

# **Academic encounters, venues to re-train ourselves**

**An initiative to document open formats**

**By Colleex – Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation**

**#Colleex /kɒli:gz/ – An EASA network that aims to open a space for debate and intervention around experimental forms of ethnographic fieldwork. #Colleex seeks to explore novel forms of knowledge production for anthropology.**

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# The Lab is not Blah

## Academic encounters, venues to re-train ourselves

*Colleex – Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation*

Tomás Sánchez Criado, Anna Lisa Ramella and Adolfo Estalella and Eeva Berglund

Meetings are, together with papers and books, perhaps the quintessential mechanism for the circulation of academic knowledge. And yet, despite their relevance, we usually resort to the most conventional formats: paper presentations, round tables, etc. Nevertheless, anthropology has recently recognised the need to explore other ways of sharing our knowledge and thinking together. The lab call that EASA has made in the last two conferences evinces an interest that we at the Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation (#Colleex) network also share. In our case, we strongly believe that they should be considered as part and parcel of a discussion on ethnographic experimentation. In this sense, this documentaion project has a twofold goal. First, we aim at bringing for discussion the relevance of meeting formats as pedagogical spaces for the apprenticeship of ethnographic experimentation. Second, we argue for the need to document these meeting formats so that they may travel, be learnt and reproduced elsewhere.

### ***I. Meetings as academic encounters, and venues to re-train ourselves***

*Adolfo:* We meet to share knowledge and learn: at large conferences or intimate workshops, in the classroom with students or in seminars with colleagues. A screen, somebody standing, a series of slides over 10, 20 ... even 30 minutes! Sometimes the speaker sits rather than stands. And then, questions at the end. This arrangement applies to most of the meetings we have had and are likely to have over our academic career. We meet to learn, but perhaps, and this is our point, we should learn to meet. Because meetings are, together with papers and books, quintessential in the circulation of academic knowledge. And yet, despite this, we usually resort to the most conventional of formats: panels of paper presentations and round tables. We want to explore new ways to get together.

Meetings are extended bureaucratic forms, organizational techniques and forms of relationality across all kinds of collective, organisational contexts. Defined in space and time, meetings always point to a larger context. This is the argument made by Hannah Brown, Adam Reed and Thomas Yarrow (2017) in a special issue devoted to the topic. Thus the relevance of meetings has to do with the effects they produce beyond. To quote Brown et al.: “[meetings] contain and animate social worlds outside the spatially and temporally demarcated arenas through which they take place” (Brown et al. 2017: 12).

There is always something at stake beyond then: interests, contexts and agendas that shape a meeting and will be affected by it. Marilyn Strathern has argued that meetings, as organisational events, constitute miniaturise versions of the collectives they are embedded in: “meetings mimic larger apprehensions of a scaled-up object” (2017: 197).

In a period of transformation that seems to call to experiment with new forms of producing knowledge, I would say that we need to mimic in our meeting methods this experimental impulse.

*Tomás:* At the Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation we are trying to open up venues to rethink the norms and forms of ethnography, and more specifically, the ways in which we do and narrate fieldwork. Hence, since we started out almost two years ago now, we have tried to foreground the particular social and material interventions, the devices and the spaces, the discourses and the practices, through which forms of fieldwork beyond the canonical participant observation could be examined in closer detail.

Seeking to explore alternative meeting formats, we organized our first open workshop in Lisbon last year. We devoted half of the programme to an exploration of situation-based, art-oriented, multi-sensory, spatial and audio-visual and other work that we called ‘open formats’. In this alternative meeting mode to the regular paper presentation, we not only experimented with fieldwork and how to learn to do it differently. Also, open formats became reflexive situations whereby what it might mean to experiment could be centre-staged, highlighted, examined, and debated. But as we would like to discuss today, our interest in ‘open formats’ goes beyond a mere playful exploration in a workshop. This is why we are suggesting to meet today in order to learn how to meet in many different other ways. Meeting to learn how to do fieldwork otherwise, meeting to appreciate what it means to experiment in fieldwork and what it brings. In fact we believe that we should devote time and space to understanding open formats as interesting learning and fieldwork devices, and to making them relevant for teaching and research. ...

*Adolfo:* One source of inspiration has been the realization, captured by Michael J. Fischer, that “life is outrunning the pedagogies in which we have been trained” (2003: 9). Or, to put it differently, engaging with forms of ethnographic experimentation has made us realize that conventional ethnographic training—or, to be more specific, the canon expressed in many handbooks and manuals of ethnography—is not adequate to the challenges fieldwork poses today. A second source would be our own very ethnographic engagement: some of us at Colleex we have learnt from our epistemic partners in the field, such artists and activists, alternative ways to come together. This doesn’t just mean that they have shown us specific meeting formats but that we have learn to inhabit in sophisticated ‘how-to’ meeting cultures: ones that mobilize an ecology of practices whose key goal is to get us together to engage in forms of joint research. From our partners we’ve learned about composing ambiances for discussion, arranging spatial layouts, deploying varied technologies for record keeping and documentation, unfolding practices of care... That is, practices whereby ethnography becomes an art of learning to relate—meet, tell, forge relations— in order to relate—that is, to keep on meeting, telling, and forging relations— .



An image of one of the open formats organized in the 1st Colleex Workshop (Lisbon, 2017) (Vitor Barros).

*Eeva:* We agree that heterodox and improvisational formats also generate academic value, and that they could and should be supported further through documentation. And so we thank EASA for the way it is seeking to break out of such constraints through, for instance, labs. EASA has been trying to raise awareness and give some relevance in the programme to labs. To us, labs are not just ‘blah’ they are not a mere playful format, but fundamental sites where the renewal of learning and ethnographic fieldwork might be attempted in a miniaturised time and space. Hence, this lab focuses on how labs matter. This is, then, a lab on how labs operate, a lab of labs...

*Anna:* In that sense, and putting open formats centre-stage, perhaps we should outline some different modes in which open formats happen. I can think of three modes: (a) meetings in which we convey our knowledge through open formats; (b) meetings in which we generate knowledge through open formats; or (c) meetings in which we show experimental fieldwork devices through open formats. Of course they aren't as distinct from each other as this, but we need to disentangle their different moments: (a) knowledge-production happening before the format takes place, (b) knowledge being simultaneous or reciprocal with regards to the format, and (c) knowledge being derived from the open format. Meetings of academic content combine these by sharing knowledge from the field and generating more knowledge around it in the meeting. By analogy with paper presentations, later developed into articles or fully written-up papers, what would be the most finished form of an open format? How can we translate this step of the process where knowledge becomes more integrated into open formats? How could we generate the situational knowledge we could take beyond

the situation, and how could it be shared? What role would documentation play in this? And, also, what kinds of documentation are we talking about?

*Eeva:* We recognize a need for more adequate accounts of fieldwork than tropes and modes that build on ‘participant observation.’ We share an imperative to verbalize or articulate in more-than-textual terms but also to embody the formats and devices through which we encounter and engage the world. We also recognize the need to give some structure and even a little order to the space we as #colleex are occupying, and which we hope enables further developments in heterodox forms of research. There are multiple voices and divergent projects in this space, not just the wider network, but even among ourselves as convenors. (We don’t want to kill the network or limit ourselves by trying to agree on everything, let alone reach consensus.)

But if we are to practice new ethnographic modes and have them recognized and valued, we do need to take a position on what experimental fieldwork might constructively be guided towards and why, and this is where documenting and discussing the ways in which we do it, or drawing inspiration from one another to attempt newer ways, plays a fundamental role. Though of course any attempt at articulating this in any genre is likely to be somewhat hesitant, always contingent and probably relational. It’s not reform so much as a recognition of already productive work and thinking that’s needed. This won’t be easy in the university’s profit-oriented institutional set up, but a drive to push along these lines is definitely there. In places it’s already possible to work without reducing ethnographic insight to text or things like ‘key performance indicators’, plus it’s clear that the extremely serious can easily and productively dovetail with the playful. What we now need is a lively, possibly provisional, documentation format that can travel and contribute to pedagogy.



*Adolfo*: A reflection on how and why to do this, is an integral part of our work about ethnographic experimentation, as a specific ethnographic modality beyond participant observation. But beyond just talking about it or giving it value, the challenge ethnographic experimentation poses is that it requires different forms of ethnographic training. This argument links to a debate on the transformations of fieldwork in the contemporary and the need to re-equip our discipline (Rees 2008). Paul Rabinow, Chris Kelty and Kim Fortun for instance have explored other forms of learning with their students and young researchers (Rabinow 2011, Marcus 2013, Kelty 2008, Fortun 2008). The volume edited by George E. Marcus and James D. Faubion (2009), *Fieldwork is not what it used to be*, is exemplary in this sense. It makes a strong case for the need to renew pedagogies in the anthropological profession if we want to measure up to the challenges of the contemporary. Specifically the PhD is an exceptional learning moment or space to experiment with the possibilities of ethnography, as Marcus has argued: it constitutes a threshold where the limits of the norm and form of field work are negotiated (Marcus 2009). This has led to rehearsing formats borrowed from other disciplines, such as the *ethnocharrette* or the design or art studio. In a similar vein, Paul Rabinow has explored what he designates *labminar*, a space of academic exchange that remediated—that, is, changed from one media to another—the meetings of the laboratories he studied. In these spaces Rabinow, together with his students, explored the possibility of “new forms of inquiry through ways collaborative guided by an ethic of care” (2011: 142).

## II. On the importance of documenting meetings and open formats

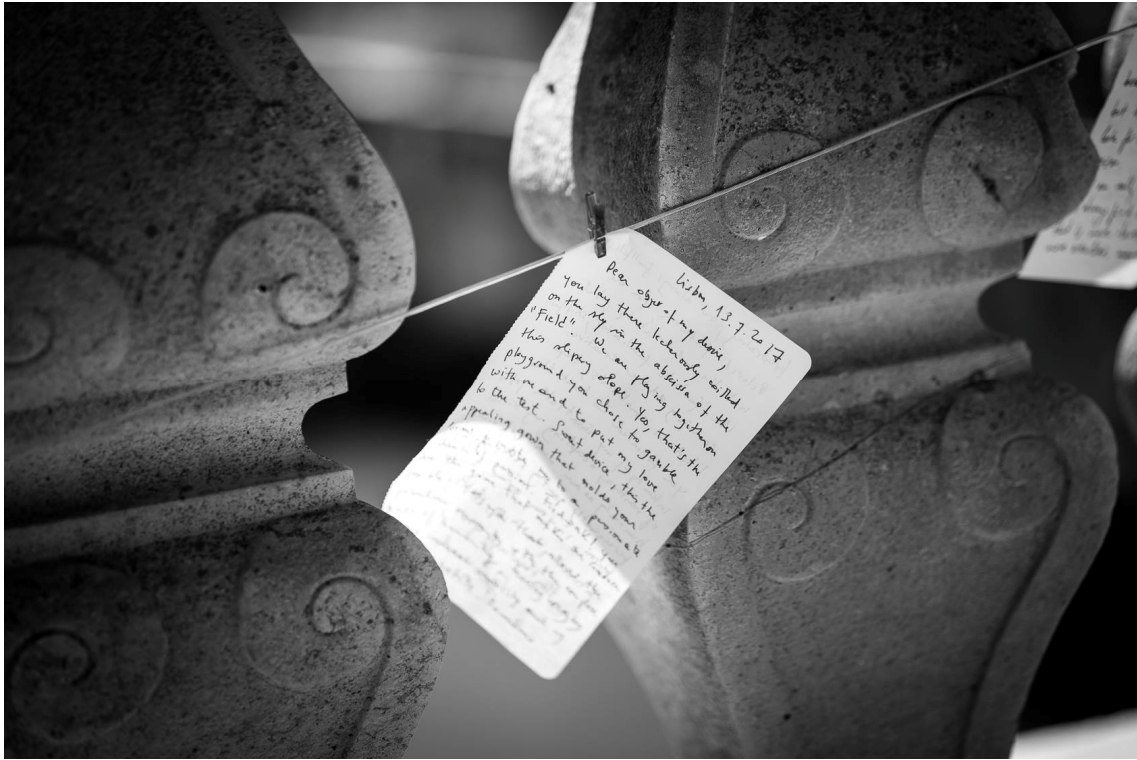
*Adolfo*: If ethnography is moving beyond the solitary to the collaborative, shifting away from the visual to multi-sensory, being captured not just textually but in other mediums, how are these conveyed? Can and should they be captured and re-moved to other locations?

*Tomás*: Perhaps we need to reflect on how to document, how to tell, how to narrate all these experiences, beyond the very situations in which they happen... How to make them travel?

*Anna*: And how can the multi-sensory experiences be documented or made relatable at all? For instance, open formats in mode (c) as I introduced it earlier – that is, as meetings in which the production of knowledge derives from the very open format itself – entail a particular form of documentation. And the documentation of fieldwork encounters and experiments is different, I think, from the documentation of the open formats with which we either seek to produce knowledge (b) or to just transmit knowledge (a).

*Tomás*: What if we gathered the documentation of open formats into something like a manual to help do ethnographic experimentation?





Two images of the open formats organized in the 1st Colleex Workshop (Lisbon, 2017) (Vitor Barros).

*Eeva:* Assuming this is desirable, and that documentation should be easily accessible, what should we call this thing? Not a handbook... An inventory or list, taxonomy even? An archive? A library of how-to manuals or toolkits, even a protocol? A recipe collection or a cookbook?

*Tomás:* There are implications in calling it an inventory or a cookbook. Both are nice terms, but they connect to different powerful imaginaries and aesthetics that could have a potential impact on the output...

*Eeva:* Terminology always carries baggage. The term cookbook is perhaps most open and tolerant of gaps. Inventory is perhaps the most rigid and colonizing word we might use. This is certainly so if it consists of standardised entries to be completed in each case, and assuming some underlying structure that is infinitely transferable from context to context.

*Tomás:* I think there are also different notions of these terms, and I am not that sure that an inventory is colonial per se... It certainly brings to mind an imaginary of knowledge as taxonomy and logistics. Is that the connotation that we want? If we're talking about a gathering of open formats, their very openness suggests more the idea of recipes people can alter, transform, adapt, that the openness doesn't just refer to the types of meetings being experimented, but also the types of documentation being attempted, not to speak of the openness of their subsequent uses?

*Anna:* I think if we use the word cookbook it will need a very clear explanation of our understanding of recipe, that it is a mix of things whose outcome can vary. My first association with recipe is still the "take a+b, get c" type of thing, and I don't think that's what we mean. Maybe we could even be more open with our metaphor and use something that is more abstract and doesn't yet have that connotation, I'm thinking carousel (for dynamics) or something that is an open collection, not a box and not an a+b=c connotation.

*Eeva:* Metaphors and words do matter. Still, as texts and in texts, these vocabularies can all be read as if they were fixed, but they can also all be invitations to improvise and work on them further. One of the key motivations for documenting any research is to share experiences and inspire further adaptation. I think what we are calling for is ways of expanding our academic (and other) imagination. At the same time, some people might be reading documents to get going, to learn something totally new, in which case a step-by-step set of instructions might be handy. Documentation as a way of giving an account (whether as a story or financially) is also simply an invitation to engage and respond, to continue. In the case of #colleex, it's a kind of *reconstructed* epistemic practice we're looking for, that cares for the ethnographic in all its dimensions: as interpersonal engagement, fieldwork, description, theory and combinations of them all.

*Tomás/Adolfo/Anna/Eeva:* Hence, in this spirit, we are meeting today to show you our first steps in attempting how and why to document, something that started after our workshop in Lisbon. In what follows, we will show previous documentation of several open formats. But our aspiration would be to think beyond these first baby steps, and to invite you to join us in meeting to further discuss how we might imagine to document the inventiveness of open formats, and what for? What should be the appropriate genres, archival modes, styles? And, after discussing this, we would also like to propose engaging in a process of documenting the experimental ethnographic practices and accounts of open formats in the conference's labs: where we think this might be a bit more explicit. But we also reckon that not every lab has to be necessarily experimental, and maybe experimentation in and around open formats might also be discussed in presentations across the conference.

Our proposal would be to display such a documentation in our digital platforms, so that we could open up a further discussion and a learning space on how to train ourselves to undertake experimental ethnographic modes. For this, we could use the hashtag #colleexperiments to collect the documentation gathered by all of us. It is our hope that the reflections and the hands-on work in this lab, could pave the way to something like the alternative to the handbook we discussed beforehand. Perhaps, in doing this we could collectively imagine how to make such a cookbook?

You may see some of the documentation produced so far in the Colleex network here: <https://colleex.wordpress.com/colleex-open-formats>

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# In the mood for epistemic love



A format by **Andrea Gaspar (Universidade de Coimbra)**

# How to build a(n anthropological) trap and fall into it?

## An attempt to design an 'epistemic love letters' infrastructure for pedagogic ends

Alberto Corsín Jiménez says "we fall" (2017). We fall in what? In anthropological traps, just like we fall in love. We are 'companion experiments', he says (quoting Battaglia in the same volume), and asks: "How do companion experiments fall in love? (...) We fall. We just fall. We get trapped and fall" (ibid: 294). The analogy between anthropology (or in my case, ethnography) and love is also what I attempted to explore through my experiment with 'epistemic love letters' in the first Colleex meeting (Lisbon, July 2017). I wondered if love could work as a vocabulary to talk about ethnographic relationships.

After working about prototypes, Alberto Corsín Jiménez turned his attention to traps more lately. His point is that anthropological traps, as he put it, "are good to fall in (love with)" (ibid: 295). But what is a trap? Alfred Gell's classic interest in traps (1996) is well known: a trap is an automaton, an extension of the creator and simultaneously a (working) model of the creator and the victim: it anticipates and subverts the behaviour of the victim. In the use of Corsín Jiménez, a trap is an *onto-dispositif*, a concept invoked by Battaglia and Antunes Almeida (2014), that "allies with Law and Evelyn's (2013) notion of devices that create their own heterogeneous arrangements for relating, with the difference that it is a sensibility-engendering rather than an analytic device." The onto-dispositif, they say, "creates its own heterogeneous *exchange protensions*—prospecting for its own possible worlds (...)".

Part of the interest in traps is that they are designed. So did I imagine what we could consider a sort of 'infrastructure' albeit basic and rudimentary, composed by a call, letter box for love letters, wire and clips and a poem of Fernando Pessoa ("All love letters are ridiculous") and during the conference there was also a moment for the presentation of the idea. The call (below) was meant to act as an invitation/provocation opening the possibility to think ethnography in analogy to love and explicitly asking the experimental ethnographers in the venue to write about their fieldwork relations as 'epistemic love letters' rather than papers. I provided a letter box with the inscription "love letters" only: having "epistemic love letters" would be too long as an inscription, and the intention (failed) was also to open the possibility that any people passing by in the garden could feel curious and perhaps could leave love letters: the event was organized in the sui generis Jardim Botânico Tropical, a former 'Colonial Garden' that once worked as pedagogic show of the botanical diversity of the colonies and which is now a museum/botanical park open to the public. My intention was to exhibit the letters received, which would be hung with clips, and eventually see if they could be used to generate discussion about ethnographic issues that are related to the more personal and relational aspects of fieldwork.

I did what I planned, and I received four letters, but the first problem was that they were very different in form to the point that I didn't know if they could work as 'epistemic love letters' or not: one of them was a photograph (and the author explained me later by e-mail what it referred to), and another one was an e-mail, so I guess this leaves only two letters-really-handwritten-

letters (although they very interesting and creative in their own right, and certainly worth attention – transcriptions below).



The second problem was that the purpose of the exercise wasn't clear and people interpreted it about love/sex issues in the field. This unpredictable effect of my rudimentary plan made me so embarrassed to the point of leaving me in an impasse about what to do next. I didn't intend to do more than to open the idea as a provocation (a provocation is a sort of trap in a way) and leave it open and inconclusive, but in order to avoid the misinterpretation I should have invested more on the design of it: on the material, mechanic onto-potential aspects of my infrastructure, on its affordances and predicted effects: it would have been important to think more carefully in advance on what it was supposed to do, to care about its design: design as a way of *drawing* things together (Latour 2008: 7), depends on "modesty, care, precautions, skills, crafts, meanings, attention to details, careful conservations, redesign, artificiality, and ever shifting transitory fashions". The box indicated 'love letters' and it was positioned in a strategic point of the conference venue. What was it meant for? Was it for love letters? Love letters in general, or ethnographic love letters? What a precarious and fragile infrastructure. "Interesting, but I wanted to ask you, why do you call it 'epistemic?'", was how one colleague expressed me her puzzlement. And to whom should they be addressed? For 'informants'? For other anthropologists? For lovers in the field? I did not know.

I ended up in an impasse. I only had a vague idea. I was left it in suspension. I was the one ended caught in the perils of trying to design an object - an infrastructure, a trap of some sort - without knowing how to. "It is hard work - at times playful, often treacherous, sometimes uncontrollable and overwhelming too - to trap a feeling", says Alberto, who could be my epistemic-sentimental advisor. I ended up with very mixed feelings about this object and for that reason I didn't invest as much as I should on it. But such exercise relates to an important debate in anthropology: how to do anthropology through design? It is a whole matter of pragmatics: to engage in the design of an object for ethnography is not only to be exposed to the perils of traps: the quest is to design them as onto-dispositifs, that is, *devices that create its own heterogeneous arrangements for relating*. What did I want my trap to put in relation in first place?

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About 'Consultorio Elena Francis': <https://smoda.elpais.com/placeres/elena-francis-consejos-para-la-mujer-sumisa/>

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consultorio\\_de\\_Elena\\_Francis](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consultorio_de_Elena_Francis)



## "Querida Doña Elena" – 'Epistemic love letters' 2.0

"And in love, in the middle, in between, in the interim and the impasse, we keep falling,  
we remain trapped"

Corsín Jiménez, *ibid*, 295

In an attempt to redefine the design of my little 'technical' infrastructure after this experience (after all, to design is always to redesign - Latour 2008), I now ask how to build an infrastructure for eliciting issues related to ethnography's capacity for 'epistemic love'. What if epistemic love letters are used as a device for an educational context? This is what my infrastructure would put into relation: the practice and experiences of ethnography, teaching anthropology, and love. Considering that teaching can be considered a form of *active* (that is, concrete) love (Roberts 2018: 8), my idea is that letters can be used as a resource for teaching ethnography and a means for inviting students to reflect about the relational aspects of fieldwork. Roberts' point is that we learn through acts of attention, and "Acts of attention demand of us a willingness to wait, to look, to listen. They require patience and humility"<sup>1</sup>Active love, he proceeds, based on careful and patient attention, "is not concerned with grand gestures but small moments of giving and receiving. It is (...) a form of work that is never complete" (*ibid.*). I wonder if 'Epistemic love' letters, if understood as a device for active love and teaching in those terms can be used for specifically writing about relational aspects of the field and providing the sort of learning opportunities that become scarce in neoliberalized academic contexts: the neoliberal universities' obsession with measurement, assessment and efficiency, according to Roberts, works against the unpredictable, often unknowable forms of learning, leading him to conclude that "contemporary educational institutions provide unfriendly soil for the cultivation of attention and active love", and therefore, "Love, has no place in such systems" (*ibid*: 9-10). So we need devices for educational falling. Can letters do that for anthropology?

If (epistemic) love is mediated, we need a whole education on how to care for these interfaces. Letters can be one of those mediators or interfaces. The use of letters in anthropology is not new: letter writing is part of an on-going tradition in anthropology: for example, both Malinowski and Margaret Mead used letters in their fieldwork, but mainly as a tool for analysing culture. In particular for Malinowski, letter writing was a tool for teaching the novice anthropologist how to do fieldwork: he made his student, Camilla Wedgwood, write to him from the field. This was his way of ensuring that "headnotes" were converted into fieldnotes (Sanjeck, 1990: 111-112). Letter writing has also been explored as a pedagogic device for anthropology courses (Scheld 2009): some anthropologists are experimenting with letter writing as pedagogy in anthropology<sup>2</sup>, among other devices - for example games (Collins, Dumit et al

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<sup>1</sup>Active love comes to life through thought, feelings, actions, and relationships. It is not abstract but concrete, grounded in the messy realities of daily life. Through active love we shift our focus of attention away from ourselves – the prompting of our ego – but in so doing, more fully become what we are meant to be as moral beings." (Roberts 2018: 8-9)

<sup>2</sup>For example, Robert Borofsky's (2008) work with the Public Anthropology's Community Action website is one example (<https://www.publicanthropology.net>).

2017). Suzanne Scheld (2009) in particular, experimented with letter writing for pedagogic purposes by asking students to write formal letters to senior anthropologists, prompting responses from them and therefore turning the letter writing into a dynamic pedagogy. Inspired by that tradition and those experiments, my reframing of the exercise is as following: the proposal is to use letters not as 'love letters' but as letters that are used to express dilemmas and concerns about the relational craft of the field and ask advice and orientation to the person (a character) receiving the letters. This, I imagine, can be a pedagogical device useful for seminars with PhD or master students in anthropology, for example, as a way of bringing up those issues for discussion.

## Instructions

1) The first step is performative: set the stage, design a character. My suggestion is to build a sort of **sentimental advisory service** and put yourself in the position of someone who receives and reads the letters for advising the people who send the letters. This is a fictional role where you will be playing a character. One source of inspiration that I recommend to build the character is the **Consultorio de Elena Francis**: it was a Spanish radio programme, active between the 1940s and the 1960s, whose structure consisted on a sentimental 'expert' (Doña Francis) giving advice to an audience of housewives based on the issues and topics raised by their letters. "Se ponían canciones dedicadas, se leían autobiografías o vidas de santos, como modelos a imitar, pero el cuerpo principal del programa consistía en leer las preguntas de las oyentes y darles consejo. Algunas cartas, si así se solicitaba, eran contestadas por correo, lo que servía como confirmación de que doña Francis existía y no era una mera leyenda." (wikipedia) Doña Francis, however, revealed to be a fictional character sustained by a whole team: the whole project was an artifice, a trap of some sort: "se trataba de un montaje que el "Instituto de Belleza Francis" de Barcelona se había inventado para publicitar sus productos". It can't be ignored that in content, this is highly criticisable: the program promoted a very moralist model of submissive woman because it was part of the conservative ideology of *franquismo*. However, it is an admirable edifice in form, a whole exercise of construction, which I see as an interesting inspiration towards a more *designed* anthropology.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PfUbrztjk0>

2) Think about the setting or format: Consultorio de Elena Francis was a radio programme. Depending on the situation and the resources available, what would be the best medium? A

radio programme? A dramatic session? A blog? A lecture room? A television show? A book, or a booklet?

3) Invite students to hand write their letters and send them to the **Consultorio**- for a better effect, it is important to keep the old-fashioned handwritten document as the medium, as a material object. Letters are used to ask questions to someone who is (or pretends to be) an 'expert' in dealing with the emotional/personal sides of ethnography.

4) Send those letters to the person (or network of people) performing the role of 'sentimental advisor'.

5) The 'sentimental advisor' writes back to the students, keeping the conversations about the craft of ethnography going.

6) Define the time and rhythm of the **Consultorio** or the questions/answers sessions: is there regularity for feedback sessions or is it a single session?

7) Use ambience ingredients for the reading and commenting session, such as, for example, music or dedicated songs, or reading the biographies of exemplary anthropologists working as inspirational models for the ethnographic craft.



8) Finally, it is important to clarify that this is intended as a way of building epistemic-pedagogic relations, therefore 'love' is not the content of the letters, but rather the aim of setting up the whole building: love is its effect.

**The call****In the mood for epistemic love**

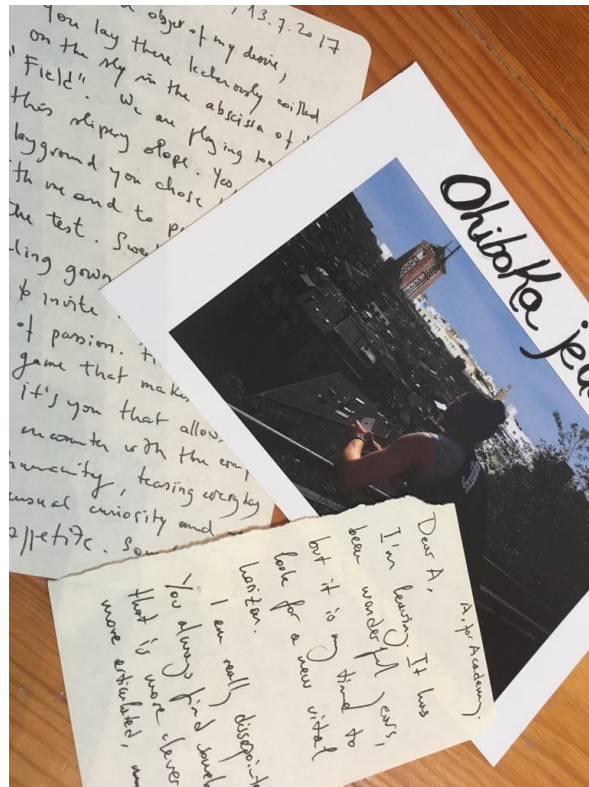
Love, the common-place goes, is something that happens: something that is made of chance, that is out of our control (we fall in love); and at the same time it is a practice: it is made of an encounter, just like ethnography; and ethnography is totally a relational affair, just like love. (Romantic) love is probably as much a discourse, idealized and 'imagined' (like in Xavier Dolan's film *Les amours imaginaires*), as it is something that escapes or overflows discourse: it is also lived, performed, embodied, corporeal. It is excessive. It is mysteriously creative, generative: it is magic (Pignarre & Stengers 2011). Love is perhaps even experimental (Rheinberger 1997): it is open-ended and at the same time it is something for which we need to create the conditions for it to happen: it is something we need to care for. Can 'love' be useful as a vocabulary to describe and think about what we ethnographers do, how we make our knowledge and the kind of relationships we create in the field? What kinds of things love and ethnography have in common?

Ethnography is often romanticized and idealized: its process is mystified. Considering that we live in a time of 'fast' research, a time when the 'projectification' of academic knowledge production (Ylijoki 2014) threatens to colonize our research life and sanity, can ethnography-as-epistemic-love work as some sort of resistance (or therapy) to this process? Can (epistemic) love save us?

Aiming at opening up possibilities of thinking about ethnography as a mode of epistemic love, 'In the mood for epistemic love' invites Colleex to experiment with a different frame for narrating their ethnographic experiences: tell us your epistemic love stories, through epistemic love letters.

Tell your colleex about your epistemic love stories: the stories about how you make your epistemic magic happens; or the troubled relationships in the field, the unsaid things: your love with the field, your love in the field, the frictions, the unconscious issues; or, be pro-active and, for example, declare your epistemic love to the discipline or area of expertise of your collaborators in the field, or even propose your fieldwork colleex to be your epistemic lovers.

The letters would be collected during the workshop days in a letter box and will be exhibited in the last day.



### Letter 1:

Lisbon, 13-07-2017

Dear object of my desire,

You lay there lecherously coiled (sic) on the sky in the abscissa of the "Field". We are playing together this slippery slope. Yes, that's the playground you chose to gamble with me and to put my love to the test. Sweet desire, this the appealing gown that mold (sic) your forms to invite me to a passionate dance of passion. Fieldwork! You are the game that makes our romance possible. It's you that allows the fabulous encounter with the complex beauty of humanity, teasing everyday more my sensual curiosity and my intellectual appetite. Sometimes frustrating, but always fulfilling (sic). Beloved fieldwork, you are not the end in itself, but the fantastic facilitator, skillfully (sic) concerning ad hoc creative libidinal constraints, traps you fomented to hunt the intensity of my insatiable poetics of resistance, accepting my trivial humanity as an award of bravery, permanently gently redefining my person, in your arms, finally; between your hips, fatally.

That bratingly (sic - bracingly?) yours,  
Bernard

## Letter 2

Picture, with a hand inscription "Ohiboka jeddans"

Comment to the picture (as a response to my question if "Ohiboka jeddans" was a singer):

"Ohiboka jeddans is not a singer, it means "I love you" in moroccan arabic. I choose to write it in arabic, because in the Residential Centre my co-researchers, sometimes, use arabic to speak about the things they don't want to share with the social workers or educators. I don't know if you were in my presentation. I research with Unaccompanied Foreign Minors that come from Morocco.

The picture is the photo on my thesis cover. I took the picture and the boy that appears in the pic is one of my co-researcher. He decided to look to that landscape, that it is a fictitious landscape. Is Bilbao, where he is set, and Tanger, where his family live. It does not represent a person. Nor me, nor my co-researcher. It represents the research as something we need to care for.

With this declaration of love to my co-researchers and declaring it in a language that social workers do not dominate I wanted a also to parody the idea of when you are seen you with your co-researchers years after the fieldwork ended, the social workers who worked with these children they imagine that we have a relationship of love/sex. This makes us feel very uncomfortable and attack. So, with this lover letter we want to represent that love overflows the imaginary of social workers."

(Karmele Mendonza Pérez, e-mail 17-07-2017).

Later, the author also attached this text:

Las investigaciones cuando son construidos a partir de una metodología de investigación que permite una colaboración intensa y extensa en el propio proceso investigador a veces generan resultados y relaciones inesperadas. Al hablar de relaciones, y como nos recuerdan constantemente colectivos como Colaborabora (2017), o autores como Sánchez-Criado (2013), Lafuente y Lara (2013), Kulman (2012) en este tipo de investigaciones las emociones, los afectos, los sentimientos, como en el arte, forman parte del propio proceso. No es que las emociones, los afectos y sentimientos no hayan tenido importancia en la práctica investigadora en el pasado, sino que en otras formas de investigar no se han reconocido ni se les ha dado espacio. Sin embargo, para comprender los derroteros de mi propia tesis es necesario tener en cuenta los afectos y relaciones (Mendoza, 2017). Así, en este proceso de investigación nos hemos llegado a sentirnos amigos, confidentes e, incluso, hermanos. A veces tejimos lazos y hermandades inesperados.

Lazos y hermandades inesperada que he querido agradecer, cuidar y recordar con esta "foto de amor". Esta foto es la portada de mi tesis y habla de afectar y ser afectados; de lazos tejidos durante la investigación no acabaron cuando se agotó el tiempo del taller, sino que continuaron en la construcción del relato, en el diseño de la portada de la tesis y por supuesto en nuestra vida. Esta "foto de amor" es la portada de mi tesis y no

solo nos habla de un paisaje ficticio soñado como Bilbao con Tánger de fondo, sino también habla de lo invisible de esa necesidad de cuidarnos y querernos. Cuidar y querer no solo a la familia que está lejos, sino cuidarnos y querernos mientras investigamos.

Pero hablar que querer cuando se investiga con menores es algo peligroso, incluso vergonzoso, y que puede ser malinterpretado, hasta tal extremo que donde una dice amor otros imaginan sexo. Por eso, para cuidarnos en salud hemos aprendido que las cosas hay que decirlas, y más cuando es un te quiero, pero quizás sea más seguro decirlo en otras lenguas. Por eso: "Ohiboka jeddan" que en árabe, la lengua materna de mis co-investigadores, significa te quiero.

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### Letter 3:

Dear A, (A, for Academy)

I'm leaving. It has been wonderful years, but it is my time to leave for a new vital horizon.

I am really disappointed. You always find somebody that is more clever, more articulated, younger... It is as if you had never enough my company, generosity and affect.

I am sorry, A., but I think you are lost, getting older and losing your enthusiasm. I am really sorry for you.

Yours.



**Letter 4 (sent through e-mail):**

On the third day...

You've caught more sleep than one would expect at a conference. You even do some yoga in the morning, while listening to electronic summer music. You have a lot of coffee and choose to leave your laptop at the apartment. When you enter the room, many others are already there, so you silently join into the rhythm of the morning session that has become familiar so quickly. You sit down on the wooden floor. It is colder than before - the soft breeze almost gives you goosebumps. The stories you listening to intermingle with dogs howling. You are picking up thoughts, think with them. You are noting down a few words and draw the plants and animals of the garden. With western eyes (\*) all the books stare at you through their cage. You can smell how they are slowly yellowing. You think of the cat sitting on the massive tree roots. And then you dissolve in the continuing choreography of voices and noises. You want to hold on to that feeling, but you know that you can't.

(\*) Portishead (1997) Western Eyes. In: Portishead: Portishead, 11.

# ATLAS: MATRIX\*



## A COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

Heléna Elias<sup>3</sup>, Francesca De Luca<sup>4</sup>

\*from Latin *mātrīx* (dam, womb), from *māter* (mother)

This short piece tells about a *mindful collaboration*, one where the act of collaborating - intentional but not overly planned - resulted in an open-ended installation/dispositive that called for ulterior collaboration, enabling the spectators to play with the elements while generating, at same time, a reflection around the collaborative endeavour itself.

An introductory story in the form of a diary is followed by DIY guidelines, indicating a replicable formula for co-laborating - [from *Latincum* (together) + *laborare* (to practice)] - in transdisciplinary settings.

*Atlas: MATRIX\** emerged, at first, as a space of dialogue and confrontation where our individual research paths- a reflective practice generated by the creation of ceramic pieces (Elias 2016), and a genealogy of childbirth pain in Lisbon's biomedical settings (De Luca 2018) - conjoined in an inquiry on the colonial legacy of the Tropical Garden and its surroundings.

<sup>3</sup> EBANO Collective invited artist, FBA Faculty of Fine Arts - University of Lisbon, VICARTE, FCT post-doc Grant SFRH / BPD / 63249 / 2009

<sup>4</sup> Member of EBANO Collective, PhD candidate at ICS Institute of Social Sciences - University of Lisbon, FCT grant SFRH/BD/93020/2013

The site-specific installation was elaborated during the first #Colleex international workshop (July 2017) in the Tropical Garden of Belém (the western area of Lisbon) on an invitation of EBANO Collective, host of the event.

The event constituted, for Heléna, an opportunity to merge a previous research carried under her PhD, regarding the public art and urban design of the Portuguese World Exhibition (1940) as the urban matrix of Belém riverside. It also propelled Francesca's enquire into the colonial imprint on the epistemological and political configurations of childbirth pain and practices on the pregnant body in Portuguese obstetrics.

From such we developed a set of correspondences to stage our work at #Colleex. The *matrix*, referring to an object or concept from where something originates, was our common ground: matrix was the name given to the uterus until the 19th century in midwifery, but also the fragments from which ceramic objects may take shape; matrix referred to a geological structure that frames the rocks, but also an architectonic model that served as a paradigm for replications (as the *ecclesia matrix*, the "mother church"); matrix could be the portion of soil that encases, through a dominant colour, the main characteristics of the area, but also indicate a group of symbols organized in a rectangle used to solve particular mathematical problems.

All these connotations implied an idea of (re)production, indicating the condition of generative possibilities withheld in specific configurations. The matrix we were looking at and working on was a very material endeavour.

## AN ATLAS DIARY

*Francesca. Day zero* - We meet at the Tropical Garden a few weeks before the #Colleex event to explore the space together and decide where to set up our installation.

In 1940, the Tropical Garden hosted the Colonial Section of the *Exposition of the Portuguese World.* "Persistence in time [...] may be coupled with debris" (Hunt 2016:10). Debris of the Exposition are scattered all over the place - standing pavilions, abandoned structures, busts of anonymous colonial subjects, ceramic tiles with exotic flowers, exotic animals, exotics bodies and scenes. Little is said in the garden's leaflets about its colonial past.

Helena's gaze is directed downwards while we walk: she explains that, as for the rest of Lisbon, also this place's soil is rich in old ceramic pieces, remains of previous architectures or potteries used to create new compounds to cover the ground. She squats down a few times when spotting what appear to be minuscule shining stones, she digs a bit and - to my amazement - she always picks up pieces of glazed pottery of different sizes and colours. We consider the possibility of setting up the installation in the entrance hall of the Lion's House. It is a chancy prospect - the space is so much imbued in upfront colonial narratives that we struggle at first to envision an intervention that may retain any form of independence and not be swallowed by its immediate surroundings. We decide to take up the challenge and see where the dialogue goes.



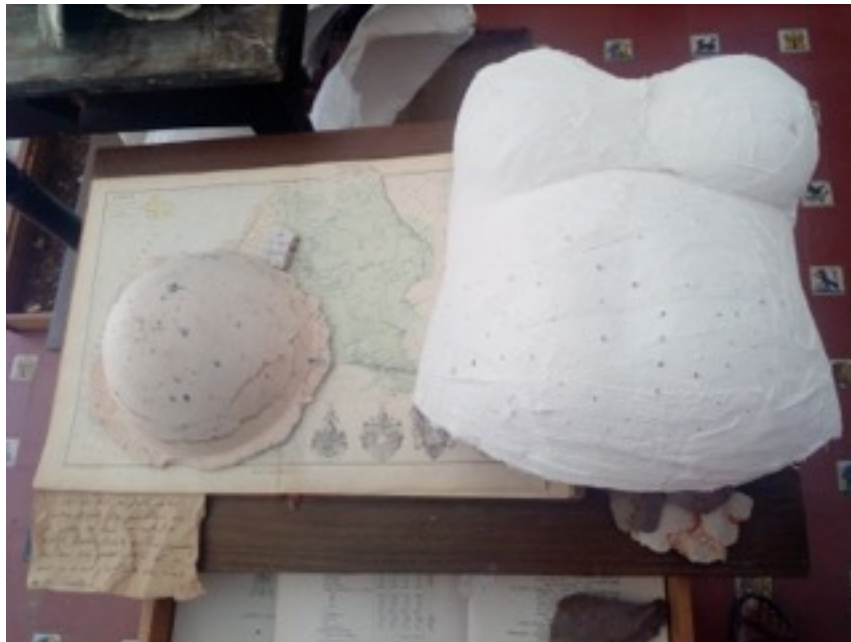
*Helena. Day one* - We set up the installation structure with colonial wood tables with a western modern design that we found abandoned in one of the buildings of the garden. In such structure, we display a set of ceramic sculptures and pregnant bellies plaster casts, artefacts that comprise our previous research explorations, adding various objects and elements that are part of the Tropical Garden environment. They include ceramic fragments found in the soil as well as Portuguese colonial research books about the geography and geology of Africa, borrowed from the Garden's library collection.

The ceramic sculptures constitute part of my ongoing artistic research, which embodies the concept of matrix as the sculpture-making procedures testify. A previous plaster mould has been the nest of a ceramic fragment found in the soil and from where a new ceramic form grows. A metaphor for the origin and growing of form starts with an unknown ceramic fragment from where I start to mould the sculpture. Ceramic objects are one of the testimonies of the west/east cross-culture references over the centuries, as they embodied many histories of the European colonization.

*F. Day one* - The installation is set as a dialogue, and we agree to play with it along the three days of the workshop and to encourage participants and casual passersby to intervene freely with the pieces. I am reticent to move some of Helena's ceramic artefacts, as they seem fragile and the tables appear unstable. So, at first, when I find time to go back to the installation between the various events of the workshop, my dialogue with it consists of minor shifts and shy tentatives of objects reorganization.

I'm less restrained with the pregnant belly casts. They are fieldwork devices (X. Andrade et Al. 2017), testimonies of the intimate touch of an anthropological encounter, bearing layers of dried plaster on gauze stripes and hours spent with pregnant women in the private settings of their homes. I have resolved to do belly casts in my research on childbirth pain to overcome the tight temporality that hospital fieldwork imposed on my engagement with pregnant women. It takes time to probe people to open up about experience or expected pain, and "the time of the clinic" - an obstetrician has once told me when asked for an interview - "is very different from the time of anthropology". Displaced from their original setting, the casts become versatile objects and bodies' archives.

*H. Day Two* - Below and above the drawers we overlap and place other personal research materials. We continue to add elements directly collected from the garden such as diverse types of soils, leaves and seeds. As each of us move to different buildings to participate to the #Colleex events, we keep collecting materials that resound and resemble the matrix concept we have agreed to explore further, strengthening the site-specific aspect of the installation. Later, I return to the installation room and add such elements, placing them in strategic areas of the installation. Soil portions are shown inside the colonial wood table's drawers, as they have been collected as specific features that stand for land possession, as samples to investigate and nominate the unknown. Francesca has collected botanical samples such as seeds and leaves from tropical tree and plant species. We move and open the Midwifery book and the Geological African soil stratus's book in specific pages to match the collected elements.



*F. Day Two*- The longer we engage in our matrix manipulation, the more intricate and intertwined appear the various archives we're mobilizing. Heléna tells me that on the inaugural ceremony of the construction work of Belém riverside, which was commemorated twice during the dictatorship (1940 and 1960), the Ministry of Ultramarine Lands (Ministério do Ultramar) ordered small quantity of soil from the Portuguese colonies to be dispersed in Belém (Elias 2008). The mobilization of soil was followed by the displacement of colonial subjects and materials -the Tropical Garden was in fact transformed during the 1940's Exposition by what a local newspaper defined "an ethnographic documentary from three continents: Africa, Asia and Oceania" (Matos 2006:211). Temporary artificial colonial scenographies were populated by a "human zoo" of 138 natives plus an elephant that walked in a secluded area of the garden according to scheduled hours and a caged lion. Two indigenous women gave birth during the six months of the exposition, and the three infants died before its ending (Vargaftig 2016). Colonial

soil, objects and bodies (animals or human alike) also filled medical imaginaries and obstetric books of the time, that circulated an old trope asserting how indigenous women - like animals - had easy, painless childbirth (Rich 2016).

*H. Day Three* – As we dialogue through the objects' placement, crafts and collected elements, we continue to display and coordinate verbal and visual elements. Paper notes from midwifery books with seeds and ceramics, cartographies of the continents as background of sculptures are among the operations developed. I re-arranged the set and disposed ceramic fragments over the colonial maps. A ceramic fragment has the word “pain” printed although, originally, the full word might have been “painted”. I displayed the printed ceramic fragment over the map showing world countries' frontiers on the XIX century. Frontiers and pain. At the time, the Western orders to divide and share Africa land and their resources have come to my mind as I was part of such colonial matrix too. Also, the propaganda motto of the Portuguese regime, during the dictatorship, saying that Portugal goes from Minho to Timor, namely the former country and the colonies (Elias 2008), has been a consequence of such European agreement upon Africa. At some point of the day III, I come back and placed sculpture ceramics over the maps. Francesca has also orientated the plaster bellies towards the map.

*F. Day Three* - One of Helena's round sculpture, shaped in the plaster mould and generated from a ceramic *matrix* is resting bottom up on a world map of an old atlas. I put a belly cast beside it, and think of how it has also been moulded around a shape. I have punctured this cast with little holes, that being close permit to see through it - and one can see the definition of *matrix* from a geology's dictionary. The MATRIX: Atlas\* is an installation that, like the research carried out in fragmented or forgotten archives, calls for active engagement. The pieces that we have put together may at first seem random and unrelated, but they share the logic of the matrix, of something that has a generative character. Moreover, they are debris of a past that has no narrative in the stroll around the Tropical Garden. Our matrix exercise becomes a practice of visibility and a work of deliberate connections.

*H. Postscriptum* - According to Bishop, the collaboration and interaction within creative practices in the art domain not always led to participatory art, due to the imposition of a false social consensus among the relations settled on such art projects (Bishop 2006). Nevertheless, she acknowledges that some participatory projects have challenged social established perspectives and assumptions as some interventions have cast some light towards alternative forms of participatory practice and convergence of diverse Knowledges (Bishop 2012). While experiencing the artistic turn in academic research, artists have settled a debate on forms of research and knowledge (Cossens, Douglas and Crispin 2009) that artistic practice can offer. There are procedures that do not fit entirely into the conventions of scientific knowledge.

Artistic research encompasses heuristic methods, primal non-verbalised research work, experimental collaboration strategies and embodied forms of knowledge. Nevertheless, they may not be exclusive of the artistic practice. By initially exploring communication through non-primal verbalized research work, namely the ceramic sculpture works and the pregnant bellies plaster casts, me and Francesca have started

an experimental format that cuts with the unidirectional procedure of reflecting and presenting work in progress. Previously, both have individually approached their research subject through craft making and bringing visible the tactile human experience (Ingold 2010). As part of the embodied knowledge, such craft investigation has triggered the mutual exchange and reciprocity enquire regarding the matrix subject and the colonial legacy of the garden. Such motivation has led to the co-creation of an interactive installation as a communicational device to open and include the dialogue with peers.

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## COLLABORATIVE INSTALLATION - A FORMULA

In this installation we have composed, at different moments along the #Colleex workshop, sets of matrix proposals as described above. Although the installation was bound to our experience of the place and previous research paths, we were able to design a set of procedures that might be used by other researchers. Here is the formula:

### 1 – Set a common ground:

Previously to the installation, combine a concept that match both of your research. Start to think of visual and material elements, crafts our other elements you both have produced in your research (whether data, material evidences, crafts, visual documents, field notes, other) and that could generate dialogues between your research issues.

(NOTE: Concentrate on the side-works of field-work: those activities, materials, thoughts or occurrences that happen around but outside of fieldwork; then undress fieldwork of the possibility of having, or discerning, an *inside* from an *outside*).

### 2- Create a site-specific approach:

After having a common-ground mind-set to start, please visit the place where the installation will be developed. Observe the typology and uses of the space – a corridor, atrium, room, open space, etcetera, and correlate such specificities with your mind-set.

### 3- Tune the collaborative mind-set:

Bear in mind that you will have at least three dimensions to be intertwined at the place of the installation: a) physical characteristics of the space where the installation is displayed; b) symbolic, institutional, agonistic discourses the space resonates, and the mind-set you have previously agreed upon. You may find attached to the space diverse elements that might bridge, reset, highlight or enlarge your initial collaboration approach to the concept you want to explore and communicate to peers within the event. Furniture, books, materials, objects, etc., may be among the preferences.

(NOTE: adopt the vision of a collaborator in displacing your object from the usual niche you have created for them. Do not dwell on feelings of embarrassment).

### 4- Planning and displaying the installation:

Plan the days that you will be dialoguing with your installation during the event and a reasonable amount sources of both previous research work that you will you be connecting to the concept and place the installation. Also suggest the moments you will be together available to talk to participants in the event and plan as well the sorts of devices suited for your documenting the performance schedule.

### 5- Continually feed the installation:

Bring elements form previous research each day and collect elements from the surroundings that could match the mind-set concept, highlight aspects of research you both find pertinent or

even topics the participants have suggested for you to think about. Keep changing and re-arranging and composing different sets.

Documentation of the process is desirable as in the form of notes or visual or audio-visual recording build a reflexive practice of the installation. As you document the procedures you may find specific frames that constitute the next arrangement.

Particularly, the compositions staged, the intuitions underlined in the matching groups of data collected, the ideas generated during the installation feeding, and shared knowledge with peers during the event, are features that will surely nurture individual and collaborative future research of the participants of the Collaborative Installation.

(NOTE: Feel free to create the connections, spur dialogues and unite the dots deliberately).

# CLEENIK

## CLINIC OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPERIMENTS



### Clinic of anthropological ethnographic experiments in fieldwork

**Summary.** The CLEENIK is a meeting methodology, a format that seeks to devise spaces to share and learn how to practice forms of ethnographic experimentation in fieldwork. Drawing on practices of care it aims at unfolding the conditions to tame the anxieties and uncertainties provoked by these particular ethnographic modalities we call ethnographic experimentation.

**Publics.** It is addressed to anthropologist and ethnographers and it is especially apt for researchers in the early stage of their careers. It requires 1-2 hours and a small group of participants (around 10-15), for larger groups it is recommended to split in smaller units.

**Keywords:** Ethnography, Ethnographic experimentation, care,

The CLEENIK has been produced by  
xcol – Ethnography beyond participant observation <http://xcol.org>

An anthropologist suffering from Excess of Engagement Stress (EES) when things between you and your natives get 'too involved', another experiencing a DDID Dissociative Disciplinary Identity Disorder and another one with positionalitis. These are just some of the symptoms and diagnosis collected in the second operation of the Clinic of Anthropological Ethnographic Experiments in Fieldwork. The CLEENIK, for short, is a especially designed format to treat anthropologists suffering from the multiple syndromes consequence of ethnographic experimentation during fieldwork. It is what we call an apprenticeship format for fieldwork learning, a pedagogical methodology especially designed to host, share and debate those ethnographic investigations carried out by anthropologists (and more generally ethnographers) that feels they are transgressing the assumed conventions of the ethnographic method. It is addressed to researchers that experience anxiety, uncertainty and doubts about what they may consider an appropriate practice of the ethnographic method. The CLEENIK aims at offering a protected space to those vulnerable investigators and open a space to share the uncertainties and apprehensions of their ethnographic projects.

It seeks to devise a different format of getting together, opening a space for care and complicity. Drawing inspiration on the common practices of self-help groups, the CLEENIK proposes a therapeutic space to take care of the anxiety so common in certain ethnographic projects (especially among young researchers). The therapeutic rhetoric is a playful parodic gesture that seeks to highlight the relevance of caring practices in all these encounters where we share knowledge.

### **Experimental collaborations**

The CLEENIK comes of an investigation over the forms of ethnographic experimentation in fieldwork, a project that builds on our own ethnographic experience and those of others that have felt that their research cannot be appropriately described drawing on the most conventional tropes of fieldwork. We have experienced a form of engagement in our field that could not be described drawing on the traditional figure of participant observation. Our presence in the field shifted from the previously experienced modality of 'participating in order to write' (Emerson et al. 2005: 26) to a more engaged and interventionist practice. The experimental condition we appreciate in these ethnographies resonates and expands in new ways 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) and the need to 're-function ethnography' (Holmes and Marcus, 2005).

### **Anxieties**

This modality of ethnographic experimentation is accompanied by an intense experience that investigators are transgressing the norm and form of ethnography. Whether this is the case, or not, is not the point for the CLEENIK. The issue at stake is the associated anxiety and uncertainty that is especially acute and relevant for researchers in the early stages of their career. An experience that is not exceptional, since we have discovered similar fieldwork instances in other researchers during the early stages of their careers, as Isaac Marrero-Guillamón describes in his account of an ethnography among activist artists in London: "I had wanted to follow some artists' work, but I was invited to become a collaborator; I had imagined that fieldwork would be based on some kind of distance with the objects and subjects of study, but I instead participated in the production of the very things I was studying; I failed to keep up with essentials such as field notes, and I wrote for the projects I wanted to study more often than about them" (2018: 183). The CLEENIK seeks to devise apprenticeship spaces for these ethnographic modalities and, at the same time, unfold the conditions to tame the anxieties and uncertainties provoked by this particular form of doing fieldwork.


### Care and clinic

The CLEENIK is an adaptation of a previous format called Klinika, a methodology that we learnt from a collective called Colaborabora, a cultural and artistic association. The figure of the clinic tries to invoke the notion of care as a key practice. Theoretically it draws on Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) discussion of an ethics of care that speculates with forms of living together, paying attention to the obligation not to just be concerned but “to take care of the fragile gathering things constitute” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 45). It finds resonances on the artistic project of Natalie Jeremijenko of an Environmental Health Clinic, a project modelled after the notion of health clinics that “approaches health from an understanding of its dependence on external local environments; rather than on the internal biology and genetic predispositions of an individual”.

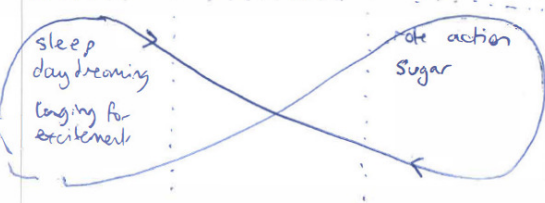
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<b>Basics for the CLEENIK</b>	
<b>Methodology</b>	
	<p>The format is organized in two parts. In the first parts the public is split in groups of 4-5 participants, they have to use a file card that is hand out, in the second part participants get together again and share the work they have produced. In the first section each participant is given the CLEENIK Clinical Report, a small booklet with three different sections, each one should be filled by a different participant.</p> <p>In the first section of the clinical report each participant will have to describe his/her symptomatology: stating in a free but straightforward and thorough manner the nature of her/his problems in or after fieldwork. When finishing this first section, the clinical report will be hand out to the person sitting next, each participant will have to read the symptomatology of another participant and produce a diagnosis, speculating about the potential causes or the ethology of these symptoms.</p> <p>When finishing this second part, the same clinical report will be passed out to a third participant, this one will have to read both the symptomatology and the diagnosis and based on both he/she will have to proposed a treatment, inviting to consider programmes and courses of individual and collective therapeutic action to tackle the symptoms.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	
	<p>The format requires at least 1 and 1.5 hours. Approximately 10 minutes should be dedicated to each of the three sections of the clinical report, and another 20-30 minutes should be dedicated to share in common the different symptoms and diagnosis when the first part of the format has been completed. Optionally, it is possible sometimes to open a third section: a final reflexive discussion on the format itself (10-20 minutes).</p>
<b>Participants</b>	
	<p>CLEENIK is appropriate for anthropologist in any stage of their career although it has been originally designed for early stage career scholars. In any case, it is designed for anthropologist with fieldwork experience, otherwise it would be difficult for them to participate. The operation of the CLEENIK requires intimacy and a limited number of participants, probably no more than 15.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	
	<p>Cornerstone in our experience in the CLEENIK format is the clinical report. It structures very easily the activity in three differentiate phases where everybody knows what to do. The second crucial aspect is that it draws on the common practice among anthropologist of writing. There is a model for the clinical report that may be modified, it may be found here:  <a href="http://xcol.org/interventions/cleenik/">http://xcol.org/interventions/cleenik/</a></p>

<b>CLEENIK</b>	
<b>CLINICAL REPORT</b>	
<b>Clinic of anthropological ethnographic experiments in fieldwork</b>	
<p>CLEENIK is a specialized anthropological clinic. We treat anthropologists suffering from the multiple syndromes consequence of ethnographic experiments in fieldwork. If you think you may have suffered any of these syndromes or you want to prevent in case of starting fieldwork, you may just drop by to our session and ask for advice and treatment.</p>	
Patient's name:	
Affiliation:	
Contact details:	
	
Clinic of anthropological ethnographic experiments in fieldwork	

<b>CLEENIK</b>	
<b>CLINICAL REPORT</b>	
Report Number:	
<b>Symptomatology</b>	
Please, state in a free but straightforward and thorough manner the nature of your problems in or after fieldwork	
Location of fieldwork:	
Duration:	
Other particulars:	

<b>CLEENIK</b>	
<b>CLINICAL REPORT</b>	
Report Number: 844-32.7-AC	
<b>Diagnosis</b>	
Please, speculate about potential causes or the etiology of your symptoms.	
<p>PATIENT: I PRESENTS WITH SYMPTOMOLOGY/ CONFESSION REGARDING PERPETUAL FIELDWORK, AND/OR WRITING-UP.</p> <p>THE QUESTION THAT ARISES TO THE DIAGNOSTIC TEAM IS WHETHER THESE ARE NEW OR ONGOING SYMPTOMS?</p> <p>WE HIGHLIGHT AND CATEGORISE SYMPTOMS ALONG 3 LINES OF VARYING AGENCY</p> <p>ESCAPE : SURRENDER* PASSIFICATION</p> 	

④\* PLEASE SEE DEFINITION OVERLEAF ← ③

<b>CLEENIK</b>	
<b>CLINICAL REPORT</b>	
Report Number:	
<b>Treatment</b>	
Please consider treatment programmes and courses of individual and collective therapeutic action to tackle the symptoms.	
<p>I wonder if there is a problem. Isn't this fieldwork to not fall asleep, to not be bored, to hear the same things over again - if we were to banish these with some magical remedy, we might also lose the magic of fieldwork.</p>	

Images of the Clinical Report used in the CLEENIK workshops.

# Learning to get together

## An ethnographic account



Relatograma of the workshop 'Investigations to the limit: A curatorship of experimental collaborations' (Madrid, 2015), by Carla Boserman.

The CLEENIK is the outcome of collaborations with a Spanish cultural collective called Colaborabora. We invited them to help us organize a workshop dedicated to our sustained reflection about forms of ethnographic experimentation in the field in 2015. Under the name of 'Investigations to the limit: A curatorship of experimental collaborations' we gathered half a dozen young scholars from different disciplines (singularly, none of them was anthropologist) attended the event. They were working beyond the boundaries of their own disciplines and methods: an architect doing an ethnography of The Barley Field (the urban void we have mentioned before), an art historian doing an ethnographic inspired research of visual representations in Equatorial Guinea... Bringing ethnographic methods and diverse theoretical traditions to their own disciplines, they acknowledged their methodological anxieties and disciplinary troubles during a series of presentations that certainly echoed the title of the meeting.

We were making an explicit invocation in the title to the fertile exchanges between art and social sciences since the venue for our meeting was indeed the cultural institution Intermediae, an art centre (connected to Medialab-Prado) devote to experiment with visual aesthetics and participatory art<sup>5</sup>. Our curatorial gesture (and the reference to the cures a curator may provide) had nevertheless a second reading key for our goal: we were pointing to those forms of investigations that are in precarious conditions for crossing conventional disciplinary boundaries, peripheral investigations located beyond the orthodoxy and were in need of care.

Colaborabora followed the line of the argument and proposed a format that took seriously the care invoked in the workshop: They organized a clinic for those needed researchers. Klinika, as they called it, was "an accompaniment service for the diagnosis and shared care aimed at developing healthy collaborative research projects. It is especially appropriate for experimental projects that leaving the orthodoxy and transgressing the canons provoke in researchers tensions, anxieties, dizziness, and great doses of vulnerability and uncertainty". As in previous occasions, they offer us a

<sup>5</sup>The workshop was closely connected to the endeavour of editing a book precisely for the EASA series about this topic –a few months later we would meet with all the authors again in Intermediae, thanks to the funding the institution provided–.



rigid methodological proposal organized around a file card that imitated a medical report. The file invited participants to provide a diagnosis of symptoms and propose an appropriate treatment for the needed investigations.

The careful gesture of the workshop was extended to the documentation practice produced by an artist and researcher (and common friend) that we invited, Carla Boserman. She had been exploring in previous years forms of graphic documentation called *relatogramas*: “non-linear narratives that invoke a granulated and more peripheral gaze, a kind of graphic report, a device for listening, affection, and action”. She embodied with her work another instantiation of the diverse experiments with languages, aesthetics and formats for documentation that we have found during our fieldwork.



Relatograma of the workshop ‘Investigations to the limit: A curatorship of experimental collaborations’ (Madrid, 2015), by Carla Boserman.

Care was an extended discourse at that time in our field. The assemblies in the open air turned the trope of what they called “active listening” (*escucha activa*) into a careful listening practice, workshops at Medialab-Prado always invoked the figure of hospitality as fundamental for these production events full of strangers, while many projects thriving in urban voids (like the Barley Field) described their engagement as forms of civic curatorship (of the city) or modes of urban stewardship. It resonates with Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) discussion of an ethics of care that speculates with forms of living together, paying attention to the obligation not to just be concerned but “to take care of the fragile gathering things constitute” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 45).

Care certainly always required constant preoccupations with spaces, materialities, and techniques aimed at conditioning spaces to be together. It was a particular method unfolded in the many occasions in which our counterparts in the field came together to explore what was possible to do with others in the city—this was indeed the motive behind Colaborabora’s name: the exploration of forms of collaboration—. People operating under precarious economic conditions experimented with all kind of forms of collaboration. We discovered in these meetings the epistemic qualities of care: A precise method that designed ambiances of care that required to constantly taking care of them, spaces where our counterparts in the field problematized the precarious conditions of living during the crisis, driven by a collective effort of joint problem making (Sánchez Criado & Rodríguez-Giralt, 2016).

A year later we were bringing these peripheral methods we have learned from Colaborabora to the interior of our own discipline at the EASA Conference held in

2016 in Milano. We organized there another Klinika that we called CLEENIK: A clinic offered for anthropologists doing ethnographic experimentation in their fieldwork. We were not the only one in this move: Carla was attending the event and making her beautiful relatogramas of some of the key lectures (it was not our invitation). The CLEENIK reproduced the therapeutic practice of care so common in self-help groups. It was an attempt to bring the sensibility we had learned in our fieldwork into our own discipline, the invocation of the therapeutic rhetoric of a clinic was a playful parodic gesture that implicitly highlighted the relevance of care for the spaces of our encounters (something we had learn from our counterparts) and the need some investigations had to be treated with care. Months later, our colleague Eeva Berglun used the format in Finland and we used it again in the first workshop we organized as part of the Colleex EASA network (Collaboratory for Ethnographic Experimentation) in Lisbon.



First Colleex Workshop (Lisbon, 2017), by Victor Barros.

The CLEENIK certainly mimics our fieldwork encounter and remediates it and brings inside our own discipline the apprenticeships we have made in our fieldwork: the therapeutic practices of care needed to think and make together. The Cleenik is a demonstrative example that comes of the tensions we faced between the norm and form of fieldwork we have learnt and the particular field encounters we had in our ethnographic investigations. This is a singular situation since our field was paradoxically challenging our methods and providing the methods to treat them. It is devised to tame the anxieties, difficulties and uncertainties of anthropologists that overflow methodological boundaries, experiencing a disparity between the canonical method and their fieldwork experience—there are ample examples in the *Experimental Collaborations* book we have edited (Estalella and Sánchez Criado, 2018)—. It is a modest attempt to devise appropriate apprenticeship venues for contemporary conditions for ethnography.

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Workshop 'Investigations to the limit: A curatorship of experimental collaborations' (Madrid, 2015), by Carla Boserman.



First Colleex Workshop (Lisbon, 2017), by Victor Barros.

**The CLEENIK is a format produced by Tomás Sánchez Criado and Adolfo Estalella.** It is part of a long-standing investigation into forms of ethnographic experimentation. An outcome of the project xcol – Ethnography beyond participant observation.

**Text by Adolfo Estalella and Tomás Sánchez Criado.**