

ARTISTS' LISTS ARE NEVER ONLY LISTS, VERSION 2.0.

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ABSTRACT

These are thoughts on the working process of contemporary artists and consequently the resulting artifacts that assume forms of lists. It includes references to auto-narratives and autobiographies of artists working with impressions of disorientation, impermanence and foreignness. Focusing on the making of lists, catalogs, archives and on the interest in alphabetical, numerical, cartographical organization, and thus also on the unclassifiable, on what cannot or has not been decoded, on disorientation, and on all that can fit into the category of “etcetera”. As examples of lists, the video *10 Delírios em 10 Suftras* and *100 Words to Describe Images of Displacement* (2017) are presented as tools to pinpoint spatial and temporal aspects of a possible ethnic-aesthetic of displacement.

KEYWORDS

List; transdisciplinary;
displacement;
disorientation;
etcetera.

1. PhD, video artist who also creates games. At the moment, Vaitsman is developing a series of board games called *Games of Alterity*. As an independent researcher, Vaitsman attempts to keep an ongoing dialogue between diverse academic areas and the art world. Originally from São Paulo, Brazil, she has lived in eight countries and now writes from Red Hook, Brooklyn, NY, as an artist resident of De-Construkt.

This text has been originally part of an investigation named *Imagens do Deslocamento* (or Images of Displacement)², an inquiry into the aspects of a possible aesthetic-ethic of foreignness, transit and impermanence. One of the early recognized problems in this study was the validation of auto-narratives as reliable sources of knowledge, to be able to approach art not only through artifacts, but also by observing the life of artists, as witnesses of their own processes of making and thinking. Because the study was going to touch areas such as traveling, migrating, art, and subjective processes of making, another early recognized problem was the necessity of a transdisciplinary vision or, how we preferred to frame it, of an *ecosophic* approach. This concept created by Félix Guattari (1990) describes an analytical, amalgamated, *ecosystemic* science that includes political, ethic and aesthetic efforts. This ecosystemic science would establish new codes to value life itself, in the sense of increasing the value of life and living, as parameters for political decision making, considering gentle relations between genders, generations, ethnicities and races. Also considering larger meanings of *eco* – less human-centered – as relations with other things, entities, articles, existences. A sort of “ecology of knowledge” that necessarily attempts to grasp human and other subjectivities in their complexities. This effort needs persistent reinventions in a world where socio-cultural ruptures are constantly being brewed anew, and so generating unprecedented and transversal variables and challenges. Guattari recognized this ecology of knowledge and the effort to approach human subjectivities in the practices familiar to artists³, what I call *knowing-making*⁴ art. It does not mean “to know how to make art”, instead *know-make* art describes a process in which *thinking* and *making* have equivalent hierarchical places. As if in philosophy the thought would follow a fading thread on an unknown path into an abstract substratum, in art the making would follow a fading thread on an unknown path into a substratum of matter and transformation. My suspicion is that artists fluctuate between these different types of substrata.

The first solution regarding the need of an *ecosophic* approach was the elaboration of lists, which were simple at first (X and Y), and later gained more complex designs (X and Y)². It is possible to imagine Z as other fitting factors or as simple modifiers of the very first list. In some cases, Z could be the addition of time, as in the example of a video; or multiple versions of the same list; or until even its translation which required a different alphabetical order, forcing new relations between the items. There were endless possibilities for the values that the Z variable

2. *Imagens do Deslocamento*, doctoral dissertation in Contemporary Art, consisting of a 331-page text, a board game, a video and a book of maps (Vaitsman 2017).

3. (Ibidem).

4. *saber-fazer arte* (Vaitsman 2017).

could assume because in an art studio there are very few fixed initial parameters. As a matter of fact, Z could be the ever-changing factor in art: for instance, the same blank piece of paper (X) in relation to a pencil (Y) could gain endless forms, placements, functions etc. (Z).

As these lists evolved, in this article as version 2.0, ideas also evolved, reformulations, a new rhythm and therefore a new form, from the first findings and impressions that at the very beginning came directly out of the contemplation of artifacts and working processes, mainly from auto-narratives. Later these first findings were contaminated by different areas of knowledge, and by my own perception of existing as an artist, by *knowing-making* art. In short: lists to contemplate these relationships or “inventories of the world”⁵ that are transpiring from our own studios. And because they are entangled relationships, the type that our sapiens condition as humanity allows us to do, following the idea of *com-plex* (which includes, within its own meaning, also what is around it) likewise it accepts the approach of the same situation, from different points of views. And so, we talk about things from various angles. We present lists made by a Swiss artist, a British filmmaker, a Brazilian artist who was institutionalized almost his whole life as a psychiatric patient, a Brazilian artist who addresses the issue of displacement. We also speak of displacement as disorientation, even for people who never left their homes, as the lack of feeling of belonging to a communal locality or temporality; as traveling and migrating; as contacting an alien; as the lack of understanding of foreign languages or ciphered texts; as transformations of the psi, as aesthetic experiences and as mutations in the cognition patterns⁶. We will speak of art as an audiovisual production, as the power and possibility to make, as the power and possibility to know, as words that protect us, as representations of what we are as humanity, as an activity that connects some areas of knowledge.

By chance, on the coffee table in the house where I was living in Bangalore, there was a book by Pipilotti Rist with 69 words, or 70, if we include the name of the publication itself: *Glossary*. It came together with a box of printed photos called *Your Saliva is my Diving Suit in the Ocean of Pain* (2016). Saliva as protection in the ocean of pain creates in me an image of saliva as a negotiator of words, of meanings, in a collective environment, but the protective saliva belongs to the one who reads the title: “your saliva”, you, and the collective environment is pain. There are many protective words on that list, such as anxiety, blood, evil, feminism, friends, lust, mother, skin, space, rituals, chromosome XX⁷. Sali-

5. (Maciel 2008, 121, translated by the author).

6. (Lichtenberg-Ettinger 1994).

7. (Rist 2016).

va is also in the concept of *texto-baba*⁸ (or dribble text) created by Suely Rolnik (2016), which proposes a kind of fluid writing that challenges the rigidity of discourses, especially the academic one. Saliva is also Lygia Clark's *Baba Antropofágica* (or anthropophagic slobber) 1973, a gestural proposition for sedimentation of the collective upon the individual body.

Artists make lists. Movie scripts are textual tools listing synchronized instructions for photographers, actors, costume designers, stage directors and producers. Media art pieces running from databases, automated or not, are command lists that interconnect actions, texts, graphics, sounds and images. On Kawara's pieces are lists that show painted dates on canvas or dates printed as books, such as the two volumes of *One Million Years* (1999), that bring years listed one after another, one million years in the future and one million years in the past, looking like this: 748207 BC, 748206 BC, 748205 BC... The dedication on the first and second volumes reads "'For all those who have lived and died' (Past) and 'For the last one' (Future)"⁹. The embroidered pieces with names of towns, as undated works by Bispo do Rosário, Brazilian artist, are also lists. He created endless inventories of day-to-day objects, relating them to cataloged countries, maps, collections of irregular geometric shapes. His work is directly related to Peter Greenaway's list of *100 Objects to Represent the World*, opera-pop from 1997, designed to represent humanity in case of contact with the Other - in this case, indeed the Other, meaning an extraterrestrial. "In 1997 two spaceships were launched from Cape Kennedy containing material to represent life on earth. The project's ambition was to make hypothetical contact with extra-terrestrial intelligence. The choice of material was subjective to an American, scientifically educated, from a community in the 1970s, with a paternalistic attitude towards the rest of the world. But who consulted us?"¹⁰ For ten years, I carried with me the catalog of Greenaway's opera, which I watched in São Paulo, a document that reminded me that others also sought to distill some sort of list-image of what we are, collectively, as humanity.

In Greenaway's visit to Nise da Silveira's Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente¹¹ (Museum of the Images of the Unconsciousness), in Rio de Janeiro, what drew his attention to the work of Bispo do Rosário was how he treated his taxonomies: mocking the intellectual attempt to catalog everything and fit the world into encyclopedias¹². Greenaway, in his at-

8. We worked this concept in a group guided by Suely Rolnik during the seminar *Novos Povoamentos* (or new populations) organized by Núcleo de Subjetividade, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Sep 29-30, 2016 ("Novos Povoamentos" 2016).

9. (Nuova Icona 2017).

10. ("Peter Greenaway: 100 objects" 1997).

11. Brazilian psychiatrist who opposes treatments such as electroshock and lobotomy. She collected more than 50 thousand pieces of art made by patients. ("Nise da Silveira, Vida e Obra - Imagens do inconsciente" 2014).

12. (Greenaway apud Maciel n.d.).

tentiveness to investigate, collect, and group, identified himself with the catalogs made by Bispo, not because of an illusory wish for completeness, but because he understood that, in addition to the functional, the importance of alphabetic, numerical, statistical, and cartographic is their existence in itself¹³.

Bispo's encyclopedia embodies what the French encyclopedists excluded from their cataloging projects, in order to render them achievable: redundancies, residues, unclassified knowledge and things, primordial subjects of vital experiences, marginal reports, at long last, everything that could be placed under a generic and unprecise label of "etcetera". Therefore Bispo's encyclopedia is much unlike the modern encyclopedic models and suchlike the previous ones from the 18th century (particularly the renaissance tendency) and the encyclopedic works by contemporary writers and artists such as Jorge Luis Borges, Ítalo Calvino, Georges Perec, Umberto Eco and Peter Greenaway, who, each in their own way, created truly anti-systems of classification, shaking – by the parodic laws of fiction or by the destabilizing principles of poetry – the taxonomic logic itself that would define their works as "inventories of the world".¹⁴

10 DELÍRIOS EM 10 SUTRAS¹⁵

While trying to find a solution for a more laboratorial part of the investigation *Imagens do Deslocamento*¹⁶, which later became a video called *10 Delírios em 10 Sutras*, there was still something uneasy about a study that would "talk about too many things". At the same time, instinctively there was the certainty that it was talking about one thing: the perception of a state of impermanence – in form of a question "*o que estamos?*" (or what are we [now]?). In Portuguese, there are two verbs translating "to be", *ser* and *estar*, the first is permanent and the latter temporary. To the question, many other variations: how, since when, until when, where "are we now"? The larger investigation about images of displacement should be understood as: *images* in the sense of perceiving and contemplating, and *displacement* in the sense of existing in a state of impermanence continuously, situation that the Portuguese language potentiates with the verb *estar* (to be now). *10 Delírios em 10 Sutras* is a video in color with soundtrack made by Cristiano Moro, to be seen at <https://vimeo.com/218848422>, and it is an important part of this text. It approaches foreignness, disorientation, acceptance of becoming, chance, velocity, and lack of control. It is also a piece about lists, as an attempt to hold on to some type of order. There was also the attempt to work these ideas in an audiovisual language, in the post-production of hyper synthetic images, almost like a pop-up collage book; in the

13. (Maciel n.d.).

14. (Maciel 2008, 121, translated by the author).

15. (Vaitsman 2017a).

16. (Vaitsman 2017).

audio, a continuous out of tune guitar improvisation; as text, a double function, serving sometimes as text to be understood and sometimes as texture (text + rupture), when language stops making sense. The texts are in Portuguese, English, German and some of them ciphered using Vigenere, even the author does not recall anymore the ciphered texts' contents. The short time the texts remain on the screen also suggests some sort of drift and lack of control, you may be able to read them, or not. They may appear and disappear without serving the function "to be read", what for some people creates the feeling of disorientation. The video, as its title, is not meant to be translated because if the text is not understood or read, it operates as texture or ornament. It recalls sensations of foreignness and disorientation, when it means nothing to be literate in one alphabet only, like when in some places in India there are street signs showing words in Kannada alphabet or when in some parts of Tokyo, we see texts in Kanji. The fragmented and polymorphic type of memory of a foreigner reflects their situation, as a sort of puzzled language that can hardly represent their past as a compact and continuous recollection, because the exile destroyed their sense of belonging¹⁷. Attached to the video there is this introductory thought:

On one side, things are so complicated that the texts, that once translated reality into news or documentaries of their current time (and which in the future would be a script of today), became now an irregular texture full of folds, holes and contradictions. Texts today are written continuously by millions of people and ejected in real time into a transparent public space, existing in black boxes, the servers, infinitely bigger on the outside than on the inside. Our "scripts of reality" are now a ripped texture, a topographic map of sinkholes, with a unique notation: the word "rupture", [text+rupture=texture], defining things at the moment that they cease to be.

On the other side, a more tranquil space, infinitely larger inside than outside (like Doctor Who's Tardis, as a proof that this is possible). Space of little changes, where the mathematical disorder [text+rupture=texture] from the outside becomes nothing more than a radio playing in the background, at a neighbor's house, on a sunny Sunday in the city of São Paulo – while we bake bread. Suddenly, the scenes get exchanged and the calm image approaches a vision of what is natural. And the other, the overloaded one, looks more like what happens inside of our minds. Initially it is a binary order, and gradually the situations repeat within themselves: like a box inside another box, inside other disorienting and pulsating boxes¹⁸.

17. (Kristeva and Roudiez 1991).

18. (Vaitsman 2017a)

DISPLACEMENT

How are the conditions to be, to know, to make in situations of transit and displacement? The journey is part of humanity's history. They are accounted for since Hanuman's¹⁹ walk to the west or the journey through the desert by the Jewish people in the search for a destiny, promised by Jehovah, in form of a reachable territory. The ancestral "mythological travellers' tales are analogous to psychological experiences; to identity transformation, to artistic processes and works, to aesthetic experiences, and patterns of cognition"²⁰. "[...] precisely what is theoretically at stake in travelling: not discovering far countries and exotic habits, but making the slight move which shapes the mapping of a 'there' to a 'here'"²¹. However, as Virilio and Richard describe, the contemporary sedentary feels at home anywhere, with their cell phones continuously connected to other sedentary ones, visiting locations which were standardized by the tourism industry. In another hand, the nomad is never home anywhere because they are excluded from belonging to anywhere, from being able to stay where they are, excluded even from the concepts of locality and place. It is possible that in the future some strange fusion will occur between tourists and the masses of exiled people – there will be nearly one billion displaced people in the next decades²².

Still according Virilio and Richard (2012), two other aspects of displacement related to disorientation are fear and velocity. The first one as a tool for control and power over the Other. Velocity, a phenomenon that creates disorientation in large scale, tame the population in a better hypothesis. In the worst hypothesis, it paralyzes people in panic. This is how Hannah Arendt described the *Nazi Blitzkrieg*, which caused materialized terror when it accelerated reality²³. The amazing informational and communicational technologic accomplishments in real time generate a synchronized march, a sudden live globalization of affects, all in name of progress, such as panic²⁴ and sad passions²⁵. "In just a few decades our most familiar surroundings have been transformed. The categories of sensation, perception and imagination have been disrupted by technological innovations and the power of the industrial apparatus projecting them"²⁶ while "[...] the industrial revolution produced standardization and the computer revolution produced synchronization"²⁷, who does not move in this controlled rhythm will be excluded from the concepts of contemporaneity and even temporality.

19. In the Indian epic poem *Ramayana*, Hanuman is the god of apes.

20. (Lichtenberg-Ettinger 1994, 38).

21. (Rancière 1994, 30).

22. (Virilio and Richard 2012).

23. (Apud ibidem).

24. (ibidem).

25. Reference to texts about sad passions by Suely Rolnik (2014) and by Marilena Chaui (2016).

26. (Augé 2015, 48).

27. (Virilio and Richard 2012, 83).

At the beginning of the investigation *Imagens do Deslocamento* in 2014 it seemed that the approach to disorientation would be particularly linked to my autobiography of migrant and the journeys, to have lived in eight countries but after the environmental disaster in the city of Mariana, in Brazil, called “death of Rio Doce” (referring to the river), when a toxic dam broke and astronomic quantities of mercury, arsenic, chromium and manganese reached the waterway²⁸; after the political coup of 2016, midst 450 kg of cocaine paste found in the helicopter of one of the Brazilian senators who was in the commission ruling and sentencing President Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment²⁹; after the lawfare against former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the obscure elections of 2018 decided by abusive fake news on WhatsApp and off-booking donations³⁰; the whole game board started to fall apart – “displacement” started to assume new forms. Even people who never left Brazil started to feel symptoms of disorientation³¹ caused by the velocity of the successive blows and scandals, rush changes in what they recognized as *reality*. So, aren’t we also talking about a sort of *foreignness-at-home*? And more, from all that has been produced by artists abroad and also at home, in all conditions of transit, can we perceive an ethic-aesthetic of impermanence? This complexity felt almost unbeatable if it were not for the flexibility and, at the same time, the intensity of “being able to make art” as means to “being able to understand things”. The investigation of these images of brutal changes and disorientation, as a formal academic research, had also to refer to a state of art, to the accumulation of knowledge, to the theoretical: how would an artist approach such expected magnitude if not by making art? There was not much left than to return to the video *10 Delírios em 10 Sutras*. 10 and 10 denoting the numeral 100 of Greenaway’s opera, a magnificent number to describe the whole humanity. From this all, always attempting to include the aspect of art in the academic formalism, a list with 100 concepts, as articulations of thoughts, emerged. As a list of connections shaped between words, sort of sutras, threads, sutures. Concepts interlinked like the saliva imagined by Rist, Clark and Rolnik, from the slobber to the meanings of things found. When delusions, hallucinations, concepts and sutras crossed these 100 words appeared to help us read and understand, to grasp some aspects of these transitory images of displacement. Clearly these words also come from the study of the previously described artifacts of art, the lists of other authors, the videos,

28. (“Brazil dam toxic mud reaches Atlantic via Rio Doce estuary”, 2015)

29. (Soares 2016).

30. (Mello 2018).

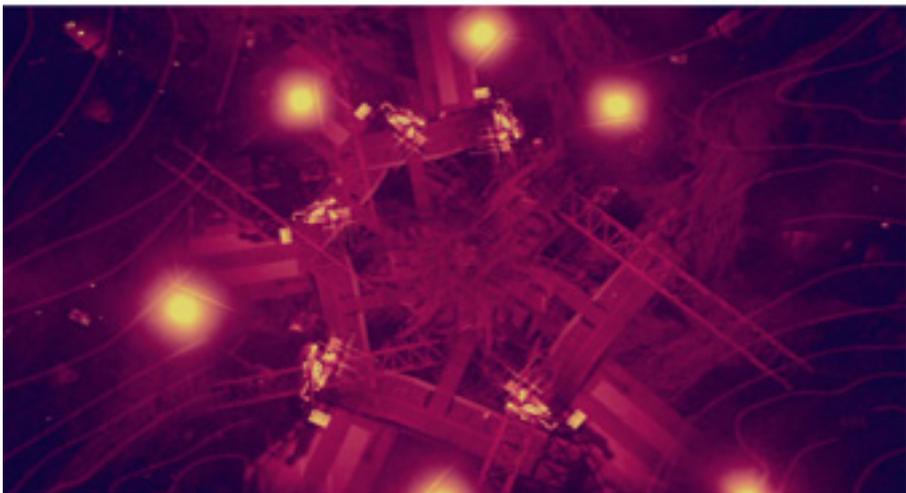
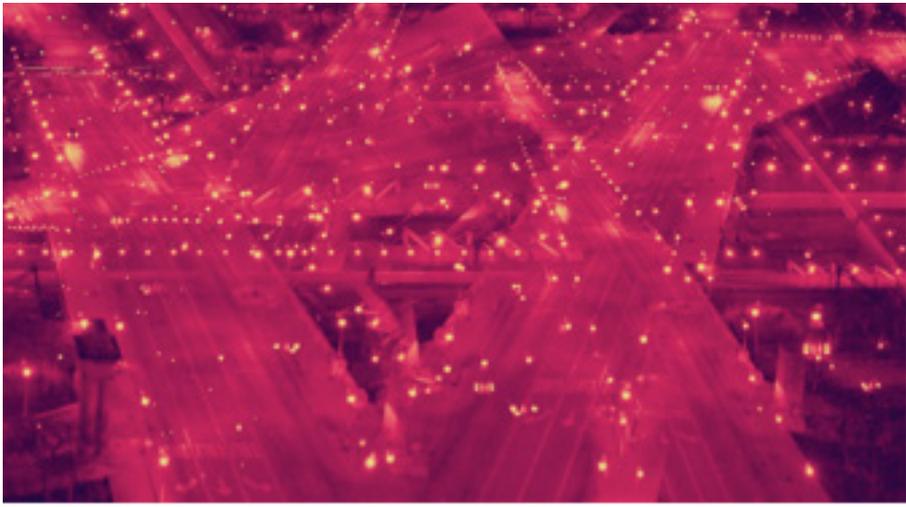
31. As a member of five political feminist and LGBTQ discussion groups, it was clear to perceive that the feeling of disorientation, fear and insecurity are today’s most urgent subjects. The groups are: Mulheres pela Democracia (560.869 members), Mulheres da Resistência no Exterior (3.897 members), LGBTQI+ Resistência pela Democracia! (438.922 members), Mulheres Unidas Contra Bolsonaro (3.744.165 members) e Mulheres e Homens unidos contra Bolsonaro (374.798 members). Group names and numbers from Nov. 9, 2018.



the books, in addition to the investigation of biographic texts from these artists. This list leads us to a cycle of contemplation: from artifact to life to thought to artifact. These 100 concepts listed do not try to exhaustively explain motivations and thinking processes of artists, it should substitute this useless revealing effort. They support this movement in thought, passing through artifact, concepts, order, knowledge, experience, saliva, drift etc.

Lists may outlast their initial utilitarian character and keep on existing in their own beautiful logic, quoting Peter Greenaway again, and so we may experience lists made by artists not only as instruments but as inventories of the world in their own taxonomic logic³².

32. (Maciel 2008).



0 .51	LUGAR MÍTICO .51	01. ACASO	
AS ERRANTES .53	MAPAS .52	02. ALIANÇAS	
CULTURAL .54	MATEMÁTICAS ERRANTES .53	03. ALTERIDADE	
ASILEIRA .56	MEDIAÇÃO CULTURAL .54	04. ANIMAL	
TICAS .57	MEDO .55	05. ANIMISMO MAQUINICO	ANIM
59	MESTIÇA BRASILEIRA .56	06. ARTESANAL	
30 .60	MICROPOLÍTICAS .57	07. AUTOBIOGRAFIA	A
ARALISMO .62	MÍDIA .58	08. AUTOETNOGRÁFICO	AU
ARALISMO .63	MISRAÇÃO .59	09. AUTONARRATIVA	A
DO EU .64	MISCIGENAÇÃO .60	10. AUTONOMIA	
MOAMENTOS .65	MORTE .61	11. AUTORIA	
6	MULTICULTURALISMO .62	12. AUTORIZAÇÃO	
MO .67	MULTINACIONALISMO .63	13. AUTÓPSIA	
0 .69	NARRAÇÃO DO EU .64	14. AYAHUASCA	
0	NOVOS POVOAMENTOS .65	15. BODENLOS	
ADE .71	OUTRO .66	16. CAOSMOSE	
GENS .72	ORIENTALISMO .67	17. CODEX SERAPHINIANUS	CODI
4	ORIGEM .68	18. COLETIVIDADE	
75	ORNAMENTO .69	19. COMPLEXIDADE	C
A AUTENTICIDADE .76	PODERES .70	20. CONSCIÊNCIA	
8	PRECARIEDADE .71	21. CONTEMPORÂNEO	CA
	PROTOIMAGENS .72	22. CORPO	
	BURGA .73	23. COSMOGONIAS	
	RACISMO .74	24. COSMOPOLITANISMO	COS
	REPETIÇÃO .75	25. CURA	
	RETÓRICA DA AUTENTICIDADE .76	26. DESCOLONIZAR	D
	RIZOMA .77	27. DESENHO	
	RUPÇÃO .78	28. DESLOCAMENTO	D
	RYUKYU .79	29. DESORIENTAÇÃO	D
	SUBERES .80	30. DESTINO	
	SEXO .81	31. DEVIR	
	SOCIOESPACIALIDADE .82	32. ECOSOFIA	
	SUBALTERNIDADES .83	33. ESCUTA	
	SUBJETIVIDADE .84	34. ESTÉTICA-ÉTICA	E
	SUBLIME .85	35. ESTRANGEIRO	
	ROLNIK E GUATTARI .86	36. FANTASMA	
	SUTRAS .87	37. FARSA	
	TECHNE .88	38. FEMINISMO	
	TECNOXAMANISMO .89	39. FEMINISMO PÓS-COLONIAL	FEMIN
	TERRITÓRIOS .90	40. FUTURO	
	TEXTURA .91	41. GEOMETRIAS ERRANTES	GEOM
	TRANSCULTURAÇÃO .92	42. GUAMAN POMA	C
	TRANSMIGRAÇÕES .93	43. HANUMAN	
	TRANSPARÊNCIA .94	44. HOMO LUDENS	
	TRAUMA .95	45. IDENTIDADE	
	VELOCIDADE .96	46. IMPERMANÊNCIA	IM
	VISÕES .97	47. JOGO	
	VULNERABILIDADE .98	48. KAXINAWÁ	
	XAMANISMO .99	49. LABIRINTO	
NTATO .100	ZONA DE CONTATO .100	50. LINEARIDADE	

[2]

LIST OF IMAGES

[1] Stills de *10 delírios em 10 sutras*, 2017.

[2] *100 palavras que descrevem as imagens do deslocamento*, 2017.

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