

# Earth's Mind is Life

A vida é o pensamento da terra

Roberto Freitas



I was walking through the streets of the Bairro Santa Efigênia, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, when I listened to the silenced voices of the channeled rivers and became thoughtful. For those who know the rivers that flow through the mountains of the region, there is no doubt that they are beings of a vital force that is difficult to describe. The purity of the waters, the abundance and the life that overflows are moving.

Belo Horizonte was built in the early 20th century at the foot of the Serra do Curral, largely because of the abundance of drinkable and translucent waters. Today, these waters that once sang through the landscape are contained in pipelines, and this is how the rivers became subterranean voices. The Córrego do Cardoso, for example, which today runs under the Mem de Sá Avenue, was, until the 1970's, part of the local landscape. Its waters were once cleaned and used by washerwomen who sang and talked while they worked. Today, these women, who lived symbiotically with the waters, are photographic memories in the public archive. There are also photos of children bathing and even images of small waterfalls, among many others.

While looking at the archival images and walking through the streets of Santa Efigênia, I felt the presence of the Serra do Cipó\* crossing me. It is a singular place, which keeps the elemental force of nature vibrating in high potency. In my sensory perception the voices of the waters there are precisely in tune with the muffled tones of the rivers that meander under the curves of the neighborhood.

Overlapping city and nature, connecting different spaces in poetic reverberations, my research is a poetic work about ubiquity, listening and loving surrender to the world that is presented to us, conversing with the muffled voices of the rivers that patiently await the cessation of human experience to reinvent themselves.



Like all fields of culture, cinema is always a field of political dispute, whether in the production, distribution, or reception of works. With the advance of digital technology, the cinema screen has become an incomparable singularity, in contrast to the streaming of the television set at home or the cell phone that can be seen as a small screen for the construction of individual narratives. The act of watching a movie at the Florestan Fernandes School\*\* or at the Higienópolis Shopping Mall is a totally different experience in terms of image quality, sound, comfort, and social interaction. However, viewing on cell phone screens is even more individualized, leading to a loss of the social experience and community that group viewing provides. With this, the loneliness of cell phone screens can lead to a withdrawal from people and a greater disconnection from the world around us, creating a negative impact on our mental and emotional health.

The goal of my research is to develop a new model of cinema that seeks a different structural narrative and bodily experience base than conventional film productions. Unlike traditional productions, which are designed to meet the demands of industry, my cinema proposes an experience that finds resonance with that of the dreamers of the magic lantern era, in which the image is seen as an immanent fold of the earth. From this perspective, the image has the power to connect the viewer with the world around them in a profound and meaningful way.

This new cinema proposal seeks to transcend the individualized and superficial experience of image consumption, creating an experience that involves the performativity of the live and improvised around images that connect places in sensations of ubiquity. It is a cinema that proposes to be a political arena, capable of generating social transformations from the way people relate to art and the world.

I think of my cinema including the structural narrative of the formation of audiovisual grammar, coming to propose another basis of bodily experience, much closer to the one filming than to the one watching, much closer to dance than to the passivity of the spectator. My machines that compose what I call cinema were not designed by engineers for a specific industry, but seek to find a place of singularity in the audiovisual experience that proposes to be in resonance with that of the dreamers of the time of the magic lanterns. Moving away from the transcendence of the heroic experience of the audiovisual work towards an immanence, a deep experience of connection with performativity, the live, the improvised around images that connect places in sensations of magical ubiquity.

For me, cinema is an artistic practice that has much more to do with experience than with representation. It is a medium that is meant to be felt with the body, that connects to our emotional and sensory experience rather than to our intellect. It is the most synesthetic of the arts. To achieve this goal, non-linear thinking is required, which is the opposite of conventional narrative structure.

The idea is that cinema is not just a storytelling tool, but a means of provoking sensations, emotions, and experiences in the spectator. For this, the narrative structure must be deconstructed, making room for improvisation, the performative, and sensorial experience. This is where the figure of the hacker comes in, because hacker thinking is linked to the idea of dismantling and hacking pre-existing systems to create something new, unconventional.

In this way, my cinema proposes to explore the performative and the improvised, with the image and the sound being created at the moment of the exhibition, in a collective process with the participation of the audience. Images are used as a means of connecting spaces and times, creating a sense of magical ubiquity that transcends the usual boundaries of narrative.

Furthermore, the connection to nature and the earth is fundamental to my vision of cinema. The image is an immanent fold of the earth, and cinema is a way to explore and celebrate this connection. Through the cinematic experience, we can reconnect with nature and our own essence, leaving behind the disconnection and alienation that are so present in today's society.

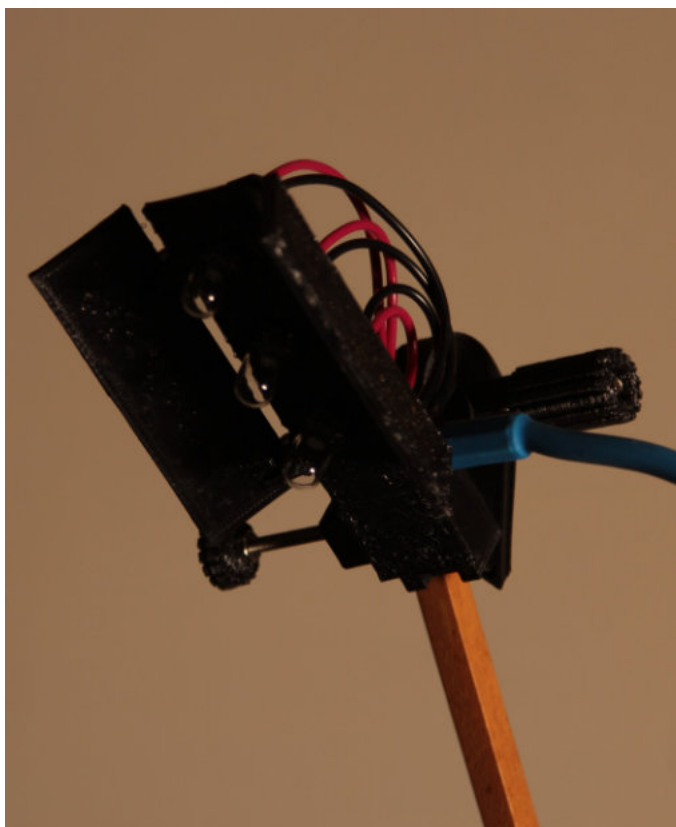


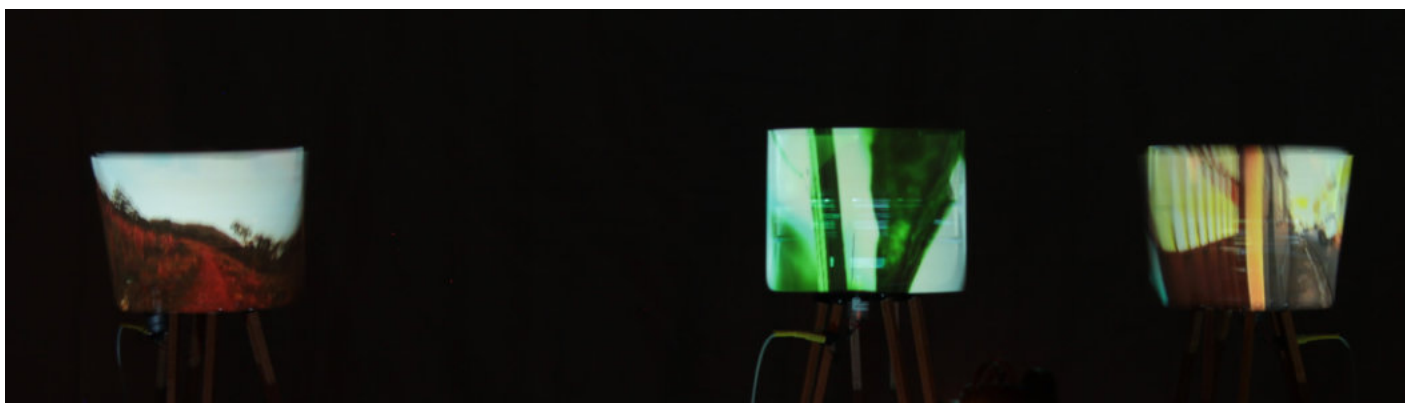
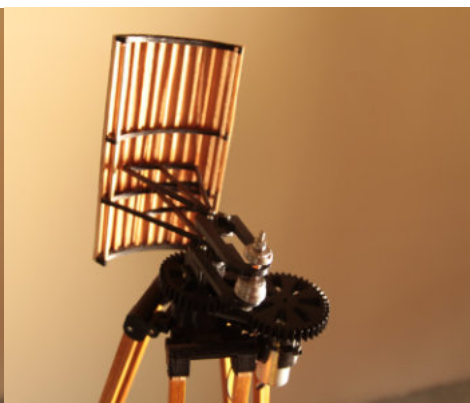
\*Serra do Cipó, mountain range sister of Serra do Curral, is located in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. It is one of the most beautiful and preserved regions of the country, with a great diversity of flora and fauna, one of the places with more water springs in the world, full of waterfalls, rivers, caves, and hiking trails. The region is an important tourist spot and offers activities such as camping, climbing, rappelling, biking, canoeing and bird watching. In addition, Serra do Cipó is an important source of water supply for the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte.

\*\*Escola Florestan Fernandes is a higher education institution located in the city of Guararema, state of São Paulo, Brazil. It was founded in 2005 by the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) as part of its struggle for agrarian reform and popular education. The school offers undergraduate, graduate, and university extension courses aimed at training militants, leaders, and intellectuals committed to the struggle for social transformation. Its name is a tribute to the Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes, who dedicated most of his work to the study of Brazilian social reality and the defense of the rights of workers and the excluded.

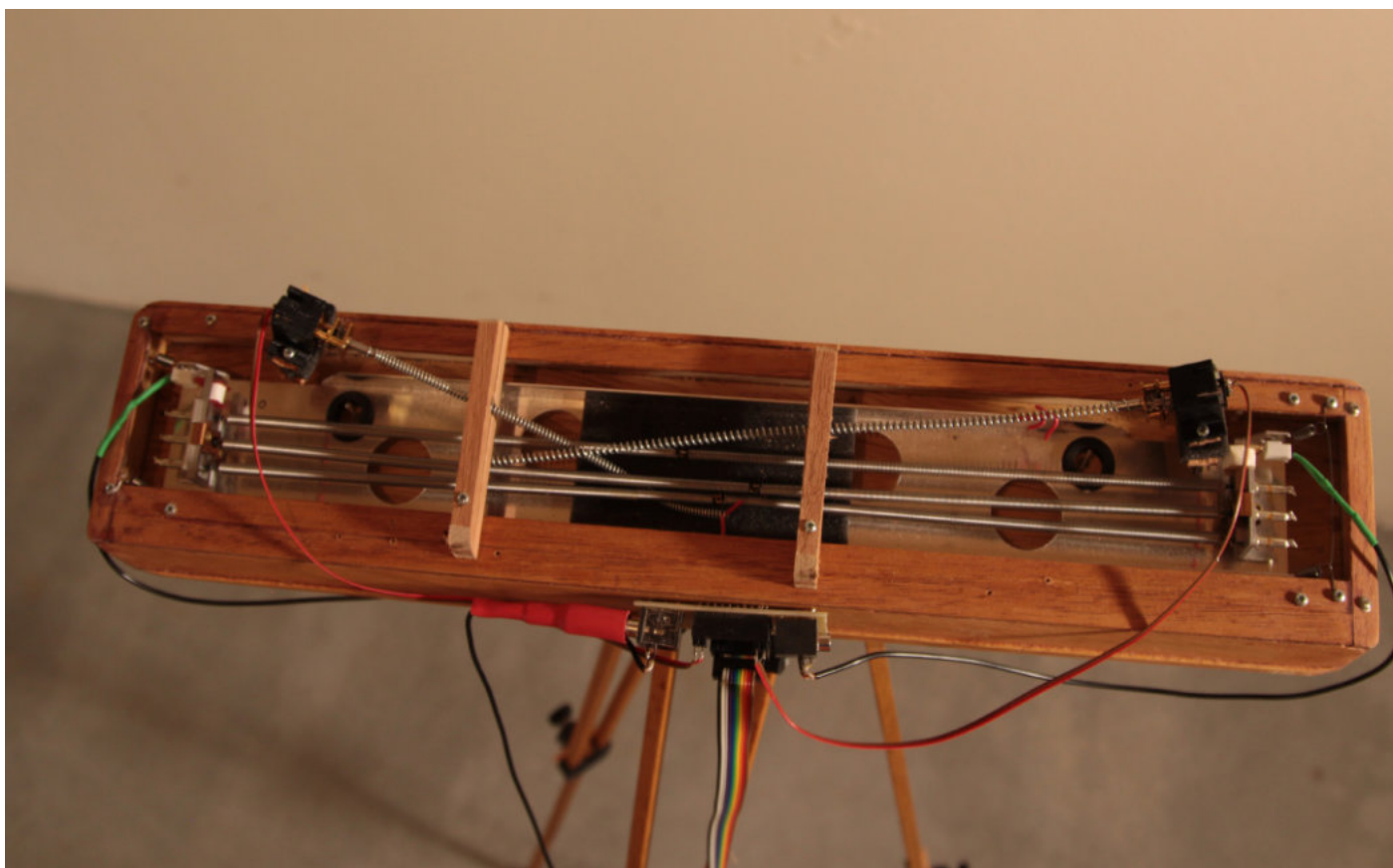






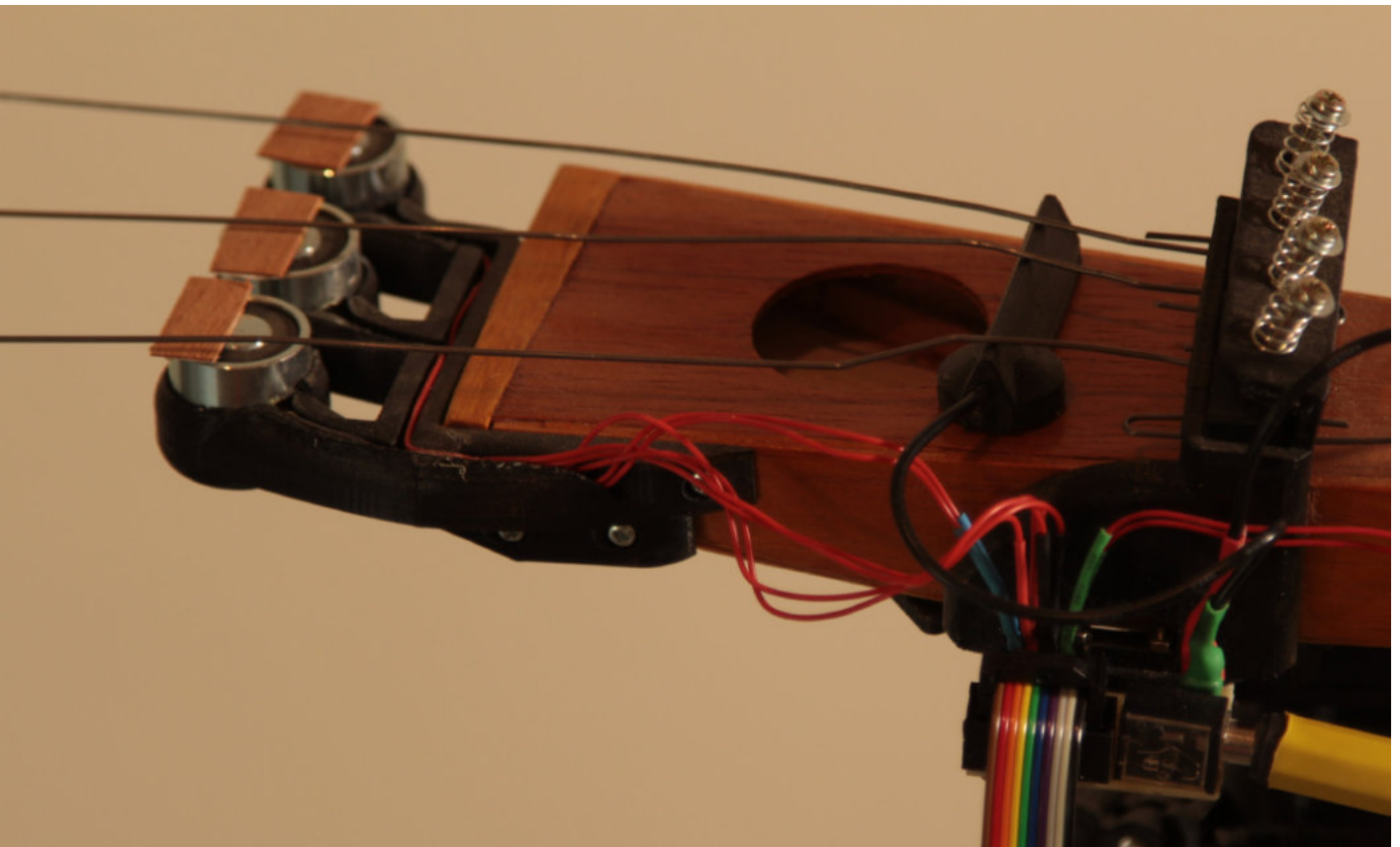


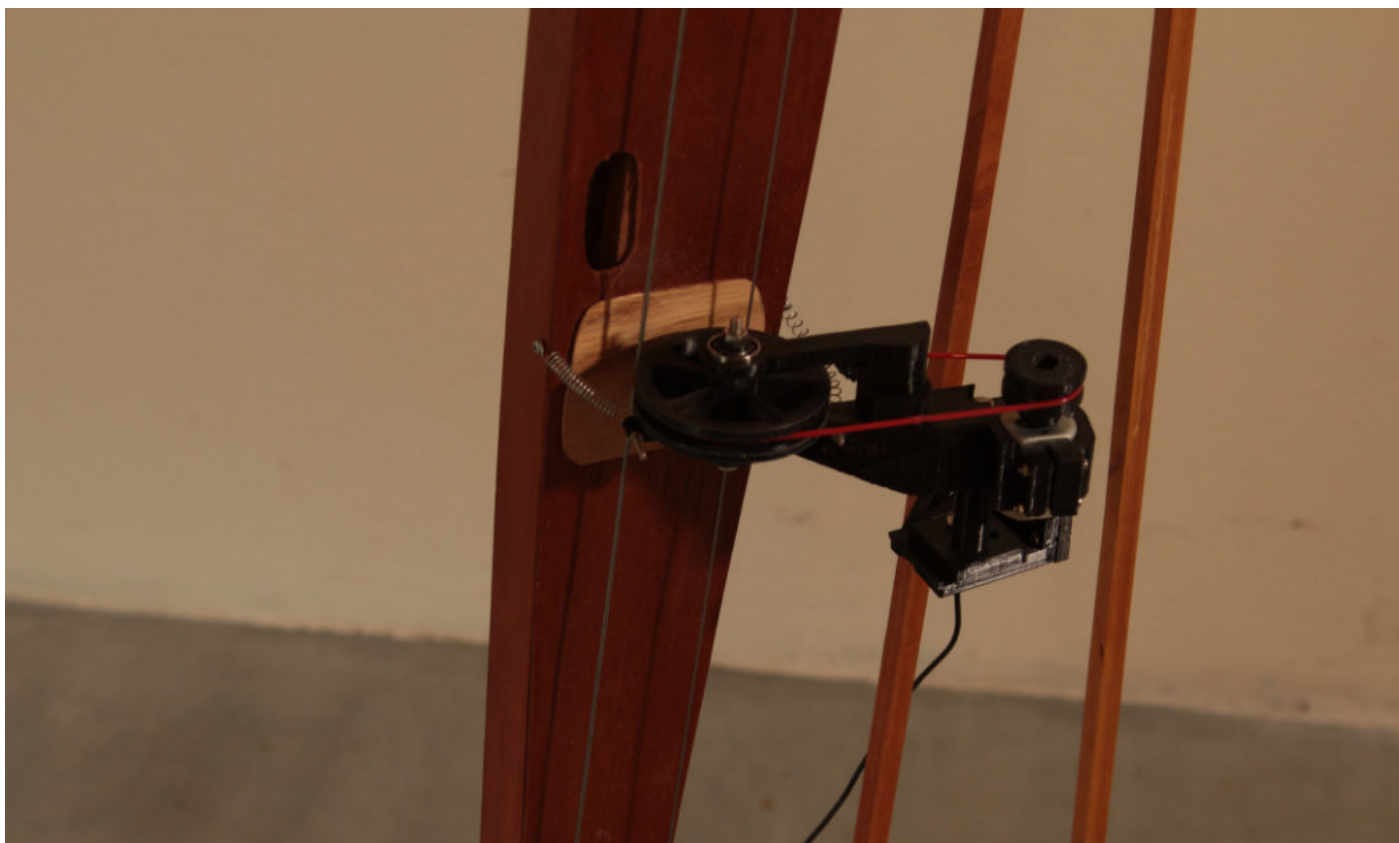






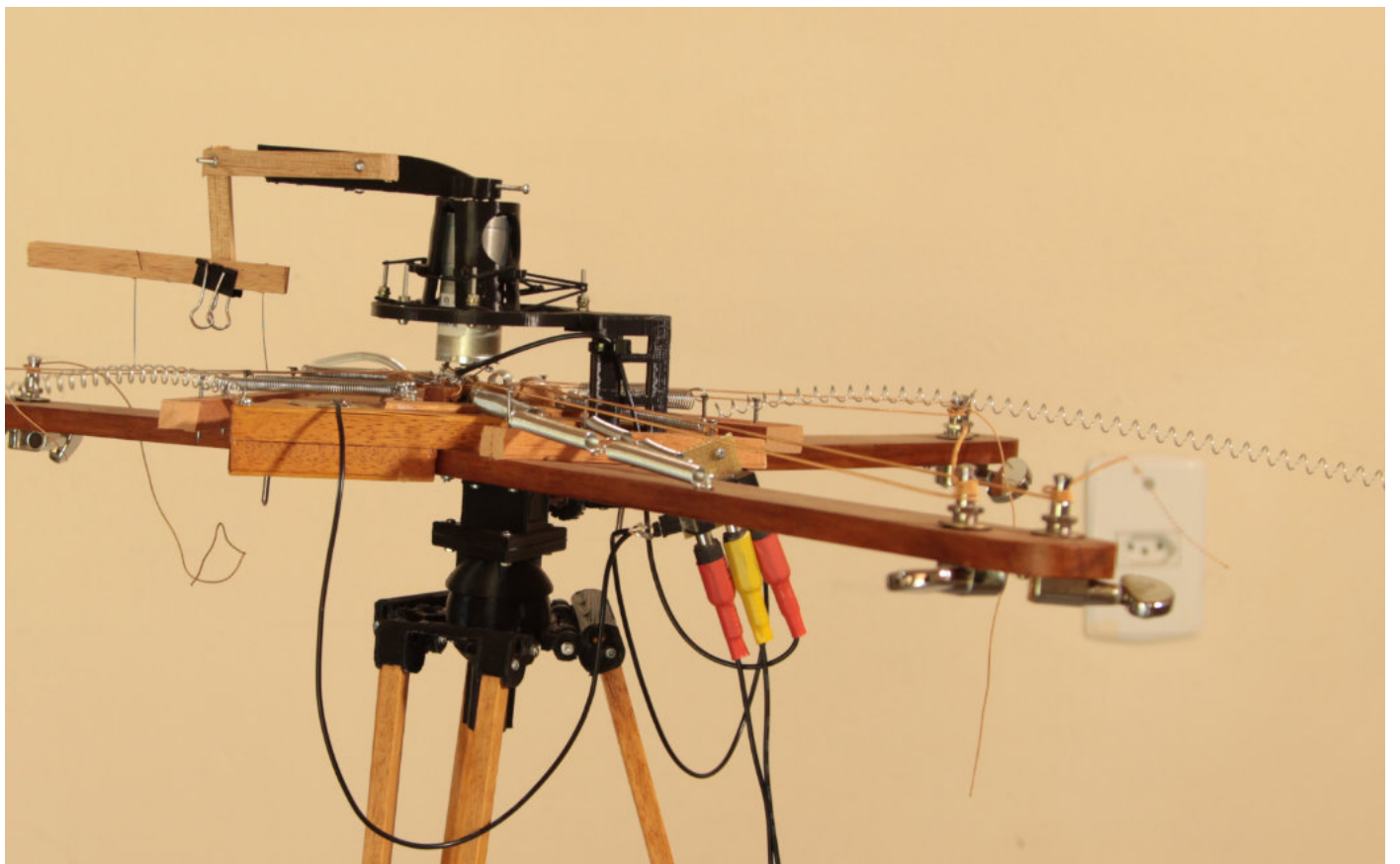


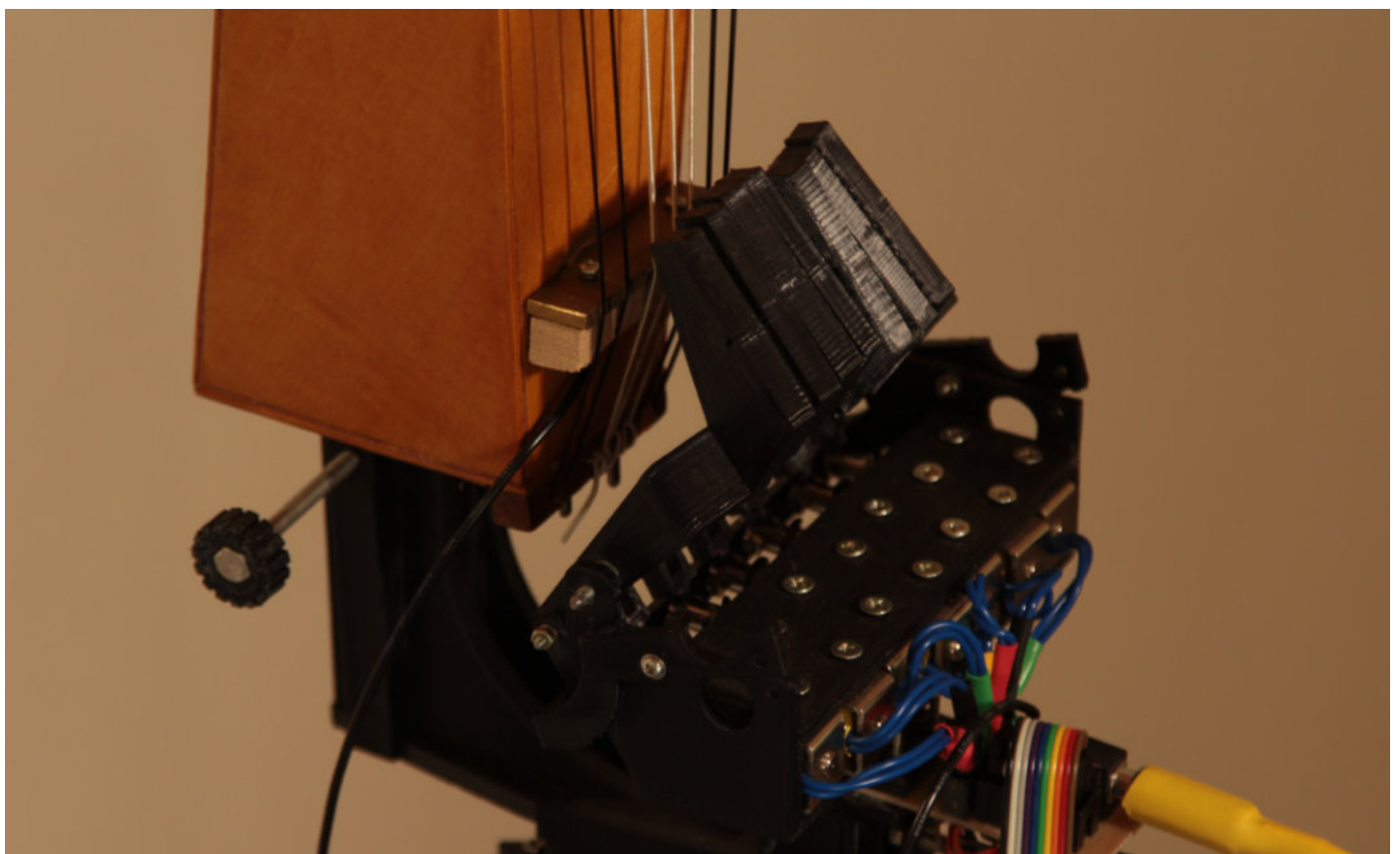




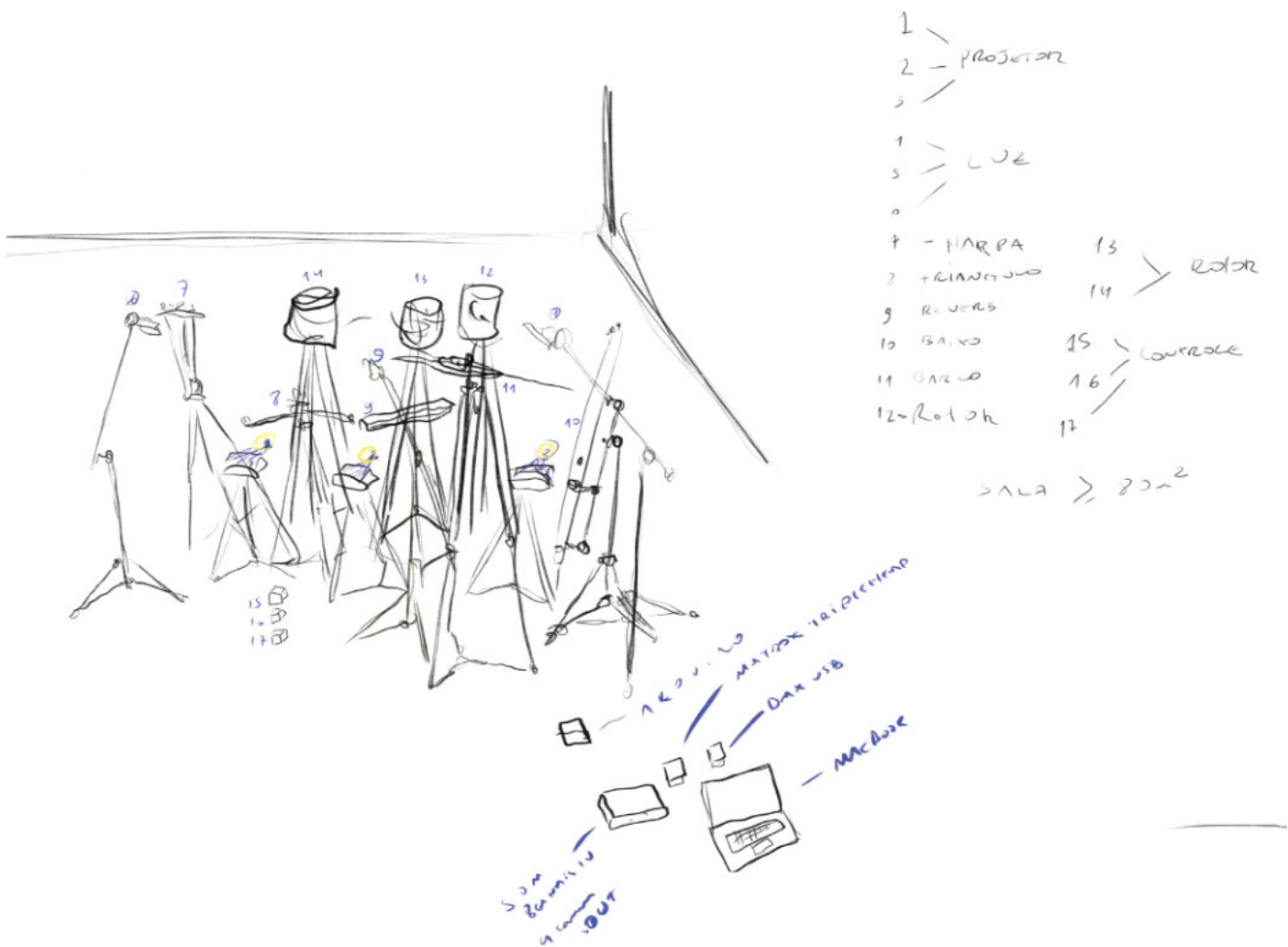












# Earth's Mind is Life



<https://vimeo.com/662493376>

## PROGRAM

Roberto Freitas

Quando o pensamento passar  
tudo vai dissolver  
assim como nossos pensamentos que somem  
como meu almoço de ontem  
que teimo em tentar lembrar  
sendo que ontem eu sequer almocei

When the thought passes  
everything will dissolve  
just like our thoughts that fade away  
like my lunch yesterday  
that I stubbornly try to remember  
and yesterday I didn't even have lunch





The soundtrack is live  
a kind of Performative Machine

everything is a *trapizonga*.

Erth's Mind is Life

Film with live soundtrack by:

Roda de viola. Strings of Cielo.

Barco. Straight springs

Reverb springs.

Triangle, guitar strings and springs.

Harp. 7 strings and hammers.

Three rotors. moving images

Light, Pickups, Microphones, Sound  
interface, Projectors and Computer.

pensamento que me atravessou sob a tutela da ayahuasca.

A quintet of robotic musicians performs an audiovisual concert accompanying a film shown on three floating rotors. The music is carefully synchronized with the film, maintaining a sense of randomness that makes it organic, within a compositional metric that follows the events of the film.

The film is about two rivers and the idea of ubiquity - as if all rivers are present everywhere there is a river. The camera follows the trajectory of three different locations, with the images overlapping and choreographed to create a visual dance experience that lasts 15 minutes, divided into three chapters and a prologue. Overall, it is an event that combines sound and image in a synchronized and engaging way, exploring the theme of rivers and their omnipresent presence.



### Prologue:

Sob seus pés corre um rio que escuta seus passos

Under your feet runs a river that listens to your steps

A terra tem vida porque ela é criativa,  
planeta, estrela ou satélite tem ciclo e por isso morre.  
Ao mesmo tempo o que não nasceu não pode morrer,

The earth has life because it is creative,  
planet, star or satellite has a cycle and therefore dies.  
At the same time what is not born cannot die,

Os rios são os vasos  
Os pulmões são a atmosfera.  
O coração é o núcleo  
Coração de ferro fundido  
Florescendo nuvens de hemácias  
Febre hemorrágica

The rivers are the vessels  
The lungs are the atmosphere.  
The heart is the core  
Heart of molten iron  
Blossoming clouds of red blood cells  
Hemorrhagic fever

Os poços de petróleo são as vesículas  
As montanhas os ossos  
A vida é pensamento  
e que tal como onda  
Movimenta a matéria sem desloca-la

Oil wells are the vesicles  
The mountains are the bones  
Life is thought  
and like a wave  
Moves matter without displacing it

Contradição está em nós  
também no corpo dos astros.  
Hoje a terra está viva e nos pensa  
vivemos na brecha da autonomia do seu pensamento.

Contradiction is in us  
also in the body of the stars.  
Today the earth is alive and thinks us  
we live in the gap of the autonomy of its thought.



## Chapter 1:

O pouco tempo que nos resta até o vazio tem a consistência de sonho

The little time we have left until emptiness has the consistency of a dream

Sou um ser vivo  
uma pessoa  
assim como uma árvore  
ou um humano  
vibro como tudo que está vivo

como você  
como a terra  
como infinito

Atravesso  
Me enraízo  
Capilarizo  
Faço a Terra pensar

I am a living being  
a person  
just like a tree  
or a human  
I vibrate like everything that is alive

like you  
like the earth  
like infinity  
I cross

I root myself  
capillary  
I make the Earth think





## Chapter 2:

a vida é o pensamento da terra

The Earth's Mind is Life

Mas uma parte desse seu mundo resolveu que haviam os iguais

But a part of that world of yours decided that there were equals

E esses iguais eram melhores

And those equals were better

Todos os outros,

all the others,

os diferentes dos iguais,

the different from the equals,

Todos os outros corpos

All other bodies

Segundo as lei dos iguais,

According to the law of equals,

Devem sua carne

owe their flesh

Agora estou morto,

Now I am dead,

Sob o asfalto,

Under the asphalt,

Mas depois,

But then,

daqui a algum tempo

some time from now

muito em breve

very soon

Em três dias

In three days

ressuscito

I rise

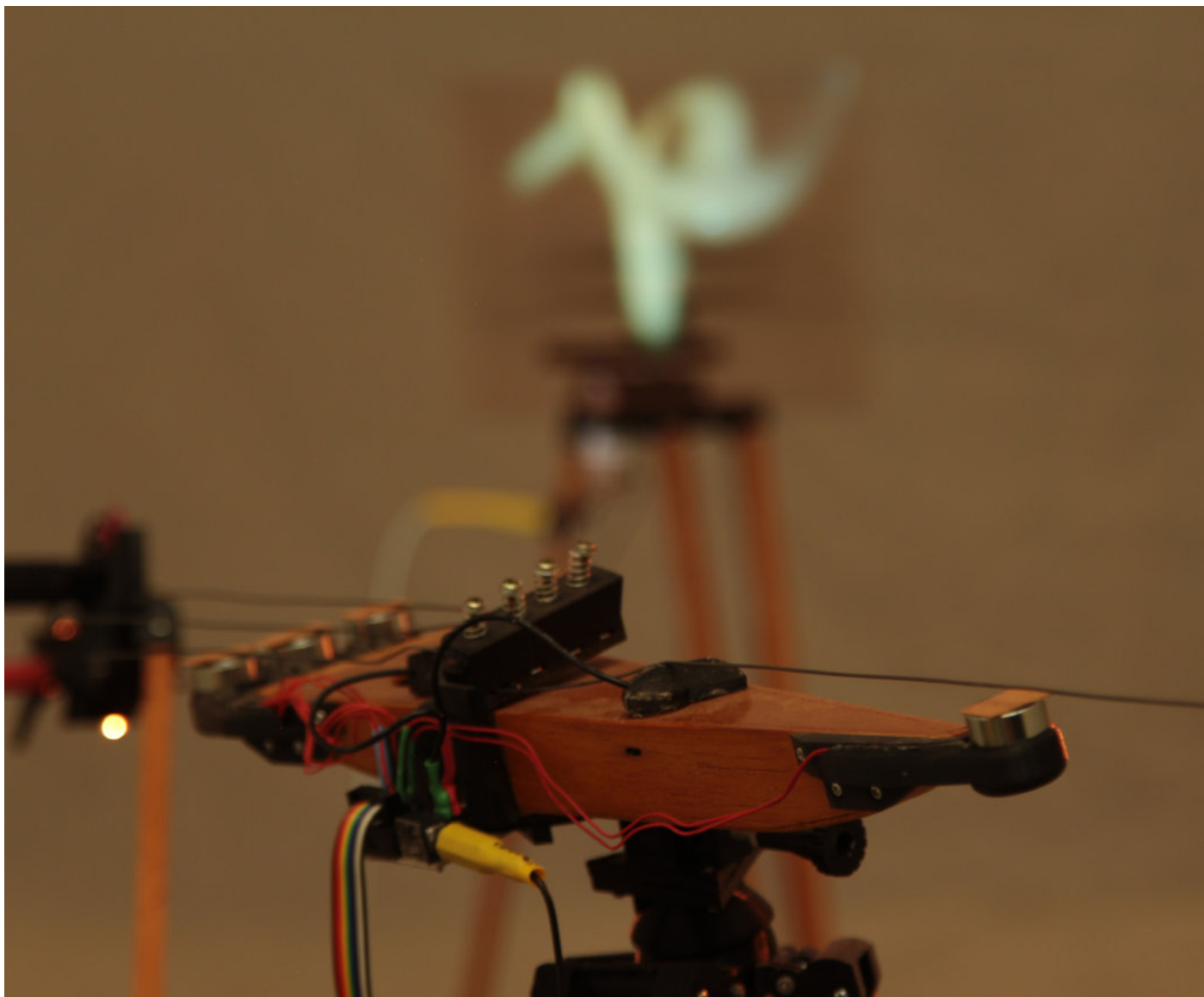


O primeiro dia é a sua extinção,  
O segundo dia é o tempo da memória  
O terceiro é o que volto como que antes  
Mas sempre diferente  
Assim como as minhas águas  
Metáfora do tempo  
Que é onde você vive  
Não eu

Vocês matam tudo que é outro  
O sangue vira rio  
E o rio vira lama  
vermelha  
Amarga  
Carcça da terra  
Dissecada  
E vendida em lotes por nada  
Por números elétricos  
Por um delírio ético

The first day is its extinction,  
The second day is the time of memory  
The third is that I return as before  
But always different  
Just like my waters  
Metaphor of time  
Which is where you live  
Not me

You kill everything that is other  
Blood turns to river  
And the river becomes mud  
red  
Bitter  
Carcass of earth  
Dissected  
And sold in lots for nothing  
For electric numbers  
For an ethical delirium



### Chapter 3: Grito surdo das vozes silenciadas

Deaf scream of the silenced voices

Te vi nascer  
E acho triste ter que esperar você morrer  
Mas já vivi isso antes  
Vou viver isso depois

I saw you born  
And I find it sad to have to wait for you to die  
But I've lived this before  
I'll live this later

Enquanto isso você vive nesse sistema  
Que insiste em vincular o seu fim ao fim do mundo  
Exaurindo as possibilidades de vida  
Pra você

Meanwhile you live in this system  
That insists on linking your end to the end of the world  
Exhausting the possibilities of life  
For you

Entre nas minhas águas  
e sinta a corrente  
Que é contracorrente do seu mundo  
E quando sair não deixe minha correnteza sair de você

Enter my waters  
and feel the current  
That is countercurrent of your world  
And when you leave, don't let my current leave you



# Earth's Mind is Life

Project Background

Roberto Freitas

The Earth's Mind is Life" is a title that brings a reflection on the relationship between life and the earth. This thought leads us to consider the earth as an omniscient being, capable of thinking and manifesting itself through the life that inhabits it.

In fact, the earth is a living and dynamic organism that interacts with all the beings that inhabit it. Life is the material manifestation of this thinking being, a manifestation that takes place in different forms and at different levels of complexity.

From micro-organisms to human beings, we are all part of a complex and interconnected ecosystem that is the earth. Every living thing is an integral part of this ecosystem and, at the same time, is influenced by it. The earth provides us with resources and hosts the conditions necessary for our survival, and we in turn affect and shape the earth with our activities and choices. This thought is the basis of the project I started in a residency at ESPAI, a space created by visual artists and researchers Nydia Negromonte and Marcelo Drummond.

The project consisted of a group of artists walking around the neighborhood of Santa Efigênia, in Belo Horizonte, in an initiative called Circunvizonhanças. During the walk, I set up a route that passed by the Córrego do Cardozo and created a choreography of looking at the camera. This same choreography was done again in Serra do Cipó. Then, overlapping the images, I experimented with an unorthodox methodology of audiovisual projection that included the spectator as part of the work.

During the editing, I tried to bring the sense of ubiquity that I felt during the hikes, something that was very unique to me. These walks stayed connected in my memory and were a source of inspiration to continue researching. By the end of the residency, I had more questions to research than materials gathered.

With the support of Rumos Itaú Cultural, I conceived an unfolding of the research and spent a year working in an empty hut in the Serra da Mantiqueira. There, I researched the depth of springs, waterholes, and neighboring rivers. Mantiqueira is known as the "Mountain that cries" and must be one of the places with the most water springs in the world. This spiritual and artistic retreat was an intense period of work and reflection.

At the end, the edges of the installation were closed, but the research continues and I believe there is still much to be explored about the relationship between life and the land.



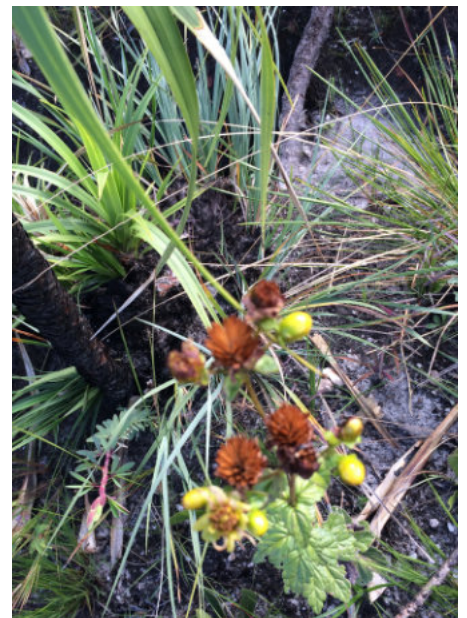
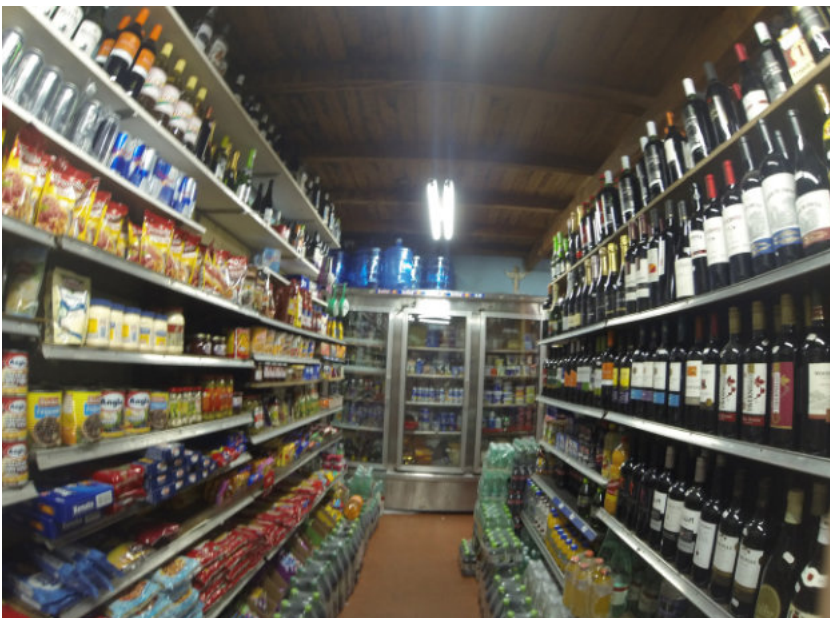
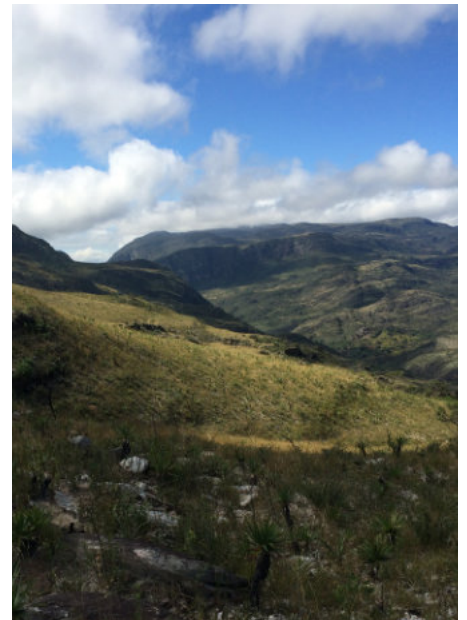








how to create kinship?



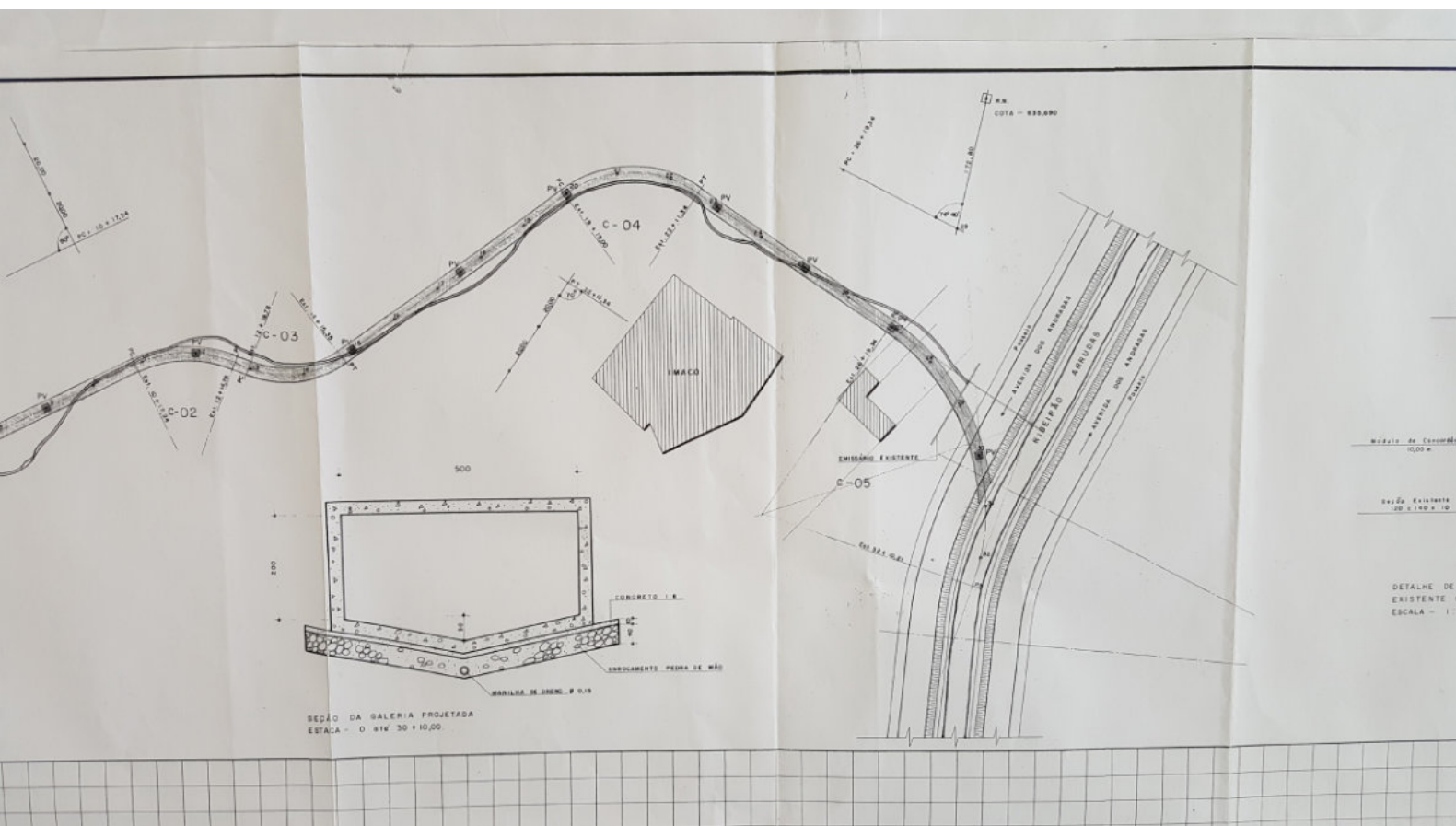








Streets of the Santa Efigênia neighborhood in Belo Horizonte projected in scale over aerial views of the Serra do Cipó National Park.



Canalization project for the Corrego do Cardoso stream in the Santa Efigênia neighborhood in Belo Horizonte.





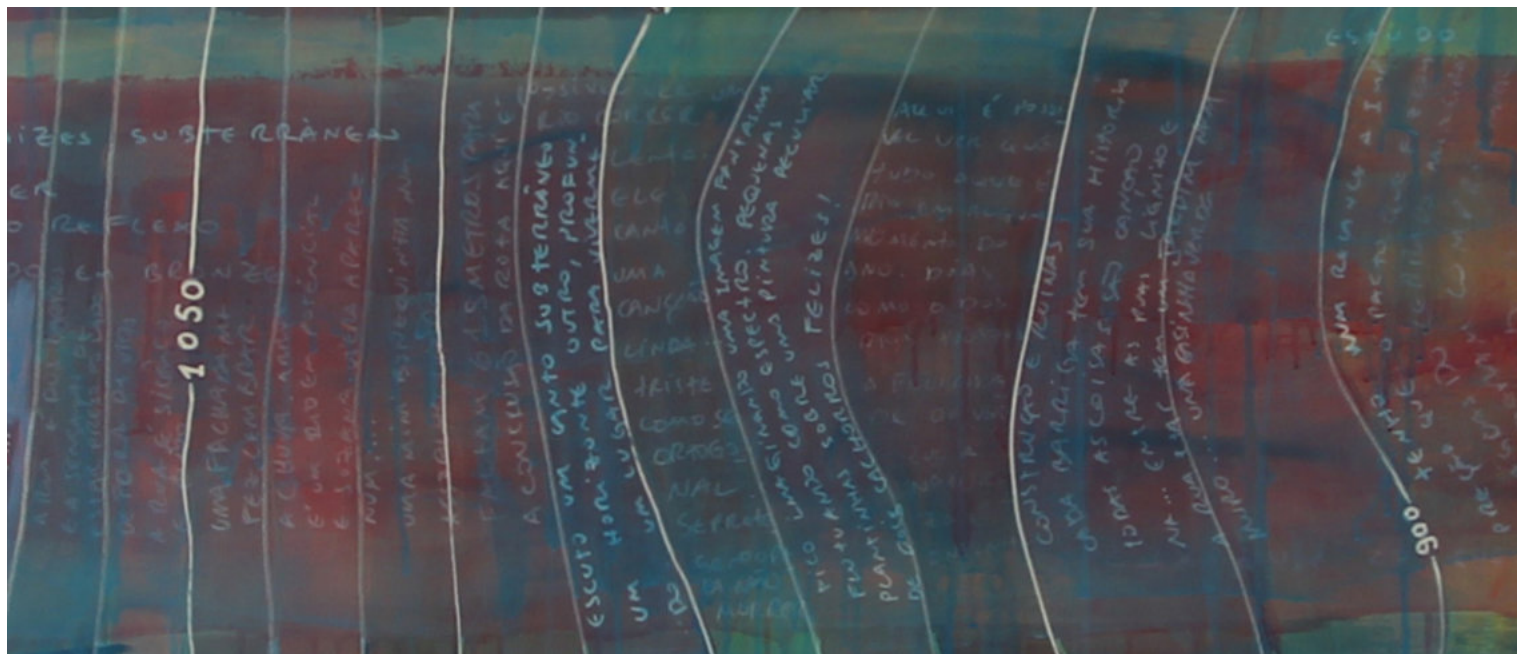
Canalization works at Corrego do Cardoso stream in Belo Horizonte.



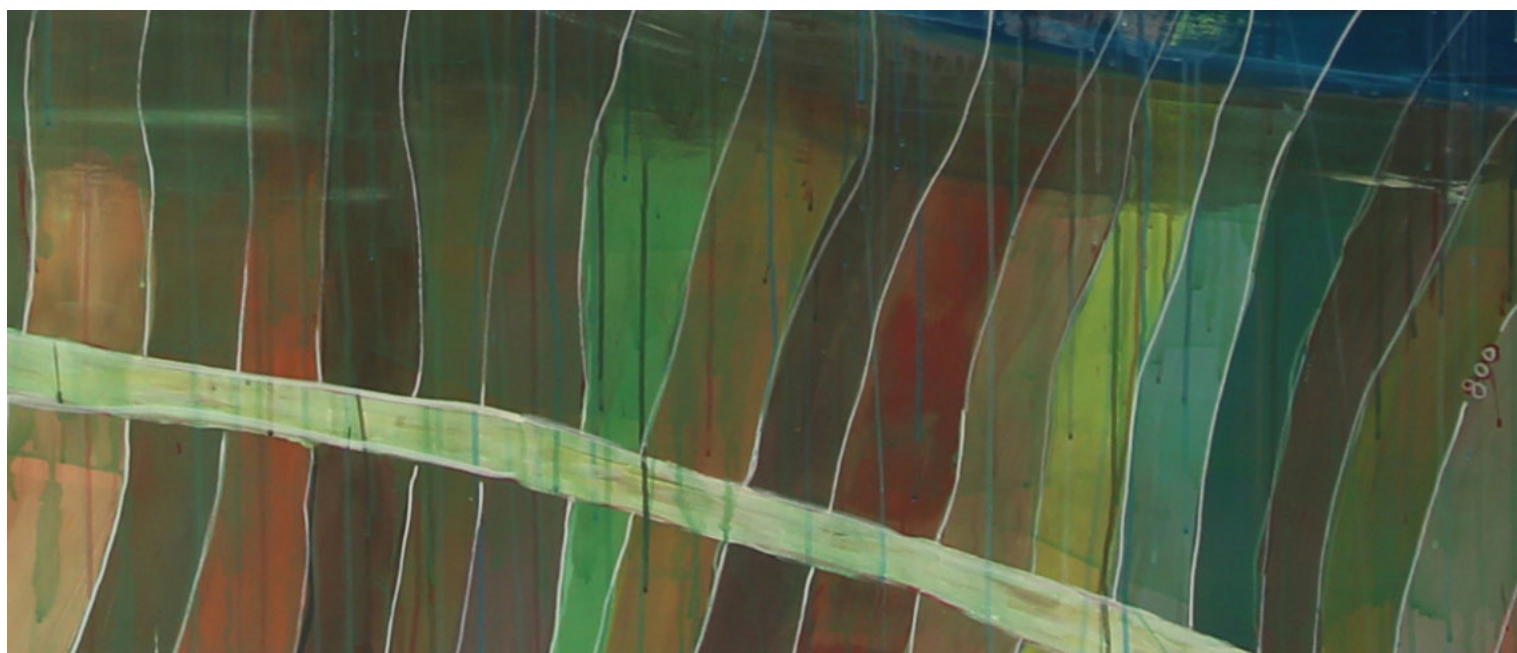




Choreographic walking and looking project with a study of the level curves.

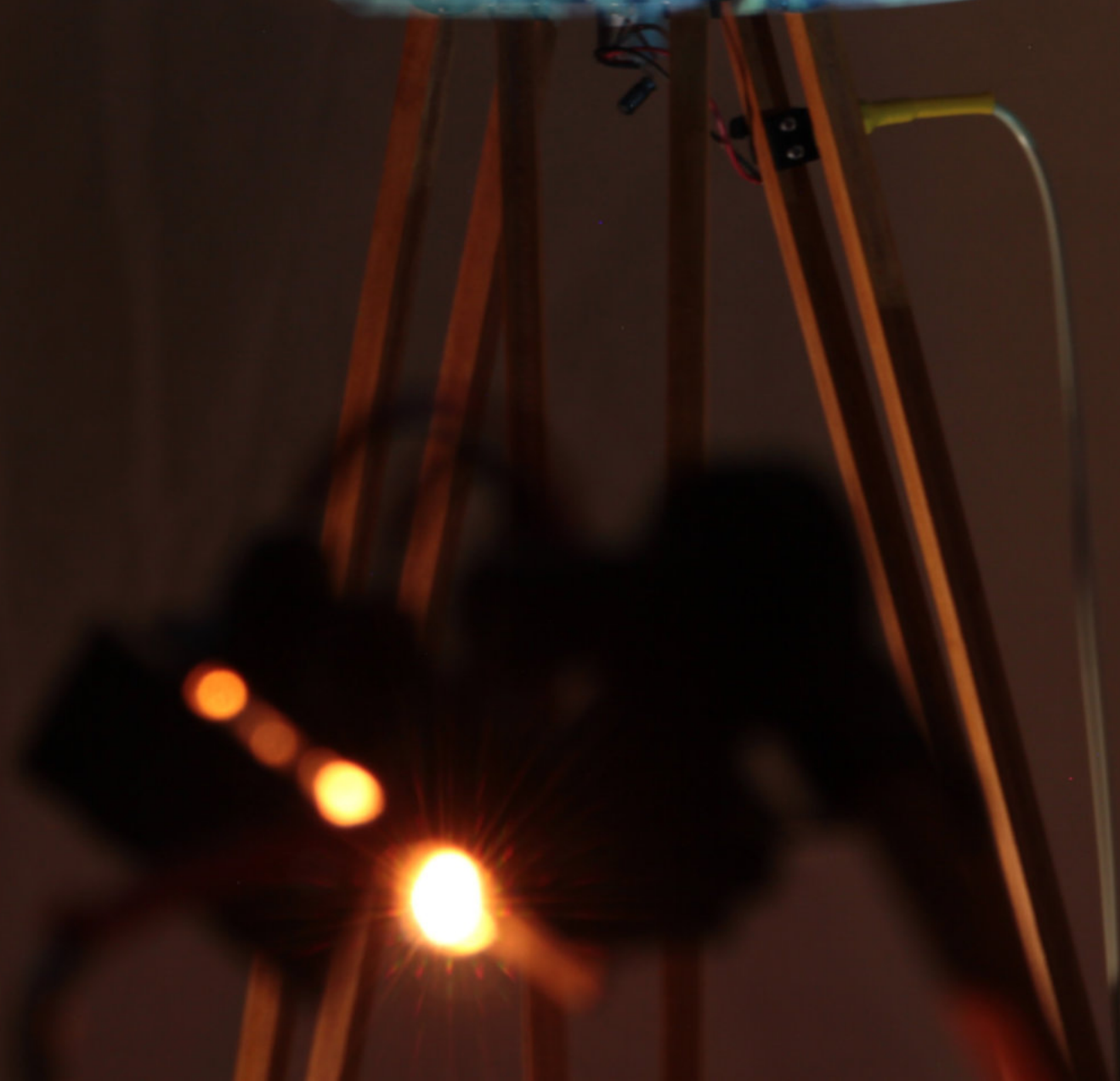


detail











<https://www.robortofreitas.net>