

Fina Miralles' *Relacions*: Kinesthetic Knowledge and Corporeal Agency

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Abstract

Fina Miralles' *Relacions*¹: Kinesthetic Knowledge and Corporeal Agency

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By looking at corporeal agency, kinesthesia, and embodiment from a feminist perspective, this dissertation investigates the corporeal emancipatory strategies employed by the Catalanian artist Fina Miralles. It focuses specifically on her series of works from 1972-76, including *Sensitiveland*, *Natura Morta*, *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics*, *Translacions*, *Relacions* and *Petjades*. It argues that producing corporeal sensorial knowledge generated from her experience and movement is a transgressive and emancipatory act (even if only temporarily) in the context of the acute restrictions on body politics during the Franco dictatorship (1935-1975). This dissertation argues that Fina Miralles' performances explore new corporeal experiences and existences in order to inhabit bodies in new and possibly empowering ways. Her artwork helps to cause a momentary rupture in the chauvinist socialization of the Francoist system that reinforced women's disembodiment, or their inhabiting objectified bodies. The dissertation then turns to the expressive capacity of the body and its possibilities as a rich source of knowledge (within the body and in the body's relation with the world) in feminist liberatory processes. Drawing from my research experience developed in and through the fieldwork and archival stages, the dissertation proposes ways of "doing" research based on "embodied methodologies" (Spatz, 2017), "research-creation" (Chapman and Sawchuck, 2012), "practice as research" (Barrett, 2014), "kinesthetic empathy" (Sklar, 1994; Reynolds & Reason, 2012), and proceeding from a situated feminist approach (Haraway, 1988).

¹ *Relacions* refer to the series of performances, and also to the whole aspect of relating (to herself and to her surroundings) that constitutes her oeuvre.

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This dissertation is dedicated to all the bodies that under restrictive politics, in the private and/or public arena, survive (or not) the different forms of abusive power and have had (albeit momentarily or precariously) the possibility to experience some kind of feminist liberation within the body.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	viii
Preface.....	xvii
Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Rationale.....	1
Chapter 2: Socio-Political Context: Feminism and Art in Spain.....	28
2.1. Being a Woman in the Time of Francoism.....	28
2.2. The Feminist Movement in Spain in the 1970s.....	37
2.3. Feminist Approaches to Art.....	42
2.4. Concluding Thoughts.....	53
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework.....	55
3.1. Introduction.....	55
3.2. The Mind-body Dichotomy Tradition and Feminist Responses.....	58
3.3. Phenomenological Accounts of the Body and Feminist Interventions.....	61
3.4. Kinesthesia and Agency.....	63
3.5. Concluding Thoughts.....	68
Chapter 4: Methodology: Embodied Modes of Research.....	70
4.1. Embodied Methodologies: The Body as a Central Factor in Knowledge Production.....	72
4.2. Feminist Research and Practice as Research: On “Situated Knowledge” and “Experience”.....	78
4.3. Privileging Process: Writing as Performance.....	95
4.4. Kinesthetic Empathy and Haptic Experience.....	100
4.5. Archives and Codification.....	108
4.6. Interviews.....	119
4.7. Concluding Thoughts.....	127
Chapter 5: Catalanian Artistic Context in the 1970s.....	129
5.1. The Muted Body: Silence as a Space of Resistance.....	131
5.2. Sensorial Explorations.....	132

5.3. Mapping the Body.....140

5.4. Concluding Thoughts.....147

Chapter 6: *Translacions: A Bodily Exploratory Method for Developing Kinesthetic Awareness*.....149

6.1. Fina Miralles’ Body in Actions: *Dona-Arbre* [Woman Tree].....150

6.2. In Search for the Body: Sensorial Investigations and Body Scores162

6.3. The Hand: An Access to the Sensorial.....167

6.4. Concluding Thoughts.....181

Chapter 7: *Relacions del Cos. Elements Naturals: Kinesthetic Exercises and Feminist Embodied Knowledge*.....182

7.1. Covering the Body.....184

7.2. Uncovering the Body.....199

7.3. Leaving Tracks.....207

7.4. *Relacions* Displayed and Communicated: Life Performance and Exhibition.....211

7.5. Concluding Thoughts.....217

Chapter 8: *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes: Feminist Kinesthetic Knowledge, Movement and Intervention in Everyday Life*.....219

8.1. The Sensorial Knowledge Generated from Movement: Expanding the Body.....220

8.2. Breathing.....228

8.3. Everyday Actions: A Space for Self-Affection in the Private and Public Space as a Feminist Intervention.....234

8.4. Concluding Thoughts.....245

Chapter 9: *Concluding Thoughts*.....247

9.1. Kinesthetic Aspects of Bodily Experience: “I am alive, I am here, I am a subject”247

9.2. Limitations and Further Studies.....257

References.....260

Appendices: Certifications of Ethical Acceptability for Research Involving Human Subjects (2016-2018).....272

List of Figures

- Figure 1.** Black and white photograph documentation of *Paraules a l'Arbre* [Words to the Tree] (November, 1975) by Fina Miralles. Floresta, Barcelona. Archive: Museu d'Art de Sabadell (MAS).....1
- Figure 2.** Black and white photograph documentation of *Paraules al Arbre* [Words to the Tree] (November, 1975) by Fina Miralles (1975). Floresta, Barcelona. Archive: MAS.....3
- Figure 3.** Black and white photograph documentation of *Dona-Arbre [Woman-Tree] (1973)* Performance of the serie *Traslacions* [Movements] by Fina Miralles. Sant Llorenç del Munt. Barcelona. Archive: MAS.....18
- Figure 4.** Drawings (Author: Unknown) in “Guía de la Buena Esposa” [Good Wife Guide], by Pilar Primo de Rivera. Retrieved in *Medina: Una revista para la mujer* [Medina: A magazine for the woman] (1953).....35
- Figure 5.** Detail of drawing (Author: Unknown) in “Guía de la Buena Esposa” [Good Wife Guide] – “Escúchalo” [Listen to him] by Pilar Primo de Rivera. Retrieved in *Medina: Una revista para la mujer* [Medina: A magazine for the woman] (1953).....36
- Figure 6.** Fina Miralles in “*El Retorn.*” Photograph by Joan Casellas (2012). Archive: Arxiu Aire.....73
- Figure 7.** Documentation of *Duna* [Dune] (1973) from the serie *Traslacions* by Fina Miralles. Still, Super-8 Film (Author: Unknown). Archive MAS.....87
- Figure 8.** Documentation of *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Liberating Anails] (1973) from the serie *Traslacions* by Fina Miralles. Still, Super-8 Film (Author: Unknown). Archive: MAS.....87
- Figure 9.** *Niña con Alas* [Girl with Wings] (2012) (60 cm x 30cm) Photoetching by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....91
- Figure 10.** Detail of *Desplegando mis Alas I* [Unfolding my wings] (2012) (240 cm. x 50 cm). Mixed technique by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....91
- Figure 11.** *Violeta Esperanza* [Violet Hope] (2013), still video. Camera by Alexandra Rodes. Direction and performance by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....92

Figure 12. *Tripas de Corazón* [Guts of the Heart] (2015) still video, Camera by Alexandra Rodes. Direction and performance by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....93

Figure 13. *Tripas de Corazón* [Guts of the Heart] (2015) still video, Camera by Alexandra Rodes. Direction and performance by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....93

Figure 14. Mind-Maps in notebooks used during the research (2018). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....96

Figure 15. Some of the notebooks for mind-maps (2013-2018). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....97

Figure 16. Left: *El Retorn* [The Return] by Fina Miralles (2012). Right: Experience in the water: Fieldwork Summer 2016. Photographs by Joan Casellas. Archive: Arxiu Aire..103

Figure 17. *Una persona relacionant-se amb un arbre* [A person in relation with a tree] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....104

Figure 18. Experience in the tree: Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Photograph by Joan Casellas. Archive: Arxiu Aire.....105

Figure 19. Office at the *Institut d’Histoire de la Médecine et de la Santé Publique* at the Université de Lausanne (Summer 2017). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....105

Figure 20. Studio/Office in Montreal with printed photographs in the wall. Documentation of Fina Miralles’ performances (2018). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....106

Figure 21. Studio/Office in Montreal with printed photographs in the wall. Documentation of Fina Miralles’ performances and other artists (2018). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....106

Figure 22. Slides, videos, photographs, catalogues at *Museu d’Art de Sabadell* Archive. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....110

Figure 23. Notebooks and journals, *Museu d’Art de Sabadell* Archive. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....112

Figure 24. Fina Miralles image (2012) in the opening of her website. Photograph by Teresa Roig. Archive: Fina Miralles website.....115

Figure 25. *El rastro de la sirena* [The siren trail] (2014) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by unknown author. Archive: Fina Miralles website.....116

- Figure 26.** Interview with Fina Miralles (Summer 2016): Explaining the soles of her shoes at the video-performance “Petjades” (1976). Still video by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....120
- Figure 27.** A break between conversations/interviews: Fina Miralles doing “sudokus” and crosswords. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Still Video by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....122
- Figure 28.** Fina Miralles cooking in the kitchen of her apartment. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Still Video by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....122
- Figure 29.** Fina Miralles having the *esmorzar*. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Still Video by Ivó Vinuesa. Archive: Ivó Vinuesa and Celia Vara.....123
- Figure 30.** Interviews/conversations with Fina Miralles in *Cap de Creus*. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Still video by Ivó Vinuesa. Archive: Ivó Vinuesa and Celia Vara.....127
- Figure 31.** *Experiències subsensorials*, Actions by Antoni Muntadas (1971-1973). Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.....136
- Figure 32.** *Accions Tàctils* [Tactile Actions] by Lluís Utrilla (1972). Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.....137
- Figure 33.** *Accions Tàctils* [Tactile Actions] by Lluís Utrilla (1972). Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.....138
- Figure 34.** Work in Progress: Acció am aigüa [Action with water] and Work in Progress: Acció Aire-Aigüa i Acció Aire-Terra [Action Air-Water and Action Air-Earth] (1972) by Francisco Abad. Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.....139
- Figure 35.** *Accions. Treball sobre els Quatre Elements: Terra* [Actions. Work about the forth elements: Earth] (1972) by Francisco Abad. Source: Pilar Parcerisas.....139
- Figure 36.** *Contar i numerar les pigues d’una part del braç per part dels assistents* [Counting and numbering the freckles from one part of the arm by the public] (1973) by Francesc Abad. Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.....141
- Figure 37.** *Intimo y Personal* [Intimate and Personal] (1977) by Esther Ferrer. Retrieved from: <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/coleccion/obra/intimo-personal-partitura>.....142
- Figure 38.** *Relation Between the Position of a Particular Body and Gravity* (1973) by Angels Ribé. Retrieved from: <https://www.angelsribe.com/en/work>.....143
- Figure 39.** *Herba* [Grass] (1973) by Olga L. Pijoan. Archive: Pilar Parcerisas.....145
- Figure 40.** *Cuerpo Real/Cuerpo Proyectado* [Real Body/Projected Body] by Olga L. Pijoan (1973). Archive: Pilar Parcerisas.....146

- Figure 41.** Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Dona-Arbre* [Woman-Tree] (photograph 1) (Sant Llorenç del Munt, Barcelona, Novembre 1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....151
- Figure 42.** Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Dona-Arbre* [Woman-Tree] (photograph 2) (Sant Llorenç del Munt, Barcelona, Novembre 1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....152
- Figure 43.** Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Dona-Arbre* [Woman-Tree] (photograph 3) (Sant Llorenç del Munt, Barcelona, Novembre 1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....152
- Figure 44.** *Sensitiveland Bulzz* (1972), Mixed technique by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....164
- Figure 45.** *Natura Morta* [Still life] (1973), Installation by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....165
- Figure 46.** Extract of *Llibre de Treball I* [Work notebook] (1973-1976, p.7) by Fina Miralles Ref.MAS-411. Archive: MAS.....167
- Figure 47.** *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* [Atmospherical Phenomena] (1973) still super-8 film by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....168
- Figure 48.** *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* [Atmospherical Phenomena] (1973) still super-8 film by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....169
- Figure 49.** Fina Miralles working-playing with materials from nature (1970s). Author: Unknown. Archive: MAS.....172
- Figure 50.** Black and white photograph documentation of *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Liberating Snails] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....174
- Figure 51.** Black and white photograph documentation of *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Liberating Snails] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....174
- Figure 52.** Color photographs documentation of the action process and black and white photograph documentation of *Duna* [Dune] (1973). Detail of exhibition *Translacions* (1974). Archive: MAS.....175
- Figure 53.** Black and white photograph documentation of *Duna* [Dune] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....176
- Figure 54.** Color photograph documentation of the performance process. *Duna* [Dune] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....177
- Figure 55.** Color photograph documentation of the performance process. *Duna* [Dune] (1973) by Fina Miralles (1973). Archive: MAS.....177

Figure 56. Catalogue of the exhibition <i>Fina Miralles. De les Idees a la Vida</i> (2001). Archive: MAS.....	185
Figure 57. Black and white photographs documentation of <i>El Cos Cobert de Palla</i> [Body covered with straw] (March, 1974) by Fina Miralles Archive: MAS.....	186
Figure 58. Black and white photograph documentation of <i>El Cos Cobert de Terra</i> [Body covered by soil] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....	188
Figure 59. Fina Miralles' notebook. <i>Llibre de Treball 1 (1973-1975)</i> , p. 36,37 (Ref. MAS-411). Archive: MAS.....	191
Figure 60. Black and white photograph documentation of <i>El Cos Cobert de Sorra</i> [Body covered with sand] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....	198
Figure 61. Black and white photograph documentation of <i>El Cos Cobert de Sorra</i> [Body covered with sand] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph on left hand side: the sand before the action. Right hand side: the trace of Fina Miralles' body after the action. Archive: MAS.....	198
Figure 62. Black and white photograph documentation of <i>El Cos Cobert de Pedres</i> [Body covered with stones] by Fina Miralles (April 1974). Archive: MAS.....	199
Figure 63. <i>Tripas de Corazón</i> [Guts of the Heart] (2015). Photograph by Alexandra Rodes. Performance by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.....	199
Figure 64. Black and white photograph documentation of the covering process in <i>El Cos Cobert de Pedres</i> [Body covered with stones] (April 1974) by Fina Miralles Archive: MAS.....	200
Figure 65. Black and white photograph documentation of the uncovering process in <i>El Cos Cobert de Pedres</i> [Body covered with stones] (April 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....	201
Figure 66. Still of video documentation of <i>Recordant Aquell Temp Tan Gris</i> [Remembering those grey times] (2015) by Fina Miralles. Retrieved from: http://www.mataroartcontemporani.cat/posts_comunicacio/fina-miralles-recordant-aquell-temps-tan-gris/	204
Figure 67. Still of video documentation of " <i>El Passat es el Present</i> " [The past is the present] (July 2, 2016, Cadaqués, Girona) by Fina Miralles. Still video by Ivo Vinuesa. Archive: Ivó Vinuesa and Celia Vara.....	205
Figure 68. Black and white photograph documentation with the trace of Fina Miralles' body after the action <i>El Cos Cobert de Sorra</i> [Body covered with sand] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....	207

- Figure 69.** Last black and white photograph documentation of the action with the shape of Fina Miralles' body under the soil in *El Cos Cobert amb Terra* [Body covered by soil] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....208
- Figure 70.** Super 8 film documentation (Author: Unknown) of *Duna* [Dune] (November 18, 1973). Still Super-8 film by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....209
- Figure 71.** Black and white photograph documentation of *Relació del cos humà amb l'herba i la impronta del cos sobre l'herba* [The body in relation with the grass and the trace of the body in the grass] (April, 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....210
- Figure 72.** Black and white photograph documentation of Exhibition *Relacions* (general view). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....211
- Figure 73.** Fina Miralles' notebook. *Llibre de treball 1*, p. 44. 1973-1975 (Ref. MAS-411). The Catalan text reads: "Covered with soil, except the head that is covered with plastic, container with water and fire" [my translation].....212
- Figure 74.** Fina Miralles' notebook. *Llibre de treball 1*, pág. 44. 1973-1975 (Ref. MAS-411). The Catalan text reads: "*Relacions*: All the things generate all the things: air, water, soil, fire" [my translation].....213
- Figure 75.** Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Relacions* [Relations]. *Relacions Del cos amb els Quatre Elements* [Relations. Relations of the Body with the Four Elements] (March 8th, 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....214
- Figure 76.** Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of the remainders of the action with the documentation of the action on top on the soil. *Relacions* [Relations]. *Relacions Del cos amb els Quatre Elements* [Relations. Relations of the Body with the Four Elements] (March 8th, 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....214
- Figure 77.** Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Detail of the documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Installation with the documentation of *Relacions del Cos. Elements Naturals* [Body Relations. Natural Elements] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....215
- Figure 78.** Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Detail of the documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Group of photographs on the right hand side of the wall of the documentation of *Relacions del Cos. Elements Naturals*. [Body Relations. Natural Elements] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....215
- Figure 79.** Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Installation with the documentation of *Relacions*.

- Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....217
- Figure 80.** Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Revolcant-se a la Sorra* [Rolling in the sand] (January, 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....221
- Figure 81.** Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa de Mar i la Sorra* [The Body in Relation with the Sea Water and the Sand] (March 1974, Premiá de Mar, Barcelona) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....222
- Figure 82.** Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar* [Body in Relation with Sea Water] (April 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....223
- Figure 83.** Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Mirar* [To look], *Mirar el Mar* [To look the Sea], and *Respirar l'Aire* [To Breath the Air] (January, 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.....229
- Figure 84.** Black and white photograph. Documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Detail of the installation of the series *Relacions: Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Three photographs in black and white. The center photograph is the documentation of *Relacions: Mirar el Mar* [Relations. To Look the Sea]. Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.....229
- Figure 85.** Black and white photograph. Documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. A general panorama of the series *Relacions del cos. Elements Naturals*. [Body Relations. Natural Elements] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.....230
- Figure 86.** Initial image in the website of Fina Miralles. Photograph in black and white of Fina Miralles by Teresa Roig (2012). Archive: website Fina Miralles.....234
- Figure 87.** Black and white photograph. Documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Detail of the installation of the series *Relacions: Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....235
- Figure 88.** Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Detail of the installation. On the top row: *Menjar* [To Eat]. On the bottom row: *Fumar* [To Smoke], *Hacer una Infusión* [To Make Tea], *Beber Vino* [To Drink Wine], *Beber Infusion* [To Drink Tea] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photographs by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....236

- Figure 89.** Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Detail of the installation. On the top from left to right: *Tocar Carn* [To Touch Meat], *Tocar Roba* [To Touch Clothes], *Tocar Fusta i pedra* [To Touch Wood and Stone], *Rentar-se les Mans* [To Clean Hands], *Rentar-se la Cara* [To clean Face], *Rentar-se les Dents* [To Clean Teeth], *Mirar el Sol* [To Look at the Sun]. On the bottom from left to right: *Parlar* [To Talk], *Caminar* [To Walk], *Tocar la Gabia de l'Ocell* [To Touch the Cage of the Bird], *Tocar Terra* [To Touch Ground], *Tocar Pedra* [To Touch Stone], *Tocar Herba* [To Touch Grass] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photographs by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....237
- Figure 90.** Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes Menjar* [To Eat], and *Beure Vi* [Drinking Wine] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photographs by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....237
- Figure 91.** Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes: Rentar-se les Mans* [To Clean Hands], *Rentar-se la Cara* [To Clean Face] and *Rentar-se els Dents* [To Clean Teeth] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....239
- Figure 92.** Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes Tocar Roba* [To touch clothes] and *Tocar Fusta* [To touch wood](1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....239
- Figure 93.** Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes Respirar L'Aire* [To Breathe Air] and *Mirar la Llum del Sol* [To Look at the Light of the Sun] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....241
- Figure 94.** Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes. Tocar l'herba* [Touching the grass], *Tocar pedra* [Touching the stone], *Tocar terra* [Touching the earth] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....242
- Figure 95.** Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes Mirar* [To Look], *Parlar* [To Talk] and *Caminar* [To Walk] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....243
- Figure 96.** Interview with Fina Miralles: Explaining the soles of her shoes in *Petjades* [Footprints](1976). Still video by Celia Vara (Summer 2016). Archive: Celia Vara.....250
- Figure 97.** Shoes used in *Petjades* [Footprints] with foam attached to the soles with the name of Fina in one sole and Miralles in the other (1976) by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.....250
- Figure 98.** Two video stills. Super-8 film documentation (Author: Unknown) of *Petjades* [Footprints] (1976) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.....251

Figure 99. Fina Miralles touches the ground carefully to print her name on it. Documentation in black and white photograph of *Petjades* [Footprints] (1976) by Fina Miralles (1976). Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....253

Figure 100. Fina Miralles inscribed her name on the ground in the streets of Barcelona. Documentation in black and white photograph of *Petjades* [Footprints] (1976) by Fina Miralles (1976). Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.....255

Preface

As a psychotherapist working with gender violence since 1998, I have experienced the importance of empathy and corporeality in the process of recuperation; as a visual artist, I am aware of the importance of the shifts between media (i.e. paper to body) in a process of embodying transformation through art; as a practitioner for many years of swimming, iyengar yoga, aikido and, more recently, feldenkrais, qi gong, and 5 Rhythms dance, I recognize the possibilities in body work for self-knowledge and unending identity building.

During my career and master's research about body art practices in the late years of Francoism, my reflections were about the centrality of the body as the space where the restrictions of body politics are practiced and also as a space for thought, reflection and emancipation. In this dissertation I reflect on these issues, especially on the possibilities for emancipation using an embodied methodology (kinesthetic empathy) from a feminist situated knowledge, and based on the possibility to be affected while sharing ideas, methods, knowledge and emotions during the research process of Fina Miralles' works between 1972 and 1976.

La meva obra no és meva: es un art vivencial per a tothom. El conjunt de la meva obra es una llavor que vull que s'escampi, que sigui una motivació per als altres per fer el mateig viatge interior que vaig fer jo.

[My work is not mine: it is an experience-based art. My oeuvre as a whole is a seed that I want to spread, which is a motivation for others to do the same inner journey that I did.]

Fina Miralles
(personal communication, 2018)

Chapter 1. Introduction and Research Rationale

If anything was learned in the Franco regime, it was to invent strategies to say what could not be said [. . .] these other ways of saying become spaces of resistance against the power of the other [...] the body, through materiality and gesture, becomes a language.
(Maite Garbayo, 2015, p. 19)

On November 20, 1975, Francisco Franco¹—who had spent a few months in a hospital where his body was kept alive by machines—passed away. In the same month, Fina Miralles performed a piece with a neglected mulberry tree (Figure 1) that had caught her attention on the streets of Sabadell (Barcelona, Catalonia). The tree, growing beside an apparently derelict house, had no leaves. Its barren form was reminiscent of the bodies mutilated (in both real and figurative senses) by the dictatorship.



Figure 1.² Black and white photograph documentation of *Paraules a l'Arbre* [Words to the Tree]³ (November, 1975) by Fina Miralles. Floresta, Barcelona. Archive: Museu d'Art de Sabadell (MAS).⁴

¹ Francisco Franco (1892-1975) was a Spanish general who took control of Spain as a military dictator from 1939, after the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War, until his death in 1975. This period is called the Franco regime (Francoism).

² This image is part of the documentation of the action, yet Fina Miralles did not select it for the series *Paraules a l'Arbre*. Further, the image was not in the initial documentation that the archive MAS gave to me. I found it in the thesis of Marta Pol, entitled “Anàlisi de l’Obra Plàsticovisual i Poèticotextual de Fina Miralles: L’Arbre com a Réflex de la Seva Cosmologia” 2012 [Analysis of the Visual Plastic and Poetic Textual by Fina Miralles: The Tree as a Reflection of her Cosmology] and then later retrieved it from MAS.

³ *Paraules a l'Arbre* is from the subseries: *L'Arbre. L'Arbre i l'Home* [The Tree. The Tree and the Human Being], which belongs to a series of *foto-accions* [Photo-Actions] connected by the theme of “the tree.” The other two series are: *L'Arbre i les Materies Naturals* [The Tree and the Natural Matter] and *L'Arbre amb Personalitat Humana* [The Tree with Human Personality] (1975-1976). *Foto-accions* is the name that Fina Miralles gives to the performances. These performances took place in public urban and

Only a decade ago, on October 16, 2008, Franco was charged with crimes against humanity by the then magistrate-judge of the *Audiencia Nacional*, Baltasar Garzón. Franco was accused of crimes of illegal detention without due cause, in the context of crimes against humanity. Garzón counted more than 100 000 killings during and after the Spanish Civil War.⁵ On November 17 of the same year, the same court decided to absolve him of his responsibility because his death was certified⁶ (Victoria Burnett, 2008). During the dictatorship, political power took over bodies in public spaces. Power also controlled the space of the private sphere. Juan Albarrán-Diego describes that the privacy of individuals (in their home and their bodies) could be infringed anytime. The security forces could stop anyone, looking for some kind of information or simply as a means of repression. He argues that “the body (especially the body that dissents), as the last redoubt of the privacy and identity of the individual, will always be threatened by political violence and torture”. (2013, p. 304)

Fina Miralles’ action might then be fruitfully read as a form of wrestling with the brutal aftermath of the Franco regime. The first image of *Paraules al Arbre* reveals a hole in the trunk of the mulberry tree where a branch had probably fallen and cracked the bark (first image on the left, Figure 2). In the next image, Fina Miralles touches the roughness of the tree with her left hand, her face almost against the tree bark, while in her other hand she holds a stone (second image from the left, Figure 2). In this photo, Fina Miralles is whispering a promise to the tree: “Prenc el compromís de desenvolupar el meu pensament revolucionari fins a les meves últimes conseqüències” [I take the commitment to develop my revolutionary thinking to my ultimate

natural spaces as well as intimate spaces, and were displayed in a collective exhibition that encouraged a recuperation of Catalanian customs against Francoist suppression. The title of this exhibition was: *Valors Actuals del Costumari Català en les Artes Plàstiques* [Current Value of Catalan Traditions in the Arts] and it was created with Josep Domenech and Jordi Pablo (with artworks about the rituals of death–Domenech–and Catalanian traditions–Pablo). This was an itinerant exhibition that travelled only in Catalonia.

⁴ From now on, Museu d’Art de Sabadell will be named as MAS.

⁵ Franco also ordered the exhumation of nineteen unmarked mass graves, one of them believed to contain the remains of the poet Federico Garcia Lorca (Fuchs, 2008; Tremlett, 2008).

⁶ Garzón dropped the investigation against Franco and his allies because state prosecutors had questioned his jurisdictions over crimes against humanity that were committed 70 years before by people who were already dead. Those crimes were covered by the Spanish 1977 Amnesty Law that was promulgated two years after Franco’s death. This law permitted exiled people to return but guaranteed impunity to the people who participated in the crimes under the Civil War and Francoism. This law, still current, avoids the possibility of prosecuting Francoist human rights violations (Kadribasic Ackar, 2010; Paloma Aguilar, 2009).

consequences] (Fina Miralles, 1975, p. 33).⁷ She explains that these actions (and the others during 1970s) were done in an intimate manner, with no public audience (personal communication, Summer 2016). It is also important to note that when she performed these actions, nobody knew what she was whispering to the tree; her secret was not displayed in the later exhibition either.⁸ The whispered phrase is an intimate commitment to herself, a moment for Fina Miralles to listen to and communicate with her own body. The action is thus an introspective process, a conversation with herself, rather than a public display of resistance. In her whispered commitment, Fina Miralles' body is the witness and main access to the experience.



Figure 2. Black and white photograph documentation of *Paraules al Arbre* [Words to the Tree] (November, 1975) by Fina Miralles (1975). Floresta, Barcelona. Archive: MAS.

With the photographic documentation, Fina Miralles also establishes a pedagogical and somatic relation with the viewer, who cannot know what she whispers to the tree but can guess through an empathic observation what the gestures of the artist transmit in the documentation. In our conversations, she emphasizes that the photographs of the actions are like a film, where the different shots recount a story (personal communication, Summer 2016). This story is recounted through her corporeal gestures. She highlights that she conceives of her role as a *maestrita* [diminutive of teacher] for herself and others.

⁷ This quotation is from Fina Miralles' *Llibre de Treball I* [Work Notebook] (1972-1976), published in the catalogue of the exhibition *De les Idees a la Vida* [From Idea to Life], which was put on at MAS in 2001 after she donated to them all of her work in 2000. The MAS is now the owner of Fina Miralles' archive.

⁸ The thesis of Marta Pol (2012) is the first publication which makes a connection between this statement and the action *Paraules al Arbre*. In 2001, in the exhibition *De les Idees a la Vida* presented by the MAS, this sentence is used on the back cover of the of the catalogue, yet not associated with *Paraules al Arbre*. In a recent conversation (August 5, 2018) Fina Miralles says that these "words" were "to the tree" and "nobody had to know the words. It is not important that people know what I am telling to the tree." I understand from this observation that her action is meant to highlight the corporeal gesture more than the words whispered to the tree. This very aspect reinforces the corporeal aspect of this dissertation.

Fina Miralles completed the performance by placing the stone she held in the tree's crack (right hand side, Figure 2). Placed there, the stone resembles a heart, a form of giving life to the body/tree, which could represent the thousands of literal and symbolic bodies victim to the dictatorship. With this action, Fina Miralles suggests that perhaps some lives are still possible after the dictatorship, but these bodies (our bodies) must be reconstituted. This is the whispered promise to the "body/tree" and to herself.⁹

My fieldwork, in which I met and conversed with Fina Miralles, was undertaken during the summer of 2016. Since then I have been in contact with her through phone conversations. In a recent conversation with Fina Miralles, I asked again about the significance of the statement that she whispered to the tree, and she answered my question in the present tense as follows: "I do not do social revolution, yet I accept constant change; I do not want to stay in a comfortable situation" (Personal communication, June 26, 2018). With this, she explains her view of her artistic path as a way to live by being constantly open to movement and change, and that "her revolution" is to be committed to this statement with all her body. Fina Miralles' statement about "constant change" relates to her corporeal practices of sensorial perception, and her commitment to self-knowledge stated in our very first conversation. In pointing to her body, she noted: "It is inside here where you have to search" (personal communication, Summer 2016).

The general question that guided my research is *How were Fina Miralles' artistic corporeal dynamics emancipatory/liberatory in the last years of Francoism?* This question made me reflect on the following further questions: What might feminist political action look like when it is not overtly revolutionary? Nor even public? How does this kind of political action value the body particularly as a site for a kind of learning? And how does the environment (in its material and symbolic dimensions) provide a source for an embodied practice and for various forms of personal and social commitment? To reflect on these questions and to answer my main research questions in this dissertation, I give a brief definition of the terms from which I draw to read her work, terms which will be further explained in my theoretical framework in Chapter 3. I investigate how Fina Miralles presents methods for liberatory/emancipatory action for feminism

⁹ In 2005, I developed a similar action in my mother's hometown, in a family orchard by the river. I put a gemstone in a scratch of an apple tree. This was an intimate scene, not documented, where I communicated with myself through the action performed in relation with the tree and an environment related to my family origin. My own performative actions, during and before I begun this investigation, create a space of sensorial empathy with Fina Miralles' actions.

through her corporeal actions. These research questions are based on the feminist claim that performance actions have been liberatory/emancipatory for artists (Amelia Jones, 2000, 2006; Juan Vicente Aliaga, 2004). I turn to Fina Miralles specifically for the particular manner in which she uses the body for self-knowledge and to gather knowledge from the world, in a context of acutely repressive body politics under Francoism. Feminist theories of liberation have explored concepts of agency and embodiment; the human body is a means for agency, and the world around us animates and also restrains agency. Thus, human agency has a corporeal meaning (Lois McNay, 2000; Letitia Meynell, 2009; Sharon Krause, 2011). In this thesis, I understand that the human body can be understood as an agent that transforms in its relation with itself and with the world, inevitably transforming both the world and itself through its actions.

The forms of feminist liberation on which I focus emphasize the body as the main aspect of agency (McNay, 2000; Meynell, 2009; Diana Coole, 2005). Following feminist thinker Diana Tietjens Meyers, I define self-knowledge as an “open-ended process of reflection, reconsideration, revision, and refinement” (2004, p.33). In my reading of Fina Miralles, I argue that it is specifically through movement (and thus kinesthesia) that her body engages the world, both to gather knowledge about herself and the world, and to intervene in it. I understand kinesthesia as the proprioceptive sense of movement in our bodies. Dance and performance studies scholar, Carrie Noland, defines kinesthesia as “the sensory awareness of one’s movement” (2009, p. 3). I draw from her thinking to understand that “kinesthetic experience –the sensory awareness of one’s own movement- can indeed encourage experiment, modification, and, at times, rejection of the routine (2009, p.3). Thus, kinesthesia is the ground for processes of emancipation because it is key to accessing corporeal knowledge of the self and the world.

Drawing from Noland, I associate this sense with corporeal performance and agency, and see it as a necessary sense to cultivate agency. Generally, agency can be understood as the ability of individuals to perform an effect or have an impact on themselves and the world. To define corporeal agency, I follow Noland, who defines three terms for the concept: first, “embodiment” is the process through which behaviours and beliefs are acquired and considered as situated practices of embodied agents. Second, “agency” is the possibility to transform those behaviours and beliefs that can innovate manners of being as actions of resistance; the third definition is kinesthesia itself, defined above. According to Noland, “the existence of both [embodiment and agency] depends on the role of kinesthesia, without which the subject would not be able to

distinguish her own body from other bodies, would have no capacity for independent movement, and thus would be incapable of assuming agency at all” (2009, p. 9). Noland’s theory helps me to see kinesthesia as a key instrument for feminist forms of liberation because I see a feminist potential for kinesthesia as both theory and practice, and Fina Miralles’ work as exercises or instructions for kinesthetic knowledge. The body work of Fina Miralles gives me access to a particular feminist liberatory politics in which the body is a site of corporeal inscription and appearance. Fina Miralles’ practices are literal manifestations of bodily actions that I read as specifically feminist for the relation I establish between a feminism that focuses on corporeal processes and that begins in self-knowledge and the corporeal sense of kinesthesia as an access to embodiment and agency. In this sense, I understand that in a feminist intervention there is a development of practices that awaken bodily sensations, and that the use of kinesthesia –the sense of the body position and movement- for this corporeal awareness leads to a reconstitution of the body under the dictatorship. Beginning from the premise that processes of agency start with the corporeal, I can analyze Fina Miralles’ performances under politics of repression as possibilities for the body to perform somatic dynamics that can produce a strategy of bodily agency. This thesis explores the body as a constituent of subjectivity through the experience of the body itself, which I understand as a feminist intervention. I draw attention to the specific corporeal dynamics of emancipation/ liberation that occurred in the Spanish context, and are of utmost importance to understanding feminist politics from a global perspective.

Thus, under the dictatorship, Fina Miralles’ corporeal practices led her to reconstitute her body. Her experience with the body was the main access to her subjectivity. In her practices as far back as 1972 (before *Paraules al Arbre*), Fina Miralles’ developed exercises that were the site of bodily practices for thinking kinesthetic knowledge and feminist emancipation. She developed a process of kinesthetic awareness that implicated the body more and more. The gradual appearance of the body in her work became a feminist pedagogical strategy for herself and the viewer. To awaken bodily sensations in the context of Francoism can be seen as a model of feminist politics that begins in a somatic consciousness. Fina Miralles provides a method for developing corporeal agency under such conditions.

Before turning to the social context within which Fina Miralles’ work might be understood, I continue with a brief biography to situate her practice in the Spanish artistic context. In the next paragraphs, I address the trajectory of Fina Miralles in order to situate the

reader in the context of her current work and her work in the 1970s. This will help to understand the ties between her practice and the social context of Spain prior to and during the Franco regime.

When I asked about her artistic practice, Fina Miralles said: “It is not a profession, it is not a vocation, it is not a devotion, it is a way of living. It is a love story that transforms your self and society. It is an experiential art that has to do with your life and that of others” (personal communication, June 26th, 2018). Fina Miralles was born on September 27th, 1950 in Sabadell, Catalonia. Her complete name is “Fina Miralles Nobell,” with her first surname from her father and the second from her mother. In an interview during the 1980s, Fina Miralles, in a challenge to the paraphernalia around the surname of the artist announced, “from here and now I will be Fina.” She recently told me that sometimes she even signs as “Fina” because it is more “intimate” (personal communication, June 26, 2018). From a feminist perspective, I read this as a way to build her own subjectivity out of her family and social heritage. For this reason, I use “Fina Miralles” instead of simply “Miralles,” in order to acknowledge her wish to use her first name. She studied Fine Arts at the University of Barcelona from 1968 to 1972. She did not identify with the training she received at the university, not only its emphasis on pictorial style but also what this style implied in those times in Spain.¹⁰ About this period of time and later, she argues: “There is no piece of art. There is process. I do not want to be an artist. I do not want to transform elements. I just want to show what it is” (personal communication, 2018).

During the Catalan conceptual movement, the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, in the field of visual arts in Catalonia, presented new aesthetic explorations that have been framed under the category of “Catalonian conceptual art.” Fina Miralles had a prominent role creating performance pieces.¹¹ She was one of the first performers in the international avant-garde scene, along with

¹⁰ The pictorial style placed more importance on the result than the process of art making. The Franco regime of the time contributed to the proliferation of “isms” (i.e., the “informalism” of Antoni Tàpies, a prominent representative who had conflicted positions with the *Grup de Treball* [Group of Work], one of the main groups in Catalonia producing conceptual art with a Marxist and structuralist basis) and to movements “taking advantage of all the successes of Spanish artists, friends or enemies” (i.e., artists who were against the Franco regime, such as Picasso) (Jorge L. Marzo & Patricia Mayayo, 2015, p. 255). Fina Miralles’ work highlights an interest in the physical properties of the materials where the objective is “not offering a finished work (in the traditional sense). [She rejects] the aesthetic transformations of matter painting” (Alexandre Cirici, 1974, p. 1).

¹¹ At that moment in Spain, the term used was “actions” and Fina Miralles used “photo-actions.” I use “actions” and “performance” in this thesis, but it is important also to take into account that the

international and local colleagues.¹² She is one of the key artists who emerged in Catalonia during the last years of the Franco dictatorship. From 1973 to 1976, she had a wide production of performances classified under different labels. Despite this, her name is only briefly cited in studies on the emergence of conceptualism in Spain. Although there has recently been increasing attention to her work, there is a scarce presence of Fina Miralles' work in specialized publications and in national museums. She is referred to as a pioneer of Catalonian conceptual art by Pilar Parcerisas (1992; 2007) and discussed from a feminist perspective in works by Juan Vicente Aliaga (2013; 2015), Assumpta Bassas, (2001; 2007; 2008; 2011), Maia Creus (2007, 2018) and Maite Garbayo (2016). Her first retrospective exhibition was *De les Idees a la Vida* (2001) [From ideas to life] and had a catalogue.

Starting in the 1980s, she left performance to devote herself to painting, writing, and to exploring what she calls the “visible invisible,” focused especially on self-exploration. She refers to this as:

What is not seen does not mean that it does not exist: it means that it is not seen. For example, between two people when they look at each other, the gaze is not seen but it exists. The emotions are not seen but they exist. The spoken words are not seen but they exist. There are many things that are not seen and exist (personal communication, June 26, 2018)¹³

She left conceptual practice and what she calls the “professionalism”¹⁴ of her artistic career. In the 1980s, she travelled to South America and lived between France (in the winter) and Catalonia and Ibiza (in the summer). Bassas argues that Fina Miralles' “trips to South America and France opened her to the world and marked the route of an inner journey in which she discovered the enigma of feelings, both in her life and in her creation” (2011, p. 178). Since 1999, she has lived in Cadaqués (Girona, Catalonia) and continues “her daily dialogue with the land, the sea and the rhythms of nature” (Elena Febrero & Amanda Bassa, 2014, p. 1).

photographic documentation interested Fina Miralles in order to show movement. In one of our interviews she argues that the sequence of photographs may be read like a film (personal communication, 2016).

¹² Such as Yoko Ono (Japan), Gina Pane (France), Valie Export (Austria), Carolee Schneemann (USA), Ana Mendieta (USA/Cuba), Pola Weiss (Mexico), Lygia Clark (Brazil), Maria Teresa Hincapie (Colombia), Monica Mayer (Mexico), Angels Ribé (Catalonia), Olga L. Pijoan (Catalonia), Silvia Gubern (Catalonia), Eulalia (Catalonia), and Esther Ferrer (Spain).

¹³ I refer to this quote later in the dissertation and connect with the kinesthesia, something that exists but is not seen.

¹⁴ “Professionalism” here indicates a public artistic career.

In 2011, Fina Miralles resumed her work on performance and participated in groups from the Catalan area: *FEM festival*, *La Muga Caula* and *Corpologies*. This year, 2018, she won the *Premi Nacional de Cultura* (“Premis Nacionals de Cultura,” 2018), and the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) is planning a retrospective of her work for 2019.¹⁵ Fina Miralles’ most recent exhibition at the Museu d’Art de Sabadell (MAS) is the work associated with *Paraules Fèrtils 1972-2017* [Fertile Words] (2018), a four-volume publication of her writings and documentation of her work from 1972 to 2017 compiled by Creus.

I move now to a contextualization of Fina Miralles’ work in the sociocultural context of the 1970s and in relation to feminism and art. I should note from the outset that, although my reading of Fina Miralles’ work centres on its feminist potential, she doesn’t identify as a feminist. In the next paragraphs, I briefly discuss two aspects of this: first, the socio-cultural context of being a woman under Francoism, and second, how the feminist movement emerged in that context as something parallel to and separate from artistic manifestations. In Spain, therefore, there was a more tenuous relation between artistic practice and feminist politics than in North America (for instance).

Nacionalcatolicismo [National Catholicism] was a sign of the ideological identity of Francoism. Its most visible manifestation was the hegemony that the Catholic Church had in all aspects of public and private life. Gender roles were defined in terms of the values of *Nacionalcatolicismo*. The female ideal of *Nacionalcatolicismo* was that of the submissive woman, daughter, wife or mother, condemned to domesticity, relegated to the private sphere of the home and the family and to the tasks of care of others. Motherhood was glorified (Raquel Osborne, 2012). Franco delegated the ‘education’ of women to the Sección Femenina (SF) [Feminine Section].¹⁶ The SF was instituted with a powerful apparatus of bodily regulation and

¹⁵ MACBA has two copies of the documentation of Fina Miralles’ works *Dona Arbre* and *El Cos Cobert de Palla*. The rest of the archive was donated by Fina Miralles to the MAS. More information about the archive is elaborated in Chapter 4 on methodology.

¹⁶ The Sección Femenina (SF) was the female branch of the Spanish Falange party, and later Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (*FET de las JONS*) [Traditionalist Spanish Phalanx and of the Councils of the National Syndicalist Offensive]. The SF was constituted in Madrid in 1934 and operated for forty years. It was dissolved after Franco’s death. Pilar Primo de Rivera, sister of the founder of Falange, directed SF from its birth until its end. The SF adopted the figures of Isabel la Católica [Isabela I of Castile] and Santa Teresa de Jesús [Teresa of Ávila] as models of conduct and symbols of their action. At the time, the SF came to have almost monopolistic

repression of feminine identity in line with Falangist ideology. In response to this, the feminist movement in Spain in the 1970s began almost from scratch and with few references because the Franco dictatorship imposed a radical break in the genealogy of feminism. All of what women had managed to create as spaces of freedom during Second Republic (1931-1939) and during the time of the civil war (1936-1939) was swept aside by the regime. This re-awakening of the feminist movement in Spain happened between 1965 and 1975 (Carmen Navarrete, Maria Ruido & Fefa Vila, 2005, p. 161). The feminist movement in Spain understood emancipation as specifically linked to the body, and acted in a more somatic/practical manner (such as occupying the streets once the dictatorship was over) than a theoretical one. Feminist politics (in Spain and abroad) have understood the body as the site of liberation from restrictive control, yet less emphasis has been placed on the body as a *source* for liberation. This dissertation turns to the body as a specific source of knowledge, especially under the repressive body politics of Spain in the time of Francoism.

During the late years of the Franco regime (and in the transition to democracy), art became political work through the performativity of the body in forms and spaces where it was hitherto unknown or unprecedented.¹⁷ These actions—even though sometimes not analyzed from a feminist perspective—have an importance for feminist politics in a moment where the control of bodies was an essential tool of the dictatorship. According to art historian Bassas, the Catalanian context for the feminist movement and the emergent practices in contemporary art “were parallel worlds, unknown in their dynamics to each other, and each partly viewed the other with some reluctance” (2013, p. 28). This is one of the peculiarities of art and feminism in Spain, and one of

power to constitute the only female body that was allowed to exist in the Franco dictatorship (Osborne, 2012).

¹⁷ For instance, in the Catalanian art scene: *(S/T)* [Action in the Street] (1973) by Alicia Fingerhut, *Herba* [Grass] (1973) and *Projeccions de Fragments del Cos* [Projections of Fragments of the Body] (1973) by Olga L. Pijoan, *Voy a Hacer de Mi una Estrella* [I Am Going to Become a Star] (1975) and *En la Intimidad* [In the Intimacy] (1977) by Carlos Pazos; *Six Possibilitats of Occupying a Given Space* (1973) and *Can't Go Home* (1977) by Angels Ribé; *Íntimo y Personal* [Intimate and Personal] (1975-1977) by Esther Ferrer; *Equivalencias de Medidas de Distintas Partes del Cuerpo* [Equivalences of Measurements of Different Parts of the Body] (1973) by Jordi Benito, *Experiències Subsensorials* [Sub-sensory Experiences] (1971-1973) and *Concert Sensorial* (1973) [Sensorial Concert] by Antoni Muntadas, *Accions Tàctils* [Tactile Actions] (1972) by Lluís Utrilla, and *Contar i Numerar les Pigues d'una Part del Braç per Part dels Assistents* [Counting and Numbering the Freckles from One Part of the Arm by the Public] (1973) by Francisco Abad. Some of these pieces will be addressed in the chapter 5 (Catalonian Artistic Context in the 1970s)

the reasons to conclude that the possible affinity with the North American contexts is somewhat uncertain, first because most of the artists of the moment were not fully aware of their counterparts outside their borders, and second because the feminist movement in North America was very much bound to the art scene.

It must be noted that, as with other artists of her time, Fina Miralles refused the label “feminist.” In Spain, artists refused to be called feminist because, among other reasons, that would have valorized their gender identity over their identity as artists. The artists could belong to feminist groups (or not) but to avoid being stigmatized as feminist militants this was something that they kept separate from their artistic practices.

There is not much research done on these artistic body practices and their implication for politics, and feminist politics specifically. In “La Memoria Corta” [The Short Memory], art historian Aliaga explains the local situation that scholars (such as art historian Patricia Mayayo), artists (for example, Ruido and Navarrete) curators (such as Alicia Murría), and Aliaga himself have observed:

They found the lack of solid and structured historiography in Spain regarding artistic production and visual culture impregnated with feminist values and with a gender perspective since the end of the dictatorship. True, even today there is no capital reference study that can serve as a paradigmatic example, although without canonical pretensions, as a platform of use on which to build other opposing readings, other discrepant perspectives (2011, p. 205).

The same situation applies for work in the late years of Francoism. Except for the work *Cuerpos que aparecen: Performance en el tardofranquismo* by Garbayo (2016), which addresses the performance in the late years of Francoism. Jorge Luís Marzo and Mayayo explain:¹⁸ “the contributions of the feminist movement have tended to be ignored in the hegemonic narratives of the Spanish transition; neither can it be said that they have occupied a renowned place in the art stories of the period” (2015, p. 429). In 2011, the exhibition *Genealogías Feministas en el Arte español: 1960-2010* [Feminist Genealogies in Spanish Art: 1960-2010],¹⁹ curated by art

¹⁸ In the only art historical monograph in Spain that includes a feminist perspective: *Arte en España (1939-2015) Ideas, Prácticas, Políticas*.

¹⁹ This exhibition selected four works by Fina Miralles: *Translacions: Dona-Arbre* [Movements: Woman-Tree] (1973), *Relacions del Cos amb Elements Naturals: El Cos Cobert de Palla* [Relations Between the Body and Natural Elements: The Body Covered with Straw] (1975), *Petjades* [Footprints]

historians Mayayo and Aliaga, highlighted “how the legacy of feminism has been underestimated not only in the traditional historiography of Spanish art but also in many of the stories that are said to be more innovative” (2015, p. 429). Marzo and Mayayo use the example of Catalanian art historian, Parcerisas, who did not address the relations between the women’s movement and experimental practices in either the catalogue of her exhibition *Idees I Actituds. Entorn a l’Art Conceptual a Catalunya, 1964-1980* [Ideas and attitudes. About the Conceptual Art in Catalonia, 1964-1980], or her 2007 book *Conceptualismo(s) Poéticos, Políticos, Periféricos* [Conceptualism(s), Poetics, Politics, Peripheries]. In that same year, Aliaga curated “*La Batalla de los Géneros*” [The Battle of Genres], showing the work of Fina Miralles²⁰ and other artists of the 1970s together with well-known feminist artists in the same period in the United States, Europe and Latin America, thus “indirectly exposing a re-reading of the experimental avant-garde in Spain” (2015, p. 429). Documentation of some of Fina Miralles’ performances are included in the international project *Re-Act. Feminism: A Performance Archive*.²¹ I have curated and shown her Super-8 films at the Feminist Media Studio at Concordia University (Winter 2017) and at the Centro Cultural de España en Santo Domingo (CCESD) which is part of the net of cultural centers at Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional y Desarrollo (AECID) (Winter 2018). These have been pioneering exhibitions of her film productions²² in the international context.²³

(1976), *Standard* (1976) and *Enmascarats* [Masked] (1976). No exhibition with a feminist perspective has yet covered her work in the series of actions *Translacions* and *Relacions*, except the article “Fina Miralles: Nautra, Cultura I Cos Femení des del Gènere” in the catalogue of the only retrospective held at the MAS: *De les Idees a la Vida* (2001).

²⁰ *Petjades* (1976), *Standard* (1976) and *Enmascarats* (1976).

²¹ A growing archive and exhibition project on feminism and performance art that travelled through Europe from 2011 to 2013. This is the only international reference to the work of Fina Miralles.

²² Nor have these films been shown in Spain, neither from a feminist perspective. In the catalogue of *De les Idees a la Vida*, Agustí Hurtado Giner says that the film production by Fina Miralles has not had attention in the context of “Catalonian and Spanish experimental film” (2001, p. 54).

²³ Her name is absent from feminist global art histories. For instance, she is not included in *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and From the Feminine* (Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, 1996) by M.Catherine de Zegher, *Art and Feminism* (2001) by Helena Reckitt & Peggy Phelan, *WACK! Art and Feminist Revolution* (MOCA, Los Angeles, 2007) by Cornelia Butler, *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* by Norma Broude and Linda Nochlin (Brooklyn Museum of Art, 2007), *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang: 45 Years of Art and Feminism* (Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao, 2007) by Xabier Arakistain, *Elles@Pompidou* by Camille Morineau (Centre Pompidou, 2009) or *Rebelle: Art & Feminism 1969-2009* by Mirjan Westem (Museum voor Moderne Kunst, 2009).

After *Paraules al Arbre*, Fina Miralles developed a group of actions that have attracted more attention by researchers who have observed a feminist component in her work. In the Spanish literature about feminism and art, there are references to pieces by Fina Miralles, particularly those works that had a clear activist purpose against abuses of power that also deconstructed the female role under Francoism: *Petjades* [Traces] (1976), *Standard* (1976), *Enmascarats* [Masked] (1976), *Triangle, Simbologia de Poder i Mort* [Triangle, Symbols of Power and Death] (1976) and *Matanzas* [Slaughter] (1976) (Aliaga, 2013, 2015; Bassas, 2001, 2007, 2011; Garbayo, 2016; Parcerisas, 1992, 2007). Marta Pol labelled this work as “visual work with sociological characteristics” (2012, p. 44). According to Garbayo, “some concrete interventions that directly appealed to power and repression exercised over subjects, such as Fina Miralles’ performance *Standard* (1976), have become paradigms of feminist political art of the time” (2012, p. 108).

There have been attempts to understand Fina Miralles’ work through a feminist lens, yet these have been frequently focused on her most explicitly political work. The feminist tenor of Fina Miralles’ oeuvre as a whole has been, I argue, underestimated. In this dissertation, I understand the feminist potential of her performance work as a group of “beginnings”—starting from the initial moments of her art production in 1972—in order to resist a narrow reading of “feminist” vs. “non-feminist” artistic practice. The way I appreciate these early works—as pedagogical, preparatory for an awareness of her own body, and related to process—disrupts the often-linear view of an artist’s trajectory. In *Inside the Visible*, M. Catherine de Zegher quotes Edward Said:

Beginning is making or producing difference; but difference which is the result of combining the already-familiar with the fertile novelty of human work in language. Beginning is basically an activity which ultimately implies return and repetition rather than simple linear accomplishment; *beginning and beginning-again* are historical whereas origins are divine; a beginning not only creates but is its own method because it has intention. (1996, p. 23)

My argument in analysing Fina Miralles’ work is developed from this notion of “beginning” that associates ideas and concepts that are present in the artworks in a kind of

*spiral*²⁴ story rather than a linear trajectory. I see this return and repetition in the trajectory of Fina Miralles, as a spiral form. There is in Fina Miralles' work an iteration of corporeal strategies in different moments of her trajectory that lead to a gradual appearance of the body (for Fina Miralles awareness and her appearance in the public space), which pass in a spiral form through the same points with a different consciousness, with the awareness of a corporeal strategy that is repeated, and is another beginning/opportunity. As in the personal growth that happens in therapeutic processes,²⁵ Fina Miralles' oeuvre suggests numerous beginnings and repetitions that explore in-depth the embodied experience of self-knowledge. Fina Miralles' specificity lies in the particular feminist politics that her work with the body addresses, one that, as I explained above, recognizes the body as the main access to knowledge and agency. This search for and within the body as an access to subjectivity is something present from the beginning of her career. On the one hand, she creates a space for bodily appearance (which seems to process the traumas of the repressive regime affectively); on the other, her practices awaken bodily sensations in the context of intense repression and offer a model for a feminist politics that turns to the body as the main source of knowledge and emancipation.

Before *Paraules al Arbre*, Fina Miralles created a group of actions that are particularly revealing for the way in which she approaches working with the body in the specific context of the late years of Francoism. In this thesis, I focus on selected works within this group that have barely been analyzed from a feminist perspective,²⁶ and in which I have observed a specific process of reconstituting the body. The use of the body is a central issue at the intersection of artistic practices and feminist theories. Fina Miralles' proposals for an embodied action acquire full meaning as sensorial experiences that guide her work. I argue that such a use of embodied knowledge is potentially liberatory in the social context of the Franco dictatorship, and more broadly. I understand liberation in this context as the appearance of a feminine body in different contexts than those imposed by the dictatorship, and I read her work as a feminist intervention

²⁴ I use the word of spiral as a concept to give a movement image to that "beginning and beginning-again" in an artist's trajectory. The spiral moves away from a toward one point sometimes passing through the same spot, yet in different positions.

²⁵ My training as a psychologist (since 1998) with women victims of gender violence has shaped the approach I use in this research. I have used my skills in interviewing, listening, observation and empathy as modes of doing art historical research and analysis of body performance.

²⁶ Except for Assumpta Bassas (2001), Maia Creus (2007, 2018) and Maite Garbayo (2016) – each one from different feminist perspectives.

focused on a sensorial exploration that creates a recuperation of the body and subjectivity under repression. I am interested in the way Fina Miralles' representation of the body and experience situates the somatic as the main site for the liberatory work associated with the feminist slogan "the personal is political."²⁷ Drawing from Noland, I understand that agentic corporeal processes through kinesthesia creates sites for transformation and liberation. If this intimate and personal search for and within the body can be understood as potentially transformative, then this can be considered political feminist intervention.

The actions by Fina Miralles between 1972 and 1976 that will be analyzed in this thesis include *Sensitiveland* (1972); *Natura Morta* [Still Life] (1972); *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* [Atmospheric Phenomena] (1973); *Translacions* [Movements] (1974);²⁸ *Relacions* [Relations] (1975)²⁹, and *Petjades* (1976). The first four works, frequently classified as conceptual art (Alexandre Cirici,³⁰ 1975; Parcerisas, 2007), were experiences of sensing and engaging the world around herself through kinesthesia. They consist of preparatory exercises on which she builds her performative actions in the later series. I argue that Fina Miralles' experience of her bodily awareness through corporeal dynamics is the main access to her subjectivity, and begins before she clearly places her body in her performative actions (which begins with the last action of *Translacions: Dona-Arbre* in 1973). I turn to the connection between *Translacions* (the previous works where Fina Miralles uses her body to move elements) and *Relacions* (where she actually relates her body to natural elements) for the particular way in which she builds a practice of bodily knowing and—through this—performs actions which are more overtly political and

²⁷ This feminist statement is inspired by *Sexual Politics* (1970) by Kate Millet. She analyzes the power relations that structure family and sexuality and demonstrates that issues that have been understood as private can be considered political.

²⁸ The series *Translacions* consists of three actions: *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Letting Snails Free] (1973), *Flotació d'Herba en el Mar*, [Flotation of Grass in the Sea] (1973); *Duna* [Dune] (1973), and *Dona-Arbre* [Woman-Tree] (1973).

²⁹ *Translacions* and *Relacions* were exhibited in *Sala 3*, an art gallery in Sabadell that between 1972 and 1979 was very active in programming important exhibitions of Catalan artists of the time. Art historian Maia Creus has published research about the exhibitions and activities of this gallery (*Sala 3 1972-1979. En la Ruta de l'Art Alternatiu a Catalunya* [English translation]). More information can be found here: https://elpais.com/diario/2007/10/25/quaderncat/1193273126_850215.html

³⁰ Alexandre Cirici (1914-1983) was a Catalan critic who followed the development of conceptual art in Catalonia. He wrote a few articles about Fina Miralles in the art journal *Serra d'Or*. He was part of the few critics that, during the dictatorship of Franco, promoted the renewal of criticism, essay and artistic historiography in the Catalan and Spanish areas.

liberatory. My interest in this process is to understand the liberatory aspects of these works that might propose feminist methods and pedagogy for emancipation.

In the next paragraphs, I wish to situate Fina Miralles' work within the different artistic movements of her time, and to understand the manner in which her work has been taken up within (largely Spanish) art history. These movements are principally conceptual art, land art, and feminist art.

Conceptual art in Catalonia is usually understood as marked by two different groups: the more political *Grup de Treball* [Work Group]³¹ and artists from the exhibition *Qué fer?* [What to do?].³² According to Parcerisas:

Things were not so simple. The Catalan conceptual was not homogeneous, on the contrary; and, apart from the *Grup de Treball*, there were no more collectives. What is certain is that the textual radicality of the *Grup de Treball* made other artists take different positions, and the exhibition *Qué Fer?* is a manifestation of that. *Que Fer?* put into *question textual and/or verbal conceptualism* and a more *material conceptual art* was claimed without renouncing the ideological component (2007, p. 440) [my translation, emphasis added].

Parcerisas also labels the work of Fina Miralles in relation to “the poetics of nature,” thus in opposition to the political work of *Grup de Treball* (2001, p. 47). Some accounts of conceptualism in Spain understand only the practice of the *Grup de Treball* as politicized, and not other proposals that emphasize the presence of the body and dislocate hegemonic models of representation.³³ In a conversation between Garbayo and Francesc Torres, one of the members of *Grup de Treball*, Torres' analysis of the Spanish panorama of the 1970s brings interesting reflections: "It seemed that if you wanted to be a politically implicated person and you were an

³¹ The *Grup de Treball* was a movement of conceptual art in Catalonia that was politicized in an activist sense. Most of its members were related to the anti-Francoist militant left and understood art inserted in a process of production in materialistic terms. The group was active for approximately three years (1973-1975), writing 33 texts reflecting on artistic practices and their relationship with politics, and intermittently brought together a total of 20 people, of whom 5 were women: The artists Angels Ribé, Dorothée Selz, Alicia Fingerut and Maria Costa, and the researcher and art critic Imma Julián (Garbayo, 2016, p. 46)

³² *Qué fer?* was held in *Sala Vinçon* in June, 1973, and its participants (without pretending to form any group) were Ferrán García Sevilla, Fina Miralles, Jordi Pablo, Carlos Pazos, Olga L. Pijoan and Lluís Utrilla, pioneers of conceptual art. Fina Miralles was also the coordinator of this exhibition room in 1974.

³³ Such as Fina Miralles, Àngels Ribé, Olga L. Pijoan, Jordi Pablo, Lluís Utrilla, and Francesc Torres, some of them part of the collective exhibition *Qué fer?*.

artist, you had no choice but to be literal, and this seemed to me the last imposition of Francoism” (Torres as cited in Garbayo, 2014, p. 107). In this sense, the work of the artists from *Que Fer?* opened another line of work.

In *El Arte Conceptual en Cataluña I* (1975), Cirici describes the artistic scene in Catalonia and defines conceptual art as “those manifestations of visual or *sensory practice* that have replaced the traditional artistic system of manufacturing tangible and durable objects by a system as purely *communicative* as possible” (1975, p. 22) [my translation, emphasis added]. He argues that there was an “exploration of the *subsenses*” in 1972, the same year that the “sociological” dimension was more present in art, and that in 1973 there were many collective manifestations. According to Cirici, this led to an increase in theoretical proposals that, during 1974 and 1975, “seemed to corner sensory practice” (1975, p. 22). The analysis of this sensorial practice more frequently centered on “sociological” and more clearly political artwork, and has not been studied from a feminist perspective. It is key for this research to clarify that the concept “subsenses”³⁴ refers not to the commonly understood five senses (hearing, touch, taste, smell, vision), but to other modes of apprehending sensation such as kinesthesia,³⁵ one of the main aspects through which I explore Fina Miralles’ performance as a feminist intervention.

In “Feeling the Body,” Albarrán-Diego highlights artists’ works that propose “tactile experiences.”³⁶ He mentions Antoni Muntadas, Eva Lootz, Antoni Llena, Jordi Benito, Àngels Ribé and Juan Hidalgo. He also mentions *Relacions. Accions Quotidians* [Relacions. Quotidian Actions] (1975) by Fina Miralles, yet he does not mention the other part of the series, *Relacions del Cos amb Elements Naturals* [Relations of the body with natural elements] (1975) and the previous works that I include in this thesis. For Albarrán

all these works show an interest in *recuperating the control of the body* using it in turn as a tool for knowledge. [These works] enhance the sensorial capabilities of the body–touch, and not just sight—at a time when it was annulled, atrophied, in a patriarchal, ultraconservative, national-catholic society. And, at the same time, *they claim the body as its own, assume its control*, to wrest it away from a dictatorial state that, through laws,

³⁴ Catalanian artist Antoni Muntadas also uses this word for his work *Experiències Subsensorials* [Subsensorial Experiences] (1971-1973). However, “subsenses” does not exist in the dictionary (*Diccionari de la Llengua Catalana, Real Academia de la Lengua Española*, 2018).

³⁵ And other senses such as proprioception, synaesthesia, interoception, equilibrium, etc.

³⁶ These works will be explained in Chapter 4.

legal gaps and various coercive mechanisms, had seized the body of its subjects. (2013, p. 307) [emphasis added]

Fina Miralles' work between 1972 and 1975, analyzed in this thesis, does not fit into the neat oppositions present in the art history of Catalonia. Due to this division, many works were not seen as political, and the feminist potential of Fina Miralles' work was lost. My research seeks to undo the distinction between "political" and "apolitical" conceptual art by understanding the impact of the performative actions through a research-creation embodied approach that includes "kinesthetic empathy,"³⁷ and by understanding the gendered context within which these actions were performed. Also, I pay special attention to the development of an introspective process and a relation to the world through kinesthesia as a feminist intervention. Fina Miralles' work is a corporeal challenge regarding women's body politics at the time. Far from semiotic or discursive proposals, Fina Miralles' work shows rather a lived body. In this thesis, I explain these somatic dynamics in relation to feminist politics of liberation and corporeal agency.

I previously discussed the relation between Fina Miralles' artistic practice and the Catalanian conceptual art at the time. I turn now to other movements with which her work was compared, namely land art and essentialist practices.



Figure 3. Black and white photographic documentation of *Dona-Arbre [Woman-Tree]* (1973) Performance of the series *Translacions [Movements]* by Fina Miralles. Sant Llorenç del Munt. Barcelona. Archive: MAS.

³⁷ Kinesthetic Empathy is defined by Deidre Sklar as "the capacity to participate with another's movement or another's sensory experience of movement" (1994, p.15). I develop this approach in chapter 4, Methodology.

In 1973, as part of the series *Translacions*, Fina Miralles performed *Dona-Arbre* [Woman Tree] (Figure 3). In this action, Fina Miralles introduced her body into the earth.³⁸ Referring to *Dona-Arbre*, Aliaga says that it “is an action within the spirit of land-art. . . . it is a proposition that connects with one of the lines drawn with feminism in those years: the search of integration (holistic) between creation and nature” (2013, p. 55). He also argues that *Dona-Arbre* is a “proposal straddling embodied and personalized land-art from a reflection on the link between women and nature” (2011, p. 209). Bassas notes that “there is a very mature moment in Fina Miralles’ conceptual body of work which started in 1972 when she began exploring the relationships between natural elements, her body, cultural representations and the uses of nature (1972-1974)” (2005, p. 6), and observes an association of the feminine body with nature (2001, p. 94).

Regarding the connections between her work and the artistic practice known as land art, Fina Miralles, in the publication *Naturaleses Naturals* (1975), specified that the intention and concept behind *Translacions* was different from the theoretical and visual approaches of artists aligned with the land art movement. According to Parcerisas, despite the fact that Fina Miralles’ artistic practice contained some formal similarities with artists such as Walter de María, Richard Long or Dennis Oppenheim, her conceptual approach was completely different (2007, p. 75). Fina Miralles argues that Land Art artists used nature as a support or artistic material with an aesthetic purpose;³⁹ however, she used natural materials as *data or objects* to study how natural and artificial things are made, that is to say, to speak of nature’s corporeal substance. In my opinion, this leads her to experience her own corporeal substance—her body and the space that it occupies—in intimate relation with the natural world. I also maintain that such a strategy informs the feminist potential of her practice for thinking of and with the body. The cultural framework where land art took place is very different from the restrictive situation of the dictatorial system in Spain. In this dictatorial system, to work with the environment was a way to have more freedom to express oneself and have access to an infinite landscape. Nature provided some

³⁸ The other part of this *Translacion* is a tree in a bed, which was shown as an installation in the exhibition with the photograph of her doing this action on the top of the bed.

³⁹ This is only one aspect of Land Art since there is a huge literature on Land Art, Earth Art, and Environmental Art, yet Fina Miralles comments are in relations with the dominant work of artists in the land of the period in the US. Later in the thesis, I mention the central connections between her practice and that of other female and feminist artists who work with nature such as Ana Mendieta.

elements to speak through the artists' bodies what they were living through in a repressive system, and a way to be outside the private realm of the artists' workshops.

Fina Miralles emphasizes the specificity of her projects and denies that they have anything to do with land art:

In my present *research*, the use of nature is not a substitute for the picture shaping the work of art; rather, the materials are taken as study elements and not as an aesthetic medium. In some cases, the material space has been used to make *experiences*, such as in *Translacions*, which are developed in nature as the space and context of natural materials, the basis of these *exercises*. (Fina Miralles, as cited in Parcerisas 2007, p. 80) [my translation, emphasis added]

When referring to the debate about Fina Miralles' works as land art, Garbayo argues that the main difference is a "question of scale." She affirms that the artist's body is the measure of the work and the important aspect in Fina Miralles' performance is "the immediacy of a presence:" "in *Translacions* . . . the *body*, although not present as a support, *is responsible for the transfer of matter from one place to another* (2016, p. 74) [my translation, emphasis added]. This brings me to my argument regarding the gradual appearance of Fina Miralles' body in her artwork. Here Garbayo refers to the body as being responsible for transferring the natural elements of the performance in *Translacions*. Yet, in her opinion, the first time that Fina Miralles actually uses her body is in the last piece of *Translacions* (*Dona-Arbre*).

Fina Miralles' goal is thus to use nature and elements as a way to "research," "experiment" and perform "exercises." In my view, she is interested in interacting with physical materials to reconstitute and make her body appear in the process. Her exercises are conscious bodily practices, a series of somatic dynamics where sensorial perception is key. As Fina Miralles states, the study of materials and elements is not an aesthetic medium. I argue that it is a way to gain access to (corporeal) experiences. These "exercises" displayed in a pedagogical form are feminist dynamics of corporeal awareness that, in my reading, give the artist and the viewer a unique and fundamental access to kinesthetic and corporeal agency.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ In the next chapter, I address feminist debates around embodiment and agency challenging Cartesian understanding of agency. Recent investigations propose that non-discursive bodily experiences are at play in agency processes suggesting "corporeal agentic capacities" (Coole, 2005, p. 138).

The association of the works in the *Translacions* series with essentialist positions has been an object of reflection between the main researchers of Fina Miralles' work. Art historian Maia Creus (2007) describes *Translacions* as follows:

Often, this work has been compared to the aesthetic sphere of land art, although it is necessary to put this work [Fina Miralles'] in relation with a particular cosmological view of the world and of the art that the artist will be exhibiting throughout her career with a work, *in and from nature*, in which *body and language become the elements of the mediation* (p. 132) [my translation, emphasis added].

Creus highlights the relation of the body with nature in Fina Miralles' work. Bassas (2001) affirms that Fina Miralles and other Catalanian artists were finding a “way to look for a transcendent sense of *feminine experience* in the world” (p. 93) [my translation, emphasis added]. Bassas' main interest is the exploration of the feminine body in relation with nature, and the “feminine experience in the world”. About the series *Relacions*, she argues:

It is a series of daily actions that have no expressive but linguistic intentions, that is, they separate the basic vocabulary that places the body in an intimate and essential relation to the sacred and secular languages of the same time. These are everyday actions that, without detaching themselves from their banality, propose a relation with ritual actions (washing one's hands, wetting one's feet on the seashore, soaking one's body with rainwater).⁴¹ (Bassas, 2013, pp. 229-230) [my translation]

Both researchers (Bassas and Creus) draw from a feminist politics of difference, and base their readings on an essential relation between women's bodies and nature. Feminisms of “difference” were initiated by Luce Irigaray, Annie Leclerc, and Hélène Cixous, and in Spain by Victoria Sendón de León, and the *Milan Library* and Philosophers of Diotima. These are the

⁴¹ In the same chapter, Bassas addresses the potential connection between Fina Miralles' current work in performance (she resumed creating performances in 2012) and the work of the 1970s: “A sphere of work that Fina Miralles is taking up in her recent appearances in the performance scene in Catalonia, to which she has returned through the hands of young artists and friends” (2013, p. 230). This is an interesting avenue of research that exceeds the scope of this thesis. However, as we will see in further chapters, the analysis of her contemporary actions has been useful for the building of my argument about her work between 1972 and 1975. Also, Francisco Salas, a curator who created an art piece with Fina Miralles titled *L'Unió dels Oceans* [The Union of the Oceans] (2013)—composed by three actions filmed on video—has highlighted this connection, saying: “Surprisingly, her new works show elements that demonstrate an evolution but also a connection with the pieces of the 1970s. The principles that govern her work are reactivated in this special project, showing again some of the elements that have characterized her particular approach to art and life” (2013).

main sources of the *Centro de Investigaciones Duoda* [English translation] in the University of Barcelona where both Bassas and Creus are currently members. In Spain in the 1970s, there were two main feminist approaches: *Feminismo de la igualdad* [Feminism of Equality] and *Feminismo de la diferencia* [Feminism of Difference]. The first one was focused on changes to laws and women's rights while the second one, according to Sendón de León (2000), made a more intimate path and created women consciousness groups. Through the analysis of Fina Miralles' works in the 1970s, I challenge both positions: Fina Miralles' oeuvre explored emancipatory corporeal dynamics far from both the necessary fight for women's rights and from an essentialist position that defines women through the lens of their essential "difference" (from men) and connects women with nature. Fina Miralles contributes to feminist politics by proposing the body as not only the site for liberation, but the source for building corporeal agency.

Garbayo, referring to the essentialism debate, argues:

While Assumpta Bassas has identified in *Dona Arbre* a link between the life-giving femininity and the figure of the tree, with both concepts inserted in the paradigm of nature, the importance of this piece in my view lies in the appearance for the first time of the artist's own body as an integral part of the work, with all that that entails. And although it is obviously a body that we identify as feminine, I do not believe that there is a direct and *a priori* association between the tree and a femininity that in any case has been redefined for a long time. (2016, p. 72) [my translation]

The debate between the potential essentialism or non-essentialism of Fina Miralles' work is ultimately about the role of gender in the performance. In my view, Fina Miralles' oeuvre has a non-essentialist quality because her work is not centered on feminine characteristics, nor does it propose a connection between the female body and nature. There is a female body, and this must be noticed in the analysis, yet this is not the main aspect. For instance, she sometimes says that some of her performances could have been done by a male body with the same meaning (personal communication, 2016).

This appearance of the body in fact happens through a sensorial exploration of her own body and the world. What makes her work non-essentialist is the focus on her appearance, in the sense of "appearing" rather than physical appearance as in looks, which is mainly an exploration of her subjectivity through bodily sensations such as kinesthesia as well as the form in which the body is displayed (analyzed in chapters 6, 7 and 8), which provide key aspects of self-knowledge

exploration, as the body is explained step by step like film shots and in a repetitive manner. I argue that this is a kind of pedagogical method of feminist emancipation.

Fina Miralles proposes experiences and explorations of corporeal agency through her body movement that can be understood as self-explorations of body awareness from the inside, as well as in relation with the world. Bassas recounts in an interview with Fina Miralles that during her research she finally understood that, in the 1970s, Fina Miralles was engaged in a “vital process,” referring to a search for the self and a personal process. I explain personal process as closely related with the somatic aspects of knowledge of the self that lead to corporeal agency. Fina Miralles’ movements are possibilities to create spaces of self-knowledge through awakening the body through the sensorial, which I understand as emancipatory corporeal dynamics.

In the following paragraphs I address briefly how I expand Garbayo’s reading of Fina Miralles’ work as corporeal agency. I then move finally in this introduction to tackle my research rationale, methodology and chapter outlines. In *Cuerpos que Aparecen. Performance y Feminismos en el Tardofranquismo* [Bodies that Appear. Performance and Feminisms in the Late Years of Francoism] (2016), Garbayo approaches Catalanian performance in the late years of Francoism. When talking about Fina Miralles’ *Relacions*, she explains that when the artist buries herself, it constitutes a process of disappearing and a “subtle” injury to herself. Also, Garbayo appreciates that in *Relacions, Accions Quotidians* there is “corporeal agency.” (2016, p. 218) Garbayo argues in her thesis that in

[In] *Relacions* the accent lies on granting *presence to the body*, on placing it as *a mediating element between the subject and the world*, through which *subjectivity is constituted*, [which] has never been analyzed in this sense or addressed, for example, from a gendered perspective. (2014, p. 108) [my translation, emphasis added]

While, like me, Garbayo offers a feminist analysis of these works in her book, her approach is based principally on the concepts of performativity and on a semiotic method. I focus my analysis instead on the corporeal relation with physical matter and what that supposes for feminist readings of embodiment and agency. In this line of thought, this thesis is committed to offering a reading from a gendered perspective not only with respect to *Relacions* but also the previous pieces with which I find the works in *Relacions* are in connection.

In this thesis, I argue that Fina Miralles’ experience of her body is the main access to her subjectivity, and that this happens even before the obvious presence of her body in the work

(beginning with *Dona-Arbre*) through corporeal dynamics where a bodily awareness is experienced. My interest in this process is to prove the liberatory aspect of these works and the connections between them that explain a process of awareness. As I have mentioned above, I consider that a feminist liberatory/emancipatory process in the context of this research happens through the creation of the body as a site of corporeal inscription and appearance, through sensorial practices that awaken bodily sensations, and that all these processes are practices of reconstitution of the body under the dictatorship. This is of utmost importance in the context of the late years of Francoism regarding agency, a process that I argue begins in perceptual experience. Although Garbayo defines the work of Fina Miralles in *Relacions, Accions Quotidians* as “corporeal agency,” (2016, p.218) she does not use this concept in her reading of the previous works of Fina Miralles. Garbayo explains that the artist trajectory “is developed through different stages in which everything appears as a direct consequence of the previous one” (2016, p.83) where the stages start in a reflection about “nature as representation, then the insertion of the corporeal and then the approach of the issue of the occupation of the private and public/social space” (2016, p.83) [my translation]. My main contribution in expanding her reading is to establish a connection between the first works of Fina Miralles, where I argue there is a sensorial exploration—and thus a presence of the corporeal—, her next works (*Translacions* and the other works in *Relacions*) and the more overtly political ones in the late 1970s. I do this through an exploration of kinesthetic empathy and through examination of Fina Miralles’ subjectivity and arguments. I also reveal this approach to art and life as something that has been present in the trajectory of her work as a whole.

Fina Miralles’ work reveals a corporeal process guided by sensations and movement. If these kinesthetic experiences, as Noland argues, can lead to corporeal processes of transformation, then it can be argued that they are strategies for feminist emancipation. This process starts with *Natura Morta* and continues through *Translacions* and *Relacions*. Drawing from Noland, I understand “kinesthetic sensations” as “a particular kind of affect belonging both to the body that precedes our subjectivity (narrowly construed) and the contingent, cumulative subjectivity our body allows us to build over time” (2009, p. 4). My research builds on what Garbayo names “corporeal agency,” yet I focus on somatic corporeal experiences as agentic processes and extend this reading to other pieces by Fina Miralles. This helps me to build a

concept of corporeal agency in which a body listens to itself from a kinesthetic process that is essential in developing corporeal agency.

In all of Fina Miralles' art pieces, nature and matter are protagonists along with the artist's body, which appears through different somatic strategies. I argue that there is an initiation of a perceptual exploration of the self and the body in her early work that is present in her work and life up until the present. Material practices are central to feminist politics in my reading of Fina Miralles' corporeal dynamics as feminist.

Fina Miralles is an important national figure and she must be understood within Spanish art history and feminist interventions. Looking at her work in relation to other local artists under the Franco dictatorship leads me to pay attention to aspects linked with the "robbed" bodies under these power systems and how sensorial experiences of the body, such as those proposed by Fina Miralles' performative actions, can lead to a reconstitution of the body and the development of agentic processes. Fina Miralles' works are, I argue, *scores of freedom*⁴² for the body, feminist emancipatory and pedagogical strategies against the control of the dictatorship. I analyze the works that inform the feminist emancipatory dynamics I have observed based on theories of kinesthesia, embodiment and agency.⁴³

The current feminist agenda in Spain revisits the debate on the idea that "the personal is political" in a new framework of precariousness and vulnerability, and it is for this reason that at the moment in Spain it is crucial to recover its feminist legacies. Since 2011, Spain has been living in a transitional stage in which the subject's place in the context of globalization is being questioned, and this makes us look at transitional moments where women artists tried to create new spaces of freedom and speech for subjects for whom new paths were opened. At this moment in Spain, it is key to reflect on how these spaces have been built, how "woman" as subject has been constructed and why it is important to return to this construction.

The examination of Fina Miralles' work particularly through its self-reflexive practice on the body will enrich our understandings of feminist liberation. This research employs a feminist method (which I will elaborate in more detail in chapter 4) to explore embodiment in performance art: research-creation, kinesthetic empathy and situated knowledge are key aspects

⁴² I explain my use of this term, inspired by Cirici in his article *Fina Miralles, l'Alternativa a l'Auntenticitat* [Fina Miralles, An Alternative to Authenticity] (1980) in Chapter 6.

⁴³ These terms will be explained in the following chapter.

of the “doing” of this investigation. The issue behind this investigation is the possibility of feminist emancipation through corporeal experiences. I analyze Fina Miralles’ work and performances from a feminist perspective, paying particular attention to those works in which the body is the main vehicle of knowledge.

With this investigation, I do not mean to supplement the Spanish art historical canon, nor argue for a more inclusive feminist canon. It is not a project that covers all the work of Fina Miralles. Instead, I focus specifically on the corporeal emancipatory strategies used by Fina Miralles. Drawing from my current research experience and my training as a psychologist, I contribute to ways of “doing” analysis of corporeal work, employing different strategies based on “embodied methodologies” (Spatz, 2017), research-creation (Chapman & Sawchuk, 2012), practice-as-research (Barrett, 2014) and “kinesthetic empathy” (Reynolds & Reason, 2012), proceeding from a situated feminist approach (Haraway, 1988). In this dissertation, I use my own documented performances, film-making, as well as re-enactments of Fina Miralles’ performances in the sites where they took place, alongside extensive archival work in Spain, and deep interviews with the artist during all the process of research and writing. This embodied methodology—which draws from both traditional and practice-led models of research—was developed through my fieldwork and in the process of writing this dissertation. I contextualize my archival, interview work, analysis and writing through what I consider a feminist art history where “empathy” is a mode of research. I show that what I excavated were not only the gestures and performances of Fina Miralles in the late years of Francoism, but also the roots of the history of Spain as my own country, while I also build my own voice through a corporeal/embodied process inspired by models of research-creation. In this research, I have developed a methodology of encounter for examining Fina Miralles’ work as an alternative to the critical distance of “the good eye” in art history. During this research process, I experienced encounters with the Fina Miralles of today, the Fina Miralles of 1972-6 and with myself, now and then, born in Spain in 1974 in the post-Franco context.

In this chapter, I have introduced the artist Fina Miralles, the sociocultural and artistic context of the 1970s in Catalonia, and the readings of her work that help to situate the approach in this thesis. In chapter 2, I explain the feminist movement, how it was to be a woman under Francoism, and the current situation regarding historiography on feminism and art in the context of Spain. In chapter 3, I tackle the theoretical framework through which I analyze Fina Miralles’

oeuvre. In chapter 4, I share the strategies that I have used to analyze and write about Fina Miralles' work in the context of the late years of Francoism. In chapter 5, I address the Catalan artistic scene and the corporeal strategies developed under restrictive body politics. In chapter 6, I analyze *Dona Arbre*, and the other *Translacions*, as well as Fina Miralles' previous work where a sensorial experience was initiated, consisting of exercises on which she constructs her later series. The dissertation then moves into chapter 7 to analyze the corporeal strategies (covering and uncovering the body, and leaving tracks) of Fina Miralles in the first part of *Relacions* that I connect to *Translacions* for the specific way in which she comprehends bodily knowing, and through this develops a more overly emancipatory practice. In chapter 8, I present the second part of *Relacions* where Fina Miralles' exercises are performed in the intimate arena of her home, and as she gradually moves into to the public space. Finally, I end (chapter 9) by giving some concluding thoughts through the analysis of her work *Petjades*, performed in the streets of Sabadell (Catalonia) during the transition from Francoism, and I present the main contributions of this dissertation, its limitations and some directions for further investigation.

Chapter 2. Socio-Political Context: Feminism and Art in Spain

2.1. Being a Woman in the Time of Francoism

If we want to articulate a feminist historical analysis of Francoism, it is crucial to have a conceptualization of corporeality. Leslie Adelson reminds us that “a story without bodies is unimaginable.” A historical conceptualization of the body will help us delineate historical continuities and ruptures. Women’s bodies are both ‘real’ physical organisms and receptacles of cultural conventions that historically have marked them under the banner of femininity.

(Aurora Morcillo, 2015, p. 11) [my translation]

Franco was a Spanish general who ruled over Spain as a military dictator from 1939, after the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), until his death in 1975. This period is called Francoism. The establishment of the Franco regime implemented the so-called National-Catholic system, based on an ideology that combines elements of Catholic conservatism with elements of the new political current that emerged in interwar Europe (fascism).

National Catholicism (*nacionalcatolicismo*) was a sign of the ideological identity of Francoism (1939-1975). Its most visible manifestation is the hegemony that the Catholic Church had in all aspects of public and even private life. Gender relations were defined in terms of the values of national Catholicism. The female ideal of *nacionalcatolicismo* was that of the submissive woman, daughter, wife or mother, condemned to domesticity, relegated to the private sphere of the home and the family, and to caretaking. In this new configuration of feminine identity, motherhood was glorified. This was a key piece of repression. Women were barred from access to the public sphere and, therefore, to the space of politics, which was considered a male space. If women were politically active, they were considered to be challenging their gender roles and their ascription to private space that was considered natural for Catholicism (Raquel Osborne, 2012).

According to Osborne (2012) Republican women, or those who followed republican ideologies, were considered to be transgressors of a supposed feminine essence or identity built by the Franco regime. They were demonized as the causes of the decline of Catholic morality. They were persecuted for expressing political opinions contrary to the Franco regime and for challenging the roles and spaces assigned by this regime. In this repressive system, violence against women included rape, purges with castor oil, hair shaving, re-education in closed shelters

(*preventorios* or *checas*) and other punishments, and was used to maintain their subordinate position.

Militant Catholicism thus conceived was ready not only to inspire the spiritual life of the country and to orient personal attitudes and behaviour, but also to take a position in all manifestations of public and social life. It had very defined characteristics:

[it was] conservative to the last, a firm defender of dogma and hierarchy, intransigent in the maintenance of social, familiar and traditional virtues, favorable to the formation of pious groupings that manifest their faith in the street loudly, in public acts and in favor of the concepts of authority and order as pillars of political action. On the contrary, it was proclaimed to be against liberalism, social revolution, freemasonry, modernism, freedom of customs, syndicalism, and feminism, while seriously doubting the virtues of participatory democracy, for which it was considered that Spaniards were not prepared. (Clotilde Navarro, 1993, p. 27) [my translation]

The national Catholic ideology established the basis of a corporeal model to which the citizens had to adapt. This was done through education, propaganda,⁴⁴ etc. There were two unique models: the masculine and the feminine, and everything that escaped this binary logic or threatened the totalization of sex/gender was persecuted by the law. Both gendered models served the interests of the homeland and were defined by contrast with each other. Education in the Franco era was based on the radical separation of boys and girls, not only in the school, but in different institutions and with different methods and purposes for each sex. In 1970, in the *Ley de Educación Básica* [Base Education Law], in which schooling became compulsory until the age of 14, a single curriculum for boys and girls was proposed. Outside the school, the Falange⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The symbolism of Francoism is the set of emblems used as an iconic reference to visually identify the Franco regime and the people and institutions that identified with it, and to mark the symbolic appropriation of emblematic places, many of them previously used as spaces of memory. It was used massively and following propaganda techniques to achieve an overwhelming presence in all public and private spheres: flags, shields, effigies, monuments, stamps, medals, uniforms and badges of all kinds (Osborne, 2012).

⁴⁵ Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista (JONS), or simply the Falange, was a Fascist and National Syndicalist political party founded in Spain by Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera in 1933. The Falange Española de las JONS ceased to exist as an independent entity when in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War, Franco combined it with the Carlists to form the similarly named Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (a more conservative than fascist party) which became the sole legal party in Spain until its dissolution in 1977 (Osborne, 2012).

separated men and women in the Frente de las Juventudes⁴⁶ and in the Sección Femenina,⁴⁷ respectively. In both organizations, body control and gender modelling were commonly exercised through various activities, among which *physical education* occupied a prime place (Luz Sanfeliu, 2012).

The model masculine body was ready for action and the defence of the regime. It was a young and robust body that had its model in the figure of Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera who passed away at 33 years of age. The Falangist ideology conceived of masculinity as the fundamental pillar of the family through men's dedication and work. Manhood was measured by force, rationality and emotional restraint, as opposed to feminine weakness and irrationality⁴⁸ (Sanfeliu, 2012).

Physical education was a disciplinary apparatus of enormous importance in the education of both sexes. Women were encouraged to focus on aesthetic issues in order to be desired by men and thus become producers of children. Men, on the other hand, were encouraged to develop physical fortitude and discipline. Studies have paid more attention to the construction of femininity during the Franco regime than to the models of masculinity. This is due in part to the discrimination suffered by women socially and legally during the dictatorship, in which their status did not differ too much from that of a minor. On the other hand, the rise of the feminist movement from the 1970s brought with it a deep questioning of the models of femininity, which over the years has given rise to numerous studies and publications (Sanfeliu, 2012).

The feminine position in the Francoist ideology could be defined as self-denial and self-sacrifice. It promoted a feminine subjectivity based on moral virtue and submission to the male. The feminine body had to be bent. Any desire for autonomy was removed. It was necessary to

⁴⁶ The Frente de las Juventudes was a section of the political party Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS created by the regime of Franco in 1940 for the framing and political indoctrination of the young Spaniards according to the principles of the Movimiento Nacional. The Frente de las Juventudes disappeared in 1960, being succeeded by the Organización Juvenil Española (OJE) (Osborne, 2012).

⁴⁷ To remind the reader, I mentioned in the introduction that the Sección Femenina (SF) [Female Section] was the female branch of the Spanish Falange party, and later *FET de las JONS*. The Sección Femenina was constituted in Madrid in 1934 and operated for 40 years. It was dissolved after General Franco's death. It was directed from its birth until its end by Pilar Primo de Rivera, sister of the founder of Falange. This leader, impregnated by a fervent Catholicism, was the female branch of the *Falange*. The SF adopted the figures of *Isabel la Católica* and *Santa Teresa de Jesus* as models of conduct and symbol of their action. At the time, the SF came to have almost monopolistic power to constitute the only female body of framing and action that existed in the Franco dictatorship (Osborne, 2012).

⁴⁸ We can observe how many of these characteristics can be framed under existentialist positions.

break with the model of modern femininity proclaimed by the Second Republic, and to erase from collective memory the fact that, during a time in the history of Spain, women had been incorporated into the public life. The exclusion of women from the world of work was a basic operation to reinforce the female archetype: in the house, dedicated to raising children. The dictatorship abolished the Civil Code of the Republic in 1938 and reinstated the code of 1889. Civil marriage was abolished, and divorce, abortion, abandonment of the home, co-habitation and contraceptive methods were outlawed (Sanfeliu, 2012).

In 1944, it was established by decree that all married women would need marital permission to work outside the home. The legislative apparatus also added a coercive regulatory system, and with the help of the church, the school and propaganda, a model of woman whose main virtue is self-denial was created:

A smile is benevolence, gentleness, optimism, kindness. Nothing is more disagreeable than a woman with a rough, sour, sulky face, which always seems to reproach us for something. The man may look stern; They will say of him that he is austere, virile, energetic. The woman should look sweet, soft, gentle. In short, she should smile as much as possible. (Revesz as cited by Carmen Martín Gaité, 1987, pp. 26-27) [my translation]

Franco delegated the education of women to the Sección Femenina, The SF was instituted with a powerful apparatus of regulation of the body and the feminine identity in line with Falangist ideology. As I have mentioned before, physical education became one of its main training tools, and tried to generate a model of physical activity that was apt for women and that did not masculinize them. The foundations of female physical education were based on biological interpretations of the body based on scientific and medical arguments. The fascist regime used sports to install discipline, and to model healthy and strong bodies that would supposedly contribute to improvements to the race (Sanfeliu, 2012).

This ideology took a deep toll on the young women who were educated under these precepts for decades. Sex-gender norms eventually work to consolidate bodies, identities and subjectivities and, in this sense, the mandate of a concrete model of femininity served as a tool of corporeal coercion. Power inscribes its ideology on the bodies of concrete individuals who end up forming a social body. Gender inequality and the subjugation of women are inscribed in their bodies as messages whose function is to legitimize patriarchy, a power structure that Rita Segato has defined as “an institution that is based on the control of the body and punitive ability on

women” (2006, p. 3) [my translation]. Segato identifies the woman's body as a territory in which to signify domination:

sanctioning the body of women is a privileged place to signify the dominance and cohesive power of a community, and practices of long historical duration confirm this function of normative (and even predatory) capacity over the female body as a sign of the union and force of a society. (2006, p. 3) [my translation]

Medicine and psychiatry also played an important role in laying the foundations of women's gender mandate and biological destiny during Francoism. Psychiatrists affiliated with the regime, such as Antonio Vallejo Nájera or Juan José López Ibor, laid the foundations for a corporeal construction of women according to biological criteria and they became “guardians” of feminine morality (Osborne, 2012, p. 21).

For Lopez Ibor or Vallejo Nájera, the *roja*⁴⁹ [red] “was a brutal and degenerate woman, socially sick and depraved” (Beatriz Celaya, 2012, p. 204). Nevertheless, there were other positions, such as that of Ramón Serrano Vicéns in *La Sexualidad Femenina: Una Investigación Estadística y Psíquica Directa* [Feminine Sexuality: A Statistical and Direct Psychic Investigation] (1971), which is an example of the survival of the modern paradigm of sexuality in the Franco regime. This allows us to think that there were other models in the Spanish society at the time (Celaya, 2012, p. 204). Part of Vicéns’ study is based on interviews with women (1417 respondents), in which behaviours that were considered marginal, immoral or directly illegal appear (Jordi M. Monferrer, 2012, p. 220). However, because of coercion on the bodies of women and the establishment of a concrete model of femininity, women had few options other than the imperative of maternity. Those who did not marry and did not take care of their husbands and children had the options of the convent, the single caste, or becoming “bad” women. As Dolores Juliano has pointed out:

Single mothers, concubines, women with bad reputations and sex workers shared social segregation but also suffered the social penalty that took away the tutelage of their sons

⁴⁹ “Roja” refers to communist women. The theory of the “*gen rojo*” [red gene] was developed by Vallejo Nágera (Chief of the Psychiatric Services of the Franco Army). He conducted a study on 50 women prisoners of war under the title: “Psychological research in Female Marxists” that concluded that Marxism was nourished by the less intelligent people. The theory of the “*gen rojo*” by Nágera justified the theft of babies. The women were subjected to a system of re-education.

and daughters, kept them in brothels or locked them in repentant shelter in hospitals and prisons. (2012, p. 38) [my translation]

The heterosexual mandate left out all those bodies that did not respond to normative desire. Gay men and transsexual people (lesbianism was barely visible, because it was practically unimaginable (Juliano, 2012, p. 38) were included in the *Ley de Vagos y Maleantes* [Law of Vagrants and Miscreants], which was replaced in 1970 by *Ley de Peligrosidad y Rehabilitación Social* [Law of Peligrosity and Social Rehabilitation],⁵⁰ which then continued until the early 1980s.

During the 1950s, women began to gradually join the labour market, coinciding with a rural exodus and emigration abroad. In 1961, de Rivera presented on behalf of the Sección Femenina the *Proyecto de Ley Sobre Derechos Políticos, Profesionales y Laborales de la Mujer* [Project on Political, Professional and Labor Rights of Women], which was approved in July of that same year. The law, while recognizing women's equal rights in professional and political activities, was very limited. Women's work continued to be considered secondary and subsidiary to that of men. Also, married women continued to require their husband's authorization to undertake economic activities or acquire properties (which remained the case until 1981).

The incipient openness and modernization that characterized the 1960s evidences a tension between the model of woman advocated by the regime and the Sección Femenina and the need for a certain women's emancipation more in line with the new consumer society. At this time, the incorporation of women into the workforce was already a reality, and at the same time, organizations were beginning to appear to improve the legal status of women. Some of them were a prelude to what would be an organized feminist movement, which appeared officially after Franco's death in November of 1975.

⁵⁰ The *Ley de Peligrosidad y Rehabilitación Social* was a law from Spanish penal code adopted by the Franco regime on August 5, 1970. It replaced *La Ley de Vagos y Maleantes* to control all elements considered antisocial. These included those who practiced begging, homosexuality, vandalism, traffic and consumption of drugs, the sale of pornography, prostitution and soliciting, and illegal immigrants, and anyone who was considered dangerous morally or socially by the regime. This law and the "public scandal" law were used systematically for the oppression of homosexuality in the latter part of the Franco dictatorship.

Women's bodies played a central role in the political imaginary, and the control of these bodies was an essential tool of the "biopower"⁵¹ of the dictatorship for the attainment of its totalitarian goal. Morcillo addresses the symbolic relationship between Franco's dictatorial state and the female allegorical body of the nation. Franco considered the Civil War a struggle "between the children of the same nation, of the same motherland" and himself as "boss and saviour of the fatherland" (as cited in Morcillo, 2015, p. 1) [my translation]. Franco described Spain as a woman, and mother, and saw her as defenceless.

Morcillo argues that the female body is a symbolic element that squares with the logic of Francoist political discourse. Not only this, but the actual feminine body was subjected to practices and technologies that were focused on dominating and domesticating. Morcillo explains how the concepts of state and nation are imbued with cultural notions of gender. In the Francoist political discourse, the political body of the state—like a living organism—demanded that its organs and members occupy a proper and immovable place. In this "place," women had to know their functions well and had to work to benefit the system. Groups defined by their social class and sex would form all the "pieces" or "extremities" of this body/nation. Each organ of the "body" would have a mission to fulfill and would be guided by a personified head: "The head of the state." Men would be the soldiers and producers, while women would be assigned to motherhood, understood as biological reproduction, but also as a perpetuation of the ideals and values of national-Catholicism. The family was also conceived through a somatic analogy, as the basic cell of this political body, with its patriarchal and hierarchical functioning being a reflection of the order and stability that the country required. The control of the female body was a pressing need for the system and it manifested itself on a symbolic and material level. The metaphors that insisted on a nation personified as a woman materialized in gender politics that aspired to discipline the female body (Morcillo, 2015, pp. 7-21). Women were converted into the repositories of a national objective, the reproduction of the regime in its biological and ideological double sense. Their bodies were at the service of the dictatorial system. The Franco regime subjected women's bodies to their interests.

⁵¹ "Biopower" is a term originally coined by Michael Foucault. It refers to the practice of modern states using numerous and diverse techniques to subjugate bodies and control the population. Foucault introduces this concept in *La Volonté du Savoir*, the first volume of *Histoire de la Sexualité*. Many researchers in Spain have used this concept to define the body politics under Francoism (Morcillo, 2015; Garbayo, 2016).

Francoism encouraged the traditional role of women in society, that of serving the family and the husband. Official propaganda and the Sección Femenina bound the roles of women to family care and motherhood. As I have mentioned, the Sección Femenina indoctrinated women to cut off any desire for emancipation and rebellion. After a liberating parenthesis with the Second Republic, in which women had won the right to vote and had begun to occupy public spaces, the Franco dictatorship had objectives to reduce women’s lives to the domestic arena, to abolish equal ambitions and to limit them to procreative roles.

Francoism reinforced these roles and—to achieve the paradigm of a “new Spain” — required that women be “virtuous,” that is to say embodying the qualities of self-denial, sacrifice, honesty, modesty, obedience, and lacking a sexuality of their own. Neither the institutions, nor the people involved were interested in talking about it [the oppression of women’s bodies], and as a consequence a politics of silence was present (Osborne, 2012).



Figure 4 . Drawings (Author: Unknown) in “Guía de la Buena Esposa” [Good Wife Guide], by Pilar Primo de Rivera. Retrieved in *Medina: Una revista para la mujer* [Medina: A magazine for women] (1953)



Figure 5. Detail of drawing (Author: Unknown) in “Guía de la Buena Esposa” [Good Wife Guide] – “Escúchalo” [Listen to him] by Pilar Primo de Rivera. Retrieved in *Medina: Una revista para la mujer* [Medina: A magazine for women] (1953).

The Sección Femenina produced a publication that demonstrated everyday tasks and instructed women on waiting for their husbands at home (Figures 4 and 5). It is important to pay attention to the gesture of service in these images: “Be sweet and interesting,” “Show your beauty,” “Take care of the home,” “Listen to him when he is back from work,” “Be empathic,” “Do not complain.” These are some of the messages of the *Guía de la Buena Esposa* [Good Wife Guide] which was promoted in the Franco regime. For instance, Figure 5 says: “Listen to him. Maybe you have a dozen important things to tell him, but when he comes back is not the best moment to talk about it. You have to let him talk, and remember that his issues are more important than yours.”

According to Maria Victoria Martins Rodríguez, Catholic social education was accompanied by the repression carried out by the Franco regime. The re-implementation of the civil code of 1889, the enactment of a “Penal Code”⁵² with especially punitive crimes for women as well as the extensive provision of labour laws that hindered women’s access to paid work, completed the circle of oppression and submission that left women only small possibilities for personal self-realization outside of prevailing legal and moral frameworks (Maria Victoria Martins Rodríguez, 2012, p. 280). Garbayo argues that “the public space of the dictatorship strongly controlled and mediated, normalized certain body alignments and authorized some

⁵² The “specific crimes” included adultery, abortion and prostitution.

bodies to ‘expand,’ while restricting the presence of others, either by means of law and punishment, or the naturalization of certain behaviours” (2016, p. 17) [my translation].

This is a brief approach to the situation of the women’s body in the dictatorship and the last years before the transition—an inheritance for the Spanish society that still is present today.⁵³ In a very restrictive context for women’s bodies in the 1970s, Fina Miralles presented an exploration of the self through sensorial experiences not only in the private realm but also in the public area, a space especially controlled by Francoism.

2.2. The Feminist Movement in Spain in the 1970s

Fina Miralles did not consider herself a feminist and she disavowed any connection with the feminist movement in Spain—as did many artists of her time in Catalonia (Bassas, 2007, pp. 223-224; Isabel Tejada, 2013, pp. 95-111). Bassas explains from her research on the Catalanian context that the feminist movement and the emergent practices in contemporary art “were parallel worlds, unknown in their dynamics to each other, and each partly viewed the other with some reluctance. Artists who began their careers in avant-garde circles and scenarios projected certain stereotypes about feminists” (2013, p. 228). However, I consider important to provide a context for feminist politics in Spain at the time, to highlight how personal liberation and emancipation was theorized and practised within its specific cultural and political situation. The feminist movement,⁵⁴ within its own activities and ways of doing politics, offered women a new perspective on how to be in the world and how to transform it through different forms of freedom: for example, placing the body in the foreground of political reality, claiming control of a free and autonomous female sexuality and offering new categories of analysis of social reality, such as the notions of “patriarchy” and “gender.” The feminist movement in Spain understood emancipation as specifically linked to practical action rather than theoretical reflection. This gives us the germ of my interest in turning to the body as a specific source of knowledge, especially under the repressive body politics of Spain at that moment.

⁵³ In the last official account, November 2017, by the government Observatorio de Violencia de Género [Observatory of Gender Violence] in the first nine months of 2017 there were 119 213 women victims of gender violence and 125 769 reports. As of July 19, 2018, there have been 946 deaths of women (these statistics do not count children’s deaths).

⁵⁴ Even though the feminist movement was happening before the death of Franco, it was not until 1975 that it started to appear publicly.

The political situation in Spain after forty years of dictatorship cannot be compared with other countries' trajectories, specifically with regard to artistic practices. In *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminists Readings*, Griselda Pollock points out the necessity of taking the different geographies of feminism into account (1996). Much remains unknown about the feminist struggle in Spain in the 1970s; in those times of transition, how did feminism evolve in Spain? The feminist movement in Spain in the 1970s began almost from scratch, and with few references, because the Franco dictatorship imposed a radical break in the genealogy of feminism. All of what women had managed to create as spaces of freedom during the Second Republic (1931-1939) and during the time of the civil war (1936-1939) were swept aside by the regime. Researcher, professor and artist María Ruido refers to the particular situation in Spain at the time:

On the one hand, the Franco dictatorship made gender concerns come later to Spain compared with neighbouring European countries. On the other hand, the early feminist movement, which emerged at the end of the 1960s, would leave traces of their specific claim to fight against Franco's regime. (as cited in Aliaga, 2004b, p. 65) [my translation]

Feminist researchers Carmen Navarrete, María Ruido and Fefa Vila point out that the rebirth of the feminist movement in Spain happened between 1965 and 1975 (2005, p. 161). The International Women's Year, initiated by The United Nations Organization in 1975, coincided with the death of Franco (and the fall of his regime) and marked the rise of the feminist movement in Spain. Two conferences crystallized the establishment of feminism in Spain: in 1975, the *Jornadas de la Liberación de la Mujer*, held in Madrid, and in 1976, in Barcelona, the *Jornades Catalanes de la Dona*. From this time onward, women's groups and feminist associations multiplied and started to be increasingly more creative and active. Justa Montero, activist and historian of the feminist movement in Spain, points out that "although these are landmark dates, a lot of work was done previously in clandestine meetings" (2013) [my translation].

According to Montero (2013), the feminist movement of the 1970s had very clear characteristics: it was a radical movement, with a strong feminist ideology and proactive behaviour. She explains that the movement not only approached the most pressing problems (divorce law, sexual rights, etc.) but was also aimed at analyzing underlying problems (i.e.

proposed changes to divorce law were accompanied by a substantial review of the institution of marriage). Montero highlights that, in that context, they thought there could be a radical change in society (2013). It was the end of the dictatorship and the struggle was for a democracy that needed to be defined in all areas. Therefore, there arose the need by feminist organizations to intervene in the process to define reality as a whole.

Feminism in Spain in the 1970s opened the possibility for women to participate in the transformation of society. It constituted the justification for constructing a political subject of its own. This acted in clear confrontation with the legacy of Francoism: the heterosexual family as a model, women's motherhood as the only option, the lack of recognized rights and a number of ideas that denied freedom to women. Demonstrations and the formulation of a collective self were very important in the tradition of Spanish feminism in the 1970s. Women went out on the streets chanting and writing on their placards: "Yo también soy adúltera" [I've been adulterous], "Yo también tomo anticonceptivos" [I also take contraceptives], "Yo también he abortado" [I have also aborted].

Montero argues that women were developing a collective self that was a form of personal engagement but also a manner to claim women's rights (2013). This occurred in a context in which there was a *Ley de Peligrosidad* [Law of Social Dangerousness], which I tackled in the previous section. Montero explains that between 1976 and 1977 there were still three hundred women who were in the regime's prisons for adultery, concubinage, homosexuality, prostitution, abortion and the like. Montero asserts that autonomy and self-determination were the main characteristics of the Spanish feminist movement. In post-dictatorship Spain, there was an enormous reluctance to acknowledge the role of feminism in forming a *social subject* and actor in the political sector. Montero explains that the political sector at that moment believed that democratic freedoms needed to come first, before women's freedoms (2013). For the feminist movement this was too little too late. The feminist movement was opposed to this dynamic, stating that there could not be talk of democratic freedoms without talking about freedom for women.

In the US context, the dominant liberal feminist political movement focused on consciousness-raising, specifically tied to freedom from the structures of patriarchy, and particularly through an examination of women's space in the home and the nuclear family, understanding freedom largely on the terms of the experience of white middle-class women. In

comparison, in Spain, feminist movements were allied with leftist movements against Francoism. Their goal was to be political, not only focusing on women's spaces in the home and the nuclear family but also their role in the political struggle against the Franco regime. Spanish feminists were interested in building a collective self but also in including many women in the cause. In Catalonia, for instance, many Latin American women who were refugees from their countries were members of feminist associations.

Empar Pineda, a writer and pioneering leader of the feminist lesbian movement in Spain, points out that the main struggle within feminist movements was over sexuality, and specifically, the affirmation that “women are sexual beings.” The issues raised included clitoral and vaginal orgasms, conceiving sexuality not only as maternity, the sexuality of women beyond the sole satisfaction of men, contraception and abortion rights. According to Pineda (2013) all these claims were for heterosexual women. She says that women in the feminist movement of the 1970s were hiding their lesbianism. She also reports that the situation was different in multiple areas of Spain. She argues that some feminist groups considered that sexual orientation could not be the basis for self-organization (2013). Lesbian collectives appeared within the feminist movement in Catalonia after the 1979 meeting of the Asociación Gay Internacional [International Gay Association]. This latter event was instrumental in the setting up of the *I Jornadas de Lesbianas del Estado Español* [I Conference of Lesbians from Spain] (1980) and, a little later, of the organization of *Colectivo de Feministas Lesbianas de Madrid* (CFLM) [Feminist Lesbians Collective from Madrid]. According to Pineda those groups were helpful to live sexual orientation with pride, yet the main efforts of feminist groups were to support the whole feminist movement that was led by the women's organizations in the Spanish state. (2013). She explains that feminist lesbian collectives from Madrid were members of the *Coordinadora Estatal Feminista* [State Bureau of Feminist Coordination] which facilitated the dissemination of feminist ideas on a non-restrictive open sexuality.

As for the theoretical sources and genealogies that inspired the feminist movements, Elsa Plaza and Paloma Uría explain that the literature came from Europe, North America and Latin America. Feminist activist and art historian Plaza identifies two enterprises closely linked to the feminist movement activities in Barcelona in the 1970s: the *Bar Biblioteca La Sal* [Library-Bar The Salt] and *La Librería de Mujeres* [Women's Bookstore]. In both spaces, there were many activities and workshops functioning as places for exchange and help. Plaza, whose heritage

came from the French feminist movement (made up mostly of students) describes the feminist movement in Barcelona as a group of women coming from all walks of life, many of them from Latin America.

Professor and feminist activist Uría (2013), founding member of Asociación Feminista de Asturias (AFA), Spain, describes the feminist movement of the 1970s as one that was very interested in and connected with creativity and not so much with the elaboration of theory. She points out that they had enough to do commenting and arguing about the theories that came from outside. The Spanish feminist movement, according to Uría, nevertheless produced very creative written pamphlets and manifestos. She encouraged exploration in this area of cultural, philosophical and literary feminist creation. Yet, in the 1970s, after Franco's death, activism mainly took place in the street. The events were typical ones of movements fighting for change in society (demonstrations, meetings, lectures, etc.) and, moreover, there was a strong artistic component through street theatre, *passacaglia* (carnival-like parades) and performances.

Garbayo explains:

the feminist movement was characterized by the occupation of streets, public spaces and buildings. If their claims were based on the body, it is logical that the staging of these bodies became a fundamental part of them. Their presence in the public space was not generally well received, and provoked reactions of rejection and condemnation in society... The appearance of these bodies constituted a threat to institutions, and their actions instantly became acts with political implications. The taking up of public space and institutional buildings through demonstrations, protests, putting up posters and locking themselves in buildings were frequent in those times. (2016, pp. 39-40) [my translation].

The movement had a strong ethical and artistic side. There was a will to change consciousness and establish a new relationship among human beings. Creativity was used in different forms. Many of the claims and projections of cultural feminism were rooted in the body, as a way to reconstitute and recuperate one's own body. Feminist positions favoured not only the incorporation of numerous artists into the mainstream but also the inclusion of disciplines that were hitherto despised as outside of "high culture." Among these disciplines were documented performances (with super-8 film), many of which worked specifically with the body.

Furthermore, feminist positions in art allowed new concepts to prevail, such as the undervalued practices of autobiography, political awareness and body work.

These elements situated the body at the centre of the feminist political scene: a re-appropriation of a body that had been in a way stolen by the patriarchal regime. Women's bodies were screaming for freedom in public spaces, and in parallel many artists were exploring this path through bodily appearance not only in the public space but also in the private realm, in relation with the world and also within the body. Fina Miralles' actions—as silent feminist intervention works—parallel the scene of these visible body actions in the public arena. Fina Miralles' less visible actions in the private and public arena can be considered feminist “hidden transcripts” that deserve attention and investigation. I draw from art historian Erin McCutcheon's article “Tales We Tell: Imagining Feminist Pasts, Writing Feminist Futures” which is based on the work of James Scott:

he suggests that scholars can methodologically expand the limits of what normally constitutes protest . . . scholars should look for hidden transcripts to reveal more nuanced meanings of protest. For Scott, the “public transcript” is that which constitutes open and public interactions between dominators and oppressed. A hidden transcript, therefore, is a critique of power that goes on offstage, which the power holders might never see or hear. (2016, p. 67)

In this sense, I consider the practice of Fina Miralles as a “hidden transcript” that occurred as a protopolitical work, in other arenas than the overtly political. Fina Miralles' approach offers possibilities to feminism in the sense of reinforcing an agency within the body, employing quiet gestures as “hidden transcript” useful for the later tasks of more overtly political interventions in the system.

2.3. Feminist Approaches to Art

In February 2004, Aliaga published "La Memoria Corta" [Short Memory] in the journal *Revista de Occidente*. This article highlighted the scant attention paid to feminist art in the history of Spanish art. In it, Aliaga referred to the magazine *Art Forum* which, in October 2003, published an issue on “Feminism and Art.” He states that, although there is an official history of feminist art in the Anglo-Saxon context, a feminist history of art in Spain had not yet been studied. He

argues that there is no feminist discourse in the history of art in Spain, proved by the inexistence of its own historiography, neither in texts, catalogues, nor books (2004).

In another article eight years later *Materiales Para una Construcción. Hechos Significativos de una Historiografía Feminista (y Queer) en la Producción Artística Española del Período Democrático: 1972-2010* [Materials for a Construction. Significant Facts of a Feminist (and Queer) Historiography in the Spanish Artistic Production of the Democratic Period] (2012), Aliaga states that Mayayo, Ruido, Navarrete and Murría have noted the lack of solid historiography in Spain. According to them there is no reference study that serve as platform to build other readings (2012).

Albarrán-Diego in “Arte y Transición” [Art and Transition] argues that there is no history of feminist art emerging from the departments of history or fine arts in Spain. In his opinion, the institutions, museums and arts centres “lack rigour and critical spirit” (2012, p. 9) [my translation].⁵⁵ He argues that it seems that this situation forces us to return to a previous stage and ask ourselves how these stories have been constructed: “Only then we can return to interpellate the works with other tools that are not tainted by the narrations of legitimation, historiographical topics and cultural guidelines imposed during the transition” (2012, p. 9) [my translation]. In the same line, Maria Teresa Alario, quoting Mar Villaespesa (an art historian and curator), elaborates that even though there were feminist works in the university arena or the anti-Franco political scene in the 1960s and 1970s, it was difficult to articulate a feminist discourse that influenced the arena of visual arts in the country (2008). This also confirms the lack of analysis and articulation of art production in relation with feminisms.

The Spanish artists generation of the 1990s appears to have arisen out of nowhere. What are its origins, models and landmarks? In May 2005, the Spanish magazine *ExitExpress* in the dossier “Women, Art and Feminism” included a survey of several Spanish artists. One of the questions posed to these artists was: “What has been the impact of the feminist artists of the 1970s?” Most recognized that there was a great impact but all quoted foreign creators (Annette Messager, Barbara Kruger, Marina Abramovic, Martha Rosler, Ana Mendieta, etc). We can see the transnational nature of feminist inspiration at play here. Navarrete, Ruido and Vila recognize that “information about the struggles, resistances, avatars and achievements of women who came

⁵⁵ One exception is the *Centro Cultural Montehermoso* in Basque Country.

before us have been very disjointed and confusing” (2005, p. 171) [my translation] and they emphasize that the intellectual and political baggage of their generation is principally Anglo-Saxon and French. “[Their] discourse [Anglo-saxon and French] is still current to our practices today ” (2005, p. 171) [my translation].

In the words of art historian Mayayo: “Can we really think that before the 1990s no noteworthy artist or group of artists existed in Spain that incorporated a reflection on gender identity in their work? Is it possible to believe that in such a politicized decade as the 1970s, the world of Spanish art could remain oblivious to the revolution in the West called the “Movement for the Liberation of Women”? Or perhaps what has really happened is that the feminist legacy has been systematically ignored in official accounts of the recent history of art in Spain. Why such invisibility? How to explain then the genealogical gap that appears to separate feminist artists from their predecessors?” (2013)

Alario writes about genealogy as one of the main tools for writing feminist art history: “Recognizing the genealogy, being inserted in it, challenges one of the basic patriarchal codes which is the tendency to perceive each work, each artist, as if they came out of nowhere, purely exceptional, isolated from context and tradition” (as cited by Mayayo, 2003, p. 168) [my translation]. This refers to the diversity of sensibilities, of ideological positions that cross the feminist, transfeminist and queer feminist universe in different geographies, and political and social contexts. In the art history of the 1970s and 1980s, there are barely any references to women artists, and even less allusion to feminist discourse. We are still in a process of creating a feminist rewriting of art in Spain. However, Navarrete says about the 1970s: “We find, for the first time in the Spanish context, a generation of women who not only perform political work in the field of art but also introduce radical ways of seeing and making art” (as cited in Alario, 2008, p. 99) [my translation].

Isabel Tejada explains that women artists of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s have hidden in the art landscape as a way to survive. Because of that, she felt a “need to work looking at the places where nobody had been looking before” (2013). Tejada points out the importance in the Spanish case to look for forgotten resources and unpublished documents. She encourages fieldwork to build new histories and counter-stories with names behind them.

There is barely any written history about Spanish feminist art’s genealogy. However, as Mayayo explains in the catalogue of *Genealogías Feministas* (2013, p. 32) the categories given to

Anglophone feminist history cannot always be useful in the Spanish context. For instance, the “feminist art” label may be appropriate to describe the Anglo-American scene in the 1970s but it is doubtful that it is useful to study history in Spain. Mayayo explains that in the Spain of the 1970s, artists were very reluctant to identify as feminists. She argues that there were many reasons for this, among them a legacy of national Catholicism, a chauvinist society (also present in the anti-Franco environments) that reject the term ‘feminist’ and the priority to fighting dictatorship than other political demands (2013).

Esther Ferrer, a major actor on the international art scene since the 1960s (interviewed by Navarrete, Ruido & Vila) reflects on the urgency of political change:

I am a feminist and I've done all those things within feminism, but when there is an emergency, and during the Franco dictatorship there was an emergency, we acted without second-guessing because there was such urgency to do so. With regards to the purely feminist struggle, I believe that to do things like ZAJ⁵⁶ in Spain, in such a chauvinist environment, was an act of feminist struggle—considering that journalists called me a “whore” in newspapers for what I was doing. [...] In that environment, I was doing my job and studied hard but there was no (formally formulated) feminist struggle and I spent my day with men, with artists who were my friends. (2005, p.59) [my translation]

Later in the same interview Ferrer explains:

Women artists were afraid of the fact that getting into feminist groups would marginalize them even more and that the world of institutions would leave them aside. [...] We lacked historical culture, we lacked awareness and self-confidence to work feminist issues in a radical way. [...] The real problem for women artists was the lack of theoretical support; the deep work that could have been done collectively was not possible. (as cited in Navarrete, Ruido & Vila, 2005, p. 170)

Nevertheless, women artists were conscious of the discrimination against them, and that influenced their artwork. In an interview with De la Mora Marti, Fina Miralles explains how

⁵⁶ ZAJ was a Spanish avant-garde musical group, created in 1964 by Spanish composers Juan Hidalgo and Ramon Barce, and by the Italian composer Walter Marchetti. ZAJ was devoted mainly to the development of the music of action. It formed between 1959 and 1963 and had an important influence of neo-Dadaism and Zen. The group ZAJ was born as a musical movement, but eventually involved poets, painters, sculptors and performers.

discrimination was performed not only by Franco followers but also by political parties on the left:

I think it was quite common at that time not to appreciate the participation of women, and when they were appreciated, they were almost always relegated to the role of spectator and small player, of people who were there but had a minor voice. I must say that this affected any thought of the very Catholic right. The Sección Femenina invented by Pilar Primo de Rivera in 1934 still exercised its influence, considering women in a completely traditionalist conception. However, parties of the extreme left also did not see the use of a feminist concept in a good light or favourably because all that, in the opinion of any communist, could scare the masses. (De la Mora Martí, 2004) [my translation]

What kind of relations occurred between this movement and contemporary cultural production? What were the links between feminist activists and the cultural/artistic scene?⁵⁷ Women artists were talking through their bodies more than through their words and most of them were not attached to feminist theories or to feminist movements. They were developing forms and processes of emancipation through the body and sensations more than through theories.

When we talk about “feminist art,” then, we understand that it is something that developed in the Anglo-Saxon context. Nevertheless, Garbayo stresses that certain Spanish artists were feminists, working on feminist issues. Within their activism, artistic or aesthetic strategies were sometimes used to convey certain messages. She rejects talking about “feminist art” in Spain because, in a way, there is a kind of imposition of the American feminist art canon. As Bassas does, Garbayo affirms that in Spain—in opposition to the situation in America—there was not a relation between feminist activism and the artistic realm in the 1970s. She highlights that we cannot read the situation in Spain from an American paradigm of art and feminism. She argues that to talk about feminist art in Spain is an anachronism (2014). This highlights the predicament of writing the specificity of the Spanish context without locating its origin in Anglo-American feminist theory, art history, film theory, etc.

Bassas (2007) explains the importance of noting that the practices of women's freedom are not an exclusive legacy of the women's movement, but they arrive and are transmitted from generation to generation in unique ways in each case. In her opinion, sometimes the less visible

⁵⁷ These questions open new avenues of research in relation with the feminist movement and the artistic scene, yet it goes beyond the purpose of this dissertation.

paths are keys for a “cut” in the patriarchal methodologies in historiography. In her words: “We must pay very much attention to (and read the legacy of) women’s emancipation beyond an unambiguous relationship between feminism and artistic practice if we want to find those threads of meaning that history can bring us” (2008, p. 223) [my translation]. Sometimes those paths that are less visible and thus difficult to follow are keys to realizing the true “cutting direction” in the methodologies we use, that is, to detach radically from patriarchal ideology. Bassas affirms:

In our context from a historical point of view, I think it would be more correct to investigate how the artists who were involved in the creation of new languages and new creative practices met the women’s movement and, beyond that, if they recognized themselves in the new realities of female freedom that the feminism movement raised and *how they [the artists] contributed to make fruitful their freedom.* (2007, p. 222) [my translation, emphasis added]

The stories of women artists are not so much life stories or testimonies of a period of time but distill the genealogy of women's emancipatory explorations which patriarchal history has obviated and which are critical to understanding strategies of resistance such as the ones that I argue are employed in Fina Miralles’ work. How might one write a different historical account—alternative to the global scope of feminism (in both its political and academic iterations)—but not simply about the translation of texts into another context? In which way can these stories show the embodied emancipatory actions in the works?

If we look at some of the reference texts of Spanish narrative art, we can see that feminist discourse is clearly disregarded. The history models regarding feminist art were paternalistic. There is a need to generate our own explanatory models that serve to explain the specificity of the Spanish case and not simply a mere translation of Anglo-Saxon feminist analysis. This need is evident from the fact, as mentioned before, that the relationship between the artists of the 1960s and the 1970s with those of the 1990s has been almost nonexistent. Artists of the 1990s who were interviewed in the Spanish art magazine *Exit-Express* are conscious of the situation. Navarrete states: “I think it is wrong that during my training I had no possibility of contact with the work of other women in a closer context and I had to grow up with the idea that it did not exist and I had to use other stories, other genealogies.” (2007, p. 246) As articulated previously: Why does this generation gap exist? Mayayo continues this reflection in relation to curatorial projects and she

argues that in the 1980s and 1990s there was a promotion of artistic and cultural policies that omitted practices of sexual dissidence (2013).

Mayayo explains that these exhibitions followed an expository model backed by autonomous communities. They were limited to women artists' gatherings whose only common link was their biological sex without having a feminist approach. Later, there were exhibitions that constructed a feminist historiographical discourse in Spain, but they have also contributed to the generational split because they focused on artists of the 1990s. Mayayo highlights curatorial projects such as *En Todas Partes. Políticas de la Diversidad Sexual en el Arte* (2010), *Cómo nos Vemos. Imágenes y Arquetipos Femeninos* (1997), *Territorios indefinidos* (1995), *Transgeneri@s* (1998), *Zona F* (2000), and *El Bello Género* (2002), which since the 1990s have introduced feminist and queer discourse to Spanish contemporary art history. This could be due to the translation of some Anglo-American feminist theory into Spanish, which might have affected a later group of artists and, as Mayayo argues, obscured the earlier origins of Spanish feminism.

Within the area of the visual arts, Anglo-Saxon countries are considered a pioneering and critical reference point in the way of telling history. This history is located within the social movements of 1968 which questioned the conservative democracies of many countries. In places like Spain, by contrast, the totalitarian dictatorship prevented the public manifestation of the changes that were taking shape clandestinely. This deprived Spain of taking a leading role in cultural production. According to Navarrete, Ruido and Vila (2005), there was no group of artists in Spain that call themselves feminists, yet they highlight that there were works and manners of making in public and private art institutions that are worth recuperating as a history of women and art in Spain. They suggest that there is a generation of artists in the 1970s that is important to recognize, and that it is necessary to produce knowledge and reflections about them. In addition, they argue that art that considers gender or includes feminist content "is certainly urgent to motivate from different centres of knowledge production, but especially from the university environment, critical research and as rigorously as those subjects addressed by other disciplines" (Navarrete, Ruido & Vila, 2005: 170) [my translation].

In the field of art and cultural creation in Spain, the permanence of power structures remains. As Helena Cabello and Ana Carceller (2000) point out, these power structures have slowed down—if not openly prevented—the evolution and change in patterns of cultural

production. In other contexts, the different modes of thought that have feminism at their base could continue their development

although they were short-circuited and have had to overcome the obstacles (for instance great suspicion, rejection and open persecution, the demagogic undervaluation of proposals, etc.) that always have been faced by any action that desires to improve the situation of marginalized groups. (Cabello & Carceller, 2000, p. 37) [my translation]

Aliaga affirms about art history and feminism in Spain “that the road is starting to clear” (2004, p. 68). He suggests the need to build a historiography that raises issues regarding gender “seems essential in a country of short memory who has not done its homework and self-criticism” (Aliaga, 2004, p. 68) [my translation].

According to Navarrete, Ruido and Vila (2005), action art, activism and video performance took place in Spain in the 1990s (by artists such as Eulàlia Valldosera, Carmen Sigler, Marta Martín, Lucía Onzain, Itziar Okariz, Pilar Albarracín, Estíbaliz Sadaba, María Ruido, Erreakzioa-Reaction, Mela, Saez and others). However, they also note that “the early video performances in Spain are in the 1970s” (such as those by Eugenia Balcells and Fina Miralles). Giulia Colaizzi, the scholar who introduced Feminist Film Theory to Spain argues that “the videographic practice in the early 1960s was a feminized practice due to a lack of prestige and official recognition” (2001, p. 8).

What happened to the Spanish women artists who experienced the political transition (1975-1978)? Why did their contributions not appear in most of the contemporary historiography? Mayayo proposes:

It would be necessary to study the meeting points between the experimental artists and the cultural proposals elaborated in the women’s movement of the 1970s (one of the most significant episodes, in this sense, was the creation of *La Sal* bar-library in Barcelona, among whose founders was the artist, poet and feminist activist Mari Chordá); it would also be interesting to analyze their own practices of representation of the feminist movement; and finally, we should better understand the influence that feminist politics had on the work of some conceptual creators. (2013, pp. 26-27)

In this aspect, Mayayo highlights Fina Miralles and Olga L. Pijoan for the importance of their analysis of operations of power in private space. This is interesting as it is directly connected with the reflections in this thesis on Fina Miralles’ work from a feminist perspective,

especially her more intimate/less visible work, barely catalogued as a feminist intervention. Mayayo also highlights connections and dialogues between artists from the 1990s that are linked to the feminist politics and practices of artists from the 1970s in Spain (Eugènia Balcells, Fina Miralles, Eulalia Grau, Esther Ferrer). These artists were contemporary with the artists represented in *WACK! (Art and the Feminist Revolution)*—Judith Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, Martha Rosler, and others (in the North American context) and Ana Mendieta, Lygia Clark, Pola Weiss, Monica Mayer, and others (in the Latin American context). However, Spanish artists from the 1970s never got the same exposure as their North American counterparts, except for those who expatriated themselves and had some impact like Balcells and Ferrer (in the United States and France respectively).

In 2008, under the direction of Arakistain (curator, feminist art critic and director of Centro Cultural Montehermoso, Basque Country, Spain) and Lourdes Mendez (Social Anthropologist, Universidad del País Vasco, Spain) a course in artistic production and feminist art theory was created, taking the form of seminars. In those seminars, Mayayo –paraphrasing a 1971 text written by the American historian Linda Nochlin– asked “Por qué no ha habido (grandes) artistas feministas en España? Apuntes sobre una historia en busca de autor(a)” [Why have there not been (great) feminist artists in Spain? Notes for a story: searching for authors]. She analyzed the absence of historiographic models that produce a non-chronological temporality, one that is not based on formal and modern categories. About the absence of local genealogies, art historian Isabel Tejada (Universidad de Murcia, Spain) affirms that the information for the 1990s generation was Anglo-Saxon and French creators, philosophers and critics, that started to be translated in Spanish at that moment (2008). Yet, little was known of their Spanish direct ancestors.

Estrella de Diego critiques the scarcity of critical analytical work in local production related to art and feminism in Spain: “Too many foreign referents, a vision of reality through imported books, the excessive theorizing discourse of art history—frequently as a simple mimesis or translation—have produced a speech quite ‘colonized’” (2008, p. 22) [my translation]. According to Arakistain (2007b) we need to include stories not only from the 1980s; but also need to bring to light work of artists who were working in the last period of Franco and the Spanish transition that are contemporary with some of the biggest American names as they also had a very interesting production that is necessary to track in other ways.

Navarrete (2008, pp. 206-207) explains that many artists agreed not be labelled feminists even though their works questioned issues regarding the role of women in a patriarchal society or explored issues of gender and sexuality. The most active and self-consciously feminist artists were from Catalonia:⁵⁸ the performances and installations by Paz Muro; the photo-collages by Eulàlia Grau; films and experimental videos by Eugènia Balcells, performance by Olga Pijoán, installations and works of land art by Fina Miralles⁵⁹ and Angels Ribé; performances and installations by Dorethé Selz and performances by Esther Ferrer (from Basque Country). Several authors (Aliaga, 2004, 2013; Albarrán, 2012; Garbayo, 2016) point out that the socio-political context of the time did not allow a thoughtful critique that placed these works in a feminist genealogy. As Navarrete argues:

This scarcity of discourse is due to an absence of a local history. [We need] to develop speeches and experiences that could frame an interpretation and debate from a local gaze, taking into account the social and historical particular characteristics of Spain. (2008, p. 207) [my translation]

Navarrete notes:

We first met a generation of women in the Spanish context who not only performed political work in the field of art but also introduced ways of seeing and doing that were even more radical than that of their peers (men). (as cited in Alario, 2008, p. 99) [my translation]

Laura Trafi-Prats argues that the history of art has constrained some of these last group of artists (Balcells, Fina Miralles, Grau) to the category of Catalan conceptual art, although their work presents issues and ways of working that could be connected with the practices of international artists in the 1970s who were linked with feminism, practices which are taken up and reinterpreted by Spanish artists in the 1990s who identify themselves with a feminist practice (2007, p, 222). Ferrer and Balcells were valorized by museums, galleries and scholars, a fact

⁵⁸ These artists participated in *Nuevos Comportamientos Artísticos* [New Artistic Behaviors] a denomination adopted in the Catalanian context by various conceptual experiences such as happening, body art, *arte de acción* [action art], *arte povera* [arte povera] and others which I tackle in the next chapter.

⁵⁹ Almost all scholars and researchers have catalogued the work of Fina Miralles—especially her work with the body that is not clearly feminist—relative to the “eternal/essential feminine” or “land art.” This thesis argues for a different analysis of these works: exploration of kinesthetic and corporeal agency. This argument is developed in chapters 6 and 7.

which has affected their professional careers. The same cannot be said about Fina Miralles whose work has scarcely been shown, and essentially only in Catalonia.

According to Rocio de la Villa, feminist actions and proposals by Balcells, Grau, Fina Miralles and Ribé “remained in the limbo of oblivion and certainly subject to more closure than their contemporary conceptual artists by the art politics and the white elephants of criticism during the 1980s, whose aims were to cut any political odour in art” (2005, p. 10) [my translation]. Some of the works of these artists are included in the permanent collection of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid (among which there are two photos that document performance by Fina Miralles). However, the recovery of the transition period in relation with the manifestation of art and feminism remains to be covered, excluding some contributions (Navarrete, Ruido & Vila, 2005). In relation with the contribution to performance I highlight the thesis *Esther Ferrer: La (Re)acción Como Leitmotiv* [Esther Ferrer: (Re)action as Leitmotiv] (Carmen Muriana, 2014) and the recent book *Cuerpos que Aparecen: Performance y Feminismos en el Tardofranquismo* [Bodies That Appear: Performance and Feminisms in the Late Francoism] (Garbayo 2016).

In Spain, there is no publication that deals with the relation between art and feminism during the 1970s (Aliaga, 2004, 2013; Garbayo, 2016). In the anthology *Arte en España (1939-2015): Ideas, Prácticas, Políticas* [Art in Spain: Ideas, Practices, Politics] (Mayayo & Marzo, 2016), a section is dedicated to “Arte, feminismo y cuestionamiento de los roles de género” [Art, feminism and the question of gender roles] in the chapter “Transiciones y Transacciones (1973-1982)” [Transitions and Transactions]. The work of *Relacions* by Fina Miralles is not mentioned in this book and *Traslacions* is under the category “Intervenciones ambientales, trabajos en la naturaleza y arte procesual” [Environmental interventions, works in nature and process art]. Also, there are no specific publications that address performance art during the late years of Francoism, except the already mentioned *Cuerpos que Aparecen* by Garbayo (2016). There exist some research works on performance: Ferrando (2009) and a doctoral thesis by Juan Albarrán-Diego (2011) *Del Fotoconceptualismo al Fotobleau. Fotografía, Performance y Escenificación en España* [From photoconceptualism to photobleau. Photograph, Performance and Scenification in Spain] (1970-2000), which focuses on performance in relation with photographic documentation. Some of Albarrán-Diego’s articles mention briefly the work of Fina Miralles in relation with the senses (“Feeling the body,” 2013). With regard to “conceptualismos” [conceptualisms] and

“nuevos comportamientos artísticos” [new artistic behaviours] Parcerisas (1992) has published the catalogue *Idees i Actituds. Entorn al Art Conceptual a Catalunya, 1964-1980* [Ideas and Attitudes. About Conceptual Art in Catalonia]. About this publication Aliaga says:

It is eloquent to indicate that not even the studies published on conceptualism in Catalonia confer upon [Esther Ferrer, Eulalia Grau and Eugènia Balcells, pioneer artists in the 1970s] the importance due from a feminist perspective, entangled in other types of issues, as, among others, the nationalist/Catalanist imprint of the conceptual proposals. (2004, p. 67)

Parcerisas (2007) has also published *Conceptualismo(s) Poéticos, Políticos y Periféricos. En Torno al Arte Conceptual en España, 1964-1980* [Conceptualism(s) Poetics, Politics and Peripherics. About the Conceptual Art in Spain]. This book offers a complete chronological framework and information about the contexts in which some actions took place. However, a feminist perspective is almost absent.

2.4. Concluding Thoughts

Francoism reinforces the message that women embody self-denial, sacrifice and obedience. Between 1934 and 1977 the Sección Femenina of the Spanish Falange indoctrinated women to cut off any desire for emancipation and rebellion. After a liberating parenthesis with the Second Republic, in which women had won the right to vote and had begun to occupy public spaces, the Franco dictatorship had an objective to abolish ambitions of equality.

In the 1970s, the feminist movement offered to women a new perspective on how to be in the world and transform it using different forms of freedom: for example, placing the body in the foreground of political reality, claiming control of a free and autonomous female sexuality and offering new categories of analysis of social reality, such as the notions of patriarchy and gender. The feminist movement in Spain was centrally concerned with issues regarding women’s bodies. Its protests and contestations had little theoretical basis, and happened mainly using the presence of bodies in the streets and public spaces.

In Spain, many artistic and feminist critiques did not have Spanish models. They looked at texts and debates imported from outside. Mayayo, in the exhibition *Genealogias Feministas*, gave importance to the constructions of Spanish genealogies:

there is a necessity to find historiographic tools that serve to analyze the singularities of the Spanish case without trying to put it in imported schemes. These singularities not only affect the way that artistic practice has evolved, but also the way feminist historiography has been constituted. (2013, p. 35) [my translation]

Mayayo argues that the strength of the political and intellectual legacy of feminism is not only in the incorporation of issues in art works, but in “the capacity to foster *new forms of storytelling* and *new modes of knowledge*” (2013, p. 33) [my translation, my emphasis]. In this sense, I approach in chapter 4 the embodied methodology used throughout this thesis, which explores a mode of knowledge coherent with a research question regarding emancipation through the body. How can you get involved in the realization of feminist memories activating new methodologies and new ways of generating knowledge?

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework

In the previous sections, I introduced the work of Fina Miralles and described the sociocultural context of the dictatorial system in Spain, emphasizing how the Francoist politics affected bodies and, especially, feminine ones. I explained how Fina Miralles' work was not overtly political and that, in this dissertation, I choose to focus on a group of works that have been barely analyzed from a feminist perspective. In them, I observe a specific process of reconstituting the body. In this chapter, I will tackle the conceptual terms that inform my analysis of this reconstitution of the body, which is achieved using bodily movement and kinesthesia as a site of knowledge and/or agency. The analysis of the artist's performances under a politics of repression has led me to focus on the silent dynamics and kinetic energy in the movements of the body. In this chapter, I reflect on the concept of *kinesthetic knowledge* and *corporeal agency* from a feminist approach. I argue that corporeal consciousness is a form of embodied agency that allows one to challenge socially and culturally conditioned norms of gendered behaviour. Kinesthetic knowledge provides a method for listening to the body where movement and proprioceptive awareness is crucial.

3.1. Introduction

The body has been largely omitted from political thought, and it is a great achievement that research in gender studies has brought it back as a vital aspect of politics and theoretical production (Elizabeth Grosz, 1994; Coole, 2013). The notions of embodiment and agency have been explored by feminist theories of self-liberation, although rarely together. Theories of the body have frequently ignored that the human body is an agent, and as such is transformed by its relation with itself and the world (Grosz, 1994; Tietjens Meyers, 2002; Meynell, 2009; Krause, 2011).

I turn to the body as a site for thinking not only the experience of women under patriarchy but also for conceptualizing somatic strategies of emancipation and self-knowledge. I argue that there is a perceptual and somatic dimension of the political that is especially important for explaining the resistance to the censorship in the late years of the Franco dictatorship, when artists like Fina Miralles developed dynamics with their bodies under obligatorily "mute" circumstances. I sustain that Fina Miralles' actions under repressive politics are corporeal

strategies of resistance through which she gathers knowledge about the world and herself. Through phenomenological accounts of the body, I can think about these actions under the dictatorship as somatic experiences where transformative processes emerge. The dictatorship exacerbated forms of repression and censorship that are at play in all structures of oppression, and thus the insights gathered from this research may contain lessons for feminism in a broad range of political contexts.

In this thesis, the body is understood as a vital active agent for the constitution of the self and the development of agency. I draw mainly from feminist theories of the body and theorists of kinesthesia, movement, embodiment and agency (Sklar, 1994; McNay, 2000; Tietjens Meyers, 2004; Meynell, 2009; Coole, 2005; Noland, 2008, 2009; Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason, 2010, 2012; Maxine Sheets-Johnston, 2009, 2016). My aim is to emphasize the importance of bodily experience in the production of knowledge and epistemology. In doing so, I do not conceive of the body and mind as separate. Following performance studies scholar Deidre Sklar, I refuse “to split off thinking minds from passive bodies or the corporeal from mental knowledge” (1994, p. 12). Mind-body dualism in western culture has been challenged by feminist theorists, and the different angles through which body issues have been approached are frequently based on the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/2014) and Pierre Bourdieu (1977/1990). The concept of *habitus* is central in their works, with an emphasis on the embodied and the performative, as well as an understanding of the generative potential of bodily *habitus*. *Habitus* is the corporeal manner in which culture, gender, and other social norms are embodied and it influences how individuals perceive themselves and the world around them. Marcel Mauss (1979) and Bourdieu have theorized how habitus is passed through generations through movement. Movement practices and ideologies are thus inscribed in our bodies. As I have explained in the previous chapter, the dictatorship’s body politics were mainly exercised through the manner in which the bodies incarnate the system of values under Francoism. This is why it is crucial to analyze Fina Miralles’ performance from a perspective where the body is at the center. Through an analysis of her work, I will argue that in their performances, agential processes have to do with their dynamic dimensions, and that bodily movement has the potential to transform the habitus.

In her book *Agency and embodiment*, performance studies scholar Carrie Noland has argued that it is possible to transform bodily habituality through corporeal process (2009). In

order to think about corporeal processes, the notion of embodiment will be introduced. Together with Noland, I follow anthropologist Thomas Csordas in understanding embodiment as the existential condition in which culture and subject are established. Through my reading of Fina Miralles' works, I argue that resistance to the Franco dictatorship and its normative regime is performed through embodiment. Somatic experiences create possibilities to gather new knowledge that is not regulated by the repressive state. I understand that Fina Miralles constructs an embodied sense of agency and somatic awareness through perceptual processes.

In order to understand how agentic properties emerge and endure within corporeal experience, this thesis will undertake a feminist phenomenological approach to the body. As Coole argues, a phenomenological approach allows one to observe “how bodies exhibit agency by exercising and experiencing their own corporeal modes of power” (2007: 414). This will allow me to advance my argument about the dimension of power lived as bodily effect/affect, that on the one hand is the site of a body politics and at the same time is where the individual or collective political bodies emerge with “agentic properties” (Coole, 2005: 131). As Noland explains, many scholars have contested “the tendency of Foucauldian and deconstructive analysis to reduce bodily experience to purely semiotic mediations” (2008, p. XIV). She argues that poststructuralist approaches differentiate corporeal signs from the experience of performing them, whereas phenomenological perspectives focus on the body as a source of knowledge and experience. To read the body of the performing artist purely as a signifying form would be to miss the profoundly charged emancipatory processes involved in the movements and bodily experiences themselves. As Noland points out, quoting Csordas in “Somatic Modes of Attention:”

meaning cannot be reduced to a sign ... the necessary critique [of a purely semiotic perspective] should not be construed as negating the study of signs with respect to the body, but as making a place for a complementary appreciation of embodiment and being-in-the-world alongside textuality and representation. [Semiotics and phenomenology] are complementary and not mutually exclusive standpoints (Csordas in Noland, 2008, p. XIV).

Since Fina Miralles' work has already been analyzed mostly under a feminist perspective of difference (Creus, 2018; Bassas, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2013; Aliaga, 2013) and a semiotic perspective (Aliaga, 2014; Garbayo, 2016), I shall explore her performances bringing into play

phenomenological understanding of the body. Following Noland's suggestion, instead of using a purely linguistic model of analysis, I construct one that focuses on the somatic and experiential—as well as the aesthetic, cultural and contextual—dimensions of corporeal actions and experiences.

I propose that Fina Miralles' sensorial explorations in the late years of Francoism are kinesthetic exercises and practices for gathering knowledge within her body and about the world. Kinesthesia is a sensory modality that refers to the awareness of the movement and the position of one's body. It is my argument that, through movement and in direct engagement with the world, these somatic investigations are feminist interventions. They constitute feminist interventions insofar they mobilize bodies in non-normative ways, challenging the dictatorship's status quo. By mobilizing the body in non-normative forms, minor resistances to the repressive system are incorporated, made flesh and bone, even if momentarily. Fina Miralles' actions, as sites and practices of corporeal knowledge, develop new forms of awareness within the body and in relation with the world. A feminist intervention is thus conceptualized as a corporeal process with agentic properties. This process shakes the subjectification of dominating structures that inform a given agent's habitus. Analyzing Fina Miralles' actions under this framework, contributes to rethinking kinesthetic knowledge-making as a feminist intervention focused on the body: an embodied action that might lead to transform a dominated bodily habituality.

In this chapter I will briefly trace the debate on the mind-body dichotomy and some feminist responses to it. I will focus specifically on phenomenological feminist approaches. A phenomenological approach allows me to think how embodiment widens the spectrum of corporeal agentic capacities. Then, I move to situate the phenomenological accounts of the subsequent feminist interventions, and finally I frame the relations between kinesthesia and agential processes. This theoretical framework allows me to analyse Fina Miralles' work as a feminist liberatory practice performed through kinesthetic knowledge.

3.2. The Mind-body Dichotomy Tradition and Feminist Responses

This section will summarize in a rather schematic way major debates about the body within traditional Western knowledge and responses from a feminist theory standpoint. An in-depth review of such trajectories is outside the scope of this thesis. My intention is to frame recent feminist attention to corporeality, and the turn to phenomenology to do so.

Traditional Western thought has traditionally posited a division between agency and embodiment, rooted in a distinction between the mind (or soul) and the body. René Descartes (1596-1650) articulated a mind/body dualism (known subsequently as “Cartesian dualism”) based on two forms of substance, the immaterial mind and the material body, which interact but exist in their own distinct arenas. He argued that the nature of the mind is distinct from that of the body, and thus that they can exist separately. His philosophy’s influence on Western cultural treatment of the body is permeated with a gender bias that privileges mind or reason over the body, culture over nature, subject over object, the rational over the irrational, active over passive, and public over private (Coole, 2013, p. 168). The mind-body dichotomy in Western culture forms a kind of “somatophobia,” or fear and aversion of the body (Spelman, 1982; Coole, 2013). This disownment of the body has led to the disappearance of somatic aspects in arguments regarding agency in traditional Western thought. Agency has been tied to the mind as have ethical judgments, will, and the capacity to act. Nobody doubts that the body is necessary for knowledge of the world and action; yet the body has been treated as a mere tool that obeys the mind. This traditional Western thought has encouraged the maintenance of this mind/body dichotomy, for instance in questions regarding memory, which has been reduced to a mental process.⁶⁰

Feminist thinkers have argued that privileging the mind over the body has, as a result, privileged men over women, since men have been traditionally associated with the intelligence of the mind, and women with emotion and the corporeal body. Feminist theory has critiqued the mind-body distinction in particular in order to understand its impact on the continued oppression of women. The undervaluation of the body worked to oppress women, who were assumed to be more tied to bodily life: “Women are somehow *more* biological, *more* corporeal, and *more* natural than men” (Grosz, 1994, p. 14).

⁶⁰ It is important to note that there have been exceptions to this tradition. For example, Hume’s *Emotions and Moral Psychology* (1739/1969) describes reason as being in the service of the emotions. Other theorists who have rejected the mind/body dualism include Dewey, who uses the notion of experience (1980); Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945/2014); Heidegger, with his concept of “being-in-the-world”, and Foucault, with theories of biopolitics and biopower. Each of these thinkers have reflected on the vital role of embodiment to explain human agency. In this research, I am partially drawing from feminist readings of Merleau-Ponty’s approach, which I explain in the next section.

There exist different strategies for valorizing women's embodiment in feminism. Some accounts of essentialism⁶¹ emerge as a search for a universalizing description of women, initiated within patriarchy. This description refers to the intrinsic and common characteristics of women, which were used historically as a philosophical justification for women's exclusion from the modes of cultural and economic production for centuries. With the definition suggested by Grosz (1994), essentialism and naturalism are associated with biologism and with psychological distinctions attributed to women, such as the maternal instinct, empathy, and non-competitiveness. Essentialism also links women to social practices such as intuition, emotional responses, commitment and concern for helping others. By celebrating embodiment, some feminists accounts ended up naturalizing sexual difference. It is in opposition to this kind of essentialist thinking that I read Fina Miralles' work as a feminist intervention based in the exercise of claiming her body through sensorial explorations.

Other perspectives, focused more centrally on overcoming the limits of an essentialized view of the body, are associated with post-structuralist feminisms⁶². These tend to explore specifically the relationship between the body, language, and power. The idea that femininity is constructed and contingent emerges here. From these positions, gender is conceived as a social construction, in which fluctuation is possible in the course of history and has been in constant negotiation from the very moment when its immobility was questioned. In post-structuralist theories, the body is seen as a cultural and not just a 'natural' object. The body is socially-inscribed, produced in the context of socio-historical relations, and does not have a fixed essence. These theorists reject biologist and essentialist accounts of the body, highlighting instead aspects of ideology, culture and power relations (Butler, 1993). Thus, feminist theorists of embodiment have made important contributions to philosophy in order to focus attention to the central role that the body has in social and political thought. They are centered not only on gendered embodiment but also on body/self relations more broadly.

Fina Miralles' selected performances in this dissertation are not particularly focused on the examination of power relations; rather, there is an excavation of the corporeal as a site of

⁶¹ There are important differences in how these different feminist thinkers conceived of the body, but to address these variations go beyond the scope of this dissertation.

⁶² There are different approaches and nuances in post-structuralist feminist thinking. My interest here is to simply indicate the high points of the debates about the status of the body within this line of thinking.

power and struggle that I argue can be examined through phenomenological accounts of the body from a feminist perspective. I turn below to the phenomenological approach in order to focus on the non-discursive aspects of experience that are necessary to analyze Fina Miralles' actions under the dictatorship and her emphasis on a pedagogical method for reuniting or synthesizing her bodily experience in association with nature. With this, I demonstrate that Butler and Foucault, who are focused on the penetrations of power/knowledge, are less interesting for the articulation of this thesis, since my aim is not to critically interrogate the implantation of dictatorial power in the body but rather the methods for self-liberation from that oppression, which Fina Miralles defines as a search for her body.

3.3. Phenomenological Accounts of the Body and Feminist Interventions

As we have seen, feminist debates have considered the question of embodiment in different manners. The turn to structuralist and later post-structuralist frameworks led thinkers to delve into aspects of ideology, culture and power relations. Although phenomenological approaches to female embodied experience had been already developed, starting with the work of Simone de Beauvoir (1953), they came under fire for their universalist and/or subjectivist tendencies. The emphasis placed on the impersonal structures (such as capitalism, language, and the unconscious) that have the power to construct bodies and subjectivities rendered knowledge derived from experience suspect (Coole 2013). But the body remains an important site of existence and knowledge, and I will seek to demonstrate how focusing on phenomenal processes allows me to enter a different agentic realm through the corporeal.

Merleau-Ponty's theorizations of the body (or body-subject) as an agent that acts have been reclaimed by scholars interested in corporeal self-empowerment. Corporeal agency is thus defined as the possibility of developing agentic processes in bodily situations and contexts, for example in a physical action, which may lead to an empowerment of the self (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012). Feminist phenomenologist, Gail Weiss, has suggested that the awareness of one's body presupposes a specific manner of experiencing the corporeal in emancipatory processes which implies kinesthesia. Weiss draws specifically from the kinesthetic aspects of bodily experience in Merleau-Ponty's work and from Michel Foucault's proposal that the pre-reflective area is the normative space of cultural expectation, yet she argues that "both authors fail to acknowledge the definitive ways in which bodies are marked by assumptions made about their

gender, their race, their ethnicity, their class, and their ‘natural’ abilities” (1999, p.2). These are the kind of markings that feminist scholars have been keen to work through.

One of the thinkers, Iris Marion Young, made important contributions to the understanding of oppressive systems that function through bodies that are socially marked, formed, and subordinated. Young explains that sexist oppression leads women to limit their bodily movements and use of surrounding space, limiting their self-consciousness of having a body, and producing an absence of self-confidence in one’s corporeal capabilities. The way that bodies are oppressively encoded has been of interest to feminist theorists in many areas. In her seminal essay “Throwing like a girl” (1980/2005), Young explains that “to throw like a girl” has its “source in the particular situation of women as conditioned by their sexist oppression in contemporary society”. Young affirms: “Women in sexist society are physically handicapped” (2005, p. 44). For Young, the issue goes further than physical particularity. She draws from Merleau-Ponty who, Young explains, locates “subjectivity not in mind or consciousness, but in the body.” She writes: “the body is the first locus of intentionality, as pure presence to the world and openness upon its possibilities. The most primordial intentional act is the motion of the body orienting itself [with] respect to and moving within its surroundings” (2005, p. 35). This theory is committed to the issue of embodiment especially in how oppressive actions damage the possibility of knowledge through the body. This is indispensable work, yet does not elaborate how body sensations/perceptions function for agentic possibilities and individuation.

Other feminist thinkers engaged in phenomenological perspectives have focused on processes of perception, such as Weiss (1999) who explores body images drawing from Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Paul Schilder (1950). Weiss thinks that we can think of our body images as manners of experiencing them. Weiss has helped me to think through Fina Miralles’ awareness of her body not as an anatomical body, but as a body that confronts daily tasks, a body in which some movements are visible and others invisible, and thus as a corporeal being. With Coole, I argue that “phenomenological investigations show that the body is never merely a passive transmitter of messages but plays an active role in the generation of perceptual meaning” (2005, p.128). It is thus that perceptual processes allow situating the political in a somatic dimension (Weiss, 1999). In this sense, I understand that the generation of meanings and agency pass through the corporeal, and it is in the body perception where it is possible to establish a relation with oneself and the world. Through such bodily schemas, Fina Miralles constitutes herself

subjectively and socially. I consider Fina Miralles' actions as "emergent agentic capacities, singularities and strategies [that operate] on a visceral level" (Coole, 2005, p.131). That is, through a phenomenological understanding of the body I can think about these actions under the dictatorship as somatic experiences where a challenge of the severe gender roles and conservative beliefs can begin.

Following Coole (2005), I look at phenomenal processes such as consciousness as part of the agentic "spectrum" of somatic agency. As already established in this research, agency is conceived as embodied and it is through a phenomenological approach that I understand that the body movements of Fina Miralles under the dictatorship are not simply transmitting messages, but are the main entry point to the production of perceptual meanings in a context where the sense of having a body of one's own and the power to act on and through it was stolen by the acute repressive body politics of the regime. In this sense, the analysis of Fina Miralles movements allow me to observe that there are perceptual and sensorial processes at the center of gathering knowledge, creating meaning and constructing agency.

3.4. Kinesthesia and Agency

The word kinesthesia derives from the Greek *kinen*, to move, and *aesthesis*, sensation. Sensing body position and muscle tension can be considered as integral to kinesthesia, defined as an "awareness of the position and movement of the parts of the body by means of sensory organs (proprioceptors) in the muscles and joints" (Reynolds and Reason, 2010, p.52). While kinetic refers to forces associated with movement, kinesthesia is considered a sense of the body that has been frequently omitted from the sensorium and is related to body receptors such as muscles, tendons and joints. In my research, I understand kinesthesia as a proprioceptive sense that is within our own movements. Reynolds and Reason clarify that the terms 'kinesthesia' and 'proprioception' are sometimes used as synonyms although, "a distinction is often made between 'proprioception,' referring to stimuli from *inside the organism*, and 'exteroception,' referring to stimuli received from *outside the organism*" (2010, pp. 52-53) [emphasis added]. Both stimuli (inside and outside) are important in my analysis of the different corporeal dynamics by Fina Miralles, leading to an agency emerging from within the body, and at the same time in relation with the world. Noland explains that scholars have approached the distinction between kinesthesia and proprioception but "most authors reserve *kinesthesia* to refer to sensations of

movement (rather than balance) available to the conscious mind” (2009: p.10). Kinesthesia implies both types of stimuli (interoception and exteroception). Both stimuli can lead to process of introspection that can be defined as an observation of one’s own perceptions, thoughts and feelings that is a reflective inner looking. In sum, addressing kinesthesia as a sense in this research, implies an understanding of movement as a manner of knowledge-making (Sklar, 2006).

Following Weiss, I understand that an increased awareness of available bodily power positions the body as a site “to fight oppression on a corporeal front” due to its very flexibility and permanence (1999, p.10). The possibilities of corporeal knowledge-making under oppressive systems, which provide spaces of agency, are the basis from which I examine Fina Miralles’ work. I argue that an increase of awareness of the moving body under the dictatorship could lead to a sense of recuperating the body, and that kinesthetic processes are at the core of this dynamic. As I mentioned in the previous section, the spectrum of somatic agentic properties is wide. In this thesis, I focus my analysis in the perceptual experiences of Fina Miralles as strategies to reclaim her body, and this I argue is done (even if only temporarily) through the sense of kinesthesia. In the rest of this section, I will address how the notion of kinesthesia is related to agency.

I draw from Sheets-Johnstone (2009, 2016) and Noland (2009) to reflect on Fina Miralles’ corporeal dynamics as a form of feminist intervention through the movement of the body. Noland argues that knowledge is generated from kinesthetic sensation, highlighting the necessity of being aware of the interconnections between the way bodies feel and produce signs in order to build agency.⁶³

⁶³ These notions help me address more accurately Fina Miralles’ process in her actions in the 1970s than Butler’s notion of “performativity”. Butler understands performativity “as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (1993, p.xii). Her considerations address not only the word, but subjectivity and cultural action within normative discursive practice. She sees all language as performative and although she does theorize how gender is enacted by and through the body, her emphasis on the discursive dimensions of performativity is not helpful here. My focus on the body as a non-discursive site of agency calls for a wider spectrum of agentic processes, such as the sense of kinesthesia. Noland further articulated the limitations of Butler’s proposal: “Performativity, as a theory of how bodies achieve social recognition (and sensual materiality), should be understood as relevant to more than verbal phenomena. Reiterated corporeal performatives produce a wide range of qualitative interoceptive experiences (as well as gendered, classed and raced bodies); and it is these experiences that are responsible for inspiring new gestural routines” (2009, p.6). Butler’s linguistic and theatrical understanding of “performativity” does not include this corporeal/kinesthetic aspect that I find is necessary to understand the whole of Fina Miralles’ practices under the Franco dictatorship.

This thesis is based on the belief that the roots of transgressive dynamics from repressive systems can be found in the body. I argue that the interoceptive experiences of Fina Miralles in her performance constitute a type of knowledge of herself and the world that can be seen as transgressive under acute repressive politics. Furthermore, the sensorial knowledge generated from her bodily experiences can be considered a feminist practice insofar as she develops a sense of the existence of her own body, and it is through this sensorial knowledge/kinesthesia that the sense of her own agency emerges. Her bodily/corporeal agency generates in turn relations/sensations that make a subjective space possible from which Fina Miralles accesses a sense of her own existence as a woman within a repressive system.

According to Noland, the kinesthetic awareness of our own movements can reinforce the change of body routines (2009). In the case of Fina Miralles, her movements and gesture in the actions, could challenge cultural meanings in Spain in the 1970s, by presenting a feminine body doing sensorial explorations, walking freely in the street, or developing reproductive tasks in intimate space in a different manner than the regime imposed on women. If we consider embodiment as the process through which behaviours, culture and beliefs are inscribed in the body, then following Noland, “agency is the power to alter those acquired behaviours and beliefs for purposes that may be reactive (resistance) or collaborative (innovative) in kind” (2009, p.9). She argues that kinesthesia is necessary for the existence of embodiment and agency, to distinguish our bodies from others, and to have the possibility of independent movement and agency.

My research question is about the potential liberatory corporeal dynamics in Fina Miralles’ work that encourage feminist interventions as a transgression to Francoist oppression, and kinesthetic knowledge allows me to reflect on these dynamics. When Noland describes kinesthesia, she associates it with corporeal performance and agency. She says that without kinesthesia there cannot be a development of any sense of agency. This coincides with Sheets-Johnstone’s argument that while we form and make sounds that express thoughts, feelings, perceptions, ideas, beliefs and so on, our tactile kinesthetic bodies are expressive in and of themselves in moving and gesturing in addition to completing words (2016). She argues that our point of departure in communication or in simply being with others is anchored in movement rather than in words. She affirms that we are related to each other by way of a common kinetic heritage: “Movement is our mother tongue” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009, p. 225). In this sense,

emotion and movement go hand-in-hand. For the socio-political context of this thesis, it is interesting to note how Sheets-Johnstone explains the qualitative dynamics of tactile kinesthetic affective bodies as the basis of life meanings that unfold in the silence of these qualitative dynamics. She talks about the power of silence in movement, arguing for recognition of the foundational reality and import of bodily movement and finally for the recognition of kinesthesia. She notes that kinesthesia has been forgotten as a sensory modality, and that textbooks commonly refer to just five senses. In her opinion, we could be statues if we only had five senses, since kinesthesia allows us to feel our own movement, the awareness of beginning a movement, the consciousness of the space-temporal energy dynamics, and also the sense of finishing a movement (2016).

Sheets-Johnstone argues for kinesthesia as a sensory modality that improves the qualitative dynamics of experiential realities and highlights the significance of thinking in movement. She draws from Husserl's insights regarding the genesis of "I can," which complement Kelso et al.'s findings regarding "positive feedback" in the dynamics of an infant in its kinesthetic kinetic awareness: "an awareness of its own movement and of how its movement can make things happen." Sheets-Johnstone understands this positive feedback as kinesthesia and argues that Kelso et al.'s investigations confirm that the essential foundations of agency are grounded in experienced movement. She says that: "The temporal sequence moves from I move, to I do, to I can. The stepping stones of agency that are grounded in experienced movement" (2016, 25:15). In *The Corporeal Turn* she argues that "the acquisition of verbal knowledge is post-kinetic and should properly be considered as such" (2009, p. 225). Drawing from Husserl, she affirms that "the corporeal-kinetic realities can be spelled out in terms of the five characteristics of ownness that Husserl enumerates on the way to spelling out the basis of intersubjectivity: fields of sensation, I cans, I govern, self-reflexivity, and psychophysical unity" (2009, p. 225).⁶⁴

⁶⁴ From the beginning of this research I have classified the process in Fina Miralles' performances through a series of pedagogical steps, derived through an embodied methodology: from sensations in relation with natural elements, to movement, and "I can" as a body consciousness that leads to agency (a process also in parallel: a more intimate relation to herself and an appearance in the public arena). Further in my research process I found these theoretical sources that explain this temporal sequence of "I move, I do, I can" as related to agency.

In *Agency and Embodiment*, Noland explains that kinesthetic experience is produced by embodied gestures and nourishes new cultural practices. Noland draws from Merleau-Ponty in *Migrations of Gesture* to explain that “gestures are not only productive of communication between agents, they also provide the individual agent with a private somatic experience of her own *moving body*” (2008, p. XI) [emphasis added]. In this thesis, I follow Noland’s statement referring to culture as something that not only is embodied but also can be challenged through the somatic or “kinetic acts” (2009, p.2). In this sense, through movement the body can learn new forms of gestures that produce changes in behaviour, something that not only affects the body itself but also the environment and bodies around it. I argue that this is a silent practice of resistance under the politics of dictatorship. Fina Miralles’ gestures in her performance lead me to think that, through embodiment, there is a possibility of resistance under the Francoist regime, and I argue that this is a particular privileged site for thinking about feminist politics specifically regarding to body as a site for knowledge.

Noland argues that kinesthetic sensations are prior to our subjectivity and that memory is constructed through this gestural sensation of “I can’s”. Thus, the sense of kinesthesia allows for practices of learning bodily gestures. Through kinesthesia, it is possible to obtain knowledge of our own bodies and this sense of the world can be taken as crucial to the construction of subjectivity. Noland then discusses the debate about the degree to which subjects are aware of their kinesthesia and explains that for some theorists (such as Pierre Bourdieu) “the body is condemned to move in disciplined ways under a gestural regime it can neither escape nor fully acknowledge”. From this point of view, the gestural routines would be as installed in the body that the kinesthetic sensation would be not possible. On the other hand, to challenge this position, Noland draws from the work of Deidre Sklar, who “replies that *no routine is so durably installed as to prevent kinesthetic awareness* and potentially, through that awareness, *transformation of the routine*” (Noland, 2009, p. 14) [emphasis added].

My reading of Fina Miralles’ actions is based on Noland’s theory about kinesthesia, Sheets-Johnstone’s kinetic processes and Sklar “kinesthetic empathy”. Through the gestures in performance, it is possible to access to a “kinesthetic knowledge” that permits one to challenge learned behaviours cruelly installed in bodies under Francoism. I understand Fina Miralles’ dynamics in her performances in the 1970s as a possible site for gathering knowledge and intervene in the world, proposing new gestures in a feminine body. Through movement and

kinesthesia, the artist performs something that, at the time, could not be expressed through words or voice. If, according to Noland (2009) kinesthetic experience reinforces the practice, alteration and, at times, the denial of the routines, then Fina Miralles' somatic practices/exercises can be understood as corporeal agency and potential, even momentarily, feminist keys for emancipation. I consider this process feminist for three key reasons: the possibilities for bodies to create a space of appearance (which in the case of Fina Miralles' performances seems to be a corporeal assimilation of the traumas of the repressive regime), a practice of awakening bodily sensation in the context of repression, and an exercise of the reconstitution of the body. These practices offer a model for a feminist politics that turns to the body as the main source of knowledge, emancipation and self-knowledge.

Noland is concerned with an individual's attention to the way the body moves. In reading Fina Miralles, I explain this individual attention to movement through kinesthesia (a focus on her own body moving in the private and public space), and through this (and this is the contribution from the analysis of her work to this theory there is an access to the world and to interoception processes within the body. If feminism has taken the body as a site for liberation from restrictive control but not a source for that liberation, because agency was frequently located in mind processes, what impact do Fina Miralles' actions have on figuring agency mainly on the body and positing a different method of emancipation?

3.5. Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, I have focused on the explanation of the body's kinetic dynamics as embodied agency and as a source of knowledge. I have developed my argument to explain the concept of "kinesthetic knowledge" and "corporeal agency," built through the analysis of Fina Miralles' performances, that I understand as reinforcing the possibilities of experimentation and alteration of the gender roles imposed by the Francoism. Thus, her work produces feminist emancipatory possibilities through kinesthesia (awareness of oneself –within the body– and intervening in the world). The theories addressed in this chapter support my argument about Fina Miralles' sensorial and movement practices in her actions in the 1970s as forms of body awareness related to self-consciousness. Fina Miralles gathered knowledge about herself and the world, and intervened in it through sensorial explorations and movement. The sense of agency is generated, among cognitive mechanisms, from sensorial, motor and perceptual mechanisms. I am

specifically focusing on kinesthesia that, as has been explained, is not only visual but also multisensory and that I argue is one of the mechanisms from which the sense of agency is generated in the work of Fina Miralles. Simultaneously, Fina Miralles' practice makes me rethink kinesthesia not only as the awareness of "body from inside" and the sense of one's body moving in the space, but also as a form of sensing one's relations with the world. The feminist politics I am interested in in this dissertation are those that situate the body as the main aspect in the process of agency. This is the reason for the selection of the term of kinesthesia and agency by Noland, which helps me read a type of feminist resistance that is somatic (Sklar, 1994; Sheets-Jonshtone, 2009, 2016). This led me to distinguish my approach from semiotic approaches and performativity, and because of this I do not use a linguistic model but a somatic and experiential approach to analyze Fina Miralles' performance. My main contribution is the reflection of somatic methods of body consciousness through proprioceptive awareness. This is key in my investigation, since a kinesthetic empathy is at play in my methodology, where I analyze movement and stillness of Fina Miralles in her actions. In the next chapter (4) I address the methods in this dissertation.

Chapter 4. Methodology: Embodied Modes of Research

Movement is a corporeal way of knowing. It is loaded with significance, with who people take themselves to be, as verbal media. [...] The point is that, in considering the body, it is essential to begin with the body and with its own, somatic, ways of knowing.

(Deidre Sklar, 1994. pp. 11-12)

The first time I met Fina Miralles, she explained the importance of visual images and movement for her personal process. She told me that, at the end of the 1970s, she suffered a very intense personal crisis. She did not feel her body and she did not have the strength to exist. Her mind built an image of this state: it was as if she had a wall behind her and a cliff in front of her. A voice inside⁶⁵ said: Jump! “I thought I was going to die but I jumped, I survived and I really started to live, to be in my body!”

I remember this encounter with Fina Miralles as an intense experience, as if I was witnessing a performance. I could feel in my body the sensations of almost preparing to jump. I could feel the jump that Fina Miralles was talking about. It was at this time that I started my “memo-writing.” About two years later, in my swimming time at the Olympic pool in Montreal during the writing of this dissertation, I saw the jump of a swimmer in an international diving championship. While I observed this jump, my body could feel the sensations of jumping, as a somatic empathic process. Here, from the first physical encounter with Fina Miralles, I realized more deeply the importance—in addition to other strategies—of the perception of my bodily sensations during this research process. By locating my “somatic” point of view, I could better unpack the distinct phenomenological, affective and conceptual perspectives of the body actions I analyzed.

This project is not meant to “supplement” the Spanish art history canon, with all its biases and presumptions. Neither is it a project to set up a more inclusive feminist canon, nor a project that covers all the works of Fina Miralles. This thesis is an exploration of the corporeal emancipatory strategies employed by this artist, through a feminist and embodied methodology. For these reasons, I have decided to focus on the series of actions that I argue theorize her corporeal emancipatory strategies. My earliest articulation of this research included visiting

⁶⁵ Fina Miralles refers frequently to what she describes as an inner voice that talks to her. I read that in the context of my argument that her corporeal exercises/practices lead her to develop an introspective process that encourage agency within the body.

archives and interviewing Fina Miralles. This was my “fieldwork.” However, my methodology has finally focused (this is one of the contributions to knowledge of this thesis) on the “how” of this fieldwork and an analysis of the traces of Fina Miralles’ performances. In order to be coherent with my research question, with the main corporeal work, and with the scarce written information about art and feminism in Spain and my interest in interviewing the artist as an important form of knowing through empathy, I have chosen an embodied methodology.

In this chapter, I share the strategies that I have used to analyze and write about the past of feminism and art in Spain, and I tackle some key concepts regarding research in art and feminism. Drawing from my current research experience, I propose ways of “doing,” explaining different strategies based on what other researchers of art have been reflecting on regarding feminist art history and approaches from other fields such as dance studies. In my research of the body actions by Fina Miralles, I draw upon “constructivist grounded theory” methods (Kathy Charmaz, 2014), “embodied methodologies” (Spatz, 2017), research-creation (Chapman and Sawchuck, 2012), practice as research (Estelle Barret, 2014), “kinesthetic empathy” (Sklar, 1994; Reynolds & Reason, 2012) and haptic experience (Kathy O’Dell, 1997) proceeding from a situated feminist approach (Haraway, 1988). Due to the corporeal aspect of the subject of my research (body actions), I argue for a feminist embodied research.

This embodied methodology was developed through fieldwork and in the process of writing this dissertation. In this chapter, I contextualize my archival and interview work and my analysis and writing within the task of doing what I consider “feminist art history.” Due to my background as a psychotherapist, I put emphasis on the time I shared with Fina Miralles while interviewing and observing her. My training as a psychologist makes this research on art and feminism an interdisciplinary, innovative and unconventional way of doing art historical research where creative processes were necessary to answering my research questions as they were posed. I practice “empathy exercises” as a mode of feminist historical research. I show that what I excavated were Fina Miralles’ gestures and performances in the late years of Francoism, and the roots of the history of my own country. In this research, I develop a methodology of encounter for examining Fina Miralles’ work as an alternative to the critical distance in traditional art historical methods.

4.1. The Body as a Central Factor in Knowledge Production: Embodied Methodologies and Research-Creation.

A form of spiritual inquiry, 'conocimiento' is reached via creative acts—writing, art making, dancing, healing, teaching, meditation, and spiritual activism—both mental and somatic (the body, too, is a form as well as site of creativity). Through creative engagements, you embed your experiences in a larger frame of reference, connecting your personal struggles with those of other beings on the planet, with the struggles of the Earth itself.

(Gloria Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 542)

The first time I visited the Museu d'Art de Sabadell—where Fina Miralles donated her archive—I saw the image depicted in Figure 6 on the cover of *Quadern* journal. At the time, I was not aware of this recent performance. My initial purpose was to look for documentation from the 1970s. I had studied Fina Miralles' performances of that period, and her main focus then on contact with natural elements, and I knew that she had returned to drawing and writing in the 1980s. The fact that she returned to a bodily relation with the water element in her recent work struck me and made me think: If Fina Miralles is re-experiencing her body in contact with natural elements (like water), it means that it is very important to go back to her work with natural elements in the 1970s to look for clues to understand her art/life trajectory. The fortuity and unplanned encounter with this image were the thread that confirmed for me my focus on the 1970s.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Fina Miralles was waiting for me in the Figueres train station when we met for first time. In this one day encounter she brought me a few things: this image in a big poster and her autobiography *Testament Vital*. On the way back to Barcelona the same day, with the emotion of our first encounter, I forgot the poster on the train platform. I phoned the next day and they had kept the image in the office of "lost objects." Six months later when I travelled for a longer visit to her I recuperated the poster.



Figure 6. Fina Miralles in “*El Retorn.*” Photograph by Joan Casellas (2012). Archive: Arxiu Aire

Approaching Fina Miralles’ work as an artist with a performance and video art background pushed me to develop a particular set of creative strategies to access to her work including: the re-creation of some of hers work, my own artistic performances (before and during fieldwork), the use of the camera during the research process and in fieldwork, and through the curation of Fina Miralles’ super-8 films into a media exhibit. The creative process I committed to took certain risks in terms of the physical/emotional/personal labors that the critical distance of “the good eye” in art history would not have taken. Through this process I challenged the traditional ways in which production of knowledge happens, particularly in that this research was approach particularly in a corporeal manner. The process itself was a creative production and advanced my research: it was through the corporeal and creative experiences/practices I undertook that the theoretical concepts and arguments emerged. The methodologies in this research can be seen as research-creation process itself, while also producing some creative products and offshoot projects.

During my fieldwork in 2016, I recreated her work and reflected on my own performative oeuvre as a manner of understanding the kind of access to knowledge made possible by making corporeal and artistic works. In *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, Estelle Barrett argues that artistic practice can be viewed as the “production of knowledge or philosophy in action” (2014, p. 1). She draws from Martin Heidegger’s notion of “handlability”

to demonstrate that artistic exploration is a manner of knowledge production “derived from doing and from the senses” (Barrett, 2014, p. 1). This is related to the phenomenological aspect of this investigation that has helped me to read the corporeal “practices” and “exercises” of Fina Miralles. Barrett defines “practice-led research” as a form of inquiry that is interdisciplinary and expands the possibilities of research. She explains that

creative arts research is often motivated by emotional, personal and subjective concerns [and] it operates not only on the bases of explicit and exact knowledge, but also on that of tacit knowledge. An innovative dimension of this subjective approach to research lies in its capacity to bring into view particularities that reflect new social and other realities either marginalised or not yet recognised in established social practices and discourses (2014, p.4).

This aspect of “tacit knowledge” developed by creation was particularly important in the research of the corporeal dynamics of Fina Miralles’ that allowed me to understand the “silent” or “hidden” knowledge that happened through her body under a repressive system. In this sense, my own creative practice helped me to discover through the practice of creative actions an aspect of the research that could have not happened through discursive or visual analysis alone.

Barrett, inspired by Martin Heidegger’s concept of “praxical knowledge”, explains that “praxical knowledge implies that ideas and theory are ultimately the result of practice rather than vice versa” (2007, p.6). My creative practice led me to build the theoretical aspects from which I draw to answer my question regarding liberatory and pedagogical aspects in the somatic dynamics of Fina Miralles’ works under Francoism. Also, my own creative practices encouraged a research centered on process and on my own corporeal responses to it, reinforcing a self-reflexive manner of doing my research.

Barrett also draws from Bourdieu to explain that “reflexivity demands that both the researcher and her/his methods be submitted to the same questions that are asked of the object of enquiry.” (2007, p.6) Thus, a reflexive process that included a creative aspect was present and necessary during my entire research path. These themes are particularly linked with the essence of my research question that deals with “tacit” and sometimes invisible knowledge that is accessible through the corporeal and somatic.

The use of creations during the process of research was a manner of engaging in the intersubjective encounter, not only the “encounter” with the traces of the performances but also—

and most importantly—with the encounter with Fina Miralles. For instance, my use of a camera during my fieldwork⁶⁷ was not merely a record of some of my conversations but a creative engagement in the intersubjective encounter with her and with myself. For my investigation, it was not enough to “read” her archive and her documentation. An embodied methodology was necessary, one that drew also from research-creation practices. In this sense, I had better access to unpacking my research question regarding the liberatory dynamics of somatic processes through an embodied creative process.

Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuck’s (2012) approach helped me to find a method for my embodied research that focused on my own process of investigation through a “creative process” and an “experimental aesthetic component” (2012, p. 5). They define one of the four categories⁶⁸ of “research-creation” as “research-from-creation”:

Research is not only part of developing art projects that then stand on their own; rather, performances, experiences, interactive art works, et cetera can also be ways of generating research data that can then be used to understand different dynamics. The use of such research information does not simply come at the end of the process to “evaluate” the effectiveness of the work; instead, the work itself can be used to generate information on user-responses to help build the project in question, as well as future initiative (2012, p.16).

It was the actual immersion in these creative practices what led me to find the answers to my questions through a somatic way of learning, through corporeal knowledge. The terms followed from the practice, rather than the other way around. Thus, the reflection on my research question about feminist emancipatory politics through the body could not be addressed without engaging, bodily, in some form of creative practice (Chapman & Sawchuk, 2012, p. 6). I am also inspired by Chapman and Sawchuk’s observation that research-creation might not take the form of a research result but might also include an approach to the investigation process itself (2012, p. 7). In this research, my creative practice is principally methodological, a mode of research among other connected approaches, rather than the principle object of my research output. While much of this thesis is recognizable within the parameters of traditional research (including literature

⁶⁷ Not only we (Fina Miralles and me) were filmed by filmmaker Ivó Vinuesa but also I used a go-pro camera to film sometimes my time with the artista and my time during the breaks between conversations.

⁶⁸ They distinguish four types of research-creation that are connected with each other: research-for-creation, research-from-creation, creative presentation of research and creation-as-research (2012).

reviews, theoretical frameworks, and close readings of artistic works), the conclusions I arrived at in the thesis would not have been reached without a complementary attention to the kinesthetic knowledge produced out of my own creative acts. Through this research, I put into practice a set of different experimentations in order to access Fina Miralles' work in a way that allows me to reflect differently on modes of knowing. As Sklar argues: "Research moves back and forth between *corporeal and verbal modes*, making adjustments between enactments and symbolic representations, combining *qualitative and empathic techniques* with more traditional verbocentric methods" (1994, p. 18) [emphasis added]. Drawing from Sklar, I ground my research in "bodily ways of knowing" (1994, p. 20).

By doing so, I explain my experiences in this research, and what I have considered a somatic mode of knowing Fina Miralles' practices. Re-performing her works was a research practice rather than a creation of new artistic works. As Chapman and Sawchuck refer to "creation-as-research",

it redefines the very concepts of theory, creativity, and knowledge. It is hand-on form of theoretical engagement at the same time as it acknowledges the processes of analysis and articulation of new concepts that are potentially part and parcel of artistic creation. Knowledge is produced as creative work, and not simply through their analysis and interpretation, contributing to knowledge in a profoundly different way from the academic norm" (2012, p.21).

In this research, I also performed archival work and interviews *in situ*. I presented the documentation of the whole process (i.e., extracts from Fina Miralles' writing, videos/photographs of the interviews at her house, and documentation of re-experiencing her performances), and used my own performances as a form of inquiry when I designed a curatorial project. In "Identifying the Performative Research Paradigm," Haseman defines performative research as "expressed in non-numeric data, but in forms of symbolic data other than words in discursive text. These include material forms of practice, of still and moving images, of music and sound, of live action and digital code" (2009, p. 151). He calls this a "multi-method led by

practice” (Haseman, 2009, p. 151). My research is not only “qualitative research”⁶⁹ but also “performative research” in the sense Haseman lays out.

Feminist art historian Karen Cordero proposes a “feminist strategy for writing and curating” that she learned through her “practice-based research”. A writing practice that leads to a curatorial project is different from simply writing. The experience of curating artwork reinforces a creative aspect in the writing where the embodied access to the art piece is at play (particularly through the perceptual processes necessary in order to set up an exhibition), and encourages a more situated and personal approach when it is done from a feminist perspective. Some of Cordero’s conclusions are linked with the research-creation aspects underlined previously and also bring into question issues related to feminist methodologies in feminist art historiography, which is particularly important for my use of research-creation within my feminist analysis of Fina Miralles’ work. Cordero reflects on the question of methodology in feminism and art, a question that has also been addressed by Parker and Pollock in the 1980s and by Pollock more recently.⁷⁰ Cordero devises approaches for writing and curating from a feminist perspective, even when one is not dealing with feminist art, or when one is dealing with artists who do not define themselves as feminists.⁷¹ In this paper, she offers her experience as a curator and makes suggestions for what a feminist exhibition might be. As she points out, this approach can also be applied to writing practices. Her approach has also been inspiring for the methodology of this thesis, and matches with the “tacit knowledge” and corporeal aspect that Barrett addresses and with the importance of process in research-creation practices referred to by Chapman and Sawchuck, particularly with two of the key points that Cordero highlights as a feminist strategy:

⁶⁹ “All forms of social inquiry that rely primarily on qualitative data . . . i.e., nonnumeric data in the form of words” (Schwandt as cited in Haseman, 2009, p. 151)

⁷⁰ In “Is Feminism a ‘Bad’ Memory or a Virtual Future? Some Reflections on Art Historiography, Feminism and Cultural memory” (2016).

⁷¹ It is important to mention here the definition of feminist art that I follow was used by Mayer, a Mexican feminist artist, referring to her conceptual work “Archiva: Obras Maestras del Arte Feminista en Mexico” [Archiva: Master Pieces of Feminist Art in Mexico] (2013): “The artists selected are feminist in practice although not all them are militants. They don’t necessarily conceive of their work as feminist art, but on the basis of its content or the context in which it has been presented it is” (Mayer as cited in Cordero, 2017, p. 272). And: “For me, feminist art is whatever we do that we want to consider feminist art. Often [...] this has to do with women’s issues, or gender issues, from a critical point of view. The kind of work I am interested in [...] is the work that is not just thematically, but also formally proposing something [...] the form, and the strategy of the work, also reflects a critical attitude toward things—a feminist perspective on the result, on the process, on the distribution, on the whole thing. [...] [It is] art as a whole process and phenomenon, not just a product” (Mayer as cited in Erin McCutcheon, 2016, p. 64).

1. The use of space and narrative, taking into account *the body in an integral multi-sensorial and multidisciplinary sense as the central factor in experience and knowledge production*.
2. Privileging *process* rather than product (Cordero, 2017). [emphasis added]

Research-creation approaches from a feminist perspective privilege the corporeal, personal and situated approach, something that was put in practice in this research. In this project, I argue for a research process that privileges the relation between research-creation and a feminist embodied practice. Both aspects were interweaved in my *modus operandi*. I examined Fina Miralles' work creatively, interpreting it through my own practice, and creating performances and gestures that sought to get inside the work.

The methodological strategies I use are drawn from several approaches from different fields. As Stewart argues in "Practice as Research:" "if we are going to play in the field of research we need to understand many research methods. We need to appreciate that each has limits and strengths in order to make a fit between the models selected and the particular needs of the paradigm under investigation" (2014, pp. 127-128). This dissertation comprises a number of approaches to research and one of them is research-creation, drawing particularly from the embodied, personal, and situated processes of the investigation. Thus, this thesis is rooted in the idea that the body is the main site where experience and knowledge production happen. In the next sections, I explain my practices regarding these strategies, specially focusing on the body as a central factor in experience and knowledge production.

4.2. Feminist Research: On "Situated Knowledge" and "Experience"

Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges
(Haraway, 1988, p. 581)

To look at Fina Miralles' pieces—and other artists' works in the 1970s that tell the stories of our country—in a corporeal way is a necessary action for women in Spain in order to map our bodies, to be aware of the space we occupy, and to build our identities. Performance is a corporeal research practice, and this must be noted particularly given my emphasis on kinesthetic

knowledge. To look at Fina Miralles' pieces is an exercise in looking backwards in order to get corporeal clues to our present, while at the same time looking inside in order to look forward in an oppressive, racist, patriarchal and capitalist system. In *Remembering: Oral History Performance* Della Pollock argues that performance is "an especially charged, contingent, reflexive space of encountering the complex web of our respective histories" (2005, p. 1). In this sense, participants in a performance (the public or the performer) are engaged in a new comprehension of their own histories, and this allows the possibility of raising alternative needs and voices in the public debate. "As live representation, performance may in effect bring imagined worlds into being and becoming, moving performers and audience alike into a palpable recognition of possibilities for change" (Pollock, 2005, p. 1).

Pollock explains how this is a transformation process:

At the very least, it translates subjectively remembered events into embodied memory acts, moving memory into re-remembering. That passage not only risks but endows the emerging history/narratives with change. [...] *[T]he body remembering, the bodies remembered, and the bodies listening* in order to remember will be redeemed in some kind of change—the small changes that come with repetition in different moments with different listeners; the large changes that might result from entering the memories of a whole body politic into the human record of daily living. In this sense *performance* is a *promissory act*. Not because it can only promise possible change but because it catches its participants—often by surprise—in a contract with possibility: with imagining what might be, could be, should be. (2005, p. 2) [emphasis added]

Because of these very points, as a researcher of Fina Miralles' actions, I entered into the story of my country told in a corporeal way. I also experienced the artist's path as a woman of the first generation of the post-dictatorship: I am alive, I am here, I am a subject.⁷² In *Intersubjetividad y Transferencia: Apuntes Para la Construcción de un Caso de Estudio*

⁷² This sentence is inspired by a recent performance by Fina Miralles where she is remembering the dictatorship while reciting: "No se qui soc, no soc ningú, no pensó res" [I don't know who I am, I am nobody, I don't think anything]. In a conversation with her about this piece—which will be explained in chapter 6—she joked, telling me: "¡Yo se quien soy!" [I know who I am!].

[Intersubjectivity and Transference: Notes for a Case Study Construction], an article in a Mexican journal of art about feminisms and politics, Garbayo⁷³ says:

Empathy and affects, traditionally excluded from cognitive processes in philosophy, are shown as central elements of the epistemic experience. They constitute a type of *situated knowledge* from which to rethink the ways in which we investigate and the possibilities of construction of *a subject that explores being anchored in the lack and the uncertainty*. The enlightened inheritance of reason excludes *the body itself as a mediating element in the processes of knowledge*, and with it the experience and the ability to affect and be affected. (2016, p. 90) [my translation, emphasis added]

Here Garbayo highlights the embodied aspect of situated knowledge, as well as the situation of lack and uncertainty for a researcher. I base my research approach on these aspects, which I consider the roots of a feminist and embodied methodology. My research position is based on a conscious (and unconscious) bias, as well as the recognition of sharing emancipatory interests with Fina Miralles and the awareness of a potential affectation—of both, the researcher and the researched—during the process. In addition, I emphasize embodied methodological practices—such as archival work and re-performing art pieces—as a fundamental part of my research that is intertwined with the theoretical analysis of the corporeal actions of Fina Miralles.

In her article “Is There a Feminist Method?” Harding proposes certain characteristics that distinguish feminist research. She suggests starting from “women’s experience as a resource to generate scientific problems, hypothesis, and evidence, to design research for women, and to place the researcher in the same critical plane as the research subject” (Harding, 1997, p. 165). It is important to analyze the lives and experiences of women. In this way, women are placed as valid subjects of knowledge, and research takes up the personal and its importance for feminist politics.

In this thesis, the methodology used contributes to the ways knowledge can be explored and transmitted. I consider Haraway’s proposal for situated knowledge as a feminist practice of particular relevance. First, my social surroundings and family education have been mostly shaped by the hierarchical structures and disciplinary organization of the traditional heterosexual family,

⁷³ Please note that for the methodology in this thesis I am drawing from anglophone and Latin American literature. There is no research in the Spanish literature referring specifically to methodology on art and feminism (excepting brief mentions by Garbayo (2016a; 2016b).

and more particularly by societal models promoted through the Franco dictatorship, where patriarchal power was institutionally justified and even promoted. For instance, my family on my mother's side (five children: three boys and two girls)—with a strong catholic culture—gave superior education only to the men. Luckily, my parents educated me in a different model from the one they assimilated in their families of origin. Second, during my childhood there was a brief cultural phenomenon in Spain, later known as *La Movida* [The Hullabaloo]. Artists shaped an alternative to mainstream art that challenged prevailing Francoist social models, and circulated ideas to a broader public through varying counter-practices, including music and children's programming.⁷⁴ Also, at this time, the first women's institutes flourished, and their feminist libraries provided a space for encounter with feminist ideas. I frequented these libraries during my teens and continue to do so today. Third, I grew up in a city on the Mediterranean coast, very much in touch with nature. This city is built looking at the sea. My summers were spent by the sea and in a small town in the interior of the country with mountains, holm oaks, black poplars and the *Tormes* River. This rooted experience in nature helped me to understand Fina Miralles' work with nature and elements. Fourth, my educational and professional background as a psychologist/psychotherapist⁷⁵ working with women victims of gender violence since 1998 in *Centro Mujer 24 Horas*, a pioneering center in Spain (founded in 1997) which researches and attends cases of gender violence. This has contributed to my personal development and practice, shaping a feminist perspective that has influenced the way I look at the world. In Spain we have a pioneering law in Gender Violence.⁷⁶ However, this legal frame is not parallel with a society still marked by the remnants of the dictatorship (Núñez Puente & Gámez Fuentes, 2017; Gámez Fuentes & Gómez Nicolau, 2017). In addition, since the beginnings of my career, I have had the opportunity to work in gender issues across different countries (Honduras, the Dominican

⁷⁴ *La bola de cristal* [Crystal Ball], for example, is a Spanish televisión program aired during the 1980s (1984-1988). It reflected the transition period in Spain and the cultural and musical explosion known as the *Movida Madrileña*. The main character of the program was *La Bruja Avería* [The Witch] who, through a gender-based analysis, could be seen as a feminist media intervention at the time. The soundtracks of this program were interpreted by musical artists from *La Movida*

⁷⁵ My practice has been always supervised by a feminist group formed by psychologists, artists, health professionals (such as nurses) and academics and coordinated by psychotherapist Peter Szil (<http://www.szil.info/en/presentation>). I still participate in these conversations which have also been very helpful in the research process in this thesis (as a space for sharing personal experiences with this feminist situated approach analyzing corporeal strategies of emancipation).

⁷⁶ *Ley Orgánica 1/2004, de 28 de Diciembre, de Medidas de Protección Integral Contra la Violencia de Género.*

Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Colombia, Chile) an experience that has increased my understanding of the varying situations of women and feminisms beyond my country of origin. Finally, my position is deeply influenced by my own work as a visual artist interested in an approach to art as a means exploring the body/self.⁷⁷ From my experience as a psychologist and as an artist, as well as my involvement since childhood in physical activities (swimming, classical ballet, Iyengar yoga, aikido and, more recently, Feldenkrais, Qi Gong and 5 Rhythms dance) I have come to consider the body as the main receptor for my memories as well as a place where freedom (new movements) can take place. These last years have also been shaped by a “body crisis” which forced me to make changes in my physical practice, starting sometimes from “point zero” and experimenting with exercising almost without movement.⁷⁸ This physical experience has given me clues to understanding the corporeal process in Fina Miralles’ actions. In sum, all these experiences have been significant in this research process.

I take into account that the way I analyze Fina Miralles’ performances is from a limited but situated knowledge position (as a white woman living in the West) and especially (due to my research case study and the time period of my focus) my condition as a Spanish woman born in the last year of Francoism. This is the position from which I think and write. This has conditioned my artistic practice and, in fact, my main focus in this thesis: corporeal emancipatory possibilities under the dictatorship in my country of origin. These situations and experiences have shaped not only the point from which I look at Fina Miralles’ work but also the “how.” That is, while exploring the practices and “exercises” used by the artist, my embodied analysis (not only through re-performing but also during my own body practices) and kinesthetic empathy made me aware of my own body, movements and habits.

⁷⁷ I have had numerous residencies and individual and collective exhibitions in the Dominican Republic, Canada, Cuba and Spain.

⁷⁸ During the Fall 2017 I had the opportunity to have a few sessions of Feldenkrais Method (somatic education that uses ease, slowness, reduction of effort and exploration of unusual sequences of movement). This experience helped me to develop my empathy with the work of Fina Miralles and its emancipatory possibilities. In one of the sessions, I was lying on the table without any movement, however the professional made me conscious of my proprioception/kinesthesia, a sense that we take for granted but was there in order to feel the volume, borders, space, and sensations “within the body.” She asked me to look for sensations while lying down: “What am I in this body?; This body is me; How can I challenge/reflect the way I am?” This experience in my body allows me to analyze the work of Fina Miralles from the perspective of these questions and sensations.

My gender, education, family origins, personality, profession and historical location, in sum, my *experience* has shaped my approach to Fina Miralles' work from 1973 to 1975. As Haraway argues: "Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn to see" (1988, pp. 583).

In "Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality, and Feminist Research," England explains the importance of the role of the researcher in the research encounter:

I see fieldwork as a dialogical process in which the research situation is structured by both the researcher and the person being researched. [...] We do not parachute into the field with empty heads and a few pencils or a tape-recorder in our pockets ready to record the "facts" [...] the researcher is an instrument in her/his research. [...] We are different positioned subjects with different biographies; we are not dematerialized, disembodied entities. This subjectivity does influence our research. (1994, pp. 247-248)

Drawing from Warren (1988, p. 7), England argues that positioning the researcher as "any person, without gender, personality, or historical location, who would objectively produce the same findings as any other person is completely mythical" (1994, p. 248). By researching and analysing the performances by Fina Miralles, I gained a deeper understanding of the patriarchal culture in which I grew up. This consciousness of my roots, with a focus on the body politics, contributed to my "self-understanding" as a woman in Spanish society. In a certain way, I have done an exercise of memory of my socio-historical context. Analyzing her performance is a way to reflect on my past. While I wrote this story, I reflected on the diverse power abuses in the dictatorship, and the continued inheritances from the dictatorship in Spanish society. Also, while experiencing and analysing Fina Miralles' corporeal dynamics I deliberate about the possibilities of feminist emancipation from the patriarchal/dictatorial politics through the body. In this sense I am contributing to the debate on questions of the archive in feminism: "How have feminist archival practices engendered new historical narratives and new political agents?" (Eichhorn, 2013, p. 2). In this thesis, I stress the importance of situating myself in this project, and reflecting upon why I turn to the body as a specific source of knowledge.

In "Situated Knowledges", Haraway writes about the importance of local knowledge and of learning through our bodies:

I want a feminist writing of the body that metaphorically emphasizes vision again, because we need to reclaim that sense to find our way through all the visualizing tricks and powers of modern sciences and technologies that have transformed the objectivity debates. *We need to learn in our bodies*, endowed with primate color and stereoscopic vision, how to attach the objective to our theoretical and political scanners in order to name where we are and are not, in dimensions of mental and physical space we hardly know how to name. (1988, p. 582) [emphasis added]

In order to provide a better account of the world, local knowledge should be situated within a broader framework of knowledge and power. Fina Miralles' body practices call for a somatic appreciation of the world, and my choice to explore these works is equally framed by the personal, the subjective and professional experience, arenas where I emphasize corporeal learning processes. This approach does not detract from the rigour of my scholarly research. Our personal conditions motivate us to develop the necessary approaches to the problematics that we as researchers aim to expose.

Regarding the relationship between the researcher and the object of investigation, and the political dimensions of doing feminist research, Maria Mies⁷⁹ proposes not to assume a neutral place with respect to one's "object" of investigation. She proposes "a partial awareness based on partial identification" (1998, pp. 78-80). This allows the identification of common interests; for instance, "being in favor of the fight against the exploitation and oppression of women" (1998, p. 80). Mies proposes we be aware of what unites and what distances the researcher and the subject researched. By reflecting on subjective aspects, without losing sight of scientific objectivity, the way of conceiving the relationship between subject and object is modified. Mies proposes that feminist research should be inline with emancipatory action. For this, it is important to be aware of patriarchal oppression and also the possibility of strengthening women as subjects who can be transformed and have a liberating praxis.

In "Women's 'Lived Experience,'" Sonia Kruks explains how "experience" has been a much-contested term in feminist theory. She explains how in the 1980s "there was critique of this concept used in the 'consciousness-raising' groups of the 1970s where 'women's experience' de facto stood for the experiences of only a certain subgroup of privileged (white, middle class,

⁷⁹ Maria Mies is a German philosopher, sociologist and Women's Studies researcher, scholar, ecofeminist, and international activist.

heterosexual) women” (Kruks, 2014, p. 75). Poststructuralists argued for caution regarding the authority of testimony. Joan Scott in “The Evidence of Experience” (1991) encourages paying attention to the ideological systems that create and shape experience and how these systems essentialize experience and identity in groups. As Oksala argues in “In Defense of Experience,” Scott’s essay “produced a timely shift in feminist theory away from a narrow focus on the issues of identity and victimization to a broader study of their constitutive conditions” (2014, p. 388). Johanna Oksala also suggests that Scott explains the nature of experience as discursive. According to Oksala, “the philosophical problem of discursive idealism [is that] we become trapped inside a purely discursive realm with no traction to reality” (2014, p. 390). Oksala argues that “a critical study of evidence of experience—when experience is understood in its traditional philosophical meaning as a subjective apprehension of reality—does not have to imply metaphysical or epistemological foundationalism as Scott claims, but is indispensable for challenging them” (2014, p. 389). Kruks argues that phenomenological approaches to the body lead us to important registers of women’s lives. In this sense, there are embodied and affective manners of getting knowledge, and intervening in the world by actions that cannot be comprehended by “discourse analysis” or other strategies that objectify “experience” (2014). Fina Miralles’ work led me to focus on an investigation where embodied and affective ways to gather knowledge were the centre of the experience.

Oksala argues that phenomenological analyses of experience are important for feminism (although poststructuralists might find them essentialist) (2016). She points out that “it is my contention that feminist theory must ‘retrieve experience,’ but this cannot mean returning to a pre-discursive female experience grounded in the commonalities of women’s embodiment” (Oksala, 2016, p. 40). She argues that experience is constructed and “reflects oppressive discourses and power relations” (Oksala, 2016, p. 43) and also that “experiences can contest discourses” (2016, p. 50).

Drawing from Kruks and Oksala—and taking into account the scope of the theoretical argument in this thesis (corporeal and kinesthetic agency)—I consider that the diverse forms of theorizing experience drawing from phenomenology and feminism⁸⁰ (Kruks, 2014) provide

⁸⁰ Kruks argues that “feminist phenomenology has extended its applications in various directions.” A few references are: Salomon (2011); Bartky (1990); Kruks (2001); Alcoff (2006) and Ahmed (2006).

interesting clues for comprehending women's experience, and further that these forms of theorizing "can make an important contribution to feminist politics" (Kruks, 2014, p. 75). This provides an interesting standpoint from which to look at the corporeal work produced by Fina Miralles during the late years of Francoism, since it reinforces a focus on "embodied, situated, immediate and often more affective forms of experience" (Kruks, 2014, p. 76). Because of these very points, Fina Miralles' experiences in relation with natural elements can be read as an access to her own subjectivity, and as a contestation to the power exerted by Francoism.

In this investigation, subjectivity is understood as constructed through our social and historical *situated knowledges* as women. One interesting point in feminist research is its concern with the process and the investigator. This is one of the consequences of criticism of the traditional scientific model. In this sense, feminist research highlights the need to make explicit the beliefs, attributes and experiences of the researcher (situated knowledge). These acknowledgements move the investigation away from disembodied objectivity and situate the researcher in a continued construction. This relates to the way in which as researchers we do art history: taking women's bodies and experience as sources for knowledge, questioning the canon of the conception of art history models, and emphasizing the importance of the research process (Cordero, 2017).

Performative research-creation, as a method, is directly related to situatedness and embodied knowing, and provides a framework for this investigation's reliance on kinesthetic empathy as a research tool. Both, my biography (my personal and professional background) and my creative practices and actions within this process allow me to read Fina Miralles' work for feminist politics. These different processes constitute the fact of making my research somatic, and thus I understand this investigation kinesthetically.

Corporeal emancipatory possibilities under the Franco dictatorship have also been a theme in the curatorial projects I have produced with Fina Miralles' Super-8 films. I curated a program of four video-performances:⁸¹ *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* [Atmospherics Phenomena] (1973), *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Letting Snails free] (1973) (Figure 8), *Duna* [Dune] (1973) (Figure 7) and *Petjades* [Footsteps] (1976). This program was part of an event in the winter of

"Phenomenology offers important ethical and political resources for feminist practices" (Kruks, 2014, 86, 87, 90).

⁸¹ The first three are part of my analysis in chapter 6.

2017 at the Feminist Media Studio⁸² (Concordia University, Montreal) and in the winter of 2018 at the Centro Cultural de España in Santo Domingo.⁸³



Figure 7. Documentation of *Duna* [Dune] (1973) from the series *Traslacions* by Fina Miralles. Still, Super-8 Film (Author: Unknown). Archive MAS.



Figure 8. Documentation of *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Liberating Snails] (1973) from the series *Traslacions* by Fina Miralles. Still, Super-8 Film (Author: Unknown). Archive: MAS.

In this curatorial activity, I explain how Fina Miralles verifies her existence through her films, and the fact that her body can occupy a space. My curatorial activity constituted a method of research, a method for explaining the connections between the four films. As I was analyzing the material, I utilized the first person, as if I were Fina Miralles. This is one of my empathic

⁸² Information on this exhibition can be found on the Feminist Media Studio website at: <http://feministmediastudio.ca/events/fina-miralles/>

⁸³ Information on this exhibition can be found on the Centro Cultural de España's website at: <https://ccesd.org/exposiciones/les-recerques-de-fina-miralles-super-8-film-1973-1976>

methodologies in order to be in relation with the pieces, and this gave me keys to understanding the process involved in her performances and the connections between them. These are my statements in first person with my empathic methodology, as if I could be her in the performances: “I am looking at myself,” “I create new spaces,” “I build paths,” “I walk through them.” This served also to elaborate the title⁸⁴ of the curatorial project.

Focusing on only four works and also telling a story for the public was an excellent exercise that served to elaborate my thesis about “kinesthetic and corporeal agency.” I needed to recount a short story that could be understood just by the videos, a few paragraphs and a title. In the first video (*Fenòmens Atmosfèrics*, 1973), Fina Miralles establishes her first communication with natural elements through the camera. Through the camera she explores the environment, she expands herself in the environment. We should remember that, as Garbayo argues: “During the regime, the production of the female body as a frail, fearful and dependent body, configures femininity as a limitation of the movement in public and reinforces her allocation to the private” (2016, p. 17) and that “fear serves to align the corporal and social space, allowing some *bodies to move and expand* in the public space by restricting others’ body mobility to spaces that are bounded or contained” (Ahmed as cited by Garbayo, 2016, p. 63) [my translation, emphasis added]. Through my exploration of the connection between the videos, I built a story of expanding the body through “kinesthetic and corporeal agency.” I wanted to explain how Fina Miralles performed an exploration of the self through her art work and how this led her to a process of the (re)appearance of her body as she explored the elements (“I create new spaces”), moves the elements to new spaces in two Super-8s of the series *Traslacions* [Movements] (1973) (“I build paths”) to the last video, *Petjades* [Footprints] (1973), in which Fina Miralles walks in the streets of Barcelona leaving marks on the ground with her shoes—her name and surname (“I walk through them”). The materiality of the films, the “thickness” of the images and the possibility to appreciate Fina Miralles’ body movement put me in touch with the sensorial and tactile aspect of the performances. In the curatorial process, I developed strategies for speaking myself through the videos, giving voice to Fina Miralles’ voiceless super-8 films (only one has a voice off) through the order or position of the films (in some of the curatorial projects I had to choose one of them for a big screen) or, as I previously mentioned through titles, like “I create

⁸⁴ “I create new spaces, I build paths, I walk through them.”

new spaces, I build paths, I walk through them” or *Les recerques de Fina Miralles* [Fina Miralles’ search]. Through these words, I arrived at a voice that could not be heard at the time due to the censorship. In this sense, this was not only a political intervention but also an artistic one, since I take part of the creative process of Fina Miralles’ filmed performances by adding a new layer of significance and knowledge to the art piece. Those aspects of the curatorial process were a particular creative aspect of getting in touch with the investigation of the traces of Fina Miralles’ performances. Also the exercise of explaining a short story, working with four pieces and having a short written aspect (as compared to a traditional dissertation) made me package my whole thesis in a simple way through a curatorial practice that could be understandable for many audiences, and was helpful for me to build a more extensive writing product such as this dissertation.

It is important to also mention how my situation has shaped my artistic practice, and how this has helped me to understand the work of Fina Miralles, especially her corporeal strategies. In this regard, the products of my work are less important than the research process and how this has influenced my investigation of the artist’s actions; that is, my own creation is an access to the performance of Fina Miralles. A distinction must be made between three forms of access to her work: watching her performance work directly, viewing documentation in the archive, and producing my own work. The first one, as I will explain in chapter 6, happened while I was doing fieldwork and gave me the opportunity to feel *in situ* how Fina Miralles performed. I experienced the second form while staying at the MAS archive and with the printed documentations of her performances. This implied a haptic experience, in O’Dell’s (1997) words, that I explain further in this chapter. The third is related to my own experience making art, which was intertwined with my research about Fina Miralles’ work during the last 5 years, and before. I will now move to explain this process.

In 2005, I started an artistic practice in printmaking. This led me to work with paper and machines.⁸⁵ One of the pieces I developed originated from my own memories and personal archives: I transformed a photograph of myself as a girl dressed in white as a princess (with all the significance this has for patriarchal culture) by drawing wings on my back (Figures 12 and

⁸⁵ Printmaking as an art practice comprises a physical demand, but is also reminiscent of a writing process. I mainly practiced in research residencies at Atelier Circulaire in Montreal and in other printmaking studios in Spain, Cuba (Taller Experimental de Gráfica), and the Dominican Republic (Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo).

13).⁸⁶ The experience of doing this work was present in my mind during this research when I observed the corporeal strategies in the work of artists in the 1970s and how they would add objects to their own bodies in order to expand them.⁸⁷ The act of making myself a part of the experience affected my understanding in a different way than only *reading* other artists' works visually, mainly because I could feel in my own body the experience of mapping the contours of my body and expanding them. I experienced this as a somatic emancipatory action: I was able to feel the space my occupied body and to expand my body into that space. I take into account the distances between the context of the 1970s and the current time, which continues to be infected by patriarchal inheritances from the dictatorship. I have noticed that the suffocating context during the Spanish dictatorship was one in which the movement of certain bodies was limited. I was able to understand through the somatic how the body can expand and encounter more space to move. As Garbayo explains, drawing from Ahmed:

Ahmed points out that comfort and discomfort refer to the fit between a body and the objects and bodies around it (2004, p. 148). Being comfortable implies that it is difficult to distinguish where one's body ends and the world begins. The surfaces of bodies become invisible: *bodies expand in space and space expands toward the interior of bodies*. [...] From self-consciousness the body enters into dialogue with the surrounding space. (Garbayo, 2016, pp. 144-145) [my translation, emphasis added]

The original photograph used for these images (Figure 9 and 10) (and others from the same time) has been a theme for many years in my work with paper, fabric and video performance.

⁸⁶ This process was done on various series on paper and fabric, and finally as a performance where my body was the main element.

⁸⁷ For instance: *Habito/Habitante* (Araujo, 1984); *Butterfly* (Mendieta, 1975); *Passing Through* (Palacios Whitman, 1977); *Mechanical Body-Fan*, *Feather Instrument* and *Black Cock Feathers* (Horn, 1974; Horn, 1972; Horn 1971) and *Mujer-Ciudad-Mujer* [Woman-City-Woman] (Pola Weiss, 1978).



Figure 9. *Niña con Alas* [Girl with Wings] (2012) (60 cm x 30cm) Photoetching by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.



Figure 10. Detail of *Desplegando mis Alas I* [Unfolding my Wings] (2012) (240 cm. x 50 cm). Mixed technique by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

What is important for the purpose of my thesis is the processes of creation: how from drawing or sewing, I moved to acting with my own body, expanding it with the wings on my back in a video performance (Figure 11). In the process of this creation, in which an autobiographic focus related to my sociocultural context was very present, I “needed” to use my body in order to digest the experience in an embodied form.



Figure 11. *Violeta Esperanza* [Violet Hope] (2013),⁸⁸ still video⁸⁹. Camera by Alexandra Rodes. Direction and performance by Celia Vara.⁹⁰ Archive: Celia Vara.

As a part of my research process during my graduate studies I developed a research-creation project in the “Alternative Media” course in Communication Studies with Dr. Monika Gagnon at Concordia University. I made a video-performance inspired by the corporeal strategies artists used in the 1970s.⁹¹ This work was named *Tripas de Corazón* [Guts of the Heart] (Figures 12 and 13). In this project, I provide symbolic images, objects and metaphors: brown wool, a woman dressed in white, the sea, a stream, waves, a rope, red wool, etc.

⁸⁸ In the Spanish feminist movement, there is frequent use of the colour violet as a symbol of feminism. Its historical origin is as the colour of some feminist movements and as the colour that American suffragists adopted as a uniform in the March for the Equal Rights Amendment in 1978. There is also a story which links it to the colour of the shirts that the *shirtwaists* made: 146 women were burnt to death in a fire that occurred in a textile factory in the United States in 1911, a fire that apparently was provoked by the boss himself before the workers’ strike. The English suffragettes adopted violet in 1908 along with the colours green and white.

⁸⁹ This video performance has a part in which I am knitting a long piece (like a path) in green and violet. While writing my dissertation, I noticed a similarity to the work *Waiting* (1972) by Faith Wilding—a work which I was moved by during my master’s thesis research (2007-2009) and that I tackle in the next chapter where I approach the global and local context of Miralles’ practices.

⁹⁰ This piece was published in *Feral Feminisms*, an open Access feminist online journal (2014).

⁹¹ It must be noted that I do take into account the differences between 1970s sociocultural context and the current one.



Figure 12. *Tripas de Corazón* [Guts of the Heart] (2015) still video, Camera by Alexandra Rodes. Direction and performance by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.



Figure 13. *Tripas de Corazón*⁹² [Guts of the Heart] (2015) still video, Camera by Alexandra Rodes. Direction and performance by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

This work was also inspired by an image of myself as a child dressed as a princess (as a symbol of gender stereotypes) in the same place where the video performance was made. I experienced different perceptions and emotions attached to the embodiment aspect in this action: to touch the cold stone with a naked foot, to untangle the wool knots, to listen to the water falling to the river pool, and so on. In this work, I untangle knots, knots from the patriarchal structure, mixed up with inheritances from Francoism that sometimes are hooked into the guts of our

⁹² This work is reminiscent of “Corazón de Piedra en Sangre” [English translation?] (Mendieta, 1974), which I watched in the media archives at Museo Nacional Centro Arte Reina Sofía six months before making *Tripas de Corazón*.

bodies. As Diana Taylor argues, repressive systems do not leave any space *to breathe*,⁹³ they get into the intimate spaces: “Systems of terror get us where we live, nullifying the existence of any safe space” (2003, p. 23). These embodied practices in the video-performance were an interesting experience of connecting with my body and understanding the corporeal process of the artists I was researching. Making this work was an opportunity to reflect on corporeal strategies in art and also a process of discovery. This experience has been helpful to understand the work of Fina Miralles. My experiences performing in nature created a possibility for engaging in a sensorial manner with Fina Miralles’ actions. In this sense, I could feel that her body work was an access to bodily awareness and kinesthetic knowledge.

Using my body, these elements and the landscape of a cape in my hometown, I told my story as a woman who grew up in the post-dictatorship under a patriarchal Spanish society. In “Practice as Research,” Stewart highlights the importance of the “insider’s perspective and experience” of the researcher while discovering, analyzing and interpreting in the investigation. He argues that a “neo-narrative” is shaped through “autobiography as a portrait-of-self that mirrors and situates the experience” (2014, p. 126). The story I tell in this investigation is placed in a certain context and, drawing from Stewart, I understand this process of theorising practice as “interactive” and constructed by our personal histories, gender, social class, biography, ethnicity and race (2014).

During this practice (*Tripas de Corazón*), I kept a journal of the creation process, as Fina Miralles did during her own creation process (in the 1970s). With this, I could experience her creative process also: an artist note-book with the practical things to develop the work and, in parallel, a personal journal with thoughts, insights, dreams, etc. As Fina Miralles has told me about her process, during my enquiry, writing and practices I found autobiographical threads affecting me and, also, through writing and practicing I felt change occurring. This process of creation, which was in a way similar to Fina Miralles’ processes, helped me to comprehend the processes of her work. For instance, as I will explain in chapter 6, it helped me understand the necessity to pass from drawing to using objects, natural elements and her own body in her art work.

⁹³ Artists in the 1970s have worked also with “breath” exercises: “Respire Conmigo” [Breathe With Me] (Clark, 1966); “Respirar” [To Breathe] (Miralles, 1975).

4.3. Privileging Process: Writing as Performance

Writing is a very specific kind of gesturing, one that rarely invites scrutiny as an instance of motility. Yet “to write” is to deposit potentially significant marks on a support and simultaneously to perform the precise movements that allow one to do so. Insofar as writing involves the moving body in “real time,” it affords an experience of animate form that can be addressed as intransitive, that is, as kinesthetic experience. My finger, hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, trapezius, and neck (at the very least) are actively engaged in the gestural routines of writing, whether these routines involve paper or wall, keyboard or skin. In the course of performing the gestural routines of writing,⁹⁴ specific parts of my body are given an opportunity to feel themselves in motion. [...] Such an experience is always available, and an awareness of its availability is implicit, even when the act of writing appears to be directed toward quite different ends. Thus, what the writer discovers while writing is both inscriptions and movements, or as Sartre once put it, “jambages:” the vertical lines of letters (the technical sense of “jambages”) and the rhythmic, measured stride of the digits as limbs (“jambages”).⁹⁵

(Noland, 2009, pp. 206-207)

During the research/writing process I used memo-writing⁹⁶ and mind-maps (Figures 17 and 28) to generate ideas. Memo-writing constitutes an essential method in grounded theory because it helps to start analyzing data and codes in the first phases of the research. By writing memos during the process of the research, it is possible to be immersed in the analysis from the beginning. Also, this type of research-writing helps in the elaboration of new ideas or abstractions related to the research question. Therefore, in the process of coding there is a parallel process of theorizing the analysis (Charmaz, 2014). During field-work, I also wrote a journal

⁹⁴ I addressed in chapter 3 Noland’s view of the concept of performativity in Butler. In this quotation, the same issue comes up. When Noland refers to “gestures” in relation to “writing,” she notes an important distinction for the coherence of the theoretical framework in this thesis:

a gestural routine is not the same thing as a gestural sign system, which nonetheless requires a gestural routine for its transmission. [...] To be precise, a gestural sign system is a conventional set of bodily movements that can be culturally specific and vaguely evocative (such as a nod or a wave) or, alternatively, codified into universal ‘sign language’ in which each gesture corresponds, like a symbol or con, to a letter, word or idea. In contrast, the gestures of writing are ‘techniques of the body;’ like other such techniques (swimming, sculpting a spearhead, applying lipstick), they are constructed, operational, syntactic sequences executed with the intention to fabricate an object, leave a mark, or accomplish a task. (Noland, 2009, p. 208)

⁹⁵ As Noland explains, the implicitness of the corporeal in the writing has been theorized before (Hegel, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty).

⁹⁶ Memo-writing is the process of keeping personal journals. This dissertation is one product of writing, yet I have created other written products beside the thesis that include autobiographical traces. As I have noted, this is a practice also used by Fina Miralles in her creative process.

based on the method of Laurel Richardson (2000).⁹⁷ Every day I wrote observational notes, methodological notes, theoretical notes and personal notes. This exercise helped me to code the events in my fieldwork and also to go back to get the necessary seeds for the dissertation writing. Also, after my fieldwork, during analysis and dissertation writing, I kept a parallel document where I wrote personal and private notes about memories, things happening at that moment, and reflections on the process of writing. This is a practice that helped me to focus on the development of the thesis argument. As Charmaz explains “grounded theory leads us to attend to what we hear, see, and sense while gathering data” (2014, p. 3) and also while analysing and writing.

This approach stems from my research question (focused on emancipatory bodily dynamics) and the characteristics of the actions that in a way forced me to embody this research in order to access the actions. Fina Miralles’ work investigates her body in order to reconstitute it (there is a search for the body) through an awareness process within her body and in relation with the world. These are corporeal strategies of emancipation. To understand these corporeal strategies in her work I needed to use an embodied research method that put into practice some of these somatic dynamics. In accordance with the suggestions of Cordero, I consider my research a feminist practice—with experimental exercises—just as Fina Miralles considers her actions.

Drawing from Harris and Holman Jones, I consider writing as a “making practice” (2016, p. 2). They say that if performance is a practice of “inscription,” then we can also consider writing a physical practice. Writing is a creative practice where space is used strategically. They say that most writers describe physical routines regarding this activity. They say: “Writing is an act of performance” (Harris & Holman Jones, 2016, p. 2).

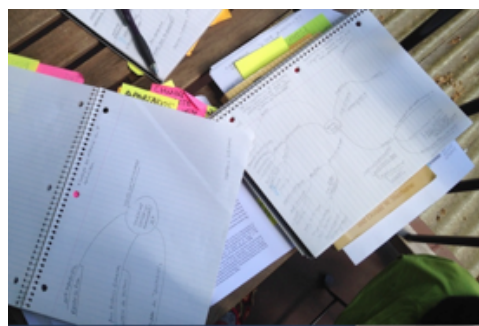


Figure 14. Mind-Maps in notebooks used during the research (2018). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

⁹⁷ I learned this technique in the course “Alternative Media” with Dr. Monika Gagnon.

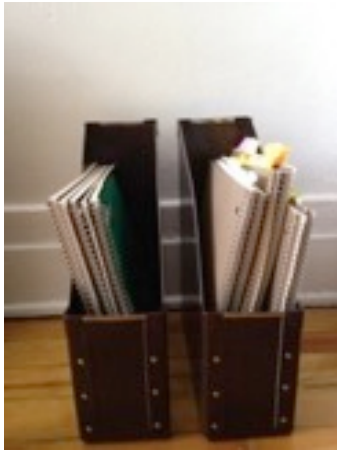


Figure 15. Some of the notebooks for mind-maps (2013-2018). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

Writing this thesis for me was not a solitary performance: as the feminist performers of the 1970s used to meet in groups, I also took part in research-creation writing meetings. Our group was formed by doctoral students based at the Concordia University Milieux Institute (Hexagram). Some of us are doing research-creation theses and others not, but all of us share a debt to research-creation or practice-based research methodology in the way we face the creative process of writing a thesis. This is our statement defining the group in a conference:

As an ongoing part of our post-curricular learning, we meet regularly to collectively address the question of knowledge production and research through artistic practice, and its intersection with creative acts of writing. We are feminists, artists and critical makers, and with this mind we do readings, presentations, informal workshops and discussions to support the development of our own projects and dissertations. Yet despite our manifold approaches and diverse practices, we have noted that many of our members research phenomena that are fraught with uneasy tensions: Is there something about difficult knowledge⁹⁸ that resists (like us) traditional scholarship and its conventions? (“Research Creation Writing Group” Milieux Institute – Concordia University, 2016)

Drawing from Sklar (1994, 2008), Chapman and Sawchuk (2012) and Cordero (2017) a few reflections about what this group inquires are on the table: How can we develop a feminist

⁹⁸ I consider as “difficult knowledge” that which comes from analysing bodies’ appearance in a dictatorial system where some bodies were not allowed to live and others live based on restrictions. The body politics in the Spanish dictatorship are present in the analysis of these pieces. I explained this in detail in the previous chapter, and explain it in relation with artwork of the context in the next chapter.

research methodology in harmony with the main question of our own investigations? Due to the major element of performance arts in my research, I wonder: How can feminist historians make embodied research?⁹⁹

Harris and Holman Jones say: “How can you write for performance without words, without bodies, outside of time and space, without things and symbolic tools? Similarly, we suggest, it is impossible to construct performance texts without bodies” (2011, p. 4). They suggest an embodied process is present while writing. In “Embodied Research: A Methodology,” Spatz (2017) defines “embodied research,” giving the examples of a mathematician, a biologist and an archaeologist. In these examples, he explains how the body is implicated in the investigation. However, even though the body is performing in these disciplines, he concludes that the focus of their explorations is not the potential of the human body. He says that in these cases the embodied practice is an essential part of the research, but “that it functions instrumentally, as a kind of tool” (Spatz, 2017, p. 4). Therefore, Spatz asks: “Are there any fields of research in which the body itself—embodiment, the experience and material fact of having a body—is the central object of fascination and study?” (2017, pp. 4-5)

To explain an embodiment practice he gives the example of “doctors and caregivers where a kind of “touch” is implicated. He says;

In the exchange of *touch* between the giver and the recipient of care, we encounter an area of research that is “embodied” in a different way. A physical therapist or osteopath works with bodies not through technology but through *direct embodied contact*, through an embodied practice of healing. The same could perhaps be said of a psychotherapist, whose research is based on a particular kind of contact with a client. In conventional psychology this contact is verbal, but the physical presence of the therapist is nevertheless essential. In other kinds of psychotherapy that contact may be embodied in other ways: danced, performed, vocalized, or even through touch. This is embodied research. (Spatz, 2017, p. 5) [emphasis added]

Due to my background as a psychotherapist since 1998, I have put particular emphasis on my encounters and relation with Fina Miralles and I was aware of this embodied aspect,

⁹⁹ In my research, I contribute to reflecting on this question with my experience analysing Fina Miralles, yet these questions extend beyond the scope of this thesis and offer promising venues of reflection for further research.

especially through the interviews. Physical presence was very important in the observational and “felt” process. In this thesis, there is an embodied practice that requires a particular kind of contact: the interviews, the touch of the material, the memories of my country, family traditions, etc. are implicated in the situated position from which I analyze the artist’s actions. When I was working as a psychotherapist, as Spatz points out, I had an embodied involvement in my work (especially because I worked with abused women and as a woman this was touching for me). This background has contributed to the way I approach this research. I experienced interviews¹⁰⁰ and exchanges with Fina Miralles and other informants in an embodied way and I was “affected” as Garbayo explains regarding her research process:

The ability *to affect and be affected* by others has been key in this process, focused on conducting oral interviews in which the methodological emphasis favours listening in a receiving position marked by lack. The researcher recognizes that she/he ‘does not know’ and converts this lack into a ‘topos’ on which to settle possible lines of research. *To observe the research process as an exchange, an encounter, and an opening to the other. To propose and legitimize forms of knowledge that go through shared experience and process, as places from which it may be possible to think and rethink in other ways. (2016b, p. 29)* [my translation, emphasis added]

There is an embodied aspect to my research not only through writing but also through all the practices in my investigation. In this sense, by being affected by the process and taking into account my research question (“How were Fina Miralles’ actions emancipatory?”) I argue for possibilities to think in a kinesthetic/somatic way. The body (Fina Miralles’ body in her actions and mine in the process of the research) is “an area of investigation in its own right” (Spatz, 2017. p. 5). I am asking: What can performance do? What can Fina Miralles’ body do? In other words: How can the body be a site for liberation? Concretely, how were body actions by Fina Miralles a site of emancipation in the late years of Francoism? And how can I embody a research process of this kind?

¹⁰⁰ I further tackle the relations established in an interview/conversation in the “Interviews” section.

4.4. Kinesthetic Empathy and Haptic Experience

During my research—in addition to other strategies previously addressed—I have located a somatic point of view from which I can unpack the body actions by Fina Miralles and distinct phenomenological, affective and conceptual perspectives of the gestures. This somatic empathy was useful for approaching my research question. I situated myself beside Fina Miralles when I looked at the traces of her work, or when I conversed with her about it. To develop this strategy while looking at the photographs, as I have explained while describing my curatorial process, I sometimes use the “first person”¹⁰¹ to describe what is happening in the performances as a way to put myself in the action, and as a way to understand what the process of the action is. This strategy allows me to develop an empathy process in the analysis. In the introduction to *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, Jones argues: “Empathy is one way of thinking about our connection to art (our desire to see and interpret is informed by our empathetic connection with the person we imagine to be making/performing or to have made/performed the work)” (2012, p. 11). Drawing from Morgan, Jones argues that this “aesthetic empathy” considers that

particular kinds of human expression (here, visual art) project feelings and elicit what Lipps had called ‘aesthetic sympathy’ such that those engaging with the work feel (presumably similar feelings) in response. [...] Art is that which expresses feelings. And art can, by expressing feeling, move viewers in the future by changing their ideas, their emotions, their beliefs. (2012, pp. 11-12)

Sklar argues that kinesthetic empathy provides information that could not be possible to gather with visual perception or symbolic analysis. Through kinesthetic empathy it is possible to feel the proprioceptive sense in relation with oneself and the world. She defines kinesthetic empathy as “the capacity to participate with another’s movement or another’s sensory experience of movement” (1994, p. 15). Through this strategy in a way I was in touch with the body movements of Fina Miralles, sometimes feeling her actions in my daily routine (for instance, in the daily tasks at home as she performs in *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* (1975), which I analyze in chapter 8).

¹⁰¹ I also used first person in the title of the program I curated at the *Feminist Media Studio* in Winter 2017: “*I create new spaces, I build paths, I walk through them.*”

Reynolds and Reason (2012) call this a model of “kinesthetic empathy,” considering that “art, and other modes of human being in the world, potentially engage others through eliciting empathetic responses” (2012, p. 12). Reynolds and Reason explain that kinesthesia is related to the feeling of movement. The word derives from the Greek *kinen*, to move, and *aesthesis*, sensation. Through kinesthesia it is possible to have a sense of the body position and the muscles. Reynolds and Reason define kinesthesia as an “awareness of the position and movement of the parts of the body by means of sensory organs (proprioceptors) in the muscles and joints” (OED as cited in Reynolds and Reason, 2003, p. 52). They clarify that the terms “kinesthesia” and “proprioception” are sometimes used as synonyms although “a distinction is often made between ‘proprioception,’ referring to stimuli from *inside the organism*, and ‘exteroception,’ referring to stimuli received from *outside the organism*” (2010, pp. 52-53). Both types of stimuli (inside and outside) are important in my analysis of the different corporeal dynamics explored by Fina Miralles, leading to an agency within the body, and at the same time in relation with the world. Kinesthesia implies both types of stimuli (interoception and exteroception). Reynolds and Reason say: “Kinesthesia can be considered as integral to perception, seen as not purely visual but active and multisensory (see, for instance, Gibson, 1979, Merleau-Ponty, 1962, Berthoz, 2000)” (2010 p. 53).

In “Can Bodylore Be Brought to its Senses?” Sklar argues that kinesthesia goes beyond “objective” observation:

Paradoxically, *one has to close one’s eyes* to look at movement, extrapolating beyond its visual presentation and concentrating instead on *projecting oneself “as if” into the other’s engaged and moving body*. [...] The process provides a different kind of information than does either visual perception alone or symbolic analysis; *it gives a sampling of the proprioceptive, or “felt” dimensions or events*. It is this emphasis on experience-near perception within qualitative movement analysis that I mean by the term *kinesthetic empathy*. (1994, p. 15) [emphasis added]

I explore kinesthetic empathy through the analysis of Fina Miralles’ actions.¹⁰² The perception of my own body while analyzing the traces of her work was a tool for my reading.

¹⁰² Although “kinesthetic empathy” is a model from dance studies and the aesthetics of movement (Sklar, 1994), in this thesis I argue that this is an accurate method of feminist inquiry in analysis of performance art.

Although some of her works involve her staying still, that was not an obstacle to establishing a somatic empathy. Jones argues that a static work also functions as a potential space of “kinesthetic empathy.” She draws from Bergson’s model and explains how humans make sense of events, people and the world. In her opinion “there is no moment of non-kinesthetic empathy in our apprehension of creative or even everyday objects and bodies in the world” (2012, p. 12). Jones considers that the phenomenological dimension is pivotal to understanding the kinesthetic and empathetic aspect of human intersubjectivity.

This methodology allows me to engage with Fina Miralles’ action with a deeper understanding. The way in which the artist decided how to exhibit and talk about her work also allows for a perceptual process in the analysis. For instance, Fina Miralles used simple titles (encouraging a personal interpretation); she exhibited photographs simply hanging on the wall (without any frame and as a kind of collage), or she printed the photographs zooming in on parts of the body.¹⁰³

Jones suggests the “model of kinesthetic empathy” for researchers proposed by Reynolds and Reason (2012)—and originally by Sklar (1994)—provides a new frame from which to look at how embodied subjects are in relation with the world and I argue that this model could help to understand how embodied subjects are in relation with their own bodies (through interoceptive processes) and with the art work I analyze (especially the performance art work). I have practiced this model of kinesthetic empathy during the process of this investigation. As Reason suggests

the establishment of an experiencing subject implies an embodied human and hence sharable perception. Language can encourage such communication through the writing of the bodily experience as a synaesthetic experience. [...] By using embodied synaesthetic descriptions, writers present their own bodies as the medium through which readers can access the experience for themselves. By translating emotional and intellectual responses into embodied reactions, readers are empowered to intersubjectively access that experience with their own bodies. (2006, p. 228)

In short, kinesthesia—a sense mediated by receptors located in muscles, tendons and joints and stimulated by bodily movements—is an access through different senses to our bodies (this is

¹⁰³ These aspects will be explained in detail in chapters 6 and 7.

what I argue is happening in Fina Miralles' actions), and synaesthesia is the description of sensations (tactile, auditory, and so on), which also implies concomitant sensations.

During my fieldwork, I decided to experience the elements that Fina Miralles uses in her performances: what it feels like to be floating in the water or to be in touch with the branches of a tree. This helped me to define the weight and outline the borders of the body, or what Sheets-Johnstone calls the “qualitative contours” of our movement (2009, p. 332). I have experienced elements of two pieces: For one of the pieces “*El Retorn*” [The Return] (2012)¹⁰⁴—a piece from the trilogy *El Bateig- Grenoille Fontaine- El Retorn* [The Baptism – Fountain Frog – The Return]¹⁰⁵—I travelled in 2016 to Les Escaules, Girona, Catalonia, a little town in the mountains near Fina Miralles' hometown, where she performed this piece in 2012. I interviewed Joan Casellas,¹⁰⁶ the coordinator of *Aire Arxiu* [Air Archive] who had documentation of Fina Miralles' recent performances. Casellas showed to me the location where *El Retorn* was performed, a natural spring in the mountains.

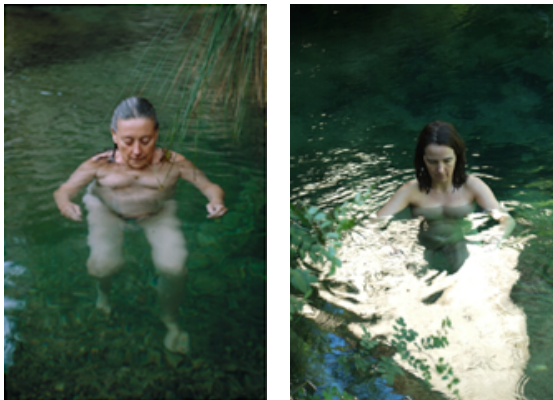


Figure 16. Left: *El Retorn* [The Return] by Fina Miralles (2012). Right: Experience in the water: Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Photographs by Joan Casellas. Archive: Arxiu Aire.

¹⁰⁴ This responds to a moment in her artistic practice when Fina Miralles resumed making performance. This opens potential research into the connections with her former experience in performance in the 1970s (however such a consideration is outside of the scope of this thesis). Casellas has written an article about the experience making these actions: “El Baptisme, la Granota I el Retorn de Fina Miralles” in *Quadern de les Idees, les Arts I les Lletres*. Núm. 185. Abril 2012. Pp.17-18.

¹⁰⁵ Photographs of the action can be found on the website of Fina Miralles: <http://www.finamiralles.com/la-muga-caula>

¹⁰⁶ Casellas is the co-creator (with Agnes Ramírez and Ernest Puig) of the journal *Aire* [Air]. *Aire* is also a platform and photographic archive that documents the performative non-institutional production in Spain and is one of the sources for performance researchers. Since 2005 Casellas has organized the “International Encounter of Action Poetry and Performance” at La Muga Caula in Les Escaules, Girona, Catalonia (Patricia Mayayo & Jorge Luís Marzo, 2015, p. 700). Fina Miralles was the invited artist in the 2012 edition, where she performed *El Retorn*.

I decided to go to the same location where Fina Miralles performed *El Retorn* (Figure 19). Even though there is no clear relation between this piece and the body-actions with natural elements in the 1970s, in *El Retorn* there is an actual “relation” between the body and the water. My interest was to experience what a body feels in “relation” with the water in order to understand through somatic sensations what it could mean to put the body “in relation” with the water, and to make subtle movements that allow the water go over the borders of the body—which was one of her actions in the 1970s that I analyze in chapter 7. As Sklar explains:

Based on the hypothesis that movement embodied cultural knowledge, I had discovered that to “move with” people whose experience I was trying to understand was a way to also “feel with” them, providing an opening into the *kind of cultural knowledge that is not available through words or observation alone*. (1994, p. 11) [emphasis added]

The second piece I have “re-performed” is *Una Persona Relacionant-se al Arbre* [A Person in Relation With a Tree] (1975) (Figure 17). I climbed a tree to embrace the branch that would support and hold my body (Figure 18). In chapter 6, I elaborate more in depth the term of “hold” the body in relation with *Dona-Arbre* and other actions in *Relacions*. While I was in the tree, I asked myself What does a body feel under these circumstances? I answered myself: I feel my body, especially I feel the part that is in touch with the tree. I can draw the border of my body, I also can feel my back and the parts of my skin that are in touch with the air and breeze. Both feelings were different. It was not the same feeling in the front of my body directly in touch with the tree—experiencing the rugosity of the wood—and on the back which was more in relation with the air, feeling a breeze caressing the borders of the body.



Figure 17. *Una persona relacionant-se amb un arbre* [A person in relation with a tree] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 18. Experience in the tree: Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Photograph by Joan Casellas. Archive: Arxiu Aire.

Connected with kinesthetic empathy is the perspective of “haptic experience,” proposed by O’Dell (1997), in order to make stories about performances that we have not witnessed. She argues that it is important to go back to oral information and use original photographs from archives. I printed the images of Fina Miralle’s actions I collected from the Museu d’Art de Sabadell and hung them in my studio. This process of hanging the work was also done in my three months research residence in 2017 at the Institut d’Histoire de la Médecine et de la Santé at the Université de Lausanne (Figure 19). There I started only with the images of Fina Miralles in the 1970s. I took off and replaced the same images in different orders and positions, using codes.¹⁰⁷ Both things helped me to find the fine thread of the process in Fina Miralles’ actions and also gave me leads into the analysis of the different strategies in them.

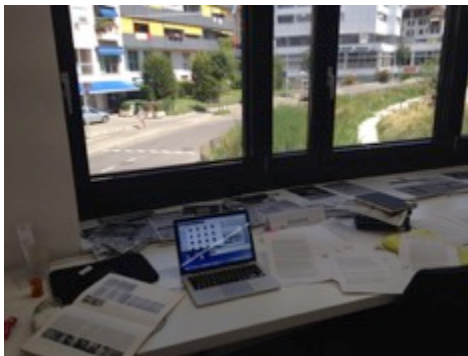


Figure 19. Office at the *Institut d’Histoire de la Médecine et de la Santé Publique* at the Université de Lausanne (Summer 2017). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

Later in the process of hanging images, I added the codes and key concepts in relation with the images (Figure 20). Finally, I added other recent works of Fina Miralles’ and other artists from the global scene at the time (Figure 21).

¹⁰⁷ I explain the process of coding further in the archive section in this chapter.



Figure 20. Studio/Office in Montreal with printed photographs in the wall. Documentation of Fina Miralles’ performances (2018). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.



Figure 21. Studio/Office in Montreal with printed photographs in the wall. Documentation of Fina Miralles’ performances and other artists (2018). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

This experience of having the images of Fina Miralles on printed paper was very important to my analytic process, and generated a perceptual experience that went beyond visual analysis. O’Dell’s argument is that “the reception of performance art—which is to say, the reception of the photographic documents from which performance art is inseparable—is not exclusively dependent on visual experience, but relies heavily on the *experience of touch*” (1997, p. 74) [emphasis added]. O’Dell explains how the “graininess”—something that I also appreciated in the super-8 films— and the black-and-white of the 1970s documentation in performances gave them a “snapshot quality,” creating a feeling of looking at family photo-albums. This is something very present in the documentation of Fina Miralles’ work: in many of the actions it seems just a photograph taken in her personal life at the time, not even related with an art action. O Dell argues:

Since the domestic site is the context in which the unconscious is originally forged, one’s visual and haptic experience of a performance photograph—especially photographs that disturb a normative sense of domestic life or physiognomy, as these do—lends itself

to a complicated review of the formation of *one's own psychical identity*, a review that is actually in progress, I believe, in the performance being documented. (1997, p. 76)

The relation with the document strengthens proximity with the action in the sense that while “touching the photograph” in addition to viewing, it intensifies the identification with what (or who) is represented (O’Dell, 1997). O’Dell’s haptic experience is directly connected with the concept of aesthetic empathy that Jones introduces when explaining the model of kinesthetic empathy. O’Dell says that, “the excessively detailed, highly textured close-up of the bite mark [in Vito Acconci, *Trademarks*, 1970] engages the viewer’s *sense of touch*.” (1997, p.79) Fina Miralles’ printed photographs for the exhibition of *Relacions* are done by zooming in on specific parts of the body action, and this allows one to see the body’s skin in more detail or to focus on the hand, for instance. This encourages the perceptual experience and the empathetic aspect while analyzing the traces of Fina Miralles’ work. Also, the quality of the different materials (stones, sand, water, etc.) that she uses promotes this sense of touch. As O’Dell affirms, haptic experience represents

a paradigm shift in epistemological processes that still, to this day, affects *how we gain knowledge*, especially of forms of activity that involve the body—to include performance art. The paradox here, of course, is that by inquiring into the haptic, the socio-political issues of, say, the 1970s might become more visible. (1997, p. 81) [emphasis added]

In this sense, her proposal is especially linked with the embodied methodology approach of this research in which feminist epistemology proposals have been applied. The haptic experience in the analysis of the documentation of the actions performed in the 1970s in Spain allows me a closer and embodied understanding (in the sense of feeling it on/in my own body) of the socio-political context of the time and its consequences for women’s bodies. In sum, this embodied aspect of methodology is useful to understanding the politics of the body in the 1970s in Spain in the period when Fina Miralles’ actions took place. An embodied methodology is coherent with the fact that feminist body politics are the central issue in my analysis of the artist’s work.

4.5. Archives and Codification

The archive is also a concept that has profound implications for our self-understanding as it relates to memory and memorial activities, to a consciousness of a past, what we could call a perpetual haunting by others whom we exorcise by our attempted mastery through writing them as history [...] Archives matter. What is included shapes forever what we think we were and hence we might become. The absence of women's histories in world archives has defined a vision of the human on the pattern of a privileged masculinity. Humanity's self-definition requires a challenge to that vision.

(Pollock, 2007, p. 12)

It is important to consider the political efficacy of being in time differently, that is, being temporally dispersed across different eras and generations. Indeed, this is precisely why the archival turn in contemporary feminism is as much about shoring up a younger generation's legacy and honouring elders as it is about imagining and working to build possible worlds in the present and for the future.

(Eichhorn, 2013, p. x)

How to do embodied research on actions performed and documented in the 1970s? Green considers art, culture and politics and the possibilities of feminist media as a contribution of second-wave feminism to feminist theory: “if women and their actions of the 1970s are forgotten, the way that they taught us to think are lasting because feminist theory changed the structure of knowledge itself” (Green as cited in Juhasz, 2001, p. 21). Recovering the strategies of film and embodied practices is of utmost importance: “the media are a most powerful tool with which to effect the changes that matter most” (Green as cited in Juhasz, 2001, p. 3). She adds: “I too worry about the remembering of the recent feminist past, and more specifically about the forgetting of feminist media history” (Green as cited in Juhasz, 2001, p. 1). Drawing from DuPleiss and Snitow, Juhasz (2001) argues that artists want to contribute to an open-ended political need, that is the acknowledgement of the continuity by activating the past. Through recognizing the media's vital role in women's exploration of consciousness and through an embodied access to the archive, I activated the traces of Fina Miralles' performances. As I explain in this chapter, her archive is dispersed in public institutions, private foundations, artists' and researchers' archives and her own website. This particular situation forced me to create a path through different places and contact different persons implicated in the form of the archive.

Fina Miralles donated her archive in 2000 to the museum of art in her native city, Sabadell, Catalonia. The Museu d'art de Sabadell (MAS) is an old house with a back yard situated in the centre of the town. The artist had her archive initially at her childhood home (Serrallonga) in the countryside in Catalonia. When she inherited the house, she decided to sell it and she moved her artistic material to the museum. She went with a large truck to the museum and she left it there. Before I went to the archive, I contacted Meritxell Casadesús, the coordinator of the activities and archive of the museum. She told me that Fina Miralles kept her work in very good order. However, after she left it, there were many different persons organizing the works with different criteria. This led to different ways of organization. This was a challenge and made me feel sometimes overwhelmed and made approaching the material difficult. When I visited the archive for the first time, I didn't select the performances I was interested in for my dissertation. My immersion in the archive and fieldwork later gave me the answer to that question. During the archival work, I was able to focus on the documents of the performances in the 1970s. The work of Fina Miralles in the archive has different formats: slides, printed photographs, videos, notebooks, objects¹⁰⁸ and newspapers/magazines with news about Fina Miralles' exhibitions.

Fina Miralles' notebooks include personal journals, planning for art projects, and poems. The MAS has the digitalization of "Llibre I" [Booknotes I] and "Llibre II." [Booknotes II] In these notebooks, there are different dates and sometimes it is not clear when each thing was written. The first one corresponds to a period from 1973-1976 and the second one from 1982-1985, even though this seems to be mixed up in the pages. There are also twenty-five notebooks that are classified in the MAS which are not digitized, which I have photographed. Some of them have the dates when they were written, others not. I take into account the notebooks from the time when Miralles' actions in the 1970s took place. Yet some other writings of later dates have confirmed the seeds that I have found in the 1970's actions, and I use them also in my analysis. In sum, some writings are not contemporary with Miralles' actions in the 1970s, however I am using them in order to support my argument. When later I refer to these quotes I always refer to them with the dates if they are noted.

¹⁰⁸ For example, MAS has kept the shoes that Fina Miralles built for the performance *Petjades* (1976).

The private archive Fundació Ars¹⁰⁹ also has forty-one of Fina Miralles' personal notebooks and documents. To have access to this archive, I asked Fina Miralles for permission and she talked to the director Manuel Costa. Art historian Maia Creus has been working in this archive and has recently published four volumes with poems, writings and images from Fina Miralles (*Paraules Fèrtils 1972-2017* [Fertile Words]).¹¹⁰ Even though these notebooks corresponded to a period after 1976 and more recent moments, I considered it important to get access to them. Since this was a large quantity of notebooks, and the access to this private archive was limited to two days¹¹¹ I decided to photograph the notebooks to analyse them afterwards. My criterion for the analysis was to look for notes on sensorial experiences, perceptions and the art process.

The Museu d'Art de Sabadell archive also provided me the digitized documentation of her photographs. Yet, I have found that there was documentation in photographs in diverse formats (slides, positives, negatives, etc.) that were not digitized (Figure 22).



Figure 22. Slides, videos, photographs, catalogues at *Museu d'Art de Sabadell* Archive. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

For instance, *Relacions. El Cos Cobert de Pedras* [Relacions. Body Covered With Stones] has twenty images, but the museum has only digitized three. These three images document Fina Miralles' covered body and then the end of the performance when we do not see her anymore. Yet, the total process documented is of Fina Miralles covering herself with stones and then taking off the stones from her body. This detail was very important for my analysis.

¹⁰⁹ Fundació Ars's aims: spread culture, ideas, arts and written documents. <http://fundacioars.org>

¹¹⁰ Information about the books: http://fundacioars.org/?page_id=307

¹¹¹ The archive is situated in a small apartment in the center of Sabadell where there is no public access. The person in charge (Director Manuel Costa) did not have much availability.

This detail was not easy to figure out from the archive, since for items that were not digitized it is not clear where they are archived or classified. I discovered the details of all the documents from *El Cos Cobert de Pedras* through a thesis by Rigau: *Anàlisi de l'Obra Plàsticovisual i Poèticotextual de Fina Miralles: L'Arbre Com a Réflex de la Seva Cosmologia* (2012). I contacted Rigau to get these documents but she did not have the material because she lost all her digitizations after she finished the thesis. These digitizations were not in the Museu d'Art de Sabadell. I asked the museum for the digitization of some of the documents of the performances I was analyzing. MAS offers this service. There is a formal petition and fees to pay. They are not investing in unifying the classification criteria of Fina Miralles' archive or in digitizing it. My reading is that many of the selected documentation that was actually digitalized are what they (the person coding the work at any given moment) understood as the "result" of the performance, or two or three photographs that they thought explained the action. This was not even all of the documents that were actually in the exhibition of *Relacions* (some of the exhibited documentation were zooms of the hands, for instance). I was much more interested in the process of doing the performance—and not just the photographs selected for the series—to really understand the clues to the liberatory dynamics in the body movement and gestures in the actions. It seems that these aspects were not even important for Fina Miralles, since most of them remain only as negatives and were never shown. Yet some of them are also on the website that she built between 2013 and 2015. This gives us some information: that this focus on the body processes started in the works of the 1970s and continues to be articulated during her art and life until the present moment. I looked at the negatives of these processes and requested the digitizations from the museum. I concluded that this archive (as with others of artists working under the dictatorship) would need more attention.

Some of the implications of doing feminist research include having to deal with the scarcity of resources and interest in active archives from a feminist perspective. I think the turn to the archive for subsequent generations is a kind of survival strategy and a necessity to recover a past that in Spain has been hidden for political reasons. In "The Archival Turn in Feminism," Eichhorn explains that "contemporary theorizing on the archive and even much of the recent research carried out in archives suggests that the archival turn has been motivated by anything but a desire to unequivocally recover the past" (2013, p. 5). She also explains how Cvetkovitch theorizes the archive through notions of trauma, desire and survival: "she admits, where the

archive is thus deconstructed, the quest for history can at best be understood as ‘a psychic need’” (2013, p. 5). I argue that this also explains the increasing number of women artists who are interested in the work produced by artists in the 1970s, which, as I have noted in the previous chapter, is a generation that has not been historicized. In recent years, Fina Miralles has been a focus of attention, generating interest among performance artists who wish to perform with her or interview her,¹¹² and researchers¹¹³ interested in her archive. Eichhorn argues:

For a younger generation of feminists, the archive is not necessarily either a destination or an impenetrable barrier to be breached, but rather *a site and practice integral to knowledge making, cultural production, and activism*. The archive is where academic, and activist work frequently converge. Indeed, the creation of archives has become integral to how knowledges are produced and legitimized and how feminist activists, artists, and scholars make their voices audible. Rather than a destination for knowledges already produced or a place to recover histories and ideas placed under erasure the making of archives is frequently where knowledge production begins. (2013, p. 3) [emphasis added]

For my organization of the archival material, I proceeded to look at all of the notebooks (Figure 23) and made a selection from the ones that corresponded to the time of the performances I was examining. After looking at those, I approached other times of Fina Miralles’ writing. My criteria in the selection of writing were focused on perceptual processes, sensorial investigations and planning of the actions. I also checked newspapers and magazines.



Figure 23. Notebooks and journals, *Museu d’Art de Sabadell* Archive. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Photograph by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

¹¹² Such as Dennis Blacker and Marta Vergonyos, Casellas, and the group of artists Corpologías.

¹¹³ Including Bassas, Creus, Pol, Garbayo, and myself.

I interviewed feminist art historian Bassas, who was the first to investigate Fina Miralles (before the artist donated her archive to the museum). Bassas has a private archive of Fina Miralles' documents. Another private archive I had access to was *Aire Archiu*, where Joan Casellas gave me access to the documentation he had about the more recent performances by Fina Miralles. Yet, the most interesting information was the way he, as a performer, was inspired by the work of Fina Miralles in the 1970s,¹¹⁴ especially the fact that Casellas and others from his generation (the one after Fina Miralles) were in a way (in his words) "re-performing the works Fina Miralles has done in the 1970s" (personal communication, June 23, 2016). He said: "I was quite excited when she accepted to perform the main piece at *La Muga Caula* in 2012. This was a very inspiring work."¹¹⁵ Also, he and Fina Miralles were part of a group of young performers of Girona, *Corpologies*,¹¹⁶ which used to meet to perform together "in the style of the 1970s, just perform for the pleasure of performing" (Fina Miralles, personal communication, June 23rd, 2016). I also had access to the private archive of Catalanian artist Isabel Banal (who I interviewed at her home during the fieldwork). Her archive was mainly of some recent performances; therefore, it was outside the scope of this thesis. However, her description of the experience performing with Fina Miralles helped me to understand some of the corporeal strategies in her work.

In addition, I needed to consult specific books, art journals of the 1970s (i.e. *Serra d'Or*, *Gazeta del Arte-Madrid*, *Artes Plásticas-Barcelona*, and *Catalonia Cultura*) with articles by Cirici regarding Conceptual Art in Catalonia and catalogues of Fina Miralles' contemporary conceptual artists in Catalonia (such as Olga L. Pijoan and Angels Ribé). These documents were also found in different archives: Museo de Arte de Barcelona (MACBA) Catalonia, Arts de Santa Mónica (Catalonia), Universidad de Valencia (Spain), Centro Cultural Montehermoso (Vasque Country), La Sala Vinçon and Centro de Arte Galego de Arte Contemporánea (CGAC). This confirms some of the difficulties highlighted by Spanish art historians that I have tackled in the

¹¹⁴ There is a group of artists that "follow" Fina Miralles and visit her in Cadaqués to talk about performance and life. This research exceeds the scope of this thesis. Yet, it gave me the important information that some of the strategies that Fina Miralles was using in the 1970s are still inspiring for current "bodies."

¹¹⁵ Casellas was the photographer of the trilogy performance *El Retorn*. He told me that this work was also documented by a filmmaker but that they ultimately did not make any video of the action.

¹¹⁶ *Corpologies* was organized by Denys Blacker from 2010 to 2014.

last section: scarcity of research and the fact that the documents are scattered in different private and public archives and catalogued with different criteria.

In my methodology in the archives, it was key to recover experiences of the artists and researchers who were previously in “touch” in some way with the traces of Fina Miralles’ work, and also those who performed with her. For the purpose of this somatic research, it was very important to be in touch with other researchers of my country who, as I did, felt a “psychic need” to recover our pasts through corporeal actions when their traces were forgotten in boxes and basements.

In my investigation of the body actions by Fina Miralles, my main question is centred on a reflection about liberatory processes manifested in the use of the body as a means of work. From the data I had been gathering, I developed a qualitative coding; that is, I attached labels to the different body actions I observed in the documentations of the performances. These categories became more theoretical in the course of the research as I engaged in successive levels of analysis and reading feminist accounts of body and agency and other interpretations of Fina Miralles’ work.¹¹⁷ In addition to the different kind of archives already explained, I also considered Fina Miralles’ website as an archive, particularly because of the manner in which she displays the information which gave me clues to reflect about, and also categories to develop my own qualitative coding in this investigation.

¹¹⁷ The main scholars researching Fina Miralles include Assumpta Bassas, Maia Creus, Marta Pol and Maite Garbayo. Bassas has two articles about Fina Miralles. Although she was the first scholar researching Fina Miralles, she ended up writing her thesis on another three artists of the time (Silvia Gubern, Àngels Ribé, and Eulàlia). Creus has been researching actions shown in *Sala 3* (an exhibition room where Fina Miralles showed some work in the 1970s) and recently she has published written work by Fina Miralles (2018). Garbayo has researched the performances in the late years of Francoism in her last book. Pol has written a doctoral thesis about the figure of the tree in Fina Miralles’ work (without a specifically feminist approach). Art historians Mayayo, Aliaga and Isabel Tejada mention Fina Miralles’ work in some chapters and articles. Curator Francisco Salas has written on the website *Sala PM8- Vigo* a reflection on her work and has also performed with her a contemporary piece (*La Unió dels Oceans*, 2012).



Figure 24. Fina Miralles image (2012) on the home page of her website. Photograph by Teresa Roig. Archive: Fina Miralles website.

Fina Miralles' website starts with a contemporary photograph of her sleeping (Figure 24).¹¹⁸ The classification on the website is organized according to the following tabs: "Naturalesa" [Nature], "Fotoaccions" [Fotoactions] (which documents *Relacions* and *Translacions* (the cases studies in this thesis)). It is interesting that in May 2018 she added a new *fotoaccion* in this section called *El Rastro de la Sirena* [The Siren Trail] (2014) (Figure 25). She has decided to include it under the group of actions in the 1970s where her body is for first time present in her work. It can be argued that this is another "relation" between her body and the water: another kinesthetic experience that gives her access to interoceptive and exteroceptive perceptions. What is also interesting is how she decided to classify this action within the category of *fotoaccions* from the 1970s (since she used another tab for her contemporary work).

¹¹⁸ It is not clear if she is pretending to be sleeping or actually sleeping. However, what is important for my research question regarding corporeal and kinesthetic agency is that she decides to show in this first instance a quite personal situation and also one in which with some of her skin is in touch with the sheets. This is important to my analysis since in my conversations during my fieldwork she insists on the importance of her lived body. One example she explains is: "Look at how much we can be in touch with our bodies just feeling the texture of the sheets on our skin" (personal communication, Summer 2016). Also, I will further connect in chapter 7 this image with her work in *Relacions*, 1975.



Figure 25. *El rastro de la sirena* [The siren trail] (2014) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by unknown author. Archive: Fina Miralles website.

The other tabs on Fina Miralles' website are "paisatge" [landscape], "pertinence" [belonging], "catalogació PDF" [PDF catalogues], "accions" [actions], "videos," "blog," and "publications." Each of these tabs has its own tabs with other classifications sometimes related to the technique (instalacions, *fotoactions*, drawing, painting, actions, videos, etc.). In sum, the main tabs related to her work are: nature, landscape, belonging, videos and (contemporary) actions. This gave me some keys for understanding her classification of the work, but my main code process was parallel to this one.

I created codes that opened promising leads in my research and that were connected with my research question. As Charmaz affirms, coding "shapes an analytic frame from which you build the analysis" (2014, p. 113). These are some of the code categories I used: "cover the body," "uncover the body," "appearance of the body," "reconstitution of the body," "standing position," "lying position," "eyes closed," "mapping the body," "borders of the body," "feeling materials on the skin," "looking at the horizon," "occupying a space," "touching with the hands," "feeling the foot on the ground," "to breathe," "intimate routines," "extensions of the body," etc. These codes generated the bones of my analysis. They emerged as I was analysing the photographs and videos of the performances.

Also through our conversations, Fina Miralles built a codification comparing her performances from the 1970s with contemporary ones, which helped to code the body actions I was analysing. Her classification emphasizes the main differences she detected between her

contemporary work in actions and the ones from the 1970s. She listed a group of concepts (the left side for the 1970s and the right side referring to contemporary work):

- Conceptual Art --- Lived Art.
- Ideas --- Intuition
- Realization of projects --- Feelings and emotions
- Rational Thought --- Magical Thought
- Egocentrism --- Center-union
- The body as tool --- The body as vital being/ sentient being [*ser sintiente*]¹¹⁹
- Occident --- Orient. (Fina Miralles, personal communication, Summer, 2016)

Here, she highlights how her work after the “conceptual” period turned into work more related with her body as a sentient being. However, as I will explain later, her work in the 1970s moved beyond both the “conceptual” label and the “feminist” label applied to her later works. Because of these very points, I argue that the performances analysed in this thesis have fallen into a kind of oblivion. About this process and in relation to the disconnection of feminist movements from artistic practices in the 1970s, Bassas maintains that “this distance worked as a paradigm that ended up modulating also the freedom of some artists” (2007, p. 228). In this sense, Bassas launched a call to a more in-depth search into the particularities of the 1970s artists’ work. Bassas explains how Miralles

declares that her return to painting in the 1980s means ‘life’ in front of an art of ‘ideas,’ which she considered to the mental sphere and without risk. Her retrospective in Museo d’Art de Sabadell was called ‘*Fina Miralles: De les Idees a la Vida*’ [From Ideas to Life]. It was hard for me to understand what she meant by this because her proposals within the conceptual were not exactly lacking of life or risk. (2007, p. 228)

In conversation with Bassas during my fieldwork she said:

I am very interested in [Fina Miralles’] refusal to accept the purest and most difficult conceptual work; it is the work in which the whole story is most coded as politics, and that did not interest her at all. [...] What we value most from a historiographical point of

¹¹⁹ The Word *sintiente* is not in the dictionary of *Real Academia de la Lengua Española*. However, in the *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* it is explained as: 1. “Experiment [a sensation],” “perceive [something] through the senses, especially through hearing and touch,” “perceive oneself in a state or situation.” These definitions are interesting for the purpose of this thesis.

view, that is to say, that we had artists who positioned themselves against Francoism, against the use of the female body in the media, etc. (personal communication, June 20, 2016)

Bassas is referring here to the pieces *Standard* (1976), *Petjades* (1976), *Enmascarats* (1976) and *Matances* (1977). My reading is that this “rejection” of the conceptual (and the classification above) refers to those actions that were classified as political (the previously mentioned from 1976 to 1977) and have received more attention by scholars and researchers (instead of *Translacions* (1974) and *Relacions* (1975) which have not received as many readings and barely attention as feminist political works).

Bassas said in our conversation that when the title of the retrospective was decided (*De les Idees a la Vida*) all the researchers at that moment told Fina Miralles “But if your ideas were very interesting they were also full of life,” but Fina Miralles rejected this affirmation (Bassas, personal communication, June 20, 2016). Bassas explains how Fina Miralles said that “it was very easy and they were ideas.” Bassas connects this with a moment in which Fina Miralles decided that she would not be “Fina Miralles” any longer, but “Fina”. My reading of this is that, even in this “search” for the body through the sensorial, she builds a self/identity far away from the socio-cultural inheritance. This is why she “erases” her surname as a way to build agency through perceptual processes (such as kinesthesia). Bassas wonders why Fina Miralles denies this part of conceptual art and she concludes that “[she] was doing a vital process. It is a vital search. What is Fina doing through this search?” (personal communication, June 20, 2016). Here Bassas suggested to me that I reflect on how I relate to ideas and how I want to write about this artist, and reflect about where there is “freedom” for women.

This brings to mind the article “Les Reserques de Josefina Miralles” by art critic Cirici that I tackle in chapter 6 and that I have written on my studio wall at home (Figures 23 and 24) transformed as: “*Qué Busques, Fina?*” [What Are you Searching for, Fina?]. Bassas’ questions are also interesting for the purpose of this thesis, however her feminist sources to explain “freedom”¹²⁰ are different from the ones I use here. I argue that this *ser sintiente* was already present in the 1970s actions *Translacions* and *Relacions*.

¹²⁰ Her research on feminist artists in Catalonia draws from the “Different Feminism” and feminists from Librería de Milán and Biblioteca de Mujeres de Parma She said that she is interested in the “relation of the feminine body with nature” (personal communication, June 20, 2016). She has an article about that

I begin from a desire to know where there are clues of liberation in the body actions by Fina Miralles. I look at the actions and gestures as clues and scores. The codes of analysis I created during the research will configure the chapters where I describe the actions. To finish the explanation of this feminist approach in my research I tackle in the next section the process of interviewing/conversing with Fina Miralles.

4.6. Interviews

During my fieldwork, I travelled to the town where Fina Miralles now lives: Cadaqués.¹²¹ Cadaqués is a little town situated on the coast of Girona, Catalonia in the *Cap de Creus* [Cape of Crosses]. The night before I got there, I dreamt I was driving up to a big mountain with endless curves. This was my first time in Cadaques and this is in fact the only way to access it (except in a ship from the sea): going up in an endless curving route and going down to the white town by the sea. I was nervous to meet Fina Miralles again after our only conversation six months prior. My research question was clear, however the investigation was unfolding in that moment, so I was not totally sure about how I was going to focus our conversations and how it was going to be. It turns out that Fina Miralles would lead many of the conversations so I would not have much opportunity to think and would have to improvise in the moment, and reflect in the breaks about the conversations' threads. The day I got to Cadaqués (June 24, 2017) was the *noche de San Juan* [night of Saint Jean] which is very much celebrated there. We had dinner together: a *tortilla de patatas* that the neighbour, Antonia, from whom Fina Miralles has much support had brought to her, with a few foods that I bought. She told me to go to buy a little bottle of *cava*, so we could celebrate the night of San Juan. In the beginning, she offered that I could stay at her apartment. However, she finally told me that it was better for both of us if I could find a place to stay. I stayed in a hostel, not far from her apartment. I ended up appreciating having my own place since those conversations were intense and I needed my time away from that and, of course, having some baths in one of the most beautiful rocky beaches and transparent seawater I have

in the catalogue of her exhibition on Fina Miralles: *Fina Miralles: Natura, Cultura i Cos Femení, una Perspectiva des del Gènere*" [Nature, Culture and Feminine Body: A Gender Perspective]. She later focuses in her thesis (2015) on Catalanian artists contemporary to Miralles: Silvia Gubern, Angels Ribé and Eulàlia.

¹²¹ Fina Miralles has spent the summers in Cadaques since she was young. She has lived in Cadaques since 2008.

ever seen in my life. This is how my in-depth conversations with Fina Miralles about her work and life began.

While working with histories of feminism and art in the recent past, feminist researchers have the opportunity—and the challenge—to meet the artists who produce the work. In “Oral History in the Visual Arts,” Linda Sandino says:

interviews ‘have become a primary, perhaps obligatory resource on the visual and performing arts’ (Cándida Smith as cited in Sandino, 2006, p. 2). From celebrity profiles to specialists’ scholarly monographs, voices in the arts continue to intrigue, seeming to offer insights or stories unavailable by other means. In tandem with oral history, which also seeks to uncover hidden, marginalized aspects of the past, the interview appears to privilege firsthand narratives and experience. (2013, p. 1)

Our conversations happened mainly at Fina Miralles’ house, and in the surroundings of Cadaqués. Every day we agreed to meet in the morning; we worked for a few hours and then we took a break and a *siesta* at lunch. After lunch, we met again. Some days we had lunch or dinner together at her place so that we were sharing everyday tasks while talking about work and life.



Figure 26. Interview with Fina Miralles (Summer 2016): Explaining the soles of her shoes at the video-performance “Petjades” (1976). Still video by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara

Garbayo explains that a research process based on a feminist perspective should start from a situation in which there is a void such that the researcher is open to change and to constant

affectation (2016a). She says that the subjective point from which we look at the research is always under construction. Garbayo proposes that we as researchers should acknowledge that “we do not know” (2016a, p. 79) and from that lack/necessity build the base and lines of our research:

I propose to think about an investigative subject without a fixed or stable identity base, which would put in question the stability of the concept of the subject, turning it into a somewhat precarious and changing anchor point that would take shape through the relationships of affectation that establish with the supposed “objects of investigation.” I say assumptions, because it would be difficult to determine a binary opposition that would distinguish the position of subject from that of object in the framework of an investigation based on the affectation and transfer of ideas, knowledge, methods, affections and emotions. (2016a, p. 80)

During my time with her, Fina Miralles received a visit from Carlos Raurich, the photographer of most of the documentation in the series *Relacions*. The three of us went together to have a *paella* by the sea. Then Raurich and myself went to have a conversation about those times when he documented the actions of Fina Miralles. He did not remember much about concrete aspects of the performances, yet he likened Fina Miralles to a big olive tree, describing her as someone who was always very grounded. This struck me as a powerful image.

During the fieldwork, the filmmaker Vinuesa helped me with video documentation.¹²² We woke up at the sunrise to try to avoid the summer holiday people at the coast. Fina Miralles was very open to this experience. I remember waiting for her at the front door to her apartment, by the street, the freshness of the early morning and the intensity of a new experience in the fieldwork. That morning we took a few photographs while we were conversing. Around 10 am

¹²² I was awarded a Research-Creation grant by Hexagram (Concordia University) in the Summer of 2016. This grant allowed me to hire Vinuesa, whom I met through colleagues in the area. I researched some of his work and I found it important that he was near the place and that he speaks Catalan. He filmed during some moments of my fieldwork to record interviews, performances and everyday life with Fina Miralles. This will be a post-doctoral project to develop this footage as a documentary. This documentary film will be framed using the methodology discussed in this thesis, where the researcher is creating herself continuously and is a subject in construction. This media production offers promising avenues for research about feminist methodology. See the documents section with a few stills and note that my figure is always from the back. I am present but at the same time constructing my non-ending identity through this research.

we were very hungry so Fina Miralles drove us to one of her more frequented bars in town to have a coffee and a *catalana*.¹²³



Figure 27. A break between conversations/interviews: Fina Miralles doing “sudokus” and crosswords. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Still Video by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.



Figure 28. Fina Miralles cooking in the kitchen of her apartment. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Still Video by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

The moments where we paused to eat were sometimes fruitful and surprising. For instance, through the allusions to Francoist times. In one of the break moments, while eating Fina Miralles said:

I fear the Civil Guard¹²⁴ [...] well, anyone who carries a weapon—a man, a woman or whoever. [...] The Civil Guard of the Franco era had a lot of *mala leche* [bad mood] [...]

¹²³ *Catalana* is toasted bread with grated tomato, olive oil and Serrano ham.

¹²⁴ The Civil Guard (Spanish: *Guardia Civil*) is the oldest law enforcement agency in Spain. It is organised as military force charged with police duties under the authority of both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence. The corps is colloquially known as the *benemérita* [reputable]. It has both a regular national role and undertakes specific foreign peace-keeping missions (2018).

if you met them you had to know how to drive them [...] if they wanted to shoot you, they shoot you. [...] There was no trial or anything. And then they went to your house and said: ‘Look, go pick up the body.’ They killed lot of people! [...] All this “gang” [...] and the Partido Popular¹²⁵ has come out again” (filmed conversations, fieldwork, June 27, 2016).

As Cvetkovick argues in “The Craft of Conversation:” “one of the values of oral history is that interviews do not always go the way one expects” (2013, p. 131). It is during these unexpected moments in the conversations where a space opens and then it is possible to link Fina Miralles’ life with her art. I very much appreciated how Fina enjoyed these spaces where we “just” were having the pleasure of eating—which also reminds me of her “quotidian activities” in the series *Relacions*.



Figure 29. Having the *esmorzar*¹²⁶ Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Still Video by Ivó Vinuesa. Archive: Ivó Vinuesa and Celia Vara.

¹²⁵ The day we were filming, Sunday, June 26th, 2016, general elections were held in Spain. They were the thirteenth since the transition to democracy and the second with Felipe VI as king. The winner of the elections was the Partido Popular (PP) [People’s Party], chaired and led by the recently finished president Mariano Rajoy (whose term ended June 1 2018). On June 26, 2016 his candidacies obtained in the congress of the deputies a simple majority and in the Senate an absolute majority. The Partido Popular is a conservative and Christian democratic political party in Spain. It is one of the four major parties of modern Spanish politics. The *Partido Popular* was are-foundation during the “transition” in 1989 of the Alianza Popular (AP) [People’s Alliance], a party led and founded by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, a former Minister of the Interior and Minister of Tourism during Franco’s dictatorship. The new party (PP) combined the conservative AP with several small Christian democratic and liberal parties.

¹²⁶ *Esmorzar* is the Catalan language word equivalent to “breakfast,” yet is a “second breakfast” in the middle of the morning between the first breakfast and lunch.

Sandino highlights the interview's historical and creative value. She argues that they are documents that become artworks and identity narratives. She says: "Oral history, like the arts, is a multivalent, diverse, co-constructed practice that challenges conventional autonomous production and identities" (Sandino, 2013, p. 2). Oral sources were central in this thesis¹²⁷ as a means to rewrite history from the artist's perspective, moving away from dominant art historical accounts which primarily use research methods that are based on textual aesthetic analysis. Feminist historiography has reclaimed the centrality of the personal as a way of overcoming past authoritative narratives. Oral history is often the main method and source used to explore marginal artistic practices, situated in opposition to those dominant sectors that have traditionally held the power. I was able to acknowledge Fina Miralles' memories, descriptions and subjective accounts, emphasizing the important role of her individual stories, which are not literal and lineal narrations, but rather a recollection and presentation of memories.

The interview is a technique in which the researcher seeks to obtain information orally from a personalized source. The use of the interview was part of my methodology due to the lack of written information in the Spanish context. It is also an important embodied form of knowing and practicing empathy in the research process. During my fieldwork, I did informal/conversational interviews and guided approach interviews. In the first type, non-predetermined questions were asked. This type of interview has the purpose of remaining as open and adaptable as possible to the interviewee's nature and priorities. Some authors (Ruíz-Olabuénaga, 2003) describe this interview as "deep interview." Its objectives are to understand more than explain, to maximize the meaning, to achieve subjectivity rather than to objectivity and capture emotions. Alonso (1994) points out the relevance of the interview in some specific fields such as the reconstruction of past activities: biographical approaches, oral archives or retrospective analysis of actions. Charmaz (2014) points out that in-depth interviews not only center the topic of the research, but also procure a space where in the interaction there is a possibility of unexpected insights or glimpses by the participants in the conversation. The interviews allow a closer attention to the construction of the data. She argues that "an intensive interview may elicit a range of responses and discourses, including a person's concerns at the moment, justifications of past

¹²⁷ One aspect of the importance that the interviews have in this thesis is mainly due to the scarcity of research available. This was addressed in chapter 2.

actions, and measured reflections” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 85). Thus, there is a flow of different responses and discourses regarding identity and social connections. The flexibility of the deep interview provides the possibility to pursue new ideas emerging at the moment of the conversation, and to take into account potential emotional issues at play in the conversations. This made me take into account the possible emotional triggers associated with bringing up memories from Franco’s dictatorship. Other researchers who have had conversations with Fina Miralles, like curator Francisco Salas, have noted this:¹²⁸ in an exchange through email with Salas, he explained to me how he perceived “a kind of hurt” when Fina Miralles was talking about the 1970s (personal communication, June 15, 2016). About this issue, Bassas refers to her research with Àngels Ribé:

Faced with my insistence to remember some facts, she told me: I am interested in memory in relation to life and she explained that at that time remembering certain things did not benefit her and therefore preferred to leave it for another time. [...] In those moments I understood that for many artists of this generation remembering works and situations of the 1970s who lived with the intensity of life and the decade was to face issues that are still alive in their present and possibly ours and are not easy to approach. The reflection also led me to think that memory is also an embodied act and that, therefore, I should welcome those stories as living matter and also write it as that (embodied), as far as possible, that is, with rigor but refining so that those questions and knots that lived in that moment could be reopened without having to pass accounts with them (the knots),¹²⁹ so that they become threads of new meaning for us. And I think that this is precisely one of the most important historiographical issues that must be addressed to make history of that period. (2007, pp. 221-222)

In this sense, during my conversations with Fina Miralles she never rejected talking about the 1970s, even though sometimes she understandably felt tired about talking again about these pieces from the past. She even sometimes talked about it in a sarcastic way. However, I was aware of some corporeal signals of sadness, and silences. They were not spoken, yet felt in our bodies; thus I had the opportunity to give space to the silence, and “walk” beside her to where she

¹²⁸ Francisco Salas is curator of *PM8* and performed with Fina Miralles the action *La Unió dels Oceans* (2012) [The Union of the Oceans]

¹²⁹ When I read this I was reminded of the “knots” of my art work *Tripas de Corazón* [Guts of the Heart] presented below in this chapter.

felt a need to go at that very moment. Silent spaces in our meetings were as important as spoken moments. I was very respectful and did not ask more than what Fina Miralles wanted to talk about, and I think our conversations were very fruitful for producing interesting reflections about “sentient bodies” and emancipatory processes present in “those grey times”¹³⁰ as well as here and now.

In-depth interviews were the type I mainly used with Fina Miralles. In the second type of interview, I prepared a guide of questions relative to the research questions of this investigation. This second type was used mainly with scholars and artists linked with Fina Miralles’ artwork. The guided approach is intended to ensure that the different interviewees will tackle the same questions. It provided me more focus than the conversational approach but still allowed adaptability and a certain degree of freedom. Steinar Kvale (2015) gives us two metaphors on interviewing: as mining and as travelling. Both metaphors represent the different types of gathering knowledge. He explains that each one has their role. The miner gives a comprehension of modern social science as “given.” The traveller role addresses a postmodern constructive understanding that requires a conversational strategy to the investigation. The “miner” interview seeks specific information pertinent to what it sets out to get, and puts into effect all the means it can to extract the desired information; the traveller interviewer is more about wandering and gleaning information that might not always deal directly with the objectives:

The alternative traveller metaphor understands the interviewer as a traveller on a journey that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home. The interviewer-traveller wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered. [...] The journey may not lead to new knowledge; the traveller might change as well. The journey might instigate a process of reflection that leads the interviewer to new ways of self-understanding, as well as uncovering previously taken-for-granted values and customs in the traveller’s home country. (Kvale, 1996, p. 4) [emphasis added]

I was certainly using the “traveller” approach in coherence with my understanding both of situated knowledge, and of subjective accounts, which forms the basis of my interest in Fina Miralles’ work.

¹³⁰ Inspired by the title of her action *Remembering Those Grey Times* (2015).



Figure 30. Interviews/conversations with Fina Miralles in *Cap de Creus*. Fieldwork (Summer 2016). Still video by Ivó Vinuesa. Archive: Ivó Vinuesa and Celia Vara.

4.7. Concluding Thoughts

Feminist art questions the subordinate status of women and has a subversive political content in everyday life, which affects social life (“the personal is political”). Women artists have employed their bodies to express their need to talk, think, and act. The body has been central to discussions around issues that have conditioned women’s subjectivity. This is the path women can follow as studying subjects and also studied subjects: women researchers explore new forms of contribution to the knowledge with political awareness of women's inequality, and aim to subvert presumptions constructed through a masculine perspective.

A feminist research focused on emancipatory actions with the body as main tool has been the frame of reference and starting point for this investigation, which leads me to use methodologies that take into account the body as a main source of knowledge. This thesis understands that sexist ideologies marginalize oppressed groups mainly through the body. I analyze Fina Miralles’ experiences as a Spanish woman artist living through complex political times from a feminist perspective. Awareness of the oppressive situation of women through the exploration of body gestures and their relation with the world forms the basis of my research. A feminist methodology can be considered a set of strategies that allow self-reflection and more

particularly, as in the case of my analysis of Fina Miralles' performances, a reflection that considers the feminine body as the main tool for knowledge. As Fina Miralles puts it: "If my work leads to self-knowledge then it is useful" (personal communication, June 26, 2018).

In this chapter I have asked: How can we get involved in the realization of feminist memories in order to activate new methodologies and new ways to generate knowledge? Drawing from my current experience this question led me to describe the way I researched and analysed Fina Miralles' actions in the context of the late years of Francoism. Other questions came up in the process of writing which open venues for further research: Is there something about difficult knowledge that resists traditional scholarship and its conventions? How can we develop a feminist research methodology coherent with the main questions of investigation? How do feminist historians make embodied research?

In this thesis I have put into practice a feminist research that involves taking into account these questions, drawing from the methods of "research creation" (Chapman and Sawchuck, 2012), "practice as research" (Barrett, 2014), "situated knowledge" (Haraway, 1988), "constructivist grounded theory" methods (Charmaz, 2014), "embodied methodologies" (Spatz, 2017) and "kinesthetic empathy" (Sklar, 1994, 2006; Reynolds & Reason, 2012) I propose a feminist embodied research.

Chapter 5 – Catalanian Artistic Context in the 1970s

In this thesis, I argue that Fina Miralles' performances in the late years of Francoism are kinesthetic explorations that produce knowledge both within the body and with the world. I also argue that these explorations provide new conceptions of the body for feminist politics and shed light on the relation between feminism and art in the Spanish context.¹³¹ To tell the story of feminist art practice in Spain, we cannot be guided solely by the extensive historical and critical works on what we call "feminist art" in the US context. Because of its very extensiveness, the American art historical context risks becoming paradigmatic model for the relationship between art and feminism in the 1970s throughout the world. My aim is not to create a more inclusive feminist art canon by focusing on the Spanish context. It is rather to understand how particular practices and experiences might provide new understandings of the body *for* feminism. By using an empathic and embodied methodology, I try to explore the significance of this 'bodily knowing' for feminism and for feminist art practice more specifically.

I defend the expansiveness of the field of feminist art history and feminist theory by approaching this research from an empathic embodied methodology that does not aim to set up a more inclusive feminist art canon, but instead to focus on the importance of the conceptualizations of the body¹³² that influence how I understand Fina Miralles.

¹ This relation was different than in other contexts, such as the US, where there was a fruitful confluence between women's groups, consciousness-raising, artistic proposals, new languages, social movements and critical practice. The lines of action in the American context had a common goal: decode, demonstrate and witness the images and representations of gender, the body, sex, class, race, etc. building a critical and reflective discourse on the patriarchal system. The idea was to dismantle political and social devices that reproduced stereotypes of class, race, gender and sexual orientation, so that the currents of feminism became a platform for practical intervention in society.

¹³² Many anthologies on art and feminism (mainly centered on American productions) examine works centered on the body. Amelia Jones' (2000) survey in *The Artist's Body* is a good introduction to this aspect that draws from Merleau-Ponty to shape her analysis regarding body works. There are some exhibition publications and anthologies that deal with artists' work with the body, yet there is not a wide analysis of the sensorial aspect of body art as a form of access to the body and the world. Peggy Phelan (2007) approaches the aspect of touch in *Wack: Art and the Feminism Revolution* in her article "The Return of the Touch: Feminist Performances, 1960-80") She argues that: "To think of touch epistemologically requires that we put *the sentient body* at the center of knowing. While New Age philosophers, massage therapists, dancers, and yoga practitioners (among others) have long recognized the centrality of the sensuous body in ways of knowing, intellectuals and other so-called sophisticated thinkers have often ignored or undervalued the body as a source of knowledge" (Phelan, 2007, p. 348) [emphasis added]. This demonstrates the scope of the contribution made by feminist work with the body. She

Phenomenological accounts of the body help shape the substantive questions in my research and contribute to building a precedent for the task of finding one's own terms to write a history of contemporary art and feminism.

As such, American feminist art's understanding of the body might be an inadequate frame of reference with which to grasp the specificity of Fina Miralles' practice and the specific situation of the body in the Spanish context,¹³³ particularly due to the specific socio-cultural situation of the dictatorship, and consequently the censorship that forced other, more subtle, types of resistance and strategies to be articulated.¹³⁴ Due to the impossibility of expression and also the prohibition on critical thinking, mechanisms of protest and techniques of resistance were devised by artists with other dynamics in contexts with dictatorships like in Spain. I argue that these artists' practices articulated different relations between the personal and the political because they are both structured by very specific cultural or political contexts. This is profoundly elucidating and should be fleshed out with an examination of practices such as Fina Miralles', whose staging of the body presents new articulations of "the personal is political." This demonstrates the different location of political action in feminist performance in acutely repressive contexts.

In this chapter, I tackle the Catalan context, which is the environment in which Fina Miralles performed the actions analysed in this thesis. I argue that some of the resistance performed under the Spanish dictatorial system was articulated through symbolic actions tied to the sensorial body. I draw mainly from Garbayo's (2016) feminist analysis of the "appearances" of bodies in the socio-cultural context of the late years of Francoism and from Albarrán-Diego's reading of sensorial explorations as specific tools of knowledge allowing one to "reclaim the ownership of the body" (2013, p. 307) in a dictatorial system. I expand this reading by looking at the explorations done by artists under the Franco dictatorship as investigations of movement and

describes some works related to the sense of touch, drawing from psychoanalysis, yet she does not describe the potential corporeal awareness process present in the art pieces, or theoretically.

¹³³ In chapter 3, I tackled why and how women's bodies were a specific space of repression in the body politics under the dictatorship, which continues to have consequences in Spanish society even now.

¹³⁴ I acknowledge that Spain shares with different countries in Latin America situations of dictatorship that—although happening at different moments—help me to understand the body politics in acute repressive systems and the resistance elaborated by women artists. Yet, to cover the Latin American context (and other artistic productions under dictatorships in the world) in relation with the art production in Spain extends beyond the scope of this thesis, even as it offers promising avenues for further reflection and research.

kinesthesia divided into two categories/strategies: “sensorial explorations” and “mapping the body.”¹³⁵

5.1. The Muted Body: Silence as a Space of Resistance

It is as if for the body, the previous silence [censorship under the dictatorship] would have supposed a self-awareness. The silenced body is the body confined to the realm of the private, forbidden from public appearance and from any recognition that escapes pre-existing schemes.

(Garbayo, 2016a, p.51) [my translation]

The body emerges as the main element in 1970s performance in Spain. The body is the basis on which a series of aesthetic and political concerns pivot. The body puts into question aspects of identity and ways in which that body acquires representativeness in public space. This is common for different performers in this context.¹³⁶ The control of bodies during the Franco regime produced rigid definitions of sex and gender, as I have argued. The feminine body, strongly mediated by national Catholicism, was an excluded body. Despite the changes brought about by the relative opening of the Francoist regime in the 1970s, the female body still carried its status as a muted body. In addition, in the Franco dictatorship, repression was not only exercised in the public sphere but also in the intimate one. Dictatorship was not only an absence of liberties, but it also made female subjectivity conform to its strictures.

Albarrán-Diego (2013) describes how the violent system was present in bodies and how the regime controlled the private areas of people’s lives. Franco regulated the use of public spaces. But this repression was also asserted in the private space anytime the privacy of individuals (homes, bodies) could be broken for the purpose of acquiring some kind of information, or just as a means of intimidation and repression.

¹³⁵ There is research done regarding the “whole-body-mapping,” defined as the tracing of a person’s body to create a “life-sized outline, which is filled in during a creative and reflective process, producing an image representing multiple aspects of . . . their embodied experience” (Adèle de Jager, Anna Tewson, Bryn Ludlow & Katherine M. Boydell, 2016, p. 1). According to these authors, there is a necessity to further research how “body mapping” is a useful research method to produce and disseminate knowledge, and that more investigation would be necessary to determine the value of “body mapping” to research, clinical, educative and political spheres.

¹³⁶ Such performers include Silvia Gubern, Olga L. Pijoan, Angels Ribé, Jordi Pablo, Lluís Utrilla, Jordi Benito, Francesc Torres, Antoni Muntadas, Carlos Pazos, Robert Llimós and Esther Ferrer.

Dictatorships impose traumatic abuses on the body and the spaces it occupies. An example of this abuse is the impossibility of affirming one's own agency in many forms. This silence becomes the place from which it is possible to explore bodily sensations in silence. Garbayo argues:

In the silence, which is nothing other than being stripped of the word (of the right to be present in the public space), there is always a story of resistance. In this sense, it would be possible to think that these bodies do not appear suddenly, but that the sociohistorical context of the moment allows a *change in tactics* that finally transcends silence and resolves into the will to appear. (2016b, p. 51) [my translation, emphasis added]

Garbayo points specifically to silence as not an absence but a space from which to find different modes of emergence. Silence is not only a sign of subjugation but also a sign of the different location of artists' body work under Franco's dictatorship. The dictatorship not only exacerbated patriarchal structures but also involved militarism, the suppression of personal expression, negation of individuality, an acute erosion of rights, and the effacement of subjectivity. Thus, artistic actions at this time are imbued with this sense of having a body. As I have argued, the Franco regime erased the emancipatory advances that women had made in the Second Republic. In this way, it imposed a model of femininity based on women's retirement from public life and the suppression of their right to self-representation. In this silence, other "tactics" are learned, including becoming aware of having a body through sensorial explorations.

5.2. Sensorial Explorations

The transition process began in Spain with the death of Franco in 1975. Albarrán-Diego (2012) notes the large wealth of existing literature on the transition process. He explains that there was a huge amount of literature that ultimately made the transition illegible and also indisputable. He argues that the transition was a consensual conclusion between the political parties put into power by the same leaders of the dictatorship. According to him this situation did not allow the current Spanish democracy to improve. I follow the position regarding the transition that Garbayo also expands by treating the "transition" as a continuity of the dictatorship: as a "pseudofrancoism without Franco" (2016b, p. 15). In the year 2004, the research Project *Desacuerdos* [Disagreements] published diverse texts about the transition and art and feminisms from 1969 to 2004. However, as noted by Navarrete, there is a lack of documentation and bibliography about

artists and culture in that period. She points out that only a few scholar has done this historiography “who have left in the inkwell an important number of landmarks, references or clues that were not their preference or that did not interest them” (2008, p. 205) [my translation]. The transitional period was a pact between the political leaders of the dictatorship who ended up being the political leaders of the democracy in Spain. These politics even currently do not allow free expression, and even punish it.¹³⁷

Albarrán-Diego argues that

in the last years of the dictatorship, there were many artists who tried to generate images, spaces and speeches from which to put in crisis the political order imposed after the victory of 1939. [...] However, it is very difficult to situate their political moment, locate *where the power of contestation settled*, determine to what extent the symbolic (art within that amalgam of social practices that we call culture) could operate a displacement in the field of the political. (2012, p. 8) [my translation, emphasis added]

Because of these very points, this thesis centres on the corporeal and situates the “power of contestation” in the intimate relations within the body and the intervention of the body in the world through movement. Albarrán-Diego notes that researchers articulated the works of this period in the capture of a “reality in its literality” (2012, p. 8), and in collective and activist actions, emphasizing that in the late years of the dictatorship there were artistic practices that fight in some of the few public spaces where it was possible to communicate disagreement: the street and the media. He highlights how this spaces where controlled by the state (2012). It is for this reason that in this dissertation, I am focusing in the parallel and subtler strategies such as the corporeal ones explored by Fina Miralles.

The art practices that occurred in this period were called “conceptual art.” Nevertheless, as Parcerisas argues, the term is not the most adequate to define the experimental practices that occurred in Catalonia:

It is important to say that, while ‘conceptual art’ was seen abroad as a tendency, in Catalonia instead it took the character of *a revolutionary program of attack on the*

¹³⁷ As I have addressed in the previous chapter (4), the Partido Popular (People’s Party) has governed Spain for many candidatures until June 1, 2018. Within these politics, for instance, Spanish singers have been convicted to jail by the Fiscalía de la Audiencia Nacional for the lyrics of their songs (Torrús, Alejandro, 2017).

established system, with an attitude similar to the Russian avant-garde or the Berlin Dada. (1992, pp. 15) [my translation, emphasis added]

The Francoist system suppressed not only personal expression, but also the relation with one's own self. I argue that the emphasis by researchers on more overtly political work leaves in oblivion more subtle strategies that focused on an exploration within the body. Because of narrow definitions, many works were not seen as political, and as a result the feminist potential of Fina Miralles' oeuvre as a whole was lost. This classification leaves behind the proposals of artists such as Fina Miralles, whose work with the body, personal and public, took place mainly in the intimate arena, and encouraged a relation with themselves. In this sense, I am reminded of Taylor's argument that: "Performance, as acts of intervention, can interrupt the circuits of the cultural industries that create products for consumption. It is much harder to control bodies than to control television, or radio broadcasts, or Internet platforms" (2016, p. 51). It is difficult to have power over or to repress sensations, such as kinesthesia, within the body. To pay attention to these subtle strategies, I seek to undo the distinction between "political" and "apolitical" artwork by understanding the impact of the sensorial explorations in performance and feminism through a reading that implies kinesthetic empathy and takes into account the gendered context of the moment. I will now continue this section by addressing the different scholarly approaches to the artwork done in the 1970s in Catalonia that are related to an exploration of the senses and the body.

Parcerisas focuses specifically on the "actions and subsenses,"¹³⁸ in which she includes the proposals of Antoni Muntadas in "Experiències Subsensorials" [Sub-Sensory Experiences] (1971-1973),¹³⁹ and *Concert Sensorial* [Sensorial Concert] (1973). Lluís Utrilla continued with pieces exploring these types of experiences with *Accions Tàctils* [Tactile Actions] (1972).¹⁴⁰ These experiences were performed at the Sala Vinçon, a venue inaugurated in Barcelona on

¹³⁸ Parcerisas, however, does not mention Fina Miralles in this category, nor in the artwork classified in her book as "actions." She includes Fina Miralles' work in the categorization "nature and landscape" (1992, pp. 16, 22). I argue in this thesis that this label undervalues the political and feminist aspects of Fina Miralles' work.

¹³⁹ These pieces remind me of the work of Lygia Clark under the Brazilian dictatorship which investigated the self through body sensory awareness. From the early 1970s until 1984 Clark developed "group-propositions" and a kind of psychotherapy that used the senses and the body.

¹⁴⁰ This action by Utrilla is also reminiscent of the tactile explorations by Clark.

March 23, 1973. Fina Miralles was the coordinator of this exhibition room¹⁴¹ in 1974 (the year when the series *Relacions* was performed) and this space was where the exhibition *Qué Fer?* [What to Do?]¹⁴² was held. In a manifesto about their work in *Qué Fer?* the artists involved explain: “The title *Qué Fer?* implies the questioning of coding systems and some purely verbal behaviours in which the conceptual movement seems to be obsolete and forced to spin continuously in a repetitive, tautological and, most of the time, idealistic way” (as cited in Parcerisas, 2007, p. 440). Parcerisas says: “In this space it was suggested that there were other positions within the Catalan Conceptual Art that were not precisely political, positions that, while remaining ideological, were more marked by material poetics or a direct transformation of the materials” (2007, p. 443). Parcerisas classifies those positions as “not precisely political,” which narrows the possibilities of analysis. Concretely, she argues that Fina Miralles work is an option for the “poetics and nature” influenced by the popular culture and identity of Catalonia and that it is a “counterbalance” to the political work of *Grup de Treball* (2001, p.47). This classification has limitations for reading Fina Miralles’ work’s contribution to feminist politics.

The Sala Vinçon case is paradigmatic, since at its opening on Passeig de Gracia in Barcelona the room was presented without title or author, and as it was painted in white. A freedom was offered to the artists to intervene in it according to their necessities. Utrilla¹⁴³ proposes two readings of the space in Sala Vinçon: the first, *tactile* and the second *visual*, with

¹⁴¹ It is not clear if Fina Miralles was a witness to *Accions Tàctils* by Utrilla (she does not remember) and/or if this work inspired some of her actions in *Traslacions* and *Relacions*, although she never explained her work in these terms. As I will explain further, she says “I do a relation of the body with elements.” (2016) In this sense, her work leaves a wider margin of interpretation and also gives a responsibility to the audience for interpretation from their own lived experience. As I have explained in the methodology, it could be argued that one of the ways to access to her work is through kinesthetic empathy.

¹⁴² *Qué Fer?* was held in Sala Vinçon from June 7 to 28, and its participants (without pretending to form any group) were Ferran García Sevilla, Fina Miralles, Jordi Pablo, Carlos Pazos, Olga L. Pijoan and Lluís Utrilla, pioneers of conceptual art. As much or more interesting than the exhibition was a publication, with the same title, that tried to bring to light projects or small utopias (simple sentences) of each artist that took into account the transformation of matter. The experience was supported by Alexandre Cirici who wrote an accompanying text for the proposal, called *Molinet de Sis* [Windmill of Six], in reference to the six artists of the exhibition.

¹⁴³ Lluís Utrilla is a Catalan artist and cultural promoter. He is one of the protagonists of conceptual Catalan art, participating in emblematic exhibitions such as “Mostra d’Art Jove de Granollers” (1971-1972), the “Primera Muestra de Arte Actual” (1973), “Comunicación Actual” (1973) and “Informació d’Art Concept” (1973). A designer of tactile environments, he is one of the performers in the exhibition *Qué fer?* in Sala Vinçon.

films, slides, sound, photographs, etc (1973).¹⁴⁴ In these works, there was an emphasis on the sensorial.

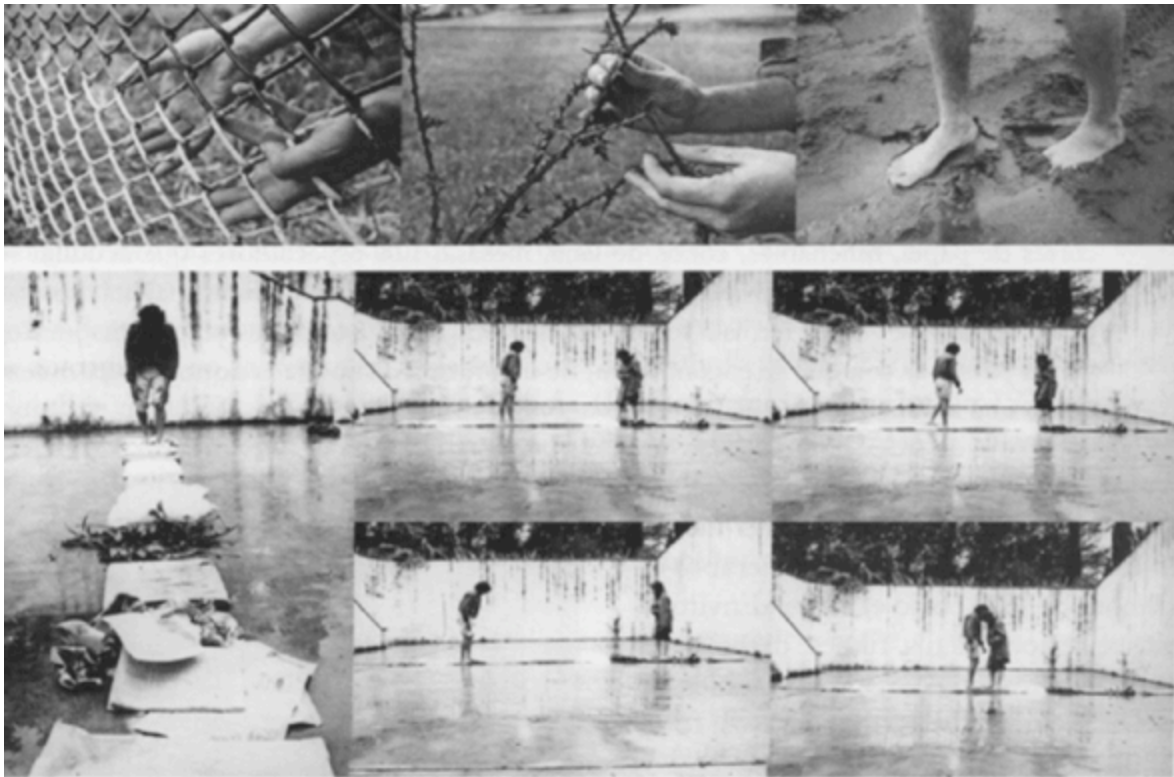


Figure 31. *Experiències subsensorials*, Actions by Antoni Muntadas (1971-1973). Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees I Actituds*.

Muntadas titled one event *Experiències Subsensorials* (Figure 31). I wonder what “subsensorial” means to Muntadas: Does this refer to the senses? What would be the sub-senses? These investigations of the corporeal were done by different artists and make me think that sensorial exploration was one of the locations where contestation took place under dictatorship. About Muntadas, Cirici explains that he made the series of slides called *Reconocimiento de un Cuerpo* [Recognition of a Body], which were later used for a film that was projected in “Art and System II” of CAyC¹⁴⁵ in Buenos Aires, in the 1976 conference *The Body as a Medium of Expression*, from the Contemporary Institute of Art of London and the Kunstmarkt in Düsseldorf.

¹⁴⁴ These actions were performed from June 4-9, 1973.

¹⁴⁵ The Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC) was an arts organization based in Buenos Aires, Argentina which was instrumental in creating an international arts movement based on the ideas of systems of art within conceptual art.



Figure 32. *Accions Tàctils* [Tactile Actions] by Lluís Utrilla (1972). Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.

Creus, drawing from Cirici, explains the work of Utrilla in *Accions Tactils* (Figures 32 and 33) as follows:

[The] Utrilla “case” is especially significant, because its activity appears *fully aimed at a fight against the multiple repressions of a moment*. Against the concerns and limitations, physical, political, ideological and psychological that distorted the craving for freedom and communication. The creative trajectory of Utrilla, from the environments in *Accions Tactils* and later with *Lectures*, seems to obey a linear progression to *a certain type of liberation*. (Creus, 2007, p. 125) [my translation, emphasis added]

Cirici (1976) also highlights a piece by Jordi Benito working with the body and words. He explains how Benito writes the names of some parts of his body on his skin and in the shadow made by his body. While naming the parts of his body, Benito recognizes them, not only in their physical character but also with respect to the space that the body occupies with its shadow. Because of this, these artists (Utrilla and Benito) were exploring what Cirici calls “liberation” (Cirici as cited in Creus, 2007, p. 125). These explorations are directly connected with a phenomenological account of the body that focuses on how the corporeal capacities of agency arise within corporeal experience. Somatic experiences create the possibilities to gather knowledge, and I consider this type of resistance as a feminist intervention. This would confirm

how the body, the senses, and the communication through the body were of interest to some of the artists in the context where Fina Miralles' performances happened.



Figure 33. *Accions Tàctils* [Tactile Actions] by Lluís Utrilla (1972). Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.

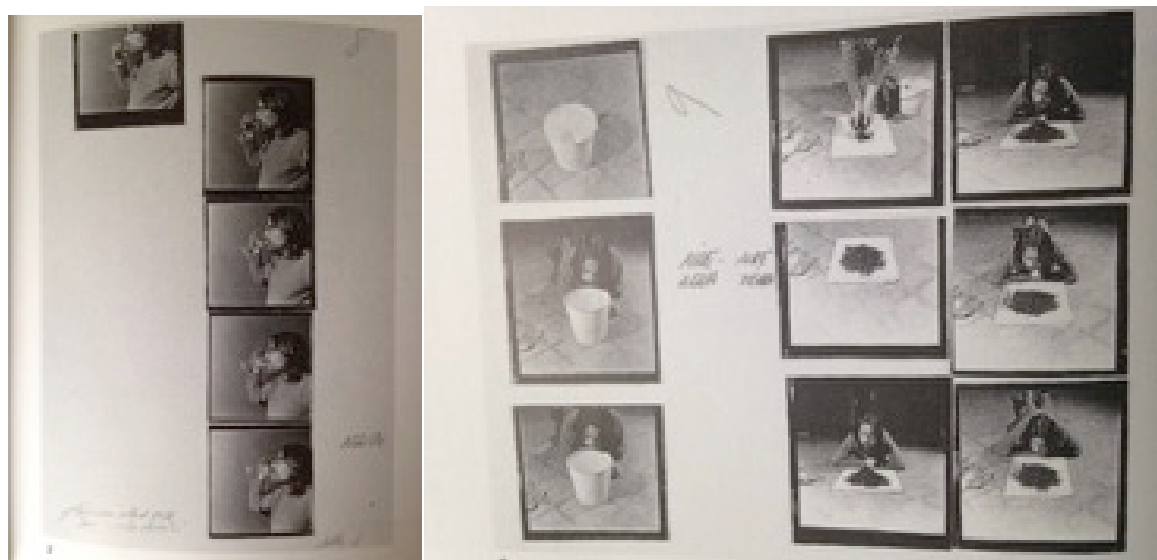


Figure 34. Work in Progress: Acció am aigüa [Action with water] and Work in Progress: Acció Aire-Aigüa i Acció Aire-Terra [Action Air-Water and Action Air-Earth] (1972) by Francisco Abad. Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.

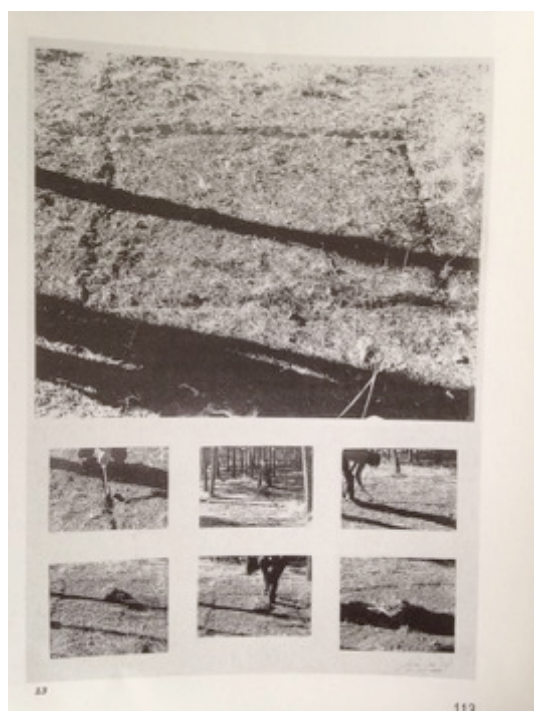


Figure 35. Accions. Treball sobre els Quatre Elements: Terra [Actions. Work about the fourth element: Earth] (1972) by Francisco Abad. Source: Pilar Parcerisas.

Francesc Abad worked in relation with the natural elements in pieces such as WORK IN PROGRESS: ACCIÓ AMB AIGÜA [Action With Water] and WORK IN PROGRESS: ACCIÓ AIRE-AIGÜA I ACCIÓ AIRE-TERRA [Action Air-Water and Action Air-Earth] (1972) (Figure

34) that could remind a viewer of Fina Miralles' work. However, there are essential differences between the two practices, particularly in the way the body is linked with the elements and the spaces where they took place. Most of Abad's actions happened in the interior of a house (in 1972, likely in New York) although two took place in nature: *ACCIONS. TREBALL SOBRE ELS QUATRE ELEMENTS: TERRA* (1972), and *ACCIÓN DE UNA TIRA DE PAPEL DE 20 m. DE LARGO EN EL AIRE, TIERRA, AGUA* [translation] (1973) on a beach in Castelldefells, Catalonia. This series of actions took place in the same year as Fina Miralles' *Relacions*, but I do not have any record of any contact between Fina Miralles and Abad. Abad explains that this work was exhibited in Valencia and Sevilla (as cited in Parcerisas, 1992, pp. 111-114), and Fina Miralles did not have access to these images. There are also fundamental differences between them. For instance, in the titles Abad talks "about" the elements, whereas Miralles speaks of being in "relation with" the elements. Fina Miralles' work is not explicitly influenced by the American context, and more importantly, she uses a woman's body in relation with the elements. This point will be further elaborated in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Parcerisas also mentions experiences with the sense of smell presented in the exhibition *Suggestions Olfactives* [Olfactory Suggestions] (1978) organized by Jordi Pablo. Before this exhibition Jordi Pablo worked with Fina Miralles in one of the actions in *Relacions: El Cos Cobert de Palla* [Body Covered by Straw] (1973). Probably these pioneering kinesthetic explorations by Fina Miralles inspired Pablo to organize the *Suggestions Olfactives* exhibition in 1978.

5.3. Mapping the Body

There are several works of performance art that proposed mapping the body through different strategies in relation with matter or positions of the body, something that also was present in the work of Fina Miralles. Abad in *Contar i Numerar les Pigues d'una Part del Braç per Part dels Assistents* [Counting and Numbering the Freckles from One Part of the Arm by the Public] (1973) (Figure 36), with the help of the public, covers his body with small ink points. Participants were invited to write on his skin as an act of framing the borders of the body, while Abad also mapped his body through his different senses (the painted skin, the public's touch, the covering of the skin with ink, and so on).



Figure 36. *Contar i numerar les pigues d'una part del braç per part dels assistents* [Counting and numbering the freckles from one part of the arm by the public] (1973) by Francesc Abad. Source: Pilar Parcerisas, *Idees i Actituds*.

Parcerisas, who describes Jordi Benito's work as "Body Art" or "Arte Corporal" describes Benito's works produced between 1972 and 1975 as follows:

[these] served to make him aware of his own body: measuring body parts with a metric tape, drinking water to urinate ("Acción-Transformación"/Action –Transformation); holding his breath ("135 Segons"/135 Seconds); occupying the space inside a closet ("Acción-Ocupación"/Action-Occupation); checking the impact of his body against a pile of bricks ("Acción-Reacción"/ Action-Reaction) and "Pes I Volum de un Cos" [Weight and Volume of a Body], an action in which the artist weighed himself on a scale, then submerged himself in a large can of water and, finally, measured the level of the liquid after the overflow originated from his body. (2007, p. 109) [my translation, emphasis added]

These corporeal actions were explorations of the materiality of his body. As if it were not clear that the body that he inhabited pertained to him, Benito performed different exercises that led him to make sure his body was there. When I talked with Fina Miralles, she explained to me that she did not have contact with the other previous artists mentioned, but that Jordi Benito was an artist with whom she worked and shared ideas:

I had a lot of relationships with Jordi Benito. Because we shared interests. What interests me is form and three-dimensional reality. The invisible, visible, what is not seen does not mean that it is not there. The sight, the feelings, the words that are heard but cannot be seen. (personal communication, June 26, 2018)

Fina Miralles is referring here to the explorations in her actions of elements such as movement and kinesthesia, and it is very connected with the work of Jordi Benito.

Albarrán-Diego, in the article “Feeling the Body: Performance, Torture and Masochism in the Spanish Conceptualism,” approaches tactile practices as “phenomenological explorations of reality” (2013, p. 303). Drawing from Kathy O’Dell and Sophie Delpoux, Albarrán-Diego provides a “new political reading of several performances by highlighting the role of the photographic medium in their reception and contextualizing these works in the very complex political Spanish transition” (2013, p. 303). He includes Fina Miralles’ work *Relacions. Accions Quotidians*, but omits the first part of *Relacions* where she covers and uncovers her body and has other experiences with elements. As I have previously mentioned, this first part of *Relacions* has been classified with works in relation with the feminine and nature (Bassas, 2001), and land art (Parcerisas, 2001, 2007).

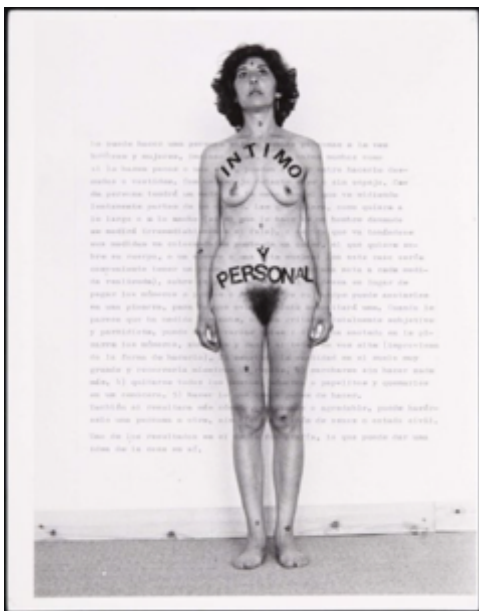


Figure 37. *Intimo y Personal* [Intimate and Personal] (1977) by Esther Ferrer. Retrieved from: <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/coleccion/obra/intimo-personal-partitura>

One of the works that Albarrán-Diego highlights is *Intimo y Personal* [Intimate and Personal] (1977)¹⁴⁶ by Esther Ferrer (Figure 37), performed in 1977 and 1992 in Atelier Lerin, Paris. In this performance she explores her own body through measuring. I mention this work for its use of measuring as an action of mapping the body, a strategy that also is used by Fina Miralles, though in different terms. The specificity of Fina Miralles' work is how she approaches performance as means of knowing the self through body practices/exercises, and also the pedagogical way in which she displays the gradual appearance of the body in the context of the late years of Francoism.



Figure 38. *Relation Between the Position of a Particular Body and Gravity* (1973) by Angels Ribé. Retrieved from: <https://www.angelsribe.com/en/work>

Albarrán-Diego also describes the work of Angels Ribé¹⁴⁷ as tactile experiences. Ribé self-exiled in 1972 to New York and developed some of her actions there. She explored kinesthesia, especially through the work *Relation Between the Position of a Particular Body and Gravity* (1973) (Figure 38). In “The Poetics of Resistance,” Teresa Grandas (2011) argues that

¹⁴⁶ This performance by Ferrer is reminiscent of *Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained* (1977) by Martha Rosler. Ferrer re-enacted the performance in the same gallery (Atelier Lerin) in 1992.

¹⁴⁷ For scholarly research about Angels Ribé see the thesis “*La Trayectoria de Tres Artistas en el Pasaje del Conceptualismo en Cataluña: Silvia Gubern, Àngels Ribé y Eulàlia*” [The Trajectory of Three Artists in the Passage of Conceptualism] by Assumpta Bassas (2015).

Ribé's performances have the characteristic of "contingency, the possibility that something might be happening or not, or the ephemeral element." She explains that in *Relation Between the Position of a Particular Body and Gravity* (1973) Ribé "shows the image of a raised and lowered hand, perceiving within it the dilation of the veins through sanguinary stasis" (2011, p. 189). This exploration of perception in a still body in different positions allows one to feel the borders of the body. These strategies by Ribé could be seen as possibilities to map the body. However, in the work of Ribé I do not see the pedagogical intention of practice/exercise of awakening the body as I argue is the case in the work of Fina Miralles.¹⁴⁸

Cirici in "El Arte Conceptual en Cataluña" describes Ribé's works, entitled *Interactions: Wind, Ventilator, Blood Circulation and Gravity* (1976, p. 23). In these works, Ribé presents a body in interaction/relation with elements like the wind and sensations of gravity that could be explored through the awareness of the position and movement of the body, or the consciousness of having a body, that is, the kinesthetic sense. As the artist explains in the catalogue of the group exhibition *Nature Into Art*, held in Chicago in 1973: "My intention in these series of works is to approach nature and physical phenomena. *The works deal with perception*, some by searching for new information, others by artificially recreating the physical laws" (2007) [emphasis added]. Garbayo argues that "Ribé's works show the problematic ascription of that body in space and explore different ways of inhabiting it" (2016, p. 144). There is a phenomenological component in her work but—because these experiences take place outside of the context of the Franco dictatorship—it would be a mistake to read them as equivalent to Fina Miralles' practice. Fina Miralles' work does not have explicit influence from abroad, and her group of corporeal experiences describes different strategies for a somatic process of body awareness, something that I argue is unique to her work, in her context.

In this exploration of the body through a mapping process, I highlight the work of Olga L. Pijoán,¹⁴⁹ particularly her action *Herba* [Grass] (1973), depicted in Figure 39. Garbayo argues about *Herba* that

the silhouette, the trace of disappearance, accounts for the incompleteness inherent in the body, as well as for its fragmentation. The action has created *a new type of subjectivity*

¹⁴⁸ I make a more in-depth argument on this topic in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

¹⁴⁹ Born in Tàrrega 1952-San Rafael del Sur, Nicaragua 1997. More information about Pijoán can be found in the catalogue: *Olga L. Pijoán, Fragments d'un Puzzle* (1999) by Pilar Parcerisas.

that erodes the rationalist conception of the subject as whole and complete, and proposes in return a subject committed to becoming constantly. A subject who knows about her/his own vulnerability. The body, female in this case, and the self, play in the dialectic between presence/absence, between completeness and lack. (2016, p. 54) [my translation, emphasis added]



Figure 39. *Herba* [Grass] (1973) by Olga L. Pijoan. Archive: Pilar Parcerisas.

In one of her actions, *Cuerpo Real/Cuerpo Proyectado* [Real Body/Projected Body] (1973) Pijoan sits down in a chair and, besides her bodily presence, projects slides of parts of her body in photographic negative (due to censorship). “A puzzle was edited with the image of the artist in photo/photocopy as if it were a starlet, whose scale varied in each of the fragments, so it was impossible to reconstruct the original photo” (Parcerisas, 2007, p. 114). This puzzle could represent the lost pieces in the Francoist system; those pieces that are sometimes not possible to put together (i.e. because of post-traumatic stress). In this regard, Pijoan reconstitutes her body through this action, an action that more closely resembles the political possibilities present in Fina Miralles’ body art works of this period.

The work of Pijoán is particularly interesting for the manner in which the strategies of mapping the body are at play. On the one hand (as in *Herba*, Figure 39), there is an emphasis on

mapping the borders of the body. The exercise of drawing the silhouette of her body in real size is a practice that reinforces a creative and reflective process where an embodied experience is encouraged. On the other hand (as in *Cuerpo Real/Cuerpo Proyectado*, Figure 40), the use of different sizes of the details of the body, such as the projection on the wall of a negative of her face enlarged, encourages a methodology for an awareness of the different parts of the body to initiate a process of reconstitution of the body as a whole.

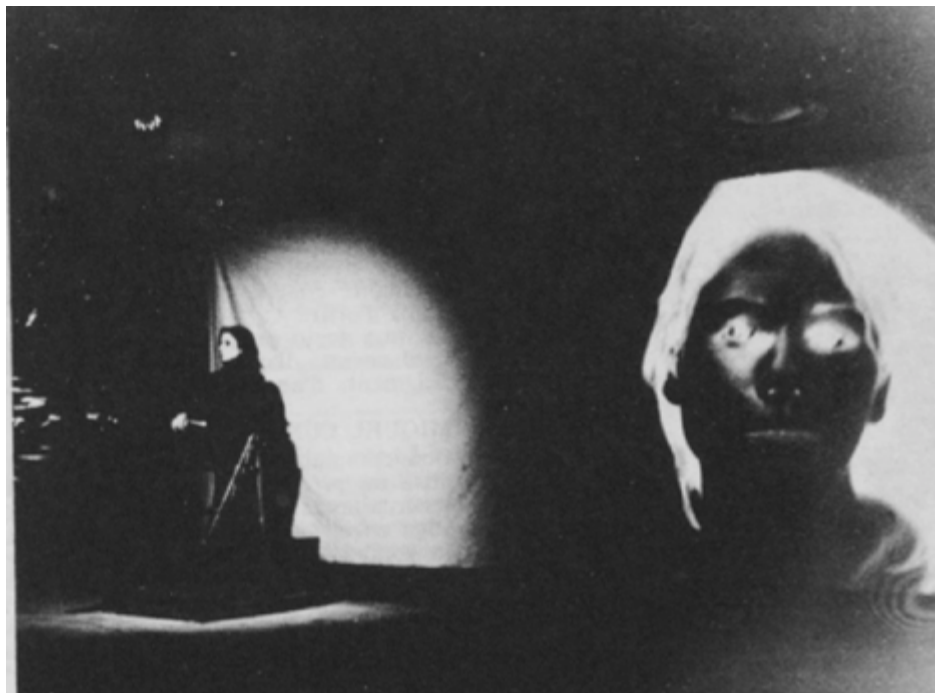


Figure 40. *Cuerpo Real/Cuerpo Proyectado* [Real Body/Projected Body] by Olga L. Piojan (1973). Archive: Pilar Parcerisas.

Material practices are central to feminist politics. These performances can be seen as a form of feminist intervention using a phenomenological account of the body. The artists described here explore their bodies in relation with the world and with the space they occupy. In addition, there is a silent presence under the repression of the dictatorial system. The consciousness of the body itself, the awareness of the presence of the body, is a liberating action. This subtle transgression is a form of feminist strategy to confirm the existence of the body, a way to own the body. This is also present in the work of Fina Miralles through a unique process of pedagogical strategies, which I elaborate further in chapter 6, 7 and 8.

In this chapter, I have briefly addressed some corporeal strategies observed in contemporary Catalan works that could remind viewers of the work of Fina Miralles. This has

allowed me to also make clearer the specificities of the series by Fina Miralles. The manner in which I am contextualizing her work also aims to argue that her early works, analyzed in this dissertation, have been misread either as a-political (associating her work with conceptual artists who explored the body in phenomenological terms, but not as a form of “relation” with herself and the world, or a form of body awareness process) or as essentialist (emblematic of an essentialized feminine relation to nature). On the other hand, aesthetic connections to other international body art practices miss the specific socio-political context within which Fina Miralles’ work gained significance, and thus we should be cautious in thinking about questions of influence too easily, even as these contribute to understanding the climate of aesthetic experimentation and the languages of body practices in that period.

The questions I pose regarding Fina Miralles’ practice are the following: How do her series of performances offer clues for a specifically silent form of transgression that leads to a transformation of the self and world, a form of transformation that might be missed in art historical scholarship particularly because of its unsaid or non-discursive elements? How do these performances provide clues about transgression under the patriarchal and fascist system of the time? How do subtle transgressions become a poetic and political action that opens spaces (awareness within the body, its borders and the space it occupies) through sensorial explorations and feminist intervention? The sensorial explorations of Fina Miralles are connected with each other and were presented in a sequence as a rigorously explained process of awareness of the body. This pedagogical sequence of body awareness is something that I have observed only in her work.

5.4. Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, I argue for the specificity of art and feminism in the Spanish context under Franco’s dictatorship, and for the importance of developing an analysis based not solely on American theoretical frameworks for understanding feminist body art. Some of the resistance performed under the Spanish dictatorial system was articulated as symbolic actions tied to the sensorial body. During the last years of the Franco regime and the transition, various artistic experiences responded to the suffocating dictatorial system. Many artists’ works were specifically related to the body and the exploration of identity and space through the senses. I specifically divide them into two groups: “sensorial explorations” and “mapping the body.”

These pioneering actions took place in the intimate surroundings of the artists, so they did not exert much influence at the time. I nevertheless observe in them a search for a body that seems not to belong to the artists through a repetition of corporeal exercises and practices to make sure that the body pertains to them in the acute repressive body politics under Francoism. Some of the works further reconstitute parts of the body, as if it had been broken in pieces. I observe a necessity to map the body through different strategies. These actions served to allow artists to become aware of the body, a body stolen by the dictatorship. The investigation of these corporeal strategies also raises the question of whether they are still strategies that can be used to weaken power and hierarchical patriarchal structures or even change political systems today.

There were influences and exchanges of some of these artists across contexts, especially those who exiled themselves in the 1970s to the USA (Muntada, Utrilla, Abad, Ribé). However, Fina Miralles did not explicitly have the influences of the American context. Most of these other artists' sensorial explorations (Utrilla, Abad, Muntadas) were isolated experiences and were not given continuity. As Fina Miralles explains, none of these artists did this type of work at later times (personal communication, June 26, 2018), so it could be argued that another specificity of her work is the continuity until the present moment of a corporeal strategy of consciousness present in her artwork and life.

Through the specificity of Fina Miralles' works in their context, I read her sensorial investigations as a sequence of exercises of somatic consciousness of the body. Furthermore, the essence of these works involves a phenomenological understanding of the body and they have continuity with her work until the present moment. Fina Miralles' performances center on the corporeal and situate the power of contestation in intimate relation with the body and the intervention of the body in the world through movement, which I interpret as a feminist intervention. In the next three chapters, I analyse Fina Miralles' corporeal dynamics in her practices.

Chapter 6 – *Translacions*: A Bodily Exploratory Method for Developing Kinesthetic

Awareness

Kinesthesia opens up a field of reflexivity in which the subject becomes an object (as body) of her own awareness. [...] Kinesthetic sensations are tools for understanding the properties of self, other and the world.

(Noland, 2009, pp. 10, 13)

In her actions, Fina Miralles explores her specifically corporeal existence, challenging the learned behaviours in the Francoist system (governed by the implicit mandates: *Do not exist, Do not be, Do not think*).¹⁵⁰ In what follows, I argue for the specificity of bodily movement and kinesthesia for self-knowledge and feminist emancipation. Drawing from theories of embodiment and agency and from Noland's concept of kinesthesia, in this chapter I explain the somatic thread already present Fina Miralles' work before she actually uses the body in her later work.

Beginning from *Dona-Arbre* (1973), from the series *Translacions* and *Relacions*, I suggest that there is an increasing appearance of Fina Miralles' body in her artworks, which I describe as exercises/practices. I argue that in *Sensitiveland*, *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* and the series *Translacions* there is a procedural and pedagogical value in the exercises for the artist herself (and the viewer) and for her self-empowerment.

I suggest that these earlier works are exercises in which Fina Miralles' body increasingly appears, and that they precede her later focus on the body where there is a more overtly feminist political intervention when she proposes the intimate scene and the public arena as spaces for self-care. I argue that an exploratory method starts here and that this method is valuable to a feminist politics that begins from self-knowledge. Through the reading of these works, I elaborate the notion of a process of developing kinesthetic awareness which implicates the body more and more, and which provides a method for building corporeal agency. I suggest that the processes of "movements" in *Translacions* are experienced through different corporeal dynamics, which include kinesthesia. The important aspect is that, by transposing material, Fina Miralles creates an experience/practice through which she may glean kinesthetic knowledge. These works are all exercises in a search for the body. The artworks covered in this chapter are the starting

¹⁵⁰ I am inspired by these sentences recited by Fina Miralles in one of her recent pieces (*Recordant Aquell Temps tan Gris*) which I describe further in the next section.

point for a process of recovering a body that Fina Miralles could eventually claim during this procedure and further in the series *Relacions* (covered in chapters 7 and 8).

6.1. Fina Miralles' Body in Actions: *Dona-Arbre* [Woman Tree]

When the body is presented in other ways that are not recognizable and that have not yet been codified or regulated, the body and the act become spaces in which the incalculable can happen. [Artists] use corporeal strategies, propose new images, new presences and new representations, strategies that make it possible to find new places from which the unthinkable can be proposed in others [places]. These strategies construct the body and subjectivity in spaces marked by censorship and the obligatory nature of silence.

(Maite Garbayo, 2016, p. 21) [my translation]

*What is the seed?
Yes, the seed is one
And you have to discover it,
All has an origin: The Dona-Arbre*

(Fina Miralles, 2009)¹⁵¹ [my translation]

In 1973, as part of the series *Translacions*, Fina Miralles produced the action *Dona-Arbre*, the first action where she actually “appears” and “puts her body” in her artwork, in space, and more specifically in the ground. The expressions “appear” and “put the body”—in Spanish *poner el cuerpo*—are taken from Garbayo’s book about performance in the late years of Francoism (2016)¹⁵². I think it is interesting to use the verb “to put” and not “to use” (the body) since the verb “to put” summons aspects of movement and building (to make), gesture and space, which are central to my argument rooted in the understanding of the body as the main site where experience and knowledge production take place in feminist politics. Feminism has discussed the body frequently when denouncing the restrictive control that has taken place on it, yet less emphasis has been placed on the body as a *source* of liberation: What impact do Fina Miralles’

¹⁵¹ Even though Fina Miralles’ text is from a later time than this book, I use this quotation in order to show how the importance of the lived body for her starts during this period in her life, as well as how she articulates it later in her writings and life (and also by resuming doing performances in 2012).

¹⁵² In *Cuerpos que Aparecen. Performance y Feminismos en el Tardofranquismo* [Bodies That Appear. Performance and Feminisms in the Late Years of Francoism], Garbayo uses the expression *poner el cuerpo* for first time in the reading of feminism and art in the 1970s in Spain, relating to strategies of appearance/disappearance in the late years of Francoism. She draws from Amelia Jones’ description of *Silhouette* (1998, p. 26) by Ana Mendieta when she explains the absence/presence in appearance/disappearance (Garbayo, 2016, p. 68).

actions have on postulating a different method of emancipation, one which understands agency not as a process in the mind but mainly as a corporeal one?

In *Dona-Arbre*, Fina Miralles' still body is covered to the hips. She is dressed in cotton jeans and a dark jersey. In one of our conversations about the performance, she told me that although it does not look like it, the soil feels colder than other elements. Through an empathy exercise, I imagine that she probably felt the freshness of the soil through the fabric of her cotton jeans, perceived the breeze of the air on the rest of her body. An empathetic approach allows me to understand this first "relation" between the body and the elements—half of the body with the soil and the other half with the air—as a sensorial exploration more than a symbolic act.



Figure 41. Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Dona-Arbre* [Woman-Tree] (photograph 1) (Sant Llorenç del Munt, Barcelona, Novembre1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 42. Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Dona-Arbre* [Woman-Tree] (photograph 2) (Sant Llorenç del Munt, Barcelona, Novembre1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 43. Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Dona-Arbre* [Woman-Tree] (photograph 3) (Sant Llorenç del Munt, Barcelona, Novembre1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

Three photographs in black and white document this performance. In one (Figure 41) Fina Miralles is looking to the camera, yet with an absent gaze, as if she is in another state of consciousness. In the second one (Figure 42), still with open eyes, she does not look to the camera but to a point between the ground and the horizon. In the third one (Figure 43), Fina Miralles almost closes her eyes. This introspective gaze allows her to focus on the invisible sensations produced through her action, and thus through kinesthesia, gathering knowledge about the borders of her body and how they can be felt in a different way in her body parts that are buried and the parts that are above the ground. The qualitative dynamics of kinesthesia are at play, happening in the silence. Fina Miralles' refers to this as the "invisible visible" (personal communication, June 26, 2018). For her there are many corporeal sensations happening in the relation with oneself, the world and others that are not visible—for instance the act of looking, or feeling the body moving.

Fina Miralles *makes space* within the body and outside the body through kinesthetic knowledge and corporeal agency. I use "make space" in a metaphorical way to explain what it could mean to "expand"¹⁵³ the body, something under restrictions in the dictatorship. A process of self-knowledge in relation with the world "makes space" within but also outside, by occupying in a different way the intimate and public space. This space is a perceptual and somatic dimension that can be unknown by the repressive system. Fina Miralles expands her body through the exploration of the sensorial and this is a manner of resistance under the dictatorship's censorship, where there were obligatory "mute" circumstances. In our conversations, she says that *Dona-Arbre* is the action where she uses the body for first time, but she says that she did so "without knowing yet. [...] I did not connect with my body until later" (personal communication, 2016). This statement has important implications for our understanding of agency. She moves first and understands the movement as liberatory and agential after. Regarding this she also notes:

[in conceptual art] I used the body as another element, like 'my body is something that I have.' Yet it was very intellectual/rational. Now, *I take good care of my body. I exist in my body. I exist through my body.* But I didn't know this before or I didn't want to know. (personal communication, Summer 2016) [emphasis added]

¹⁵³ The term "expand" the body is borrowed from Ahmed as cited in Garbayo (2016, p.63) explained in chapter of Methodology (4).

For Fina Miralles, the contact with the body was nonexistent in these works, yet there was already a relation with her own body occurring. I do not aim in this reading to contradict Fina Miralles' understanding of her corporeal process; however, I argue that these processes have connections to the construction of agency, a process that starts with corporeal dynamics, and with sometimes un-perceived movements that later are understood as agential. Bodily dynamics are taking place in Fina Miralles' still body in *Dona-Arbre*, where she makes the statement with her action: "I am part of the earth." Her feet can feel that they are part of it.

Kinesthetic sensation is thus in league with the mind's attempt to experience its embodiment as an animate form. That kinesthesia might be seen as *providing sensory experience for the purposes of introspection* is of course highly relevant, for it implies that the way movement feels ("sensation in its own right") can indeed become the object of intentional consciousness (to evoke Husserl's terms). (Noland, 2009, p. 10) [emphasis added]

Kinesthesia, affectivity and tactility are the experiences through which the artist verifies that she is alive and present in the flesh, something that I argue is a subtle resistance under the repressive body politics of the Francoist system. With subtle resistance I am referring to a perceptual and somatic resistance that happens in silence. If the sensory experience of kinesthesia provides a process of introspection and allows agentic processes, then I consider this a form of resistance because those very points were what Francoism was acting against. For this reason, Fina Miralles' explorations are a particular and different form of liberatory process. This political and personal dynamic that is mainly a somatic process invisible from outside in this work is missed within other readings of Fina Miralles precisely because of its subtlety and because it is an invisible dynamic. That is why it is of utmost importance to turn to kinesthetic empathy as a mode of doing art history, where I can understand not only the action's aesthetic and symbolic dimensions, but its experiential ones, and in and through that, I can understand something about the transformative possibilities present in *Dona-Arbre* (and the rest of the performances that I analyse in this thesis and that I observe to be connected). Through an empathy approach to the pieces, I recognize these possibilities in and through the body, and not through a kind of authorial or artistic intention. This is why I call these pieces "pedagogical" in that the body itself, its sensation, *instructs* Fina Miralles and also myself, on how to proceed.

A stilled body is present in this action. Drawing from psychologist Daniel Stern, Noland affirms kinesthetic awareness is working in both the gestures of a moving body and the postures of a still body. She argues that

locked in a cramped or awkward position, we may not be visibly moving, but our neuro-receptors nevertheless pick up the sensation of discomfort and, accordingly, compel us to move. Kinesthesia, in Stern's reading, refers to the feedback the body provides, and to which the subject can choose to listen; kinesthesia thus stands for body awareness in general, with the understanding that the body is never—even while dreaming—entirely in repose. (Noland, 2009, p. 14)

In "The Impossible-Possible of Being Still,"¹⁵⁴ Gretchen Schiller explains that

being still allows us to catch up and grasp perceptions that are ungraspable when we move through space . . . the performers bodies plays a double role: they are both the microscope and the physical site of sensation: a *sensescope*. Like a microscope that allows us to amplify *the too small* or the telescope that allows us to see the too far away, the body as still becomes a sort of faraway nearby sensescope which feels what is not visible to the naked eye. The body-still affords a sensual fine reading of time and space. (2017, p. 188-189).

Drawing from André Lepecki, Schiller notes that stillness implies a "differential presencing:" "Stillness operates at the level of the subject's desire to invert a certain relationship with time, and with certain (prescribed) corporeal rhythms" (Lepecki as cited in Schiller, 2017, p. 189). In this sense, Fina Miralles' still body is an intervention fighting the established corporeal rhythms installed by the dictatorship. Her still body is an exploration of another type of presence under the Francoist rules. Dictatorship doesn't want bodies in movement. There are restrictions for the way a body moves and where it goes. As explained previously (chapter 2) the gendered roles are very marked. It can be said that Fina Miralles in *Dona-Arbre* is repeating some forms of constraint. She literalizes metaphorical statements such as, for instance, being cut off at the knees, which as Francoism, limits the possibilities of movement. The dictatorship debilitated bodies and wanted them to be rendered immobilized under rigid gender roles. However, when

¹⁵⁴ The aim of this article is "to turn the stage inside out and ask performers to illuminate the ways in which this invisible figuring of approaching and approximating immobility cultivates movement thinking" (Schiller, 2017, p. 178). In this article she interviews contemporary artists Catherine Schaub-Abkarian (dance and theatre), Yoann Bourgeois (dance and circus), and Ruth Gibson (dance and video).

Fina Miralles literalizes the symbolic description of this situation, I observe that she understands it differently. There is a sensorial exploration that breaks these limits through perception. On the one hand, her body instructs her on what constraint and repression look and feel like physically. On the other hand, her body—in relation with the very materiality of the world—proposes a possibility of breaking those cruelly installed body routines. She does this through kinesthetic perception as a way to create a corporeal dynamic that leads her to develop an attention within her body. In *Dona-Arbre* she fights the corporeal rhythms installed by the dictatorship, literalizing the immobilization but also proposing a perceptual exploration where kinesthesia becomes an access to introspection.

Schiller argues that “being still also wipes off the historical dust of other movement sediments in our bodies” (2017, p. 190). Fina Miralles’ still body reveals the cruelly installed gestures established by the regime which are rigidly gendered, it creates a “pause,” a situation of silence, that articulates what cannot be said with words: the claustrophobic society that immobilizes bodies and minds leading persons not to act, not to think, not to reflect about themselves nor the suffocating world around them. In sum, the dictatorship educated people into not having a subjectivity, nor a body. Being still reveals “a schematic inner vector or tendency-toward movement that can persist in the body even when the large-scale gesture that the ghost gesture schematically implies is not actually being performed” (Elizabeth A. Behnke as cited in Schiller, 2017, p. 190). By being still, Fina Miralles is creating a “psycho-physical space” where self-knowledge and introspection can take place.

Reynolds and Reason also explain that “Stillness is far from simply the absence of movement but rather a moment in which *perception* is allowed to settle upon the ‘microscopy’ of reverberation, of detail, of closeness, of difference” (2012, p. 196) [emphasis added]. I wish to highlight the importance of perception and sensory processes in the artwork of Fina Miralles. Kinesthesia is a forgotten sense. It is commonly understood that human beings have five senses. However, as Sheets-Johnstone (2016) notes, kinesthesia is a sensory modality that has fallen into oblivion. In her opinion, with only five senses human beings would be simply statues. Kinesthesia allows bodies to sense movement, and the awareness of not only the beginning of that movement, but also finishing it, as well as its spatio-temporal energy dynamics (Sheets-Johnstone, 2016). This is important for Fina Miralles’ bodily actions, because it locates in the body the site where a process of consciousness happens, suggesting a different method of

emancipation that situates agency not in mental processes but in corporeal dynamics. The still body gives access to the habitual gestures inhabited in our bodies but also to the body as a source of new capabilities and movements. Schiller notes:

The unperformability of being still is a creative impossible-possible for performers. Internally it is a bodily-felt dynamic landscape of *micro movements*, which invoke subtle shifts of bones, tendons, ligaments, nerve endings, fluids, breath, cells, states of energy and the imaginary. During the various discussions with the performers the terms: augmented perception, amplification, dilation, listening, reacting, surrendering and opening were often mentioned. These micro eukinetic¹⁵⁵ perceptions of being still cultivate the performer's sensitivity to enact an economy of action-reaction: a heightened responsivity to itself, to others and its environments. Being still produces *inner trace-forms and shadow-forms*, which often escape the public eye and printed press. (2017, p. 191-192) [emphasis added]

Schiller's argument is focused on performers doing dance. I wish to locate her thinking within this dissertation. It is my argument that Fina Miralles' still body under this repressive system is exploring a creative possibility for the obligatory "stillness" and "mute" circumstances under Francoism. I have argued previously how Fina Miralles' actions are subtle resistance in this context. Here Schiller describes "micro-movements" in a still body as "subtle shifts" of different segments of the body. In my understanding of the corporeal dynamics of Fina Miralles, the augmented perception of bodily sensations is a silent awakening of the body, that is, a subtle resistance by increasing the awareness of a body that the Franco system wanted to immobilize and "shut up." Fina Miralles does not talk in *Dona-Arbre*, yet through the body there is a communication with herself through kinesthesia. "Inner trace and shadow forms" are invisible to the eyes, yet a transgression of the system it is at play.

In *Dona-Arbre*, Fina Miralles doesn't document digging the hole, neither placing herself in it. I understand this as a strategy to focus on what she is only documenting: the still body in the hole, the enigma of the disappeared legs, the confusion of a body in pieces, or a body semi-buried. The still body is the main element of a physical action. To go inside the hole in this

¹⁵⁵ She draws from Rudolf Von Laban's "term Eukinetics ('Eu' refers to good, and 'kinetics' to movement) in the 1920s to describe the dynamics of movement. See Maletic, Vera, *Body Space. Expression: The Development of Rudolf [Rudolf? Check] Laban's Movement and Dance Concepts* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1987)" (Schiller, 2017, p. 191).

action, she moved the earth out with a shovel. She made this effort to create a physical, clear place where she could situate her body. At a time when there was no real (nor imaginary) space for women to move freely, Fina Miralles pushed herself to open a hole in the earth to touch a physical and visible possibility that could hold her body. Matter sustains the body. Fina Miralles can relax the body supported by matter. She can feel its weight and volume. Holding the body indicates a different exploration than what can be understood as a burial, which implies associations with death.¹⁵⁶ I argue against an overemphasis on the burial of the body (with all the Christian undertones and allusions to death). Holding the body is such a different action and I argue that there is something quite other going on here. It is my argument that this exploration is far from a symbolic death; instead there is an awakening process.¹⁵⁷ In *Dona-Arbre*, Fina Miralles holds her body with the matter of the earth. It is important to note the very meaning of holding, that is, sustaining the body, avoiding its fall, something necessary and totally coherent under the dictatorship. By holding the body in this action, the matter created a space for the body, or an exercise for figuring out what space a body occupies. Drawing from Schiller, I wish to pay attention not only to the “shape and forms of movement” but also to the “inner-felt mechanisms of the performer-body-stage turned inside out” (2017, p. 192). In performing the action, she physically testifies to how much space her legs occupy. She not only confirms the space she occupies, but also perceives from inside the invisible kinesthetic corporeal dynamic created through her performance. As she says during our conversations:

My work is very pedagogical. I am a *maestrita* [diminutive of teacher]. Even for myself. There is no work of art. There is process. I just say it and show it as it is. [...] The interesting thing about conceptual art and performance is that they are experiential, because what I am committed to is an experiential art. It has to make sense. [...] Let’s go to life, please [...] but start with your life [...] and get going!” (personal communication, Summer, 2016) [my translation]

Dona-Arbre is thus a key action in Fina Miralles’ trajectory. In it, she anchors her body in the soil, where she feels its freshness on her legs. The stilled body talks without words through sensations. She recently argues: “All has a sense [in my actions]. [It] is very easy to follow it [...]

¹⁵⁶ This is the first piece of Fina Miralles when her body is half-buried. In the next chapter, I analyse other burial pieces that have been associated with a symbolic death process.

¹⁵⁷ I continue explaining this argument more in-depth with the analysis her burial actions in the next chapter (7).

It is important to learn how to look [...] I am telling the things without words [...] [it] is a simple language. [...] There must be a learning of looking more in depth” (personal communication, July 24, 2018) [my translation]. I argue that this “simple” and “invisible” knowledge is communicated through the body, positing it as the very site of knowledge, which has implications for understandings of feminist corporeal aspects of agency that understand the body as an agent and the place where agentic processes begin (McNay, 2000; Coole, 2005, 2007; Meynell, 2009; Krause, 2011). In Fina Miralles’ words there “is a knowledge that you do not realize that goes inside you. [...] This knowledge cannot be gathered intellectually, but with the hands, with the look” (personal communication, July 24, 2018). A corporeal and somatic way to gather knowledge, and consequently agency, is implied.

Fina Miralles’ actions must be understood in the context of Francoism, where her explorations are devoted to occupying a space, to experiencing the borders of her body, to being aware of her body from the inside, and to confirming that she has a body and that she exists. Cirici describes her process in this series as acts of “devoting herself” to performing certain actions (1977, p. [173] 45) [my translation], a self-reflexive grammatical structure in which she is both the subject and object of her practice. Her practices are embodied experiences.

Dona-Arbre is the last piece in the series *Translacions*, and the first one where Fina Miralles actually “puts” her body somewhere (as the main element of the action). *Translacions* is a series of actions in which Fina Miralles moves elements to an environment where they initially do not belong: *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Letting Snails Free] (1973), where she paints snails in groups and liberates them in a square in Parc de la Ciutadella, Barcelona, Spain on November 1, 1973; *Flotació d’Herba en el Mar* [Fleet of Grass in the Sea], performed in Premià de Mar on November 11, 1973; moving sand to a field in *Duna* [Dune] in which she translated sand from the beach of Sant Martí d’Empúries to a farmland on November 18, 1973; and *Dona-Arbre* [Woman-Tree], in which the artist’s own body is transplanted to the middle of the landscape of Sant Llorenç del Munt, Barcelona. According to Fina Miralles, *translacions* is an invented word (personal communication, Summer 2016). It comes from the word meaning “to move,” but the way she forms the noun does not exist. *Translacions* can be translated as “movements.” The definition of *Translacions* related to movement is very important for the connection to my attention in this dissertation to the movements/kinesthesia of Fina Miralles in her performances.

Dona-Arbre opens the door to the first part of her next series *Relacions*, where Fina Miralles covers her body with different natural materials in the Catalonian countryside. These pieces will be more fully theorized below. Fina Miralles' actions are quite intimate (Catalonian landscapes with no people, or her house or garden) so the general public will see only the documentation. Only one action was performed on the day of the opening of an exhibition;¹⁵⁸ in fact, these actions happen in intimacy or natural landscapes without people. Expanding Garbayo's (2016) reading I understand that this *lugar-otro* [space-other] is the space within the body felt through kinesthesia. As Schiller notes referring to body knowledge and stillness: "the impossibility of immobility cultivates *creative kinaesthetic improbabilities* and a *performative agency* which listens with its cells and hears with its hands" (2017, p. 192) [emphasis added].

When Cirici writes about *Translacions*, he refers to these actions as "Context and change:"

To show the importance of the context and meaning-making, the artist has devoted herself to taking things out of their original context: from their natural context to another (grass on the sea, the beach on top of an orchard, *the legs of a woman in the underground world*), from the natural to the artificial (the potatoes and cultivated field in an exhibition hall, the tree in a bed, the stones in a closet) or from an artificial one to a natural one (the artificial fish in the bucket of water, the chicken dissected in the chicken coop, the paint on the shell of the snails). (1977, p. [173] 45) [my translation, emphasis added]

Cirici's formulation—"The artist has devoted herself"—is important to the process of bodily appearance in Fina Miralles' work, even when her body is less frequently visible in these earlier works. In all the pieces of the series *Translacions*, even though she is displacing other objects rather than working explicitly through her body, Fina Miralles nevertheless gathers knowledge through her body, still and in movement through transporting natural elements to spaces to which they do not originally correspond. As Diana Taylor argues: "Placing an event/image outside of its familiar context or frame can be, in itself, *an act of intervention*" (2016, p. 16) [emphasis added]. By moving elements to places where they do not correspond, Fina Miralles creates a dissonance in those spaces. There is an important aspect to transposing them because it is a self-knowledge exercise by moving them with her body. I observe different

¹⁵⁸ Fina Miralles did a public performance in the opening of a *Relacions* exhibition that I explain in the next chapter.

body strategies where the process of movement is focused in a transposition of elements for the exercise/experience/practice that allows Fina Miralles to glean knowledge by moving them. It isn't the transposition of objects as a completed task but their movement, their transposition, that is relevant, and this requires bodily action and movement.

In *Dona-Arbre*, Fina Miralles not only creates a dissonance but also uses sensorial experimentations or corporeal exercises to create a new space for her body and new ways to intervene in the world. This intervention is feminist in the sense of bringing the sensorial to the body, as a way of reconstituting her body and verifying her existence. I argue that these exercises are exploratory methods for a feminist politics that begins from self-knowledge. Noland argues that “kinesthetic experience—the sensory awareness of one’s own movement—can indeed encourage experiment, modification, and, at times, rejection of the routine” (2009, p. 3). Noland’s theory supports my argument in seeing kinesthesia as a clue for feminist manners of liberation because I observe a feminist potential for both kinesthesia as theory and practice and Fina Miralles’ work as exercises or instructions for kinesthetic knowledge.

Dona-Arbre has its own specificity in the series of *Translacions*. It is a literal manifestation of bodily actions that are about explorations of the relation between the self and world, between things “in place” and things “out of place.” This is not only liberatory but specifically feminist because it proposes a model for feminist emancipation in a different arena than representational democracy, occupying the streets, activism in women’s rights or the feminist emphasis on consciousness raising,¹⁵⁹ on the work on and in the self as a mode of the political in its very origins. Fina Miralles proposes a path of knowledge of the self/body, yet she explores another side of this consciousness—different from, for instance, the consciousness-raising proposal. Her work has a political impact that starts in a non-discursive perception of the body that allows an access to the self *in relation* with the world, which reinforces introspection processes through the intimacy of kinesthetic sense.

¹⁵⁹ Second-wave feminism emphasized shared feminist consciousness and feminist resistance to the objectification of women. Consciousness-raising groups were frequently based on a traditional definition of agency as resistance (and thus a Cartesian understanding of agency). Researcher in Social Psychology, Satu Liimakka, has explored women’s bodily experiences and possibilities for embodied agency. She suggests that a strategy of the mind, such as being conscious of the oppressive status for women, is not enough to provoke a change in learned corporeal roles. She proposes an agency that arises from and in the body (Liimakka, 2011, 2013).

According to Noland, this consciousness of kinesthesia is a tool for liberatory practice and allows for “variations” in the form a person performs in daily life that could not be possible in other ways. Noland’s approach assists my argument for seeing movement as a key instrument of the corporeal form of liberation in the performances by Fina Miralles. This is a key point for a feminist politics of corporeal agency. I consider this specifically feminist in the link I establish between a feminism that focuses on somatic processes and one that uses self-knowledge and kinesthesia as a path to embodiment and agency. Together with Noland, I understand that without kinesthesia “the subject would not be able to distinguish her own body from other bodies: would have no capacity for independent movement; and thus would be incapable of assuming any agency at all” (2009, p. 9). Fina Miralles’ actions are expressive without words, transmitting knowledge through the body. I argue there is a presentation of the senses and the “subsenses,”¹⁶⁰ such as kinesthesia, as a way to gather knowledge and intervene in the world through bodily awareness, and through movement. These strategies were also present in the previous works of Fina Miralles, where the sensorial, the haptic and the hands had an important role in the gradual appearance of her body.

6.2. In Search for the Body: Sensorial Investigations and Body Scores

Perception can be defined as the act of collecting information from the outside world. History has marked two aspects of perception: the sensible, through sensation, and the mental or conceptual perception from the intellect.

(Fina Miralles as cited by Marta Pol, 2012, p. 84) [my translation]

Rationalism has closed us. [...] We cannot be with closed eyes just rummaging in the head and in the brain [...] You have to look, you have to relate, you have to see people, you have to touch, you have to pamper, you have to get dirty, you have to cry, please! [...] This is so aseptic, so afraid to live, so afraid to exist, to live, [...] then, this reality, let the reality come in!!

(Fina Miralles, personal communication, summer 2016) [my translation]

On Fina Miralles’ webpage, under the tab “Pertinença” [Belonging], one can find a series of paintings called *Sensitiveland* (1972) (Figure 44), which prefigure the work of *Translacions*. In

¹⁶⁰ I use “subsenses” inspired in the actions by Antoni Muntadas that I explained in the previous chapter. It is not clear that he refers to kinesthesia, yet my reading is that “subsenses” are the modalities of the sensorial that are not the five senses (kinesthesia, proprioception, etc).

these paintings, even just in their titles, I argue that the senses are present. These paintings may in fact be seen as “pre-exercises,” explorations of the sensorial, which come before *Dona-Arbre*. There is an initial exploration of the senses, such as tactile sensation, and the names or colors of sounds¹⁶¹ (i.e. the onomatopoeia of words such as “bulzz”). I can hear the sounds and also have tactile sensations when I observe these images. While the series might be closer to a form of haptic visuality for the viewer, rather than kinesthetic agency, it nevertheless gives us information about her exploration of bodily dynamics. *Sensitiveland* is a group of fifteen paintings and was the first individual exhibition by Fina Miralles in October 1972. According to Pol, with these paintings “she abandoned the learned culture, the traditional artistic conception, to express the world linked to the senses and feelings” (2012, p. 40). Pol argues that these works “represented a whole world of sensations that could be understood and perceived by the senses” (2012, p. 62).

I appreciate how much of these paintings express the relation between rounded forms (the body) and squared forms (the objects). When I look at these paintings, I feel the corners and the soft objects. Fina Miralles paints what she will further develop with her own body and matter in the world in her later series. For this reason, I consider these paintings some of the initial events in the process of becoming physically in relation with natural elements and objects around her. These paintings are the beginning of a search for and within the body, and I argue that this search is related to corporeal perception.

In *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance*, Matthew Reason explains how in *Music as Heard* Thomas Clifton draws from

Merleau-Ponty’s description of the embodied experience of the world to the specific experience of the music. In particular, he argues that our experience of music is not limited to the auditory but, like the world, is experienced through the whole body: that is to say synaesthetically. (2006, p. 221)

Through colours and forms, Fina Miralles stimulates physical sensations and an aural sensation through letters and words that are onomatopoeias. By this I mean to explain how Fina Miralles was (and still is) interested in processes of perception. Reason explains that “synaesthesia refers to how emotions or stimuli to one sense can prompt responses in another. In

¹⁶¹ During my conversations with Fina Miralles I realized how much she communicates through music, sounds and onomatopoeia. Sometimes a sentence can be full of sounds expressing what she is communicating without words.

other words, perceptions resulting from sight, sound, smell or touch are not isolated experiences but phenomena unified by the human body” (2006, p. 221).



Figure 44. *Sensitiveland Bulzz* (1972), Mixed technique by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

In the same year that Fina Miralles painted *Sensitiveland*, she began to experiment with elements from nature: the materials with which she later places herself *in relation* in the series *Relacions*. In one installation, named *Natura Morta* [Still Life] (1972),¹⁶² Fina Miralles displays different elements from nature on a table. Instead of painting them in this case, she presents the elements themselves. Fina Miralles, in this piece, not only breaks with art history’s traditional parameters of the “still life,” but also initiates a sensorial experimentation in her art practice and intervention in the world.

¹⁶² *Natura Morta* (1972) was shown for first time in a collective exhibition named *Comunicació Actual a l’Hospitalet* [Current Communication in l’Hospitalet]. This piece was also shown at the exhibition *Naturaleses, Naturals* by Fina Miralles.

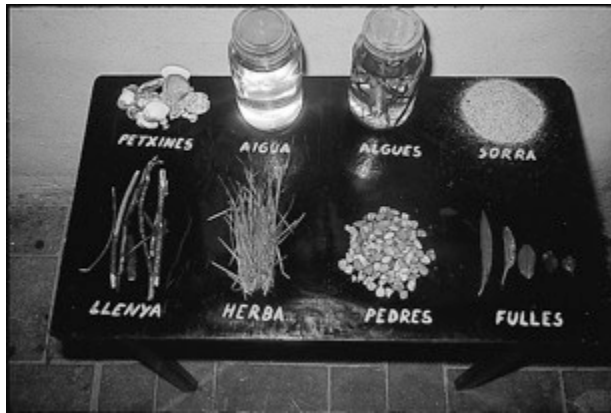


Figure 45. *Natura Morta* [Still life] (1973), Installation by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

To complement the piece *Natura Morta* (1973) (Figure 45), Fina Miralles gave the public a text in which she explained that, apart from the materials shown on the table (shells, water, algae, sand, wood, grass, stones and leaves), there were other materials present such as the air, a material that the viewer could experiment with outside of the gallery. She asked people to look at the sky and gave a series of instructions to complete viewers' appreciation of the landscape. In her notebook, Fina Miralles writes: "look at the sky three times a day: morning, afternoon and night; and four times a year, according to the seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter."¹⁶³

In this way, the public assumed a role similar to that of the artist because they added their own experience to the work, and were expected to read this installation as a kind of hieroglyph or survival guide. With these proposals, Fina Miralles expanded her field of action outside the physical frame of the room, bringing the viewer into the experience of their daily lives. The work exists less as a stable object than as a generator of perceptive answers. Now the spectator cannot remain indifferent, he/she is forced to carry out successive acts of perceptive response to the stimulus, even out of the context of the exhibition.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Fina Miralles, *Llibre de Trevall 1*, pág. 218 (Ref-MAS-211)

¹⁶⁴ In this sense, her work reminds me of Lygia Clark who says: "Art is a gift, a possibility to offer others a way of living differently in a way that would be creative and free" (2014, p. 253). Clark also has a work that recalls Fina Miralles' *Natura Morta*: it is a book with elements from nature that can be touched by the public (*Livro Sensorial* [Sensorial book], 1966). The *Livro Sensorial* is made of water, sea shells, mirror, plastic, stone, metal, and steel wool (Clark, 2014, p. 262).

Cirici, in *Fina Miralles, l'Alternativa a l'Autenticitat* [Fina Miralles, An Alternative to the Authenticity], argues that the artist's strategy to give the viewer an instruction manual is an approximation of the methodology of music:

With this, she approaches musical composers who do not give us sound images but write a *score* and indicate some instruments. Music is a sensitive reality that may be performed or not by the reader of the score but the author does not play it [but the musicians]. (1980, p.43) [emphasis added]

Although all the musical content is recorded in the score, in order to produce sound, it is necessary to know how to read the symbols that indicate time, notes and instruments. Cirici, drawing from music, indicates that the text by Fina Miralles is an index, the unfinished symbolic elements that stimulate the productive process of reception-creation. In this way, Fina Miralles did not create a representation of reality such as traditional art. To understand her methodology, it is important to look at the following extract from April 14, 1974, in an artist statement entitled “Artistic Practice Process:”

The artistic practice must be the clearest explanation of the ideology and the act of creation. The art piece must be an *open process for everybody*. Nobody can enjoy or purchase it partially. It must follow an *accurate method* to expose ideology the most clearly possible. (Fina Miralles, 1975, p. 22) [my translation, emphasis added]

Like my embodied methodology in this research, Fina Miralles' methods are exercises and practices defined by corporeal strategies. There is an emphasis on process, and also that such a process must be available to everybody. She gives a score/sheet music with codes to be interpreted by the body. Yet, she not only does that through these “instructions,” she also does the same thing in further pieces through the corporeal sensorial explorations in her work, as body instructions from a “teacher.” Her actions are *body scores* open to being interpreted. In this sense, I argue that Fina Miralles is offering us *scores of freedom for the body*, and this can be read as a feminist intervention. I see these scores of freedom as instructions for noticing the body through kinesthesia. They are scores for becoming aware of the subtle movements in our body, even if it is a still body, such as those that augment the perception of tendons, ligaments or muscles. What is freeing here is the awakening of the body through subtle movement within the body. I consider this feminist because of the particular feminist politics from which I draw in this thesis that consider the body as the site of inscription and the main source of knowledge and emancipation.

Through the body instructions/scores that Fina Miralles offers, it is possible to notice the body in a subtle way and this leads to a potential reconstitution of the body.

6.3. The Hand: An Access to the Sensorial

The actions started because I needed to make: Fina, you have to make.
(Fina Miralles, personal communication, Summer 2016)

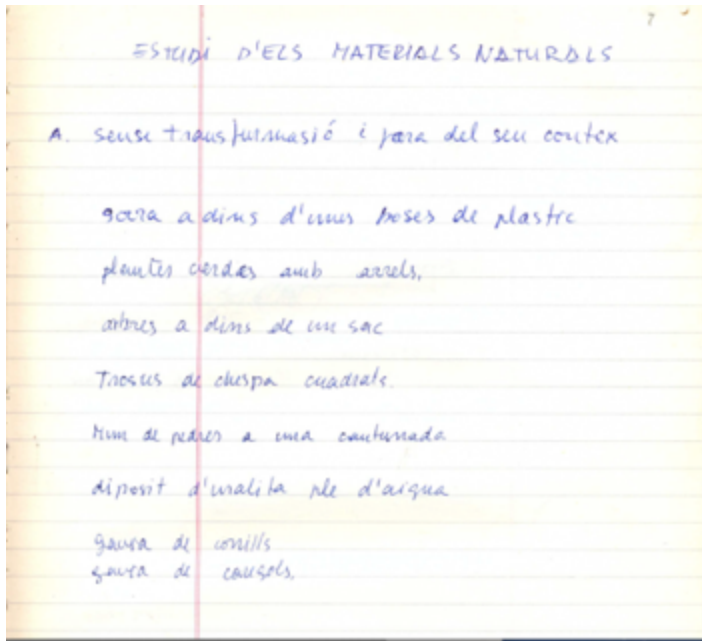


Figure 46. Extract of *Llibre de Treball I* [Work notebook] (1973-1976, p.7) by Fina Miralles – Ref. MAS-411. Archive: MAS.

In her notebook (Figure 46), Fina Miralles writes: “study of the materials without transformation and in their context: Sand inside plastic bags, trees inside a sack, squared grass pieces, a pile of stones in one corner, asbestos deposit water-filled, cage with rabbits, cage with snails” (Fina Miralles, 1975, p. 7) [my translation].

Some of these experiences were ultimately performed and others not. I suggest that this is also a list of relations between materials (for instance, the sand touching the plastic bag). She gathers the materials, exploring them in nature. This study of materials pertains to the exhibition *Naturaleses Naturals*,¹⁶⁵ in which Fina Miralles wished to make a distinction between natural and artificial elements, putting them in relation to each other.

¹⁶⁵ The *Naturaleses Naturals* exhibition was first presented in 1973 in Sala Vinçon in Barcelona and then in 2016 at the Museo Arqueológico Natural. In this project, there is an emphasis on the relation

Alongside *Natura Morte*, Fina Miralles created a 25 minute Super-8 film entitled *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* [Atmospherical Phenomena] (1973) (Figure 47 and 48), both under the project *Naturaleses Naturals*. In this film, Miralles records different natural events and elements: the sun appearing on the horizon, the rain water touching the water of the sea, the sea waves breaking on the rocks, the wind moving the tree leaves, and so on.



Figure 47. *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* [Atmospherical Phenomena] (1973) still super-8 film by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.

between natural and artificial materials. Fina Miralles explains (2018) that in this exhibition, she was showing natural materials without transformation (challenging the ego figure of the “artist” that “transforms” matter), artificial materials (imitation grass, etc) and live animals with stuffed animals (here she did an action with doves—alive and stuffed—in which she opened a cage and only the ones that were alive started to move and leave). For this last action, Fina Miralles wanted to highlight the difference between being alive and being dead. Also, she mentions a poem from a Basque poet that she put near the cage: “If you would have cut the wings, it could be mine, yet it would have stopped being a bird.” This interest in showing “movement” and “liveness” is also an exploration of the dictatorial repression of the bodies and her interest in developing liberatory dynamics through movement.



Figure 48. *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* [Atmospherical Phenomena] (1973) still super-8 film by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.

The choice of Super-8 film gives a form of thickness to the elements. I can appreciate how Fina Miralles shows the relations between the natural elements, and also how they touch each other. The water touches the rocks, the wind touches leaves, etc. In this piece, Fina Miralles does not touch the elements with her body; however, a connection is established through the very fact of her filming them. The format of the Super-8 film, with its roughness and cuts between scenes, gives the sensation of losing the flat screen to enter into a world of curves, which invites a “lived” sensation of being in the landscapes. Observing this film, I felt surrounded by the water, the sunrise, listening to the stone thrown into the water, creating rounded waves. Her film thus constitutes another language for proposing modes of being “*in relation with*” as proposed in *Translacions and Relacions*. There is a list of notes related to the film that Fina Miralles likely wrote prior to filming: “From a balcony, inside a room, film how the light of the day finishes and the night arrives, the sea, film how the sun rises, film how a cloud dissolves in the sky, how the clouds move” (Fina Miralles, 1972-1976, p. 7) [my translation].¹⁶⁶ A few pages later, she writes more notes under the word “Films” that correspond to most of the scenes in *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics*: “the waves when they get to the seashore, how the sun rises, from inside a balcony

¹⁶⁶ *Llibre de Treball 1* (1972-1976) (Ref.MAS-410).

to shoot how the day light disappears and it gets the night, how the sun dissolves a cloud, how the clouds move because of the wind, how the wind moves the trees, the rain water on the sea, the flight of Plaça Catalunya, how the seagulls fly over the sea, how a bean grows, to shoot a cypress tree with sun and cloud” (1972-1976, p. 11) [my translation].¹⁶⁷ These notes discuss the importance of “movement” and “touch;” the movement that she observes happens in the elements of nature and the contact between them. There is a metonymic aspect in the sense that one thing is in relation with the other, and one thing touches the other. In her notebook, it is important to note the verbs she uses to describe this. She describes transitions, movements and dissolutions. All these processes require a kind of “touching” sense between the elements she describes. Using the previously explained term synaesthesia, I argue that emotions and stimuli come from the action of looking at the natural elements and the relations between these elements. Not only from sight but from hearing the sound of the waves, the wind, etc. In our conversations, Fina Miralles says: “All that I know is from all that I saw, all that I see. I have a knowledge, if you want, ‘not read’ . . . yet a sight and lived knowledge” (personal communication, Summer 2016).

Fenòmens Atmosfèrics becomes a way of encountering the world through the camera. Fina Miralles filmed the sunset, the sea, the waves, and other natural elements. Some of these elements are ones she works with/touches later in her actions. She shows natural elements in movement, such as sea waves, sunsets, clouds, branches of trees, rain on the sea, and the flight of birds. The film records sea waves, the sunrise and sunset, the passage of clouds, the disappearance of a cloud by the action of the sun, the expansive waves created by throwing a stone in the water, the rain on the sea, the wind moving the leaves of the branches of the trees, and the flight of birds.

In conversation with Joan Casellas¹⁶⁸ he explained to me the importance of the use of Fina Miralles’ hands in her performances (personal communication, June 22, 2016): he remembers an action that she performed recently in the Trobada Internacional de Poesía d’Acció I Performance La Muga Caula [International Encounter of Poetry of Action and Performance La Muga Caula]¹⁶⁹ in which Fina Miralles uses her hands to go across her body while she whispers a song to

¹⁶⁷ *Llibre de Treball 1* (1972-1976) (Ref.MAS-410).

¹⁶⁸ Joan Casellas is part of a second generation of performance artists who recognize the influence of Fina Miralles in their work. He argues that Fina Miralles’ work has kept its essence of the 1970s and that unlike other artists she did not follow an “artistic career” (personal communication, June 22, 2016).

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.lamugacaula.cat/en/>

herself. Curator Francisco Salas, who performed with Fina Miralles *La Unió dels Oceans* [The Meeting of the Oceans] (2012)¹⁷⁰ also highlights the importance of the hands in her current work. He says: “The performances are about the hand and the action of caress. [...] We can see Fina’s hands [...] moving and dancing with mine” (personal communication, June 15, 2016). This gives information about the importance that Fina Miralles gives to a tactile perception process, and how this was the one of her first modes of access to the sensorial, which is still present in her works.

In a notebook of the time (1972-1975), she writes a list:

Presentation of two processes: The hand—the mind. The mind: intellectual process of creation-transformation, the concept-idea, the realization is the result of a study, the importance is the idea, incorporated into a culture. The hand: Main processes of transformation of the shape, primary fact of culture, spontaneous action, sensitivity, somatic stimulus, integrated in a culture, sensitive, feeling, re-evaluation of this type of thought—immediate, vital, quotidian— the hand as instrument, tool, useful. (Fina Miralles, 1975, pp. 81-82) [my translation]

Here we can flesh out what corporeal means to Miralles. The hand/the body is the means for a process of transformation through contact with the world, through kinesthesia and movement. She is interested in the movement of shapes that takes place when she moves her hands. For her, the hands are the access to knowledge and this happens without noticing. She notes:

With the hands you are doing something, and also with the eyes [...] and it is done alone. This knowledge is extraordinary. [...] The true knowledge is going in depth into what we do with our hands. To make with the hands is very important: [...] it is through the hands that I access feelings. [...] At the end of life, you only remember the emotions, what you lived with feeling. [...] Emotions and feelings are what we have left. (personal communication, June 26th, 2018) [my translation]

¹⁷⁰ He said that due to difficulties with accessing Fina Miralles’ archive and the fact that she did not want to talk about the 1970s, the two of them created something new. Over the course of three years, he visited Miralles and they created a series of actions with documentation in video and photographs. The first action is a film of Fina Miralles’ hands “moving and dancing” with Salas’ hands.



Figure 49. Fina Miralles working-playing with materials from nature (1970s). Author: Unknown. Archive: MAS

She gathers knowledge stemming from bodily experience. In part of the archive, there are photographs (Figure 49) where Fina Miralles is playing with sand and natural elements on the beach. Since the piece the photographs pertained to is not identified, this is likely one of the moments where she was gathering the materials for the installations (for instance, *Natura Morta*, 1973; or while she was filming the sunset for *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics*, 1973).

During my fieldwork, I had an email conversation with the curator Francisco Salas. He explained to me that, in his opinion, in order to understand the work of Fina Miralles it is necessary to return to the 1970s to comprehend “her being and understanding of the world, that in my opinion hasn’t changed in all these years, [...] particularly this ‘being’ and ‘feeling’ the world” (in email correspondence, June 15, 2016). Fina Miralles’ explorations imply that the body is gradually appearing through her artistic actions and explorations in the world, which may be read as a search for and through the body, related to a construction of subjectivity. Consequently, her whole process in the 1970s (*Translacions* and, *Relacions*, which will be discussed in the next chapter) in my opinion offers a model for feminist methodologies for cultivating agency by creating spaces of bodily appearance and somatic sensations that lead to a reconstitution of the body.

In 1975, Fina Miralles explains her process as follows:

In the present research, the use of nature is not a substitute for the picture in shaping a work of art; rather the materials are taken as study elements and *not as an aesthetic medium*. In some cases, the material space has been used *to create experiences*, such as in *Translacions*, which are developed in nature as the space and context of natural materials,

the basis for these *exercises*. (as cited in Parcerisas, 2007, p. 80) [my translation, my emphasis]

She names the processes produced in *Translacions* “experiences” and “exercises”. This has implications for the pedagogical aspect of the works that Fina Miralles highlights, and that I consider as one of the essential aspects of her work. For her, “aesthetics” is an intellectual concept, and her interest is not only in the experience but also in the possibility of “practice” as a pedagogical intervention, which I read as a feminist intervention in this dissertation due to the focus on the appearance of her own body as the main element in the experience. Taking into account the previous note in her notebook referring to the process of the hand/the corporeal, I argue that Fina Miralles was experimenting with stimulus, feelings and increasing the value of the lived body. Garbayo notes: “The way in which the body appears and is becoming increasingly important in the work of Fina Miralles is relevant” (2016, p. 70). Yet Garbayo argues, as other scholars writing about Fina Miralles’ work in the 1970s (Parcerisas, Giner, Bassas & Creus, 2007), that in the proposals of *Translacions* the artist’s body is still absent.

In my reading, the body is already present in *Natura Morta*, *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* and *Translacions*. I suggest that the processes of “movements” in *Translacions* are experienced through different corporeal strategies, which include kinesthesia. It is not the materials that take on an important aspect but the fact of transposing them as an exercise (an experience, a practice) in order to glean kinesthetic knowledge through moving them.

Fina Miralles’ body appears through the touching of the materials; through her hands which are very present in these experiences and exercises. In *Deixada Anar de Cargols* (Figure 50 and 51) she takes snails from the countryside and transplants them into the gallery. I argue that kinetic awareness implicates the appearance of the body, and that this offers a strategy for building feminist corporeal agency in these performances, through gathering knowledge from the world through the hands and by moving elements.



Figure 50. Black and white photograph documentation of *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Liberating Snails] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 51. Black and white photograph documentation of *Deixada Anar de Cargols* [Liberating Snails] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

The series *Translacions* has been read as a study of natural elements and the relation between artificial and natural elements, as well as an analysis of natural materials and their origin (Cirici, 1974, 1976; Parcerisas, 2007). Yet no reflection has been made regarding the sensorial explorations and experiences made by Fina Miralles and their relation to feminist politics.

Translacions is the beginning of an exploratory method and its value to feminist politics is the fact of the appearance of a body through the transportation of natural elements (in *Deixada Anar de Cargols*, *Duna* and *Herba Flotant en el Mar*) and the fact that her own body becomes a site of displacement (in *Dona-Arbre*).

Fina Miralles refers to *Translacions* as works that are “not the result of an idea, but the study and research of a theme: the natural elements” (Fina Miralles as cited in Hurtado, 2001, p. 55). It is important to take into account the process before and during the actual performing. This is very clear from the documentation of the exhibition (Figures 52-55).



Figure 52. Colour photographic documentation of the action process, and black and white photographic documentation of *Duna* [Dune] (1973). Detail of exhibition *Translacions* (1974). Archive: MAS.



Figure 53. Black and white photographic documentation of *Duna* [Dune] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 54. Colour photographic documentation of the performance process. *Duna* [Dune] (1973) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 55. Colour photographic documentation of the performance process. *Duna* [Dune] (1973) by Fina Miralles (1973). Archive: MAS

Duna was exhibited in the *Translacions* exhibition. In this exhibition, Fina Miralles planned to show the Super-8 films of the actions but the films were ultimately censored in the

gallery.¹⁷¹ From the documentation of this exhibition (Figures 58 and 59), there is a line where Fina Miralles shows three black and white photographs : the first one contains a view of the sand path from one side (Figure 58), the second the beginning of the path, and the third the final mountain of sand (Figure 59). Under these photographs, there are twenty photographs in colour (Figure 58) where Miralles shows her process: photographs from the sand looking at the sea, taking the sand from the beach, the dunes at the beach, making the sand path in the field with her hands (Figure 60) and moving the sand with a wheelbarrow (Figure 61). This makes clear the importance for Miralles of the *process* of the actions, and how she was implicated in it. She emphasizes this process in the exhibition through the photographic series, but also the photographs of her process.

Cirici argues: “Miralles’ work is focused on the most exploding *possibility of change*, located in the dialectic between natural and artificial things, the author finds that the coexistence between artifice and nature presupposes a principle of change” (1977, p. 45) [my emphasis]. Cirici’s emphasis on the possibilities of change echoes my emphasis on Fina Miralles’ body movement and its relation with matter. Drawing from authors writing about movement and change, I understand Fina Miralles’ explorations between elements (between them in *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics*, between natural and artificial ones in *Naturaleses Naturals*, and between the natural elements and her own body in *Translacions*) as explorations of corporeal agency through kinesthesia, opening possibilities of change for gendered corporeal learnings. From my reading, they are feminist explorations of emancipatory possibilities, such as bodily inscription and appearance, and practices that awaken bodily sensations that lead to reconstituting and further reclaiming her body under acute repressive politics. Fina Miralles’ emphasis on the gradual appearance and emergence of her body accentuates a pedagogical training for the ways a body can be awakened through consciousness exercises and practices, and this presents the body as a site for agency and liberation.

¹⁷¹ Fina Miralles explains that this exhibition had an installation which included straw, and at that moment one was allowed to smoke in public places. Those responsible for the building asked that the artist not install some of the pieces. She says that in the same building there was an exhibition of a famous painter and that he had staff for security reasons. Fina Miralles thought that it could have been enough to have the same support in her room exhibition. However, this was not offered to Fina Miralles and she decided to cancel the exhibition because she did not want to remove some of the pieces (personal communication, 2016).

In conversations with Fina Miralles, she explains her own trajectory in her work. She affirms that during the 1970s and the development of her work in the period of conceptual art she was focused on “rational thought, ideas, the realization of projects and the body as a tool,” while after that she argues that her work was centered on “experiential-based art, intuitions, feelings and emotions, and the body as sentient.”¹⁷² I argue that, in these actions, she emphasizes a gradual sensorial connection to herself and the world, and that there were the seeds of her later approach to life and art articulated in her practices in the 1970s and beyond. She described this process to me during a conversation we had when she was driving her car:

It comes from conceptual art and goes to an experiential-based art. *There is the description of a movement.* And from the 1970s until 2000, what is there? What makes all this change? [...] All the work *to go inside*, go to the hand, is very complicated because *the hand has emotions.* [...] Reality has three dimensions; the landscape is not flat. [...] The landscape is this, we are inside! [...] *The landscape is spatial.* (Fina Miralles, personal communication, summer, 2016) [emphasis added]

This work of “going inwards,” recognizing the hand as an access to the sensorial, and recognizing the world around her as spatial, is what she is already doing in her 1970s actions. I argue that this movement of “going inwards herself” through the sensorial developed gradually from her first works in the 1970s. This description of the hand (“the hand has also feelings”) is important to understanding her works.

During our conversations, Fina Miralles emphasizes what she calls the “invisible,” explaining how—after the period of conceptual art—she was very interested in drawing and especially in drawing the “invisible.” The “invisible” refers to drawing the movements that cannot be seen by the eye. For instance, one of her interests was the movement that a bird performs while flying. This invisibility could also be applied to her movements, and “micromovements”¹⁷³ in her 1970s actions. This invisible movement is what Noland, drawing from Derrida, defines as “illegible to the eye but tangible as caress” (2009, p. 213). This trajectory was articulated in Fina Miralles’ later works but was present already in the works I

¹⁷² I also refer to this part of our conversations in the chapter on Methodology.

¹⁷³ I use micro-movements to emphasize the invisible aspect of kinesthetic processes in a still or moving body. I draw from previously explained concepts about perception: “microscopy of reverberation, of detail, of closeness, of difference” (Reason, 2012, p. 196) and the “micro eukinetic” (Schillner, 2017, p. 192).

describe in this chapter. It is through the illegible (i.e. kinesthetic awareness) that Fina Miralles engages in introspection; it is through her hands that she accesses the illegible.

This invisible and silent act of introspection can be read as a feminist intervention and also as a strategy for liberating consciousness under repressive systems—that is to say, a feminist politics that is both aware of the constraints on public action and also engaged in the preparatory work of self-conscious liberation, a kind of work of the self that is also anticipatory of a future moment. It is interesting to know her more overtly political work to understand that these actions are preparatory in the sense that Fina Miralles initiates a process of self-liberation by gathering instructions and sensorial information from her bodily perception. It is in the body where agentic processes begin (Coole, 2005, 2007; Noland, 2009) and Fina Miralles' process is described in a corporeal way as an experience where the body is an active agent in relation or merging with the surrounding world. I understand as pedagogical the way Fina Miralles displays the sequence of the series as a whole because she begins with the bases of agentic processes, that is with bodily movement and somatic awareness. In a way, she is building through a series of “blocks” or lessons an awareness of a corporeal agency that further, at the end of this period, will be more overtly visible. Her own body teaches a particular method of liberation, lesson by lesson. I argue that these preparatory exercises are the way for the body to instruct her—through movement—into more political forms of liberatory action. Given the repression of the time, they might further be instructive for a feminist praxis because they are pedagogical exercises that open the subject to bodily forms of knowing the world and the body that have been repressed or robbed under conditions of oppression, violence and repression. This is the feminist potential of her actions.

I read this “going inside,” which Fina Miralles describes as “layers of the onion, a body that listens to itself” (Fieldwork Summer 2016) through Noland's theory of movement, drawing from Sally Ness: “Ness's insistence on the “enduring character” of the body's “host material” preserves a possibility for *self-disclosing motility*, the *subliminal agency of neuromuscular feedback*, yes; but also, and equally important, the *mind-full agency of a body listening to itself*” (2009, p. 213) [my emphasis]. Noland refers to two forms in which the sense of agency is generated: self-disclosing motility, subliminal neuromuscular feedback and the body listening to itself. There she finds a potential for new movements and experiences. What Noland suggests is that sensorimotor and perceptual experiences generate agency. Noland critiques Bourdieu for what she considers as structuralist understanding of habitus. For Noland, Bourdieu “tends to see

cultural subjects as stamped indelibly with conditioned patterns they cannot change” (2009, p. 21). In sum, Noland’s proposal is to demonstrate that located in the kinesthetic experience is individual agency. Fina Miralles’ movements in the field, and opening a new path by displacing sand, develop a sensorial access to space, and also create a communication with herself through kinesthetic experience.

6.4. Concluding Thoughts

Dona-Arbre, has been analysed as the first performance where Fina Miralles uses her body. In this chapter, I have argued that this process of the appearance of the body is already present in previous pieces, where the artist practices pre-exercises of bodily awareness through synaesthesia and moving elements to spaces with which they do not correspond. With *Dona-Arbre* and *Sensitiveland*, *Natura Morta* and the previous actions in *Translacions*, Fina Miralles speaks without words, communicating through her body, through sensation and I argue that this is the seed for the rest of her work in the *Relacions* series where there are actions where the artist’s still body continues to be a source of kinesthetic knowledge (as I discuss in chapter 7), and others where movement or micro-movements will be not only invisible, but also visible interventions in the world (chapter 8).

These are corporeal and embodied strategies that are less visible that open new avenues to consider the central role of the body in processes of agency, and consequently the implications for a feminist intervention that is focused on the body as a source of emancipation.

Chapter 7 – *Relacions del Cos. Elements Naturals: Kinesthetic Exercises and Feminist*

Embodied Knowledge

There is one thing that interests me so much: we must be able to see and understand what we see. Relate and interrelate. I am in relation.

(Fina Miralles, personal communication, summer 2016) [my translation]

In the previous chapter, *Dona-Arbre* allowed me to see across all the oeuvre of *Translacions* a bodily comprehension of and engagement with the material world through a mode of exploration that was tactile and kinesthetic. I argued that *Dona-Arbre* constitutes another interesting point in Fina Miralles' kinesthetic practices and exercises that continued into the series *Relacions*. Fina Miralles' works preceding *Relacions*, including *Dona-Arbre*,¹⁷⁴ are practices and pre-exercises on the self in the world that are sensorial explorations and—potentially—also liberatory for the trajectory of her own explorations. Such exercises give her a corporeal understanding that leads to other somatic dynamics in her later works. These preparatory exercises were a way for her body to teach her different explorations through movement that took a more overtly political form. I consider this a feminist praxis for the way Fina Miralles instructs the subject of corporeal dynamics in knowing the world and the body under the repression of the time.

After *Dona-Arbre*, between March 1974 and January 1975, Fina Miralles performed a series of actions called *Relacions* [Relations]. This series was divided into two subseries: *Relacions del Cos, Elements Naturals* [Body Relations, Natural Elements] and *Relacions. Accions Quotidians* [Relations. Everyday actions]. In this chapter, I focus my analysis on the first part of *Relacions del Cos, Elements Naturals* in which there are corporeal strategies of covering and uncovering the body and leaving tracks, strategies that mainly use a still body. The second part of *Relacions del Cos, Elements Naturals* (in which body movement and the relations with qualities of elements other than weight are clearer than in the previous actions), and *Relacions, Accions Quotidians* (which is a set of actions in which Fina Miralles emphasizes the importance of everyday gestures in private and public spaces) will be covered in chapter 8 because of the change in corporeal strategy I see in them.

¹⁷⁴ As well as *Sensitiveland* (1972), *Natura Morta* (1972), *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* (1973), and the first actions in *Translacions* (*Deixada Anar de Cargols*, 1973; *Flotació d'Herba en el Mar*, 1973; *Duna*, 1973).

I make a distinction between the series explored in chapters 6, 7 and 8 in order to mark specific shifts in Fina Miralles' practice, moments where an insight carries through into a different set of practices or body of work. In chapter 6, I explain Fina Miralles' preliminary exercises, which serve to access the body through processes of transposition. In this chapter, I cover the processes of awareness within—and mapping of—the still body, processes which reinforce a form of introspection.¹⁷⁵ The next chapter, chapter 8, will address the performances in *Relacions* that highlight movement as a form of knowledge and intervention in the world in both private and public arenas.

In this chapter, the corporeal strategies of covering-uncovering and leaving tracks are continuations of the exploratory and potentially liberatory exercises that Fina Miralles initiated in *Translacions* (and previous artworks) by moving elements with the use of her body. I distinguish the “covering-uncovering” process, which I see as a form of kinesthetic awareness within the body, from the process of “leaving tracks,” which I read as a process of mapping the borders of the body in matter. Both strategies use both processes interrelatedly: the first strategy as a process of mapping the borders of the body from the inside, and the second strategy as a process of mapping them from the outside. In this chapter, I continue the argument that I started in chapter 6, that Fina Miralles uses her still body to access a somatic introspective process. In this part of *Relacions*, where Fina Miralles focuses on her own body, I also argue that the use of a repetitive strategy is a pedagogical method to show emancipatory possibilities through awareness of the body in the practice of kinesthetic exercises. While covering-uncovering and leaving traces, Fina Miralles provides others with feminist somatic scores for emancipation through body awareness. By this I mean that she presents a corporeal guide for creating a space of bodily appearance, which in a way assimilates the repression of the Franco dictatorship and awakens bodily sensations in that context. Through this, it offers a somatic model with which the body can be reconstituted.

¹⁷⁵ I associate these strategies with the “invisible/visible” concept described by Fina Miralles, as previously explained, and with subtle feminist strategies which open avenues for emancipatory strategies focused on bodily awareness under a repressive system such as Francoism.

7.1. Covering the body

*And after many laps
the books are over
Life is not on the fringed pages
Feeling is in the street
The soul in all
Now I live every moment and I am happy*

*To make visible the invisible
One must work with colours
And not with words or ideas.*

*We must gain ground/gather pace in life, and swallow it,
and squeezing it, we must go far beyond the words.*

(Fina Miralles, 1985, pp. 50-51) [my translation]

*My actions in Relaciones are the ones that most talk about
me.*

(Fina Miralles, personal communication, 2017) [my translation]

In 2001, after Fina Miralles donated her entire oeuvre to the Museu d'Art de Sabadell, there was an exhibition that she titled *De les Idees a la Vida* [From Ideas to Life].¹⁷⁶ With this title, Fina Miralles made clear how the sensorial guides her work, from rational ideas to the lived body, a body that is very much in touch with perception. As she has written in her notebooks: "Perception can be defined as the act of collecting information from the outside world. History has marked two aspects of perception: the sensible, through sensation, and the mental or conceptual perception from the intellect" (Fina Miralles as cited in Pol, 2012, p. 84).

On the front cover of the exhibition catalogue (right hand side, Figure 56), there is an image of Fina Miralles' body covered with straw with her face exposed. On the back cover, there is an image with her whole body covered (left side, Figure 56). In this last image, I see only the silhouette of her body. These two photographs correspond to the series *El Cos Cobert de Palla* [Body Covered with Straw]. The images selected for the cover present for me an intense kinesthetic experience or, drawing from Noland, "a resource of sensation" (2009, p. 215).

¹⁷⁶ In the chapter of Methodology I addressed my conversation with Assumpta Bassas regarding the title of this exhibition.



Figure 56. Catalogue of the exhibition *Fina Miralles. De les Idees a la Vida* (2001). Archive: MAS.

In a standing position, Fina Miralles is covered little by little with straw until her head is covered (Figure 57). This action is closely related to questions of identity in Catalonia.¹⁷⁷ In her notebook she writes:

Collection of Catalan traditions:

1. The body with natural materials: rites and traditions.
2. *Incorporation of a matter on the body*, changing meanings: costumes, masks, disproportions.
3. Images and symbols related to man and natural space: alchemy, games, tarot, magical meanings of natural materials. (Fina Miralles, 1975, p. 101¹⁷⁸) [my translation, emphasis added]

¹⁷⁷ As Garbayo (2016) has argued, there is an anthropological character to these pieces because of their connection with the *Costumari Català* by Joan Amades. Fina Miralles was contacted by Jordi Pablo (a Catalanian artist) in 1975 to work on a project about the values and costumes of the Catalanian community. These beliefs and ancestral rituals are “essential” in Fina Miralles’ opinion (as cited in Garbayo, 2016, p. 76). Fina Miralles in her *Testament Vital*, says that at the time she agreed with Jordi Pablo to develop a form of work that was more creative and less sociological, less a political denunciation, and less linguistic or conceptual (Fina Miralles, 2008, p. 15). *El Cos Cobert de Palla* is the first action done in the series *Relacions*. It appears that she uses this strategy of “incorporation of matter on the body” in some of the other actions in the series.

¹⁷⁸ Some of the pages in the notebook are not numbered. In this case, I refer to page 101 in the digitalized document by MAS. Whenever a page is not indicated, it refers to the actual number of the page in the notebook.



Figure 57. Black and white photographs documentation of *El Cos Cobert de Palla* [Body covered with straw] (March, 1974) by Fina Miralles Archive: MAS.

This is one of the few actions in this part of *Relacions* in which I observe her with her eyes open.¹⁷⁹ The other processes of covering are almost entirely (according to the documentation) performed with her eyes closed, a method that—besides remaining still—improves proprioception and reinforces an introspective process. I argued in the previous chapter that the still body in *Dona-Arbre* gives a sensory access to the body and the self. Schillner names these “micro eukinetic perceptions” (2017, p. 191). Drawing from Noland, I use instead the term kinesthesia which is more specific and not only refers to movement but also to the sensations and perceptions within the body. Reynolds and Reason explain that a distinction has been made between proprioception (which refers to stimuli from inside the organism) and exteroception (which refers to stimuli from outside the organism). Also, Noland notes that there are reflections about the distinction between kinesthesia and proprioception, with the latter sometimes folded into the former, or vice versa (2009). Together with Noland, I understand kinesthesia as “sensations of movement (rather than balance) available to the conscious mind” (2009, p. 10). I choose kinesthesia because the term gives access to interoception and exteroception, both interesting processes under censorship politics such as dictatorships. Interoception is encouraged through the micro-movements of the still body, and through the actual movement of the body towards something (the latter will be addressed in another group of actions in the next chapter). Both stimuli (interoception and exteroception) allow *introspection* processes that I define as the condition of possibility for an observation of one’s own perception, thoughts and feelings. In the

¹⁷⁹ The other action in this series in which Fina Miralles opens her eyes is *Relació del Cos amb la Lluvia* [Body Relations With the Rain] (March, 1974).

context of the actions of Fina Miralles where all these processes are at play, there is a reinforcement of a self-reflective thought, something that was punished in many ways by the Franco regime. Because of these very points, these exercises and practices by Fina Miralles are subtle transgressions to the system.

In this series, through stillness and interoception, Fina Miralles explores the “invisible” through corporeal micro-movements unperceived by the eye. She addresses her own words on the cover of the catalogue, the words that she offered to the tree in *Paraules al Arbre*¹⁸⁰ which, I argue, confirm a commitment to this use of embodied knowledge as a possibility for emancipatory processes: “I take the commitment to develop my revolutionary thought until my last consequences.” Here Fina Miralles says “thought,” yet it is directly related to performances where interoception and exteroception are the main processes that, as I argue, lead to introspection processes where not only perception and feelings are felt, but also thoughts are linked with those processes. For Fina Miralles, a “revolutionary thought” is associated with a lived body, with her seminal sentence: “From ideas to life.”

Between 1974 and 1975, Fina Miralles developed a part of the *Relacions* series in which she buried her body with different elements. We can observe the repetitive act of covering and uncovering her body with straw (March 1974), stones (April 1974), soil (January 1975) and sand from the beach (January 1975). I note the different materials that Fina Miralles uses in this series, which lead to different sensations (due to their weight or texture), and I also note the different processes used in each part of the series and how the documentation shows these processes. In some of the actions, such as *El Cos Cobert de Palla* (Figure 57), the documentation shows a covered body at the end of the action. This also happens in *El Cos Cobert de Terra* (Figure 58). In both actions, the last image is the body camouflaged and disappearing in the environment. Garbayo argues that these pieces confirm that the body occupies a place: “It is a *lugar-otro* [space-other]: the body goes there and is situated out of the visible” (Garbayo, 2016, p. 77). When Garbayo says “out of the visible,” she is referring to the context where the piece is happening. It is my argument that this “out of the visible” implies also a kinesthetic process, the awakening to the body in relation with the elements, where there is an augmented perception that is invisible for the viewer, unless there is an empathy approach to the piece.

¹⁸⁰ This action is described in the introduction to this dissertation.

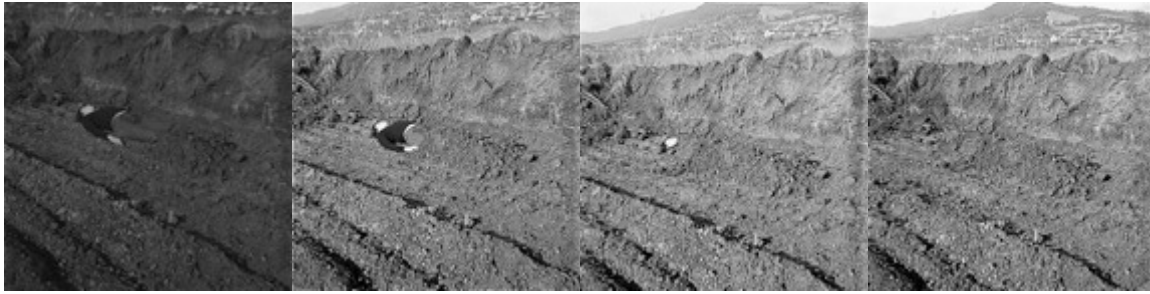


Figure 58. Black and white photograph documentation of *El Cos Cobert de Terra* [Body covered by soil] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

There is a difference between these pieces. In *El Cos Cobert de Palla*, Fina Miralles is in a standing position with open eyes and, as I noted, this is an action very much connected with Catalanian traditions, while in *El Cos Cobert de Terra* (Figure 58), she is in a reclined position with closed eyes, and the last image is a pile of soil. Through observing the documentation of the process, I can guess that her body is underneath the lump. A solid material, clots of soil, covers her body. The coverage of the body appears as a compact mass completely integrated into the landscape; however, we can nevertheless see the form of the body underneath the soil.

The symbolic resonance of these works as forms of burial (Garbayo, 2016) or as integration of feminine and nature—as a symbolic “mother” (Bassas, 2001; Creus, 2018)—might dominate at times their interpretations. I argue that this symbolic resonance is in many respects at odds with my kinesthetic reading. In these series, there are quite bleak images (eg. *El Cos Cobert de Terra*, Figure 58), ones which show a body disappearing, dissolving, dying. In the context of Francoism, this is a very haunting series, one which demonstrates quite vividly the process of disappearance that was part of political retributions. But my kinesthetic reading and the notebooks by Fina Miralles also indicates something different at play here, beyond the symbolic resonance of the work, and particularly evident in the images which document the actions. These actions also demonstrate a demand for a different kind of relation to the earth, to natural elements, a form of reconnection that is not simply about critiquing the repressive system or reinforcing the connection between the feminine and nature, but finding a space of self-knowledge through the body in the very strictures of the Franco system.

The actions of covering herself with different materials (straw or soil) and in different positions (with closed or open eyes) reinforce kinesthetic processes through the texture and weight of the straw or the freshness of the soil, and an increased inner sensation of the body

through closing the eyes. In her notebook, Fina Miralles describes what she calls “practice works to make in the countryside:”

- To make a path in the ground.
- To leave footprints in the sand until I get to the sea. Step in the same place.
- *To know the day with covered eyes. Through the sound, the cold and the heat.*
- Life and artistic quotidian actions at the same time.
- Abandon actions of manipulating matter.
- Erase all human traces. (1975, p. 101) [my translation, emphasis added]

These exercises implicate Fina Miralles’ body and her everyday life. They give clues to understanding how the experience of the sensorial is centered on corporeal experimentation. In this writing, she shows her interest in perceiving the world with closed eyes in order to reinforce other senses, some of them invisible to the eyes such as hearing, touch, and, I argue, kinesthesia. Schiller also refers to this “invisible” aspect of the performance¹⁸¹ in an interview with contemporary artist Ariane Mnouchkine who encourages artists to find “secret gardens” or “inner cooking” in performance:

Ariane was not interested in knowing the actor’s ‘recipe,’ but she wanted to feel the ‘flavours’ of their performative cooking. This inner cooking or secret garden ‘is not with sight but with our hearts and emotions,’ Catherine explains to me. ‘When you have a vision, you may feel the breeze of the morning *but not see it*. It is as if all of our cells have eyes.’ For Catherine, however, the interior world is a *different somatic experience* than that of the exterior. (2017, p. 181) [emphasis added]

Here it is interesting how somatic and sensorial experiences that are invisible to the eyes are emphasized in performance.

A similar note to the one addressed above is written around fifty pages before in her notebook. This indicates Fina Miralles’ iterative work and her pedagogical aspect. Here, it is interesting how Fina Miralles literalizes the human gestures socially inscribed onto bodies in matter, as well as how she presents possibilities of “erasing” or transforming this inscription. She writes of “making all the possible actions with the body, and the transformation of matter, only using the hands” (1972-1975, p.31). She also writes in the same line “body” and “wood” as a

¹⁸¹ Although in the contemporary context and not under dictatorship circumstances.

simile. In the notebook, she writes: “For instance: body, wood. To peel it, make a circle, grate. Erase all the marks” (1972-1975, p.31). Given the context of the dictatorship that shaped bodies with social marks, it is important to note how Fina Miralles—in her notebook and in relation with her performances—writes in many occasions about her intention to “erase” the marks or traces.

Fina Miralles notes that exploring the relations between the body and natural elements is something that is very connected to her roots and personal history: “I come from the countryside, from nature, from wallowing in the mud of Serrallonga”¹⁸² (as cited in Garbayo, 2016, p. 77). She emphasizes the sensorial in our conversations when she notes that “all that I know is from what I saw, from what I see. [...] *I have a ‘non-read’ knowledge* [...], from sight and lived experience [...] and Serrallonga, which has helped me a lot. The forest of Serrallonga, [...] what is not seen” (personal communication, summer, 2016). Fina Miralles’ actions include invisible processes and make viewers feel the results of these inner experiences through both an empathic process,¹⁸³ and a score to be played or performed.

Later in her notebook, Fina Miralles enumerates experiences and relations where she differentiates the matter she engages with (liquids such as water and solids such as stones, sand or trees), and also through different actions (to cross, to leave a trace, to climb). These are some of the materials and actions that compose the series *Relacions*. Between January and September 1974, we find the following written notes in her notebook:

All the actions that we can make with materials and mainly with natural materials:

- To swim.
- To be buried.
- To run [erased in the notebook].
- To swing on a tree branch.
- To climb a tree.
- To cover the body with grass.
- To be covered with soil.
- To jump.
- To sit on a stone.

¹⁸² Serrallonga is her mother’s house in the countryside in Catalonia.

¹⁸³ In chapter 4 (Methodology), I argue that one of my methodologies, due to my background as a psychologist, is based on kinesthetic empathy as a tool for body art and performance analysis.

- To cross a river.
- To be wet with rain.
- The snow. Leave footprints. A fire in the snow.
- To be covered with stones. (Fina Miralles, 1975, pp. 20-21)

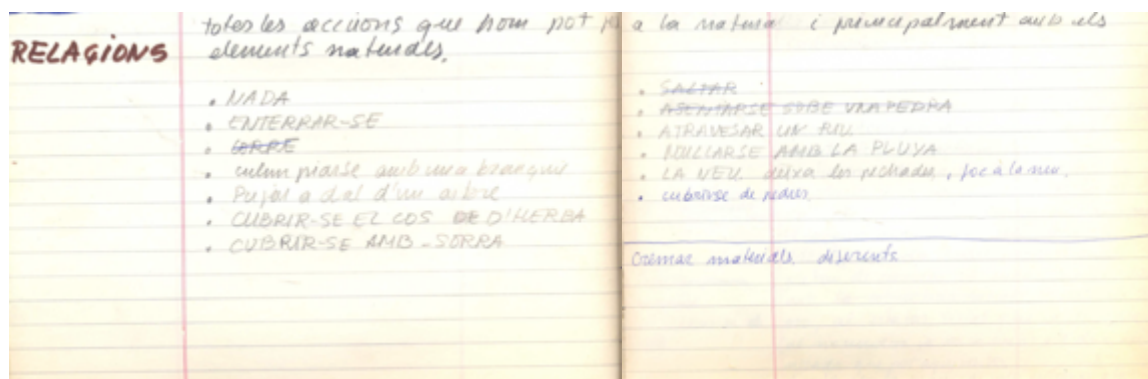


Figure 59. Fina Miralles' notebook. *Llibre de Treball 1* (1973-1975), p. 36,37 (Ref. MAS-411). Archive: MAS.

These notes (Figure 59) constitute various corporeal strategies, even though not all of these actions were performed, according to the documentation. When we talked, she explained to me that there was a kind of unplanned process. There would be an initial plan, but then some of the actions were accomplished in the situations of quotidian life. For instance, she was walking with a friend and she found a pile of stones and decided to perform the action at that moment. The fortuitous nature of the actions should be emphasized, their integration into her everyday life. In this sense, I argue that this is also an important method for self-emancipation, one that focuses on everyday life in intimate and public space as sites where feminist liberatory strategies happen. Feminism is connected to everyday life in Fina Miralles' explorations. These everyday actions open the subject to corporeal forms of knowledge of the body and the world. Sometimes Fina Miralles shows scripts that are performed, sometimes she guides actions, and other times there are actions spontaneously enacted in everyday life. Fina Miralles covers all the arenas where feminism can be inserted in the quotidian. She gives tools, scripts, and guides, but she also shows the spontaneity that comes from listening to the body and intervening in the world around it. The body teaches her a particular mode of liberation for the trajectory of her own explorations, which are means to provide the viewer with a mimetic and also empathic learning procedure: a feminist pedagogy.

Regarding the actions where Fina Miralles covers her body, Garbayo explains:

When the body is covered but at the same time it lets its shape appear, its contour reveals the presence of a volume, a material: it *certifies that the body occupies a place*. It is a space-other: there, the body goes and is located outside the visible. [...] The disappearance, the transference of the body to this kind of beyond through the hump form is easily identifiable with *burial and death*, . . . the images show *an obsession to cover, to hide the body, to make it disappear completely*. A latent violence, a kind of pain, passes through the bodies that Fina Miralles puts on the scene. It is not an explicit and lacerating violence, such as the one sometimes shown in a certain type of action art. It is much more subtle, but the body appears coerced, inhibited by circumstances. (Garbayo, 2016, pp. 77-78) [emphasis added]

I agree with Garbayo's identification of "burial and death" in these actions, particularly in the context of the dictatorship, where a large quantity of bodies disappeared during the Franco regime, many of them still buried in unknown places. Moreover, at this time some bodies did not even have the permission to exist. Only the male, virile and heterosexual body had permission to live. The Franco regime left bodies buried in ditches, inert bodies. It stole bodies of newborns, locked bodies in jails, tortured bodies to death.¹⁸⁴ Bodies were stolen in a real and figurative sense. Fina Miralles' burials ooze with the context in which they were performed. Dictatorial power systems function to nullify the existence of the body. There was no space to exist in one's own's body. One's body does not pertain to oneself. The Franco dictatorship did not permit an existence on different terms than the ones that served the system.

To understand how restrictive body politics under the dictatorship were doubly repressive for women, I turn to Morcillo's (2015) *En Cuerpo y Alma*, discussed previously in the section on women and Francoism. She argues that there exists an organic metaphor of the nation which takes physical shape in the figure of a woman. Because of this, women's bodies play a central role in the political imaginary, and the control of these bodies became an essential tool of the Francoist system for the attainment of its totalitarian ends. This supposes the "existence" of "woman" by and for the dictatorial power system. Morcillo proposes that the female body was a symbolic element that flooded the logic of political discourse in the Franco regime and was also

¹⁸⁴ In chapter 3, I address the restrictive body politics in the Franco dictatorship.

the place where these practices and technologies were specifically designed to dominate. In this sense, the actions where Fina Miralles is buried evoke this system of control of women's bodies. The regime left living bodies broken into pieces, especially women, bodies which would never be recomposed and would live in this country with the weight of a dictatorship on their backs. It would take generations and generations to recompose pieces of these broken bodies.

How can a human being live in her body if it is at the service of a dictatorship and patriarchy? Fina Miralles gives an answer through her corporeal practices; she develops a possibility of appearing through the body. She not only "certifies that a body occupies a place," (Garbayo, 2016, p.77) but she also explains *how to occupy* at the same time the place from inside, through bodily awareness, as a way to expand physically outside and within the body from inside.

When I reminded Fina Miralles that there was a process of disappearance in this series, she noted: "Yes, it is Garbayo's view," Garbayo's book having just been published at that moment. I asked her: "What does it mean for you to erase the body?" She answered:

Garbayo is right. It is this thing of disappearing, melting, disappearing, ceasing to exist. Death, if you want. The final process is that you stop living, that you do not see the body anymore. But this is also beautiful, poetic. You only see the natural element with which she has started to cover herself. She covers herself and disappears. And turns to straw. And turns to soil. And turns to sand. And you do not know what is underneath the stones, but *there is an alive person*; you only see a pile. This is disappearing. There is only one [action] which is leaving tracks¹⁸⁵ in the field of grass, the rest is a disappearance, is erasing the body, *but poetically because the body transforms progressively into the natural matter*. If you do not see the process, you think that there is no one there. All are burials. Burials and soil. Like dead people. Sure, they get buried. These are burials. But here instead of saying burial we say covering the body with soil, or with another material [...] but it would be an *empedrament*, *enterrament*, and *empajament*¹⁸⁶ but the relations

¹⁸⁵ By observing the photographs of the actions, I realize that other actions in this series also leave tracks, as is documented. This allows me to guess the process of appearance of the body.

¹⁸⁶ *Empedrament*, *enterrament*, and *empajament* are synonyms for "covering" but each one is a derivation of the material by which the body is covered: *pedras* [stones], *terra* [earth] and *paja* [straw]. There is no translation in English.

with the water is more subtle;¹⁸⁷ it is the relation of the body with rain water that touches you and you get wet. And with the sea water, etc, etc. [...] All this is very interesting. (personal communication, summer, 2016) [my translation, emphasis added]

Fina Miralles makes clear that this covering of the body is a symbol of death, yet also highlights the importance of a poetic performance where she focuses on the centrality of body consciousness in a process of transformation. I want to highlight both processes: one that helps me to situate the piece in the context in which it took place, and the other which helps me build my argument regarding Fina Miralles' feminist pedagogical interventions, where she "teaches" that the body is not only the place where Francoist body politics are inscribed, but also the source for a feminist liberation through different types of appearing, more or less visible, as "hidden transcripts"¹⁸⁸ waiting to be read as "body scores."

Fina Miralles refers to the actions of covering her body as a process of disappearance in relation with death. Pol says: "This desire to cover and/or bury herself is a halo around her that can appear as a sign of death, but also as *life*, since the artist *in the end uncovers herself so she can start the cycle*" (2012, p. 207) [my translation, emphasis added]. Fina Miralles also uses words such as "poetic," and highlights these works as a transformation of the elements, a kind of blurring between her bodily borders and matter. In this sense, I argue that this is not only a process of disappearance, but also an appearance where there is a sensorial exploration of the living body. As Weiss affirms:

I do believe that the plasticity and stability of the body image can serve to maintain an oppressive "status quo" and that a greater awareness of the "body power" we have at our disposal through this very plasticity and stability can result in new, perhaps subversive, *body images that can be used to fight oppression on a corporeal front*. (1999, p. 10) [emphasis added]

In the four actions (straw, soil, sand, stones) where Fina Miralles covers and/or covers-uncovers her body with different elements, the images are of a still body. As noted, this still body privileges micro-movements and kinesthesia, which reinforce introspection. Also, it must be noted that Fina Miralles moves at the end of the action to uncover herself (I address this in the

¹⁸⁷ I analyse these actions in relation with water and air in the next chapter.

¹⁸⁸ I mention in chapter 3 (p.42) that I use "hidden transcripts" based on art historian Erin McCutcheon's article "Tales We Tell: Imagining Feminist Pasts, Writing Feminist Futures" which is based on the work of James Scott.

next section). I argue that the repetition of this strategy through the different actions is a pedagogical tool that Fina Miralles uses in her desire to “teach.” It is not a trivial exercise and is very focused on a still body, which as I argue, gives access to the inner body/self. The repetition of this kinesthetic exercise with different elements causes an increasing bodily perception, something that is not visible.

In an interview with Fina Miralles about these pieces she says:

You see a lump of soil, and you do not know if there is a person. [...] You know it because you see the photographs and you see the process. But if you go there you do not know if there is someone or not. *I wanted to show the process*, almost like a comic, like cinematographic images, like a scene shot. In the first scene, I cover myself until here, then until here, then here, then I cover myself completely and then *I uncover myself!!* Because there are many photographs of the uncovered scene, [...] what happens is that people [researchers] are not interested, but there is *the removal of the soil*. In fact, the action would be from when you put the body on the ground, then you are covered little by little, then you are totally covered and then you leave. *So the action should be the whole process*. And the documentation is like that. (personal communication, summer, 2016)
[my translation, emphasis added]

Through covering and also uncovering her body in *Relacions*, she starts a reconstitution of her body from zero. In “The Impossible-Possible of Being Still,” Schiller notes that

in quantum mechanics immobility or stillness is defined as a zero point of gravity that exerts energy. In other words, there is movement and the exchange of energy within that which is still. [...] Being still is a starting point for many training techniques. Reducing the range of one’s bodily movements is often the way a performer prepares the body-instrument in training. In most training practices, the aim is not to seek stillness for stillness’s sake, but to find the still point which prepares and awaits, or anticipates the emerging gesture—a sort of ready state of becoming. It develops the performer’s ability to be responsive to subtle movement oscillations inside and outside of the body. (2017, p. 188)

While writing this dissertation, I attended a few “Feldenkrais”¹⁸⁹ sessions. I was lying still on a table with almost no movement. The Feldenkrais professional made me conscious of how the still body perceives the structure of the body through what is called proprioception, and I could experience an awareness of my body from the inside and a sense of starting to be aware of the movement of my body from a zero state. While lying on the table, I imaged Fina Miralles’ *Relacions*, lying under different natural elements, and I connected my sensations with the possible sensorial experiences that Fina Miralles could have had during her actions. I concluded that from the still body that the artist presents us in *Relacions* there is a new beginning, like an awakening of the body through the sensorial. My emphasis on kinesthetic empathy and the descriptions of Fina Miralles allows me to analyse her work as practices and exercises that lead to realizing somatic habits and also to discovering new patterns of movement in the body. The still body put us in contact with the constant changes of this stillness, and augments the awareness of the bodily processes of transformation.

In interviews with Fina Miralles, she describes the process of being in contact with elements as follows:

What interests me is *what I do not see*. That’s why I started with stones, the soil. [...] Stones are good, but now I am not going to carry stones, [...] but you have to start with stones, you have to start with reality, you have to start with things that you touch, you have to dirty your feet, you have *to be aware of where you are*. After that you can go deep into these *different layers* of your own ‘onion’ until you reach this part. The onion is a fantastic example. The first layer of the onion is very dry. And when you remove the cover there is a thin tissue and more layers. (personal communication, summer, 2016) [my translation, emphasis added]

Fina Miralles’ emphasis here is on a process of awareness that I identify with the invisible awareness of the body. I say invisible because while one can be aware of the body through kinesthesia this is something that is not visible from outside. It is a feminist strategy of resistance that occurs in silence. She is also explaining a process from something less subtle (the feeling of the stones on the body, which she says she would not do now because of aging) to a more subtle bodily awareness from within that has imaginative “layers.” The “different layers” is an example

¹⁸⁹ Feldenkrais examines the micro-movements of the body and the possibilities to create new directions out of habitual ones.

of the layers of the process of awareness of the body “from the inside.” It is my argument that she *accumulates* corporeal dynamics within her body. For Fina Miralles, this is a key to situating her body in space: “to be aware of where you are.” Kinesthesia becomes a placeholder for a variety of actions and effects that Fina Miralles experienced in the performances of 1970s and that are still present in her life *in relation* with herself and the world.¹⁹⁰

In *El Cos Cobert de Sorra* [Body Covered by Sand], there is an emphasis on covering the body, this time with a lighter material than soil. The documentation (Figure 60) that I initially found in the archive demonstrates this process. However, during my research in the archive and in other theorizations of her work, I found the first image where she is not there (left hand side, Figure 61) and the last image where there is a trace of her body (right side, Figure 61).

¹⁹⁰ Her sensorial explorations are reminiscent of other works from contemporary artists that propose to explore the world outside the body and develop an awareness of the body “from the inside,” such as *Unicorn* (1971) by Rebecca Horn. There are some similarities and differences between these works and Fina Miralles’ ones. Horn, for instance, after having an intoxication from a material in fine arts was exploring a work with the body. Horn’s crisis is not the context of the dictatorship, but one that is related to the body. She affirms that she was offering “a series of attempts at creating new models of interaction rituals” (as cited by Michael Bonesteel, 1984, p. 147). Bonesteel describes “an atmosphere of intimacy” in Horn’s work, yet he bases this comment on the “nudity” (something that in Fina Miralles’ dictatorial system was impossible). I think Horn’s work is an intimacy related to an awareness of the body, yet in her case this awareness stems from her recovery from an accident. Bonesteel refers to the work of Horn as “apparent extension[s] of sensory awareness. ... They emphasize the conceptual and the sensory” (1984, p. 149). Also, Bonesteel refers to some of her works as “kinetic art objects” (1984, p.149). Both Fina Miralles and Horn increase bodily awareness through the sensorial, not only by extending/liberating the body but also by preventing movement in the body (for example, Fina Miralles with *El Cos Cobert de Pedres* and Horn in *Arm Extensions* (1968) by attaching her legs and torso). I find both strategies to be feminist interventions, a way to increase bodily awareness, to expand the body towards the world and within itself. At the end of another dictatorship in Brazil, there is another example of sensorial exploration: *For a Body and its Possibilities* (1985) by Martha Araújo. Salas explains in the webpage of his gallery that Araújo’s work

questions how the body is intimately entwined with the world, how the ‘I’ negotiated terms of relations. [...] She proposed other ways of knowing by producing sensorial phenomenological exercises which enquire into our ways of being-in-the-world in correlation with questions of modes of world-making. Araújo’s sensibility evokes the body as the area of the world which is the main ground for human expression. (2018)

To locate the experimentation with the body in other contexts in the world and identify differences and similarities with Fina Miralles goes beyond my research question in this dissertation. However, in this dissertation I make some analysis of these possible relations with the global scene as seeds for further research.



Figure 60. Black and white photographic documentation of *El Cos Cobert de Sorra* [Body covered with sand] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 61. Black and white photographic documentation of *El Cos Cobert de Sorra* [Body covered with sand] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph on left hand side: the sand before the action. Right hand side: the trace of Fina Miralles' body after the action. Archive: MAS.

I understand this performance as a process of appearance, because after the covering process there is also an uncovering process; this is why I can see the traces of the body in the sand. I address this emphasis on traces in the next section. There are also other actions where the end is the discovering of the body. This is especially clear in *El Cos Cobert de Pedres* [Body Covered With Stones] and *Relacions amb els Quatre Elements* [Relations with the four elements].¹⁹¹ I now turn to the perception process in a still body, and also the uncovering process that is also present in the burials, which gives us information about Fina Miralles' process of appearance.

¹⁹¹ I cover this piece in the last section of this chapter where I describe the exhibition where the action was performed. I understand that the uncovering process is very important since it is the one that she actually performs in public.

7.2. Uncovering the Body

In *El Cos Cobert amb Pedres* [Body Covered with Stones], Fina Miralles lays down with her eyes closed for first time (Figure 62). Based on my embodied methodology—where not only is there a research-creation process, but also an aspect of kinesthetic empathy—I understand this piece through my own performance in *Tripas de corazón* (Figure 69), mentioned in chapter 4 (on methodology). With this experience, I can interpret Fina Miralles' work as a script, a score for action that has liberatory potential for my own explorations.



Figure 62. Black and white photographic documentation of *El Cos Cobert de Pedres* [Body covered with stones] by Fina Miralles (April 1974). Archive: MAS.



Figure 63. *Tripas de Corazón* [Guts of the Heart] (2015). Photograph by Alexandra Rodes. Performance by Celia Vara. Archive: Celia Vara.

In *Tripas de Corazón*, I could feel the freshness of the rock on the back side of my body. I was lying down with a large rope over my body.¹⁹² I also created a final scene where I felt the relief of being uncovered. My own performative actions created a space of sensorial empathy with Fina Miralles' performances, to see in them potential spaces for bodily awareness and kinesthetic knowledge.

In *El Cos Cobert de Pedres* (Fig. 62, 64 and 65), Fina Miralles started by covering her feet and ended by covering her head, the stones almost the size of her head. She is buried under this mass that delimits only her silhouette. This piece was performed in 1974. It is in this piece where it is more difficult for the viewer to guess that there is a body underneath. In an empathy exercise, I try to imagine what a body feels when the weight of stones covers it entirely. If we are never aware that we have a body that moves us from one place to another, surely putting the weight of stones on it will help us to realize our bodily existence. There is also an action of literalizing the weight on the body. To be aware of the weight of one's own body implies a process of consciousness.



Figure 64. Black and white photographic documentation of the covering process in *El Cos Cobert de Pedres* [Body covered with stones] (April 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

The context chosen by Fina Miralles to perform *El Cos Cobert de Pedres* is an agricultural site where stones had been placed. She gradually covers her body with stones—a solid material, heavy and compact. Her body is still. As I have argued above (in the previous chapter)

¹⁹² At this time, I was already investigating Fina Miralles artwork, yet the similarity in these processes and photographs is impressive, because the script of my performance process was created with my friend, the artist Alexandra Rodes who did not know of Fina Miralles' action.

with reference to Noland’s argument, I understand that kinesthetic awareness is also present in a stilled body. The body is never in complete stillness. Schiller argues that

this *invisible* figuring of approaching and approximating immobility cultivates *movement thinking*. [...] This identity-in-the-making or what Francisco Varela proposed as ‘enaction’ situates and places being still as a receptive, relational, dialogical and differential dynamic. (2017, p. 178) [emphasis added]

In her article, Schiller reflects on the procedures in which ‘stillness’ enacts processes of agency in the performer. Through the description of some contemporary case studies,¹⁹³ she highlights different corporeal dynamics such as repetitive movements that allow for forms of “micro immobility” (Schiller, 2017, p. 182), or the still body as something in which a consciousness of oneself proceeds incrementally through “the perception of the inner felt body in relationship with the environment” (Schiller, 2017, p. 187). “Being still is not only an action to be looked at but also a choreological process ‘which commences from a position of embodiment and corporeality’ where the body is ‘not just a physical vehicle of meaning but an intersubjective identity-in-the-making’ (Preston-Dunlop & Sanchez-Colberg as cited in Schiller, 2017, p. 178). Drawing from her argument, I conclude that Fina Miralles’ still body might be kinesthetic and that those invisible dynamics can lead to agency.



Figure 65. Black and white photographic documentation of the uncovering process in *El Cos Cobert de Pedres* [Body covered with stones] (April 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

The action also transmits a threatening sensation. I feel a suffocation that is then released by the act of uncovering her body (Figure 65). It seems impossible to remove the material with only the force or inertia of the body in the act of changing position, yet this is how it is

¹⁹³ Catherine Schaub-Abkarian (dance and theatre), Yoann Bourgeois (dance and circus), Ruth Gibson (dance and video).

documented: Fina Miralles, in order to get out from under the stones, removes them from the top, one by one, with her hands. The action has twenty photographs. In the first ones (Figure 64), her body is covered, and in the last ones (Figure 65) she takes the stones off her body.¹⁹⁴ As I have explained, Fina Miralles presents not only a disappearing body, but also an emerging or appearing one. This appearance is not only the physical body that we can see in the documentation; there is also a kinesthetic process. The fact of exercising the appearance of her body through the feeling of the weight of the stones encourages a bodily consciousness that is present for the artist, but not visible for the viewer, unless there is a process of empathy of the kinesthesia at play in the work.

When Fina Miralles covers and uncovers her body, I observe the action as a feminist strategy where she not only emphasizes a disappearance, but also reinforces a space for bodily appearance. This process of appearance seems to process the repressive system affectively, but also offers a procedure of emancipation and self-knowledge through the body as the main source. Drawing from Martin Seel, Garbayo uses the term “appearance:”

I use the term appearance to refer to the irruption of some bodies in the public and artistic space of Spain in the 1970s. An irruption that takes a different form, which does not mean that these bodies did not previously exist, but rather they take on a presence in a specific space and, above all, in a specific way, which was hitherto unprecedented, as it had not been codified or interpreted yet. The appearance, addressed in depth by Martin Seel, is present in all aesthetic activity. That which appears anchors us in the present and makes us become aware of our own present. (2016, p. 55)

I extend Garbayo’s argument of this “appearance” of bodies in the late years of dictatorship by emphasizing perceptual work such as Fina Miralles’ performances. In this sense, I argue that this process of awareness is a somatic consciousness. There is the physical appearance of Fina Miralles’ body and there is also the invisible conscious process of bodily awareness through kinesthesia, a sense that takes place in our body. Sheets-Johnstone notes that when we focus on the sensory modality of kinesthesia we gain knowledge into its experiential realities,

¹⁹⁴ As I mention in Chapter 4, MAS only had three digitized images and most of the publications finish the documentation with Fina Miralles’ covered body, so the total process was not present. This detail in the documentation is very important for my analysis because the action does not finish in the disappearance under the stones, but in the relief of taking the stones off, and in the (re)appearance of the body.

that is the “qualitative dynamics” of kinesthesia. For her, an acknowledgement and investigation of these qualitative dynamics allows for an extension through the significance of thinking in movement (2017). These qualitative dynamics can be guessed at in Fina Miralles’ performances. For instance, in this piece (Figures 70 and 71), the sensation of the weight of the stones in the muscles, the augmented perception of the borders of the body with the weight of the stones, or the dilation of the tendons after her body is uncovered.

The strategy of covering-uncovering the body is present in all the first actions of *Relacions* as a strategy that reinforces an awareness of the body from the inside. It is interesting that Fina Miralles still uses this strategy in current performances, and particularly in an action where she remembers Francoism: In 2015, the Museum of Mataró (Catalonia, Spain) celebrated the new edition of Fina Miralles’ exhibition *Per Matar-ho* [To Kill Him] that was first presented to the public in 1976, one year after Franco’s death. The title of the exhibition is a play on words with the name of the town where the exhibition took place (Mataró) and the phrase “to kill him”—evoking Franco’s death. In the context of this exhibition in 2015, Fina Miralles performed an action with two artists from Catalonia: Denys Blacker and Marta Vergonyos. The action, performed in the garden of the Museum, revealed the lassitude and fatigue of having been a victim of a dictatorial system full of restrictions. She showed, in an allegorical manner, the historical moment in which she worked during the 1970s. In this action, called *Recordant Aquell Temp Tan Gris*” [Remembering Those Grey Times], Fina Miralles is rolled up like a mummy with white cloth from her feet to her neck. The action begins with the two artists who lead her to a chair. Fina Miralles is covered with a grey sheet so she cannot see anything; when she sits in the chair, the other artists take off the grey cloth, and her eyes are closed. After that, one of the artists covers her eyes with a piece of white fabric. To have the eyes closed encourages not only a kinesthetic experience on the part of Fina Miralles, who is drawn into an introspective relation to her bound body, but also on the part of viewers, who were invited to empathize with her embodied state rather than engage her relationally through eye contact. Again, as in the pieces from the 1970s, Fina Miralles covers and uncovers her body. During the performance she recites: “No se qui soc, no soc ningú, no penso res” [I don’t know who I am, I am nobody, I don’t think anything]. When the artists finish wrapping all of her body, one of them holds the cloth on her eyes and the other draws a cross on her body with black ink as a symbol of national Catholicism (*Nacionalcatolicismo*) (left hand side, Figure 66). While the artist vigorously draws this cross,

we see a spasm in Fina Miralles' body and also a subtle differentiation of the tone of her voice: "No soc ningú, No penso res." After they finish drawing the cross they begin unwrapping the body (right side, Figure 66), and then the action is finished. It is important to notice how there is an overtly political work in this performance, unlike the performances analysed in this dissertation where the non-discursive aspect is more present. These works are more explicitly political (allegorical, symbolic, etc) whereas the works I am discussing in this dissertation are minimal and non-discursive. I wish to mark this distinction but also demonstrate how—even in these more overtly political works—corporeal dynamics such as covering-uncovering continue to inform her procedures for making meaning. My interest in bringing attention to these current performances—and the one I explain in the next paragraph—is that it is particularly significant how the somatic dynamics, for instance covering-uncovering, or the emphasis on perceptual processes such as kinesthesia, that I observe in the performance in the 1970s are also present in these more recent works.



Figure 66. Still of video documentation of *Recordant Aquell Temp Tan Gris* [Remembering those grey times] (2015) by Fina Miralles. Retrieved from: http://www.mataroartcontemporani.cat/posts_comunicacio/fina-miralles-recordantaquell-temps-tan-gris/

In 2016, during my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to participate in another action by Fina Miralles: *El Passat Es el Present* [The Past Is the Present] (Figure 67). She performed this action in a chapel in Cadaques, Girona, the village where she currently lives. Again here, I found her strategy of covering and uncovering the body. In this action, while humming a song, Fina Miralles covers her body from head to toe with photographs of her life. With a few clothing pegs, she attaches one photograph after another. While she attaches these photographs, she gathers a bit of her clothing to hang them. The last one hangs on her head and hair. At the end of the action, she takes off the photographs and uncovers her body.

In these actions, the dynamic of covering and uncovering¹⁹⁵ that I have observed in the actions of the 1970s is present. The repetition and circularity of the action—covering, uncovering, covering, uncovering—and the fact of having her eyes closed gives access to corporeal sensations. There is a shift from natural materials to more symbolic objects (photos, the inscription of a cross, etc), yet the dynamic of appearance is subtler than in the artwork with stones. This emphasizes the importance of this “appearance” as one that takes place not only through physically appearing but also within the body. Kinesthesia is a process that happens under the skin; it can be appreciated from within. It is a silent appearance, visible in the consciousness for oneself, an intimate appearance. The observation of this iterative action in this recent performance led me to better understand the process behind the action of covering-uncovering in *Relacions*. In these actions, I can feel the other layer of the experience: what we cannot see and cannot hear. This is a layer in relation with a kinesthetic aspect, the place where the silent action happens.



Figure 67. Still of video documentation of “*El Passat es el Present*” [The past is the present] (July 2, 2016, Cadaqués, Girona) by Fina Miralles. Still video by Ivo Vinuesa. Archive: Ivó Vinuesa and Celia Vara.

¹⁹⁵ This strategy is reminiscent of some works by women artists in the global context which involved covering the body: *Ablutions* (1972) by Judy Chicago, Susan Lacy, Sandra Orgel and Aviva Rahmani, and *Electric Dress* (1956) by Atsuko Tanaka, although in these pieces there is not an emphasis on the “uncovering” strategy, nor a specificity regarding body consciousness.

What is the process that Fina Miralles' still body demonstrates? Why is the uncovered scene important? How is this showing dynamic? What is the nature of this dynamism? In these pieces, she shows two sides of the body: on the one hand, the place/space where control and constrictive politics happens; on the other, the place where emancipatory action can happen through mapping the borders of the body through kinesthesia, for example by covering-uncovering and leaving tracks. In the case of the uncovering process, I observe that it is very important not to confine this detail to an interpretation of the actions as a "burial" process and I examine the aspects of the embodied process that identify the body as a source of liberation. Throughout this research, I pay attention to the kinesthetic dynamics that happen in the repetitive task of covering and uncovering. It is not only a pedagogical strategy of repeating in a schematic way the steps of a process, but also a routine of drawing again and again the borders of a lost body to be sure of its borders. The detail and repetition of the same action, covering and uncovering the body, engages my sense of touch¹⁹⁶ as a viewer, and also my own bodily awareness. It solicits the viewer to physically trace the different body parts covered by the material: the foot, the legs, the hips, the breast, the neck, the head, and so on, and again in the opposite direction. It also physically traces the contours of the body. At the same time that I trace Fina Miralles' body, I draw my own body image. The circular and repetitive actions of covering and uncovering make me feel the body as a whole element; makes me feel as if I am the owner of my body. Drawing from Weiss, I understand that awareness of the body can give access to possibilities of transgression of power systems. In this sense, these are subtle feminist interventions to fight oppression that give us keys to somatic emancipatory processes.

In these last two sections (covering-uncovering), I have focused my argument on an awareness of the body from the inside (encouraged through the still body and kinesthesia). I also highlighted the importance of the uncovering process in the series, as a process where transformation occurs, and repetition as a pedagogical strategy. In the next section on the dynamics of leaving tracks, I focus my argument on the possibilities of mapping the body through other actions of the same series *Relacions*.

¹⁹⁶ In chapter 2, I explain the feminist methodology in this thesis that allows me this engagement: situated knowledge, kinesthetic empathy.

7.3. Leaving Tracks

In January 1975, Fina Miralles performed the action of covering herself with sand from the beach in Premià de Mar, a small town in Barcelona: *El Cos Cobert amb Sorra* [Body Covered With Sand] (Figure 68). This action takes place on a beach where the sand is fine. This material is lighter than the previous ones.

The idea of the action was "to cover herself with sand, to leave the body marked on the sand" (Fina Miralles, 1975, p. 24/42).¹⁹⁷ Sand, like stone and earth, is a solid material, but it differs from the stones because it is small and compact. It appears that Fina Miralles wanted to experience a different weight on her body, a subtler one. Also, her notebook indicates an intention to leave a mark, a bodily trace, in these works. The fact that the sand is thinner and has less weight than the other materials allows Fina Miralles to get rid of the material in a single movement. Again, the process of covering occurs from feet to head. The body is covered by sand over her clothes to the head.



Figure 68. Black and white photographic documentation with the trace of Fina Miralles' body after the action *El Cos Cobert de Sorra* [Body covered with sand] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

It is important to emphasize that when she experiments with a different material, she obtains a result that is different not only visually but also perceptually in her body. For instance, in *El Cos Cobert amb Pedres* (Figure 62, 64 and 65) Fina Miralles arbitrarily displaces the stones that cover her. She removes and places them around her with no desire to leave the trace of her body marked on the surface. In contrast, in *El Cos Cobert amb Sorra* (Figure 60 and 61) the artist

¹⁹⁷ The *Llibretas de Treball I-II* are on paper and digitized. In some images, there is a number on the paper page, and in others not. Here I indicate the paper page/digitalized document page.

could stand up in only one or two movements; therefore, the material that she had on her body was deposited to the sides more rapidly. Thus, she could highlight her silhouette, that is, the hole produced with the process of being covered and standing up. The artist's body mark remains—ephemerally—in the sand.¹⁹⁸

The final photograph is the shape that Fina Miralles leaves in the sand after she stands up from being covered (Figure 68). This silhouette could be confused with the small dunes that carve the sand with the wind.



Figure 69. Last black and white photographic documentation of the action with the shape of Fina Miralles' body under the soil in *El Cos Cobert amb Terra* [Body covered by soil] (January 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

While in *El Cos Cobert amb Terra* (Figure 69), the last document is the shape of Fina Miralles' body under the soil, in *El Cos Cobert amb Sorra* I find another interest in the documentation: to leave the trace of her body in the sand. It is an opposite process of shaping the body: one is the lump of her body under the soil and the other the trace of her body in the sand. I suggest that the role of this documentation is to map the body, exploring the borders and the spaces that her body can occupy. These are also part of the experimental exercises through which Fina Miralles explores the sensorial as an access to the world through the borders of the body, through leaving those borders marked, for instance, in the sand.

¹⁹⁸ These strategies of covering-uncovering and leaving tracks remind me of the Cuban-US artist Ana Mendieta's performances *Feathers on a Woman* (1972), *Blood and Feathers* (1974), *Tree of Life* (1977), *Burial Pyramide, Yagul, Mexico* (1974), and *Siluetas* (1973-1977). Mendieta also relies on and encourages a kinesthetic experience.

In the previous chapter, I explained that in *Translacions* there was already an intention of leaving marks: in *Duna* [Dune] she moves the sand of a dune to an orchard. Even though her body is not in relation with the elements as in *Relacions*, she does tactile work. She uses the shovel to move the sand to the orchard and builds a path of sand, a mark in the orchard. At the end of this path she builds a little mountain of sand. This action was filmed in Super-8 and there are a few close-up shots of Fina Miralles' hands where she takes sand, builds the little mountain, and claps it to make it uniform.



Figure 70. Super 8 film documentation (Author: Unknown) of *Duna* [Dune] (November 18, 1973). Still Super-8 film by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

In *Duna*, Fina Miralles makes the shape with the sand (she leaves the marks of her fingers and hand on the sand: Figure 70) and in *Relacions* she is under this sand to make the shape. As I noted, *Duna* is a preparatory action¹⁹⁹ of creating traces with materials that helps to develop the process of leaving her own body trace. I could say, using Noland's argument, that she is doing an "exploratory project" in investigating her bodily image. As Noland affirms in "Agency and Embodiment:"

¹⁹⁹ I argued in the previous chapter that Fina Miralles performed actions where her body was not the main element but the one that makes the elements move (*Deixada Anar de Cargols*, *Herba Flotant en el Mar*, *Duna*) which are preparatory exercises for these kinesthetic experiences with her body.

To be sure, the gestural routines of inscription are violently disciplining; they can shape and suppress the individual body by submitting it to highly rigorous standards of execution. However, *the process of making marks also offers opportunities for subversion*: we can leave our marks in the wrong place, invent private or countercultural mark systems, or use mark-making as an *exploratory project*, investigating how our bodies might move differently and thereby achieve materialization and cultural legibility in unexpected ways. (Noland, 2009, pp. 214-215) [emphasis added]

This process of making marks in unexpected situations continues with the action *Relació del Cos Humà amb l'Herba i la Impronta del Cos Sobre l'Herba* [The Body in Relation With the Grass and the Trace of the Body in the Grass] (1974). In this action, Fina Miralles leaves the mark of her body on top of a surface. In her notebook she writes: "Cover with straw and leave the mark of the body" (1975, p. 24/42). In this case, the body's shape leaves a mark on the grass as a result of crushing it. The idea of working with dry grass that covers her in *El Cos Cobert de Palla* [Body Covered by Straw] (addressed above), generates a different form than that of the body imprinting her shape on the grass, since the living grass, as a material, has a plasticity that is completely different from dry grass. There were three images of this action: one of the field (left hand side, Figure 71), the next one with Fina Miralles lying on the field (center, Figure 71) and the last one with the traces of her body (right side, Figure 71).

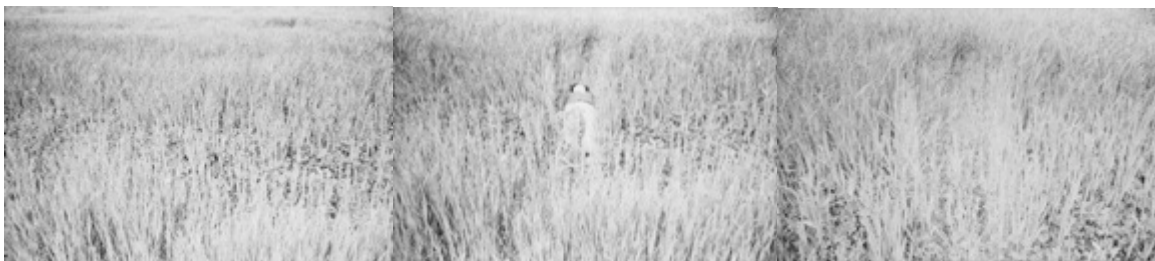


Figure 71. Black and white photographic documentation of *Relació del cos humà amb l'herba i la impronta del cos sobre l'herba* [The body in relation with the grass and the trace of the body in the grass] (April, 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

Fina Miralles describes this material in her notebook as follows: "The grass is solid, nothing compact and extremely flexible" (1972-1976 p. 21). We observe again this detailed research of the characteristics of the elements she is using to put in relation with her body. This particularity of the material in its natural context, for instance the grass in a field, allowed the artist to work plastically once again on the idea of leaving the negative footprint of her body on

top of the material. I observe that in these two actions (*El Cos Cobert de Palla* –Figure 57- and *El Cos Sobre l’Herba* –Figure 71-) there is a kind of reversed process: in the former, she is covered by the straw and generates the shape of her body. In the latter, we could say that she is covering the straw, which generates a trace, a mark. While making traces, Fina Miralles is mapping the body.²⁰⁰

7.4. *Relacions* Displayed and Communicated: Live Performance and Exhibition

Fina Miralles showed the process of *Relacions* in Sala Tres²⁰¹ (Academia de Bellas Arts, Sabadell, March 1975) and Sala del Casino (Iguada).



Figure 72. Black and white photographic documentation of Exhibition *Relacions* (general view). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

The centre of the exhibition included an installation with different natural elements that represent the earth, water, air and fire and established a relation between them. She called this

²⁰⁰ Body mapping has been proved as a therapeutic tool that mixes bodily experience and visual artistic expression (Imadisetty, 2012) used in research, therapeutic, and educational contexts (de Jager, Tewson, Ludlow & Boydell, 2016).

²⁰¹ Sala 3 was an exhibition space of the Academy of Fine Arts of Sabadell from 1972 to 1976. It hosted the most progressive artistic trends of the moment and was a national point of reference. More information about this in the publication: Creus, Maia (et al) *SALA TRES 1972-1979. EN LA RUTA DE L’ART ALTERNATIU A CATALUNYA* (2007).

installation *Cosmologia* [Cosmology]. The installation was in the middle of the room, on the front wall, the photographs of *Relacions. Relacions del Cuerpo con Elements Naturals* and on the left wall the photographs of *Relacions. Relacions Quotidians*. On the floor, there was the remainder of an action that took place on the day of the opening: *Relacions. Relacions del Cos amb els Quatre Elements* (1975) (Figure 72).

Relacions amb els Quatre Elements [Body Relations with the Four Elements] is the only action which Fina Miralles planned to perform in public. I close the chapter with this performance because it includes the main strategies that I have covered here: covering, uncovering and leaving traces. This performance is a summary of the strategies that she explains through the series *Relacions*, which she shows in printed photographs in the exhibition, displayed over the remainders of *Relacions amb els Quatre Elements*. This action was performed on the day of the opening of the exhibition in which Fina Miralles showed the documentation of all the actions in *Relacions*.

In her notebook, there is a drawing of Fina Miralles' body covered with soil (Figure 79). She intended to show the four elements, which she relates to three different parts of her body: air for her arms, water for the trunk of her body, and soil for the legs and feet. She also specifies that there are a few glasses with candles symbolizing fire. Her head is covered with a plastic box that according to Fina Miralles symbolizes the relation with the air. This would also avoid getting soil on her face. In the drawing, she depicts herself with a smile.

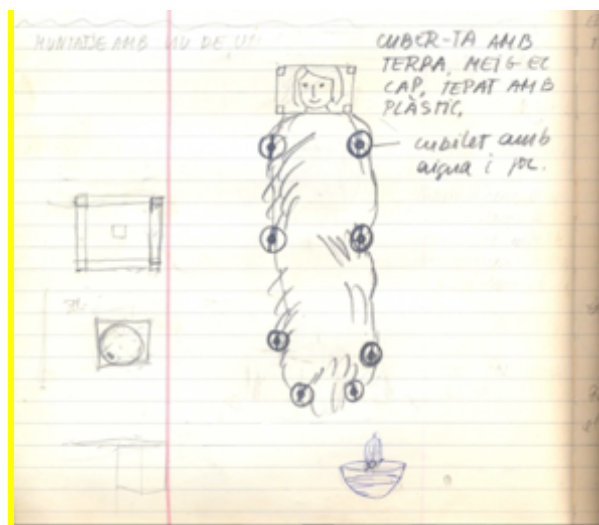


Figure 73. Fina Miralles' notebook. *Llibre de treball 1*, p. 44. 1973-1975 (Ref. MAS-411). The Catalan text reads: "Covered with soil, except the head that is covered with plastic, container with water and fire" [my translation].

Another sketch from her notebook (Figure 73) includes a schematic silhouette where the body situates the performance. This is one piece where I observe the whole process of covering-uncovering the body, and also the action of leaving marks on the soil. The title (*Relacions del Cos amb els Quatre Elements*) indicates that this is a person in relation with the four elements. However, the piece also demonstrates the gesture of covering and uncovering from head to toe. It highlights relations between the materials (Figure 74), something that is also present in the installation *Cosmologia*. The process of covering-uncovering is shown in the documentation of the previous actions in *Relacions*. There are many photographs documenting the action that was performed in the exhibition room. It can be argued that *Relacions del Cos amb els Quatre Elements* has a ritual aspect, however I focus my analysis on the strategy of covering-uncovering that is also used in other actions and I argue that the repetition is not only a pedagogical strategy but also a kind of mapping the body with different bodily perception processes (differentiated with the different matter): kinesthesia and also the traces of the body in the soil.

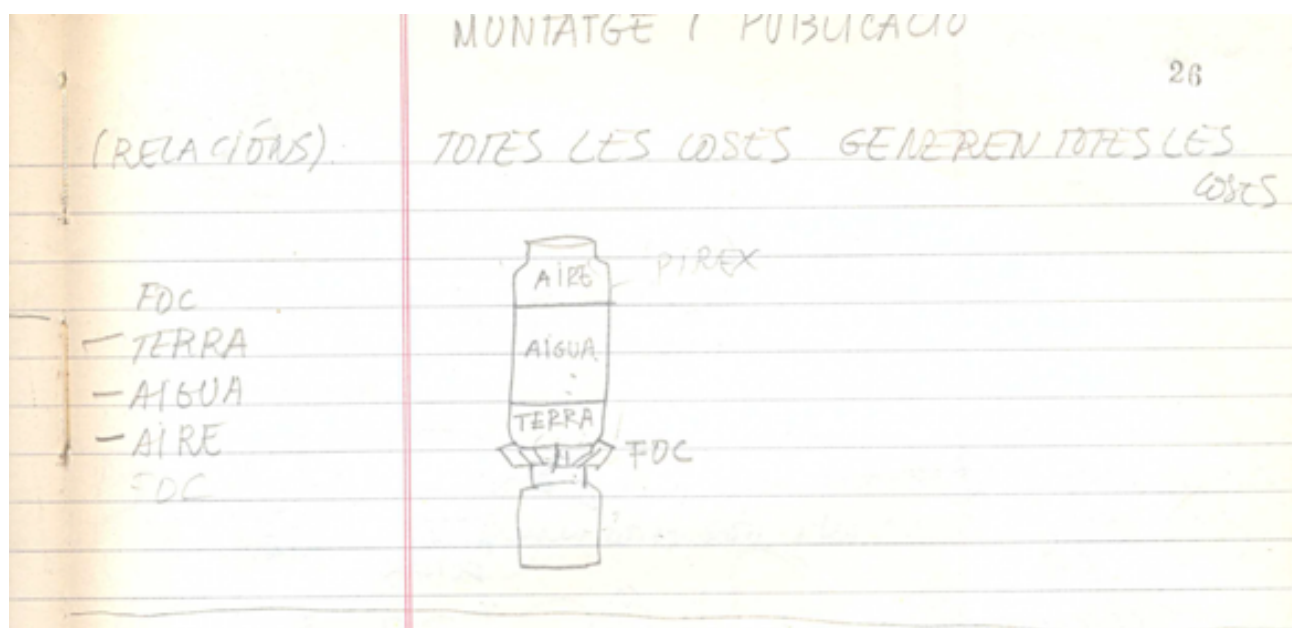


Figure 74. Fina Miralles' notebook. *Llibre de treball 1*, pág. 44. 1973-1975 (Ref. MAS-411). The Catalan text reads: "Relacions: All the things generate all the things: air, water, soil, fire" [my translation].



Figure 75. Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Relacions* [Relations]. *Relacions Del cos amb els Quatre Elements* [Relations. Relations of the Body with the Four Elements] (March 8th, 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

At the end of the action, the remainders of the soil (with Fina Miralles' silhouette) were left in the gallery until the end of the exhibition. On top of this soil, there were photographs of the performance process (Figure 76). This reveals Fina Miralles' pedagogical strategy and the interest in showing the process of uncovering. Someone coming to the exhibition after the live performance would see the remainders of the action and the photographs of the covering-uncovering process. This is important in a different manner than the documentation of the other performances on the wall. There, the audience can even touch the remainders of the process, and some viewers were present at the live performance. I want to highlight this latter action of the series of *Relacions* because Fina Miralles not only performs the process of covering and uncovering but is also interested in showing the remainders of the action which document the corporeal strategy.



Figure 76. Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of the remainders of the action with the documentation of the action on top on the soil. *Relacions* [Relations]. *Relacions Del cos amb els Quatre Elements* [Relations. Relations of the Body with the Four Elements] (March 8th, 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 77. Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Detail of the documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Installation with the documentation of *Relacions del Cos. Elements Naturals* [Body Relations. Natural Elements] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.



Figure 78. Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Detail of the documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Group of photographs on the right-hand side of the wall of the documentation of *Relacions del Cos. Elements Naturals*. [Body Relations. Natural Elements] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

In a detail of the exhibition (Figure 77), there are the images that Fina Miralles selected from the documentation of *Relacions. Relacions del Cuerpo con Elements Naturals*. In the group of photographs on the right-hand side (Figure 78), the first four lines (like a mosaic, starting from the top) show the body covered with stones, with sand, with soil and with straw. In the next line (the fifth one), there are three photographs on the right side of Fina Miralles' experience with the

wet body and sand (rolling on the sandy beach) and on the left side, two images of the action where she is on top of a tree branch. In the last line, there are three images with Fina Miralles leaving tracks on the grass.

In the same image, there is another group on the center of the wall (center part of Figure 77): from top to bottom, the first line shows Fina Miralles entering the sea (an image I decided to keep for analysis in the next chapter), the second line shows Fina Miralles under the rain; and in the third line, Fina Miralles' feet and legs are on the seashore, experiencing the water but also leaving ephemeral tracks. Finally, on the left side of the photo wall (left hand side Figure 77), there is documentation of the action of Fina Miralles breathing²⁰² (another action that will be analyzed in the next chapter), and further on the left a zoomed shot of Fina Miralles' hands making a fire.

The most important thing to notice on this wall is how she ordered the pieces in the covering-uncovering process (Figure 78). The first four lines on the right document the four actions of covering-uncovering, where the order is from covering to uncovering the body. That is, she ordered the documentation from the body totally covered to the body appearing. This is interesting for the importance that she also gives during our conversations to the burials as a process of uncovering her body, and to my argument in this chapter regarding the burials as a process where there is a reconstitution and reappearance of the body, not only visually, but also through a kinesthetic process of feeling the matter.

In another detail of the exhibition (Figure 79), there are the images from *Relacions. Relacions Quotidianes* (that I address in the next chapter). On the left part of this wall, there are photos of the actions in a group: *Mirar* [To Look] and *Mirar al Mar* [To Look at the Sea]. The second group of images corresponds to Fina Miralles eating and drinking, where the photos zoom in on the hands and mouth. The third group appears to be some other actions in her home and others in the public space. These actions will be addressed in the next chapter.

²⁰² The archive, with Fina Miralles' help, has titled this action *Mirar* [To look]. Marta Pol classifies this action as belonging to the next part of *Relacions: Relació del Cos amb Elements Naturales en Accions Quotidianes: Respirar l'Aire.* When I recently asked Miralles about it, she said that it is an image from the first part of *Relacions*. Indeed, it is on that wall but at the same time it is separated. From my analysis, it is an image "bridge" from the interoceptive process performed in the first part of *Relacions* to a process that, while keeping the focus on the body, is more in relation with the exterior: the exterior of her own house and the public space. I explain this in the next chapter.



Figure 79. Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Installation with the documentation of *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

My interest in explaining the documentation of this exhibition is to highlight the importance of performing an action that covers the strategies that I explain in this chapter, to note the details of the order of the actions, and also to summarize the series *Relacions*. This also prepares the reader for the next chapter in which there is not only a kinesthetic process in the sometimes still body but also a relation with other matter in movement, and with Fina Miralles' own movement. These actions were performed in the intimacy of her home and in the public space.

7.5. Concluding Thoughts

Fina Miralles' actions in the 1970s are a process. In *Sensitiveland*, *Natura Morta*, *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics*, and *Relacions*, I observe different strategies of kinesthesia that reinforce an awareness of the body "from the inside." These strategies help her to "draw" the borders of the body. This is not only evident through iterative and circular body strategies, but also through the simplicity and repetitive titles of the pieces. She says: "I was doing very *simple* actions" (Fina Miralles, 2016) [my emphasis]. The titles just describe in a simple way what the spectator can see. Fina Miralles performs an exercise of reconstituting the body using different strategies. In these works, I see a link between the pieces, a story recounted, where I can actually observe *how*

to do this introspective work through the body. There is a communication without words about a liberatory process. In this process, instructions for daily life are offered to the viewer and this is potentially emancipatory and can be read as an embodied intervention in feminist politics. The feminist politics that I draw from turn to the body as the main source of knowledge, emancipation and self-knowledge. This is fleshed out in the corporeal dynamics through a process of bodily appearance that awakens corporeal sensations (such as kinesthesia) and a reconstitution of that body lost in the dictatorship.

This process of relating within the body is very present in my interviews with Fina Miralles, as one of the important things in her life, past and present. During the interviews, she said: “I have had difficulties *to be* in my body” (Fina Miralles, personal communication, Summer 2016). She explains this as a difficulty to connect with different kinds of perceptions within the body. The strategies she uses (as I have explained through the analysis of the pieces) include: stillness, iterative movements of recognizing the different parts of the body, covering-uncovering her body and drawing its silhouette. These strategies have as a main tool the experience of kinesthesia through different natural textures. These experiences conduct an introspective activity and help to certify the existence of a body that occupies a space.

These strategies can be considered liberatory in the sense that Fina Miralles is appropriating her own body in a quiet transgressive action. Developing kinesthetic awareness, the artist makes a feminist intervention, implicating her body more and more, providing a method for self-knowledge and consequently for corporeal agency. As a pedagogical action, Fina Miralles repeats the process like a professor who explains and repeats, but, due to the restrictive context where it is not possible to talk, Fina Miralles, in silence, reveals liberatory strategies for her with her body. We, the viewers, must play the body score to understand.

Chapter 8 – *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes:*

Feminist Kinesthetic Knowledge, Movement and Intervention in Everyday Life.

In the previous chapters, I addressed how the sensorial guides Fina Miralles' work from the 1970s. The painting *Sensitiveland* explores sensations of form and sound through synaesthesia. She then filmed *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* as an immersion in the connections and relations between natural elements. She also explored these elements by touching them with her hands, moving them from one place to the other (*Translacions*). Fina Miralles approaches the world through her hands and builds a space within her body and around her through contact with the matter in these pieces. One of the *Translacions*, *Dona-Arbre*, “plants” her body in a field, thus pursuing her sensorial investigation with her somatic experience. The main corporeal strategies that I analyzed previously include observing elements, moving elements, covering/uncovering, and leaving tracks or traces in order to map the body. These earlier works allowed Fina Miralles to recover a body that she could claim. These works were an access to the space inside her body, and also forms of delineating this space. Through the movement of objects, the experiences with natural elements, and being in relation with these elements, Fina Miralles reinforces a kinesthetic experience that supports an introspective attention. I addressed the processual and pedagogical value of this work for the artist herself, and the work as a feminist intervention that situates her bodily practice, and as exercises that create spaces for kinesthetic knowledge that provide self-empowerment. This gradual implication of the body reveals for the viewer a method which—through mimesis and empathy practice—leads to possibilities for approaching corporeal agency.

In this chapter, I address other practices and exercises from the series *Relacions*²⁰³ where Fina Miralles continues exploring the sensorial. In these pieces from *Relacions*, however, there is an emphasis on movement²⁰⁴—of her own body and of the matter—and also a relation with

²⁰³ My order is similar to the order in the series; however, there are a few changes: I address some actions from *Relacions del Cos. Elements Naturals* (1975) in this chapter, because of the change of corporeal dynamics and strategies present in those works. I have also decided to associate some images that were not in the same group, according to Fina Miralles' organization. Finally, I take some documentation of the series from the archive that was not displayed in the exhibition. This will be indicated as I analyze each document.

²⁰⁴ From the series *Relacions del Cos. Elements naturals* [Body relations: Natural elements], the actions where movement is a key aspect are: *Revolcant-se a la Sorra* [Rolling in the sand], *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa de Mar i la Sorra* [Body in Relation With Sea Water and Sand], *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar* [Body in Relation With Sea Water].

the exterior world through everyday activities. I analyze here, then, a group of actions where the body is still, yet the corporeal dynamic is different from the actions previously analyzed in chapter 7: breathing the air, looking at the sea, for example. These actions focus on quotidian activities in the intimate space of Fina Miralles' home and the public space.²⁰⁵

Reproductive labour and the intimate scene of her house are explored by Fina Miralles as a pleasurable action and as a space for “self-affection”. I draw from Noland that describes “self-affection” as a “celebration of affect as autonomous resistance to sedimentation by revealing affect’s reliance on the habitual *and socially generated* muscular articulations Merleau-Ponty calls “I can’s” (2009, p.67). Noland understanding of embodiment as “dynamics of self-affection” it is particularly interesting for reading the corporeal work of Fina Miralles in *Relacions* as a challenge of the “social patterning” that is necessary to theorize through “gestural routines” (2009, p.67).

There is a gradual appearance of Fina Miralles' body in the public space. Following this, the public space becomes also an arena where she explores the world through quotidian activities, keeping an attention on her awareness within the body. These actions become strong feminist interventions that propose the intimate and the public arena as spaces where it is possible to awaken body awareness and relate to the world in a new way under the dictatorship. There is a clear liberatory aspect transmitted through these performances.

8.1. The Sensorial Knowledge Generated from Movement: Expanding the Body

*Lo meu no son les paraules,
Lo meu es el moviment
I el moviment es la vida
[Words are not really my thing,
what is mine is the movement.
And the movement is life].
(Fina Miralles, 2000)²⁰⁶*

²⁰⁵ The actions from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations: Quotidian Actions] (1975) are: *Menjar* [To Eat], *Fumar* [To Smoke], *Hacer una Infusión* [To Make a Tisane], *Beber Vino* [To Drink Wine], *Beber Infusion* [To Drink Tisane], *Tocar Carn* [To Touch Meat], *Tocar Roba* [To Touch Clothes], *Tocar Fusta i Pedra* [To Touch Wood and Stone], *Rentar-se les Mans* [To Clean Hands], *Rentar-se la Cara* [To Clean Face], *Rentar-se les Dents* [To Clean Teeth], *Mirar el Sol* [To Look at the Sun], *Parlar* [To Talk], *Caminar* [To Walk], *Tocar la Gabia de l'Ocell* [To Touch the Cage of the Bird], *Tocar Terra* [To Touch Ground], *Tocar Pedra* [To Touch Stone], *Tocar Herba* [To Touch Grass].

²⁰⁶ While looking at Fina Miralles' notebooks I found this writing. Even though this is from a different time than the performances I am referring to in this thesis, I consider it of utmost importance to

Movement is a corporeal way of knowing. It is as loaded with significance, with who people take themselves to be, as verbal media [...] Simply to move is to be presented with proprioceptive information as the body changes [...] In considering the body, it is essential to begin with the body and with its own, somatic, ways of knowing.

(Sklar, 1994, pp. 11-12)

While talking with Miralles, she recounted a story to me: “Life is movement. I have a friend, and when she was eight years old we were sitting by the sea. We were playing a game that we had invented and it was called ‘questions and answers’ and we could answer whatever we wanted. We whispered the questions in each other’s ear, and I asked: ‘Bárbara, why is the sea moving?’ And she answered: ‘Fina, because it is alive!’...and I thought: if I can show movement in what I draw and what I do, then it will all be alive” (personal communication, Summer 2016) [my translation]. For Fina Miralles, then, to show movement is very important because movement *is* life. In the next pieces, I analyze Fina Miralles’ body movement towards her environment. In the pieces in the last chapter, movement is also there as a sequence, even though there is a still body. As noted, kinesthesia allows micro-movements within the still body that are invisible to the eye. Here, kinesthesia is at play in the body in motion.



Figure 80. Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Revolcant-se a la Sorra* [Rolling in the sand] (January, 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

An action in the series *Relacions* where movement is encouraged has a different title from the other works in the series, insofar as it relates to movement—“*Revolcant-se a la Sorra*”

rescue this quotation in order to confirm that this seed in *Translacions* and *Relacions* continues to be developed in the more recent work and life of Fina Miralles. In fact, while talking with her during my fieldwork this way to be in the world and art was present in her speech and also in her way of being/performing during those conversations.

[Rolling in the Sand] (Figure 80). This action pertains to the series *Relacions. Elements Naturals* and it was shown in the same group of actions in which Fina Miralles covers and uncovers her body. Yet here, Fina Miralles is moving to be in *relation* with the matter. When I asked her about this action, she explained to me those games that children used to play at the beach. I remembered playing them and this helped me to understand some of the actions of Fina Miralles. I remember lying down in the sand of a beach as my cousins started to cover me with sand. They covered me to the neck and then they clapped on top of the sand and I perceived the vibrations on the borders of my body where they touched the sand. We also played in the water and then, like Fina Miralles, would roll in the sand so that the sand would cover all of our bodies, and then we would go into the sea and start over.

In this action, Fina Miralles would likely have begun in the sea. I can observe her wet hair and skin through the details of the documentation. The little particles of the sand build a thin layer on her skin. There are four photographs documenting this action: in the first one, Fina Miralles lies on the sand (the leftmost image in Figure 80), under the sun. In the second and third image (the center images in Figure 80), Fina Miralles rolls, and in the fourth one (the rightmost image in Figure 80) her body is still, with the sand sticking to her wet skin. This action was probably performed the same place as *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa de Mar i la Sorra* [The Body in Relation with the Sea Water and the Sand] and *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa de Mar* [Body in Relation with Sea Water].



Figure 81. Black and white photograph (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa de Mar i la Sorra* [The Body in Relation with the Sea Water and the Sand] (March 1974, Premiá de Mar, Barcelona) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

In *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa de Mar i la Sorra* (Figure 81) there is an ephemeral track that disappears almost at the same time it is created due to the movement of the sea waves. This action focuses the attention on her feet, which are being covered by wet sand through the rhythm of the waves' movement on the seashore. On the one hand, due to the effect of the sea waves, the sand is moved and on the other, Fina Miralles' feet swirl in the sand and, under its weight, the body shifts on an unstable surface. She submits her body to other movements and it appears as a preceding action to *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar*. These works enact similar operations as *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics* (chapter 6), except that she inserts her body specifically in the flow of movements between elements. I observe a metonymic aspect by which one element is in relation with another, and in turn is touching another, where movement, touch and relation between elements are at play. Fina Miralles' body is now introduced in this dynamic.



Figure 82. Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar* [Body in Relation with Sea Water] (April 1974) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

In *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar* (Figure 82), Fina Miralles enters the water, transmitting an experience of extending her body through movement in the space it can occupy. Garbayo, drawing from Ahmed, explains that “being comfortable means that it is difficult to distinguish where one’s body ends and the world begins. The surfaces of bodies become invisible: *bodies expand* in space and space expands into the interior of the bodies” (2016, p. 144). When I use “extending the body,” I am describing the perception of feeling the body occupy a space, inside and outside, something encouraged in the practices of Fina Miralles.

Through kinesthetic empathy, I observe the documentation of these actions and I feel the comfortable sensation of expanding one's body. Fina Miralles' previous actions (covering, uncovering and leaving tracks) reinforce an expansion within or inside the body, through the sense of kinesthesia, allowing an introspective process. Even though those actions of covering, uncovering and leaving tracks could be felt like a retraction to the body or a retreat into the body, it is nevertheless expansive *within* the body and in its relation to its bodily boundaries.

As noted before, the still body augments the perceptions within the body through awakening somatic awareness, and in *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar* (Figures 82), she extends her body towards the world through relating with her own movement and the movement of the water. In these works, Fina Miralles is "spreading" her body in the space through entering the water. She is dressed in a bathing suit and, with her back to the camera, she walks to the sea and introduces her body little by little until it is totally immersed. In this action, the movement is broader than in *Revolcant-se a la Sorra* (Figure 80) (where movements took place around the body). After a series of experiences where her body is recovered through the very act of experiencing covering, uncovering, and mapping its silhouette, she is able to claim it by moving it, moving it further, and expanding the space that her body can occupy.²⁰⁷ It is important that she does this in the water, a material that causes a sensation of disappearance or a melting of the lines of the body, a perception very related with an extension of the body. Floating in the water, her body is lighter, the borders are less clear, and at the same time it is easier to move. What does that movement mean in the context where it was performed?

In a notebook, she writes:

The sea has loved me

As it was my

First mother

In her arms

I want to die

Saltpetre

²⁰⁷ This strategy can be observed in other artists' performances where there is an extension of their bodies through objects and video effects; for instance, *Unicorn* (1971) and *Finger Gloves* (1972) by Rebecca Horn, *Butterfly* (1974) by Ana Mendieta, *Passing Through* (1977) by Silvia Palacios Whitman, and *Mujer Ciudad Mujer* (1978) by Pola Weiss.

Wind
Smelled
Inside and outside
To be a wave
Wave vibrations
Expansion.
(Fina Miralles, 1993)

In this writing, there is an initial contact with the sea, which (through her poem) symbolizes the mother. Yet, in the second instance of this writing, this symbolic meaning is brought into contact with her sensorial and perceptual apprehension. She uses the different senses to describe the fact of entering the sea. Even though this notebook pertains to the 1990s, it gives us information about how the sensorial guided her performance work from the 1970s, and how it continues to be an anchor to situate her body in space. She describes the qualities of the water and how it feels to be inside it:

For this, when I am in the water, I am not myself but the water. And I do not think, I do not think, I do not feel, I do not have emotions, *I flow*, *I enlarge*, I live like I am water, not only am I getting wet outside, I am dissolving (Fina Miralles, 1993) [my translation, emphasis added].

In this writing, Fina Miralles explains the feeling of expanding her body. To experience her right to explore her surroundings, Fina Miralles emphasizes movement and kinesthesia. She proposes a method of emancipation that focuses on the somatic aspect of liberation. This exploratory method is built on a feminist politics that begins in a somatic self-knowledge.

When I asked Fina Miralles about *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar*, she said that she conceived the action in order to establish a relation between her body and the sea. A relation established with the natural elements opens a sensorial exploration of the world. Also, the performance enacts a vigorous movement of the body from which emanates a form of freedom and pleasure. If we think of the previous images where Fina Miralles is buried and unburied, there is a difference in her performative actions here. When I practice kinesthetic empathy in my analysis, I feel different sensations by looking at her body buried or looking at her entering in the sea. This is a key aspect to distinguish the previous works where, even though there is an introspective action –that I argued is expansive within the body- and a reconstitution of the body

from inside reinforced by kinesthesia, there is also a suffocating sensation of being buried, very much linked with the context of Francoism. However, by rolling in the sand, feeling the movement of the waves on her feet and entering in the sea, a whole different perceptual experience is evoked. Here, the metaphors in the two sets of works are clear: covering and uncovering versus the more liberatory act of rolling in the sun or running into the sea. Beyond this symbolic resonance, I note that her body dissolves in the sea, that she becomes water. This seems different from the symbolic action of running into the water. A specifically kinesthetic empathy allows me to flesh out sensations; her action then seems tied to an experiential event, one where through the mutuality of movement (her own and the waves) she frees herself from her very bodily boundaries.

In *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar*, Fina Miralles opens her arms and the impulse of running toward the sea reveals a free body moving towards the surroundings, exploring new spaces and movements. She offers the sight of a body in an open position, ready to leap into the sea. Now that we see a whole body, the corporeal strategies at play in the previous pieces reconstitute her “lost/robbed” body. The earlier work allowed her to recover a body that now she claims through movement. As noted, the previous works had a processual and pedagogical value for Fina Miralles and for feminist self-empowerment. By seeing these previous works as pedagogical, preparatory of an awareness of her body and related to process, I disrupt the often-linear view of an artist’s trajectory. Fina Miralles goes over the strategies again and again. In a way, in doing so, she *accumulates* these dynamics and strategies within her body. In rolling again and again, she builds layers within her body and around her skin to expand her body in all directions (outside and within). Actions become situated in a spiral connection with each other. While she practices these actions, there is a gradual awakening of her body and construction of a specifically corporeal subjectivity. Consequently, every action is a beginning again that builds layers in a spiral of kinesthetic knowledge and self-empowerment. As noted before, “[b]eginning is basically an activity which ultimately implies return and repetition rather than simple linear accomplishment” (Said as cited in de Zegher, 1996, p. 23). Through *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar*, Fina Miralles exercises a liberatory movement of the body that, in Said’s sense of the “beginning”, relates to the other beginnings practiced by Fina Miralles in her search for the body through the sensorial, to her returns and repetitions in her search for awakening the body. In the context of a suffocating dictatorship that shaped bodies and delimited the way they could perform

and which type of gestures, the very act of a feminine body entering in the sea freely in an open and vigorous gesture can be seen as an act of resistance. Following Noland (2009), I understand that processes of agency depend on the role of kinesthesia. This makes a difference in my reading of *Relacions del cos amb l'aigua del mar*. For instance, to read the action symbolically is to locate agency in the decision to run into the water. Meanwhile, to read the action kinesthetically is to see the very act of running into the water as a liberatory opening. This is interesting and a key aspect of Fina Miralles' work. She isn't free prior to running into the sea; it is the act of running into it that frees her (sensorially, subjectively) from the strictures she experiences under the dictatorship.

In her notebook writings, she reflects on the mind/body dichotomy and how knowledge can be gathered from the world: "the body as emotions, the mind as emotion...to feel with the mind is personal...and the experience: can it be transferred? How to feel emotions with the mind?" (Fina Miralles, unknown year in the 1980s) In our conversations, she was determined to reject Cartesian categories and to explain experience from bodily perceptions that occur while connecting with the world around her. In *Relació del Cos amb l'Aigüa del Mar*, Fina Miralles seeks to connect and relate her body with the water, which she does by entering the sea. She experiences her intervention in the world through movement. This action is the zenith of the previous ones where she, through kinesthetic sensation, recognizes different parts of her body. Fina Miralles uses her whole body in movement to perform; kinesthetic experiences through movement are in play. After integrating different parts of her body (through covering, uncovering and leaving tracks), she can now feel the body as a whole through her action. She reclaims her body through the vigorous movement of entering the sea. The process of *Relacions* is thus a constant will to appropriate the body through different practices and exercises. In the previous chapter, I traced Fina Miralles' almost still body, moving just to uncover herself and to see the imprint of her body in various matter (sand, soil, grass, etc.). Entering the sea implies another strategy and movement: here the material is soft and the movement vigorous. By entering in the sea, Fina Miralles is going beyond, expanding her body and exploring other facets of her body mobility.

Drawing from Noland, I understand that "culture is both embodied and challenged through corporeal performance, that is, through kinetic acts as they contingently reiterate learned behaviors" (2009, p. 2). Fina Miralles challenges learned behaviours under Francoism by

connecting with the world in an experience where new movements are explored through perception. The kinetic experiences in these actions are key to understanding the corporeal process described by her gestures. I analyze the gestures of Fina Miralles in *Relacions* through Noland's definition:

Gestures are a type of inscription, a parsing of the body into signifying or operational units; they can thereby be seen to reveal the submission of a shared human anatomy to a set of bodily practices specific to one culture. At the same time, gestures clearly belong to the domain of movement; they provide *kinesthetic sensations* that remain in excess of what the gestures themselves might signify or accomplish within that culture. (2009, p. 2)

In other words, sensorial knowledge is generated from experience with the world. Bodily knowledge is an important aspect for developing kinetic awareness, and these dynamics activate and provide a method for corporeal agency. Fina Miralles describes the series *Relacions* as the development of the idea of a process where matter is related to other matter and the body is in relation with matter. She says that *Relacions* is a simple process of putting the body in relation with materials (personal communication, Summer 2016). Fina Miralles also describes her performances in the beginning as a necessity of the body. She affirms: “*Relacions* was born because I needed *to make things*” (personal communication, Summer 2016). She felt an urge “to make,” to gesture with her body; it was not enough to draw or paint. Fina Miralles' work allows me to reflect on how her artistic practice/gestures and creativity have political and cultural effects.

8.2. Breathing

In January 1975, Fina Miralles performed *Mirar* [To Look], *Mirar el Mar* [To Look at the Sea] and *Respirar l'Aire* [To Breathe] (Figure 83).²⁰⁸ In these actions, we can see Fina Miralles' body looking at the horizon and see her breathing. In *Mirar*, Fina Miralles looks to the horizon. In *Mirar el Mar*, she looks at the sea. She hears the sound of the waves, and feels the breeze of the air filled with salty water. In the performance's documentation, I observe the footprints in the sand, and the shadow of her body behind her. As she writes in *Testament Vital*, for her it is very

²⁰⁸ Fina Miralles classified *Respirar l'Aire* as part of the series *Relacions del Cos. Elements Naturals* and *Mirar* and *Mirar el Mar* as part of the series *Relacions. Accions quotidianes*, and they were displayed in different mosaics in the exhibition *exhibition title*.

important “to touch the soil with my hands and feet, shoot my gaze to infinity, to see the horizon, to see the sky in all its immensity” (Fina Miralles, 2008, p. 37). In *Respirar l’Aire* (the rightmost image in Figure 83), Fina Miralles is on top of a little hill. She feels the air caressing her face, entering through her nostrils to her body. The position of her body creates a sense of integrity, like her body is recuperated. She can finally breathe. Inspired in her recent performance, *Recordant Aquell Temp tan Gris* [Remembering Those Grey Times] in which she uses the covering-uncovering process and recites: *No se qui soc, no soc ningún, no penso res* [I do not know who I am, I am nobody, I do not think anything], I look at these actions and it appears to me that Fina Miralles transmits in silence: *I am here, I exist, I am alive.*²⁰⁹



Figure 83. Black and white photographs (Author: Unknown). Documentation of *Mirar* [To look], *Mirar el Mar* [To look the Sea], and *Respirar l’Aire* [To Breath the Air] (January, 1975) by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.



Figure 84. Black and white photograph. Documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Detail of the installation of the series *Relacions: Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Three photographs in black and white. The center photograph is the documentation of *Relacions: Mirar el Mar* [Relations. To Look the Sea]. Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.

²⁰⁹ These three actions have been put together under my criterion.

In a detail shot of the exhibition (Figure 84), I notice that *Mirar el Mar*²¹⁰ was displayed on the wall of *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes*. Fina Miralles placed this image between two images of the sea, one with the word *mar* [sea] and the other with the seashore. With this, Fina Miralles distinguishes the possibilities to transmit something with words, without words and with a gesture by the body.



Figure 85. Black and white photograph. Documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. A general panorama of the series *Relacions del cos. Elements Naturals*. [Body Relations. Natural Elements] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.

²¹⁰ *Mirar* was not shown at the exhibition, probably because Fina Miralles considered that *Mirar el Mar* already included the action of looking and the sense of sight that was also shown on the same wall with another action: *Mirar el Sol* [To Look at the Sun]. *Mirar el Sol* shows Fina Miralles looking to the exterior from inside the home and I consider it a preparatory action involving intervention in the public space. I address this action later in this section.

The documentation of *Respirar l'aire*²¹¹ (Third photograph from the left, Figure 85) is displayed between the *relations* with Fer Foc [To Make a Fire] (Two first photographs from the left, Figure 85) and *relations* with water (Group of photographs in the center, Figure 85)—just beside the covering, uncovering and leaving tracks processes (Group of photographs on the left, Figure 85). Between the covering-uncovering-traces group and the experience with the water group and between *Respirar l'Aire* and *Fer Foc* [To Make a Fire],²¹² there are two sheets with explanations of the process. According to Fina Miralles, these documents are lost and were an explanation of the relations between the natural elements (air, water, soil and fire). These are not instructions to interpret her actions. For viewers to experience the actions, it is necessary to use a process of mimesis and kinesthetic empathy. It is interesting to note that in some of her earlier works (for instance, *Natura Morta*, 1973, analysed in chapter 6), Fina Miralles gave instructions to viewers to pursue their own experiential explorations and in *Traslacions* and *Relacions* she doesn't give instructions. The instructions were: “Look at the sky three times a day: morning, afternoon, and night; and four times a year, according to the seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter” (Llibre de Trevall 1, p.218) (Ref-MAS-211). This shift appears at the moment in which there is an experience of the body, first with the micromovements of the still body and then when her corporeal movements can be seen as more liberatory for her. In my view, this is a pedagogical strategy to encourage a kinesthetic empathy in the viewer, a process that implies other learning besides following instructions; instead, she asks viewers to experience a practice of corporeal liberation in their own way. She does this by incorporating steps and layers in the process of expanding the body within and outside. This is felt by the viewer who connects to the piece with a kinesthetic empathy that leads to sensations and introspections, something that requires a more mature incorporation of that instructional corporeal guideline (instead of a written guideline). Furthermore, as I argued previously for Fina Miralles, the viewer also *accumulates* dynamics and strategies within the body: it begins with following instructions, and proceeds to perceiving and noticing the world and the body without a guide. In this pedagogical process, the spectator is

²¹¹ This photograph is on the left part of Figure 83.

²¹² *Fer Foc* is an action that Fina Miralles describes as a “relation” with fire (in accordance with her interest in the relation between the four elements in her “Cosmology” installation in the exhibition). I do not analyze this action in this chapter because my focus is on actions where there is a movement of her body, and in *Relacions. Accions Quotidians* where Fina Miralles focuses her intervention on the intimate/private and public arenas that I see as a feminist interventions.

building layers, like “lessons” for the body, that will lead to an expansion of the body: within the body and around its boundaries. Because of these very points, Fina Miralles’ performances are a feminist praxis. Her practices were a procedure for her body, to instruct her through kinesthesia, and they are also pedagogical and instructive exercises for the viewer, since it gives the subject access to somatic manners of knowing the world and their bodies that have been under conditions of repression and violence in the dictatorship.

In *Relacions*, kinesthetic sensations are encouraged through the use of different textures and elements. In the part of the series *Relacions* that I analyze in this chapter, the matter addressed (air and water) is less evident because it is part of daily life. As Noland argues, by gesturing to daily life there is a possibility to experience kinesthetic awareness that leads to interoception. In this sense, new ways to move are opened (2009). In other words, sensorial knowledge is generated from *experience* with the world. Fina Miralles’ first performances (including *Sensitiveland*, *Natura Morta*, *Fenòmens Atmosfèrics*, *Translacions* and *Relacions*) were not simply the development of an idea, but a pedagogical and emancipatory set of practices that enabled the later actions such as *Mirar*, *Mirar el Mar* and *Respirar l’Aire* (Figure 83). Bodily knowledge is both in the dynamics of the still body, and in the activation of movement.

Drawing from Sheets-Johnstone’s claim regarding agency and movement, I observe corporeal agency in *Mirar*, *Mirar el Mar* and *Respirar l’Aire*. It could be argued that all the sensorial methods for gathering knowledge in the actions explained in this thesis are a progression or continuity of corporeal events. As Sheets-Johnstone affirms: “The temporal sequence moves from I move, to I do, to I can. These are the stepping stones of agency that are grounded in experience movement” (2016).²¹³ Drawing from Husserl, Sheets-Johnstone affirms that “the corporeal-kinetic realities can be spelled out in terms of the five characteristics of ownness that Husserl enumerates on the way to spelling out the basis of intersubjectivity: fields of sensation, I cans, I govern, self-reflexivity, and psychophysical unity” (2009, p. 225).²¹⁴ From

²¹³ Paper/conference: “Being a body: critical and constructive perspectives” at *Body of Knowledge. Embodied Cognitions and the Arts*. University of California Irvine – Claire Trevor School of Arts.

²¹⁴ From the beginning of this research, I have classified the process in *Relacions* with categories and through the embodied methodology described in Chapter 4, from sensations in relation with natural elements, to movement, to “I can” as a body consciousness that leads to agency. Further in the research I found theoretical sources that explain the temporal sequence “I move, I do, I can” as related to agency.

Sensitiveland, through *Traslacions* and *Relacions*, Fina Miralles experiences the “basis of intersubjectivity” and documents the process through photographs and Super-8 films.

In the process through which Fina Miralles situates her body in space, there is an exploration of the possibilities of the world surrounding her. In the previous chapters, I showed how this process turned inward (encouraged, for instance, by her closed eyes) and focused on the borders of the body (encouraged by interoceptive experience and the shape of the body in the elements). In the actions described in this section, the exploration moves forward, investigating the spaces that the body can occupy through movement and standing positions. I argue that *Respirar*, *Mirar* and *Mirar el Mar* are milestones in the process of *Relacions*. The uniqueness of the whole series of *Relacions* lies in the description of somatic agency through different strategies. After the previous actions in which Fina Miralles covers herself, exploring the borders of her body and finally leaping in the sea, there is a grounded body that I observe in these actions. Here the subtle matters examined are the wind and the air. They surround the body; the body in turn surrounds the matter and creates a space of its own. The previous strategies were initial steps for getting to the performance possibilities of the later works. In these actions, Fina Miralles breathes and looks at the sea, feeling the borders of her body in relation with those elements. The pictures look rather casual, like familiar pictures rather than performance actions. This responds to Fina Miralles’ purpose in this series: to transmit quotidian activities, the normal life where she performs *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes*, and the emancipatory possibilities of these everyday actions.

In an empathic exercise, I can hear from these silent actions: *I am here, I can*. As Noland argues “performing gestures can generate sensations that are not-yet-marked, not-yet-meaningful. These sensations precede change; they may be productive of *new movements, new meanings*” (Noland, 2009, p. 17) [emphasis added]. Through these actions under the dictatorial regime, Fina Miralles encourages “new movements and meanings” for herself and for others, emphasizing a pedagogical intervention with feminist implications. As noted, she offers body scores with emancipatory possibilities, scores to be played by the viewer.

8.3. Everyday Actions: A space for self-affection in the private and public space as a feminist intervention

The visualization of the body that enjoys vindicates pleasure as capable of expanding the body in the surrounding space. If pain folds the body and encloses itself, pleasure has the potential to open it to the world and other bodies, generating encounters and spaces of intersubjectivity.

(Garbayo, 2016, p. 224)

On her current webpage, the first image is a recent photograph of Fina Miralles sleeping in her bed—or at least with closed eyes. There is a silent presence with her body still (Figure 86). She lies down on her left side and is covered with sheets. Her head rests on the pillow. Some sheet covers her body up to her armpit. Her arms are bare and her hands are under her face. Why place this unusual image at the start of her professional website?



Figure 86. Initial image in the website of Fina Miralles. Photograph in black and white of Fina Miralles by Teresa Roig (2012). Archive: website Fina Miralles.

In doing so, she introduces her emphasis on the intimacy of her everyday, her rituals. It is important to note that this is a recent photograph, and it could also show the continuity and current importance of everyday life as a source for exploring bodily forms of knowing the world and the body in the intimate arena. It also seems that she is addressing the visitor to the site as a woman. Because of these very points, there is a feminist potential in this photograph. In my

conversations with her about the actions in the 1970s, Fina Miralles talked to me about the importance of self-affection for her and how this shapes a relation with her body. Without describing this first image in her webpage, she says: “When you are alone, just lying in your bed, it is not even necessary to move... you can feel the sheets touching your skin, just the contact of your body with the sheets... and this is a beautiful sensation of feeling my presence” (personal communication, Summer 2016). I take into account that this photograph pertains to a different social, cultural, and political context than her work in the 1970s. However, according to our conversations, by feeling her presence, she is referring to the act of mapping the body through the contact with an element outside the body, this time her sheets. This current image has a connection with the somatic consciousness process and with the everyday actions present in the series *Relacions*.

The image of Fina Miralles sleeping is reminiscent of her actions in *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* (1975). In *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes*, the artist continues using her body to explore “new movements and new meanings” through kinesthesia, implying the rituals of her everyday life in the private space, and a gradual movement into the public arena. In *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes*, Fina Miralles develops everyday actions at home, in her intimacy.



Figure 87. Black and white photograph. Documentation of the exhibition *Relacions* [Relations]. Detail of the installation of the series *Relacions: Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Photograph by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

She decides to display these series of actions in three groups (Figure 87):²¹⁵ first, with the action of looking (the leftmost group of images in Figure 87), second with the actions related to eating and drinking (the center group of images in Figure 87) and third with the actions related to touch, to cleaning herself, to looking (at the sun through the window), and to talking and walking in private space (the rightmost image in Figure 87).

The images of the series *Relacions. Accions quotidianes* are related to the senses of taste, smell, and touch. In the second group (the center group of images in Figure 87), Fina Miralles eats, rolls a cigarette, smokes, makes an herbal tea, drinks wine and drinks her tea. In the exhibition, Fina Miralles was interested in zooming in on the mouth or on the hands. For instance, *Beure Vi* [To Drink Wine] and *Menjar* [To Eat] were printed in close up for the exhibition. However, in the images from the digitalized documentation in the archive the images are not cropped (Figure 90). This is a pivotal shift in how Fina Miralles uses the documentation of her actions. The implications of this are that she is interested in zooming in on the senses, a sensorial exploration already initiated, as argued before. However, these scenes describe a powerfully auto-erotic aspect. There is a form of intimate pleasure in the space of daily life.



Figure 88. Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Detail of the installation. On the top row: *Menjar* [To Eat]. On the bottom row: *Fumar* [To Smoke], *Hacer una Infusión* [To Make Tea], *Beber Vino* [To Drink wine], *Beber Infusion* [To Drink Tea] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photographs by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.

²¹⁵ In the documentation in the archive (MAS), there are photographs of this series of actions that were not displayed. One is the previously mentioned *Mirar* [To Look], and the other which is called *Respirar* [To Breath] shows Fina Miralles opening a window at home and breathing. I use these images in this chapter because I observe similarities between them in their corporeal strategies and they reinforce my reading of Fina Miralles' other works.



Figure 89. Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* [Relations. Everyday Actions] (1975). Detail of the installation. On the top from left to right: *Tocar Carn* [To Touch Meat], *Tocar Roba* [To Touch Clothes], *Tocar Fusta i pedra* [To Touch Wood and Stone], *Rentar-se les Mans* [To Clean Hands], *Rentar-se la Cara* [To clean Face], *Rentar-se les Dents* [To Clean Teeth], *Mirar el Sol* [To Look at the Sun]. On the bottom from left to right: *Parlar* [To Talk], *Caminar* [To Walk], *Tocar la Gavia de l'Ocell* [To Touch the Cage of the Bird], *Tocar Terra* [To Touch Ground], *Tocar Pedra* [To Touch Stone], *Tocar Herba* [To Touch Grass] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photographs by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.



Figure 90. Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* *Menjar* [To Eat], and *Beure Vi* [Drinking Wine] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photographs by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.

In an intimate/private space that was associated (and still is) with a feminine role of caring for the other, she suggests a change: other possibilities for a feminine body. Fina Miralles

proposes an opportunity for self-affection, and to experiment with pleasure in the private realm that present a possibility for corporeal agency. Although these actions seem to be in continuity with the previous ones (covering, uncovering and leaving traces), there is a distinction that is profoundly tied to a different bodily consciousness, one that relates to comfort, satisfaction and self-indulgence. This is related to agentic processes. Noland suggests a theory about “how biologically and/or culturally informed use of the body affords a type of awareness that is ‘agentic’ in the sense that it plays a role in what a subject does and feels” (2009, p. 16). Noland argues that gestures also interact with other information-gathering processes of the mind and body. “They are organs of what I call ‘distributed agency,’ mobilizing sensory surfaces to engage ‘the dynamic mentality of one’s neuromusculature’ in decision-making processes in many planes” (Noland, 2009, p. 16). Noland draws from Sally Ann Ness (1992, p.4). In Fina Miralles’ intimate actions, I observe a “decision-making” in the way she approaches these daily tasks. She activates the sensorial that in turn also mobilizes a way to be in the intimate space, something that can be catalogued as a feminist intervention with emancipatory forms.

In the third group of photographs displayed at the exhibition (Figure 89), there is an emphasis on the senses of touch and sight during quotidian activities at home, and also Fina Miralles appears in the public arena by walking and talking. In some actions of this group, there is an emphasis on the somatic experience while moving the body in the intimate arena. There is also a transformation of reproductive tasks into a space of self-affection, and, by zooming²¹⁶ in on the contact between the hands (and in relation with the water), or on the contact of the hands with the face and the water, she suggests possibilities for awakening bodily awareness during the routine of cleaning her hands, face and teeth, and also a self-affect and care of the self while doing these quotidian activities.

²¹⁶ In the exhibition (On the top line: forth and fifth image, Figure 89), there is a close up of the documentation of *Rentar-se les Mans* and *Rentar-se la Cara*.



Figure 91. Black and white photographs documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes: Rentar-se les Mans* [To Clean Hands], *Rentar-se la Cara* [To Clean Face] and *Rentar-se els Dents* [To Clean Teeth] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.

Merleau-Ponty argues that human consciousness is embodied, and emphasizes this embodied nature through the relation with space and the world: “To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world. [...] Our body is not primarily in space: it is of it” (1962, p. 148). Noland, drawing from Merleau-Ponty, explains in *Migrations of Gesture* that “gestures are not only productive of communication between agents, they also provide the individual agent with a private *somatic experience* of his or her own *moving body*” (2008, p. XI) [emphasis added]. In *Agency and Embodiment*, Noland understands the corporeal performance of gestures as possibilities to challenge culture. She explains that kinesthetic experience is produced by embodied gestures and nourishes new cultural practices (2009).



Figure 92. Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes Tocar Roba* [To touch clothes] and *Tocar Fusta* [To touch wood] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS

Fina Miralles emphasizes this bodily awareness through contact with objects surrounding her. It is as if she suggests stopping quotidian activities for a moment and, through a relation with

the objects around her, beginning a moment of somatic consciousness. This occurs in *Tocar Roba* and *Tocar Fusta* (Two first photographs from the left, Figure 92), where, for instance, Fina Miralles decided to show a close up of the contact of her hand with the fabric of her pants in the documentation. This pause in the quotidian to pay attention to somatic consciousness allows her to extend the body towards the interior and the exterior. Garbayo says about *Relacions. Accions quotidianas*:

Fina Miralles uses the body to explore, through gesture and the relation with different materials, the subject's spaces of *corporeal agency*. These interstices, these leaks of meaning, allow a glimpse at the possibility of imagining other bodies and other subjects. [...] In the gestures of Miralles there is a vindication of the everyday as *a space of possibility*, a call to subjectivity as a place from which to access a plot of freedom. The images show a woman in the act of being, a body that appropriates, even momentarily, the space that surrounds it. There is a delay in the gesture, in the ordinary act, in an idleness that puts in check the demand for discipline and productivity. Their actions defy the mandates of the Franco regime. These mandates were transmitted and put into practice by the *Sección Femenina*—what a woman should be and what she should do. (2016, pp. 218, 223, 224) [my translation, emphasis added]

Drawing from Noland, I extend Garbayo's reading by unpacking the term "corporeal agency;" that is, I explain *how* this corporeal agency happens: with movement and perception, and especially through kinesthesia. In this thesis, I extend Garbayo's use of "corporeal agency," beyond Judith Butler's notion of performativity, on which Garbayo's argument depends. I do this because Garbayo's argument focuses particularly on the discursive aspects of performativity, and thus on re-experiencing agency through the cognitive. I expand this reading of Fina Miralles' works by understanding that embodiment and agency occur firstly as somatic experiences reinforced through an attention to kinesthesia.

Noland raises the debate about the degree to which subjects are aware of "the kinesthetic background underlying their existential choices and senses of corporeal bounds." She argues that for some theorists, the body is condemned to move in disciplined ways under the gestural regime it can neither escape nor fully acknowledge; for others, the subject has intermittent awareness and thereby learns to alter the practices themselves. On one side of the fence Pierre Bourdieu has argued that gestural routines are so "durably installed" that the

subject no longer experiences the kinesthetic sensation of performing them. On the other, Deidre Sklar replies that no routine is so durably installed as to prevent kinesthetic awareness and potentially, through that awareness, transformation of the routine. (Noland, 2009, p. 14).

Through the gesture, Fina Miralles gleans such kinesthetic knowledge. Through the sensorial perception of her body, and by focusing on kinesthetic experiences, she opens a space for transformation in these routines. In *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes*, Fina Miralles not only challenges imposed gender roles, but also focuses on the body as a source of emancipatory possibilities through the practice of conscious movement and kinesthesia. As Noland explains:

the embodiment of the habitus generates a far greater number of variations than the hazards of simple iteration can explain. These variations accumulate and cascade into *forms of innovation* and, yes, *resistance that produce profound effects on behaviour*, effects that *spread out and radiate* into realms of conscious decision-making and other supposedly more mindful areas of cultural and political practice. (2009, p. 3) [emphasis added]



Figure 93. Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes Respirar L'Aire* [To Breathe Air] and *Mirar la Llum del Sol* [To Look at the Light of the Sun] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.

Fina Miralles' performative practice thus serves to expand the body. In *Respirar l'Aire* and *Mirar la Llum del Sol* (Figure 93), there is an extension within the body through the senses. For

instance, feeling the borders of the body in relation with the air that enters through the nostrils creates an expansion within the body; or, looking into the light of the sun there is a pleasurable sensation that expands the body. This process of expanding has two faces: as argued in previous chapters, an expansion inside the body, an introspection process generated by kinesthesia, which creates space inside the body and the delineation/mapping of the borders of the body; and an exteroceptive process where the body establishes a relation with the exterior, with the world. These processes occur at the same time, and both are necessary to generate body awareness and agency.

In another series of actions in *Relacions*, there is a shift from the private arena of the home to the public space of the street and square. In two actions, Fina Miralles looks to the street, (Figure 93) constituting a bridge between her actions in private space and in the public arena, this space beyond the windows to which women under Francoism had restricted access. The use by Fina Miralles of public places to perform has a resonance. If we understand the public sphere as the arena where expression, communication and political action takes place, then it can be argued that Fina Miralles is in a way closing some rounds of the *spiral*²¹⁷ of all her series from the 1972 to 1975, from a more intimate arena to put all those reflections under a more overtly political and public space.²¹⁸ Her non-discursive works are at play now in the discursive space where it is supposed that individuals and groups discuss common interests, something that was repressed under the dictatorship.



Figure 94. Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes*. *Tocar l’herba* [Touching the grass], *Tocar pedra* [Touching the stone], *Tocar terra* [Touching the earth] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.

²¹⁷ The concept and movement of the spiral is explained in the introduction (pp.13, 14) in relation with the concept of “beginning and beginning again” by de Zheguer (1996, p.3) about the artist’s trajectory.

²¹⁸ There are different qualifications of public space/public arena theorized by feminist thinkers, but these variations go beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The images in Figure 94 appear as the next step after looking through the window. Her feet touch different textures of the ground. She is in public space, but simultaneously awakening sensations related to kinesthesia because there is an emphasis in this series in the different grounds: it feels different to touch grass, stone or soil through one's shoes. This different matter provokes in Fina Miralles a different sensorial contact with the public space, and she extends her sensorial explorations to the public space. Noland suggests that "the body we observe in the act of writing may indeed be communicating a message or completing a task, but it is simultaneously measuring space, monitoring pressure and friction, accommodating shifts of weight" (2009, p. 2). Drawing from this, I see that Fina Miralles in *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* is in the "public space", yet there is at the same time a perception of the space, the pressure or the textures of the surroundings. This group (Figure 94) of different measures in the public arena gives the viewer information that extensions of the body should be happening both within and without the body at the same time in order to build agency. In a way, Fina Miralles reminds us what her focus in her work is; that is, a corporeal agency that occurs through self-knowledge, something that takes place in the private as well as in the public arena. Fina Miralles cultivates an attention within and in relation to her own body and in relation with her surroundings, in the private and in the public space. These actions are feminist interventions in the sense that they build self-empowerment and connect the intimate with the public. The process is carefully presented as a sequence. In first instance, the series where there is an exploration of the sensorial, presenting step by step an awakening of the body and a reconstitution of it. In a second instance, an extension to the surrounding. Fina Miralles presents both directions in her explorations: within the body and intervening in the world.



Figure 95. Black and white photographs. Documentation from the series *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* *Mirar* [To Look], *Parlar* [To Talk] and *Caminar* [To Walk] (1975) by Fina Miralles. Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.

In the part of the series displayed in Figure 95, Fina Miralles looks and stops to talk with a friend. During the dictatorship, there existed censorship in verbal expression, and some people (and bodies) also had more freedom than others to occupy public spaces. In this period of time in Spain, the spaces (intimate or public) delimit what may or may not be done by a feminine body. Every dictatorial regime establishes a policy of silence. In this environment, *Relacions* reveals a means of experiencing the presence of a feminine body through movement.

Fina Miralles emphasizes the very place where it is possible to be and to exist. She deploys corporeal strategies without words. These forms have not yet been codified in this very public environment in which they are performed. This allows ways of being and existing—even momentarily—that were vetoed in the Francoist system. In the photo of talking, there is also the perception of another body, the sound of the street, the smells of the humidity of the fall, and the feeling of Fina Miralles' wool jersey. Fina Miralles is in the public arena and at the same time keeps an attention to kinesthesia, which allows her to build new gestures. As Noland argues, “gesturing also affords an opportunity for interoceptive or *kinesthetic awareness*, the intensity of which may cause subjects to alter the very ways they move” (2009, p. 2) [emphasis added]. Fina Miralles explores possible variations, possibilities in the spaces that were not stepped on before by a feminine body. With her body movements and micro-movements. In the last image on the right of the group in Figure 95, she walks away from the cross as the symbol of the national-catholicism of the Francoist moment, leaving it behind. She explores new paths to walk on.

It is important to notice that Fina Miralles finishes the series *Relacions* in public, moving through space, and also that this is part of the same series in which she produces explorations of matter, with nature, with the pleasures of everyday rituals of care. It is my argument (and my reading from the previous chapters leads here), that the former explorations, before going to the public space, are preparatory for her movement into public space and important for understanding exactly how Fina Miralles' work provide a model for feminist liberatory action, for other forms of consciousness-raising grounded in bodily experience and the expansion of the sensorial space of the body. There is a political aspect in bringing the body to the public arena in such free movement under the circumstances of the late years of Francoism. The fact of culminating these series by walking in the streets draws out a clear effect for feminist praxis by connecting the particularities of the previous works and the overtly political intervention of performing in the streets. If the initial works were preparatory practices where her body instructs her through

movement in particularly personal/intimate sensorial experiences, then it is my argument that this very corporeal self-guide are lessons for a more political forms of liberatory actions that are in the public arena. Thus, her preparatory corporeal dynamics and kinesthetic movement culminates in the public spaces and Fina Miralles builds a corporeal/somatic bridge between the personal and the political feminist intervention. Given the oppression, violence and repression of the time, these practices are further instructive for a feminist praxis because they are pedagogical exercises that lead the subject to potentially emancipatory somatic modes of exploration of the self under hierarchical patriarchal structures.

8.4. Concluding Thoughts

The body that Fina Miralles proposes in *Relacions. Accions Quotidians* is a body which explores the world and generates knowledge through the sensorial. This is the opposite of the mandate for women during the Franco regime. Noland argues that bodies, subjects and identities are materialized through the performative repetition of gesture and act, and corporeality is constituted through them (2009). Fina Miralles' body proposes other types of presence, existence and "sensuousness." Her presence in everyday actions in intimate and private spaces opens up other possibilities for ways of being for women in the late years of the Franco dictatorship.

Noland argues that gestures have political importance. On the one hand, the gesture affirms and perpetuates through performative repetition. On the other hand, it is through the corporeal gesture that agency is established and gives rise to new spaces and realities, even if they are temporary. The corporeal gesture proposed by the Sección Femenina reiterates and normalizes a specific model of woman. The actions of Fina Miralles challenge these models. Fina Miralles not only explores other movements, she also proposes an exploration of corporeal agency through the whole series of *Relacions*, from covering the body as an introspective action to exploring the world keeping that introspective process.

Feminism has focused on the oppressive power exercised on bodies, however less attention has been payed to the body as a source of women's liberation. *Relacions. Accions Quotidianes* offers keys and opens responses to issues of feminist emancipation regarding agency. As Noland questions in *Agency and Embodiment*: "How does individual human agency exert itself despite the enormous pressure of social conditioning?" (20009, p.1) Fina Miralles develops bodily strategies, new movements outside of the cultural conditioning. Movements that

imply both going within the body and going towards the world, extending the body in both directions. It seems that it is in the body that the new gestures start to build. In this sense, Fina Miralles challenges the culture around her through corporeal performance.

Chapter 9. Concluding Thoughts

9.1. Kinesthetic aspects of bodily experience: “I am alive, I am here, I am a subject”²¹⁹

[Pointing to her body and talking to herself] *It is inside here where you have to search, Fina. And here, there was such an immense space [...] the interior doors were opened, which is wonderful [...] the wonder of being alive.*

[Pointing to myself, the researcher] *And that is what I meant to tell you [...] Never lose your own self*

Fina Miralles, Summer 2016

I wanted to investigate the work of Catalanian artist Fina Miralles to understand, think about, and assess certain corporeal strategies in relation to feminist politics of resisting forms of constraint, oppression, and exploitation, specifically (in this dissertation) in the context of the late years of the Franco dictatorship. In the previous three chapters, I have explained the preliminary exercises performed by Fina Miralles in order to access her body (chapter 6), the body-awakening process achieved through mapping the still body and covering and uncovering it, as dynamics that reinforced the introspection (chapter 7). Finally, I interrogated the performances where bodily movement was more clearly a knowledge and intervention strategy in the world in both private and public arenas (chapter 8).

What was liberatory in the process of her practice? I found in my reading that Fina Miralles developed a kinesthetic awareness through her artistic practice that implicated the body more and more, and she procured in and through her practice a pedagogical method for constructing corporeal agency. The practices of Fina Miralles are a search for her body under conditions in which bodily life was severely repressed and constrained. I argued that, through movement and kinesthesia, Fina Miralles' body intervenes in the world in order to gather knowledge from herself and the world. I draw from Noland's theory to understand how

²¹⁹ As I have explained previously, my methodology includes the exercise/practice of kinesthetic empathy. This empathic process was encouraged through the use of first person sentences while analyzing the traces of the performances with the intention of understanding the body work of the artist by putting myself in her position doing the performance.

kinesthesia has a feminist potential as a form of theory and practice, and to pursue how, in Fina Miralles' performances, it is a guide for a specifically kinesthetic form of knowledge. This has an impact on feminist liberatory practice because of three main aspects: a) the body becomes a space of corporeal inscription and appearance, b) there is a somatic awakening, and c) this corporeal consciousness leads to a reconstitution of the body under dictatorship. I read this as specifically feminist because of the connection I make between kinesthesia as a path to embodiment and agency, and a feminism that begins in self-knowledge and centers its attention on corporeal processes. If the corporeal is the starting point for processes of agency, then Fina Miralles' practices and exercises are a feminist guide for emancipatory methods that begin in the sensorial body. If feminism has focused its attention on the body as a site of oppressive power, then Fina Miralles' actions offer an avenue to be explored regarding the body as a source of liberation for women.

In this investigation, I have focused on the body as a site of power and struggle, and I turned to feminist phenomenology to approach women's corporeal experience under the dictatorship, examining Fina Miralles' emphasis on a pedagogical method for excavating her experience and reuniting or synthesizing her bodily experience in relation with her sense of self and environment. For the articulation of this thesis, I focused less on the penetrations of dictatorial power than on the procedures for self-liberation from that power that were proposed in the form of Fina Miralles' corporeal investigations.

This investigation was accomplished through a methodology influenced by situated knowledge, which prioritized an embodied research methodology. There was also a question during the process about my own practice as an artist and researcher trying to find my own voice through the analysis of Fina Miralles' corporeal performances. In the process of this research, and in conversations with Fina Miralles, there was an exchange, and also a process of metamorphosis for me as researcher and the object/subject of this investigation. I conclude from this research and experience that Fina Miralles' work has a pedagogical value. The manner in which she performs repetitive corporeal strategies, and her manner of displaying its documentation served as instructions for developing corporeal agency. This latter point is interesting because it reverses also the status of Fina Miralles' performances as the objects of my investigation, since they have also become instructions for my research, and thus methods for my capacity as a researcher to

understand them and comprehend and perceive through kinesthetic empathy their feminist agential possibility.

I investigate because I do not know; I research to understand, to build my own criteria. What was specific about her work that provided a model for feminist emancipation in a different sphere than the arena of representational democracy, demonstrations in the streets, mobilizing for women's rights, or feminism's emphasis on consciousness-raising,²²⁰ on the work on and in the self as a mode of the political in its very origins? How was this a different kind of liberatory practice? Fina Miralles proposes a path of knowledge of the self/body, yet she explores another side of this consciousness –different from, for instance, the proposals of feminist consciousness-raising in the 1970s. Her work has a political reflection regarding a perception of the body that is mainly non-discursive, which allows an access to the self through the body *in relation* with the world, and thus reinforces introspection processes through the intimacy of the kinesthetic sense. Reflecting on these questions throughout the research, my own voice emerges, first in an embodied manner through my own performances, re-creations of Fina Miralles' performances and conversations with her, and then or even simultaneously in a process of kinesthetic empathy during the analysis and writing period of this research that became also an investigation of my own liberatory practice.

In 1976, one year after the death of Franco, Fina Miralles developed a performance in the streets of Barcelona entitled *Petjades* [Footprints].²²¹ It proposed to reflect on patriarchal society and private property, highlighting women's situation in an explicit manner. The piece consisted of walking in the city streets of Barcelona while she wore shoes that printed the letters of her name on the pavement. The shoes were handmade by Fina Miralles. She put together cork and foam to build up the words: "Fina" on one shoe and "Miralles" on the other. In a conversation with Fina Miralles (Summer 2016) about this performance, she did a drawing with what she wrote on the sole of her shoe.

²²⁰ In chapter 6, I explained how second-wave feminism emphasized shared feminist consciousness and feminist resistance to the objectification of women and consciousness-raising groups were frequently based on a traditional definition of agency as resistance (and thus a Cartesian understanding of agency).

²²¹ This piece was a contribution to a collective film project: "In the city" by Eugeni Bonet. Each participant was given a roll of super 8 to film a piece of three minutes.



Figure 96. Interview with Fina Miralles: Explaining the soles of her shoes in *Petjades* [Footprints] (1976). Still video by Celia Vara (Summer 2016). Archive: Celia Vara.



Figure 97. Shoes used in *Petjades* [Footprints] with foam attached to the soles with the name of Fina in one sole and Miralles in the other (1976) by Fina Miralles. Archive MAS.

In the performed action there was a tray with ink, and she would step in the tray to ink her shoes and she would start walking, thereby printing her name on the ground. *Petjades* was a performance, though its final destination was to be part of a film, which ultimately would include an audio reflection on patrilineal heritage and private property regulations, some of the issues that especially affected women's status in society during the Franco dictatorship.



Figure 98. Two video stills. Super-8 film documentation (Author: Unknown) of *Petjades* [Footprints] (1976) by Fina Miralles. Archive: MAS.

When Fina Miralles walks with these shoes, I observe in the super-8 film how she walks carefully and with a slow movement, feeling the contact of every part of the foot, and then moving the other foot to make a step. She had to walk slowly because the shoes were delicate and she wanted to have a clean imprint on the ground. However, this very fact encourages a bodily movement that could be linked with the sensorial explorations of her previous works. The attention to this form of walking is different from, for instance, her gait in the action of *Caminar* [To walk] (Photograph on the right, Figure 95), addressed in the previous chapter in the series *Relacions. Accions quotidianes*. Here, in *Petjades*, another way of walking is encouraged. The fact of having a very delicate shoes and the aim to mark her name shapes the situation. The act of imprinting itself demands a different bodily movement, yet this bodily movement is instructive for making political statements in public space.

The fact that she wanted to print her name makes her develop another type of movement, a movement that became an exercise/practice of a specific awareness of her body walking in the street: a body that becomes *in relation* with itself and the world. *Petjades* is different from the previous work I discussed in this thesis. This work is driven toward the symbolic and the discursive (the imprint of the name, the trace). Nevertheless my reading of her previous works – as kinesthetic knowledge and corporeal agency- and the connection I make between her earlier work and this one, allows me to read this performance in another manner. The marks made by Fina Miralles could be understood as governed by a different kind of exploratory movement. The type of movement that Fina Miralles develops in *Petjades* increases her kinesthetic consciousness. While watching the documented performance, it is possible to feel its haptic qualities and how they might produce a certain effect that is not simply visual but also sensory, not only an observation of Fina Miralles in the process of walking and leaving a mark, but also

something that the contemporary spectator may feel. This reading derives in part from the performative aspect of the gesture, which remains even as she imprints her name in the street.

Petjades confirms but also challenges some of the tendencies that I read in her oeuvre prior to this period. I see in *Petjades* a culmination of a set of practices that I identify as feminist, even if they are not explicitly so. Therefore, I argue for continuity between the previous works explained in this dissertation and *Petjades*, a clearly political work. I also want to specifically note how scholars ignore the kinesthetic and sensorial aspects of *Petjades* because of its political and semiotic valence. In this sense, the concepts of kinesthetic knowledge and corporeal agency, mobilized and fleshed out throughout the analysis of *Translacions* and *Relacions* culminate in a more explicitly political and feminist practice in the post-Franco era that also is shaped by kinesthetic aspects.

I began this dissertation by noting that Fina Miralles describes her interventions as pedagogical actions: “I am a *maestrilla* [diminutive for teacher]” (2016). I understand this to mean her transmission of an exploration of how the body through its movement and action leads to processes of corporeal agency. Fina Miralles explored the body mobility outside scripted forms (*habitus*) and this opened up a space of inquiry that was potentially liberatory. With her corporeal investigation, she describes an agency that arises from and in the body under different situations and contexts, as flesh-and-blood actions.

I observed in Fina Miralles’ body work between 1972 and 1976 an increasing appearance of the body where the sense of kinesthesia was key in order to build a sense of agency within the body. This was done through the interaction with materials that led to an introspective process and a reconstitution of the body in relation with the world. Through the corporeal, Fina Miralles gathered knowledge of herself and intervened in the world. This intervention is characterized by a corporeal practice that gives access to experiencing a bodily connection to the world around her through the sense of kinesthesia, and proposes a break in the bodily *habitus* cruelly installed by the Franco regime.

Her exercises/practices were an increasing awakening of the body through somatic dynamics where kinesthetic processes were key for a corporeal agency. I argue that these processes are feminist interventions, insofar as creating a space of bodily appearance that processes the traumas of the repressive regime affectively, awakens bodily sensations in the context of intense repression and offering a model for reconstituting the body as a source of

knowledge, emancipation and self-knowledge. Fina Miralles states that the explorations of the materiality around her were not an aesthetic medium, but more a manner to gain access to experiences of her self and her surroundings, mainly through corporeal experiences.



Figure 99. Fina Miralles touches the ground carefully to print her name on it. Documentation in black and white photograph of *Petjades* [Footprints] (1976) by Fina Miralles (1976). Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS

Petjades is not only a continuation of a sensorial exploration where kinesthesia plays a role in the acquisition of agency, it also reflects on public and private space and its different occupation regarding gender structures. She walked through the streets of Barcelona, leaving marks on the ground with her shoes—her name and surname. This was a pioneering political work for the personal occupation of public space by a woman stamping her own name (and her single name at that) and at the same time an incorporation of her corporeal dynamics as “hidden transcripts”²²² developed during all the processes described in this dissertation: the corporeal keys for a conscience of the body. If in the previous actions analyzed in this dissertation, I observed a

²²² Please see chapter 3 (p.42) where I explain this concept.

proto-political work, a “hidden transcript” parallel to the feminist activism, in *Petjades* I see a continuation of that procedure and a connection with these previous works. Fina Miralles joined a more interoceptive process of recuperating the body with a more overtly political work denouncing the situation of women in the Spain of the moment. She traced a path with her printed name while parodying the power system in the capitalism and patriarchy. In the film, she used her voice-over for the first time in a performance and said:

In the city, we clearly face the characteristics of our capitalist society. The power in the sense of ownership is deeply rooted in our way of life, our behaviour, our organization and our laws. Not only do we legalize our personal assets to acquire power (house, car, land, objects...) but also the people who are under our protection. My wife, my son, giving the name to reaffirm that they are our property and are under our power. From here, the shoes that I present with my name on the sole like an office rubber stamp, and the action of printing my name in all the places where I step, are simply to highlight this possessiveness and power, overreaching things to the ridiculous, the incredible, saying that the place where I walk is “mine”, “it’s mine” (Voice-over by Fina Miralles in the film *Petjades*, 1976) [my translation]

“The personal is political” feminist motto permeates the entirety of the work of Fina Miralles, even if this is not explicit in the works I cover in this dissertation. The text that Fina Miralles reads in the film indicates a shift nevertheless towards a more overtly political and feminist work. Specifically in *Petjades*, she is doing a parody and a critique of the place of women in society. This is an important shift to understand its relation to the post-dictatorship and to a different space for expression. This action is being summoned from the corporeal agency of the body in movement. She engages herself in a path to corporeal agency that, as I argued, is related with the sense of kinesthesia, the sense of having a body and being aware of the position it occupies (in the private and the public arenas). The statement in *Petjades* has been enacted in and through her bodily movement that has been explored in her previous works since 1972.

In an interview she states:

In this capitalist society, all is men’s property. They leave a woman pregnant and that’s all. It is the power of the sperm. And the house, the car, [...] everything is marked with the initials and the name. Marriage and heritage: this is a society made by men.

And here you have to adapt [...] Then *I also want to put myself in what I walk on.*”
(Fina Miralles as cited by Garbayo, 2016: 99) [my translation, emphasis added].



Figure 100. Fina Miralles inscribed her name on the ground in the streets of Barcelona. Documentation in black and white photograph of *Petjades* [Footprints] (1976) by Fina Miralles (1976). Photograph by Carles Raurich. Archive: MAS.

In the last sentence: “I also want to put myself in what I walk on...” she highlights a radical relation with the ground on which she walks. Fina Miralles reclaims her body in the public arena through a sensorial relation with her surroundings, in this case the relation that her feet establish with the very texture of the ground she is in relation with. She presents the space occupied by walking and reinforcing the space within the body, by building agency within the body. Kinesthetic processes reinforce this consciousness within the body. She creates a place inside and outside herself, *engaging the self* through the *sensorial*, walking in a public domain, as a woman, as a subject in society. The idea of taking control over one’s body, claiming her subjectivity and gaining space for corporeal agency within the body, albeit momentarily or precariously, is something that I have identified in this piece and other performances addressed in this dissertation. Fina Miralles reclaims her body and I would say her own sensorial spectrum in relation with the matter around her and her own material body, a key aspect in the process of

building agency. I have drawn from Noland (2009), Sheets-Johnstone (2016) and Sklar (1994) for the connection they establish between kinesthesia and agency, that was particularly useful to reflect on the emancipatory possibilities of the corporeal work done by Fina Miralles under the dictatorship. I see in her simple bodily acts the possibility not only of bodily knowing, but also a feminist liberatory intervention emerging in the context of the repressive gender order of the dictatorship.

In Fina Miralles' words: "I also want to put myself in what I walk on". There is no separation between the public and personal arenas. The process in *Translacions* and *Relacions* brings the intimate arena of introspection to *Petjades*, not only to the private space of her home but also to the very materiality of the streets of Barcelona in 1976. The personal is expressed through the sensorial body by carefully touching the ground and the different textures and objects around her. Making the public space an area of protest, and claiming that space as her own, locates her work within the framework of political activism and also within a kinesthetic exploration of the self in the world. She engages in a particular material search to take over public space claimed by the feminist movement, and also encouraging an attention within the body through that very relation with the materials around her. Putting all her senses in this walk is acting as a tool for self-exploration, and as an activist intervention in public space. She could be asking herself: what does it mean to put "myself" in what I walk on? How does it feel to engage my *self* through the sense of walking with agency? While she traces her wet footprints with her name on the ground, I believe what she means to say is "I am alive, I know who I am, I am here, I am a subject with agency".²²³

Fina Miralles' oeuvre is composed of somatic scores for kinesthetic knowledge and intervention. Through mimesis and kinesthetic empathy, it is possible to access them. The ways her body in its movement knows the world and intervenes in it are somatic strategies that I understand as feminist pedagogical interventions against the bodily control during the dictatorship and the transition period. In this dissertation, I was particularly interested in fleshing out Fina Miralles' feminist liberatory dynamics as forms of knowledge –as a way in which her body (through its movement) knows the world and intervenes in it. Fina Miralles' work expands

²²³ These sentences, written by me, are inspired by the recent performance by Fina Miralles, *Recordant aquell temp tan gris* [Remembering those grey times] (2015), addressed in chapter 7 where she covers her body like a mummy and then uncovers it in order to remember the Franco dictatorship, while reciting: "I do not know who I am, I am nobody, I do not think anything".

the manner in which feminist politics understand agentic processes. If feminism has frequently understood the body as a site for liberation from restrictive control but not a source for that emancipation –due to the understanding of agency under Cartesian paradigms- then what impact do Fina Miralles’ actions have to comprehend a corporeal or somatic agency that contributes to building methodologies for emancipation? Fina Miralles presents her work as explorations of the self through movement and kinesthesia, subtle transgressions under the Franco dictatorship and emancipatory feminist somatic dynamics.

All the pieces of Fina Miralles analyzed in this dissertation present a bodily comprehension of the material world, and a mode of exploration that is tactile and kinesthetic. All of them are progressive exercises/practices on the self in the world that are explorations through the sensorial. I argue that these actions are potentially—even if temporarily—liberatory under the Franco oppressive system. Fina Miralles’ process in the performances it is an instruction/self-instruction for a corporeal comprehension that led to other dynamics in subsequent works, such as *Petjades*, where different processes are integrated. Her work is inward-looking and develops agency within the body. The different sides of self-transformation and corporeal dynamics of her work in a particular context (Franco regime, Spanish isolation, left political parties that did not accept feminism, etc) lead to the production of a performance very much in touch with a sensorial exploration, not influenced by other international contemporary artists work and that encourage the development of an articulated personal voice.

9.2. Limitations and further studies

This dissertation contributes not only to understanding the value of Fina Miralles’ work, but also to thinking performance and body art outside the American feminist context. The main limitation of this research is that, while I briefly tackle the artistic context and some relations with other local and international works, I analyze only one case in the context of one nation, Spain, and my research question is related to this concrete intervention. Therefore, it could be interesting to further explore this corporeal and sensorial aspect of kinesthesia in the work of other coetaneous artists in Catalonia and other contexts. Of special interest will be to explore more in depth the relations with the artists who also did body work under dictatorships, to explore the ways in which the liberatory dynamics could be different or similar. Further research on the liberatory

dynamics through the body in relation with other contexts would enrich the investigations about feminist politics and body art.

Another important aspect of this research is the mobilization of kinesthetic empathy as an innovative method to explore performance that has been used in dance studies. I used it in combination with my background as a psychologist practicing empathy exercises as a mode of feminist historical approach during the interviews and also in the analytic process. The research about embodied methodology procedures and research-creation approaches could be expanded by compiling and comparing the different methods of other scholars researching about art and feminism.

As mentioned, I have documented the fieldwork and physical interviews with Fina Miralles (2016). Filmmaker Ivó Vinuesa assisted me during my time in Cadaqués. A further project will be to extend the documentation with Fina Miralles and elaborate a documentary that includes the insights in this dissertation. I have also curated two exhibitions with her super-8 film production in the 1970s and a new curatorial project with other documents –such as written work or photographs- of her performance it could expand and enrich the dissemination of Fina Miralles feminist corporeal pedagogical guide. Also this exhibition it could expand including films by Latin American artists –such as the Cuban Ana Mendieta and Mexican Pola Weiss.

Finally, the investigation of Fina Miralles' corporeal strategies as emancipatory practice raises the question of whether they might be strategies that can be used to weaken power and hierarchical patriarchal structures or even change political systems today. There is an open avenue of reflection about the relevance of this theory and practice to contemporary feminist politics that could be relevant and fruitful, beyond its historical dimensions. There is a resurgence of feminist activism in the contemporary moment, and Fina Miralles' feminist corporeal guide can be inspired to reflect upon the lessons from this period for political action in the contemporary moment, which is certainly not a dictatorship but where there have been backlashes against the advances of women, resurgent nationalisms, and ethnic nationalisms that have also had an impact on women and others. This model of corporeal agency might provide a guide for current feminist politics, to claim the body as the main aspect of emancipatory processes. In Fina Miralles' performances there is a conception of 'self-work' that runs counter to the resurgence of feminist politics in popular spaces. Her body work is a challenge of the neoliberalization of forms of 'self-care' that inform also post-feminist forms of self-expression.

Fina Miralles' corporeal practice draws from and differentiates itself from "consciousness raising" in the 1970s, and also her emphasis on the sensorial as an access to herself is different from the 'care of the self' which has been met with suspicion by feminist thinkers attuned to the enchantments of neoliberal forms of consumer subjectivity. Fina Miralles' corporeal strategies in the 1970s offers lessons of a feminist self-knowledge that turns to the body and a corporeal agency that begins in kinesthetic knowledge.

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Appendices

Certifications of Ethical Acceptability for Research Involving Human Subjects
(2016-2018)



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Celia Vara

Department: Faculty of Arts and Science \ Communications
Studies

Agency: N/A

Title of Project: Emancipatory Actions: Video and performance
by Fina Miralles (b. 1950, Sabadell, Catalunya)

Certification Number: 30005621

Valid From: April 22, 2016 to: April 21, 2017

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Pfaus".

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Celia Vara

Department: Faculty of Arts and Science \ Communication
Studies

Agency: N/A

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Certification Number: 30005621

Valid From: April 21, 2017 to: April 20, 2018

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Pfaus".

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Celia Vara
Department: Faculty of Arts and Science\Communication Studies
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Emancipatory Actions: Video and performance by
Fina Miralles (b. 1950, Sabadell, Catalunya)
Certification Number: 30005621

Valid From: March 20, 2018 To: March 19, 2019

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Pfaus".

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee