

VOICE

In 2003, during my sabbatical year, I travelled to England to continue a project in visual arts. I was interested to get in touch with Colombian people who were facing difficult circumstances in that country. Initially, with not very clear reasons, and with a certain amount of apprehension and suspicion, I visited some Colombian prisoners detained in different jails both in England and Colombia.

*"Violence itself reflects and accelerates the experience of society
as an incomplete project as something to be made"*

Formation of violence, Allen Feldman

The hands sweat. Steps follow. I scratch the fingers. I cross a door, another, and another. I look at both sides: opaque glasses, an infinite white wall. The doors made out of steel, motionless, keys shuffle and can be heard; behind, nothing. Gray, void sound, an insistent look, nothing in front, nothing behind. One can listen, only listen. A distant tunnel; imprecise, inside, even more rough. In front of the security glass window I hand over my passport and almost all my belongings. I loose domain and begin to depend on the guidelines determined by the isolated and artificial world of a prison. Someone willing to receive me and take me to the meet the Colombian inmates. I am followed by man and women of corpulent size. This decision seems to have no reversal. The vertigo grows. I manage to introduce a small sound recording equipment and a work plan.

I bring with me a time to listen, to love, to be a the channel of a voice of their own, alone and dry. To listen to voices without childhood, without parents, without affections, without education, full of mistreatment, humiliation. Every time I was admitted I accumulated intimacies, claims, blames, and above all scarcity. I prepared various exercises to stimulate a "creative reciprocity", which would favour a dialogue for a long time silenced in order to recover their own time and to try to stimulate the capacity to question themselves.

Mi body penetrates, it collects heat, coldness and suspicion. I listen to the right and the left. I lean, I weigh, I weigh more, I accumulate. Its cold, I enter a bit more, I arrive fragile, insignificant. Time begins to stand still. I go remembering approving voices and opinions about punishment. Fear begins erasing limits and makes me see black spots. I look. I don't see, I erase. The imprecise appears. Do they speak? No. They only look. The cross the corridor, the doors, vigilance increases. How many on one side? I don't see, I don't know, I only listen.

In the prison of Pentovile, England, amidst the cleanness of the treatment, one by one the Colombian prisoners arrive. They all seem known to me: they are kind and familiar to me. Dialogues, laughs, euphoria in our greeting. *"I am going to a trial in which I have 50% against because I am Colombian"*.

The stories begin, they seem thirsty, willing to move, to establish some contact. One by one they enter, in sweat suits, one by one with their heads down, isolated and thoughtful. No one retreats completely, no one refuses to speak about themselves.

Paper, pencils, bandages, music, paragraphs of literature. In the prison of Brixton, we planned to begin visiting the childhood house, the first school, the Buendía's house, "the house in the air", his country. I manage to concentrate in spite of the expressions of little comfort and shame manifested.

They visit the places of their infancy, their parents, their education, their affections. Sometimes it is difficult to continue. They cry, they stop and establish relationships. They erase, evoke desired encounters but unfortunate ones. By moments there is stillness. Some tell, others revise, they laugh. *"In my house floors were spotless because my mother was very strict"*. Please silence. More and more come in. The mark arises, it becomes evident. Marked for ever. They go over from beginning to end the same places for years forgotten. They surround, search, enter, touch.

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