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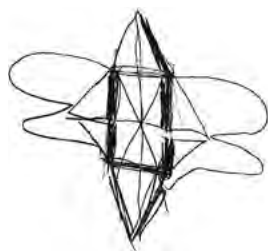
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Écouter une mélodie silencieuse vient confirmer
l'importance d'être seule. Les dessins sont
des architectures dans lesquelles la permanence
habite en une compulsion secrète, aux
sifflements. Régurgitant, lacérant, soufflant,
poignardant, léchant le vide. Ils sont ce que je
connais de plus proche des rêves : une projection
inversée accompagnée d'ombres utérines que
je ne parviens pas à déchiffrer totalement.
Les yeux sont toujours à l'extérieur. La véritable
dimension d'un dessin est sa profondeur.

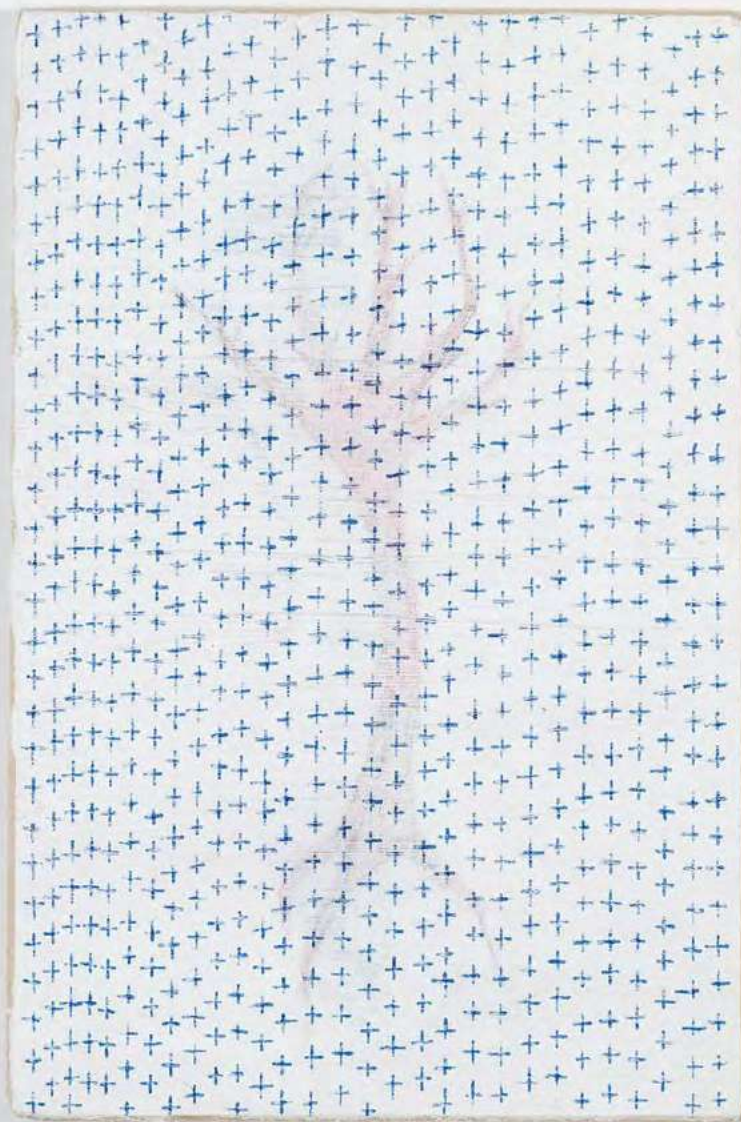
Ao escutar uma melodia silenciosa confirmo
a importância de se estar só. Os desenhos são
arquitecturas onde a permanência habita em
compulsão secreta, aos assobios. Bolçando,
rasgando, soprando, apunhalando, lambendo
o vazio. São o mais próximo que conheço dos
sonhos: uma projecção invertida com sombras
uterinas que não consigo totalmente decifrar.
Os olhos estão sempre de fora. A profundidade
de um desenho é a sua verdadeira dimensão.

Listening to a silent melody confirms
the importance of being alone. Drawings
are architectures where permanence dwells
in secret compulsion, whistling. Puking,
tearing, blowing, stabbing, licking the
void. They are the closest thing I know to
dreams: an inverted projection with uterine
shadows I am unable to fully decipher.
The eyes are always outside. The depth
of a drawing is its truest dimension.

S. B.



Sara Bichão













*I shall be gone and live or stay and die.*¹

Noëlig Le Roux

- 1 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 3, scene 5. Quote in exergue of the book by Nicolas Bouvier, *L'usage du monde* (1963), Paris, Éditions Payot, 1992.
- 2 La “S” Grand Atelier (Vielsalm, Belgium), founded some thirty years ago by Anne-Françoise Rouche, is a unique artistic space that supports the creative work of artists with mental disabilities. La “S” Grand Atelier is conceived as an open platform, where talents can flourish freely and where the labels and barriers that exist between different art worlds are dismantled. There, for several years now, Sara Bichão has been collaborating with Anaïd Ferté, the artist leading the textile workshop, and Barbara Massart, a transdisciplinary artist. Together, through residencies lasting from several weeks to months, they have developed a polyphonic body of work, showcased at BPS22 (Charleroi, Belgium, 2025).

In search of experiences, validation, and new perspectives – both artistic and commercial – artists are always on the lookout for opportunities that carry them to new places and horizons. Exhibitions, research projects, commissioned works, residencies, festivals, and meetings – artists receive no shortage of invitations and often find themselves far from their studios.

For Sara Bichão, as for her fellow artists, mobility – especially on an international scale – is a key issue. She has embraced this reality, which is intrinsic to her practice, and frequently leaves her home city, Lisbon, to undertake projects that span anywhere from a few days to several months, with some even extending over multiple years. Since 2023, she has been developing a long-term collaboration in the form of creative residencies with La “S” Grand Atelier, an arts centre based in the Belgian Ardennes, where artists with mental disabilities with artists from elsewhere.² In 2022, together with artist Violaine Lochu (b. 1987, France), she embarked on a travelling project lasting nearly two years. Following a residency exchange – one that took her to the island of Ouessant in Brittany and Lochu to the Azores archipelago – they reunited for a series of exhibitions spanning Brest, Lisbon and São Miguel Island. During this period, Sara Bichão was invited to work in New York (2022), exhibited in Copenhagen (2022) and then in Vienna (2023), before taking part in a festival between Sète and Lisbon (2024).

These frequent shifts in location and environment, along with the disruptions and upheavals they bring, infuse Sara Bichão’s work with renewed energy. While they challenge her sense of stability, they also sharpen her ability to adapt to







Nerve, 2018





Drawing is a net catching fish from different seas

Joana P. R. Neves

Cupped hands

I place my trust into Sara Bichão's hands, which I imagine cupped. I'm not the first person to do that. She often receives gifts and collects transitory objects orbiting between use and memory. Theirs is a volatile state, an eroded presence, which the artist's hands care for. Her father's discarded fishing and work shirt, for instance, was wrapped around fragments of a cane, plastic tubes, and dipped in pink acrylic paint – flesh and circulating air – *Breath* (2024). The artist also collected gifted peach pits, woody remnants of the digested fruit, which she proceeded to sew into a humanoid figure made with fabric and other materials, titled *Grave* (2017).

The scientist Robin Wall Kimmerer, enrolled Citizen of the Potawatomi nation, remembers how her father poured the first coffee onto the ground, following the ethos of gifting. In their culture, offerings belong to a philosophy of "reciprocity"¹. After a cupped hand receives or asks for something, it contracts its fingers around a tool or produce to make food, shelter, figurines, or medicine. These crafted items will go back to the earth, or they will be repaired eventually but they are all, in one way or another, shared with the community, which receives and circulates – gifts are re-gifted. This is what makes a world. And an artist who has amassed about 400 works before reaching the age of 40, is worlding in her own way. "The reason why I do these things is to externalize a revelation, a revelation which was personal."²

The artist is referring here to the exhibition, which she seems to redefine in her own terms. Not really a vitrine for exposure or presentation, but a site where she lays down a vision which turns the space into a place.

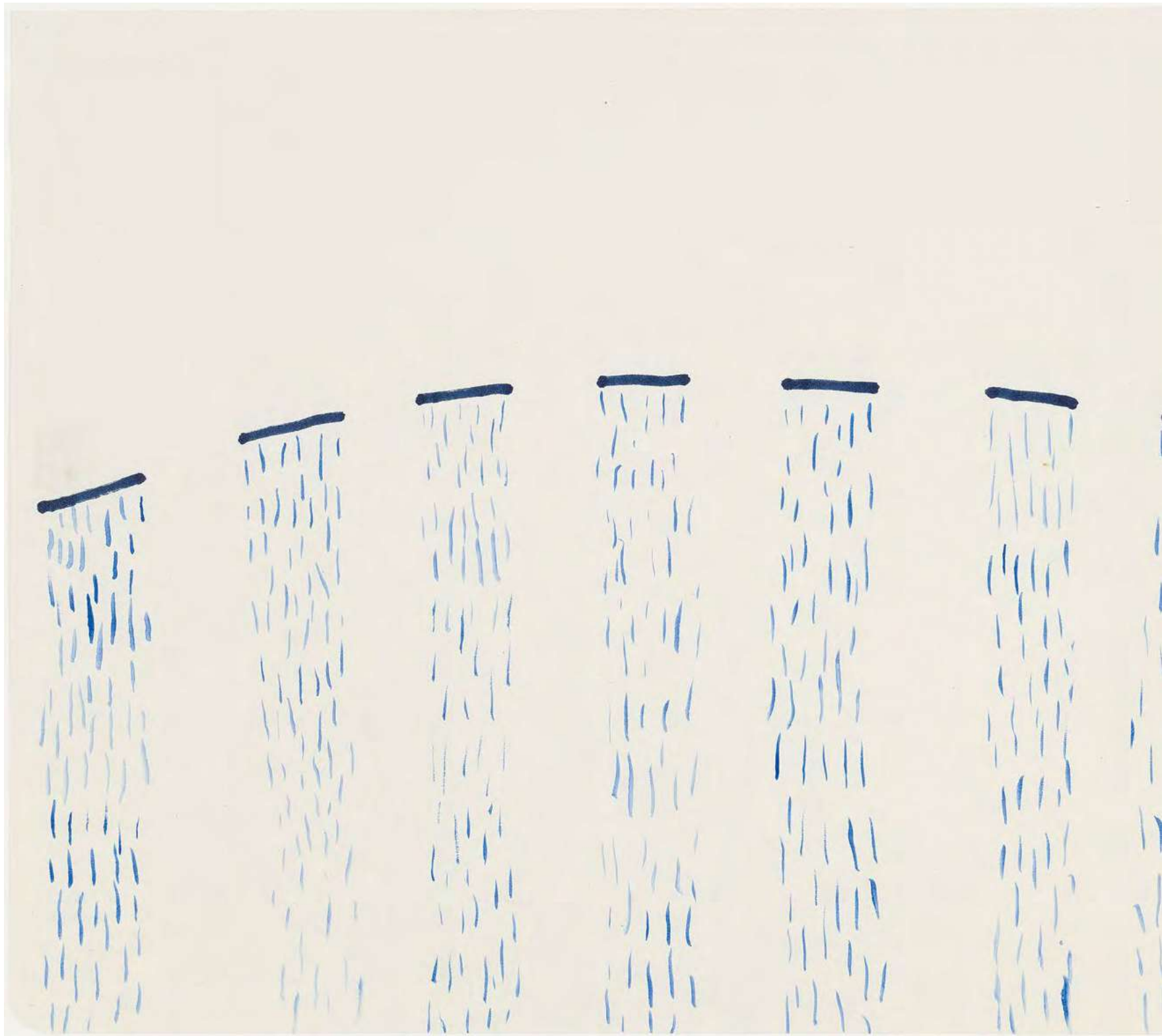
1 Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*, Penguin Books, 2013, pp. 33-34. The Potawatomi Nation is a federally recognized government of the eponymous Native American people, originally from the Great Plains in the north of the U.S.A.

2 Interview for the exhibition "Find Me, I Kill You", 2018 at Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian: <https://gulbenkian.pt/cam/en/agenda/sara-bichao-2/> (consulted on 10th March 2025). [Translated by the author]

Farewell, 2022



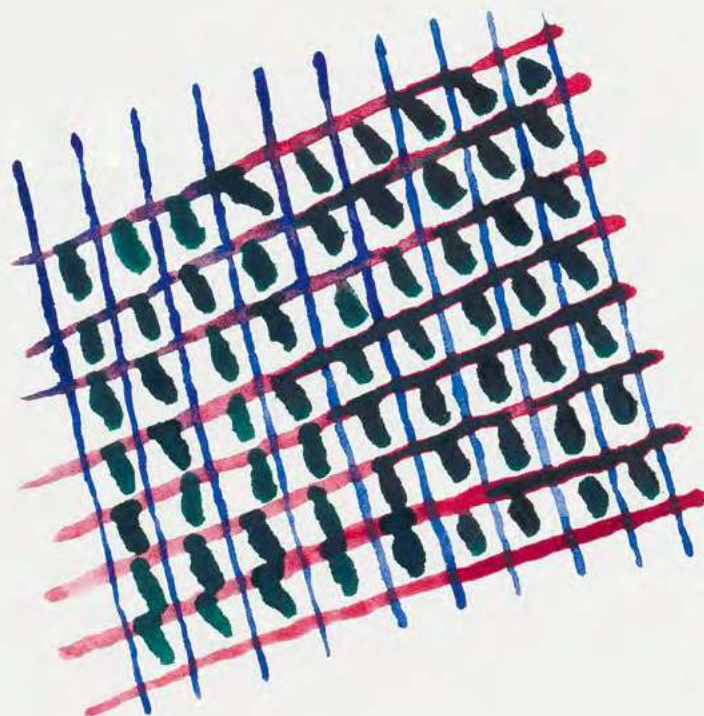




Untitled, 2012



Horse's Back (DETAIL), 2019



Figure, arrow, bow and tone

Delfim Sardo

1.

Seeking to characterise his experience in the 1970s with the Achuar Jivaro in the Upper Amazon, Philippe Descola recounts his surprise at the realisation that the fundamental categories we have for understanding and categorising the world (and which he used for his research work) were useless for describing the everyday practices of the community that received him. The classic distinctions of nature and culture, religion and history, and the specificity of technical knowledge were of no use in developing a discourse on an idea of society not structured on the basis of rules followed by humans. His subsequent theorisation of the four typologies that organise his anthropological thinking (animism, totemism, analogism, naturalism) emerged from an inability to convert an experience that required, in itself, another form of power not only to elaborate a discourse, but, more fundamentally, to organise knowledge, insofar as this is a whole set of different epistemes that spanned and surpassed fields that eighteenth-century rationality had delimited. It was a matter of understanding that processes of worldview construction are not just visions of the world, but worlds *per se* that mobilise our perceptions, intuitions and cognitive relationships in a non-propositional way.

This same feeling of strangeness and inadequacy seems to apply to Sara Bichão's practice, in the sense that her works, whether in the field of constructed objects, entities we could call sculptures, or drawings, seem to summon worlds that refer to cognitive, relational and symbolic formations that do not share an epistemology of the art work as it often appears in artistic discourse, i.e. as a formal construction that refers to a history, sustained by a propositionality that is exercised over it and which grounds it from an exterior that coexists with it and attributes meanings to it.

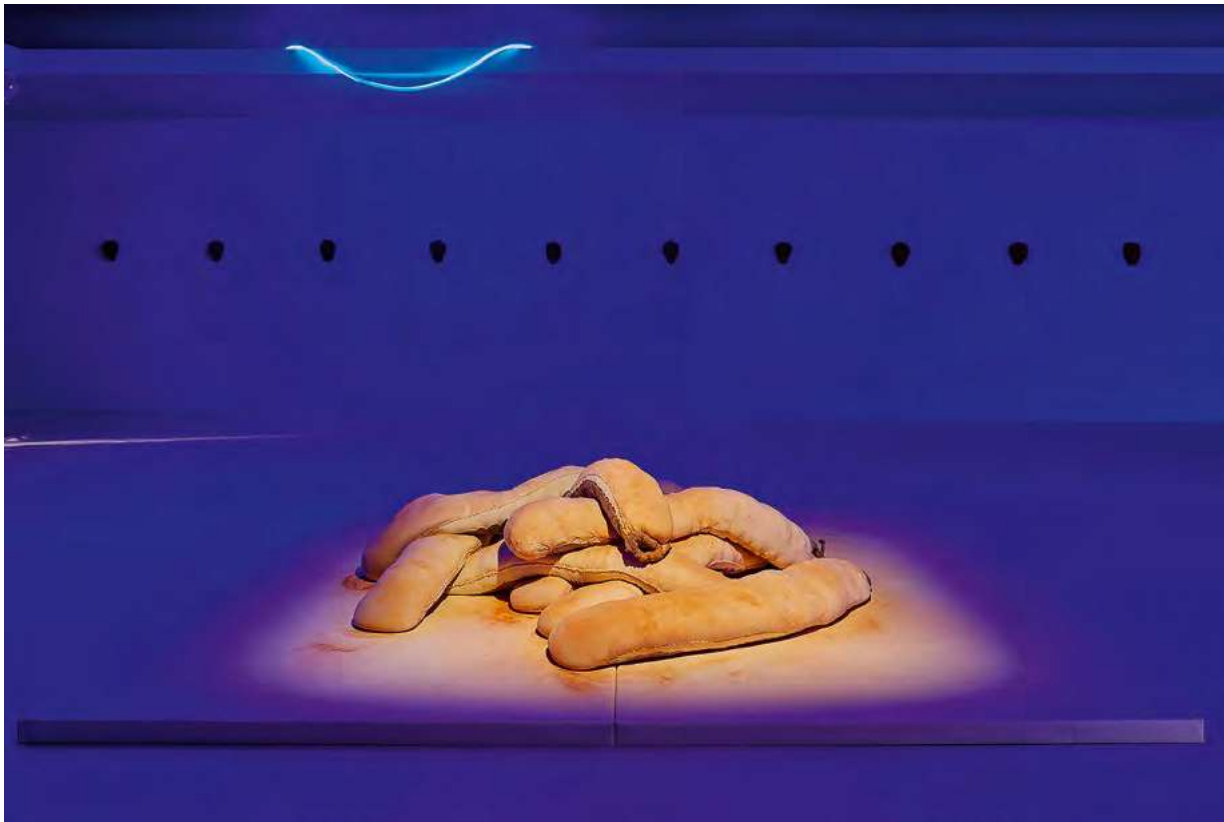
To clarify: the notion that a certain artistic production can be grounded in a discourse that establishes its own ontology is only possible if the lexicon relates to discursive protocols that can be recognised within a certain constellation of notions that have a historicity, such as the terminology of conventional form, political urgency, categorical recognition, or inscription in the typologies operating in a system of valuation with its stylistic patterns.

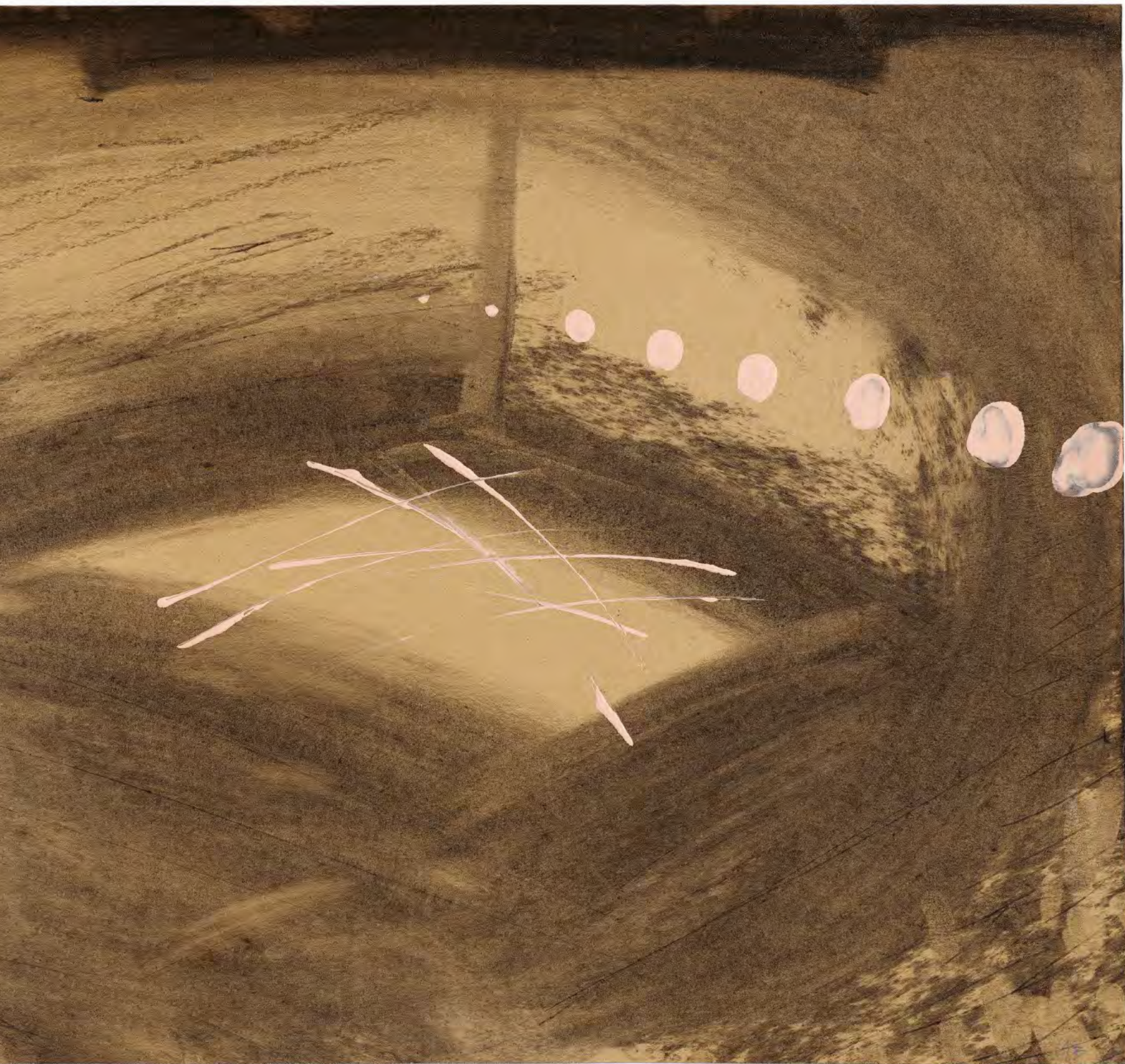
What happens when the propositional knowledge of artistic discourse seems to be subsumed in another order of urgencies and tensions that only seem to fit not into artistic but psychological typologies, but which nevertheless only find their sensitive possibilities within the context of the artistic?



Raia, 2018







SQUARE ROOT

Sara Bichão

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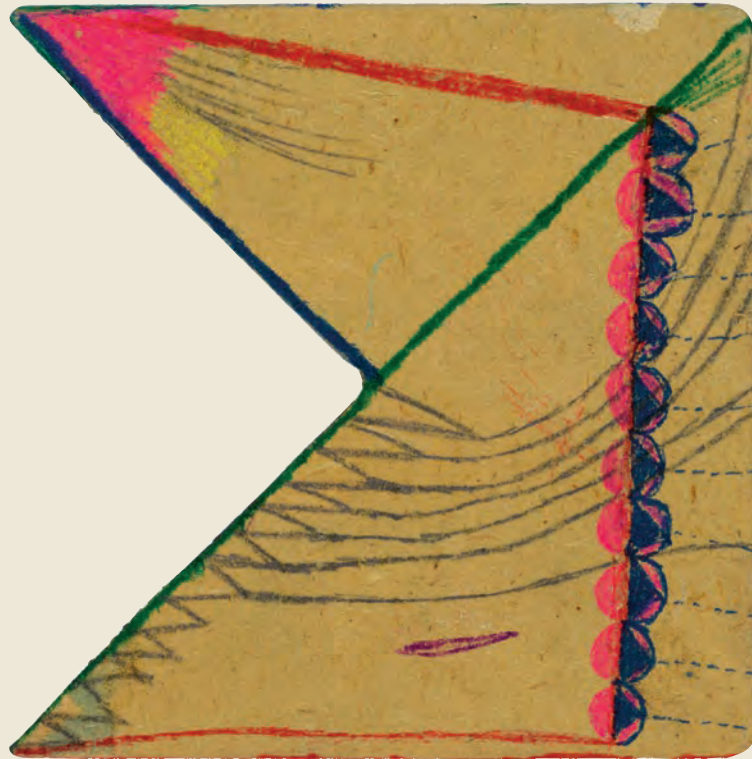
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