

Assum Livre Performance: A live environment for cyberperformance

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ABSTRACT

The performance “Assum Livre” integrates a sequence of artefacts firstly presented for the PhD Thesis “Backyard of Sounds: A path to sound immersion”. It was recently recreated in a cyberspace event, thus its transcription to cyberperformance. It consists of an artistic proposal that seeks to reflect on freedom/imprisonment, evoking a metaphor that recreates the experience of the lockdown periods in 2020/2021. The performance is based on the streaming of a video recorded with the author/singer performing part of the song “Assum Preto” (Teixeira and Gonzaga, 1950), simultaneously with the live performance of the other stanzas of the song. These alternate with the presentation of the lyrics, and the materialization of the performer. As backdrop we have a natural scenery as a projection of “freedom”, depicting the natural habitat threatened by human intervention, enhanced by the natural soundscapes and integrating the hybridization of image / sound / live performance. The main concepts, the description of the artefact, and the developments made are discussed.

Keywords: Performance; cyberperformance; inter-art; confinement; soundscapes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The performance “Assum Livre” is part of the set of artefacts presented in the research for the PhD Thesis “Backyard of Sounds: A path to sound immersion”, in April 2022. The first presentation took place at the Aveiro Events Center during ARTECH 2021 – the 10th International Conference on the Digital and Interactive Arts, with the publication of the paper in the proceedings. The performance aims to reflect on the experience of confinement that devastated the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020/2021, a situation we designated a “cage-screen”. (Canossa and Rocha, 2020). The second presentation took place online, supported by the Zoom platform.

The inspiration for the work comes from the song “Assum Preto”, by Luiz Gonzaga and Humberto Teixeira (1950), we initially thought of the metaphor between the story of the bird and the art of sound, as the black Assum. Living in Brazil’s northeast, it has its eyes pierced as if it was blind, apparently to sing better and at all times. It only sings at night,

and, in a poetic way, the night would seem eternal. In a way, it would seem a cruel act in favor of “beauty”, of the improvement of “talent”. How many cruel acts were performed for the sake of classical virtuosity? How many good singers from before the invention of sound amplification were excluded because they did not have vocal power and, in this condition, could not perform? How many people in music have not failed conservatories for not having technique or knowledge in music theory? Many! With the emergence of sound art, many of these paradigms were broken, allowing greater freedom and lightness in thinking and making a sound. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic, another complementary thought was born, the feeling of “being in a cage”, because in addition to the “prison” of our homes during lockdown, we were “imprisoned” in screens to enable online work, education and a whole life that has temporarily become suspended (Sapucaia, 2022).

The performance “Assum livre” was created in this context, critically reflecting on the “prison” of screens, the imposing norms and the freedom of humans as opposed to that of animals, who felt freer with the temporary decrease in human intervention in their natural habitats. The images shown in the video projection were captured on the banks of the Jequitinhonha River, in the city of Almenara - MG, Brazil, alternating between the original sounds of the black Assum bird in the forest and those of the bird in a cage, thus reflecting the agony inside a prison, be it a physical or a virtual cage. A parallel to be made with humans who felt “caged” in screens during lockdown.

In a second moment, the performance was transformed into cyberperformance, being presented in cyberspace on the Zoom platform. The work was presented as part of the CyPeT¹ project, funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), hosted by the Center for Research in Art and Communication (CIAC), in Portugal. In this transposition, the narrative was maintained, but the format and the audience were changed since cyberperformance allowed greater interactivity of the users.

So, in this article we discuss relevant concepts about performance and cyberperformance, we explain the development and detailing of the digital artifact, and finalize with the discussion of the results obtained.

2. THE PERFORMATIVE ACT LEADING TO ASSUM LIVRE

¹ EXPL/ART-PER/0788/2021- Project - CyPeT - "Development of a new pedagogical model for teaching cyberperformance in higher education"- Funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)- Center for Research in Arts and Communication- (CIAC), University of Algarve in partnership with the Open University of Portugal and the University of Maia.

“(…) an art is never simply an art; it is always at the same time a proposal for the world” (Rancière, 2012, p. 52).

The term performance is used in several areas. Originating from Latin, the word is composed of the prefix *per*, which means to perform or develop an activity, added to the word *formare*, which means to form, give form, establish. Broadly speaking, the concept of performance is linked to the notion of performance. Schechner (2013, p. 28) illustrates this well, commenting that “In business, sports, and sex, ‘to perform’ is to do something up to a standard – to succeed, to excel”. According to Carlson (2018), because the word is applied in different ways in so many fields of knowledge, and even within art, for example, presents different concepts and has a complex definition,. In an attempt to simplify the concept of the term as much as possible, we agree with Schechner (2013, p. 1), when he states that “performances are actions” that will differ according to the field to which they belong.

On performance and the performative act, Zumthor (2018) describes that performance “is knowing-to-be”, a knowledge that implies a presence and conduct, through concrete Spatio-temporal and physiopsychic coordinates, an order of embodied commands in a living body. In this taxonomy of the performing arts in general, the term “performing” describes the unmediated engagement between spectator and artist, an artistic event where the here and the now take on the true meaning. The concept of performance has been the object of analysis and the target of different definitions. Cvejic and Vujanovic (2017, p. 25) indicate, for example, that the musical and theatrical denotation of performance as a “live show or concert” dates back to the early 17th century. Other authors refer to performance as a live demonstration of “an appropriation of the street, the city or life” (Rancière, 2010, p. 25).

The performance displaces the spectator to other places, Goldberg (2012, p. 247) points out that “the performance came to fill the gap between entertainment and theater.” For Vilela and Barros (2018), “the plasticity with which we live the notion of performance materializes the possibility of coexistence between the imaginary and the real, art and life, utopia and dystopia because it reveals a unique interaction device in placing the body at the center of the event”. Carvalho (2012) states that performance is the execution of a work of art in front of a live audience, although it can also happen with the integration of other media, such as video, cinema, music, street works and others. This statement allows us to conclude that the interdisciplinarity between artistic fields and the use of multiple media is present in performances.

From the union between performance art and digital media, manifestations of digital performance arise. Regarding the latter, Dixon (2007, p.3) conceptualizes it as a generic format used “to include all performance works in which computer technologies play a key role, rather than a subsidiary, in content, technique, aesthetic or in the final support”. According to the author, no manifesto for digital performance was ever written, however, the futurist manifestos conceived between 1909 and 1920 could be written only with the subtle exchange of the word “electric” for the word “digital”. Silva (2019) recalls Birringer's² (2007) definition, which indicates that digital performance is characterized by an interface structure that includes all performance works in which computational processes are

² Founder of Performance Coletiva Telemática (ADaPT), a performance group that uses digital technology in its creations.

an integral part of composition and content, aesthetic techniques, interactive settings and forms of distribution. In many examples, the integration of human-machine interfaces implies the design of interactive systems and eventual real-time transformations of the media involved.

In the realm of digital and online performance we find cyberperformance. Najima (2020) defines cyberperformance based on Stephen Schrum's categories, as a computer-mediated cyberperformance using digitally adapted multimedia resources. That is, performances that make use of interactions originating in the computer and the internet, and involving the creation of avatars, multimedia processes and real-time interaction by the performers. The term was initially used by Causey (2006). About a similar definition of the term, we have the “cyberformance”, created by Helen Jamieson, the artist reflected a lot about what it would best mean and in the 2000s came to the conclusion that cyberformance would be a type of “live performance with remote performers coming together in real time via free internet chat applications” (Jamieson, 2022).

For Duarte (2016) the practice of performance in virtual environments signals the potentialization of its opening, establishing itself as an expressive channel with blurred and undefined limits. She claims that cyberperformance is defined as: “unfinished”, its existence is nourished by the spectator's actualization of the utterance; “it happens live”, artist and audience share time; “it is located in cyberspace”, and can take place on several virtual platforms; it is “geographically distributed”, being able to be simultaneously in physical and virtual places; “has attitude”; “it is transparent”, does not try to simulate reality and is ingenious when using available technological resources.

Both digital performance and cyberperformance allow for the inclusion of pre-recorded elements, and video resources are widely used for this purpose. By including the video in the performance “Assum Livre” we see it as “video art”. The recording of the events carried out by the performances and installations in the 1970s was initially based on video. Many artists who took up video at that time were attracted to the medium, precisely because it did not have either a history, or an identifiable critical discourse as an art medium. American writer David A Ross saw this lack of a critical position as a “Pure delight...” (Meigh-Andrews, 2014, p. 9). The term is attributed to Nam June Paik (a member of the Fluxus Group), from when he shows a video to his friends, in 1965, at Café a GoGo. In this context, Ribeiro (2013) points out that the birth of video art coincides more with a commercial operation than a technical discovery: the launch of the portable camera (Portapak) and video recorder by SONY.

Apparently, Paik took the tape with images of the Pope, filmed from a taxi, and that night he showed the results at Café a GoGo, a meeting point with the artists, thus creating the first video art presentation. What classifies Paik's footage of the Pope as video art? Basically, it is considered to be art because a recognized artist (Paik), associated with performance and experimental music, made the video an extension of his artistic practice. Unlike a journalist doing his work with the Pope, Paik created a crude, non-commercial product, a personal expression. (Rush, 2006, p. 76 apud Ribeiro, 2013, p.92).

The author also states that the promotion of video art took place through two aspects: the first, to make the work performative, into something that can be documented, and recorded after its realization and the second, to focus on the language of video, which added form and content to body language, thanks to audiovisual production and manipulation processes.

In a scenario of technological evolution, experimentation, innovations and artistic fusions, Pereira and Marcos (2019) state that the “post-digital” appears, initially, associated with a critical reflection on the concept of materiality in digital aesthetics, characterized by the ubiquity of digital technology, and the realization of its omnipresence in all aspects of life. Digital technologies expand the digital presence and highlight the discussion about materiality, conceptual and dematerializing artistic practices, especially in the context of creative processes. With regard to the boundaries between the media, in the post-digital period, they disappear or are attenuated, so that the “old” and the “new” media have mixed and resignified themselves in the light of renewed critical gazes.

When thinking about a hybrid or interart performance, which according to Müller (2012) proposes the reconstruction of the interaction between the arts in the process of artistic production, we seek to provide viewers with the questioning of materiality in a screen experience/human materialization. According to Daniels and Naumann (2010, p.583), the “(...) performative arts (...) are still created with live performance in mind (by the artists themselves or by interpreters).” In the performance “Assum Livre”, the projection of the video is alternated with a live performance, thus impacting the complete piece. In this way, we have the materialization of the performer, from recording/video to existence in “real-time”. This became different in the second iteration of the performance, in the cyberperformance format, as the performer “materializes” via a videoconference platform.

2. THE DUEL BETWEEN SHADOWS AND LIGHTS IN ASSUM LIVRE

In this post-digital era we are experiencing a true “pandemic of images” (Vilela and Barros, 2018), leveraged by the current visual media culture; even advertisements for sound tools such as podcasts and music streaming platforms are disseminated in video format. Vilela and Barros (2018, p.140) also talk about “hearing/seeing”, the condition of listening in a visual context, where in contemporary times most people have stopped listening to records to listen and watch video clips. Even the musicians’ performance is no longer enough, there is a whole stage narrative that is now added visually and that determines the new condition of “hearing/seeing.” In an opposite movement we have “blindness”, a metaphor that intersects the narrative of the performance being presented.

Facing the shadows and the excess of the lights, in our work we point out “the blindness” suggested by the “Assum preto” bird, signalling the death of the image. Bavcar (2015), who is a blind photographer often questioned in his work, clarifies that the “oculocentric” logic dominates cultural spaces, mainly because works of art are almost entirely exhibited to the frontal view, a context which he refers to as “Frontal Oculocentric Tyranny”. So, even three-dimensional works such as sculptures are most often exposed to be explored solely by sight, because the way they are displayed does not instigate the other senses. Therefore, it reflects the possible intention that they are destined “for a look desired by the physical eye: the ‘oculocentric’ world is very powerful and currently dominates all other perceptions and perspectives, not just the tactile ones.” (Bavcar, 2015 apud Leyton, 2019, p.41).

In addition, we also have some “darkness” in the contemporary world, considering scenarios of conspiracy theories; ongoing debates about affirmative policy, significant increases in authoritarian and extremist governments, and digital globalization that has shortened distances between those far away and widened the gap between those who live

close. To this globalization, Lipovetsky (2005, p.15) highlights that “the forms of annihilation assume planetary dimensions, the desert, the end and middle of civilization, designates this tragic figure in which modernity replaces the metaphysical reflection on nothingness”. As the desert grows, we have the impression of human involution, in its most human sense of the word. In this “sea of shadows”, we have humans who do not believe in science; David and Corrêa (2020, p.164) point out that people who deny scientific studies, popularly called “deniers”, act with the intention of leading debates on the above-mentioned issues to the mass media, demanding the same space for their questions as that reserved for scientists. The authors claim that most deniers have political and financial interests behind their opinions. In this sense, Leite (2014, p.179) adds that “as science provides the basis for the most legitimate discourses of society, those who are questioned by it have to react by opposing supposedly scientific arguments and theories, even when they are not”. Analyzing the evolution of science in the Renaissance, a period of Enlightenment, we associate this retrograde thinking with the “shadows” that, in our performance, we link to individuals immersed in the visual darkness of the black Assum.

Modern societies, according to Hall (1996, p.14), are, “by definition, societies of constant, rapid and permanent change”. These changes are reflected in all segments. Oliveira (2017, p.2-3) highlights the expectation of change as something that has become natural in people's lives in this contemporary world:

With technology came the idea that innovation and novelty are intrinsic components of civilization. Constant changes in technologies, society and the economy are so ingrained in our daily lives that it is difficult for us to understand that in the past this state of affairs was not the rule. A few hundred years ago, change was so slow that most people expected the future to be very similar to the past. [...] All this changed when changes began to occur with such frequency that they became not only clearly perceptible, but expected.

Oliveira (2017, p.5) also declares that we live under the effect of the Red Queen, inspired by the character of the work “Alice on the Other Side of the Mirror” by author Lewis Carroll: “Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place.” This effect results from the fact that, as evolution takes place, individuals and organizations need to become more and more sophisticated and constantly in search of novelties, not to acquire a competitive advantage, but just to keep themselves in the same position and alive while the other organisms present in the system continually evolve and become more competitive. This system and way of living in society have spread across much of the world. Thus, the globalization of forms of production, multinational companies and technology have brought advances in social comfort, access to information and the expansion of big brands.

Contrary to the issues created by access to technology and the unbridled capitalist ambition, Krenak (2019) brings us a vision of indigenous peoples, stating that humanity is distancing itself from its place and, in this way, “smart” corporations are taking over the Earth. It predicts that “We, humanity, will live in artificial environments produced by the same corporations that devour forests, mountains and rivers”. These corporations own “the planet's money”, and earn more every minute, spreading the same model of progress that we are encouraged to understand as well-being in the world. They invent kits (entertainment) to keep us quiet, alienated from everything and preferably taking a lot of medicine. Braidotti (2020) warns that postcolonial, decolonial and indigenous theories have a lot to teach us. Among these teachings is the fact that there is no distinction between Nature and Culture, the fear of death and extinction being an integral part of the daily life

of colonized cultures. For many indigenous peoples, for example, epidemics and environmental devastation were the hallmarks of colonial conquest and the destruction of their tribes.

In this innovation age-for-innovation universe, focused on constant evolution and immersed in ever-deepening darkness, art appears as a point of light. From this angle, proposing a performance is lighting a small flashlight and opening a window for social criticism, after all, “talking about performance is talking about resistance; resistance in the sense of rejecting institutionalized patterns. Refutation, objection, questioning, are words directly related to attempts to characterize these actions of contestation of pre-established models” (Zulian, 2021, p.3).

In post-digital art, the process of interaction between machine and performer, and/or the application of new technologies, become an inherent element of the work. In fact, “the very use of the technique allows the artist/performer to abstain from their physical presence in the space of action, often replaced by that of the electronic image or by the participation of the spectator.” (Giannetti, 2012, p. 90). Gaspareto (2013) emphasizes that the artistic nucleus dialogues with the space-time in which it operates and with the culture in which it is inserted, thus establishing its mechanisms and structures of action. It is from this assumption that a new moment for digital production was visualized, with constant exchanges with this digital, interactive, connected, convergent and plural culture. About this man/machine interaction in the creative process of artists coming from digital culture, Mörschbacher and Weymar (2021) emphasize that the virtual environment can be perceived as a space rich in possibilities for creation and reflection, a studio that embraces the needs of contemporary artists who develop not only their technical procedures but also produce aesthetic, social and cultural thoughts about the relationship between their art and the world in which they live. Giannetti (2012), in turn, proposed the grouping of various performance manifestations that use new audiovisual technologies and interactive or telematic systems with the term metaformance, highlighting the general tendency of Digital Media-Art to enhance the development of the interface between the work and the spectator.

By assuming the “Imprisoned Assum” as a “space of confinement”, we propose the interaction with the “Free Assum” as a “space of freedom”, so in the performance this man/machine interaction triggers a reflection on human intervention in landscapes and the imprisonment of the animal/human being. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic period, we visualized life through the screens and it became clear that “the cultural hybridization of global inhabitants can be a creative and emancipating experience” (Baumann, 1998, p.109). Through net art, performances in cyberspace, in virtual worlds and cyber-performances broadcast live through social networks, artists continued to create their works of art. Viewers also became involved with the artists by sharing their experiences. In our project, being “Assum Livre” includes all these crossings.

3. THE WAY TO THE ASSUM LIVRE CYBERPERFORMANCE

The rise of cyberperformance was reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic with its lockdown periods, which not only prevented the enjoyment of public spaces, but also contributed to an exponential increase in live experiences, broadcast by a multitude of creators on all major social media networks, in what we may call the "pandemic lives". This new statute required a renewed effort considering the challenges posed by digital technology

in the Performing Arts, which turned innovation into a keyword for adapting to a new reality, leading artists to experiment with online performance models.

According to Anton (2016) our living environment includes and incorporates technological extensions, and these are never mere additions. They alter our sensibilities and abilities, our notions of self and others, our notions of privacy and ownership, and our orientations in space and time. To reach a satisfactory understanding of this new reality, and to be able to structure, organize and disseminate this knowledge, we need to fully engage with the human environment that contributed to the cultures we are now experiencing.

In those times of lockdown, while living the experience of “being in a cage”, many of us had the perception of seeing and hearing more birds. It was not the song of pain, as in *Assum preto* (1950), but the song of freedom and lightness. By bringing the natural scenery, the birds' habitat, the metaphor of the image (seeing) and the provocation of the sound (of the virtuous emission), the intention was to leave the synesthesia of the sound to the spectators; the questioning of man's intervention in nature and the need of a man/machine interaction. So, the narrative of “Assum Livre” emerged for the presentation of an Intermediate PhD Thesis called “Backyard of Sounds”, when the author sang the song to a committee and was assumed, at that moment, that this voice was also in a cage, but that of the creative process.

The first technical setup used by the performance “Assum Livre” included a video projection to show recordings (video + audio) of the song “Assum Preto”. This took the form of a video clip, recorded by the author in her hometown in Brazil, and integrated videos of the bird's song alternating with the live performance of the song. The second technical setup made use of the Zoom videoconferencing platform, where the cyberperformance would take place, mixing the audiovisual material with the author's live performance.

Moment 01 – Narrative: This is Assum

In terms of narrative, the performance was based on 3 stanzas of the original song by Luiz Gonzaga and Humberto Teixeira, and on the creation of an unpublished stanza, in which lyrics are composed for each event. The lyrics portray the way of speaking of the Brazilian Northeast and more specifically of the humble man of the countryside. The performance begins with an introduction alluding to current times, with thoughts about the imprisonment in virtual platforms for meetings, training and online classes. It continues with the video of the bird “Assum Preto” in freedom and playback of the singing in the first stanza of the song “Assum Preto” (Gonzaga e Teixeira, 1950):

♪♪ “Tudo em vorta é só beleza / Everything around is just beauty
 Sol de Abril e a mata em frô / April sun and the forest in bloom
 Mas Assum Preto, cego dos óio / But Assum Preto, blind of the eyes
 Num vendo a luz, ai, canta de dor / In a seeing the light, oh, sings of pain
 Tarvez por ignorança / Perhaps out of ignorance
 Ou mardade das pió / Or badass of the worst
 Furaro os óio do Assum Preto / Pierced the eyes of Assum Preto
 Pra ele assim, ai, cantá mió” / For him like this, oh, sing better

The video brings images of the natural landscapes of the author's city. These soundscapes represent the place and the experience of its people, as well as a critique of freedom because all around is beauty, but in a lockdown situation, it is not possible to take advantage of it. In the second stanza:

🎵 Assum Preto veve sorto/ Assum Preto lives free
 Mas num pode avuá/ But you can't fly
 Mil vez a sina de uma gaiola/ A thousand times the fate of a cage
 Desde que o céu, ai, pudesse oiá/ As long as the sky, alas, could look
 Mil vez a sina de uma gaiola/ A thousand times the fate of a cage
 Desde que o céu, ai, pudesse oiá/ As long as the sky, alas, could look

The play of light leaves the projection and focuses on the singer present in the place. Dressed in black and blindfolded with a black belt, the singer performs the excerpt highlighted above. In the third stanza:

🎵 Assum Preto, o meu cantar/ Assum Preto, my singing
 É tão triste como o teu/ It's as sad as mine
 Também roubaro o meu amor/ They also stole my love
 Que era a luz, ai, dos óios meus/ That was light, from my eyes
 Também roubaro o meu amor/ They also stole my love
 Que era a luz, ai, dos óios meus/ That was light, from my eyes

The light switches to the video projection which brings urban images of the author's city bringing a paradox between movement and emptiness; crowds in tourist places and isolation of empty streets. Finally, the last stanza is an original composition, which portrays the exit from a lockdown situation, through the exit from darkness, and the cure of blindness. The performer removes the blindfold and interacts with the audience. The lyrics are specially composed for the venue.

In the following table, we present a description of the narrative, with the different stanzas of the song.

Theme division	Description of the narrative	Image	Audio	Light
Introduction	Showing a video with a free black Assum bird.	Free Bird	Video sound	Projection
1st stanza	Exhibition of a video recorded with the singer on the banks of the Jequitinhonha River.	Recorded video	Projection	Projection
2nd stanza	Singer (who was not visible to the public) appears, dressed in black and blindfolded.	Performer sings live	Live + instrumental music	Focus on the singer
3rd stanza	Showing a video of the black Assum in a cage.	Caged Bird / Darkness	Instrumental music	Projection
4th stanza	The singer removes the blindfold, interacts with the audience and presents an unprecedented stanza, where she portrays the exit from lockdown.	Performer sings live	Live + instrumental music	Focus on the singer

Table 1 – Descriptive script of the narrative of Assum Livre, Rocha and Canossa (2021).

Moment 02 - Description of the installation: Technical Assum

The construction of the artefact used for the performance “Assum livre” requires:

- **Environment/required area:** a room with at least 6x3m.
- **Equipment/materials:** microphone, speakers; light focus; video image: computer, projector, HDMI cable.
- **Technical needs:** the room must be dark; the spotlight must turn on and focus on the performer during the moments of her live performance, bringing an alternation between the projection and the performer.



Figure 1 - QR code with 1st part's video, 1st stanza of the song "Assum Preto". (Rocha e Canossa, 2021).

- **Duration:** 5 to 10 minutes. The exact time of the described performance is 5 minutes. It may vary depending on an extended introduction or addition to the narrative specially created for each event.

The videos presented show natural imagery and the cry of the black Assum from inside and outside the cage. According to Schafer (2011, p.277) “the sound environment of a society is an important source of information”. The word “soundscape” is a neologism created by Schafer with the union of the words Sound and Landscape – Soundscape, characterizes any field of acoustic study: “we can refer to a musical composition, a radio program or even an acoustic environment as soundscapes”. (Schafer, 1993, p 23). Soundscapes are a kind of radiography that transmits the sound impression of each environment, through which we can perceive the intensity of everything around the place where we are at.

Voeglin (2010) states that the composition of the soundscape evokes a listening ranging somewhere between aesthetic fantasy and the aesthetic-political demand for a world heard. The sound ecology project pursues the subject directly, wanting to hear the environment that surrounds us, to know and recognize these spaces through sounds. Soundscape compositions are sonic works that seek an investigative and research-oriented tone, where

listening is a request rather than an ambiguous invitation. Krause (2013), in the book *The Great Orchestra of Nature*, shares findings on the importance of the auditory environment for animal survival and the harmful effects of noise on the balance between prey and predator. The sound ecologist dedicated himself to recording natural sounds in wild environments and said in interviews that his mission was to record as many natural sounds as possible, before they disappeared, comparing them to the sounds of nature, deeply interrelated with one another like the arrangements of an orchestra.

The soundscapes that make up the projection are natural (QR code in figure 1), they essentially deliver the sound of birds, as it was the predominant sound during the listening days between March 15 and May 18, 2020. Gomes (2020) states that the pandemic and the consequent lockdown periods forced us to deal with a new reality and resulted in “surprising sound epiphanies”, such as looking back at the soundscape that surrounds us and the transformations that occurred during that period.

Moment 03 - Presentations made: *Assum Livre* flies

- **Artefacto 2020 (International Conference)**

Created in 2020, the performance “Assum Livre”, is inspired by the song Assum Preto, used as the opening theme in Chapter 3 - Sound Art (s), of the PhD Thesis “Quintal dos Sons”. Just as we use the metaphor of criticism of Academicism and the atrocities committed due to the exclusion of individuals not considered "talented", karma is still present in Music and in the roots of musical traditions, where, to be considered a musician, it was necessary to be born with a “gift”, in the performance, we use the metaphor of the “Black Assum” to talk about “freedom”, when we become prisoners in our own homes. Together with digital media artist Hugo Canossa, “Assum Livre” was presented for the first time in an article, at the Artefacto 2020 Conference, on November 26 “Assum Livre: From the screen-cage to the existential world” (Canossa & Rocha 2020), where we still used the name of audiovisual installation; on the occasion, the performance was presented theoretically, as a future work because, in practice, we had no way to travel from the municipality of Porto to be, in person, in Faro, due to a lockdown period during the Covid-19 pandemic. The performance, that speaks of liberation, could not happen imprisoned on a screen.

- **ARTECH 2021 (International Conference)**

On October 14, 2021, the performance was presented on stage, at Centro de Congressos de Aveiro, during the ARTECH 21- 10th International Conference on Digital and Interactive Arts - Hybrid Praxis -Art, Sustainability & Technology. The performance was aimed at the conference audience and was held at 6:40 pm. The paper “Assum Livre: Performance paradoxal entre o real e o digital” (Rocha e Canossa, 2021) was published in the proceedings.

The performance lasted 5 minutes, which we now think was a long time, when we recognize that nowadays life narratives take 15 or at most 30 seconds, which is the time of a story on Instagram or reels and short videos on TikTok and YouTube. However, people craved for more, which made us happy as artists. In the presentation, the story of the bird caused interest and curiosity, a story which unfortunately is not just a metaphor, since the

mistreatment of animals for capitalist purposes and human entertainment is still very real. The audience that attended the communication, but who did not watch the performance, demanded to sing parts of the song, and a spontaneous choir was created with the participants.



Figure 2 - Performance "Assum Livre", presented at Centro de Eventos de Aveiro on October 14, 2021, for Artech 21. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7ygag4J-AE&t=60s>.

- **Cyberperformance 2022 (Live Event)**

The second presentation of *Assum Livre* was held on October 19, 2022, at 9:00 pm, Portugal time, in cyberperformance format, on the Zoom platform, within the scope of the CyPet project, supported by the Center of Research in Arts and Communication (CIAC), at the University of Algarve. With the change of environment, changes were necessary and a new setup was devised.

Between cyberperformance and interaction with the audience, we had a total duration of 15 minutes; those attending were invited to answer a small survey that is also linked to the undergoing research project. In this presentation in cyberspace, the blindfold was not used, but the resource of lighting in sync with the song. The video of the bird was kept; we can see in figure 3 a QR code linking to an excerpt of this presentation. However, the recording did not capture the image of the singer, only the audio, in a sort of telematic dematerialization.

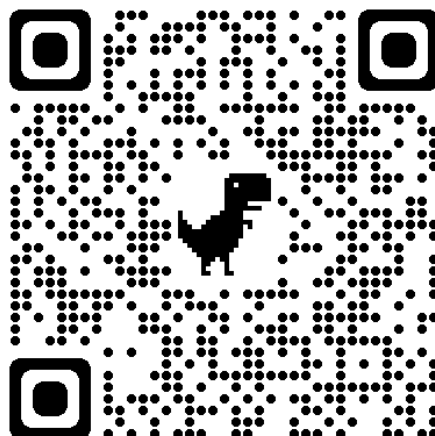


Figure 03-Ciberperformance “Assum Livre” presented on the Zoom platform, on October 19, 2022, within the scope of the CyPet Project. Available at <https://youtu.be/miF3ZwZtqD0>.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Assum Livre was presented in three different formats, theoretical, physical and online, starting as a spin-off of a PhD thesis to evolve towards a performative arts project (CyPet). In both the theoretical and physical presentations there was no data collection and analysis, all that was observed was the audience's participation in terms of interaction with the performer. The live event (streaming) enabled us to compare the physical and online performances: in the physical environment the audience was totally academic and a little more withdrawn, while in the online presentation we had a mixed audience, with people of different ages and with participants from different countries. We were able to corroborate the insights of author Scherlis (2021) who comments on Laurie Anderson's lectures at Norton Lectures, at Harvard. Anderson, at cyber classes during confinement, was more distant than his predecessors in face-to-face classes, but there was a sense of more intimacy. She describes from the audience's point of view a sensation similar to that of the performer. In my physical presentation of the performance “Assum Livre”, I was watching the audience away from me, who, in turn, were staring to the stage; in the online performance close in their windows in the videoconference and could ask them individually their opinion about the cyberperformance, with closeness and intimacy.

In our survey, 100% of the audience participated, five questions were asked. In the first one, it was asked if the audience knew the story of Assum Preto and 50% of the participants said no, which justifies the permanence of the bird video in future performances. In relation to the theme and the performance, they indicated in summary: 1- be interesting for the personal, motivational and reflective relationship; 2- evidences human cruelty towards animals, the performance is at least touching and disturbing. In the third question, we asked if during the confinement they felt somehow trapped and why, 100% of the respondents said yes and among the reasons: 1- deprivation of the company of friends and family; 2- The whole world turned into a small giant cage; 3- we were stuck with TVs and computers; 4- we were limited just like the birds portrayed in the story. In the fourth question, we asked about the amount of online performances they watched during the pandemic. There were 3 options and 75% of participants indicate that they watched 0 to 10 performances online; from 10 to 20 we did not get answers and 25% reported that they had watched more than 20

performances. In the last question, we investigated about the post-pandemic period, if people have watched online performances and what are the advantages and disadvantages for them, 62,5% say they have not watched online performances and about the advantages and disadvantages:

- Advantages: geographic and temporal freedom, watching from the comfort of home, without need to move; can be watched from any mobile device.
- Disadvantages: lower image and audio quality; it lacks the soul and smell of real performances; we lose contact and physical affection; no social interaction.

5. CONCLUSION

The performance “Assum livre” consists of a hybrid art proposal, which sought to reflect on the periods of lockdown during the pandemic (2020-2021), the impact of humans on the environment and the effect of new technologies on the freedom of individuals.

The performance presented is based on the streaming of a projection with the performer/singer interpreting part of the song “Assum preto” (Gonzaga and Teixeira, 1950) simultaneously with a live performance of other parts of the song, which alternate with the presentation of the entirety of the song. A discussion was provided as support for the (cyber)performance presented, dealing with concepts about performance, video art, post-digital art, the hybridization between the arts, the pandemic of the image, the frontal oculo-centric tyranny, the transformations of contemporary society, man/machine interaction and soundscapes, among other. In this perspective, Rancière (2010, p.83) adds that the effectiveness of art is not limited to conveying messages, providing models or deciphering representations. It is related to the arrangement of bodies, with depicting specifically curated spaces and singular times that define ways of being together or in isolation, inside or outside, in proximity or at a distance.

As results, we can conclude that the performance in the different spaces (real and virtual) brings to the audience moments of reflection, by questioning what imprisons us, not in the literal sense, but metaphorically, linked to external and internal factors. Regarding the final survey, it was possible to compare the audience reaction to the physical and online performances, and thus point out the advantages and disadvantages. Essentially, the main advantage of the online performance is geographic freedom (anyplace) and the disadvantage is the lack of physical contact. In the near future we intend to exhibit *Assum Livre* in both physical and cybernetic art spaces, expanding this art project and transforming it into other artefacts and installations with themes related to the issues of human actions towards the natural environment.

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