

Nude aesthetics of the disabled persons: a political and anti-normative analysis

A estética da nudez das pessoas com deficiência: uma análise política e anti-normativa

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Abstract

In every society, the body has always been in the clutches of powers that impose limits and prohibitions on it. In contemporary times, however, the dispositive for monitoring the body expanded, aiming to disassemble and reassemble it based on established norms. From this machinery emerges a binary understanding of human corporeality: on one side, the healthy, beautiful, normal, and the efficient; on the other, the sick, ugly, abnormal, and disabled. Given this scenario, it is important that we create an environment in which it is possible to form free citizens who are artists of themselves, who turn their lives into works of Art. This article reflects on the antinormative nudity of people with disabilities, while trying to answer the following questions: What does it mean to have an abnormal body? Does the disabled person have a body that carries an aesthetic value? The answer to these questions will be found through political philosophy reflections and with my artistic works. I am hoping to bring the invisible effects that the machinery of governmentality has on the bodies of people with disabilities to the surface of public dialogue while, at the same time, creating a *locus* that enables the visibility of these same bodies.

Keywords: Body; Scan; Free Citizen; Art; Nudity; Person with Disabilities.

Resumo

Em toda sociedade, o corpo sempre esteve nas garras dos poderes que lhe impõem limites e proibições. Na contemporaneidade, porém, os dispositivos de esquadramento do corpo têm se avolumado, visando desmontá-lo e remontá-lo a partir de normas estabelecidas. Dessa maquinaria emerge uma compreensão binária da corporeidade humana: de um lado, o saudável, o belo, o normal e o eficiente; do outro, os doentes, feios, anormais e deficientes. Diante desse cenário, é importante criarmos um ambiente em que seja possível formar cidadãos livres, artistas de si mesmos, que transformem suas vidas em obras de arte. Este artigo pretende refletir sobre a nudez antinormativa das pessoas com deficiência, ao mesmo tempo que procurará responder às seguintes questões: O que significa ter um corpo anormal? A pessoa com deficiência tem um corpo que carrega um valor estético? Procurarei responder a estes questionamentos através das reflexões filosóficas políticas e dos meus trabalhos artísticos. Portanto, desejei trazer para a superfície do diálogo público os efeitos invisibilizadores que as maquinarias de governamentalidade têm sobre os corpos das pessoas com deficiência; ao mesmo tempo em que procurarei construir um *lôcus* possibilitador de visibilidade desses mesmos corpos.

Palavras-chave: Corpo; Esquadramento; Cidadão Livre; Arte; Nudez; Pessoa com Deficiência.

Abject body

*I am not Norma
I am what Norma doesn't want to see
For years they've tried to hide me*

*For the normies,
The dance of my body is an expression of incapacity*

*As an imperative
I live. I expose my viscera,
I promote astonishment*

*Strange, it is not me
With my body, my constitution
But your enemies,
Who insist on staying
In Norma's cage, which has lost its validity.*

Elivanda de Oliveira

Introduction

This article is the result of ongoing post-doctoral level research in visual arts conducted at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), Brazil. Carried out under the direction of Dr. Robson Xavier da Costa, Doctor of Architecture and Urbanism, Professor and Researcher at the Department of Visual Arts and Graduate Programmes in Visual Arts (PPGAV UFPB /UFPE) and in Computer Science, Communication and Arts (PPGCCA) at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB).

As a whole, my/our research questions the space for visibility of non-normative bodies that do not fit into the standards and norms established by traditional aesthetics. These considerations have a precise cut across the set of so-called non-normative bodies, since the research reflected upon the nudity of the disabled person. This is because this topic has a particular relevance, considering that I myself am paraplegic, a wheelchair user, and clearly perceive the daily invisibility of the non-hegemonic bodies of disabled persons. The lack of environmental, communicational, and attitudinal

accessibility diminishes the rights to develop their own nude aesthetic of these bodies. They are condemned to rejection because of the darkness of non-materiality¹, because they are ugly in the eyes of social norms, and because are imbued with normative society's notion of illness and disability.

This article aims to develop a reflexive practice that takes as its starting point the phenomenon of non-hegemonic bodies of people with disabilities and develops a non-normative body aesthetic. My reflections are based on the production of poetics of my artistic practice and infused with the philosophical reflections of authors such as Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, and Giorgio Agamben. For Arendt, "The immediate source of the artwork is the human capacity for thought [...]" (Arendt, 1958, p.186). This assertion serves as the guiding thread in this article, helping me to think about the aesthetic invisibility of the nudity of the bodies of disabled persons.

My research focuses on the unique experiences of the corporality of people with disabilities, thus seeking to capture the existences of disabled persons as living research, "an encounter that its build through understanding, experiences, artistic and textual representations" (Irwin; Dias, 2013, p. 28) and infuses our inquiry with the idiosyncrasies of people with disabilities. Much of society judges our "deficits", which their bodies show, as sick, incapable, ugly, and not worthy of admiration, especially in artistic forms. Disability studies scholar Tobin Siebers warns us that,

What I am calling the aesthetics of human disqualification focuses on how ideas about appearance contribute to these and other forms of oppression. My claim is that this symbolism depends on aesthetic representations that require further clarification and critique, especially with respect to how individuals are disqualified, that is, how they are found lacking, inept, incompetent, inferior, in need, incapable, degenerate, uneducated, weak, ugly, underdeveloped, diseased, immature, unskilled, frail, uncivilized, defective,

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"Indeed, in a strictly philosophical sense, at once to say that 'there Are' abject bodies and that they do *not* have claim to ontology appears to be what the Habermassians would call a performative contradiction. Well, you could become kind of medieval and scholastic about this and say, oh yes, certain kinds of beings have more fully ontological being than others, etcetera, etcetera. Then you would remain within a certain kind of philosophical framework that could be *conceptual* satisfying. But *I* would like to ask a different kind of question, namely, how is it that the domain of ontology is itself circumscribed by power? That is, how is it that certain kinds of subjects lay claim to ontology, how is it that they *count* or *qualify* as real? *In* that case, we are talking about the distribution of ontological effects, which is an instrument of power, instrumentalized for purposes of hierarchy and subordination and also for purposes of exclusion and for producing domains of unthinkability" (Butler, 1998, p.280).

and so on (Siebers, 2010, p.22-23).

The theoretical dimension of my research developed through a bibliographical study of the sources that appear in the references. I analyze the works of authors dealing with this topic from a philosophical perspective, and whose concepts will serve here as a starting point for reflection. In addition to the above mentioned authors, I draw on theorists of the visual arts who deal with the theme of corporeality, especially antinormative corporeality. I analyze Foucault's understanding of the "aesthetics of existence" to propose possibilities for creating new images beyond the techniques of power and domination.

Finally, I present several of my own artistic works. These are part of a series entitled (In)VISIBLE, which arises from the reification of the naked bodies of disabled persons who voluntarily participate in the research, through the poetics of drawing.

The scrutiny: the construction of abject bodies

According to Peter Pál Pelbart in *Vida Capital*, in every society, regardless of temporality and spatiality, rigid and orchestrated powers affect bodies, imposing limitations, prohibitions, and obligations (2009, p.42). However, control devices seek more rigorously to scrutinize the body through the aesthetic norms established by the dominant culture, especially in modernity and contemporaneity. They follow social norms and standards and exclude those who do not fit in. Ieda Tucherman warns us of this in *A Brief History of the Body*:

It is always worth remembering that ideal images of the human body always lead to mutual oppression and insensitivity, especially among those who fall outside the norm. In a society or "political order" that universally praises "the body," there is a risk of denying the needs of those who do not fit into this paradigm (Tucherman, 2012, p. 29).

The denied bodies that do not fit this paradigm are the abjects. I understand abjection here as the rebellion of a person or a society against that which appears to threaten them in some way. Therefore, there is an attempt to delineate the place of existence of the abject, which must remain separate from those who feel threatened. This demarcation, however, does not definitively separate the subject from that which threatens him; on

the contrary, it allows him to realize that there is a looming danger, leaving him exposed to it. Faced with the abject that threatens him, the subject rebels and attempts to depart from and reject this abject. This is where Julia Kristeva's formulations unfold. These formulations appear mainly in her work *Pouvoirs de l'horreur: essai sur l'abjection*, where the Bulgarian-French philosopher builds a theoretical framework about abjection, a category that would later influence Judith Butler's reflections.

Kristeva explains that the abject repels us because it threatens us, like the excrement of the body, which, although expelled and discarded, proves the fact that we have a fetid corporeality. The philosopher strongly warns us that the abject does not have to do with the feeling of dirt, lack of cleanliness or health. The abject refers to that which we do not want to see, which refers to ourselves, such as our bodily fluids, our bodily weakness, and in the extreme case of corpses: the maximum putrefaction our bodies can reach. The abject is composed of that which one permanently discards in order to live. For Kristeva, abjection refers to what disrupts an identity, an existentiality, a system, an order, i.e., that which does not respect boundaries, rules, given places, but instead distorts them.

Kristeva explains that the abject is "anything that I do not recognize as a thing" (Kristeva, 2015, p. 21). The abject is not an object that opposes the individual, properly speaking; this reinforces the classic subject/object dichotomy. The abject retains only a single and specific characteristic of the object: the ability to oppose the "I," but not in the same way as the object, for the abject is radically excluded. This casts the subject into a place where meaning no longer exists, since the subject is outside the norms, beyond the usual meanings we give to things that participate in the game of social, moral and aesthetic regulations. In the epistemological and ontological construction of the abject lies a refusal by those who identify certain corporealities as abject, that they exist for them, that is, before it is possible to construct meanings for these corporealities, they have already been rejected, expelled, repelled.

Since abject bodies have no epistemological or ontological dimension, they have not been put under tension by scientific arguments, these bodies are incapable of materializing for society and are therefore lives that have no meaning. They are invisible to the vast majority of those who make up society. However, they exist as bodies that one would like to remove from the core of normative society.

If the abject is what some want to eliminate from our field of vision, one must ask: where is the abject located? For Kristeva, more important than the question of the abject's "being" is to turn to the problem of its place in a society, insofar as it is in a "catastrophic," "thrown," and "excluded" place. The problem surrounding the location of the abject is close to my heart because it delimits and explains the space of invisibility, the impossibility of seeing and determining certain bodies in their idiosyncrasies, as is the case with the bodies of people with disabilities like me? Works of art occasionally represent these bodies, especially in their nudity.

In Judith Butler's view, bodies become abject through a discursive process. For the American philosopher, the discourses inhabit the bodies, that is, the bodies carry the discourses within them as if they were their own blood, their bodily fluids, without which life perishes: the discourse carries the bodies. With this statement, Butler warns us of the risks of constructing dichotomous understandings in which, on the one hand, there is the body and, on the other, the discursive construction about that body. On the contrary, one must turn to the fact that they are intertwined... they belong together. With the understanding that the body is a discursive process, Butler brings "gender problems" closer to the problems of disabled persons, because the heterosexual matrix excludes not only and condemns to abjection "deviant", but all bodies that have no valuable existence from the perspective of normativity. Butler carries out this conceptual approach in the 2008 documentary film, *Examined Life*, through a fruitful dialogue with Sunaura Taylor, an American painter, activist for the rights of people with physical disabilities, and professor at the University of Berkeley, California. This approach allows us to understand that the abject "[...] is by no means limited to sex and heteronormativity. It refers to all kinds of bodies whose lives are not considered 'life' and whose materiality is understood as 'unimportant'" (Butler, 1998, p.281).

For Butler, the abject and gender are not related, but they relate to the lives that are not considered lives, whose materiality is understood as unimportant, not worthy of being looked at, admiration or at least respect. The examples of bodies that are marked with the seal of abjection are numerous. One example is the killing of Lebanese refugees, and the way these bodies, these lives, are not understood as lives. The numbers of those killed may lead to public outrage, but there is no specificity about individual bodies and lives. I can verify this in the German press when Turkish refugees

are killed or mutilated “[...] so we get a differentiated production or a differentiated materialization of the human [...] so, it is not that the unthinkable, that which cannot be lived or understood, has no discursive life; it certainly does. However, it lives within discourse as the absolutely unquestioned figure, the indeterminate figure of something that has no content, that has not yet become real” (Butler, 1998, p.282).

Among Butler's examples, one can include people with disabilities who had the opportunity to make their bodies visible denied. Spectators see them as "objects" not worth to look at, so their bodies do not become real, especially when they label their bodies, when seen as real, as ugly, "handicapped," flawed, or lacking something... but what? Normality?

Nudity: A problem?

In *Nudities*, Giorgio Agamben reflects on human nudity through the theological notions of Adam and Eve's original sin. Thus, before the fall, Adam and Eve were not naked but covered with a garment of glory, even though they were not clothed. Human nudity is present in the Christian theological history of humanity only after the original sin. According to Agamben, it is in this perspective that nudity is always denudation, and therefore no one is never able to be fully naked in our Judeo-Christian Western societies. Nudity should be understood as another garment, as if by undressing we "put on" nudity, since it carries with it such a heavy burden of impositions and restrictions that we are unable to undress fully.

Although carrying this burden on our bodies, it is necessary to dismantle the processes of social control in order to free our bodies from the imposed training and discipline. It is necessary to rethink the body in its different dimensions and to perceive openings that allow it to free itself from the shackles of dress, as had happened when Adam and Eve first realized that they were naked. For Agamben,

The nudity that the first humans saw in Paradise when their eyes were opened is, then, the opening of truth, of “disclosedness” (*a-letheia*, “unconcealment”), without which knowledge would not be possible. The condition of no longer being covered by the clothing of grace does not reveal the obscurity of flesh and sin but rather the light of knowability [...] To see a

body naked means to perceive its pure knowability beyond every secret, beyond or before its objective predicates (Agamben, 2011, p. 81).

Adam and Eve's revelation of themselves was only a fleeting moment, for in its place came shame and regret. When God realized that they knew they were naked, He made clothes of skin and covered the nakedness that once revealed the pure knowability that breaks every secret. Humankind was expelled from paradise since then, was condemned to live on the fruits of their labor, and condemned to cover with clothes the parts of their bodies that bring ruin and shame and should therefore not be exposed.

Although carrying this burden on our bodies, whose weight rises with the increase and refinement of the machinery of control, it is necessary to dismantle the processes of social control, in order to set the body free from the training and imposed discipline. In other words, it is necessary to rethink the body in its many dimensions and to perceive openings that allow it to unshackle and untie itself from the bonds of training that determines, through surveillance, what share belongs to each one within a given society. The share given for the nudity of the bodies of people with disabilities is obscurity, invisibility.

For this reason, I believe in the urgency of thinking courses of action to enable the liberation of the nakedness from theological, social, cultural, economic, colonizing, heteronormative, disciplinary and ableist signatures. In order to give visibility to non-hegemonic, anti-normalizing bodies, such as the bodies of people with disabilities, the deactivation or, at least, the mitigation of the coercive forces of control devices is necessary.

Political Technologies of the body

As for the devices of control and domination, Michel Foucault warns us in *Discipline and Punish* that the precondition for disciplinary power is the production of subjects and the training of their bodies through means of control devices such as surveillance. Surveillance helps to establish domination over the body, which is at once an important part of the apparatus of production and a specific means of disciplinary

power. One might even see him or herself as wearing different clothes when undressed, because even in the seclusion of our private homes, the "gaze" of a disciplinary society constantly observes our bodies. These looks are projected into the Other that lives within us; it does not need to be on someone else's face. These looks permeate our thinking faculty, which, instead of maintaining a relationship with ourselves in search of the meaning of what exists in the world, throws at us the disciplinary voice of a society that tells us how to be, how to dress, and how to undress. Because of the disciplinary voice that resonates within us, the people with a disability hides his or her own nudity from himself or herself; since they do not fit the normative ideal for body aesthetics, it is not suitable to show themselves naked. To appear naked, one needs a tan and a lean body with toned muscles. However, these devices are not capable of authorizing the bodies of people with disabilities to appear naked in public, since they have the constitutive characteristic of lacking some of their members, or if they have all their members, then some have a certain degree of atrophy. For these characteristics, in the eyes of the *normotics*, these bodies should always be secluded in the darkness of invisibility.

What is the power that disciplines and subjugates us? Michel Foucault argues that power is not a "thing" possessed by some at the expense of others who are deprived of it. On the contrary, power "[...] must be analyzed [...] as a thing that circulates, or rather, as a thing that functions only in a chain" in a network and "[...] in this network, not only do individuals circulate, but they are always in a position to be subjected to this power and also to exercise it" (Foucault, 2005, p.35). For the French philosopher, power relations exist only where the individual can evade this attempt to direct his behavior; in other words, power is exerted only where the possibilities of resistance are always latent. Since freedom is a precondition for the exercise of power: "every relationship of power implies [...] at least in a virtual way, a strategy of struggle" (Foucault, 1995, p.284).

Therefore, there is no power relationship without points of subjugation or dissidence. There is always a crack in the wall, through which a small drop of water can penetrate, or a beam of light enter and reach what is in the darkness. It is important to note, however, that despite resistance, there will always be new mechanisms of power, new responses to any counteroffensive, investments "[...] that no longer take the form of

control-repression, but of control-stimulation: ' Take off your clothes... but be thin, beautiful, and tanned!' (Foucault, 2016, p.236). In other words, in each fight carried out against power devices, these devices/*dispositives* reinvent themselves and build new machinery to domesticate those who have experienced, even for a fleeting moment, the power of an anti-normative, non-hegemonic existence. These devices, added to the political technologies of the body operated by biopolitics, seek to manage life in terms of providing a better use of bodies. We are thus dealing with an intersection of disciplinary norms and regulations. The subjugated bodies are those that become docile and useful through this machinery. The abnormal are those who rebel against these techniques of control and domination, those who do not conform to the norm, that some think of as "normal."

In *Les Abnormals*, Michel Foucault warns us that the question of anomaly will be intersected by the question of sexuality, that is, of the body (Foucault, 2010, p.143). In order to make an efficient choice between the normal and the abnormal, it is necessary to speak about sexuality through the power of forced revelation. Following this line of argument, Foucault states in the preface of *Herculine Barbin: Diary of a Hermaphrodite*, titled "The True Sex," that in Barbin's notes there is the revelation of a person with an uncertain sex, and this uncertainty, evoked from her past, appears as a happy time, a non-identity. The possibility of not having to reveal one's gender, that is, of being who she really is (1982, p.06).

The concern to build a genealogy of modern subjects appears in Foucault's reflections in order to answer the question "Where do we come from?". Following the reflexive path opened by the author, one can conclude that our subjectivity comes from historical and cultural constructions that, among other prerogatives, aim to classify us into certain binary social groups: Man vs. Woman; Heterosexual vs. Homosexual; Normal vs. Abnormal; Beautiful vs. Ugly. These forms of training affect the body.

Are there vanishing points in this scenario of subjectivation? In Foucault's last lectures at the *Collège de France*, there are indications of how not to allow ourselves to become slaves, either others' or our own. It is an art, a reflection of a freedom perceived as a power game, which Foucault calls the "aesthetics of existence": "By aesthetics of existence we must understand a way of life in which moral value does not come from conformity to a code of conduct, nor from a work of purification. It derives from certain

general formal principles in the use of pleasures, in the distribution one makes of them, within the limits observed in the respected hierarchy (HS2, 103). The aesthetics of existence is an art, a reflection of a freedom perceived as a power game (HS2, 277). The question of freedom, understood as non-slavery, is at the heart of this ethics: not being a slave to others, not being a slave to oneself, or, put positively, government of others and government of yourself" (Castro, 2016, p. 150-151).

The aesthetics of existence includes practices of freedom that allow individuals to bring their lives closer to art. In caring for oneself and for others, Foucault notes that care implies the need for a guide, a counselor who tells us the truth. Thus, one faces open speech, parrhesia, the courage to speak the truth. Parrhesia is embedded in the techniques of governmentality and the constitution of the self-relationship. "The truth-telling of the other, as an essential element of the government he exercises over us, is one of the essential conditions for us to establish an appropriate relationship with ourselves that provides us with virtue and happiness" (Foucault, 2013, p. 44), through the courageous act of telling the truth. This courageous act, which affects not only the person to whom one speaks but also the person who speaks truthfully, constitutes a practical reflexivity, a way of relating to oneself, of building oneself up, of working oneself out, which Foucault calls self-care. Parrhesía:

[...] is thus a certain way of speaking. More precisely, it is a way of speaking the truth [...]. It is a way of telling the truth in such a way that, by the fact of telling the truth, we take upon ourselves a risk [...]. The risk involved in telling the truth constitutes us in a certain way as partners with ourselves when we speak, it connects us to the statement of the truth, and it connects us to the enunciation of the truth. Finally, parrhesia is a way of binding ourselves to the statement of truth, of binding ourselves freely and in the form of a courageous act (Foucault, 2010, pp. 63-64).

In his reflections on the care of the self, Foucault took an argumentative turn by revisiting the philosophies of the Stoics and Epicureans such as Marcus Aurelius, Cato, and Seneca. He does this to create a theoretical framework that would serve as a practice of freedom, a spiritual direction that is not reactive, that does not "react" to the power games inflicted on the individual but is instead active and takes a position. For Sérgio Gallo, there is a profound difference between the fact that any exercise of power

implies resistance, and the fact that the ethics of care for the self, on the other hand, implies the creation of practices of freedom.

Thus, if the analysis of the government of others, of the games of power, implied the possibility of taking a position that we can call reactive, the propositions around the government of oneself allow taking a position that we can call active. It is what Foucault calls the “practice of freedom” (Gallo, 2013, p. 386).

In light of the above, one can argue that there is no difference between the fact that any exercise of power implies resistance and that the ethics of care for the self implies the production of practices of freedom, since both resistances to power and care for the self belong to a common fund, which is precisely freedom.

Foucault calls this courageous act an act of self-care. An act whose effects affect all participants in the open dialog and constitutes a practical reflexivity, a way of relating, building, and elaborating oneself. "This means that 'subjectivity' for him [Foucault] evidently refers neither to a substance nor to a transcendental determination, but to a reflexivity that could be called practice: a way of relating to oneself in order to construct, to elaborate" (Gros, In: RAGO; Veiga-Neto, 2013, p.128).

These active stances would lead people to deal with multiple body forms, through the relationship with their own existences. To do this, it is necessary to abandon the perverse social logic culturally imposed on antinormative bodies by normative bodies: The bodies that matter have the higher "shelves" reserved for them. The other bodies are destined for the lower "shelves", those of the "abject" bodies. It is necessary to act courageously and subversively against the apparatuses of control and domestication.

To subvert the logic imposed on non-normative bodies marked by a seal of abjection, it is necessary to create a deviant body, that is, one that does not submit to normative ideals. According to Brazilian thinkers Roberta Letícia Pereira Marques and Rosa Maria Berardo, in their text “Corpo monstro: estratégias de deseducação do corpo feminino a partir de uma poética visual”, “[...] by transgressing social rules, the individual affirms his existence, because 'humanity results from movements of horror followed by attraction, with which sensitivity and intelligence are associated" (Marques; Berardo, 2013, p. 546).

The re-signification of bodies based on various artistic poetics allows contemporary proposals of bodies with disabilities to confront the term "abjection". "Contemporary art contributes to the subversion of identity codes and categories, presenting new forms of knowledge production articulated in an interdisciplinary way. It becomes a space for the exchange and development of impulses" (Silva; Blanca, 2018, p. 18). This subversion and development of impulses is evident in the work of visual artists such as Mari Katayama, Diane Arbus, Daniel Moraes, Adriana Maria dos Santos, Rafael Monteiro, and others, whose artistic poetics reveal new possibilities of resignifying non-hegemonic bodies, disabled bodies, monstrous bodies, and queer bodies.

The bodies of people with disabilities challenge and destabilize imposed normative standards. The display of the bodies of people with disabilities in the visual arts presents itself as a destabilizing element of established standards and questions the normativity of beauty reified in works of art. According Siebers,

If this is the case, we may expect disability to exert even greater power over art in the future. We need to consider, then, how art is changed when we conceive of disability as an aesthetic value in itself. In particular, it is worth asking how the presence of disability requires us to revise traditional conceptions of aesthetic production and appreciation [...] (Siebers, 2010, p.67).

The presentation of bodies of people with disabilities aims to shake the foundations of established norms and make visible a presence "that challenges and affects the senses and bodies of the spectators, destabilizes a rigid division between the 'normal' body standard, and the atypical bodies that are considered other, and stimulates reflection on the harshness of interactions between bodies with disabilities, technology, and culture" (Gilbert; Kellerman, 2020, p. 28).

The presence of the body of a disabled person, as it challenges, questions and affects the senses, aesthetically problematizes typical understandings of the "normal" and beautiful body and constitutes the touchstone of my own artistic works, in which I try to materialize all the reflexive movements developed in dialog with authors who deal with the theme of antinormative corporeality.

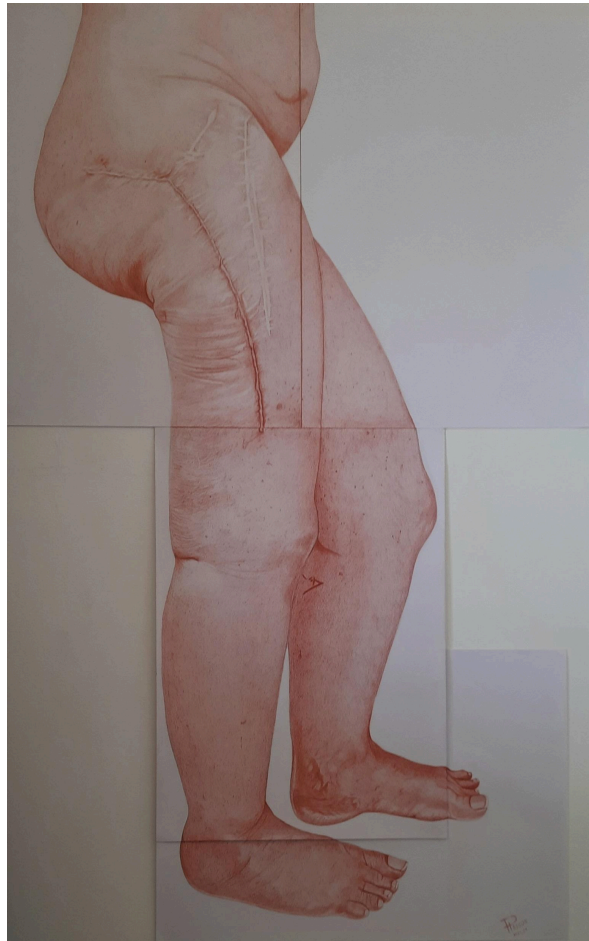
An increasing number of artists focus the body in order to confront pre-established models of beauty that make invisible a significant part of the population,

the disabled people for instance. Egon Schiele (1890-1918) challenged that classical ideal, creating expressions of the naked body endowed with expressive force and brutal energy. L. S. Lowry (1887-1976) shows, especially in his work "The Cripples" from 1949, a catalogue of disabled bodies suffering from physical and mental illnesses due several factors, such as poor diet, accidents in factories and World Wars. In addition, Żmijewski (1966-) in "An Eye for an Eye", a serial composed by videos and photography's from 1998, shows non-disabled people using their body extremities to help people with disabilities to stand, to walk, and get up. The work explores the boundary between human cooperation and symbiosis. It wonder if both those who are helping and who receiving the support of other risk to lose their uniqueness. Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) depict her one pain in of several self-portraits during the twenty-nine years after a bus accident that left her with a serious physical injury and forcing her to undergo several surgeries. In those portraits, the pain matters as lived experience. The work of Christian Schad (1894-1982) focus the objectifying gaze in "Agosta" (1929), depicting two circus performers: a disabled man with pigeon's breast and black women as Rascha - the black pigeon. The only way of acceptances was as freaks. Diane Arbus (1923-1971), direct the lens of her camera at social defiant lives and bodies. Bringing light to prostitutes, homeless and disabled people stories, she reclaims those experiences as having a lot to teach. It celebrated the existentiality of people as they really were. The lens of her camera seduce and invite those the marginalized to detach themselves from the common sense images they were forced to perform in order to be accepted in society. The Japanese artist Mari Katayama (1987-) explores the visibility of the disabled body in several artistic languages, such as sculpture, sewing, performance and photography. She focus on her one experience (leg amputation) in order to illuminate themes such as identity and body image. The visual impact of her portraits invites the viewer to rethink the way society fosters the sense of beauty.

The artistic works presented here, that is in dialog from a many artists that focus the body in order to confront pre-established models of beauty, make up the series "Fragments" of the project (In) VISIBLE. The works are constructed through the poetics of drawing on white paper in A3 format (42cm high, 29.7cm wide) in vertical or horizontal position, which, when placed side by side, convey the idea of a fragment, of

invisible parts of the body of a disabled person in its pure nudity. For the compositions, I chose graphite mine of blood color. Blood color brings the idea of human flesh, of human beings who bear the traces of their singularities in their bodies. The drawings have a high degree of realism, where I use the chiaroscuro technique to highlight the body parts.

Image 01: Fragments I

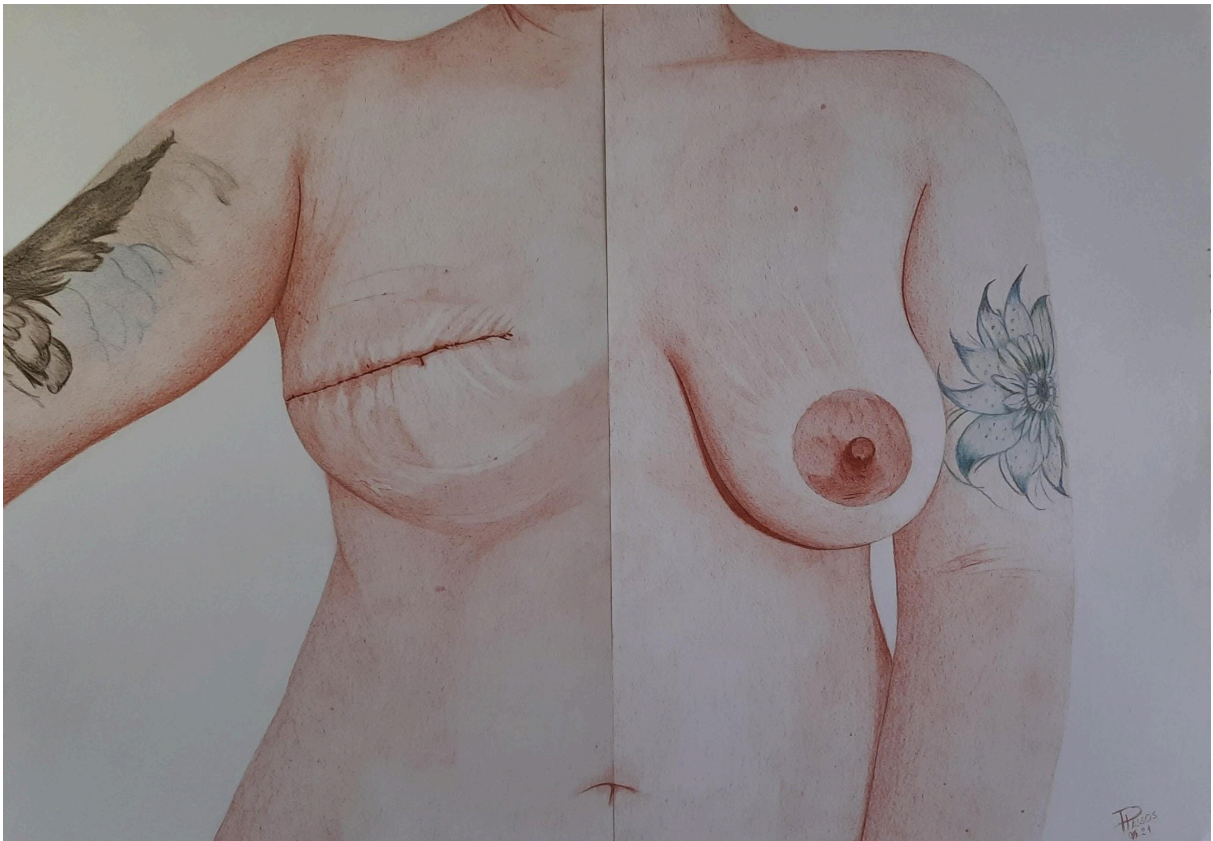


Source: <https://fabiopassos.com/fragmentos>, 2021.

Description of image 01: Right side of an unclothed white woman in profile. Her body is visible from the waist to the soles of her feet. On her left leg is a large scar that runs from her knee to her hip. The scar, from surgery, is deep, as you can see from the marks of the stitches. As you approach the hip, the scar opens in the shape of a "V". Parallel to this scar is a smaller scar that runs from the level of the groin to the middle of the thigh. The feet are slightly swollen and parallel to each other. Her buttocks are of

medium size. Material used: colored graphite lead on paper. Dimensions: 94.3 x 59.4 cm.

Image 02 – Fragments II



Source: <https://fabiopassos.com/fragmentos>, 2021.

Description of image 02: Undressed torso of a white woman seen from the front. The right breast surgically removed through a mastectomy. In the place of the right breast runs a scar slightly and diagonally along the entire length of the breast. The scar is deep and highlighted. The skin next to it is tight. The left breast is medium in size and has a voluminous areola. Her arms appear only to the level of the elbow. The left arm rests against the body and has a tattoo of a large blue flower. The right arm, slightly raised, has a tattoo of green leaves and blue clouds. Material used: colored graphite lead on paper. Dimensions: 42 x 59.4 cm.

Image 03 – Fragments VII

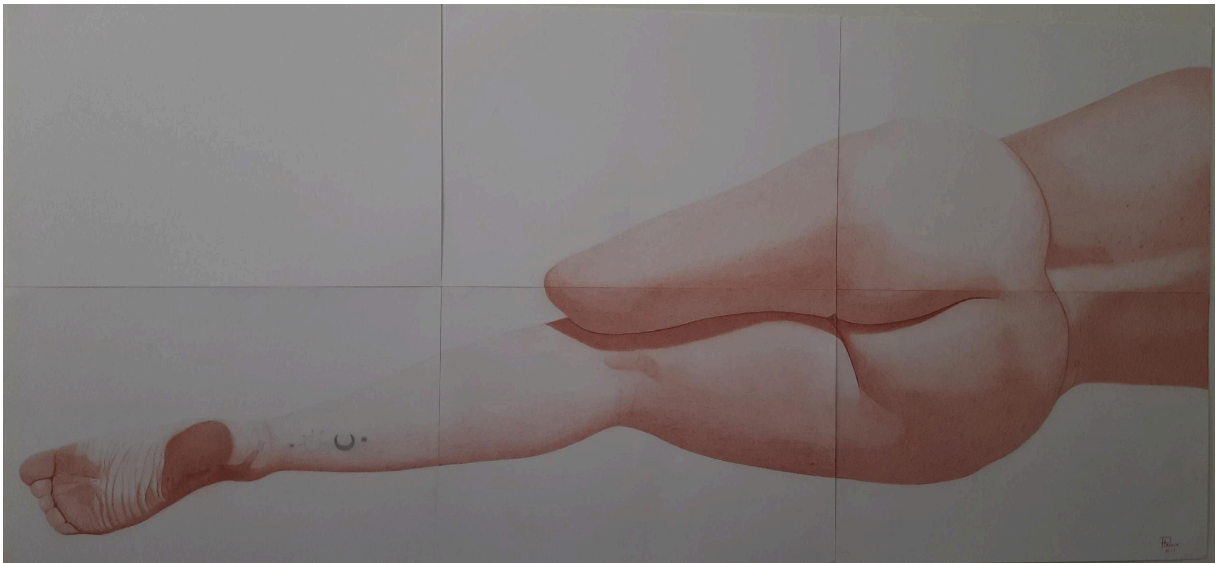


Source: <https://fabiopassos.com/fragmentos>, 2021.

Description of image 03: man, naked seen from the front, from the shoulders down. His chest and shoulders are broad. His arms are long and muscular and extended down.

downward. His hands are large and hold his legs at the knees. He bends his legs slightly toward his abdomen. The right leg is closer to the torso, forming abdominal creases. There is a small mark on the left knee from a wound that has healed. The legs are short and atrophied due to paraplegia. The feet are small and slightly swollen. Pubic hair appears between the knees. Material used: colored graphite lead on paper. Dimensions: 126x59.4 cm.

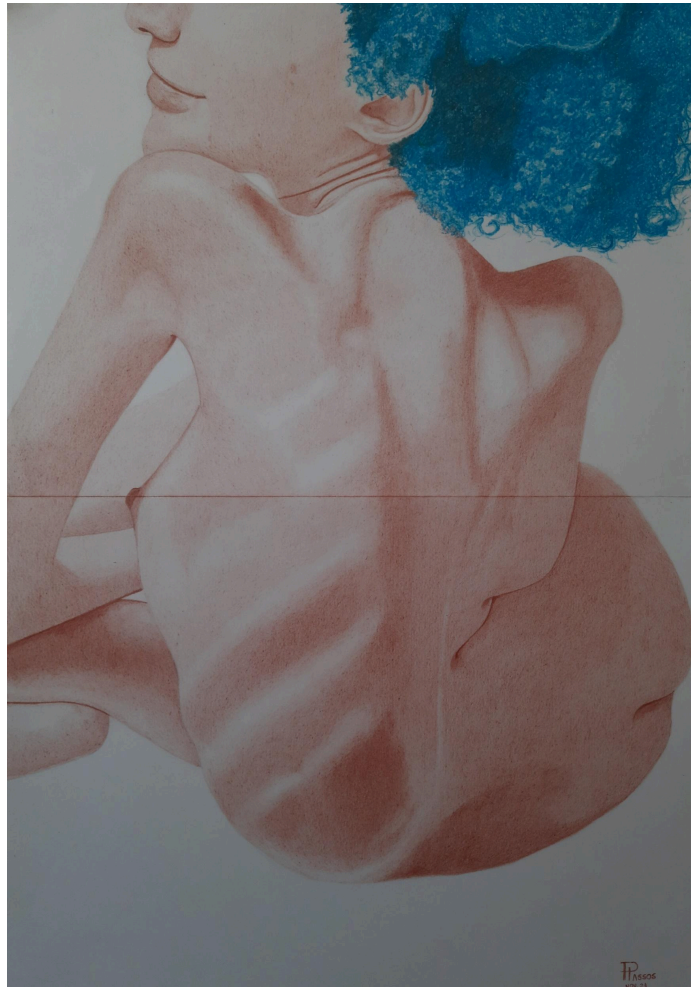
Image 04 – Fragments XIX



Source: <https://fabiopassos.com/fragmentos>, 2021.

Description of image 04: The back of a naked white woman, from the shoulders to her right toes. She is lying on her side, from right to left. The arms are not visible. Her buttocks are large and wide. The left leg has an amputation at the knee. Material used: colored graphite lead on paper. Dimensions: 126x59,4 cm.

Image 05 – Fragments X



Source: <https://fabiopassos.com/fragmentos>, 2021.

Description of image 05: Nude white woman sitting on her back, her body slightly turned to the left. The design makes a cutout from the height of the nose to the navel. The face, turned to the left, features a fleshy mouth. Her hair is short, slightly curled, and dyed blue. The left ear is on display with a small piercing. Her shoulders are extremely narrow and the arms thin and long. The breasts are small. She has turned her

buttocks to the right side, sitting on her side. Material used: colored graphite lead on paper. Dimensions: 59,4x42 cm.

Conclusion

In the reflections developed here, as well as the artistic compositions, I have sought to demonstrate that art must question and destabilize normative standards. Through drawings, I intend to explain, as an artist, as a researcher and as a person with disabilities, what I see and experience on a daily basis: the invisibility and the non-materiality of the bodies of people with disabilities, which, in their nudity, have always been vilified by the visual arts. In possession of these experiences, I also attempt to demonstrate what we "do" with what happens to us. How some people with disabilities catalyze their social immateriality into questioning powers, capable of disrupting the status quo of bodily patterns. To do so, however, it must break the shackles of the cultural industry, which appropriates art and transforms it into yet another mass-produced consumer object. For Hannah Arendt, the entertainment industry is the threat to culture implemented in modernity and contemporaneity. It claims the right to produce cultural products in a process similar to the human metabolism with its body: cyclical and eternal. For the author, this process has transcended the boundaries of the private sphere and has spread like a fungus throughout the entire fabric of social relations, leaving its mark on culture. In order for art to constitute itself as a vehicle for questioning, it must urgently be freed from the shackles that imprison it in a logic of marketing, becoming a mere object of embellishment. In this way, art can awaken individuals from the torpor that intoxicates them and makes them wander the great metropolises as "living dead".

The matrices of contemporary art have the ability to teach many how to inhabit the corporeal world, rather than trying to build it from an aesthetic ideal. This research and the artistic works that emerged from these reflections intended to weave a web of relationships between people and the world, inviting them to question themselves about the non-materialization of non-hegemonic bodies and their consequent invisibility. The

point was to share the body life's of people with disabilities in order to present them as aesthetic individualities that everyone can identify with. These individualities testify to the certainty that bodies are unable to reflect the ideal of "human beauty" elaborated in the classical and modern eras.

I include the "other," the person with a disability, in the aesthetic discussion, not as a theme, but as an essential piece for understanding the considerations made here. The artworks presented problematize the meaning of bodily existence and suggest possible ways forward, given the discriminatory, exclusionary, and unfeasible currents of contemporary societies. I have argued that artistic practice represents a privileged space for the construction of antinormative individualities. It provides the necessary tools for a human existence capable of freeing itself from pre-existing ties to powers that aim to control behavior and shape the "I" according to political and economic interests.

These artistic constructions seek to uncover the naked bodies of people with disabilities, relegated to the basements of invisibility. This movement is the result of affections, your own experiences, because I feel daily what it is like to have no materiality, no body perceived and thought as such, because as a paraplegic I know what it is like to be seen as a monster, defective or even sick.

Expressing, through my artistic works, the nudity of bodies of people with disabilities, I tried to give some visibility to the aesthetic power of these bodies. Therefore, I hope to bring the invisible repercussions that the machinery of governmentality has on the bodies of people with disabilities to the surface of public dialogue, while, at the same time, trying to build a *locus* that enables the visibility of these same bodies. Those bodies constituted the basis on which my drawings were elaborated.

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