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The window and the world

Tania Rivera

Analú Cunha's films are small windows to an intense world. They present scenes created by the artist, which had somehow been there, in life, silent but pulsating, waiting to be viewed.

In the beautiful *Theo e as coisas*, her first video dated 2004, the camera pans on the window of a car crossing the Rio-Niterói bridge. Within one of the darkened edges framing the luminous window, the viewer can make out the profile of a boy, the artist's son. His arm follows the lower line of the window and moves about in broad and funny gestures during the entire oner, playing with landscape and lampposts. Theo utters few words and many sounds, onomatopoeias that evoke movement, imaginary falls and fights that a delicate music score (by Marcio Shimabukuro) comes to underline.

The window through which the artist invites us to look is not the rear window. Contrary to the revealing window in a Hitchcock's masterpiece, this one is rather low-profile. It is not about peeping into reality to find some hidden thing that must be revealed, but rather about (re)building nearly banal life-scenes in order to trigger discrete appearances that claim for an instant, as if they suddenly winked a mischievous eye to us and said, unpretentiously and roguishly: *take a peep!*

(*Nefelibata* (2008) actually highlights this structure: successive clouds in straight cut, accompanied by a sing-song drumbeat performed by Theo. In the final instant, the boy turns to the camera – to us – and asks: “see it?”)

The window I try to refer to, *in* and *with* Analu Cunha's work, is the same as that car window in *Theo e as coisas*. Every film, every video is cut from reality, obviously, but we usually forget that and take it as reality. Instead of sharing this implicit negation, Analu assumes the screen as window and presents it as such. And it is through this window, through this fixed panning that is found in nearly all of the artist's work, that we then see the world as ordinary to us, that evident, quasi banal yet extraordinarily beautiful world, such as the Guanabara Bay on a sunny day. Between her and us, poetic gestures are delicately ushered, in a way that may poke through the postcard screen or the everyday life in order to unveil another beauty.

It may seem simple, but this is as sophisticated a task as it is delicate. Its structure is not that of a micronarrative directly removed from view, as a documental camera utterly unveiling a piece of the world. Analu knows that every window is like a magic frame: each window turns a piece of life into a *scene*. ("*Theo e as coisas* has always existed, since my own childhood," says the artist.) And the scenic ushering of her videos is not that of prose, narrative, but rather that of poetry: it rearranges the common elements in order to make them say *something else*. Something has to be extracted in order to get there, such as silence and the blank space on a piece of paper are necessary for poetry. In *Theo e as coisas*, we do not see and we do not hear many things. Theo's mumblings can hardly be heard, his face can hardly be seen, but some discrete elements – particularly the noises and gestures in his interaction with the landscape, with the world – transform views like only children seem to be able to do, turning whatever ordinary there is into something extraordinarily *theirs*. Theo's movements are lessons on how to live, how to make one's own presence in the world: fictionally, sensitively.

Something *happens* in this short scene, bringing forth nothing less than the poetic power of man – this invisible entity that can turn some worldly elements into something worth looking.

Regardless of us, there may be a universe of images where Analu Cunha's films lean on and sometimes engage in silent conversation with one another. From his window, Theo may suddenly see a city zooming onto him, or a young woman on the sidewalk leaning against something like the enclosure around a construction site (*Bubbles*, 2005). Through that window we see the counter in a delicatessen and some hurried passersby. Right in front, there is a street busy with cars and buses all along the oner (which lasts little longer than three minutes), and these vehicles sometimes cover up the young woman's image for a few seconds. In the beginning of the scene, she puts on earphones, but the soundtrack continues to be the noises of a big city. For nearly one minute, she remains more or less listless amidst the hustle-bustle and the movement that sometimes hides her from view – the automatic focus makes a nice play between the images of vehicles on the foreground and her image, which remains blurred for a few instants after each bus goes by. Suddenly, after a moment when she is long out of focus and the traffic images become virtually abstract, the soundtrack gives in to a familiar song, "Let's spend the night together" (Rolling Stones), in a curious rendition with Latin American accent (by the Charo and Salsoul Orchestra). At this moment, the young woman reappears, now transformed: she smiles, and her body moves slightly and pleasurably to the rhythm of the music. After a few minutes in which we share her singular and somehow contagious presence, she exits the scene and returns an anonymous sidewalk to us.

Something happens in *Bubbles*, like in *Theo e as coisas*, that can turn ordinary into unique, in a public/private act to which we are invited to participate. Just as we do not have direct access to Theo's playful utterances, neither do we get to know the young woman's boredom and joy – we merely witness her transformation. There is some common ground between her and us that ensures this sensi-

tive sharing: a familiar song and the vibration (or should I say *desire*?) that she incites.

The loud and pleasurable bubble in *Bubbles* is an oasis in ordinary chaos, but it does not refuse the urban bedlam – on the contrary, that is where it finds its own condition for a possibility. If we look at each of the characters, the video seems to reassure that the urban space is made of bubbles of desire, listlessness or pleasure. Analu Cunha reveals that in many of her videos she tries to “elect situations where either the characters or the camera appear as alien to surrounding events, as if they were within brackets”. There are moments of disruption in the everyday scene, moments that strike us oftentimes, instants of suspension in which “subject and art activate dreams, memory, play, madness, drunkenness, and epiphanies”. In a space-time break, that subject would be positioned in a more “familiar” and “intimate” place.

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In the split interval between musical notes, in a minimal instant of silence in the bedlam of the city, perhaps the woman in *Bubbles* will remember a moment of epiphany at Largo da Carioca, the one that appears in *Uma ilha* (2006). As counterpoint to the fixed framing of the previous videos, now the camera turns clockwise over its own axis, showing passersby at this downtown nodal point, while Harry Thacker Burleigh’s gospel song “Deep River” is heard in a capella rendition over the slight hubbub of the city.

The camera vigorously and vertiginously indicates the central point, which is, say, your eye: the point where there is someone who does not appear in the image, but that is this someone’s condition of possibility. This point of view, as we have known at least since the Renaissance, is usually denied, out of the scene, and its subtraction allows for the world to be presented to us “as it is”. Trying to

bring it into the image is a nearly impossible operation, because it will no longer be the point of origin to become a character or a part of the ambient landscape if it does enter the image. It is the invisible interior of the scene. Its place might be that of the sound, the music – which, paradoxically, is out, off.

Turning this invisible presence into something sensitive is a major challenge. *Uma ilha* teaches us that it does not develop by reassuring the artist's place, but rather by the presence of the *others* – these countless and anonymous individuals, this mass of singular and similar people from whom we are never totally estranged. A representation of an image's point of origin is therefore made here, with a topological operation: pushing the inside out, and bringing the outside in. At the intersection of these two opposing operations, a tense and mobile space is delimited. And there we are, in it.

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In *Uma ilha*, a problematic place is therefore presented, a chiasm (to use Merleau-Ponty¹'s term) in the scene of the world. A twist constitutes it – silently, invisibly. A subject is very subtly and somewhat clumsily outlined at this bend, in the display of as banal a world as Largo da Carioca and as divine a world as the promised land mentioned in "Deep River". As she sings this song by heart, the artist's friend Keyna Eleison, who is also the young woman in *Bubbles*, transforms part of the lyrics, reassuring "*my home is over Crossland*" and, thus, inadvertently creating, according to Cunha, an imaginary place that would reinforce a "feeling of inadequacy to the world". Our house is not here; it is always a promised land, but it has to be invented. The subject that appears there is not in conformity with the world, but rather one who appears in the gap between man and city, in a malaise (the *cultural malaise* that Freud talks about), which we sometimes feel as nausea or dizziness. It is this unstable position in which this video places us, and that the

1 See Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Le visible et l'invisible*. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.

artist could also take for some time (say, while she held the camera). But this is a place outside the space, a place that, perhaps, doesn't even exist: the place of poetry. A voice indicates it into our ears. A place without coordinates, it is always empty – and thanks to that we are invited to occupy it, in a moment of vertigo.

Uma ilha is about intimacy. And about how intimacy is not the reassurance of a being, but rather the presence of the other in one's bosom. "There is no 'inner' life", as indicated by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "that is not like a first experience of relations with the other".² The most intimate, Jacques Lacan states many years later, is *extimate*.³

Analú's poetics outlines the place of an anonymous presence that invites us to happen, singularly.

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In *Ponto de vista*, from 2008, this very same place is indicated, but in a different manner. The fixed panning of the camera shows the shade of a person's profile projected against a wall. The person makes gestures, using brushes with which he/she appears to be painting a surface – perhaps a picture – that is outside the field. The score is the ambient sound, with the noise of the painting instruments and some incomprehensible words uttered by the woman (that is Ana Muglia, Analú's friend). From a wall, a small empty canvas hangs slightly darker than the wall itself, and the moving shadow of the woman covers it at various moments, forming moving spots. Live painting.

The camera viewpoint is explicitly presented there, while that which would traditionally be the visual object of art – the picture – is out-

2 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Conversas 1948*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2004, p. 50.

3 Cf. Lacan, Jacques. *O Seminário Livro 7. A Ética da Psicanálise*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1997.

side the scene. Analu Cunha thus plays with bringing the artist (the painter) into the scene while leaving her and her shadow as the picture (the painting). Between the eye of the camera and the eye of the painter (over a surface that is not seen), there is an intertwining, a chiasm, which attracts our eye and renders it unstable.

It is therefore, with the man, a point of view, or “an island” – even though it is always intercrossing other islands, immerse in an archipelago.

Indeed, *Uma ilha* is not alone – the film *Duas ilhas*, also from 2006, is right beside, and may never leave it totally alone. The landscape is idyllic: in the middle of Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas, there we are in one of those huge fiberglass swans that are usually referred to as paddleboats. The camera spins, showing everything around. There is also some background music, a capella, but this is now sung in two voices, one male and one female (the same, always great, Keyna Eleison). It is the melody of Jorge Ben Jor and Toquinho’s song “Que maravilha”. It is a loose and unpretentious rendition, like the gospel in the first video, and eventually incorporates the couple’s laughter. The lyrics are not in the video, but it echoes in our memory:

Lá fora está chovendo / Mas assim mesmo eu vou correndo / Só pra ver o meu amor / Ela vem toda de branco / Toda molhada e despenteada, que maravilha / Que coisa linda que é o meu amor / Por entre bancários, automóveis, ruas e avenidas / Milhões de buzinas tocando sem cessar / Ela vem chegando de branco, meiga e muito tímida / Com a chuva molhando o seu corpo / Que eu vou abraçar / E a gente no meio da rua do mundo / No meio da chuva, a girar, que maravilha / A girar, que maravilha / A girar.⁴

4 It's raining outside / Still, I rush out / Just to see my love / She is all dressed in white / All wet, with tousled hair, how wonderful / What a beautiful thing my love is! / Among bank clerks, cars, streets and avenues / A million horns honking non-stop / She

Amidst “bank clerks, cars, streets and avenues”, someone stands out from the hubbub of the world, in a wonderful apparition that is greeted and reassured by the spin. In this video, love is what nominates the instant for the appearance of the subject, with the other. As in *Uma ilha*, a presence as strong as delicate is ushered, but here it is double, from the start: two voices, two persons. Or better: this presence corresponds to something that happens *between them*. As the movement in the song is doubled and echoes, something appears amongst them, spinning (in Portugal there is a slang expression that can be literally translated as “what a spin!”, which would be equivalent to “awesome!”). The vertigo in *Uma ilha* is hereby repeated, with a rotating camera, but now it spins counterclockwise. Between one and two islands, the logic is that of counterpoint, of dialog. Of alternating voices, more than unison.

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The spin, which will be resumed in some of Analu’s future works with *looping*, as we shall see later on, appears here as central poetic structure. Nearly baroque, it opens up an excess register that is intended as most simple and plain. It produces texture in the plain fabric of the world – and may cause waves we may smoothly surf.

The spin is a transforming movement: ordinary becomes singular, everyday transforms into unique – and so it goes, resuming its ordinary nature to become singular again, without ceasing to be ordinary. Infinitely, repeatedly. This structure is one of a topological figure that is dear to the Brazilian art: the Moebius strip. From Max Bill with his 1951 Biennale winner *Three-part unity* (1948-49), through Lygia Clark with her *Caminhando* (1964) and Hélio Oiticica

comes near me, all white, sweet and shy / The rain pouring on her body / That I am going to hug / There we are, in the middle of the street, of the world / Under the rain, spinning round – it is so wonderful! / Spinning round – it is so wonderful! / Spinning round.

with many of his *Parangolés* (in addition to *Diálogo de Mãos* – 1966, made by Hélio and Lygia), this unilateral strip conjugates outside and inside, one and the other, in a poetical and ethical project that is disseminating and resounding today in a good portion of Brazilian production.

With *Lua Moebius*, from 2010, Analu Cunha beautifully resumes and appropriates this tradition. The image of a white moon moving across a clear sky was resumed with a free camera and zoom, which contributes some instability to the satellite movement. By bouncing and duplicating this image, the artist makes the crescent trajectory of the moon draw a Moebius strip on the sky. This short video is silent and the Moebian torsion gradually picks up speed to finally transform the lyric nature of the initial moments into something nearly comic.

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Loyal to the reflection about outside and inside as a final call to the other, Analu's trajectory is marked by collective work since the late 1980's, with the study group gathering Ricardo Basbaum, Alexandre Dacosta, Marcos Chaves, Eduardo Coimbra, Rosângela Rennó, Valeska Soares, and others, that would eventually become Visorama. Since then, she has maintained emotional partnerships with artists such as João Modé, Ana Miguel, Cristina Salgado, and Patricia Norman. For many years, she cultivated the habit of making a short online video to send as New Year's gift card to friends. The emotional approach in her work is remarkable, the idea of opening up a small window as if unpacking a gift.

In the artist's poetic reflection about the place of the other in poetic production, an emblematic work is *Sonhos com voo*, made in 2007 for the occupation *Associados – Espaço Orlândia*, which was intended to give rise to reflections about the issue of collectives. This video originates from an email sent by the artist to friends in late 2003 as a New Year's card, with the following message:

how do you fly in your dreams?
how do you dream when you fly?
for 2004,
good equations between dreaming, flying,
and landing.

In 2007, Cunha asked each participating artist to show how his/her body flew in his/her dreams. With a fixed pan usually showing the trunk and part of each dreamer's legs, the video presents different sequences of bodily movements, in a beautiful and ethereal dance. There is no score, and silence reinforces the poetry of the feat there: nothing less than showing dreams.

A dream is our most intimate production. It just cannot be experienced with the other, and sharing it is always problematic. As we tell a dream to someone else, transforming it into a narrative, we always lose what is essential: the perceptive nature therein, the radicalness with which it happens in the actual experience. Trying to show it through images is no less reductive and partial. This is partly due to the fact that a dream is not usually limited to a well-constructed narrative or image, but it rather consists of a rough amalgamation of feelings, images and words. How can we open a window in the "archaic world of vast emotions and imperfect thoughts" (in the grandiose expression of Havelock Ellis⁵)? "With the body", Analu Cunha seems to answer in her *Sonhos com voo*. But not the entire body: with an excerpt from the body that makes it into a gesture, a certain movement, more than the culturally modified expression of some sensation that the physiognomy of the face is especially prone to express. "If not forced to smile to the cameras," people "could remain anonymous, they would not need to act, they could be themselves," Analu curiously suggests. "Be themselves" would perhaps correspond to be "anonymous".

5 Resumed by Freud, Sigmund in *A interpretação dos sonhos*. Porto Alegre: L&PM, 2013, p. 78n.

It just so happens that, through the window the artist opens onto the world of dreams, something singular to every dreamer appears as unique and undefinable, however plastic, that can be perceived by anyone – something *anonymous* and common to all. And each of these gestures, personal and anonymous at the same time, is conjugated with other gestures, in a collective dance that composes some type of dreams of many, dreams we all have. The video edition soothes the passage from one dreamer to another by means of fading, “thus minimizing the differences, as if one dreamer became the other and so on”, as the artist verifies. This work seems to realize that which Louis Aragon longed for in his verses:

I dream of a long dream where each one would dream. (...)
I dream on the edge of the world and of the night.⁶

226 Broadcasting this long dream of each and all may only be feasible in art.

Only in art will something so radical as sharing as turning a dream into something common be possible. “Dreaming (...), like hurting and dying, is a verb we all conjugate (including those who say they never dream)”, Cunha remarks. Questions such as the ones in her New Year’s card, “how do you fly in your dreams?” and “how do you dream when you fly?”, go straight to the unspeakable point where each subject is defined, in the conjugation with the others. Can we possibly answer them? Like some type of trap, these questions may always induce some poetic response. Whatever it is, without expecting any answer, Analu Cunha asks these questions in a vow, a wish addressed to the other: Happy New Year!

The passage to the other, the transformation into something personal into something common, as taught in *Sonhos com voo*, is ef-

6 Aragon, Louis. *Une vague de rêves*. Paris: Seghers, 1990, p. 28.

fectured by means of that which escapes us in the experience. How do I fly, in dreams? There is no aeronautics, there is no technique that can answer the vague, vast and intense bodily sensation that may take us, in dream. That which is impossible to communicate to the other in an informational manner are building blocks for a *sensitive interworld* – disseminated place, the place of art, where singular emerges into common, and therefrom it is made.

But it is not only a matter of bringing to art that which is already common – rather, it is to have in art, as art, a sharing that is impossible in everyday life. In this sense, perhaps, we may understand, with Jean-Luc Nancy, that “art detains something from commonality that is only detained by art”.⁷ That which is meant to be shared must be invented – and art is the practice of that invention. More than detaining that commonality right away, art must repeatedly create it and make it emerge *in the other and for the other*.

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What I refer to as *sensitive interworld* (thinking about Merleau-Ponty) is that which art would activate. It seems to be the exact objective of the master's thesis presented by Analu Cunha in her Graduate Visual Arts Program at the UFRJ's School of Fine Arts, in 2007. The text titled *A arte, o canto e a esquina: sobre intimidade, exposição e suas ocasiões de permeabilidade, mesmo* was conceived as a work of art. It is structured as a house where each room corresponds to one chapter, and the reader moves across, past windows and skylights. Along the way, we encounter artists, such as Andy Warhol, Marcel Duchamp, Ilya Kabakov, and Bruce Nauman, and a variety of authors such as Jacques Rancière, Jean-Luc Nancy, Sigmund Freud, and Walter Benjamin. Intimacy is treated

⁷ Nancy, Jean-Luc. *La Comparution*. In Nancy, Jean-Luc. e Bailly, Jean-Christophe. *La Comparution*. Paris: Christian Bourgois, 2007, p. 91.

dialectically with the public space, and that is brought about with commonality, enhancing the reversibility we were speaking of when we mentioned the spin and the Moebius strip.

While she was writing her thesis, Analu made the video *Walter e Bruna* (2006) as an exercise on intimacy. At that time, she was reading the statements made by prostitute Bruna Surfistinha (from her *blog*) and by philosopher Walter Benjamin (in *One-way street*), and decided to engage them in a dialog. In this film, quotes from one and the other about intimacy succeed one another in writing – the former speaks about sex and exposure of her intimate life, the latter speaks mostly about his intimate relation with books. The camera clearly takes the point of view of a window, from whose threshold one may but peek into a limited stretch of the street, thanks to changing angles and to the use of the zoom capability. The public space is sought from the intimacy of the house. It is a humble looking street that is nearly desert at night. Electric wires are entangled in the first plane. A black man wearing simple clothes is sitting on the sidewalk. The camera suddenly zooms in on him, but it seems to remain strangely ignored by him (no doubt that every camera turns us into some sort of *voyeurs*).

I look for something in this small portion of the world around me, through my window, and as I turn the other into an image I may nearly touch this other I do not know. But, on the screen, intimacy too finds its own limit and impossibility. Intimacy always moves hand in hand with mismatch. To Benjamin, books and prostitutes would remind us of that:

Books and bitches can be taken to bed. (...)

Books and bitches have always shared some unfortunate love.(...)

Books and bitches like to turn their back when exposed.⁸

⁸ Benjamin, Walter. *Rua de mão única*. São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 2004, p. 33-34.

Whatever is there between Walter and Bruna, between me and the other, is no fortunate conjunction, but rather a spin, a flight, a loop that is more than dangerous, it is unexpected, and may even be fun.

The short video *From me to you* (2011) is the edition of a scene taken from the internet: a twin engine aircraft looping filmed from the cockpit. "The looping, a movement that comes back to itself, is the conceptual opposite of a bridge, which brings different points together," says the artist. Editing cuts the movement right where the spin is completed and forces it backward, repeated itmes. In a topological operation, the spin is thus reversed upon itself, performing what Analu names "the bridge of a looping": "a potential movement that is not performed and, therefore, contains its own contradiction". The spin is resumed in order to unite its different points, beginning and end, in an infinite movement such as that of a reverse number eight. Reversing the reversal is vertigo, the mad desire of this video – *from me to you*. The artist also says it refers to the "idealized bridges that we create to get to the other and to return to ourselves."

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How can one turn a spin around oneself into a bridge towards the other? It is no doubt necessary that the spin be not fully completed, or better, that it enables the perception of the impossibility to eventually achieve the exact starting point (time, added perhaps to other factors, will have altered it). A spin around oneself thus appears as self transformation and opening to the other.

The fact that it is an appropriation of some footage actually denounces the fallacy of any selfhood. I cannot be, myself, the point of arrival, because from the start, in "me", it was already something that comes from the other. ("I like to make images," says Analu about her appropriations, "but sometimes they are already ready, isn't it?...").

In that world of images that Analu's videos meet, *From me to you* will often visit *Loop* (2010). The latter of the eight videos from the series made in partnership with musician Bruno de Lullo is the artist's preferred video and is based on the appropriation of images from a looping. Analu was seeking a spin "that would turn into something else". She found it in Robero Farias's 1968 film *Roberto Carlos em ritmo de aventura*, which shows four airplanes using smoke in acrobatic choreography. The artist cuts the oner right when the aircraft start to turn upside down, leaving the looping as a promise to be performed in the viewers' imagination – already transformed into something else, perhaps.

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The series with de Lullo resulted from an invitation the artist made to the musician, with the proposal that half the times they would start from the images to compose the sound, and the other half they would start from the sound (by Bruno) to get to the images. In *Loop*, first came the music, which is made of electronic loops. The artist considers this video "a synthesis of the relation between image and sound, and, by extension, of the relation with Bruno."

The issue of scores – which had already been crucial in Analu Cunha's videographic production, as we have seen with *Bubbles*, *Uma ilha* and *Duas ilhas* – is treated from then on in a more central manner, assimilating all along the reflections about the relation between I and the other, and intimacy and public space, and resuming them in new spins. In *Não posso mais viver assim ao seu lado* (2011), the title shows a metaphorical equivalence between the sound/image relation and the interpersonal relations. The image is peaceful: fixed panning from a pier to which a small floating platform is tied. In the moving blue waters of Guanabara Bay, the platform seems to softly batter the jetty. However, mixed with the ambient sound of the cityscape, the hard noise of friction between the two surfaces

stands out and denounces the violence of that encounter. So, the video warily and ironically presents “apparently quiet relations, particularly between sound and image”, in the artist’s own words.

What moves Analu is to show that such relations between image and sound are not at all quiet, and that there is no equivalence or accompaniment between them, as one is led to believe by the expression “soundtrack of a film”. She then starts to think sound as loud image, and thus claims an autonomous statute just as noble as that of the visual image. In her doctorate’s dissertation, presented in 2014, the artist reassures that sound and image “are capable of producing sense and creating networks of interchangeable meanings: it is all about a relation between peers”. An encounter between visual and loud images could generate “third images, and many others”. However, their mismatch seems to be the most important thing – when, for instance, the hearing experience seems to take the lead, leaving behind the visualization of its source, and “the spectator starts to create mental images in the form of memories, situations, dreams”. Between sound and image, there are disruptions that open up the window to a poetic world located outside the realm of visible and audible – but, at the same time, is nevertheless inside them.

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In *Loop*, the sound is literally made of loops, but is not corresponding to the visual image of an airplane loop at all. The way in which the image (of the beginning of the airborne acrobatics) relates with the music is that of some equivalence (loud loops encountering aircraft loops), but this is a deviating pair, because loud loops do not sound like flying airplanes. Analu notices that, “despite what the two-dimensional representations of the visual and loud bands suppose, they are not side by side, they do not occupy the same plane.” Giving the loud image a similar statute to that which is traditionally occupied by the visual image does not mean they are similar and interchangeable, but rather that one operates upon the other in

order to twist and transform it. In the artist's own words, "there is this type of reciprocating *estrangement*, where each one produces distinct specialties, in symbolic and necessarily contaminated inside and outside. Image and sound revolve like a Moebius strip, showing their constitutive opposites (silence and invisibility) and occasionally breaking each other apart, to bring their "associated ghosts".

The loud band in *Loop de facto* transforms the image. Allied to the effect of slowness made by the artist on the original scene, de Lullo's sound gives the impression that aircraft speed up and down in the flow of sound waves and are nearly suspended, still for an instant that has never existed. That suspension is made explicit at the end of the video, which discontinues the movement right when the aircraft are about to reach the highest point in the loop.

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A pop reference to songs appears in various videos, as we have seen in *Bubbles* with "Let's spend the night together" and in *Duas ilhas* with "Que maravilha". The presence of a pop element in Analu Cunha's production is not secondary or incidental. The artist states, straightforward: "My background is basically pop." The Belgian and American cartoons collected by her father were her first museums and, a young lady herself, she started to make some pocket money painting the animations her own father started to make as a professional. Her 1980's drawings present characters who could even be in certain children's animated cartoons, with loud colors and clear lines, like a pink kangaroo woman and a superhero in a purple uniform (*Kib-esteira*, inspired by an ex-boyfriend, according to Analu, who was lascivious as Macunaíma, despite his American style uniform). Part of the titles in her videos are always pop – this is why they are often in English. But instead of relying on the image to highlight its mass culture nature (as Lichtenstein with reference to cartoons, for instance), Analu Cunha assimilates pop

to ordinary, to life. Without any idolatry or giving in to the show (not even in favor of a critical attitude), the artist thus makes something like an *antipop*.

Warhol is nevertheless an important reference to her: she is particularly interested in feature films that show a sleeping man (*Sleep*, 1963) or a 35-minute long fellatio (*Blow Job*, 1963), for instance. However, instead of using the real duration as a way to bring the image closer to life, Cunha tries to suggest and elicit short instants of disruption from everyday life, in order to underline that which inevitably escapes the domain of image.

In her 1980's drawings, there is usually a pop aesthetics joined by some break or irony, sometimes by means of short inscriptions accompanying the image. Some pieces remind us of newspaper cartoons. The series *Vamos brincar de monstrinho* clearly shows that entertaining and good humored treatment – which, however, does not exclude something really terrible.

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Jokes and humor are, for Freud, privileged ways to relate with the other. A good joke captures the other and makes him/her laugh, even if he/she is not willing. The structure is that of breaking the sense, of a surprise, of discontinuing that which is ordinary. The humor in irony, in its turn, does not trigger a direct bodily reaction, laughter, but it presents itself as a refined creation by the spirit. In an anecdote told by the psychoanalyst, a convict is on his way to be hanged on a Monday and exclaims, "the week is heading to a good start!"⁹ The self thus recognizes, in humor, his insignificance before the world – and, at the same time, it goes around (in a loop?) so as to triumph, in language, over his own death.

9 Cf. Freud, Sigmund. "O Humor". *Edição Standard das Obras Completas*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago, vol. XXI, p. 189-194.

All of Analu Cunha's work has some humor in it. In the explicit break sought by the artist, there is something of the structure in a joke, despite the fact that these drawings and videos never make us laugh. A finer irony is usually in the making, which goes nearly unnoticed and goes hand in hand with a poetic suspension, a lyric displacement, more than with explicit provocations such as those we inherit from Dadaism. It is all about subtle transformations made mischievously as if each of the artist's scenes were winking an eye to the viewer.

Her most "humorous" video, in that sense, seems to be *Pickpocket* (2010/2012). In the foreground, a red spot is seen on a white piece of fabric. It gradually changes to make a denser and darker region that starts to pulsate, lightly, and grows darker and darker as it takes a clearer shape, at the same time that the spot grows smaller and smaller. We suddenly identify a heart shaped like a real human organ. Next, a hand quickly subtracts it from the image and the title *Pickpocket* is displayed.

After *Pickpocket*, what can we say? More than a quick instant, a split second before the anonymous hand snaps it from the scene, that heart was once mine – and once outside the scene it started to be a part of the world.

The first time I watched this video, I was surprised and had the feeling that it had nothing to do with the rest of Analu's production. A few days later, my impression turned the other way around, and I started to see, in it, an explicit structure of the artist's poetic proposal. It would consist in one of those privileged moments when some metalwork would take place, some work that expatiates and reflects upon the work itself. The looping of poetics about itself! It is, like it nearly always is in Analu Cunha's work, all about an appearance. From a shapeless spot, from something nearly dissolved in the world, a clear cut figure suddenly appears: a heart. Here, the

usually so ephemeral poetic thing gains symbolic materiality, say, by appearing as nothing less than the organ of life and feelings. But it is only poetic because it disappears right away, removed – or stolen – by a hand coming from outside the scene. Exposed at Casa França-Brasil in 2012, *Pickpocket* was accompanied by the following inscription by the artist, plotted on a wall:

“I can’t remember well, I think it was like this: it would pass from one hand to another, between the fingers. And, again, it disappeared.”

That which appears is *again* going to disappear – supposedly, a previous disappearance. Something has already happened before – in art, it may always be remembering, memory (“I can’t remember well...”). Swaying between appearance and disappearance corresponds to passing from one hand to another, from one person to another.

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This is something in transit, between people. It must be extracted, subtracted from someone’s intimacy, in order to circulate and become each one’s own. It must only appear, ephemerally, in order to go on transiting among us, as something that pulsates, even though we may not know exactly what it is. It is the space drawn by the looping: it is always empty, it must be the place of a loss, of the passage of something from me to the other. In *Economia*, from 2010, a table is panned in *plongée*, on which *Slaves of Job* is being played. Players’ hands move to the rhythm of the renown folk song they are singing. In art, as in economics, something has to circulate – meaning, something has to get lost as it passes from one hand to another.

Though it deals with images, art may operate some disappearance, more than any addition of elements to the world scene. Or better, there is in art a fundamental extraction, through which the world of images opens up and points at what is outside. Operated by the

hand that comes from from the invisible outside and invades the scene, that extraction denounces the edge of the scene, the window we had been talking about in the beginning of this essay. In the 2012 exhibition of *Pickpocket* at Casa França-Brasil, this margin and the play between inside and outside therein were potentialized by the spatial disposition of the monitor inside the small camera, which had once been used as a vault for the customs office operating in those facilities. Spectators saw the piece from a threshold, through the beautiful arched portal that doubled and intensified the window in the video, and was thus included in the inside/outside play.

By subtracting, stealing something (from someone), art can make something exist outside the image, outside the field, outside itself, in exile. In the other, in the world, in me: in life.

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The extraction presented in *Pickpocket* thus makes the *outer scene* vigorously sensitive as a constitutive element of the entire scene. The window, the passage between the scene and the world is presented in this video as ideally activated, underlining the operation at play throughout Analu Cunha's oeuvre: spinning the image outwardly, looping the art around the world. A poetic turnaround. Art may thus prompt in us that which was advocated by Mário Pedrosa, in 1966: a "somersault in the cosmos", to which we are all utterly doomed.¹⁰

¹⁰ Pedrosa, Mário. "Especulações Estéticas: Lance Final III". In *Mundo, homem, arte em crise*. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1975, p. 139.