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Experimental sites and encounters: Open formats as catalysts for the renewal of ethnographic arts

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Bios

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Abstract

The text engages with the rise of collaborative methods in anthropology against the background of a transformation in anthropological knowledge production, itself part of a wider scientific and academic institutional project. It describes art and design-inspired methodological experiments presented at the first workshop of the European Association of Social Anthropologists' #Colleex network (Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation) '*Ethnographic Experimentation. Fieldwork Devices and Companions*', held in Lisbon July 2017. It foregrounds a mode of research explored there addressed as 'open formats'. These are different from the critical approaches mostly seen hitherto, generally being focused on the production of venues or opportunities for knowledge creation. Three illustrations of these situations are presented.

KEYWORDS: ethnographic experimentation, art-inspired anthropology, sites, encounters, open formats

Introduction: relating art/design and anthropology now

In meetings between ethnography and art there has been a tendency to assume that the relationship between the practices and practitioners of anthropology and art or design is one where ethnography/anthropology can be of service to art/architecture/design/making. Indeed, in many forms of contemporary performative and installation-based art (Bishop, 2012), but also in corporate design attempts at trying to better understand users or customers (Suchman, 2011), anthropology is used as a proxy for more participatory and collaborative attempts at learning from people/users and unveiling their true motivations. Usually the aim is to intervene in behaviours through art and design. This is largely based on the assumption that either methodologically or theoretically anthropology has privileged access to a breadth of ways of being and doing, as well as imaginaries other than those of the Euro-American middle-classes, that other disciplines lack thus helping artists and designers to expand their reach. There have, nevertheless, been many critiques of these somewhat ‘de-contextualised,’ ‘utilitarian’ or even ‘extractive’ moves, within and beyond anthropology.

For instance, where anthropological descriptions of the lives of ‘others’ or non-Euro-American/non-Western/non-modern peoples have inspired art or architecture, these efforts have later often been conceived of as problematic “primitive pastoralist” uses of anthropology. A case in point are 1970s countercultural radical designers: examples of the critical approach could be design historians' Alison Clarke (2011) and Catharina Rossi (2014) analyses, respectively, of Victor Papanek or the Italian radical architecture group Superstudio's ‘return to crafts.’ Indeed, in their interesting attempts at undermining industrial and consumer-oriented forms of design through more ‘natural,’ and ‘simpler’ crafts, they not only drew inspiration from anthropological research on other non-Euro-American/non-Western/non-modern peoples, they also did ethnographic research. Superstudio's attempt at documenting and understanding the material culture of 1970s isolated and somewhat pre-modern Tuscan peasants, published as *Cultura Materiale Extraurbana* (Natalini et al., 1983) is still a good example.

Recently however, other approaches have emerged. In line with constructivist, post-colonial, and feminist technoscience sensitivities seeking to re-politicize knowledge production, there have been many attempts at drawing other kinds of relations between art and anthropology (Calzadilla & Marcus, 2006), but also, between design and anthropology, as in the emerging

field of 'design anthropology' (Gunn, Otto & Smith, 2013; Murphy, 2016). Most of these feature a whole breadth of collaborative cross-pollination exercises and methodological exchanges seeking to re-create newer – should we say 'para-sitical' (cf. Marcus, 2010) – connections between these fields. Those are disciplinary contacts where not only designers and artists reflect on what it means to import the essential methodological feature of 'old-school' anthropology into their practices – 'ethnography' -- but anthropologists are learning to expand and transform theirs through direct inspiration from art and design methods and materials (Murphy & Marcus, 2013), re-enlivening, perhaps, a certain 'experimental' flair that has been always part of the discipline.

Such efforts include the impulse to transform anthropology from within art and design practice. This, for instance, is what Tim Ingold (2011, 2013) has been pursuing, foregrounding a direct participation *in* and *with*, say, art and architecture as a means to redraw what anthropology could be. In his ambition to 'bring anthropology to life,' Ingold (2011: 2) takes aim at the dualistic heritage of anthropology itself that separates observation and description from our engagement in the world (something he usually addresses as a relation of *co-respondence*) and, in parallel, an already made/finished world from the process of its formation (and dissolution) in which we, as human organisms and indeed anthropologists or scholars, are always joined.

We believe that another mode of encounter between art/design and anthropology is also possible. In fact, perhaps, it is even common whenever they meet. Here ethnography is done 'otherwise' or in experimental ways in conjunction or juxtaposition with artistic practices (art, architecture, design, craft, making, activism), generally drawing inspiration from them for fostering open-ended, pedagogically as well as epistemologically valuable moments and situations. In showing a few examples of this, we want to focus on how in such fertile encounters artistic/creative practices impact on ethnography/anthropology. But we also suggest that the collaborations involved fold back, making ethnography/anthropology a different art. In those situations, the relationship is one of mutual learning, where art and design impact on anthropology and anthropology perhaps gives something back by return. This is also altering the way doing research is valued.

These artistic and design practices are catalysing a shift in anthropology itself, with young generations of scholars already often operating with different criteria of what is interesting,

worthwhile and legitimate than earlier generations. Related to the shifting roles of experts and activists in society generally, these shifts are also about what the object of research practice might be, where it takes place and what is deemed to have happened or been gained through it. Anthropologists working in activist modes, for example, easily offer their intellectual work to be valued and treated as political action (e.g. Osterweil, 2013) and can take considerable personal risks in doing so. Others seek out anthropology as a tool for making sense of prior professional lives using specialist expertise of their own in conjunction with anthropological modes of problematization (Marcus, 2016). Typical reactions to these shifts have highlighted the messiness of ethnographic fieldwork (as for instance Marcus does), but as these experiences multiply, they invite but also generate novel understandings of anthropology and its uses. Some pick up on long-standing polemics on the objects of anthropological study (Clifford & Marcus, 1986), but some may be aligned with and in conversation with broader debates on legacies of scientism in social science (Latour, 2004).

In this paper we pay attention to a few examples we have witnessed in a recent venture, the European Association of Social Anthropologists' #Colleex network (its acronym standing for Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation). At its first workshop *'Ethnographic Experimentation. Fieldwork Devices and Companions'*, which took place 13th–15th July 2017 at Lisbon's Jardim Botânico Tropical, we had the opportunity to discover how young and not-so-young scholars are experimenting with anthropological and social science scholarship by drawing from art, design, and other creative practices.¹ Here, ethnographic experimentation referred to an ethnographic modality where anthropologists venture into the collaborative production of venues for knowledge creation that turn the field into a site for the construction of 'joint anthropological problematizations' (see Estalella & Sánchez Criado, 2018). What, as convenors, together with Adolfo Estalella and Anna Lisa Ramella, we found interesting, was the need to articulate what is going on in such practices and what authority it might have or lack.

We were overwhelmed by the response to our call for papers. The final line-up of a very intense 3-day long workshop included three types of intellectual products or processes: 5 sessions of 4-5 somewhat conventional papers circulated to participants in advance; nearly 20

¹We would like to thank all the participants of the workshop and especially those whose work we survey later in this article: EBANO collective, Francesca de Luca and Heléna Elias, Leticia Barreto and Rachel Harkness.

‘open formats’ (art, design, installation, and performance-inspired research devices), 9 audio-visual presentations. This way we were able to provide space for practicing and critical reflecting, but also for different tempos and stages of our work of discovery and creation. Also, we wanted to highlight as relevant the theoretical accounts seeking to unearth meanings of what ‘ethnographic experimentation’ was, but also to find a way to validate and legitimise the overt plurality of formats as modes of engaging, feeling, sensing, and practicing what experimenting with ethnography might mean.

In the rest of this paper we will, first, briefly lay out a historiography of transformations in anthropological knowledge production as part of a wider scientific and academic institutional project (of which we are a part, even as it provokes in us critique and some discomfort), and review the rise of collaborative methods in anthropology. Then, we foreground how the mode of research we explored in Lisbon – ‘open formats’ – offers a different set of ingredients for reflecting on emerging objects of anthropological collaborations with artistic and design practices, more focused on the production of venues or opportunities for knowledge creation and on what anthropology gains in its collaborative risk-taking with art and design practitioners (broadly defined), mutually parasiting, or ‘cross-pollinating’ each other. Three illustrations of these situations, using images from the collaborative live-tweeting of the event (collected in this storify: <https://storify.com/tscriado/1st-colleex-workshop>), will be provided. Put differently, we tell a story about trouble in anthropology and how #Colleex hopes to productively engage with it, its ‘open formats’ acting as catalysts of the renewal of the anthropological art and craft of ethnography.

The crisis of ethnographic authority and contemporary anthropology

Ethnography is popular across many disciplines but it has a distinctive and canonical role as authorizing a whole epistemological framework for the discipline of anthropology (and, to a lesser extent, some subfields of sociology). And even though ethnographic authority has never been uncontested, it is obvious that its role in contemporary anthropology has shifted after a series of debates underlining a ‘crisis of representation’ (Clifford & Marcus, 1986), affecting not only the sources of authority—the indexical documentary practices, or the ‘being there’ of fieldwork, but also the politics and poetics of ethnographic writing genres, and the modes and conceptions of authorship of fieldworkers and of the people traditionally understood as ‘informants.’ In fact, we identified an urgent issue in the discipline: a lack of

serious and minute attention to describing knowledge practices in the discipline, and to ethnography more particularly (for a particular account of the lack of attention as well as an interview-based research on the art and practice of fieldnote-talking in ethnographic work, see Jackson, 2016). After all, like all types of expertise, anthropology is evolving in our (epistemologically) troubling new times towards new ‘norms’ (Marcus, 2013) and, maybe more importantly, new ‘forms’.

In particular, #Colleex seeks to foreground an attention to the different meanings and practices of ‘ethnographic experimentation’ forms or formats. With this figure we seek an appropriate descriptive language to account for the kind of engagements and epistemic practices of our (and other’s) fieldworks. As stated in a blog post:

“This discussion resonates with recent reflections contending the need to readdress fieldwork and reformulate its practice (Faubion and Marcus, 2009; Fabian, 2014). We echo debates on the place of ethnography in the production of anthropological knowledge (Ingold, 2008) and the transformation of the norm and form of fieldwork in a series of projects that have injected an experimental drive (Rabinow et al. 2008). The reflections of Douglas Holmes and George Marcus (2008) are particularly relevant for the argument we aim to bring for discussion: their ethnographic projects led them to argue that if anthropology was to enter into domains populated by subjects that shared anthropologists ethnographic-like practices, or in their idiom, ‘para-ethnographic’ practices, it was essential to ‘re-function ethnography’ (Holmes and Marcus, 2005). In these ethnographic sites, collaboration would be the cornerstone from which to undertake fieldwork. Their argument has been posed for those anthropologists working side by side with scientists, activists, public servants or artists: Sites leading anthropologists to engage with different forms of expertise and problematize their conventional practices of knowledge production. The observational stance is then replaced with an experimental approach deeply rooted in these para-sitical collaborations”

(Estalella and Criado, <http://allegralaboratory.net/post-1-ethnographic-experimentation-other-tales-of-the-field-collex/> accessed October 2017)

Experimentation in science, art, and ethnographic fieldwork

Experimentation in its different styles (Klein, 2003) has a long pedigree in the natural sciences as a particularly authorized type of research. Experiment has been somewhat connected but also set in opposition to observation. This is despite its own protocols to enhance trustworthiness, which have involved the production of a particular setting, equipment, and inscription devices (Rheinberger, 1997) designed to articulate particulate knowledge on yet-to-be-known entities, as well as to produce circulating literary inscriptions (Latour, 1987) that establish the validity of particular claims.

The idea of experimenting in the field has a taste of transgression, possibly because of the work initially invested in separating out laboratory –or in the case of art and design: studio, atelier, etc. (see Farías & Wilkie, 2015 for a comprehensive discussion)– from field. The implication has been naturalised that the field, the world out there, is not for intervening in, but for leaving alone and observing passively. Resistance to this separation is one of the hallmarks of the emerging field of design anthropology (Gunn et al., 2013).

In turn experiment in art is connected with the value of the avant-garde and so has an ambivalent position in the politically charged field of the social sciences, even though pleas for pluralistic and ecumenical approaches are gathering pace (e.g. Kjørup, 2011).

Experiment is now also a favoured modality in governance, as public sector service provision looks increasingly to alternative ways to finance its functions (Julier, 2017). Here is perhaps one reason for the rise in popularity of collaborative research methods, allied to a certain loss of confidence perhaps in academic endeavour itself. (Parenthetically, this is a self-critique that might temper over-hasty celebrations of all things experimental but that we cannot expand on here.)

In ethnographic fieldwork, experimentation might indeed be a ‘tale of the field’ (Estalella & Criado, 2018), whose main object would be, at one level, to simply be honest about what ethnographers have always done: improvise and experiment in order to learn. Indeed, all forms of fieldwork have entailed *bricolage*, imports from the vocabulary of others, practices of arranging relations, and interventive gestures (such as the mundane act of placing people in front of a camera in particular ways). Yet there is something self-consciously different about the ‘collaborative,’ ‘parasitic’ or ‘in partnership’ work presented at the #Colleex workshop.

We could provisionally label it ‘risky,’ as most terms to describe them evoked discomfort among the participants of the workshop.

All forms of experimentation entail risks, or put at risk the solitary and disciplinary modes of research. The ethos of ethnographic experimentation may be that the risks are born across the field as the roles of scholar, activist, local expert or victim or whatever, are all put to work in collaborative knowledge production. However, maybe one of the most interesting moves is to consider the traditional ‘Others’ as ‘epistemic partners’ rather than as objects or subjects of knowledge production, people we work with. But how?

“Invoking the trope of ethnographic experimentation we aim at describing how anthropologists creatively venture into the production of venues of knowledge creation through processes of material and social interventions that turn the field into a site for epistemic collaboration: a site for the construction of joint anthropological problematizations. In these situations, the traditional tropes of the fieldwork encounter (i.e. immersion and distance) give way to a narrative of intervention, where the principle of collaboration in the production of knowledge substitutes or intermingles with the traditional trope of participant observation. Building on this, we propose the concept of ethnographic experimentation to describe and conceptualize what we consider is a distinctive ethnographic modality, an effort to produce new tales of the field”. (Estalella & Criado, <http://allegrallaboratory.net/post-1-ethnographic-experimentation-other-theses-of-the-field-collex/>)

But it also alters the way the sites of knowledge production and circulation (consumption?) are figured, as well as the modes of research encounters. Sketching some of the interventions at #Colleex might help us show this.

Art-inspired ethnographic experiments (1): Open formats as sites

It was through art-inspired experimentation that at Lisbon we explicitly sensitized ourselves to the very setting, the venue of the conference by eagerly taking up the offer by the Lisbon-based EBANO collective, in their words an “ethnography-based art nomad organization”, to host the event at a site where colonialism was once celebrated: The Tropical Botanical Garden, built in the 1940s by the Portuguese fascist regime in the noble district of Belem,

where the residence of the president of the republic is. The garden not only has vegetal specimens coming from all different countries under Portuguese domination at the time, but also buildings that evoke these far-away locations, displaying their vernacular architecture, as well as busts and frescos of ‘native’ or ‘aboriginal’ communities, mostly of an African descent. The Garden’s main building, Palácio Calheta, acting as a ‘centre of calculation’ of sorts (cf. Latour, 1987) was also the main site where the knowledge about and samples from colonial flora, agricultural practices, land and soil, were accumulated in the library and its archives. It was created to glorify the colonial endeavor, but the place has gradually fallen into disgrace after the decolonial and liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies, changing hands, and only very recently, becoming the property of the University of Lisbon.

A wonderfully complex and usually forgotten place, which, was “a fragile venue to host an initiative caring for fragile research” (see <https://twitter.com/adolfoestalella/status/886229990286733312>) as was tweeted of EBANO's different art installations, produced to account for and problematize the venue's complex colonial background.



IMAGE 1. Francesca de Luca presenting EBANO's interventions and the colonial background of the Garden in the library of the Palácio Calheta. Picture by Adolfo Estalella, taken from <https://twitter.com/adolfoestalella/status/886229990286733312> (July 15th 2017).

For instance, anthropologist Francesca de Luca's (EBANO) collaboration with artist Heléna Elias, created a particular open format, an installation in the main lobby of the Garden's 'Lion's House' (which hosted a real lion in display during the 1940s, and is now used as a shop/cafeteria), having *azulejo* representations of hunting scenes of African 'tribes' on the walls. The installation, MATRIX, played with the commonalities of Francesca's fieldwork working on narratives of maternity—where she has created plaster molds of the belly of pregnant women, something she uses as a mnemonic/trigger of the narrative of pregnancy and maternity— and Heléna Elias's interest in the garden's colonial past through its soil and terrains, whose materials were directly imported from the colonies. Both represented matrixes of different kind, containers (soil charts and handbooks, pregnant bodies' plasters, or drawers with sands and soils) evoking the suffering and violence that had 'given birth' to them.

As stated in their accompanying text: “Manifestations of the MATRIX (space, archive, painting, bodies) are present in the researches of both Francesca De Luca and Hel na Elias. Each present component informs the other on the presence of the matrix, and enables the spectator to play with the elements, to create new narratives. During the #Colleex Workshop the MATRIX turns from concept to practice, getting different configurations and generating new manifestations and symptoms.”



IMAGE 2. The presentation of MATRIX.



IMAGE 3 The presentation of MATRIX.

Another of EBANO's art-related open formats or interventions expanded on this. In the exhibition 'The Colour of Silence' (*A Cor do Silêncio*), done in collaboration with Brazilian photographer Leticia Barreto, they were "treating colonial depictions at Lisbon Botanical Garden and whiteness through bleach", as one of the attendees, Mascha Gugganig, tweeted (see https://twitter.com/g_mascha/status/886233277513818113). In fact, as stated in the workshop's programme, this was a form of 'play' with the colonial representation of blackness, so evident in the venue's architecture:

"Belonging to the symbolic domain, the white colour, rather than a simple physiological mechanism and a physical phenomenon, is mainly linked to cultural and psychological aspects. White has been associated with purity, innocence, cleanliness, peace, happiness, armistice, and neutrality. It is seen as a symbol of goodness, beauty and perfection. Despite all the symbolism associated with it, white is not as innocent as it is usually judged. Throughout history, the 'purest' colour became, in some occasions, the colour which shows the darkest side of human instinct. It is the colour of totalitarianism, separation, prejudice and intolerance and is also considered the colour that divides, excludes, and controls. The chemical reaction using the bleach on cloth is a metaphor to an ethnocentric 'whitewash of thought'. The trace of prejudice, as well as that of bleach, is profound and permanent."



IMAGE 4. EBANO's work at the workshop.

As we see it, Ebano's site-specific work of understanding takes inspiration from and merges with art to attend to what is involved in the making of knowledge – like the fragile places we inhabit.

Art-inspired ethnographic experiments (2): Open formats as encounters

Other open formats highlighted alternative modes where art unfolds particular affordances of 'relations.' A case in point are ethnographic formats which have a family resemblance with forms of what Nicholas Bourriaud termed 'relational art:'

“Bourriaud explicitly defined relational art in terms of encounter and mediation, personalized and ephemeral situations of exchange that could offer an alternative to the impersonality of the society of spectacle. Relational art, on the other hand, would not see the public as a passive consumer but as an active partner” (Sansi, 2015: 36)

Interestingly, most relational art was inspired in a turn to ethnography whereby the artist acts as 'anthropologist' (Sansi, 2015: 44). Now, in somewhat paradoxical situation of retroactive inspiration of sorts, different anthropologists are drawing on relational experiments from the arts to undertake particularly interesting experiments with 'encounters.'

One of the best examples from #Colleex was Rachel Harkness's 'A Collective Act: An Ethnography Made by Five Ethnographers at Once,' inspired by Japanese artist Koki Tanaka (2013). His series of performance events called 'Collective Acts' (e.g. A Pottery Produced by Five Potters at Once, A Poem Written by Five Poets at Once, A Piano Played by Five Pianists at Once, or A haircut by nine hairdressers at once) foregrounds the importance of sharing experiences. According to Harkness, "participants are brought together in playful yet careful ways in order to collaborate in the production of a creative work", also being intensively "filmed and photographed" so that in the resulting videos, almost raw cuts, spectators "watch these documentations and witness the unfolding, sometimes joyous and often difficult, processes of acting collectively" (Harkness, 2017).

Adapting Tanaka's format – whose relevance was highlighted by the post-Fukushima disaster and how it compelled many to collaborate in complex situations none of them had experienced before – to experiment with what it might mean to collectively undertake an ethnography with 5 of the attending ethnographers, Harkness's open format proposal stated the following:

"As beautiful and thought-provoking studies, Tanaka's acts made me wonder (as an anthropologist often collaborating, working in art/interdisciplinary contexts and teaching ethnographic practice) what five anthropologists or ethnographers might create collectively? Is there a shared craft amongst us and could a Collective Act help illuminate (or even develop) it? How might scholar-practitioners perhaps not used to working like this (though perhaps used to collaborating with research participants) react in such a situation? How might the ethnographic approaches of five individuals differ or converge, productively or divisively? Thinking about the diversity and creativity of ethnographic fieldwork practices and modes of expression and production, what materials might they draw upon in their making and what form would their creation take?

I'd like to probe ideas of expertise, experiment, skill and discipline by inviting five participants of the workshop to produce something ethnographic together. Although staged to carve out a space for collective creations and reflexive discussion, using the model (of the experiment) provided by Tanaka

the participants would be free to steer the direction or outcome of the act. My proposition, then, is that we attempt *An Ethnography Made by Five Ethnographers at Once*, and see what happens!

Participants would be briefed beforehand and then [...] perhaps 90 minutes or so could be given for the act itself [...]. The act should be filmed and photographed/documentated throughout” (Harkness, 2017).



IMAGES 5 & 6. Briefing of the participants by Rachel Harkness. (July 14th 2017).

The two of us took part, spending nearly two hours in more or less convoluted discussions with other colleagues under high documentary pressure (being filmed and photographed), unravelling what it might mean to do what was being suggested: what it meant, whether it was possible, and whether we should be doing ‘something’ or not. Whereas in one of the groups a collective exercise at understanding the uses of the garden was attempted, the other group remained in reflexive mode, wishing to agree on what it might require to carry out the task. Interestingly enough, and as it was made evident in the subsequent collective discussion

documented by Rachel Harkness, this form of experimentation entailed many conversations that made explicit the very conditions of the suggested ‘encounter,’ together with the precise modes of thinking needed to produce working encounters when none of us had been trained for something like this.

Besides this open format, the experimental role of encounters was, indeed, highlighted in the majority of the work we discussed. For some participants it became an explicit issue they wanted to develop. For example, in Ricardo Seiça Salgado’s paper on ethnotheater, ethnography was indeed depicted as “the art of producing encounters” (see <https://twitter.com/adolfoestalella/status/886159371960553472>). Experimentation in fieldwork becoming, then, “a machine for making the future that generates unexpected events” (Sansi, 2015: 142), perhaps helping to produce another aesthetics of fieldwork and a plurality of relational modes in order to work together with others.

Concluding remarks

We would like to conclude by reflecting on #Colleex as an art-inspired catalyst of ethnographic experiments, paying attention to sites and encounters as objects of intervention but also of pedagogical renewal.

The research we describe above has a somewhat transgressive nature that could, we believe, recast what the ethnographic might be and how it might be valued. Wanting to share the examples above, rather than expand at length, we invoke Bruno Latour’s thoughts on imagined ideals of natural science in the social sciences. Whereas natural sciences take the risk of their objects being recalcitrant or ‘talking back’, social science has mostly preferred to avoid such risk! Latour writes that “[c]ontrary to non-humans, humans have a great tendency, when faced with scientific authority, to abandon any recalcitrance and to behave like obedient objects, offering the investigators only redundant statements, thus comforting those same investigators in the belief that they have produced robust ‘scientific’ facts and imitated the great solidity of the natural sciences!” and goes on, “the social sciences have not been thwarted in their development by the resistance of humans to being treated as objects, but by their complacency about scientific research programmes which makes it *more* difficult for the social scientists to quickly detect the artifacts of the design in the case of humans than in the case of non-humans . . . Human science laboratories rarely explode!” (Latour, 2004, 217).

What felt important was establishing a space where practitioners would be confident enough to further engage with these acts. Put differently, perhaps it was an impulse to create the possibility for real experiment, the kind that might, indeed, explode in the midst of seeking learning. As stated in the #Colleex introductory remarks on the first day, our two-fold goal was:

“First, we would like to preserve the disciplinary differences of ethnography at the core of Colleex: We are in favour not of one ethnographic method, sensibility and concern but many. We wish to foster many different expressions of the ethnographic.

Second, we would like to evince the need to maintain a sophisticated balance between our disciplinary attachments and the urgent need to establish dialogues with other disciplines to re-function and renovate our ethnographic equipment.

[...]we want the network also to be a space of validation, normalisation, and stabilisation of those different resources and modes of doing, as well as for our search for newer grounds for ethnographic experimentation, together”

As the open formats ‘MATRIX’, ‘The Colour of Silence’ and ‘A Collective Act’ show, ethnography as art-inspired experimentation may shift epistemological frames and goals, producing not so much ‘knowledge’ (let alone ‘data’, a word that was met with derision by many participants) as ‘encounters’ or even ‘sites for encounters and learning to unfold’, where we put at risk not only our knowledge and methods, but the very venues in which experimentation takes place, whatever interlocutors and co-learners these might involve. Indeed, we see potential in developing open formats to support our teaching of ethnographic work, something that unfolds beyond the times and spaces of institutions of learning.

In fact, our emphasis on ‘open formats’ as sites and encounters is very much in line with other experimental approaches by other #Colleex members to more formal anthropological education (Gaspar, 2018). However, for us, open formats signal a concern for any anthropologist – even beyond regular training and the formative period – to search for ways

to renew his or her ethnographic arts; creating sites and encounters for such an experimentation to be shared and discussed with fellow experimenters.

In turn, these illustrations are, perhaps, some of the best instances of an anthropology of art/design that doesn't necessarily reject 'ethnography' (*pace* Ingold) but that 're-functions' the ethnographic using artistic and design means. That is, they show instances of a renewal of the anthropological art and craft of ethnography that could be more self-aware of its debt to the artistic practices that, as a discipline, it has often helped critique.

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