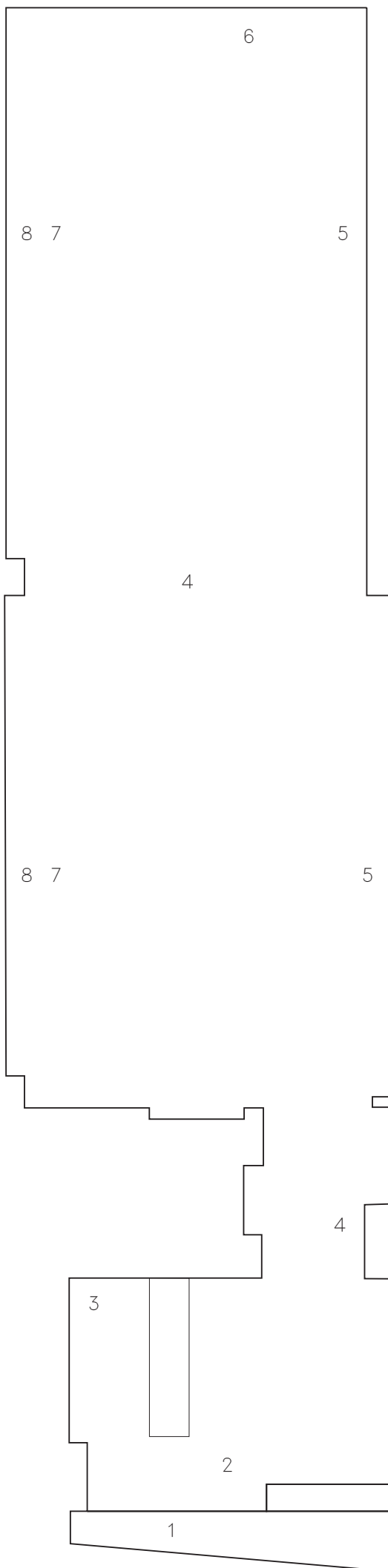


Sara Rodrigues with
Rodrigo B. Camacho:
Warm Earth

Sismógrafo
17 OCT - 14 NOV 2020

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1
Books for consultation.

2
Model of a terrain with 6.2 acres (Frechas, Trás-os-Montes) with floorplan projection of Sismógrafo to the scale of 100:1 with natural red earth pigment and guar gum. Earth with flour and water glue on cardboard. 60x65x17cm

3
Bottles of homemade Rosehip syrup "Warm Earth" (Frechas), Ed.10.

4
Earth (Frechas) with wheat flour and water glue on cardboard with velcro on the floor.

5
30 minute, 6 voice sound piece, 4 channels, graphic score reading with excerpts from "Earth and Men".

6
30 minute video: physical work in jute outfits (Frechas).

7
Oak, Broom, Olive tree, Rosehip, Brambles and Flax-Leaved Daphne sticks; variable dimensions, hanging by thread of jute and hemp.

8
Graphic score painted with brown earth pigment (Frechas) on wall with guar gum, water, clove oil and honey.

Sara Rodrigues (1990) is an interdisciplinary artist working in audiovisual composition, performance and installation. She graduated from a BA in Fine Art at The School of Art, Architecture and Design, London, and a BMus Music from Goldsmiths, University of London, specialising in contemporary composition and sonic art. Sara completed her MFA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths, 2019, taking the position of Junior Fellow throughout 2020. She is co-director of the New Maker Ensemble with Rodrigo B. Camacho and has been working collaboratively with various artists, including in recent performances for *In Limen* (PADA Studios, Barreiro, 2020) and *Diaspore* (Manifesta 13, Marseille, 2020.)

Her practice explores the intersection between humans and their ecosystems - micro and macro - questioning the various forms of power and control that materialise the contemporary world. Conducted through research, there is a focus not only on the affect within the work, but effect beyond it. Sara has been developing a work that considers possibilities of autonomy, resilience and regeneration, where 'Warm Earth' finds itself; a life-long project on the earth of Frechas, Trás-os-Montes, dedicated to her father, Alexandre Rodrigues.

Rodrigo B. Camacho (1990, Funchal) is a creator and a cultural producer. As a researcher and essayist, he primarily writes on ecology, food production, democratic deliberation, and critical historiography. In the practical realm, he now leads, with Sara Rodrigues, the cooperative network for strategic capacitation 'Equilibrio'. As for artistic production, he is interested in communication and linguistics, and relentlessly excavates questions to do with myriad forms of violence in political production and participation.

His last studies at Goldsmiths, University of London, in cultural and creative entrepreneurship, took him to now approach his own projects much more organically. These projects, ever more longitudinal and organisational in nature, include and integrate (rather than excluding and segregating) food production, health, territory politics and social organisation and components of utmost importance in creative processes. Nowadays, most of his time is dedicated to the study of Mediterranean and temperate continental ecosystems, as well as to the practice of varied techniques of restoration agriculture.

Joint projects by Sara Rodrigues and Rodrigo B. Camacho include the New Maker Ensemble contemporary music programme 'Sistema' (Iklectik, London, 2019; Baltazar Dias Municipal Theatre, Madeira, 2018), the performance 'Fluctuations: missa pro defunctis' ('Depictions of Living', The Art Pavilion, London, 2020; Ilhéstico, Porta 33, Funchal, 2019; Chalfon Gallery, Art Night, London, 2019; 'Not Yet the Sea', Sismógrafo, Gaia, 2018), and the participative installation 'Taxonomy, The State of Things' (Galeria do Sol, Porto, 2018; Pipinoir, Funchal, 2017).

IN YOUR OPINION, HAS THE PORTUGUESE AGRICULTURE LOST, OR WON?

I think that these questions cannot be put in such simplistic terms.

The Portuguese agroindustrial sector was practically an inexistent sector, especially in comparison with Europe. When I arrived in Portugal, I felt the shock of that backwardness; a backwardness that was technological, economic, social, cultural. Before joining the EU, in 1986, we didn't have any proper structures for the slaughter of cattle. We didn't have what we call an 'agri-food industry'. Extremely outdated methods of production with low productivity levels. We are coming to a time, in which we will be forced or bound to alter many of our traditional habits and behaviours in agriculture. Most Portuguese farmers maintain social representations, which lead them to remain attached to the earth in ways that are, sometimes, not very rational.

May we invest, may we modernise, and that this be done quickly. We want a more modern and developed agriculture, with better infrastructures. May the Portuguese agriculture have success! In terms of equipment, in terms of machinery, in terms of irrigation, in terms of agricultural infrastructures. To be installed, furthermore, modern vineyards and orchards. May all that is modern come onto us! To increase the modernisation rates of agricultural holdings through the acquisition of tractors and other mechanical equipment. Technologies, the most diverse, which can be modernised. Always, and only, in terms of modernisation. Be it in the field of production structures, in the field of technologies, in the field of infrastructures.

Agricultural holdings grew 300%, agribusiness 600%! We have a strong, healthy and competitive industrial sector. Despite everything, and all strangulations, we are competitive! There is no reason to accept that they cannot be competitive! We have a perfectly equipped industry, from a technological standpoint, to compete with our European counterparts. We have the country covered with slaughter structures; with enough slaughterhouses to support the regular outflow of our production.

Sophisticated technologies, that only a limited number of companies have access to.

What technical progress will never solve, and farmers cannot surpass is the level of inequality in the economic and institutional conditions they are subject to. [Damage in the will and morale of many farmers]. We are still far from catching up with the expansion, technical progress and organisational levels seen in other European countries. We allowed ourselves to fall behind in relation to our EU partners and to the so called 'New World Producers'. Nowadays, in Europe, the food distribution sector is condensed into 4 or 5 multinational chains alone. How is Portugal, as a small country, with all its fragilities, to survive in such an aggressive commercial sector? The Portuguese agriculture does not hold the necessary conditions to be competitive, so it is therefore not worth continuing to invest in its modernisation.

Europe produced an excess of thirty-three million tons of meat, many hundred thousand tons of powdered

milk, amongst many other food products. Portugal is amongst the countries where wine consumption is the highest. In the last decade we witnessed, in Portugal, a continuous increase in the consumption of milk, a consumption level already comparable to that of other European countries. The EU decided to lower prices for cereal, oilseeds, meat and milk: "We'll control the surplus through a reduction in prices and leave the market to the rest..." From the moment we joined the EEC, our foreign trade balance has progressed negatively. We import mainly bananas, apples, peaches, oranges, but also potatoes, onions, tomatoes, carrots. The integration was made in conditions such, that in fact, today, the Portuguese food market is completely overrun by foreign products. Portugal has always produced cereal! Today, regardless of annual oscillations, it can be said that, internally, we rarely produce more than 40% of the cereals we consume. Portugal has pursued, without success, the myth of self-sufficiency in this sector.

Many small producers, those who weren't able to follow this progression, felt bound, in recent years, to put an end to their activity. The great opportunities are, without a doubt, more connected to services than to production. Farmer numbers have dropped significantly, which is normal in a development process. The productivity of agricultural labour has increased sharply. Unfortunately, many farmers are also poorer and more insecure than they were ten years ago. The rural community will be affected by all this, it's not really just the farmer. The farmer's activity is essential to keep everyone going. There is a whole community that lives only thanks to the farmer's practice.

The 'Earth Market' is a market that is just not working in Portugal, precisely because of connections to the earth, which are not exclusively economic in nature. Today, we must start producing for a market that is European, that is international, and the market is a global market and, as such, Portugal has to be in that market just like any other. We run the risk of having a beautiful product and yet not knowing how to sell it, and so, companies, sooner or later, are forced to shutdown. Today, it's increasingly important to know the market; to have good relationships with that market; to know which conditions that market demands; to produce towards that very market; to have good outlets and, currently, I can assure you that on all shelves of the biggest supermarkets in England one can find Pêra Rocha!

Unfortunately, for the state of our agriculture, the regions where the rain is more abundant and the ocean moderates the climate, there is a shortage of land and a surplus of folks and mountains. Production units of insufficient dimensions. Where the water is rare and the climate excessively warm, there is a surplus of land and a shortage of folks. The underdevelopment and backwardness of most rural areas, the contrast between the small agricultural holdings, turned towards private consumption, and the big agricultural enterprises, turned towards the market. Well then, it is through the creation of market knowhow, as well, that we may contribute to the regularisation of agricultural holding dimensions. Nowadays, we have a lot less agricultural holdings than we had in 1985-86 which is, one can say, quite positive.

Many of you out there listening, will ask, logically; "if that is the case, then why don't farmers do something else?" One of the most important factors in the development of Portuguese agriculture is the preparation of a new type of farmer. It is fundamental that specialised training is given - basic literacy, in first place - that education and professional training is provided. We have to train young people in agriculture according to this new pattern. Leave your job and try to become a farmer. When that time comes, you'll be able to attest whether or not it is possible to live without subsidies.

Most farmers lived on knowledge made from personal experience; they learned by craft with their ancestors. People were used to live with drought but, these days, they no longer recognise that which was passed on by their parents and grandparents.

This essay was entirely composed of transcriptions taken from interviews, debates and reports from the television show "Earth and Men".

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Apoio Criatório



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