

# SOMATECA



Research Group in Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

# WHAT'S SOMATECA?

SOMATECA first started as a research and teaching program directed by Paul B. Preciado in Reina Sofia National Museum of Art Center in Madrid.

It intends to examine the body as a political and cultural archive, critically distancing itself from approaches that consider the body a corpus, temple, nature, seat of sovereign power, sheath, place of residence, or property. In philosophical terms, it can be said that the modern body (healthy or sick, normal or pathological) does not have an ontological status but rather, a biopolitical and performative status.

It exists only within a set of discursive, epistemological, scientific, pharmacological, economic and visual practices, through the politics of immigration and of risk management, clinical trials, pharmacological techniques, diagnostic practices, mediated narratives, discursive structures, visual representations and discourses concerning prevention, control and surveillance. In other words, the medical, political and audiovisual discourses that represent the body produce the normality or pathology that they attempt to describe.

The modern subject has no body. It is a somatheque: a dense, somatic, stratified, organ-saturated apparatus managed by different biopolitical regimes that establish spaces for action that are organized according to class, race, gender or sexual difference. Somatic practices are "general formulas of domination" (Bordieu), "corporal techniques" (Maus) that function as "mechanisms of subjectivation" (Foucault), and as "processes of incorporation of the norm" (Butler).

From within the sphere of art and culture, the idea is to denaturalise the somatheque, to intervene collectively and critically in the network of knowledge and representations that produce the body as an organism, to produce counternarratives and counter-representations. In short, we seek to invent techniques for the desubjectivation of the somatheque<sup>2</sup>.

But we need to know from where we speak, think about how we speak and to who. And there everything melts because even you can't stand our postmodern pretentious language... We just have to admit our contradictions and look inside our bodies for what is calling us out, the significant facts of our experiences to cross them, to interweave them and make the most of them. We grab our hair and pull our insides out, we untie the knot to relax and be able to show and share our vulnerabilities. Nos unen las ganas de resistencia, sin difuminar las diferencias, esperamos el apogeo... Guadafak, ¡qué barbaridad!

Qu'est-ce que c'est la Somateque?

What's Somateca? This question is under (de)/construction\*  
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(de)/construction\* under is question thiS

1 Somateca is a constellation of people, a platform of theoretical, artistic, and performative experimentation and research. It works on different concepts: bodies, diversities, normativities, sexualities, feminisms, dissidences, resistances, vulnerabilities, privileges, caring, interdependence, affects, desires, discourses, accessibility, language... Somateca is a project-based malleable group. It emerges from the Program for Advanced Studies in Critical Practices at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid), directed by Paul B. Preciado, with two editions. It now works with queer methodologies from the situated knowledge of its members, inside and outside the borders of the institution.

2 This was the open call for the Program for Advanced Studies in Critical Practices Somateca, available on the Website: <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/activities/somatheque-2013>



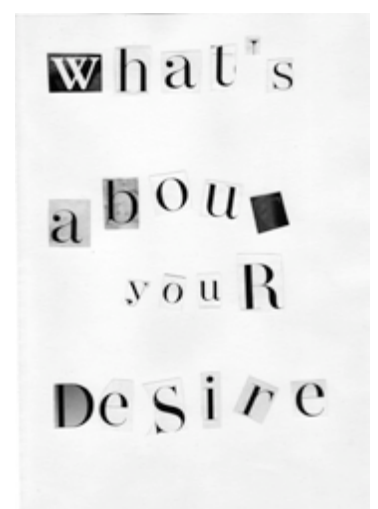
If we have any doubt we always can check things with our beloved Foucault

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Our work is always crossed by affections, self-care, group(s), micropolitics and cañas (this last one involves every former). Since we started, our relationship with the museum has always been an independent one, we have self-managed our own activities and we have had access to museum facilities.

We have been working and still work with the bodies and from our bodies in three different ways:

- **INTRA:** By the group and for the group. Affections. Self-care. Somateca2.0. Fanzine llamado deseo. Residencies. Research projects (arts, activisms...). Self-formation and Production, Martes Raros.
- **EXTRA:** By the group and for outside. Public presentations. Fanzine Barbridades and all its projects. Somateca 2.0 workshops. Expanded Somateca (artistic production: esclerótica, les bordes). Jornadas crip-queer.
- **INTER:** Working with other groups. Subtramas, Ekka, La Selecta, Las raras, Dissident Desire.

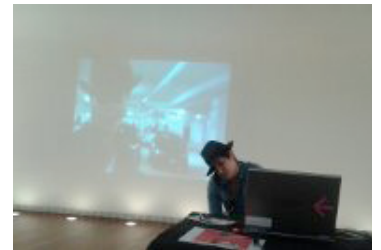






MONTHLY WORKSHOPS / READING SESSIONS: self formation and production (intra or extra)

- △ Performance workshop
- △ Theatre of the oppressed
- △ Squizoanalysis
- △ Masculinity, performativity, and parody
- △ Dance, gender, and contact
- △ Gender, body, and movement
- △ Laughter therapy
- △ Autobiographies
- △ Videojam



#### BARBARIDADES FANZINE PRODUCTION AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

“Barbaridades” is a collective fanzine whose name is inspired by the movie *Juggling Gender* (Tami Gold, 1992). This documentary portrays Jennifer Miller, a lesbian artist who chooses to live with his beard. We see how she refuses to remove those hairs that sprout from her face, after undergoing laser hair removal, to assaults by strangers and family and even the LGBT community. We see how she overtakes her pointed beard, stigmatized, disturbing, which no one wants to look at, which is a problem for class, gender and sexuality. Faced with society, a woman with a beard, like a whore, a raped, a lesbian, a black, indigenous, one who squirts a transsexual turn out to be a ghost and have historically been treated as inferior. We want to give anothe meaning to ourselves from this kind of beard that flows in our bodies and as such do our hair. This unseen beard sometimes, sometimes not, turns out to be a place from which to rely on, rise up, from where we can face the heavy scourges of normality. We swallow the defects, we appropriate them, make them into texts, photos, images, videos, audios, performances, films, postcards, dance, etc. to resist together.





### CRIP-QUEER SEMINAR (MANAGEMENT AND CURATORIAL WORK)

(Extra and Inter nice work)

Alliances between understood as abject subject, according to the parameters of capitalist normality, have multiplied in recent years. If feminist-queer movements address the sex / gender / desire, critical approach to studies of functional and neurological diversity contributes crip diversity movement, generates a common framework for questioning the bodies built as standard and / or standardizable.

The vulnerability of these bodies is presented as a place from which to analyze multiple issues such as diversity, sexuality, disease, care and affection, in the search for a crip-queer alternative for a worthwhile life be lived.

This seminar, organized by the research group Somateca, proposes to create a space inside and outside the museum institution, for sharing experiences and practices to generate dissidents ethics and politics of interdependence, sustainability and solidarity, in margins of neoliberal and neocolonial, ableistic heteropatriarchy.

During this seminars we worked in different formats:

- △ Open space and discussion
- △ Round-table and discussion
- △ Workshops on body(ies) and on autobiographies
- △ Anti-catwalk





### ARTISTIC INTERVENTIONS.

Exhibition *Really Useful Knowledge*, framed in L'Internationale project, at Reina Sofía Museum invited by Subtramas.

- △ Book selection of part of Chto delat space
- △ Activation Chto delat
- △ N Performances
- △ Workshop: Happiness, DIY.



ARTISTIC AND PRODUCTION RESIDENCIES  
film season, open discussions, etc.

COLLABORATION WITH GROUPS AND LOCATIONS AT LAVAPIES  
NEIGHBOURHOOD:  
EKKA y Fundación 26 de diciembre

MARTES RAROS / WEIRD TUESDAYS.  
Working sessions, collectivized self-knowledge.

