

Between Sheets

Conversation between Lígia Soares and João Lucas

What is it that interests you the most in my work?

Lígia Soares: Right away your work is a form, not an action, it is immediately an idea and inspiration. It never appears with an 'I'll figure out what to do afterwards' or 'I'll begin working and then I'll see what happens'. Never. It always comes with an idea, already filled with colour, with words and with relationships. And afterwards yes, the work, the handling of the material may reveal other paths. They are ideas subject to being overcome, modified, communicated, that can become other ideas or none at all, and they rejoice at taking form. Another thing that impresses me in your work is the eclecticism, your capacity to connect to the music in its widest possibilities and even contribute towards widening it even more, with yet another unusual discovery, born of your openness to things happening. While your music is difficult to define and grasp in categorical terms, there is always something absolutely distinctive, which leaves no doubt that it is yours, whether it is popular, electronic, symphonic or whatever it is. In your work, music, which is normally the least verbal of material, reveals a dramaturgy, is an organizer of poetics, of syntaxes, and often constitutes itself as the dramaturgical heart of the works you create. In my work, I align myself with a necessary dose of cynicism, and I know I regard everything that seeks to move us with mistrust. Your work is one of the few places I allow that to happen, to experience emotion, celebration and wonder without, despite that, having to let go of the cold reason necessary for understanding the world. Besides that, it helps that your preoccupations as a human being are compatible with mine, and to know that when I am working with you, I am not alone.

João Lucas : One thing I like in your pieces is that they are experienced; they have something that gets mistaken for the world, something that captures it in the performance nets, but which doesn't numb it in the intentionalities of discourse, something that preserves the heartbeat of that which is experienced in the artifice of the composition. I like the way that stands out, how each moment happens in the duration of the present and in the density of presence, in the melody of significations, in the duration of the silences, in the violence of intensities, in the vertigo of the depths, in the power of banalities, continually in the concrete interpellation of the other, in the implication of its presence, in refusing anonymity. I also think that this production of presence offers itself up as a response to an interrogation of the world which, being very much your own, is given to us as very much our own, in some way we are always joined together in this movement of your thinking. An interrogation suspends us when facing the abyss, in other words, it creates in us a duration of ignorance and innocence, leaves us open to the world responding to us at some moment which is not yet present. I think that is one of the things you do, a perpetual suspension faced with the abyss of presence. A suspension which is, in itself, a movement. Your interrogation is born of this perpetual movement in the direction of the world, which always transcends you, therefore it is an interrogation which is always remaking itself and becoming transfigured throughout the creative process, from work to work, from device to device. That interrogation is something from your life and is formulated to be from our lives also, it is offered to us as very much our own, which in some way makes us *brothers in arms* in the unveiling of the world. I also like the clairvoyance with which I identify my place in the trail of your thought. A place that oscillates in its becoming a work, a bit more like this or like that, more this or that, but a place always in complete harmony with the work, a place which appropriates the work with sovereignty of freedom and the ethics of desire. This closeness between freedom and ethics makes your work my work. I am absolutely free as the author, I am definitively ethical so that your soul never abandons me and in that way a side of my expression that also belongs to you may flourish. Perhaps that is the most beautiful thing, because the composition gesture becomes a gesture of sharing, because it comes out of

me, seeking the work and the work speaks to me in the timbre of your voice. This is the incantation which remains, in all that I experience, in what we do together.

In what way will we work together?

Lígia Soares: First we will share ideas at a distance, while you are in Brazil and I in Lisbon, building the writing based on the idea of a staging that has as its focus the creation of a performative installation to be inhabited by the audience. A very concrete idea in terms of action, but which we have to discover together so that it is not too vague for the audience. Then, I will do the maintenance of the initial concept and idea, and discover its execution, and

you will show me its potential in ways I could not imagine. The next step will be the ability to write more text, already separated from the interviews, with a well-defined voice (Mine or yours? We have to think about that, perhaps a masculine voice is more challenging for speaking about a dowry, what do you think?)

João Lucas Well, this time we will interrogate bedsheets. I believe the bedsheets will not confess their place in the order of the world. It seems to me then, that our mission will be to project the world in its folds, on its multiple sides which will become the mirroring of the diversity of people with whom we will interact, those who visit us and those who were already there. People who own sheets and those who sleep in those sheets. People who take in and those who are taken in, who mix with each other through the contact of the skin with the fabric of the sheets, and in that contact, materialize a specific relationship with the world. The sheets are offered through the generosity of sharing, washed and folded, emitting the aroma of the rivers or fabric softeners. The sheets are returned wrinkled by the guests' sleep, touched by dreams or tinged by nightmares, sullied by suspect stains, or

simply marked by the nocturnal sweat which places the sheets in the living matter of the diverse materials of the festival. The sheets must be folded because there is an order in which we wish to integrate ourselves, an order which suggests an explanation, a response, an order which aspires to dominate the complexity of the world reducing it to an elementary mechanism. I would like it if there were a song that spoke of all this, what do you think?

Besides the festival, how do you see these bedsheet games and the question of hospitality? What do you think you can do about this through your work?

Lígia Soares: To answer this question, I am going to start with a view to the work I have done and in which I have most strongly attempted my personal preoccupations and worries, as I don't see my artistic activity as just a profession, which doesn't interest me much, but mainly as a gesture from my person to other people. This current necessity, of un-identifying myself with the word work, is at the same level as when I've questioned the theatrical or performative productions I've done. Through this, I intend to un-focus the contours which separate the spectator from the actor, the stage from the audience, the active from the passive, the product from the consumer, the stage space from the space outside of the stage, and so on. And to try, through this un-focusing, to point to another place, disorganized as far as assigned places, but scrutinizing of human relationships, communication, responsibility for the other, for society and for everything that may yet live and change. In that sense, I appeal to elements such as: an active scenic device on the spectator — this can also be seen as a game with rules shared by the dramaturgy of the piece; I appeal to signs that are intelligible by all seeking the true and fluid experience of the relationship with that fictional language — **this can be considered a type of 'bedsheet'** where we lower our weapons and allow ourselves to wander in a place of comfort between

people and the comfort of languages; and I also seek, through the theatrical and performative space, to lead to think about the other and the experience of the other as someone of equal importance to each of us, favouring spaces in which we can share our actions in a common sense instead of privately, which to me seems to easily connect to the idea of hospitality.

João Lucas *Jogo de lençóis* (Bedsheet game) is what we can call a domestic apparatus. But *jogo de lençóis* is also a metaphor which refers to the implication of two signs, in this case, the sign *jogo* (game) and the sign *lençol (bedsheet)*. Therefore, *jogo* is a sign which, when isolated, expands its immediate signification of an indeterminate group of artefacts for activities which are usually playful, invoking other signs such as badminton, hide and seek, monopoly, eroticism, computer, fighting, etc. Whereas *lençol* is a sign which, when isolated, points to other signs which associate it with qualities such as thermal, textural, chromatic, economical (warm bedsheets, soft bedsheets, white bedsheets, cheap bedsheets), etc. The sign *lençol* can also be used to evoke aquatic fluxes, such as sheets of water or water tables. The metaphoric power of the implication of these two signs can create an infinity of other signs, generating images such as boiling dispute, rough darkness, velvety caresses or digital red, to give just a few examples. On the other hand, *hospitality* is a sign with an immediate objective in the taking in of another, but with semantic virtualities related more strictly with taking in, pure and simply — *this phrase takes on various meanings, this question takes in various answers*. Uniting bedsheet game with hospitality, the signifying expansion of these three signs elevates us to a virtually infinite sphere of implications — *the taking in of aquatic norms, the flux of hospitable plays, the encompassing embrace of luck*. Based on the latent poetics in this universe of possible implications, it seems to me that my immediate function is to try to hear the music which is hidden in the shadow of these signs, to ponder the atmospheric vibrations that surround them, to discover the acoustic reverberation of hospitality in the pulsation of the bedsheet game.