

Visual Glossa #6: Learning from local practices

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Important concepts and methods: friendship, publishing, walking, food, ephemerality, oral stories, urban counter-memory, symbolic and corporeal reinscription.



On the third day of the Ecologies of Care gathering, the practice of care became even more present when we met at Bikini Books, a feminist design publisher and space founded by Nina Paim in Porto. Seated around a table, we were welcomed into an environment that was more than just physical, it was affective: a network of friendships and partnerships carefully nurtured by Nina. It felt as if, by sitting at that table, we were also entering the web of relationships that sustain her work and life.


Nina mentioned one of the books published by Bikini Books, *On Design, Feminism and Friendship*, in which she interviews Briar Levit (2024), as a central reference for thinking about her own practice: friendship as an ethical, aesthetic, and political foundation. By evoking this work, she was signaling that her practice is not built from isolated gestures, but rooted in bonds and relationships, especially among people in diaspora, like herself and many of us, who need to rebuild support networks in foreign territories. In this context, friendship emerges not just as affection, but as a methodology. It is also through it that Nina builds and sustains connections and collaborations, bringing people together to edit and publish books that, like her practice, are born from these networks of care and shared affection.



Gathering at Bikini Books on the third day of Ecologies of Care, with the group gathered around the table for exchanges and conversations on practices of care, friendship, and feminist publishing

In this gesture of intertwining friendship and method, Nina Paim invited companion-friends (Isabeli Santiago, Alicia Medeiros, Chloé Darmon, Isabel Duarte, Raya Leary, Karina Ramos, and Engy Aly e Mayar El Bakry) to share their research and practices with the researchers from the Extreme Sites and Ecologies of Care groups. These are artists and researchers whose work revolves around themes such as design and public space, culinary practices, independent publishing, and forms of insurgent care. The contributions addressed, among other topics, the presence of female memory in old public washhouses; the relationship between literary practices and urban space; walking as a critical practice that challenges the figure of the flâneur and proposes new ways of perceiving and inscribing oneself in territory; African history intersecting with African and Afro-Brazilian cuisine, revealing how food carries narratives of ancestry, migration, and resistance; experimental practices of editing and publishing as spaces for political articulation and collective creation, etc.

Later, our attention shifted to the urban space and its layers of memory. We participated in a feminist walk through the city of Porto, led by the collective MAAD (Women, Art, Architecture & Design). The proposal was to revisit the city through a



Moment of sharing during the gathering at Bikini Books, with a participant presenting her reflections to the group.

critical reading of its monuments, statues, and omissions: where are the women? How—and if—are they remembered? Whose lives have been erased from the public landscape? According to the collective, the presence of people historically marginalized by gender, race, class, age, among other markers, has been systematically distorted, made illegible, or simply erased, both materially and symbolically, from the city's spaces.





Moment from the Feminist Tour of Porto guided by the MAAD collective, with the group gathered for one of the discussion stops along the route about Gisberta and her memories.

The walk passed through locations such as Largo Amor de Perdição, Rua de Cedofeita, Jardim de São Lázaro, the Porto Municipal Library, the Prado do Repouso Cemetery, and referenced the Pão de Açúcar Building. At each stop, stories were revealed: Ana Plácido, a writer silenced and subordinated to the memory of Camilo Castelo Branco; Carolina Michaelis, an intellectual honored but still an exception to the rule of erasure; Gisberta Salce, a trans woman brutally murdered, whose memory is still contested, among others.

By invoking these figures, the collective also shed light on themes such as transphobia, xenophobia, the sexualization of women's bodies, colonialism, and symbolic violence. Throughout the route, they also referenced the work of other artists and researchers who critically investigate these spaces and their layers of invisibility—as if, by walking, they were weaving a network of continuity between voices that insist on challenging oblivion through artistic inquiry, such as Hilda de Paulo, Marina Morais, Tiago Liberdade, etc.

However, the proposal went beyond denunciation: it was also a performative and interventionist practice. At some points along the route, the group enacted small gestures of reinscribing memory into public space: they placed stickers, opened letters and posters, and played music. Yet, as they told us, these interventions are often removed, revealing the difficulty of establishing lasting marks for dissident narratives.

Even so, the collective insists on the power of the ephemeral. In tune with the gathering's proposal, they evoke care as a practice that occupies space, inhabiting the gaps of monuments with other visualities and voices. Caring for space, in this sense, means questioning it and reinscribing it from an intersectional feminist perspective, creating micro-infrastructures of memory capable of resisting erasure.

The walking experience resonated directly with the argument developed by Elke Krasny about care as a form of critical infrastructure. By asserting that seemingly fragile practices, such as walking together, reading aloud, and marking space with temporary gestures, can fracture exclusionary urban logics and propose more just ways of coexisting, Krasny offers us a lens to understand the ephemeral interventions of the feminist collective: even when removed, these actions leave traces, shift perceptions, and establish forms of slow learning and pedagogies of hope (Freire, 2014) that subtly reconfigure the conditions of visibility and belonging in the spaces we inhabit. This day therefore reinforced that care is woven in collectivity, in relationships, and in persistence: it is about occupying and imagining futures where other stories might finally endure.

**WHOSE LIVES
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