

# RELATIONS ON PAPER

by Paula Caspão

a  
piece  
of  
documentation

a  
site-  
specific  
glossary

a catalogue  
a travelogue  
a resonance  
a calepin  
a place  
a trace

of  
from  
for  
with

RELATIONS  
A  
CONCRETE  
CHOREOGRAPHY

by  
Petra Sabisch/  
Veranda

More than made to remember the concrete  
choreography of “relations”  
this piece of documentation is made to literally  
RE-MEMBER  
RE-PERCEIVE  
RE-ASSEMBLE  
RE-ARRANGE  
RE-PLACE  
the parts, issues, objects, movements, stances, senses,  
winds, thoughts  
the piece is made of.

In a way, this piece of writing is made to *continue*  
the performance of “relations” – as an open ended  
process of making sense, different senses – in other  
times and spaces, with other people. As such, it will  
present the entities that took part in the choreography  
as a complicated flow of transformations, triggered  
by the relations they are capable of activating, or find  
themselves in. Just like this very object  
– booklet – document – travelogue – trace –  
  
– a place – that stutters –

It may be important to refer that THIS is written by  
a researcher on choreographic performance that  
situates her activity in the fictional sphere – which she  
considers as fully choreographic, by the way. A piece of  
documentation written by a fiction writer then – with  
her passions, beliefs, convictions, obsessions, blind  
spots – to whom performances (be they of the kind that  
involve verbal discourse or not) are sensitive highly  
dialogical matters resonating with books, resonating  
with meals, pebbles, objects of many sorts, landscapes,  
ghosts, and many other things.  
A writer of fictions to whom *books are performances* –  
some of them displaying a heightened sensitivity to the  
agency of assemblages at work a little bit everywhere –  
with as many kinaesthetic and affective implications as  
choreographic performances.

HERE, the fact of writing in connection with a performance assumes itself as an arrangement of intermediations – without the faintest desire to give “une image juste” of the performance as it (really) was (supposedly). This resonates with Godard’s expression:

“Ce n’est pas une image juste, c’est juste une image”  
[inscribed on a poster in *Vent d’est*, the fake Western of 1969 co-written with Daniel Cohn-Bendit]

Whatever the case, every departure point is already mediated; it belongs to a *milieu*, amidst many other things. That is why conceiving of the relation between live performance and mediating forms like documentation in ontological terms doesn’t seem very relevant.

[Echo: “The site of performance can no longer be thought of as separate from the extended environments and networks within which it takes place” – Ric Allsopp “Itinerant Pages: The Page As Performance Space”, *Performance Research*, 9(2), 2-6, 2004, p.5]

Every single thing works as the medium of another or of many, and the other way around:

“Il n’y a pas plus de forme privilégiée que de point de départ privilégié. Il y a partout des points de départ, des nœuds qui nous permettent d’apprendre quelque chose de neuf si nous récusons, premièrement la distance radicale; deuxièmement la distribution des rôles; troisièmement les frontières entre les territoires.”  
[Jacques Rancière, *Le spectateur émancipé*, Paris, La fabrique, p. 23, 24]

To be sure, the performance “relations” will neither be contained in, nor be captured by these pages. Though it may relate to it in many ways. The precise way in which these two modes of production – this writing and that performance – are going to interweave remains to be seen. Sensed.

*Whether some common space can emerge from their encounter?*

By now you’re probably asking yourself whether the fact that you have (or not) seen the piece matters for your relation to these pages. Honestly, I don’t know. But I dare say it doesn’t matter that much. Imagine that by one of those coincidences that happen more often than not, we had seen this performance on the very same day, sharing the same time and physical space, the same

air and the same angle, both of us sitting in the same row. I am not sure that we would have seen the same performance. You and me, we will never share the same space-times; our perception is not choreographed in the same way, our seeing-thinking is not sensitive to the same things. That is why we could say, without fearing to discredit this documentation gesture, that any resemblance between the people, the objects and materials that participate in the encounters that will take place on these pages – and the people, the objects, and the spectators that participated in the making and in the perceiving of the performance “relations”, is a matter of pure chance.

I imagine that what you are reading, thinking, and feeling here  
while crossing this writing on and with paper

won’t even correspond to the version I think I’m writing

I like to think that what you will get from this – what you will weave with it

will be something like the erratic encounter between:

this writing of “relations: a concrete choreography”

your thoughts, sensations, feelings  
your desire to read and see-think with it  
depending on the weather  
on the time you have  
or lack

depending on many other things I don’t have the slightest idea about

*In this space, reading appears as an activity that requires a “reading style”, i.e. a certain dramaturgy – and even a choreography – of reading; an awareness of what it does to you; how it moves you; what it makes you feel; what you can do with it.*

See what happens between your rhythms and these pages’: the specific sounds, affects, times and places you can produce with each other – out of one another.

For definitely, “the reader of a book is also its performer”.  
[Johanna Hoffmann, “On the margins of time”, in Sarah Bodman (ed.), *Artists’ Book Yearbook 2001-2002*, Bristol, Impact Press, 2001, p. 21]

WHAT  
YOU  
WILL  
FIND  
ON  
THE  
WAY

ASSEMBLAGES: A SITE-SPECIFIC GLOSSARY p. 11  
[a set of descriptions of how the objects or entities at play in the piece *get lost – get somewhere else; become something else – according to the aggregates of relations they engage or get caught in, or activate on their own]*

FRAGMENTS OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN PETRA SABISCH AND PAULA CASPÃO p. 35

[a written conversation with a distributed temporality; it took place in Berlin during the days that followed the premiere; we were sitting next to each other, though using skype (instant message chatting) as an intermediary – a way to have the issues we wanted to tackle written down, while still being face to face sharing the same air, eating from the same chocolate bar on the table, with the possibility to talk for real while writing; we started with 15 minutes answers, but then we forgot about the time limits, and each time we just continued what we had started until we felt it would do; we made a couple of breaks to get some fresh air, buy and eat chips on the snowy streets, or have dinner; after I had left Berlin we went on writing and re-writing for a whole week.

it's possible that you will find some of the questions we address each other redundant, but that's because we had indeed similar issues, though slightly different, not quite the same... it looked like those issues demanded to be approached through many doorways – again – *encore* – once more – and again –]

THE LYRICS OF A SONG DEDICATED TO DOCUMENTATION p. 53

[you can match it with whatever melody and musical arrangements you find appropriate]

THE BIOGRAPHIES OF THE PEOPLE THAT TOOK PART IN "RELATIONS: A CONCRETE CHOREOGRAPHY" p. 59

## 2 QUESTIONS

[for the way]

### HOW DOES THE BOOK RELATE?

[suggestion: as you read, produce (artificial) relations with the immediate surroundings where you are reading it; it can be with things happening around, or with very concrete objects like the material the floor is made of, or a sound, a smell passing by; you can assemble things that seem to have nothing in common]

### HOW DOES THE BOOK SOUND?

[suggestion: there are at least two ways of finding it out: a) experiment with different ways of scratching, brushing the paper, or rubbing it against other objects and/or against your body; b) experiment with different ways of voicing its text and/or images: present it as a lecture, as a preaching session or as a choir with many voices; voice it with different rhythms, different accents, speeds, volumes; it can become a concert, maybe performed collectively as some sort of jam session]

You know what?

You can read these pages as if they were a score for you to imagine other performances, or –literally– *to make performances*.

We never know. This could be the document of a piece of something yet to come.