plate.

15. Marta Bełkot, Vasconcelos, João, Helena, Arlinda, Duarte, Alzira, Varela, Peneda, Fernanda, José, Alcino, Maria, Laurinda, Augusto, Elvira, Ester, Emília, António, América, Alzira, Amélia, Ana, Arminda F., Zé Marques, Dulce R., Alcino F., Maria Amelia, Domingos, Fernanda, Graça, Rosa, *"Sinto um vazio"*, [2023].

16. Marta Bełkot. *Flash.* [2021-2022]. Photo-enamel on metal.

































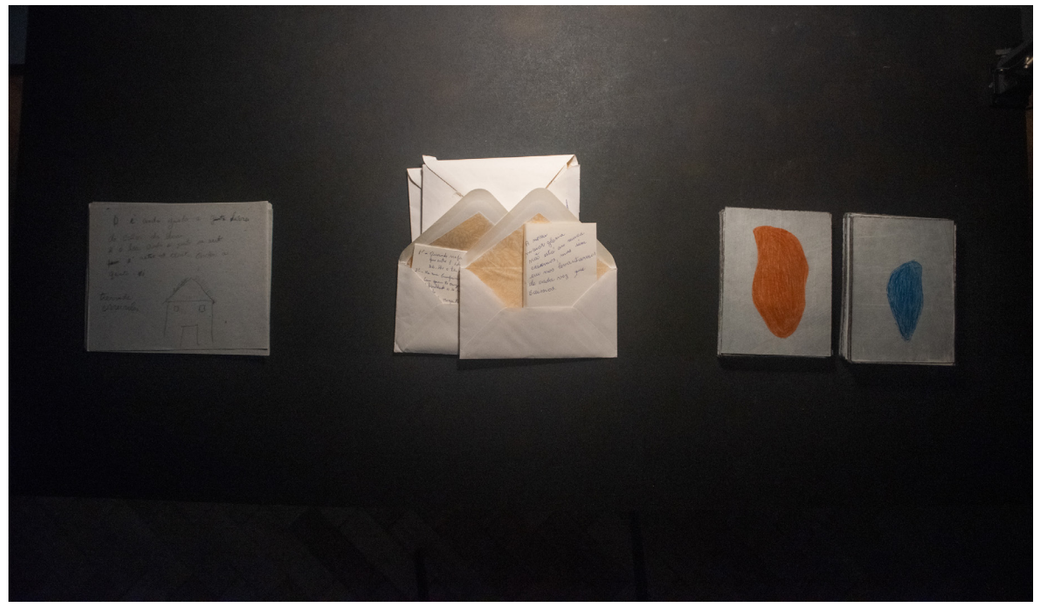


























APPENDIX B
Proposed Project: Correspondence

This appendix presents the original outline, together with its English translation, of the proposed collaborative project entitled Correspondence, developed within the framework of this doctoral research. The project was conceived as a potential collaboration with elderly residents in care institutions and reflects the intended social and participatory dimension of the research.

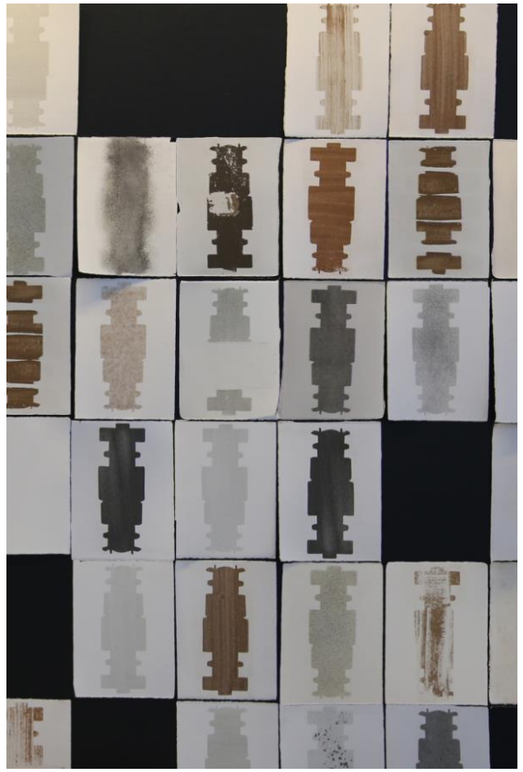
O projeto de *correspondência* nasceu da necessidade de estabelecer contato e é dedicado a um encontro com o paciente. O objetivo deste encontro é adquirir experiências, histórias, lugares e narrativas importantes para o paciente.

A *correspondência* é, portanto, um projeto de várias etapas que inclui não apenas palestras e workshops, mas também uma troca de cartas. A primeira etapa é o próprio **encontro**, no qual, por meio de oficinas artísticas especiais, o paciente poderá se conhecer e se expressar melhor. Olharemos com cuidado redobrado para o local ou locais onde o paciente se sente seguro, para as coisas que o rodeiam, que pertencem ou não ao paciente e que evocam emoções particulares. Falaremos sobre onde e quando o paciente está se sentindo bem, tentaremos reproduzir este(s) lugar(es) e contexto no papel. Criaremos cartões de memória (um jogo de memória que envolve encontrar pares dos mesmos cartões) usando técnicas fotográficas antigas e ardósia. Usando câmeras analógicas, vamos fotografar esses lugares e coisas importantes e essenciais, jogar cartas de memória e conhecermo-nos mutuamente.
A próxima etapa é o encontro com a foto, cujo autor é o próprio paciente. Filmes desenvolvidos de forma analógica serão um convite para falar sobre as representações propostas pelos próprios pacientes. Nesta fase, o encontro assume uma forma diferente considerando os primeiros contactos: tentaremos criar um livro de arte, denominado *livro secreto*, no qual o paciente poderá armazenar fotos, cartas ou um processo de trabalho criativo como suas próprias anotações ou desenhos.
Nesta fase, falaremos de uma forma peculiar de comunicação, que é uma carta tradicional, sobre a escrita, sobre os vestígios, sobre o que gostaríamos de encerrar em palavras ou em desenho. Falaremos de oficina gráfica e da ardósia. Trocaremos uma carta e iniciaremos a correspondência.
As próximas etapas serão construídas com base nas necessidades e interesses do paciente, bem como no desenvolvimento de um projeto artístico, cada etapa do qual é uma parte importante.

Este projeto é, neste momento, um projeto totalmente artístico, com foco em ganhar experiência e inspiração, não em análises sociológicas e/ou psicológicas.

PRIMEIRA ETAPA: (data não agendada: As etapas podem ter a forma de reuniões de dois ou três dias, sob consideração)
A proposta das reuniões:

1. **O primeiro encontro** - teórico e prático (1,5h-2h) com limite de 7 pessoas.
Irei questioná-los sobre lugares onde os pacientes se sentem seguros e bem, sobre espaços onde gostam de estar. Gostaria que eles apresentassem um desenho. Em seguida, discutirei as especificidades dos papéis preparados na superfície, bem como me referirei às técnicas fotográficas analógicas. Apresentarei cartas de jogar MEMÓRIA, que criei usando uma técnica de goma de impressão do séc. XIX e ardósia preta obtida localmente no Porto como pigmento. Os participantes serão também convidados a criar os seus próprios cartões através de recorte de papel (papel de negativos que se transformarão em positivos quando revelados).



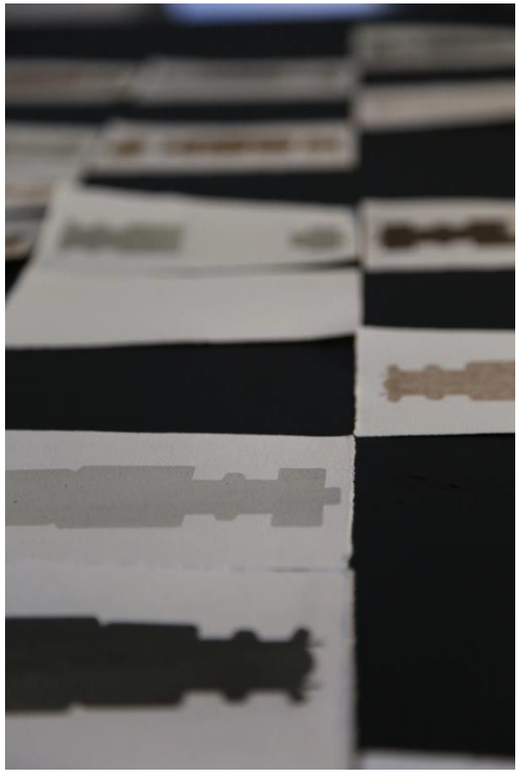


Fig. 1 e 2. Marta Bełkot, *Cartões de memória,* 2021. Cartões de memória criados com o uso de tecnologia do século XIX impressão de goma fotográfica, ardósia preta e silhueta emprestada a uma fábrica de brinquedos em Valongo, Porto, PT. 2021

2. **O segundo encontro** - teórico e prático (1,5h-2h) com limite de 7 pessoas.
Apresentarei a possibilidade de usar pedras específicas como pigmentos na produção de tintas, papéis e matrizes. Explicarei a fotossensibilidade do papel previamente preparado por mim com o uso de carbono. A seguir, apresentarei como irradiar com o sol e como se desenvolver com água. Os pacientes que usam os recortes do primeiro dia, com minha ajuda, criarão alguns cartões. Se não houver essa possibilidade - sem luz direta ou sem acesso a um ponto de água apropriado – irei revelar eu própria e apresentar no dia seguinte.

3. **O terceiro encontro** - teórico e prático (1,5h-2h) com limite de 7 pessoas.
Veremos os resultados de nosso encontro - as cartas de jogo resultantes. Vou convidar os pacientes a escolher um lugar onde vamos jogar. Um por um, distribuirei câmeras analógicas e pedirei aos pacientes que fotografem esses lugares importantes e seguros que discutimos na primeira reunião. Cada paciente assinará a camêra e me entregará para revelar. Em troca entregarei um envelope com papel e uma carta em que perguntarei sobre a disponibilidade para correspondência.

SEGUNDA ETAPA (data não prevista)
A proposta das reuniões:

1. **O primeiro encontro** - teórico e prático (1,5h-2h) com limite de 7 pessoas.
Neste encontro irei distribuir aos participantes as fotos reveladas que eles tiraram na primeira etapa. Falaremos sobre as fotografias. Escolheremos as melhores e mais relevantes fotos de cada paciente. Criaremos um mapa onde colocaremos desenhos da etapa anterior dos encontros e fotos desta etapa. Faremos um mapa de um local seguro cortando, colando e desenhando.

2. **O segundo encontro** - teórico e prático (1,5h-2h) (limite: 7 pessoas)
Distribuirei os materiais necessários aos participantes e mostrarei como construir um livro secreto. A vantagem dessa tarefa é trabalhar sem o uso de cola, mas todas as opções de criação possíveis ficam à disposição do paciente. Esta tarefa terá como objetivo criar um objeto que ficará com o paciente. No interior, o paciente poderá armazenar informações importantes, fotos, anotações e desenhos. Chamaremos esse objeto (livro de arte) de diário de *vestígios de atividades domésticas*, seguindo Dieter Roth[1].

3. **O terceiro encontro** - teórico e prático (1,5h-2,5h) (limite: 7 pessoas)
Veremos nossos livros, faremos uma tentativa de analisar a viabilidade da forma tradicional de uma carta. Vamos endereçar esta primeira carta a nós mesmos. Nele perguntaremos sobre um lugar onde nos sentimos bem, sobre as coisas que nos cercam, sobre memórias que evocam emoções positivas. Responderemos com palavras, traços e desenhos.

TERCEIRA ETAPA e seguinte (curso e data não fixados)

Durante uma série de várias etapas de encontros e workshops, gostaria de enfocar o aspecto e o processo criativo vivenciado pelo paciente, o curso do encontro e as interações que nele ocorrem. Em busca de inspiração, não avaliarei as habilidades artísticas do paciente, mas procurarei respostas para perguntas incômodas sobre o senso de segurança. Está diretamente relacionado ao conceito (deslocamento) de deslocamento com o qual trato em meu trabalho artístico e de pesquisa. O resultado do trabalho criativo do paciente pode vir a ser um material importante para pesquisas futuras sobre como moldar melhor a autoconsciência por meio da arte.

Marta Bełkot,
Estudante do doutoramento em FBAUP
Bolseira do FCT (SFRH/BD/149042/2019)

[1] Dieter Roth (1930-1998) - foi um artista suíço mais conhecido por seus livros, edições impressas, esculturas e obras feitas com materiais encontrados.

TRANSLATION OF THE CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT

The Correspondence Project

The Correspondence project emerged from the need to establish contact and is dedicated to an encounter with the patient. The aim of this encounter is to gather experiences, stories, places, and narratives that are meaningful to the participant.

Correspondence is therefore a multi-stage project that includes not only lectures and workshops, but also an exchange of letters. The first stage consists of the initial meeting, during which, through specially designed artistic workshops, participants will be invited to explore self-awareness and modes of expression. Particular attention will be given to places where the participant feels safe, to the objects that surround them — whether personally owned or not — and to those that evoke specific emotions. We will discuss when and where the participant feels at ease and attempt to recreate these place(s) and contexts on paper.

Memory cards (a matching game involving pairs of identical cards) will be created using nineteenth-century photographic techniques and locally sourced slate. Using analogue cameras, we will photograph these meaningful and essential places and objects, play the memory game, and gradually become acquainted with one another.

The next stage involves an encounter with the photograph, authored by the participant. Analogue-developed films will serve as an invitation to reflect upon and discuss the representations created by the participants themselves. At this stage, the encounter takes on a new form, building upon the initial meetings: we will attempt to create an artist's book, referred to as a secret book, in which the participant may collect photographs, letters, and traces of the creative process, including personal notes or drawings.

We will also discuss a particular form of communication — the traditional letter — reflecting on writing, traces, and what we wish to preserve in words or drawings. We will speak about graphic workshops and the use of slate. A first letter will be exchanged, initiating the correspondence.

Subsequent stages will be developed according to the needs and interests of the participant, as well as the evolving artistic process, each phase constituting an integral component of the project.

At this stage, the project is conceived as an entirely artistic initiative, focused on experience and inspiration rather than sociological or psychological analysis.

FIRST STAGE (dates to be scheduled; meetings may take the form of two- or three-day sessions)
Proposed meetings:

1. First meeting — theoretical and practical session (1.5–2 hours; maximum 7 participants). Participants will be invited to reflect on places where they feel safe and comfortable, and on spaces they enjoy inhabiting. They will be asked to produce a drawing. I will introduce the characteristics of specially prepared paper surfaces and discuss analogue photographic techniques. Memory cards created using a nineteenth-century gum printing technique and locally sourced black slate pigment from Porto will be presented. Participants will also be invited to create their own cards using paper cut-outs (negative forms that will become positive when developed).

2. Second meeting – theoretical and practical session (1.5–2 hours; maximum 7 participants). I will introduce the possibility of using specific stones as pigments in the production of inks, papers, and matrices. The photosensitivity of paper previously prepared with carbon will be explained, followed by demonstrations of sun exposure and water development. Participants will use their paper cut-outs from the previous session to produce their own cards with my assistance. If conditions do not allow for direct sunlight or appropriate water access, I will develop the materials independently and present the results at the next meeting.

3. Third meeting — theoretical and practical session (1.5–2 hours; maximum 7 participants). We will review the results of our previous sessions – the completed memory cards. Participants will be invited to choose a place where we will play the game. Each participant will be given an analogue camera and asked to photograph the meaningful and safe places discussed earlier. Each camera will be signed by its user and returned to me for development. In exchange, participants will receive an envelope containing paper and a letter inquiring about their willingness to engage in correspondence.

SECOND STAGE (date to be determined)

1. First meeting – theoretical and practical session (1.5–2 hours; maximum 7 participants). Participants will receive the developed photographs taken during the first stage. We will discuss the images and select the most significant ones. A collective map will be created, combining drawings from the previous stage with the newly developed photographs. This map will represent a safe place through cutting, collage, and drawing.

2. Second meeting – theoretical and practical session (1.5–2 hours; maximum 7 participants). Materials will be distributed and instructions given on how to construct a secret book. The task encourages working without glue, although all creative possibilities remain open. The aim is to produce an object that remains with the participant – a space for storing photographs, notes, drawings, and personal reflections. This artist's book will be referred to as a "diary of traces of domestic activities," following Dieter Roth.

3. Third meeting – theoretical and practical session (1.5–2.5 hours; maximum 7 participants). Participants will review their books and reflect on the viability of the traditional letter form. The first letter will be addressed to oneself, containing reflections on places of comfort, surrounding objects, and memories associated with positive emotions. Responses may take the form of words, marks, or drawings.

THIRD STAGE AND SUBSEQUENT PHASES (structure and dates not fixed).

Across a series of further meetings and workshops, the focus will remain on the participant's creative process, the dynamics of the encounter, and the interactions that emerge within it. In seeking inspiration, artistic skill will not be evaluated; rather, attention will be directed toward exploring complex questions surrounding the sense of security. This inquiry relates directly to the concept of displacement that underpins my artistic and research practice.

The creative outcomes generated by participants may constitute significant material for future research into how self-awareness can be shaped and strengthened through artistic practice.

