

DEVANEIOS

Eliana Ambrosio

Reflecting on the creative act is an important moment of pause for us to understand the paths that feed our processes, evaluate the transformations our practices have taken, and delve more deeply into our artistic work.

During the creative process, the artist uses an initial idea, which is often reconfigured after a period of maturation, reflection, and experimentation. This investigative trajectory is permeated by doubts and uncertainties, tests, errors, abandonments, successes, revisions, deviations, migrations, expansions, ramifications, and new inspirations; a constant advance and retreat of possibilities lead to the realisation of the work, the emergence of other works or new areas of interest to be investigated. It is a process of constant metamorphosis, which requires moments of distance from the artist for the maturation of their aesthetic issues.

Thus, throughout its practice, art research involves reflective questions from the artist's sensibility; this leads to the development of its own methodology, which is not always linked to traditional methods and theories. Unlike scientific areas, in which a thesis is to be proven or refuted through the analysis of quantitative data collected within the scientific methodological rigour during the development of the research, artistic investigations have a subjective character related to their conceptual aspects, intimate reflections, and truths conditioned by the materiality of the work itself during its execution and the historical-social context of the moment.

Moments of forced isolation, such as the one caused by the coronavirus pandemic, can also contribute to this process. What can we learn in periods of isolation such as those caused by the pandemic? How can these moments change our perception and lead our artistic practices to other paths? These were some of the questions I started to ask when the moments of deprivation of contact with other people and with the studio itself changed my practice.

The deprivation of materials and the growth of the digital universe changed my expressive means. I no longer had the studio, nor access to papers, matrices, and inks to produce. I turned to drawing, resorted to photography to make my visual records, and became interested in video editing. Gradually, exchanges took place in the digital realm again through seminars, meetings, congresses, and virtual exhibitions. All of this opened a series of new possibilities and adaptations so that I could express myself. Gradually, I opened myself to other sensibilities, to new immersive spaces in which touch, sight, and sound emerged as aesthetic elements expanding my earlier poetic research on imaginary beings and nature.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure Titles and information

Figure 1: DEVANEIOS Artist Book

Figure 2: Photography of glass fogging and its imaginary gardens which is part of the artist's book DEVANEIOS

Overall, much of this previous research, presented in a solo exhibition entitled HUMANLESS at IMPACT 10, dealt with issues of environmental destruction through engravings depicting imaginary beings created from the observation of architectural ornaments, appropriating known spaces in a world without anyone, as any other plant species would insert itself in an abandoned place: a world of solitude, silent, that was open to reflections on the human passage and the fleetingness of time. In addition to the prints, the series featured installations in which these imaginary beings were inserted into different architectural environments as if they were already living silently among us, waiting for our departure to occupy the spaces once and for all.

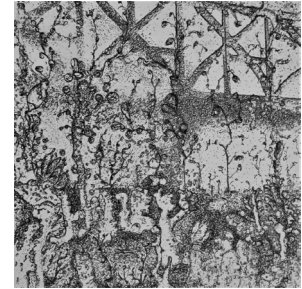


Figure 3

Until the beginning of 2020, the existence of a “being” that was among us to occupy our spaces and disturb our existence was only a hypothetical elocution. However, with the pandemic isolation, these reflections were transformed and incorporated into my daily life. I started to wonder if other beings were cohabiting with us without us even realising it. The lack of interpersonal encounters, of feeling the touch, of exchanging words and looks, of establishing relationships with others also changed my sensitivity, and each habitual element of everyday life was resignified as I became more introspective.

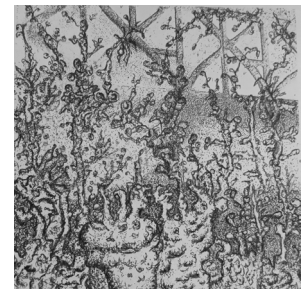


Figure 4

The DEVANEIOS project presented here is part of these pandemic investigations and was developed in a virtual artistic residency promoted by the Spanish group SM Pro Art Circle during the Huellas Seminar. Through weekly meetings, each participant carried out his proposal and the resulting plastic works reflected a connection between elements of nature and the personal emotions of their authors. The possibility of discussing the proposals during these virtual meetings was essential for the success of the projects because, in addition to their symbolic meaning, they represented the expansion of contact with each other. Being able to connect with people who were going through the same concerns to discuss art, express their feelings and externalise their perceptions about their productions and those of other colleagues was essential for each member to continue their imaginary.

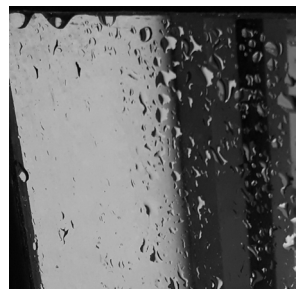


Figure 5

DEVANEIOS is divided into an artist’s book and three videos resulting from this experience. The work started with my perception of how the droplets and the fogging of the glass in the bathroom outlined imaginary gardens. From the sound of the rain and its flow, these gardens were remembered. From the tears for the inconveniences and deaths in the pandemic, other feelings were sublimated through these created beings, and a text was made to accompany the album and one of the videos.

Although the seminar took place in March 2021, the work was built gradually. Firstly, there was the sound and sensorial perception of the water that ran in the shower and the fogging of the bathroom glass, which was possible due to this moment of pause, restrictions, and introspection that ended up sharpening the understanding of details that previously went unnoticed. Perhaps the absence of the

Figure 3: Different images of imaginary gardens
 Figure 4: Different images of imaginary gardens
 Figure 5: Photo of the rain inside the artist’s book DEVANEIOS

rush of daily life facilitated this encounter with the stains, but another preponderant factor was the deprivation of contact with others. The non-touching, the absence of a complete view of the faces obstructed by the masks, and the meetings mediated by electronic devices allowed us to reframe these gaps of losses through the expansion of our sensory means. I noticed how my gaze became more attentive to details; the smells became more pronounced; the sounds reverberated emotions; the contrasts of lights, shadows, and colours took on other nuances; touch and touch have changed, and the sensitivity of skin contact has become more subtle.

That was how I started to experience the water that flowed in the shower. I could feel its sound, its touch on my skin, and its drawings on the glass. Its drops reminded me of the imaginary beings in my installations, which were secretly waiting to occupy our space. I thought of our fragility facing a microscopic being, such as the coronavirus, which spread so easily and was everywhere, which silently occupied everything and isolated us from our loved ones, our routine, and ourselves. We were at home, but restless... So, in the silence of the repetition of everyday tasks, the stains of water splashes and the fogging of the smoke on the windows of the shower caught my attention. The random shapes that appeared there reminded me of a universe of beings ready to be drawn.

The droplets had always been there, but I had never seen them like this, and the moment they were unveiled, a universe of possibilities opened. At first, I resorted to photography to register what I saw. From these photographs, I digitally worked the photos until I got images that highlighted the spots but still spoke with the original reference. What, though, to do next? I could print and overlay engravings. These images could also be the basis for future matrices of an etching series. Among so many possibilities, in possession of printed digital images, I realised that the stains instigated my imagination to produce drawings and thus I let myself be guided by their forms to create new beings.

Guiding myself by the stains was already a practice of my creative process. However, I understood it better at that time. I knew that a fragment of ornament or stain was enough for a new being to sprout and take shape in my drawings and engravings. I came to understand that the process was not a mere re-reading of what I was observing, but a procedure that passed through an emotional filter, which accessed deeper memories and allowed the imagination to work freely. I noticed that the construction of these beings came from the emotional rescue of fragments of my visual memory and dialogued with a particular way of drawing, in which the observation drawing gained layers and interference from memory and imagination. I started to reflect on the use of stains to activate the inventive capacity pointed out by Leonardo da Vinci in his work 'A Treatise on Painting' and on the method proposed by Alexander Cozens in the eighteenth century for the creation of landscapes based on the suggestions of stains and ink blots. I understood how the presence of contours and blemishes was essential to my imagination.



Figure 6

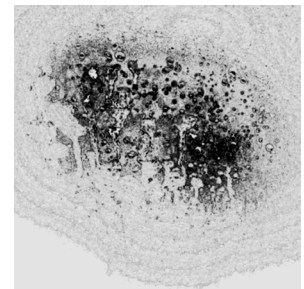


Figure 7



Figure 8

Figure 6: Digitally manipulated images from photographs
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 Figure 8: The Interactive Artist book DEVA-NEIOS and its montage possibilities

During the drawing phase, the same digital image took on different formats, and in the introspective act of drawing, questions emerged. How long will we survive? Will we become skeletons soon or are we already a skeleton of what we once were? Everything will go back to the way it was before, or it will be profoundly changed. The work stopped there. Everything was kept until the moment of reflexive exchanges during the Huellas Seminar. It was a rainy season and again the sound of water and the fluidity of drops through the windows brought new possibilities. I started to record their flows and capture their sound, and I wrote a text to set down my contemplations that structured and guided the entire project. The text became the book's opening text and part of one of the videos. Thus, I expressed the feelings experienced during the creation of the work DEVANEIOS:

I was overwhelmed with intense emotion. I started to visualize the water, I wanted to feel it, dissolve in its droplets. I imagined the path of the drops walking on the surfaces... I saw drops running down my body. During the bath, I felt water, I heard the melody of sound produced by each movement of my hands, the sweet taste of the tenderness, the caresses of its paths drawn on my skin. I saw the haze of moisture take over the glass and drew it with the droplets that I splashed with my gestures. I observed every image, I registered it into my heart...

Outside the rain falls... the sound awakens images... the images of the drops over my body, the fogging of the glass, and the droplets running down the windows... I need to film it... capture its sound... compose with its droplets... video and photo...

Sad news from the pandemic... tears are streaming down my face... fear takes over my heart... the taste is no longer sweet... it bitters me... there is no sound of the melody, it flows in silence... its salt crystallizes and paralyzes...

I think about the unfolding of events, the different facets of our feelings, and the multiplicity of nature...

From a window I visit the images that unfold... from the runoff of the rain, I see the beings being formed... from there, I move on to the images of the blurs that take shape... in every transformation appears a garden, they walk back to the forest, to the shape of the wood and they sprout from the top of a tree trunk... nature reveals itself in the depths of these images that are formed from drops, glass, and metal and reach the organic of wood. Organic or inorganic, everything is nature... (Ambrosio, E. (2021) DEVANEIOS [online]. Available at: <https://www.circleproart.com/en-gb/eliana-ambrosio> (Accessed: 27 May 2022))

From the text, I composed an interactive book made of folds in fine art print. The book consisted of photos of rain, drops, and water runoff, and drawings made on printed images that were digitally manipulated. The main structure shows the facets of the rains and only in the most intimate folds reveals the drawings that sprout from the windows. Thus, the images that started from the raindrops and the fogging on



Figure 9



Figure 10

Figure 9: The Interactive Artist book DEVANEIOS and its montage possibilities
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the bathroom glass gradually turned into imaginary gardens until they gained contours like those of top wood. I realised that even if digitally, my imagination was focused on the practice of woodcuts. Conceptually, digital images paid homage to printmaking and graphic thought, even if their practice was temporarily suspended by pandemic times.

Another important conceptual aspect of the book was its interactivity. Being designed to be manipulable resided in the fact that it was not just a visual object but a sensory book, in which touch was a key element. So, in turn, it allows spectators to access their imaginations and create new visual formats after each intervention.

To build the book, I used special paper that allowed printing on both sides. I chose the Pale Hahnemühle Photo Rag® Duo, ideal for portfolios and albums, as it is coated with a printable layer on both sides, in addition to having 276 gsm and 100% cotton fibres. This gave the book a good structure without needing to glue the sheets. In addition, it allowed folding for later manipulation. Another important specification is that its composition favours the durability and conservation aspects of the book: "*The acid- and lignin-free Photo Rag® Duo meets the most exacting requirements for age resistance and is a double-sided FineArt printing classic.*" (Available at: <https://www.hahnemuehle.com/en/digital-fineart/fineart-media/matt-fineart-smooth/p/Product/show/8/5.html>. (Accessed: 27 May 2022))

When the book was finished, the project lacked the sound element. I revisited my photos and videos with the rain documentation and the work revealed itself. I decided to produce three videos. They arose from the memory of the sounds of rain, the records of handling books, and the text reading.

Although the book is an autonomous object that can be exposed separately, the videos complement its content. I believe the best way to display them is to compose an installation. However, this does not have to happen yet. So far, they have only been shown in a virtual environment, and I am waiting for the resumption of in-person exhibitions to materialise the proposal.

After the DEVANEIOS project, I created other virtual works with videos and digital images. I noticed that in all of them the visual thought of engraving, its practices, and aesthetics were present. When revisiting these works, I am aware that, even adopting other visual media, printmaking will always exert a strong influence on my plastic work.

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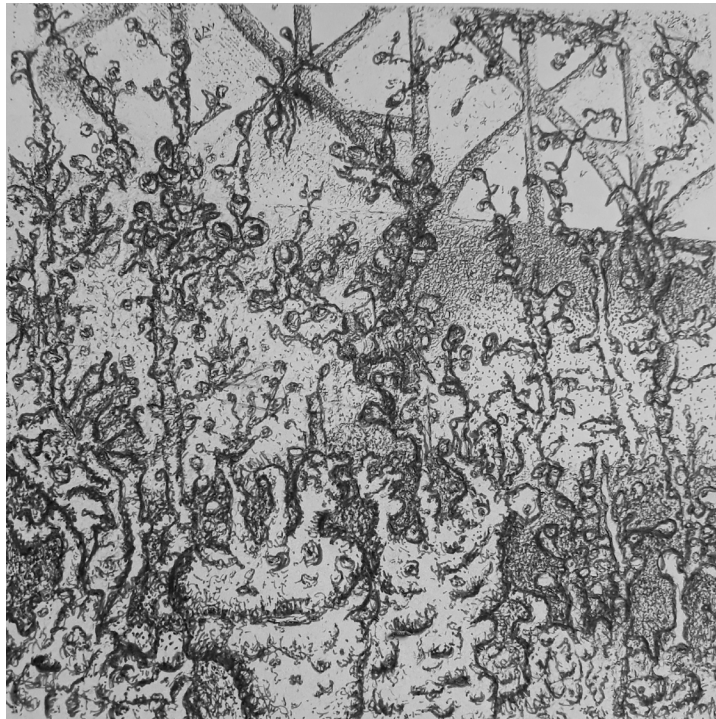
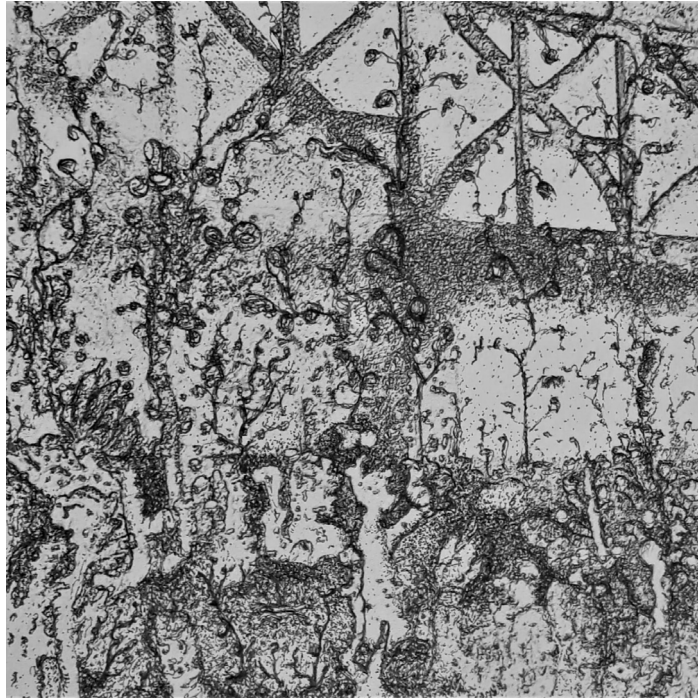


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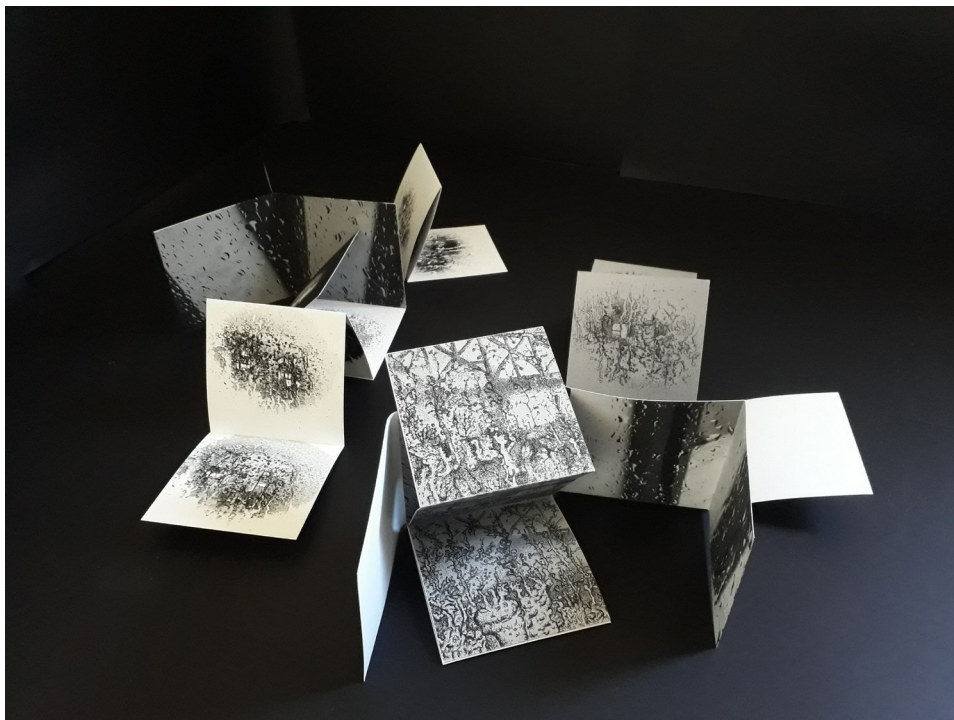
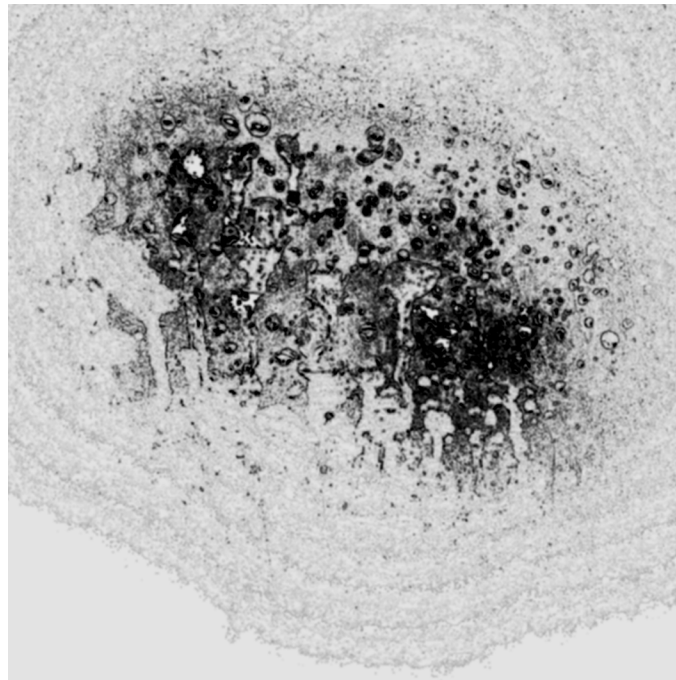


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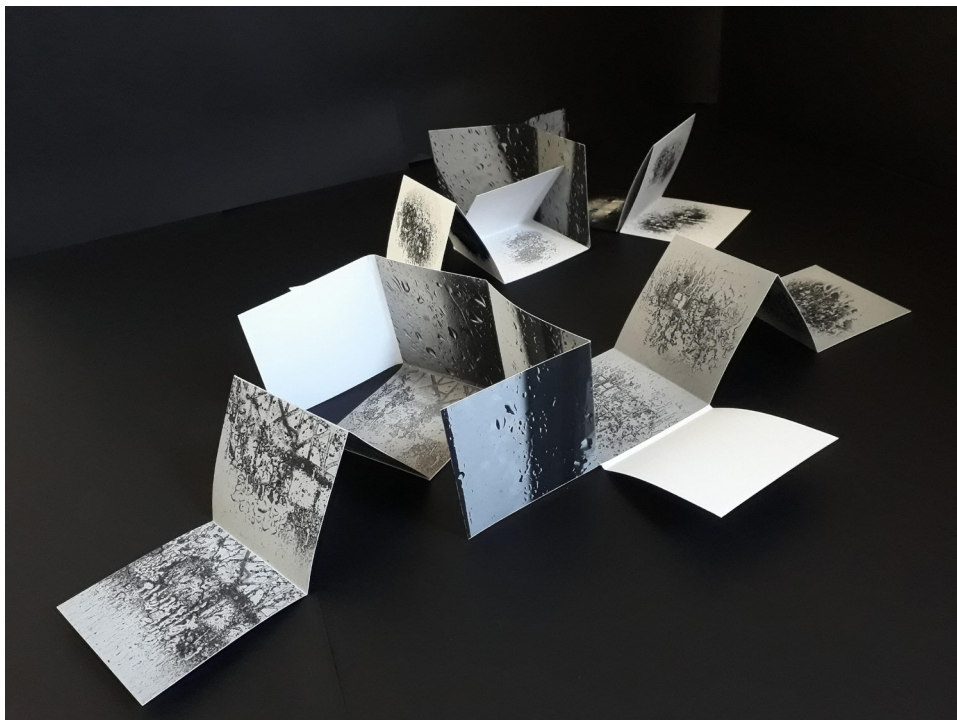


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