

marte roel lesur

My practice is based on crafting multisensory gestures for action research, questioning existing hierarchies between diverse ways of knowing. Combining sound, performance and movement practices; interactive, immersive and generative media; as well as scientific research, I explore perception and the subjective limits of the own body. In this process, the blurry line between self and other, between subject and environment, is evidenced. My pieces become alive in dialogue, through shared experiments where knowledge becomes embodied. Here, a selection of my artistic works is portrayed.

collective practice

Since 2012, I am a co-founding member of BeAnotherLab, a collective that develops methodologies for dialogue between individuals and communities. These exchanges are stimulated by a process of embodying another person. With this basic principle together with an empathic listening methodology, we have worked with communities around the world, in settings ranging from the Palestinian streets to prestigious research institutions, from the midst of the drug conflict in Mexico to the United Nations General Assembly. Each of our works becomes complete in site-specific settings. Here, however, a glimpse into our main methodologies is presented.

A photograph showing a workshop environment. In the foreground, a person wearing a VR headset is seated in a chair, being guided by a standing person in a light blue shirt. In the background, another person is seated in a chair, also wearing a VR headset, and being guided by another person. The room has large windows on the left side, and the overall atmosphere is collaborative and focused on technology and performance.

the machine to be another

Through an immersive narrative performance, an intimate exchange between a performer and a participant is generated. The participant sees and acts from the performer's perspective while listening to a narrative spoken by the performer. Agency is shared between them. Tens of stories narrated by often marginalized communities have been presented using this system. This photography shows a workshop imparted at the MIT Art Culture and Technology program in 2014.

Two participants mutually exchange perspectives and coordinate their movements in an exercise of shared agency. A non-verbal dialogue emerges. The experience culminates with participants facing themselves —from the perspective of the other— in front of them. With this setup we have explored diverse topics, such as gender identity, intimacy, mutual respect, between others. The image depicts a presentation at the Twist queer film festival in Seattle.

body swap



library of ourselves



A collaborative archive of embodied narratives that can be experienced by pairs of participants alternating roles. This archive of non-fictional first-person narratives told by anyone is distributed in cultural centers in different locations. The image shows a narrative recorded at Cidade de Deus in Brazil (2016) told by parents that lost their baby to police violence.

personal & collaborative practices

It is difficult to frame my work under one single medium or theme. There are many pieces ranging from orchestral music to digital images that I have created either on my own, or jointly with others. I consider a large amount of my practice to manifest as collaborative activities, through workshops, teaching, or taking part in shared explorations with various media, however, these efforts are difficult to present in a document like this. Here, I depict a selection of shared and individual works.

between

A video essay commissioned by Ars Electronica to BeAnotherLab. I contributed with a personal work where my own skin —with intense eczema at the moment—serves as a starting point to dialogue about its liminal place. The skin, I argue, lives in the boundary between the observer and the observed. My topic of scientific inquiry, my alienation, and lack of homeland, manifest in my own skin. Film stills are presented in the image.



bird songs of a hyper organism



As children, we were embedded in a lively world: experiencing affectionate relations with our surroundings. If animism was the way to be alive, how did we invent death? These questions are explored and narrated through a live cinema work. Playfully engaging shadows, plants, bits, and the plurality of matter, nature and technology become indistinguishable. Premiered at the Collective Practices series at Acud Mach Neu in Berlin, 2020, in collaboration with Ary Ehrenberg.

We have forgotten that our voice is our body in its most lively dynamism. Like another limb of our morphology, dancing in conversation, flowering in the non-verbal, our voice manifests the liveliness of the body. Fonosoma is an active artistic research and a series of iterative works exploring these concepts. For in shifting our understanding of the voice as part of the body, an alternative ontology is murmured. The image on top depicts a performative exploration in Spain (Hangar, 2017), the image below shows a work of the series and a book published in 2017 (Museo Numismático Nacional, Mexico, 2018).

fono- soma





qualia

In this interactive, immersive, sound work, together with Paul Rosero, we attempt to create a space with no references. Where the dynamics of our body and how they relate to changes in the environment are reframed. In a completely dark space, participants move about a world with new sensorimotor dynamics. Imagine how the world would sound if the distance between your ears was 3 meters wide. The image shows a presentation in the Museum of Contemporary art in Quito, Ecuador (2013).

I have recorded sounds since I was in my early teen years. My brother, Ary Ehrenberg, has his own video repository. Together, in this live cinema work, we integrate our paths and histories, portraying our ever changing, perhaps scattered, identities. The image depicts something else.

liquid identity



According to Western appropriations and interpretations, the 21st of December 2012 was, for ancient Mayans, the end of the world. Playing with this narrative, I proposed a technology for preventing our demise. The device relied on hugs for increasing the time of our existence. The piece, presented on such date, manifested as a countdown clock that suggested hugging to avoid the end. Every hug that was detected, added seconds to the countdown, thus extending the time of our existence. Today, with the ongoing pandemic, hugging appears to convey the opposite message.

Film stills are presented in the images.

aquele abraço



Contact
marteroel@gmail.com
<http://marte.me>