

POROUS RESONANCES: SOUND, SILENCE, AND FEMINIST RESISTANCE IN ANNA JERMOLAEWA'S WORKS



This paper examines three works by Anna Jermolaewa—Rehearsal for Swan Lake (2024), Ribs (2022/24), and The Penultimate (2017)—to propose porous resonance as a feminist sonic politics that moves from vibration to inscription to memory. The argument unfolds across three modalities.

First, Rehearsal for Swan Lake (with choreographer Oksana Serheieva) restages Tchaikovsky's ballet as a rehearsal for dissent. Referencing the Soviet tactic of broadcasting Swan Lake in a loop during moments of political crisis, Jermolaewa replaces the spectacle of state control with the durational labour of bodies warming up, counting, breathing. The audible effort of rehearsal turns listening into a political attentiveness: sound is not merely heard; it is felt as muscular persistence and minor coordination—what Ewa Majewska theorises as weak resistance, a corroding force born of fragility, care, and repetition.

Second, Ribs returns to the clandestine bone-music of the postwar USSR—records pressed onto discarded X-ray films to smuggle forbidden jazz and rock. Displayed on a medical light box and periodically played, these X-rays materialise a sound-image: the archive of the body doubles as the archive of sound. Here, porosity names the crossing of thresholds between flesh and medium, auscultation and audition. The body is both resonant chamber and recording surface; inscription is already vibration held in pause. In Donna Haraway's terms, listening becomes making—with across organisms and technologies.

Third, The Penultimate composes a silent bouquet of revolutionary colours—carnations, roses, tulips, cornflowers, jasmine, saffron crocuses, a cedar and an orange tree—each indexing a popular uprising. Silence here is not absence but after-sound: the echo of protest songs displaced into vegetal time. The work convenes what Majewska calls counterpublics of the common—unspectacular acts of remembrance and care that sustain resistance when spectacle recedes.

Across these works, porous resonance names a politics where sound leaks between bodies, images, and histories. Rather than the grand gesture, Jermolaewa offers a slow (but loud) revolution: rehearsal instead of triumph, bootleg instead of official record, bouquet instead of anthem. Listening—whether to breath, to bootleg noise on bones, or to the muted insistence of flowers—operates as method and ethic. The paper situates this triad within feminist and post-socialist debates on art, censorship, exile, and aurality, drawing on Majewska's weak resistance and Haraway's relational world-making to argue that Jermolaewa composes an infra-politics of sound where vulnerability resonates as endurance.

KEYWORDS: feminist resistance; sound art; porosity; Anna Jermolaewa; post-socialist aesthetics

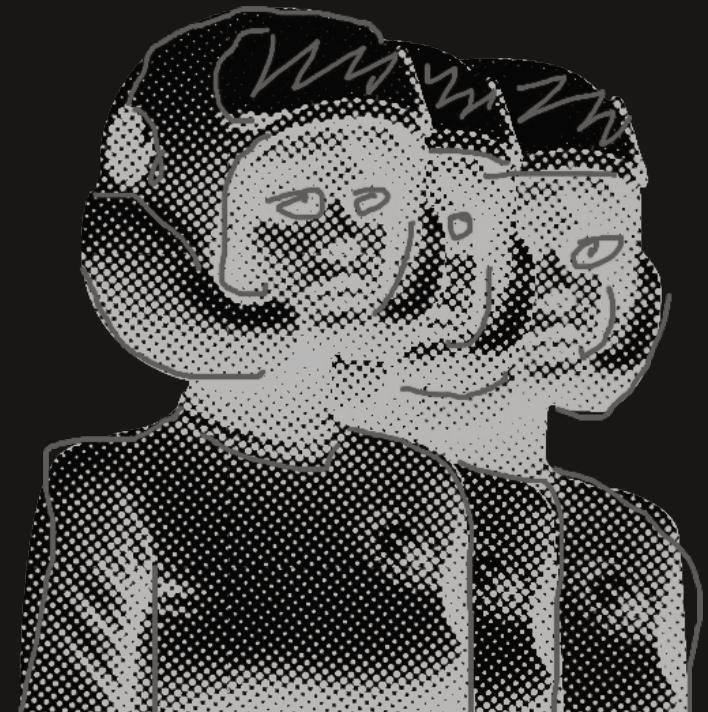




Lais Rabello de Andrade: is a PhD candidate in Art Education at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto (FBAUP), and a researcher at i2ADS. Her doctoral project, Looking East! What can we (un)learn from each other? SF knowledge production from East European Biennials, investigates East European biennials through feminist, decolonial, and speculative frameworks, drawing on the notions of unlearning (Madina Tlostanova) and SF (Donna Haraway). Her research focuses on curatorial infrastructures, situated epistemologies, and non-fascist modes of living. She has presented and published internationally on topics related to biennials of resistance, feminist curatorial practices, and situated methodologies that connect Eastern Europe and the Global South.

Afiliação / Affiliation: Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto (FBAUP) / Instituto de Investigação em Arte, Design e Sociedade (i2ADS)

Contacto / Contact: lais.rabell@gmail.com



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