

WARC Gallery is pleased to present



Giselle Beiguelman + Vera Bighetti, *Improbable Architectures*, 2007.

## Translations | Traduções

Giselle Beiguelman + Vera Bighetti  
Raquel Garbelotti  
Alice Miceli

Curated by Emelie Chhangur + Daniela Castro

**March 27 - May 3, 2008**

Opening Reception  
Saturday, April 5, 12 - 5pm  
Artists + Curators will be present

Presented in conjunction with Images Festival



**TALK to the PIE 4 Curators + Artists Talk**

Wednesday, April 9, 4pm  
Gladstone Hotel Art Bar  
1214 Queen Street West

Curatorial Essay by Emelie Chhangur

Transposing artists from one country or hemisphere to another already suggests that we are not dealing with abstract notions of space—or even topical ones of place or locale—but always rather with processes of translation. Moreover, the Brazilian artists here, **Raquel Garbelotti**, **Alice Miceli**, and the team of **Giselle Beiguelman** and **Vera Bighetti**, do not speak to accidents of nationality but to ever-recurring translations within their works that map social and psychic geographies. Their multi-faceted projects expand the territory of art and pave the way for new ways of learning, seeing, and interacting through collaboration, participation, and new uses for technology. That is to

say, *Translations/Traduções* is an experiment in shifting spaces that deals with reception here in Toronto as much as with production elsewhere. Together, we are implicated: each of these works places us as participants within observational systems rather than as detached viewers.

The photographs, videos, and texts in **Raquel Garbelotti**, *Juntamentz* (2006 – 07) mimic academic field research projects by documenting aspects of Pomeranian migration from Germany to Brazil in the late nineteenth century. Together with Carla Siebert and Irlici Klitzke, two of her Pomeranian students from the Federal University of Espírito Santo, Garbelotti collaborated with research scientists, Rafael de Paula Correa and Vinicius Martins Gonzaga. This research oriented group used ethnography as a method in order to reveal the limitations of representation. The resulting components of the collaborative project shows that documentary formats are intrinsically bound to the perspectives of their makers.

Made for this exhibition, *Silent Film (in search of Pomeran house)* shows a series of subtitled stills that represent “typical” Pomeranian houses constructed through the tradition of *Juntamentz* (joint-work) in the rural communities outside Espírito Santo. Translated into Portuguese from Carla and Irleci’s verbal Pomeran descriptions and now translated into English, the subtitles in Raquel’s images point out the impossibility of fixed typologies emerging from traditional ethnographic research in that their documentation points out Pomeranian elements along side Capixaba. Similarly, the photograph *Casa Pomerana- Casa Capixaba\_ pomeran house\_ capixaba house* represents a hybrid style of architecture—common in cities like São Paulo—that is neither one nor the other (neither Pomeranian nor Capixaba).<sup>1</sup> The subtitles in Raquel’s photographs, like the architecture she documents, blur classification; their descriptions veer instead toward narratives: “It was bought by non-Pomeranian owners that use the house only on weekends. It no longer has a warehouse attached for storage.” Garbelotti’s participants, Carla and Irleci, have been entangled in a received fiction. Migration took place so long ago that some of the characteristics described by Carla and Irleci as Capixaba are, in fact, European.

By using an academic research model in contemporary terms, the artist and her collaborators participate in another kind of *Juntamentz*. They transform the very structure and systems of learning at the university. As an artist, Garbelotti, too, resituates her role by rethinking the way art is made, the conditions under which it is received, and how it functions in other contexts.

**Alice Miceli’s** *Chernobyl Project* (2005-2008) pushes the boundaries of documentary-based art by “portraying” invisible social realities: the radioactive residue of Chernobyl’s Exclusion Zone. After a year of intensive research on radioactivity, Miceli worked with scientists from the Radio Protection Institute in Rio de Janeiro and the Otto-Hug Radiation Institute in Munich, to build an apparatus—a pinhole lead camera—that detects radioactivity. The images thus map an invisible reality that transcends visible borders and that has real social effects (60% of all radioactive fallout settled in neighbouring Belarus, the less socially and politically visible location of the Chernobyl catastrophe). The camera makes the invisible radiation visible through a process of imaging rather than (statistical) representation.

A photograph printed for this exhibition—*Checkpoint at Chernobyl Exclusion Zone*—reveals nothing of the social realities of the place depicted nor the complexities Miceli’s project uncovers. It is an image of the entrance to the exclusion zone taken on her first visit to Belarus. Miceli’s BLOG, unlike her image of the checkpoint, includes the viewer in the production of knowledge by creating a space to shape discourse around her discoveries. It provides us, through the Internet, with direct access to the exclusion zone and creates an alternative public document of the catastrophe. As a central component to her project, the BLOG functions to document her visits, research, and photographs while lending visibility to the contributions of others. As in all the artists’ projects in this exhibition, the subject of the work calls forth the methods of representation or documentation that is best able to articulate its visibility by shaping the very nature of how it becomes visible.

Giselle Beiguelman and Abel Reis (CEO, Agencia Click) founded perhaps the first digital art gallery, *Galeria Noema*, on the Internet, housed in Second Life, an online virtual reality platform. In this nomadic gallery, artists create networked environments where the net and other sites in the real world are brought together in an integrated artwork. By its very nature, this space transcends limits and borders, but the gallery also defines its function through its name. “*Noema*” is an object of perception or thought defined as “the representation of an experience of a meaning based system through its own self-referential process.” By the very nature of the interactive process, viewers now are integral participants.

*Galeria Noema* is the site of **Giselle Beiguelman and Vera Bighetti’s** immersive and interactive *Improbable Architectures*, which the artists define as being “in suspension, transparent, without columns, using only liquid and aerial sources to compose original forms which allow anyone to navigate in its interior and exterior spaces, crossing its walls and merging with its structures.” This is “a space that challenges our perception and reacts to the inter-actors presence, being reformatted and mutated by its guests.” At WARC, Beiguelman and Bighetti have created two avatars that viewers are invited to activate, manipulate, and see from the point of view of the space of *Improbable Architectures*. The project also connects the newly formed WARC island to the other islands previously created for

*Improbable Architectures*, such as the Itaú Cultural Centre in São Paulo to create a new network of virtual spaces that are defined by the activities of the viewers. At all levels of production and participation, the project is performative; it advances our perceptual, physical, conceptual, and theoretical understanding of the impact of virtual identity as it provides a platform for a lived exploration of the observer inside the system of observation.

As an experiment in shifting spaces, *Translations/Traduções* presents the works of **Raquel Garbelotti**, **Alice Miceli**, and the team of **Giselle Beiguelman and Vera Bighetti** as open and ongoing investigations rather than fixed representations. Their projects are presented on *display* and *in process* to reflect the ways they explore social and political reality as both staged and created. But the artists here do not simply comment on these realities since their actions have a direct impact in shaping them. Bringing these works into the gallery context seems at first contradictory, however the premise of the exhibition mirrors the work itself. Together we acknowledge the need to lend a conceptual framework to the work as a means of facilitating communication but recognize that this, in turn, fixes it along representational lines. In the context of its presentation in Toronto, we strive to emulate what the work performs in a global context by providing a conceptual framework that emerges from our on going practices both inside and outside the territory of contemporary art.

Footnotes

1 The term Capixaba refers to the people or tradition found in Espírito Santo and the people who were born in Espírito Santo.

**Emelie Chhangur, Toronto, 2008**

## **English to Follow**

### **Textos transitáveis, Espaços transitíveis<sup>1</sup>**

São inúmeras as afirmações sobre as impossibilidades da tradução, seus limites, sua incapacidade de transferir com fidelidade um significado de um signo de uma língua para outra.

À vista de Jakobson, ao traduzir uma língua para outra, substituem-se mensagens em uma das línguas não por unidades de códigos separadas, mas por mensagens inteiras de outra língua. Tal tradução é uma maneira de discurso indireto: o tradutor recodifica e transmite uma mensagem recebida de outra fonte. Assim, a tradução envolve duas mensagens equivalentes em dois códigos diferentes. A **equivalência na diferença** é o problema principal da linguagem e a principal preocupação da Lingüística<sup>2</sup>; é também o principal foco de atenção em *Translations / Traduções*.

Vemos o processo de transposição dos trabalhos de seus contextos específicos para outro como um processo de tradução. O contexto específico, aqui, diz respeito não somente às esferas sociais, políticas e culturais que enquadram o lugar onde as artistas elaboraram seus projetos, mas também do aspecto *site-specific* de cada um deles. Raquel Garbelotti disjunta o mecanismo do que poderia ser uma pesquisa antropológica sobre os Pomeranos na região do Espírito Santo; Alice Miceli pretende dar visibilidade à invisibilidade radioativa da zona de exclusão de Chernobyl; Giselle Beiguelman e Vera Bighetti apontam para o imediatismo do entendimento das possibilidades do espaço virtual definido pelas limitações do espaço físico.

O que se enuncia no caso de transposição/tradução dos trabalhos para as especificidades de um outro contexto (Toronto) é uma topografia irregular de conceitos, de intenções, de abordagens ao fazer artístico, que resistem a uma tradução de adjetivação (como do tipo *Brazilian, women artists' works*), para uma de substantivação: o substantivo, *the noun*; o que há de substancial nas propostas intelectuais e artísticas de cada trabalho.

Ou seja, entendemos que o risco de um achatamento dessa topografia irregular seria um gesto tecnocrático e desatento frente à possibilidade de compreensão sobre a força criativa que emerge do espaço **entre** um sistema de significação e outro. Numa tradução não há caminhos fáceis, de equivalência direta, já que cada língua tem seus próprios sistemas de significar. O projeto tradutor - entendido aqui tanto como suporte conceitual para apresentação dos trabalhos nesse trânsito linguístico e espacial, quanto como a "tradução" de um conceito inicial em qualidade (i)material nos trabalhos das artistas - se apresenta como projeto "constelativo entre diferentes presentes, e como tal, desviantes e descentralizadores"<sup>3</sup>.

E como não seriam desviantes se tratamos aqui de uma topografia antropológica imaginada/ficcional (Garbelotti), uma topografia invisível (Miceli) e uma topografia improvável (Beiguelman & Bighetti)? *Translations / Traduções* é uma operação que acontece entre lugares; um itinerário que procura mostrar as filiações textuais e institucionais e dos corpos que se movem entre elas,

sobretudo o do artista. É um *informational site*<sup>4</sup>, um locus de sobreposições de textos, fotografias, vídeos, espaços físicos e coisas.

Da suposta incomensurabilidade dos sistemas, a tradução figura como locus para investigar o contato intercultural a partir de intrusões, fusões e disjunções. A tradução é um *site* privilegiado para se investigar as relações de poder e alteridade.

Tentamos não arriscar fazer um desvio semântico do termo, e sim uma dilação semântica dos limites da tradução como possibilidades, como forma plástica e viva com a qual se aborda os projetos artísticos presentes nessa exposição.

<sup>1</sup> Parte considerável desse texto se vale da leitura da Dissertação de Mestrado Jorge Menna Barreto, defendida na ECA – USP em 2007, bem como o que saiu dela em discussões conjuntas sobre o tema dessa exposição.

Apropriei-me de suas idéias e elaborações textuais, que acabaram por se misturar às minhas em constantes ocasiões e são referenciadas na bibliografia somente quando houve citações diretas.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Jackbson, *Linguística e Comunicação*. (São Paulo: Editora Cultrix), pág. 65

<sup>3</sup> Jorge Menna Barreto. Lugares Moles. Dissertação de Mestrado defendida na Escola de Comunicação e Artes – Universidade de São Paulo, 2007. Orientadora Ana Maria Tavares.

<sup>4</sup> Ver James Mayer, "The functional site" in Documents Magazine, EUA, 1996, pág. 20-29. Apud Jorge Menna Barreto, op. cit. pág. 12

daniela castro

## Transitory texts, Transitive spaces<sup>1</sup>

Many are the affirmations about the impossibilities of translation; its limits; its inability of accurately transferring the meaning of a sign from one language to another.

According to Jakobson, when translating from one language to another, the messages in one of the languages get substituted not by separate code units but by complete messages from the other language. Such a translation is a type of indirect discourse: the translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source. Therefore, a translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes. The **equivalency in the difference** is the main problem of language and the main concern of Linguistics<sup>2</sup>; it is also the focused attention in *Translations / Traduções*.

We see the process of transposing the works from their specific contexts to another as a process of translation. Here, the specific context relates not only to the social, political and cultural spheres that frame the place where the artists formulated their projects, but also to the *site-specific* aspect of each of these projects. Raquel Garbelotti breaks down the mechanism of what could be an anthropological research about the Pomerans in the Espírito Santo region; Alice Miceli intends to give visibility to the invisible radioactivity of Chernobyl's exclusion zone; Giselle Beiguelman and Vera Bighetti challenge our immediate understanding of the possibilities of the virtual space defined by the limitations of the physical space.

What is enunciated in the case of transposing/translating the works to the specificities of another context (Toronto) is an irregular topography of concepts, intentions and approaches to the artistic processes involved here. These resist to a translation based on adjectives (such as *Brazilian, women artists' works*) to one of substantives, *the noun*; that which is substantial to the intellectual proposals in each art work.

In other words, we understand that the risk of flattening this irregular topography would be a technocratic and careless gesture in face of the possibility of gaining understanding about the creative force that emerges from the space **between** a system of signification and another.

In the act of translating, there are no easy routes of direct equivalents since each language has its own system of signifying. The project of translation – here understood to be a conceptual support for the presentation of the works in this spatial and linguistic transit as well as the 'translation' of the initial concept into the (im)material quality of the artists' works - presents itself as a "cluster between two different presents and as such, deviating and decentralizing"<sup>3</sup>.

And how could they not be deviating if we are dealing with an anthropologically imagined/fictionalized topography (Garbelotti), an invisible topography (Miceli) and an improbable topography (Beiguelman & Bighetti)? *Translations / Traduções* is a transaction that happens between places; an itinerary that seeks to evidence textual and institutional affiliations, as well as connections of the bodies that move between them - above all that of the artist. It is an *informational site*<sup>4</sup>, a place of superimposed texts, photos, videos, physical spaces and things.

From the supposed immensurability of the systems, the act of translating appears as locus to investigate the intercultural contact through intrusions, fusions and disjunctions. Translation is a privileged site from which to investigate the relations between power and alterity.

We attempted not to risk diverting too much from the semantics of the term, choosing rather to widen the complexities of its definition so as to use translation as possibilities, as a forethought ability to transit within the equivalences of one (linguistic/observational) system to another as we experience the art works present in this exhibition.

<sup>1</sup> Great part of this text uses Jorge Menna Barreto's Master's Degree dissertation, presented at the Department of Communication and Arts – University of São Paulo in 2007, as well as what resulted from our endless discussions about the theme in light of this exhibit. I have absorbed some of his ideas to the point of blending them into my own in several occasions, which are referred to in the bibliography only when direct citations are mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Jakobson, *Linguística e Comunicação*. (São Paulo: Editora Cultrix), page 65

<sup>3</sup> Jorge Menna Barreto. Lugares Moles. Master Degree dissertation presented to ECA – USP in 2007

<sup>4</sup> See James Mayer, "The functional site" in Documents Magazine, EUA, 1996, pág. 20-29. Apud Jorge Menna Barreto, op. cit. page 12

Daniela Castro  
Translated by Thiffany Wilmouth  
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## BIOS

**Giselle Beiguelman** is a São Paulo, new media artist who teaches Digital Culture at the Graduation Program in Communication and Semiotics of PUC-SP (São Paulo, Brazil). Award winning publications include: "The Book after the Book", "egoscópio" and Landscape0 (with Marcus Bastos and Rafael Marchetti). Her work has been presented in international venues such as ZKM, Karlsruhe, Fundación Telefonica, Madrid, Smart Project Space, Amsterdam, and the 25th São Paulo Biennial.  
<http://www.noema.art.br/>

**Vera Bighetti** is a doctorate in Digital Media from the Communication and Semiotics Program at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica, PUC – São Paulo. She develops research and projects in the field of generative art and is the author of the awarded Draw with Sound and Gramatologi+tal. She has participated in the Havana Biennial (Cuba), the WebArt Festival of Yugoslavia, and was listed listed as TOP10 digital artists in the Diesel New Art Competition of Sweden and Denmark.

**Raquel Garbelotti** is based in Vitória, Brazil, where she teaches at Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo. Her work has been presented in at ARCO 2003, Madrid, the 25th São Paulo Biennial, XXVI Bienal de Pontevedra, Spain, FIAC - Feira Internacional de Arte Contemporânea, Paris, and FUNARTE, Rio de Janeiro. Garbolotti is represented by Galeria Casa Triângulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

**Alice Miceli** is a Rio de Janeiro artist who teaches at Ateliê da Imagen – Escola de Fotografia, Rio de Janeiro. Her work has been presented in international venues such as ZKM, Karlsruhe, center for contemporary arts, Hasselt, Itaú Cultural, São Paulo and shown in video festivals: Videobrasil, São Paulo, NY Independent Film and Video Festival, 2005, New York; transmediale.05, 2005, Berlin.  
<http://www.jblog.com.br/chernobyl.php>

**Emelie Chhangur** is a Toronto based artist, cultural worker, and curator. Maintaining a processed based, collaborative approach to working with artists, her recent curatorial research and upcoming projects find their relevant context in Latin America. As an artist, her position as Curator at the Art Gallery of York University is instrumental in transforming the nature of the institution and the role of the university contemporary art gallery both in relation to its academic context and its social function within an arts community. She has shown her single channel videos nationally and internationally.

**Daniela Castro** is a hybrid producer and a nomad. She went to art history school in Toronto but transits through the Brazilian contemporary art world curating, writing, and producing art works in Sao Paulo, where she is now based.

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