

# THE 14 STEPS TOWARDS A WONDERFUL FAILURE

 **JUAN LUIS TOBOSO**

Escola Superior Artística do Porto  
CEAA | Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo  
juanluis.toboso@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

"Ufffff! So what are we going to do?" ... this is how this film/essay begins. It starts with a conversation between three (maybe more) people in the kitchen of an apartment. The situation seems to be tense, but at the same time, with some charge of emotion. In the upper right edge of the image, we can find an image with the Palestinian flag. Today is November 12, 2023, the armed conflict that began in the city of Gaza a few weeks ago and slowly destroys the city and inhabitants, is still active. This methodology, which is intended to be decidedly anachronistic, in its sense of current against linear narrative time, acts interdependently with the content of each embrace. The unexpected form in which this audiovisual essay manifests itself is entirely related to the form of the project and the content of its non-narrative.

Keywords: Moving images; Manifesto; Queer; Ecology; Failure

"Uffff! So what are we going to do?" ...This is the conversation that situates the starting point, but that could be at the same time a midpoint and even the end and return point of this audiovisual essay entitled *A mani-pedi-anti-counter-FESTO for queer screen production* (Black, Kelly, Munro & Taylor 2022). An audiovisual essay of almost fourteen minutes and divided into 14 statements, which transversally and from audiovisual fragments created by each of the authors, go through different aspects connected to the creation of an intersectional queer imaginary, creating a collaborative work methodology based on kinship relationships. Understanding this kinship as something that goes beyond personal relationships in the sense that it rethinks its own meaning of this word, sometimes too much linked to a union exclusively of blood ties, to bring it to the field of "learning from each other" and based on a queer care thinking as a sharing experience. But equally towards an ecology of relationships that expands our forms of research and, why not our ways of life, with the risks involved in assuming a position of interdependence between humans and non-humans (Haraway, 2016). Kinship relations that are not always comfortable and that imply accepting the conflict and the different tensions that appear from these relations as an ontological way of constructing new radical imaginaries (Castoriadis, 1997).

## 1. THE POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE

All possible forms of failure appear when we contemplate with uneasiness the vertigo of new forms of life in dissidence of the hegemonic forms of image production. Our bodies become aware of the limit of their condition of creators of visual narratives to exercise the experimentation of this fierce inclination vertigo. We are obsessive about failure to investigate questions related to a kind of threat: that of stability as opposed to the fragility of the tightrope. Failure, disappointment, collapse...are these ideas not a constant presence in a body of work with a vocation for success? The expectation of failure is equally proportional to the possibility of successful failure.

## 2. DISRUPTION OF THE EVER-FORWARD MOMENTUM

"We are sick of positivity". But what kind of positivity? .... that one of useless desire, that one of the influences of inertia, that one of the lack of experimentation in the sexuality of life. This happiness makes impossible to think of failure as a starting point towards revolt and not as frustration (Pál Pelbart, 2017).

## 3. A COLLAPSE OF PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE

"We should be afraid of the future because we've already been there". (Bond, 2003)

#### 4. SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

How can we think a different model of knowledge creation under the form of an articulated sustainability between production and destruction? Is this binomial a form of sustainable practices, or will we have to include other transversal thoughts? In the audiovisual essay *A mani-pedi-anti-counter-FESTO for queer screen production* (Black, Kelly, Munro & Taylor 2022), we not only perceive the form of content creation from different audiovisual fragments in a collaborative challenge, but also a logic of editing and screen production in which the relations between these images, the producers of these images and the relations with audiences point towards forms of ethical post-production.

#### 5. EMBRACE THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ALTERNATIVE TO HEGEMONIC FORMS

On the abundance of this neoliberal happiness and the possibility of creating new imaginaries of production of moving images (but still on its unexpected rupture under the economic collapse and the neurosis of an empty landscape of expectations and strategies of resistance and subjectivation of the subject) we can approach the intellectual production of authors of post-Marxist influence as Franco Berardi or Sarah Sara Ahmed whose thought delves into the various evolutions of a conception of happiness from this recognition of our common possibilities. And those possibilities may be a form of anti-capitalist self-affirmation (Berardi, 2019) and combining the exercise of philosophy and feminist cultural studies (Ahmed 2010).

#### 6. FILMMAKING AS KINSHIP-MAKING

Would there be any better way than to relate to each other in all fields of knowledge, establishing relationships of kinship and affectivity among all forms of life that inhabit our contemporaneity times? This question has, in this audiofilm essay a very clear answer on these 14 statements when they utilise mobile devices and technology used to record our everyday life and intimacy, as a form of "autoethnography" (Holman Jones, 2005), sharing empathetic ties between the filmmakers and the us. But who are us?

#### 7. EMBRACE INTERSPECIES RELATIONS

The filmmakers propose to create links of empathy between multiple subjectivities. The practice of producing moving images by creating empathy between political coalitions, such as race, gender and/or languages with other species can create an ecosystem of audiovisual production (and knowledge) that overcomes the barriers of individualism, nations notions, and corporations' engagement (Seymour, 2013, p. 28) as the only places of identity relations.

## 8. EMBRACE INFLATABLE POOL ANIMALS

Are inflatable pool animals considered as a companion species? Does their ridiculous and tender shape make us feel an affection or eroticism for them? Where do such funny shapes come from? Eroticism and self-criticism take shape in this chapter of the audiovisual essay presented by the authors. But my main question is: where and under what labor and material conditions have they been manufactured and transported to our pools? Its answer could bring us problems of consumer ethics and sustainability.

## 9. EMBRACE THE RICHNESS OF EMBARRASSMENT

Embracing the embarrassment, our own and that of others, implies the ability to be moved by feelings and empower ourselves from our failures collectively. In the well-known book, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed tells us about a series of "affective economies" where these emotions do not reside in the subjects or objects, but rather this affection is produced as an effect of the circulation. Ahmed argues that "emotions move through the movement or circulation of objects, which become "sticky," or saturated with affect, as sites of richness in personal and social tension" (Sara Ahmed 2004, p. 35).

## 10. EMBRACE QUEER SHAME

Perhaps the answer to some of the above questions can be found in these two statements. Shame as an exercise of self-criticism. Ridicule as a performative state of emancipation in an intoxicated world. Sausages, inflatable pool animals, old-fashioned dresses and uncontrolled erections ...all those contradictory things that make us happy together.

## 11. EMBRACE MORE FAILURE

More failure please! give me more and more failure, please!... To affirm failure as a form of creation of subjectivity in the exile of capitalist productivity, is to configure a new form of joy different from that happiness of "yes we can!". To restore the spheres of insurrection (Rolnik, 2019) in the face of the imposition of a mutilated future.

## 12. EMBRACE DELINQUENCY AND ETERNAL ADOLESCENCE

When I was 12 years old, I decided one day to offer a Christmas tree full of ornaments to my neighbors: my friend Remedios and her family with few economic resources. All the items, including the Christmas tree, were stolen from a big supermarket corporation. My mother was furious with me when she learned the truth. I continue to feel a very proud happiness about it.

### 13. EMBRACE THE IMPERFECT IMAGE

All images are possible, all images are welcome, all images are true, all images are false... All images are possible even if there is no intellectual intentionality behind them. They are images of a failure, and in them we trust.

### 14. EMBRACE QUEER SPACE

To accept the discontent of having failed can be of vital importance to understand, how much it is worth for us to make of this failure a space of celebration.

And that is where we are together, a place where we establish a series of relationships that establish revolutions of bodies full of desire, leaving germinate a wild and utopian way of life different from the hetero-normative and neoliberal disease.

Under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world.  
(Halberstam 2011, p. 2).

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