



# Reação

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João Sarmento's first seminar about Africa presented a set of survey tools that were used by geographers to explore Africa during the Portuguese colonization period in the 20th century. At that time, the commonly used research methods in Geography had specific field tools that consisted, among others, of field diaries, or notebooks, and analogic photography cameras. Field tools, which accompanied explorers who traveled for research, were adapted to remain a memoir of what was observed and studied. The field diaries and photography — survey tools for recording, communicating, and representing — were a central part of governmental-funded missions, as well as, institutional missions to experience geography at academia. The seminar mainly focused on the field diaries of the Portuguese geographer Orlando Ribeiro, the missions which he organized and participated, as well as their relevant characteristics and the work methods used (see Sarmento & Brito-Henriques, 2013).

In Sarmento's contextualization, that period of time (mainly the 1960s) is a testimony that geographers' relation with space goes beyond mapping regions and the use of physical cartographies (Hull, 1994). It beholds essential knowledge related to the research field of site visitations — for scanning and analyzing a geographical context and its human aspects. Orlando Ribeiro comes from a generation of geographers who used the field diary as a foundational instrument, often unique and irreplaceable, and drawing as a useful tool for scrutinizing the landscape. This practice was mostly lost as technology enabled other forms of representation and study (Kenyon, 2006). Instead of adding photography and video to the existing practice, the contemporary facilitation dictates that the field diary has been almost completely replaced. Not only in Geogra-



**Figure 1.** Andreas Rumpfhuber. *Architecture of Immaterial Labour* 6/8  
Hans Hollein. Mobile Office - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKSWEW7vYak>



**Figure 2.** *The mobile office in use, while being observed by others*  
[http://www.hollein.com/var/ezwebin\\_site/storage/images/projekte/mobiles-buero-mobile-office/000\\_mobiles\\_buero\\_01.jpg/5708-2-ger-DE/000\\_MOBILES\\_BUeRO\\_01.jpg\\_projectimage.jpg](http://www.hollein.com/var/ezwebin_site/storage/images/projekte/mobiles-buero-mobile-office/000_mobiles_buero_01.jpg/5708-2-ger-DE/000_MOBILES_BUeRO_01.jpg_projectimage.jpg)

phy, but across many other fields of knowledge, drawing and “the thinking hand” were downplayed as useful and practical work tools, often shifting to the “less respected” or secondary position of mere illustrations. In the field of architecture, in Portugal at least, there is still great resistance to the abandonment of hand-drawing. From early on in their studies, students are taught that drawing is a foundational tool in spatial practice and theory. A useful drawing, which is very different from a beautiful drawing, has a clear purpose, as it serves for: I. knowing II. thinking and / or III. representing.

In the practice of architecture, which consists of the intervention of any medium with pre-existences, these following three steps are inseparable: knowing the environment, working on it, and representing the result, through drawing. In other fields of knowledge, the process of drawing may differ and may be deconstructed in other ways. Whatever the drawing process or purpose is, knowing an object (building, body, or landscape) through drawing, implies its exhaustive and repeated scrutiny. It is from drawing, whether for representation, thought or discovery, that fundamental aspects of the object are assimilated. These elements are often invisible in photography or textual description. When “thinking with the hand”, we do not necessarily arrive at a conventionally beautiful drawing, because that is not the purpose. By contrast, and since it is a working method, we may reach results or discoveries.

When studying the practical method of drawing and/or annotation in field diaries, one may question the travel behavior of the person who produces this work — the proper mediator and projector of the surrounding environment onto the field diary. Regarding this question, the 20th century — especially due to the Avant-Garde movements as consequences of experimentations of the arts and crafts — contained various explorations in the practice-based field of social and cultural humanities by improving annotation and transport research works during site visits. In the case of Hans Hollein, a 20th century Austrian architect and artist, who went beyond the canonical norms of field-works, his travel behavior consisted of a more eccentric, almost futuristic attitude and look towards innovation and creativity. In 1969, Hollein created a mobile office as an experimentation, projecting a survey office-capsule that is portable, not to mention its practicality in function and assembly as it can be easily folded and carried (as seen in Figure 2). For him, exploring space is that of making it as

practical and comfortable as possible. His idea of a field diary thus is to cooperate instant annotation and registration of what he observes from his landscape interpretation, overlooking through his transparent office, as well as facilitating this space to operate as an actual office. Despite having worked during the same period of time, most likely Orlando Ribeiro was not aware of Hollein's mobile office. Thus, we can only speculate how Ribeiro would have developed this mobile office in practice to adapt it to his missions in Africa, and conceivably producing a very different and detailed type of work.

## Bibliography

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