

Words are not enough for me

Nuno Crespó

“Though – one would like to say – every word has a different character in different contexts, at the same time there is one character it always has: a single physiognomy. It looks at us.”

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Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, II, vi, §4

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In a photograph of Bruce Nauman’s studio taken in 1993³ one can see a poster on the wall saying, “Make me think”. This appeal or order reveals the world that feeds the artist; that is, it is that which seeks, which needs and which stimulates him. Needing to think – an activity that since Antiquity philosophy has attributed with the greatest powers – is more than an appeal; it is a vital need of language, of words, of sound, of concepts and of art. All conceptual activities, all activities of **knowledge**. Even though they may not be totally equivalent, one may make transitions and establish comparisons among them. And from this exercise – a sort of mental gymnastics – there comes about a widening of our understanding and our experience gains in depth: things are not altered, but our view of them undergoes transformation.

Luisa Cunha shares Nauman’s need for thought and curiosity for the world of words. A curiosity that is transformed into an instance of experimenting, of transforming and always of recognition of the human perception of the world. She is interested in what is condensed in words, in the voice and in the attention transformed into the speakable of what there is.

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The title is taken from a statement by Luisa Cunha in which she says: “I was absolutely sure that only words were not enough for me. I remember that at the time there were sentences inside me such as: ‘words are not enough for me’, ‘I have to invent a new language’. And in these images, I saw the silence that I needed for me. As for the verbal images, I practically reduced myself to silence, and for two years I adopted, due to an absolute need for survival, only one verb tense: the present – ‘Do I do this?’, ‘I am doing this.’ I could not use the past or the future, because that would mean bringing those other times into the present. If I had done so I would not have had the possibility of surviving.” All quotations by the artist are taken from a conversation held in June 2007.

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Ludwig Wittenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, London: Blackwell Publishers, 1977.

3

Kathy Halreich and Neal Benezra (org.), *Bruce Nauman*, exhibition catalogue, Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1994, **p. 11**.

In her eyes the world is controversial and paradoxical. It is not a political, sociological or anthropological decision (even though, deep down, everything is politics, sociology and anthropology), but a perceptive inevitability. A universe ruled by that which each thing (a room, a library, a bicycle, landscape, etc.) possesses or convokes: her gesture is that of encountering things in their objectural, formal and conceptual specificity. The problems are not posed by language, but language emerges as one of the tools she uses to state the real: for this reason, it is a question of the spatialisation of language, or, in other words, the word as the matter of sculpture.

Benjamin states:

“Finding words for that which we have in front of our eyes is something that can be very difficult. But when they come, they tap like little hammers on the real until they pull an
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image out of it, like on a sheet of copper.”

This is a good description of Luisa Cunha’s process. It is not a method or a style, but a movement of response to what one sees in front of one’s eyes. The field of vision is transformed into language, the words are taken from the real and find their place of belonging in the gaze – words that state things that are heard and seen, and which take on a position in space. A dual revelation of things and of language itself.

The situation described by Benjamin is the opposite to the *linguistic turn* that took place in contemporary philosophy, with prolongations in a determined type of art. For this way of thinking, everything begins and ends in semantic structure, and the world is reduced to a grammatical matter. This terrain is slippery, because between the analytical position in which language is the touchstone of the world and the “speak so I can see you” of Hamann and Wittgenstein (not that of the *Tractatus*) there exists a certain community. The fundamental distinction does not lie in the demiurgic function granted to language, but in the role that semantic and grammatical conventions possess within the mechanisms of intelligibility of the world. For the former language is the place of convention, of rules, of the models of the world and the premise that sustains all this analytical discourse is the belief that observation produces the observed, language and the world. For the latter language is corresponded by the effort to describe an image that contains beliefs, contradictions and anticipations. Their only certainty is that the polishing of the linguistic surface, the dust accumulated by use on its surface is preferable to the dryness of the word: the human being needs friction in order to be able to walk, gravity in order to stand up and incompleteness in order to be able to speak. Their reason is dual: firstly, because

poetry is the mother-speech of the human race,⁶ and secondly because grammarians do not dominate the world. Rules and formalisations are always a second moment: the first contact is aesthetic – to be amazed by the size of the mountain and to be able to express that greatness.

Let it be stated again: in Luisa Cunha's case, language is not a problem; it is a fact. We talk, and things are said; things are there and they speak to us – observation does not produce the observed. A speech that extrapolates the linguistic and grammatical scope. It is not language, with its grammatical and vocabulary conventions, that stands as a problem, but the illogical, irrational, unpredictable and unstable character of the things and facts of the world that is stressed. Her field is made up not only of words, but also of that which emerges with words: sounds, materials and rhythms. Primarily, language describes an image that already suggests an application and an occupation of a place. In this context, words are chosen due to their being, from an archaeological point of view, the first signs of perception, of what was seen, heard and felt.

It may even be accepted that in all cases what is at stake is a perceptive genealogy that establishes different relationships of complicity with the different aims; that is, the one who sees is prolonged in that which is seen, and that which is seen in the one who sees:

“we only see what looks at us. We can do only... what we cannot help doing.”⁷ And the way one says what one sees, and the material that one chooses, depends on the face that looks at us from the inside (of the words, of the space or of the clay, etc.). A face that entices, that seduces and that stands out. The choice of the words – and Luisa Cunha's works are inscribed within this field – does not correspond to any intention: the words are natural prolongations of sight, their correlations. An organic character that has its reason

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“Poetry is the mother-speech of the human race: as gardening is older than farming, painting older than writing, singing than declamation, parables than inferences, bartering than commerce.” Johann Georg Hamman, “Aesthetica in Nuce”, W. M. Alexander, *Johann Georg Hamman – Philosophy and Faith*, The Hague: Martinus Hijhoff, 1966, p. 83.

6

“Language does not live off its own laws; otherwise grammarians would rule the world. Deep down, the word is neither form nor key. It becomes identical to the Being. It becomes the power of creation. And *there* lies its immense strength, which can never be converted into currency. *Here* only has room for approximations. Language weaves in favour of silence [...]” Ernst Jünger, *The Retreat into the Forest*. [The author quotes from a Portuguese translation].

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Walter Benjamin, “The Return of the Flâneur”, in Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (eds.), *Selected Writings*, vol.2 1927-1934, Cambridge MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 265.

in a relationship of giving itself up to the spaces and objects with which Luisa Cunha works.

The artist says:

“I let the space enter, I let the space speak, my pores are open. I go through the space, I journey. I may go through the space in many different ways, and these ways will give off sensations that I later catalyse, verbalise and associate to other, previous sensations.”

Here it is verbalisation that allows me to digest and process that which comes in through the pores: a position of being watchful, being receptive and permeable. Above all one thinks of her works in which there is a deep relationship with architecture, as these seem to us to be the patterns for her way of thinking and feeling the world (and which are naturally carried on in photography and in video).

Ali vai o João (1996) is a work in which these characteristics of pulling the words out of the spaces is clearly present: here one speaks of pulling out the words because this expression is a good synthesis of the process of recognition of spaces and of things. In short, *Ali vai o João* is a photographic description of a room. A process made up of names and of the cadence with which things are stated: slow, fast and then repeated and everything goes back to the beginning. There are no photographs, just physical (sensitive and intelligent) contact with a space inhabited by a voice. Experience is mediated by the voice that presents that which is this room: it discriminates, synthesises and takes up once again. A voice that seems to be that of the space itself. It is not a literary personification in which things suddenly start to speak. But it is as if the space could have a voice, and through it be able to speak about itself, about what it has, about what it is, and about how it is structured. And here “voice” means point of view. The fact that it is a description does not mean that the spectator is in a position of passivity, involving hearing the words and not doing anything. On the contrary, these are descriptions that drive the eyes to seek, to move and to discover. And the eyes push the body to follow the voice; that is, one cannot help identifying the cardinal points, making our gaze identical to the gaze identified by the words. As the artist states, “the spectator feels dislocated”, by this meaning that the spectator does not know where to start in order to accompany the whole of the descriptive movement in order to be a part of that movement in space. It as if we wished to see how the artist sees and thus how the space itself sees itself.

This is a very specific convocation. Luisa Cunha states:

“I am summoning a perception of the space that is not what is expected. I am describing space in a way that corresponds to the space itself, but at the same time does not. Because I am not exactly describing it dot by dot, although that is what I would like to do. This determines the rhythm that I give to my voice, the text that I write and its speeds. I have

that need for synthesis and this dictates the right speed to me in order not to lose the image in my mind. It is a question of summarising in order to re-establish things. And then one goes on to another level.”

A perception that does not totally correspond to the space itself, because it is our gaze that makes the description and fixes the images. It seems to us that the other level is that of the transformation of the space of something foreign into something ours, and so for this reason the artist cannot lose the image that she has in her head: it is her gaze, it is her perception, it is her movement and it is her feeling. Mirrors cover the panes of one of the windows, and in front of it there is an empty chair: the expression is that of a demand for absolute concentration and the reinforcing of the need to remain inside the place one is at. Distractions and escapes are diminished, the gaze is concentrated and the subjective element is reduced to the minimum. Because this is not a duplication or camouflaging of the space, nor of registering in words that form images that result in a description. It is a matter of going through that room, understanding it, and perceiving it as objectively as possible: the voice serves as a guide, a memory of a movement.

Here the transformation of the gaze takes place through concentration on the architectural and spatial structures (we could add *Biblioteca* from 2007 and *Projecto Tabaqueira* from 2003), but in other works that sort of opening of the gaze depends not on the discriminating and photographic gesture that deals with the space, but on the confrontation with a blank space. In *Words for Gardens* (2004) the space is a blank sheet and the voice one hears on the headset is related to a space created on a white sheet, a drawing made by the body itself to the rhythm of the suggestions and intromissions of the text. At most, the word drawing is here used for the becoming aware of the different qualities and intensities of the space; that is, the passage from an abstraction of the space to its materialisation, vision and experience. What is meant to be inscribed on the paper is a garden. What is intended is to make a landscape visible, with it emerging while it is being drawn, and which corresponds not only to feeling the qualities of the paper, the resistance offered by the pencil and the directions of the grass, but the way in which the subject relates to the action that he is carrying out: “You cannot draw. You say you cannot draw. You wish you could draw. You see. You see things...” Determining the changes and transformations on the landscape corresponds to an intimate gesture: landscape becomes the emotional place of the person who draws it, and this drawing is an exercise of affective memory. It becomes necessary to turn to that which is “warehoused” in memory: the condition of this work’s experience is analogical – it is as if we were really drawing, planting and seeing, and therefore we need to invoke the moments during in which we draw, planted and saw. The condition of the bringing about of this drawing

depends on the transfers carried out between “drawing grass” and “planting grass”: it is not an exercise of mere transposition, but it falls upon the originating and concentrated character of the drawing.

In all of these works, language is used as a strict instrument that establishes distinctions and tries out different expressive capacities:

“It is important to distinguish between ‘real’ language, which involves those words that mean nothing to me, and the other language in which there is something behind it, a language with a shadow, leaving a shadow. It is not a language of midday; it is a language of all time before midday and after midday. But the rigour of the language I want is that of midday.”

It is the conjugation of the rigour of midday with the ballast, which is shade that the words leave behind, as marks of human use and the presence of things, which Luisa Cunha’s works develop. In her sound works, one of the bases is that of the spectator’s doubling as a room, as a landscape, as drawing, as the hand that draws, as movements corresponding to an encountering of their topography and drawing of the way that their gaze is constructed and structured.

Although use of language may seem to be the dominant note in this universe, Luisa Cunha has not specialised in being the “artist of the word or verbal expression”. In *Side-by-Side* (2007), there are no words, but the movement that the fourteen photographs make is descriptive. Here it is not a space, but the movement of an object, and its moving and stillness that are the central issues. The successively mounted photographs bear witness to a peculiar movement: one does not realise whether the bicycle is moving or whether it is the transformations of colour, light or the movement of the shadow and our own movement that create that impression. The line along which the photographs follow on creates a need to overview the work, and the time of a viewing also becomes the space travelled in order to go from the first photograph to the last. The object stops being fixed and accompanies this spatial and perceptual mutation: it moves with us, along with our rhythm. This experience of being “side by side” implies a decisive gaze on the type of spatial occupation that the images and objects make. In this series, it is an object that is fixed and also serves as a guide in this sort of discipline of attention that wishes to understand the mechanisms of construction of what it observes. In other works, we are the ones who are the targets for such a gaze.

In *Hello!* (1994) it’s very visible the attention (something that is almost imperative in Luisa Cunha’s work) to the subject’s capacity to recognise his identity and to deal with the intromission of an Other: a mirror placed in a WC, a space for supposed intimacy and not one involving the presence of anyone else, calls upon the user: “Are you there? Can

you hear me? Hello!” The surprise arises from an inversion of expectations: a talking mirror, a voice that penetrates space. One looks at the mirror and the image is ours, but the voice belongs to someone else. This device places the presence of a stranger between me and my own image (an instance of representation of my alter-ego, a recognition of my identity, etc.): it is as if my space had become a space that someone else could occupy, and suddenly my interior becomes populated by many voices. One might risk stating that what is at stake here is a view on the construction of identity, which is seen as a process in which the one is joined to the many, my voice to that of others, and all of this exists in a game of successive references and prolongings. For this reason, the words that the other’s voice states are transformed into apparently subtle vibrations which slip into my body.

This game between recognition and lack of recognition is a constant factor in Cunha’s works. Firstly, there is no doubt about that which has to be done, seen and heard, but after a certain moment it is strangeness that gains ground and the terrain of the habitual-inhabitable becomes disturbed. Fragmentation sets in and the voices are multiplied. And Luisa Cunha is a part of these fragments. This summons – corresponding to the phenomenon that Wittgenstein identifies from words having a face that looks at us – places the viewer in the situation of a sort of peculiar hunter: he has to follow his prey’s footprints. And he who follows footprints reconstructs the prey’s path in order to be able to repeat it and then, at the end, to be able to surprise (catch) the object of his seeking. We may state that here the prey is the space and the objects are its vestiges (the shadows that Cunha talks about).

We have seen that there is intense use of the image in Luisa Cunha’s work: *Ali vai o João* already possesses a photographic character, and presents a sort of perceptive mutation of the stated into the seen. This transformation has to do with acknowledging that there is something as to which words are powerless and insufficient. It is a matter of wanting to mean something and words are not enough to present this fully. It is an expressive limit that happens in Luisa Cunha’s sound works, corresponding to a certain dumbness. Suddenly we understand something in the space that we are no longer able to say, and then the images appear as the only possibility. That is, the “virtual” images invoked and convoked by the words and by the space need the addition of a sort of writing of the image that lives off the strict viscosity of that which is said, heard and felt. The artist states:

“Words are more limiting; silence is stronger. The absence of sound and the absence of the body are very significant. I am very aware of when I have said too much. When I have heard too many of my own sounds. Naming of things has an energy, like writing; it

is an energy that limits. Naming things is sometimes liberating, but often the words close down our capacity to see beyond them.” And then, to finish off, she adds: “I’m tired of everything that is said.”

The silence we are speaking of here is the silence of the word and not an absolute silence. The aim is still to see beyond the names and to be able to look at things themselves. This does not mean that for Cunha images are dumb, but, as she states, they are less limiting. In video and photographs the word stands as a graphic mark, as a register and an image, **because, according to Cunha**, “language is the construction of images”. In this context making photography is not of value as a photographic object, but, once again, as a sort of creation of tools for capturing the different ingredients of the structure of perception, and it corresponds to a different form of going to meet things and space.

Benjamin writes:

“Only images in the mind vitalise the will. The mere word, by contrast, at most inflames it, to leave it smouldering, blasted. There is no intact will **without** exact pictorial imagination. No imagination without innervation. Now breathing is the latter’s most delicate regulator. The sound of formulas is a cannon of such breathing. Hence the practice of yoga meditation, which breathes in accord with the holy syllables. Hence it’s
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omnipotent.”

Benjamin’s suggestion establishes two important aspects: without nervous activation, there is no perception, and it is perceptive sound that regulates will, which is a crucial element in seeing whatever it may be. What is being said has to do with a sort of tuning of the sensitive messengers as a form of intelligence. Luisa Cunha’s work may be seen as an exercise in a careful discipline of attention and sensitivity; feeling is a way of integrating the fragments that make up the world and making them intelligible: finding a stable place where one can place one’s feet amid the instability that characterises life. Art emerges as a “reflection” of that state of things. Cunha says:

“I think that art is totally nervous system, and my art is without any doubt. Thus, it breathes as I breathe, to the rhythm of my breathing, of my emotions, of my gestures, my thoughts, what I read, what I see, the people I love, the rages I have, the crazy revolts, the nervous attacks.” And then she adds, “I think that art has to do with the workings of each person, and each person functions in a specific manner, and so do I. I can only make a

work like this. Because I am like this. Everything comes in and may create chaos.” The inevitable conclusion is: “my work reflects the way I see and think about things.”

The fact that art is a nervous system implies the capacity to react to the world that is understood as a set of stimuli requiring a response. The fact that everything may come in and provoke chaos places the artist in a position of great receptivity that results in the construction of a very particular view of things for which language is not sufficient: it is a great deal, but it is not enough. Stressing this failure on the part of words does not mean that words (to some extent they are really all we have) can be dispensed with, and that it is possible to construct an intelligent view of the world in which linguistic statements are set aside. For Luisa Cunha, going from the word to the image (a passage which is a natural development, because, repeating Cunha’s statement, “words form images”) means achieving another fixing of the different atmospheres that each thing or word has around it, a revealing of that which may remain hidden in a voice or in a graphic symbol. In some cases, the word is joined by photographic images, as if to reinforce the idea that everything that exists is always speaking, producing meanings and making sense. This power of insinuation of stated words is more than a simple intromission, but a sort of imposition in which the word meets an expansion: what there is means itself.

The problem we are dealing with here has to do with the power that language has to go beyond itself, and thus we may accept experiences that extrapolate the sphere of strict linguistic meaning. Almost an exaggeration of the world. Wittgenstein states:

“And how about an expression as: ‘In my heart I understood when you said that’,
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pointing to one’s heart?”

In Luisa Cunha’s case, we may replace the heart with the gaze. In the series of photographs *P — série I* (2005), the words are inscribed and have a value not as linguistic statements but as ingredients of the images: they arouse the imagination towards a production of meaning. The descriptive power of the images is added to by the inscription “Door to the Outside”. This is not a caption or an indication as to the facts that the images might represent. The language is transformed into pure pictorial experience, reinforcing its unstable character: the words, in being integrated onto the visual plane, now undergo the same phenomena of fluctuation. In this field, it seems that the word, in being seen, that is, when transformed into an image, is made freer and less committed: **which raises its floating power**. In general, these works are about the horizon: through the door, we are led to a mobile place, into a plane that can never be held down to or fixed to a determined point – and, like in *Ali vai o João*, we are “de-situated”. The anchoring of

the gaze is made in a swampy terrain that has fixed coordinates, but which undergoes different movements provoked by the different subjects that move over them.

In *Linha #1*, the body is inscribed not on the landscape, but on the architecture. The body becomes space and the space body through the hand that draws and writes on the wall. “The heels on my shoes are two inches, and when I’m standing that is the line along which I write...”: the line along which I write is the line that is dictated by my body, by my height, by the place my hand reaches. The drawing is the trace of the presence of a body in the space, a memory of an action carried out. And that experience of the space transforms the limits, abolishes frontiers and metamorphoses the place: one realises the instability of the terrain we are moving in through the almost infinite character of the line (the *loop* creates this sensation) and of the text drawn on the wall. The consequence of this action of establishing the maximum limits of the body is to make the limit go through variations and transformations: it is transformed into a threshold, it is kept further away and it circumscribes less. This mutation, which only depends on an exercise of the gaze, is one of the major strengths of Luisa Cunha’s work: to abolish limitations, to cast out frontiers, and to recognise the limits in order to go beyond them. We are talking about a plane on which the stability of our gaze is only apparent: an unstable stability. Cunha states:

“Things are written in that which is life which is unstable and even the names we have for objects are a convention, an illusion of stability. So it is and it isn’t; it is but it could be something else.”

In Cunha’s eyes, creating images is another manner of defending herself against this instability that she sometimes calls “chaos”. An organisation of the visual field corresponds to the image, which is possible through an understanding of the several different aspects that the things have. This perception, which is half seeing and half thinking, is the fruit of the amazement that the forces of intelligence feel when they are confronted with the permanence of objects and the impermanence of their meaning (which is, to some extent, their wealth).

“I contemplate a face and then suddenly notice its likeness to another. I *see* that it has not changed; and yet I see it differently. I call this experience ‘noticing an aspect’.”

“And I must distinguish between the ‘continuous seeing’ of an aspect and the ‘drawing’ of an aspect.”

“The change of aspect. But surely you would say that the picture is altogether different now!”

“But what is different: my impression? My point of view? – Can I say? I *describe* the
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alteration like a perception; quiet as if the object has altered before my eyes.”

These manoeuvres, which are so decisive for the formation of a clear concept about what perception is, reveal the type of event that takes place in some of Luisa Cunha’s works that use language. Consider the diptych *Objecto* (2005). Two photographs, the object is the same (really?), yet the captions are different. In the first one, we read “object found and photographed”, in the second “object sought and photographed”. Is it still the same object? Or has it changed? What is the difference, as a transformation of the gaze, between finding and seeking? A world stands between these two events. It is not an issue of bringing the question of intention into the art field, but rather one of tracing out the physiognomy of the complexity of the phenomenon of sight. For Cunha this is a work in which what takes place is a sort of “description of the artistic process: first one finds and then one seeks”. In this almost-metaphor, the creative process is seen as an event: things are found and then one goes looking for them. In an intuitive vocabulary it is as if she had an insight and then went looking for the best subject to fulfil it, to express it, for its existence. It looks like an inverting of the natural order of things: first one has, and then after having it seems like one loses and then has to go looking for what we thought was already ours. It is a matter of conquering experience, meaning and sight.

It would not be wrong to assume that Luisa Cunha is constantly stressing the physical aspect of language. Both in her descriptions of spaces or in the invectives she casts at those who experience her works, the words she uses (stated, written or printed over an image) always and only state what they state. Allegories, metaphors or personifications seem to have been abolished. Yet from this effort of rigour and precision, what arises is an experience that neither the words, nor the spaces, nor the objects can provoke.

In the work *Areias* (2007), she experiments with pure visual elements. Through a silent succession of slides, we are involved in an intense visual experience in which there appear drawings, aerial views, dots that are concentrated and then move away, and stains that are formed and then disappear. The loop that we can experience in the sound works takes place here as a repetition of the image, and the rhythm of the voice is the rhythm of their succession. The experience is totally visual, and the internal rhythm is added to by the rhythm of the image, with this encounter resulting in a joint cadence: the gaze meets the image and the image the gaze. The linguistic function is suspended and it is the spectator’s receptiveness – his feeling – that determines the meaning. The view that one

achieves is a synoptic view, that gaze that sees the links between things, their connections. The artist states:

“I sometimes get the feeling that I see the world from above and so I want to get to know everything.”

Areias is this view from above. A gaze with the aim of knowing everything, being aware of all details and of describing/discriminating the particular aspects of spaces, objects and of experiences. To try to cover everything is the global movement of Luisa Cunha's universe: it wishes to achieve a sort of overview of the nature of the world and of the gaze.

On another level, we may state that Luisa Cunha's works make an inversion of the relationships of power – it is not by chance that one of her first works is called *Subversão I*. If in *Drop the bomb!* (1994) the rebellious attitude of going against authority is literal, in other works the transformation of power takes place through the disturbance introduced in human conventions for designating the world, things and experiences: interior/exterior, inside/outside, stated/unstated and mine/yours take on new fixations, and in this manner sets up new possibilities of conjugation. The mastering of a technique, of a language and of a rhetoric is shaken by Luisa Cunha's “sensitive-linguistic experiences”, and art emerges as a work about the way things are seen, about itself and, therefore, an effort to state how one can see the world from where one is. It is not a doctrine, nor an art made of theses. It is an activity that repudiates accumulation, and thus it is always repeating, in a loop. It grants a special place to the experience of amazement about what exists, about the existence of language and about the very power of stating that which in theory is alien to being uttered. And from this experience there emerges the possibility of feeling an almost poetic intensity in which the spectator, in the artist's own words, “captures the emotion that I felt.”

Although her work is mainly about the nature of our perception, it also has a political dimension which can be found in movement we see in many of her works which question, problematise and abolish frontiers. She states:

“I am fascinated by the frontiers that people establish between the private and the public, and, as I don't have any frontiers, I break through them. The fact of going to a public space and going inside it has a lot to do with that idea of abolishing frontiers.

I have always been attracted by situations of chaos, of fragmentation and of precariousness. As I observe the world of people a lot, I see the fragility of the physical world and of objects. This is a part of my work. I do not conceive of a work without these fragmentary elements.”

Accepting this fragmentary and precarious nature of everything has the aim of, at least, making us think about the nature of the edge. As a summary, Luisa Cunha says:

“The aim is to eliminate value judgements and shake frontiers.”

There are many entrances into Luisa Cunha’s work: language, sound, the horizon, sculpture and photography, etc. On the one hand its density originates in the discipline of the gaze and in the attention it possesses, and, on the other hand, in the rigour with which she uses each of her supports (the word, the image and sound). Although set within great formal simplicity – as Luisa Cunha states, “absolutely exact phrases and a minimum of objects” – each work possesses enormous conceptual and sensitive complexity. A totality in which our voice is transformed into the voice of the other, and our gaze allows intromission, communication and community.