

FORMATOCOMODO

Theo Firmo + Rafaela Salgueiro

Nervio Blando

26 abril – 30 junio 2025

Text. Aldones Nino

Nervio Blando (Soft Nerve)

In ***Nervio Blando (Soft Nerve)***, the duo formed by Theo Firmo (1983), a Brazilian artist based in Madrid, and Rafaela Salgueiro (1991), a Brazilian artist living in Lisbon, presents for the first time in Spain the developments of a collaborative practice they have been building over the past several years. With complementary approaches, both artists offer the outcome of a poetic encounter in which drawing acts as a shared foundation and point of departure. In Theo Firmo's work, the drawn line structures compositions that expand across various mediums, transferring emotional weight into material form through traces of gesture. In Rafaela Salgueiro's practice, the line first emerges through the textile modeling of garments, shaping forms and volumes, but soon extends beyond the body, embracing sculpture and performance as modes of creation. In the works gathered here, these lines meet and intertwine, generating a field of shared sensitivity in which body, gesture, and matter become complementary.

Through this dialogue, both artists challenge the historical limits of two-dimensionality, unsettling the distance established by classical conventions of drawing and painting, which traditionally positioned the viewer as a detached observer. Their works appeal to touch and sensation as a form of

approach, awakening the desire to reach out in response to the strangeness provoked by the materiality of the drawings presented. In this sense, the connection between the two artists reveals itself through a shared mode of thinking, as inhabited space emerges as a central axis in both of their investigations. Beyond the coincidence of trajectories shaped by bodies in transit—sharing the experience of living on European soil—their research converges on the question of what the body can do, and how it appropriates and relates to the spaces it creates for itself.

If Rafaela Salgueiro's practice has long involved stitching together various textiles to create garments, her recent works turn that familiarity into a space of discovery: an exploration of materials as mediators of sensory experience. In parallel, Theo Firmo takes on the challenge of moving beyond the fluidity of paper, engaging with the complexity of a gesture that opens into three-dimensional space, activating new ways of articulating the relationship between body and artwork.

Here, textiles are no longer merely functional surfaces between body and world. Instead, they evoke elements of cushioning, comfort, and

hospitality—materials that make architecture inhabitable, acting as transitional zones between skin and space. These are surfaces tied to rest and intimacy—sofas, pillows, mattresses, blankets—that operate as sensitive layers between the individual and the hardness of the environment. Like the skin of furniture, the softness invoked functions as a metaphor for repose, echoing the concept of topoanalysis proposed by Gaston Bachelard, who reminds us that even within the rigidity of geometry, domestic spaces carry poetic potential: when lived as spaces of comfort and intimacy, they open to the world of dreams—a realm where affection and imagination dissolve boundaries beyond the reach of rationality:

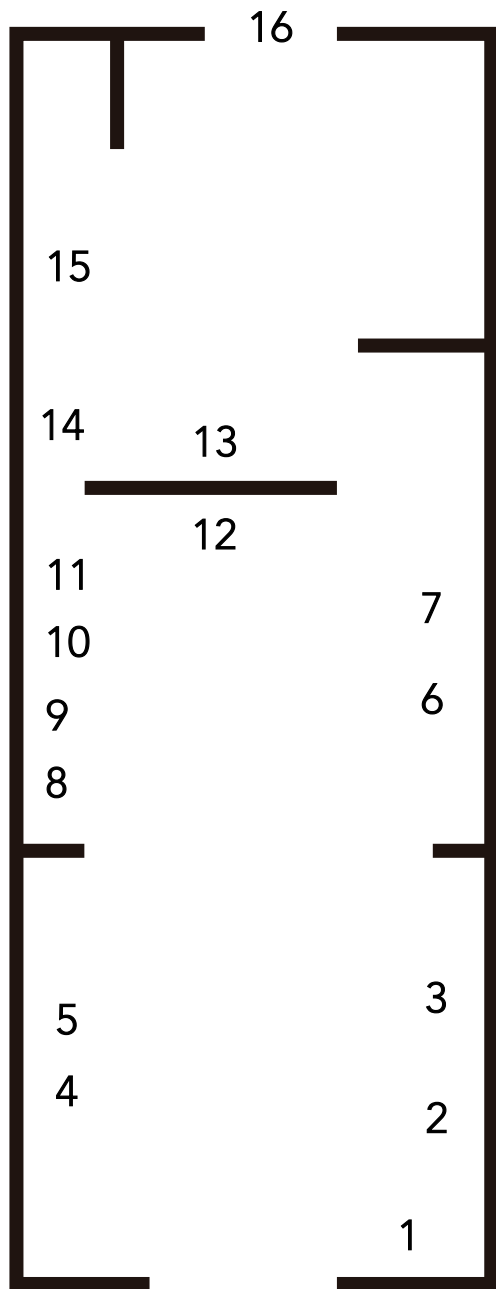
A geometric object like this should resist metaphors that embrace the human body, the human soul. But the transposition to the human takes place immediately, as soon as the house is conceived as a space of comfort and intimacy, as a space meant to condense and protect one's inner life. Then, beyond all rationality, the realm of oneirism opens up (BACHELARD, 1978, P. 228)¹.

In this way, the two complement each other: Rafaela draws with the needle, while Theo sews with the pencil—like a dance across habitable layers that act as a 'soft nerve.' This term, which for them refers to the sensation of feeling a nerve at a different frequency, evokes a sensitivity capable of absorbing touch and translating tactile sensations into image and surface. In a similar manner, the compositions presented invite us to perceive how the image dissolves into welcoming membranes, like connective tissues—soft, elastic, and responsive to touch and presence. The elasticity of these materials, more than a mere physical property,

becomes a metaphor for relational capacity: that which connects, communicates, and sustains the exchange between body and world. In this way, space ceases to be a rigid surface and begins to pulse as a transitional matter, capable of recalling gestures.

Their materialities intertwine, and the body, in this play, ceases to be a recognizable figure, transforming into abstraction, fold, tension. A poetic memory is left upon the surface through overlapping lines and forms that do not seek to represent the body, but instead evoke the gesture of touch which, like stitching, eternalizes the pressure that once was presence. Within this context, the works presented offer a poetic glimpse into how lived space shapes our subjectivity—an immersion into the intimate universe and the many layers of complexity that inhabit the interiors of spaces.

¹ BACHELARD, Gaston. A poética do espaço. Coleção "Os Pensadores". São Paulo: Abril Cultural, 1978, p.228.



1. UNTITLED

2023

Synthetic leather,
polyurethane foam
30 x 40 cm

2. UNTITLED

2023

Velvet
40 x 30 cm

3. UNTITLED (MARAÑA I)

2023

Velvet, cotton, wadding
80 x 100 cm

4. UNTITLED (MARAÑA II)

2023

Velvet, felt, waxed fabric,
wadding
80 x 100 cm

5. UNTITLED (MARAÑA V)

2023

Velvet, felt, wadding
100 x 73 cm

6. UNTITLED

2024

Velvet
50 x 41 cm

7. UNTITLED

2024

Velvet, wadding
80 x 60 cm

8. TRAMOYA (III)

2023

Synthetic leather,
polyurethane foam
70 x 55 cm

9. TRAMOYA (I)

2023

Synthetic leather,
polyurethane foam
70 x 55 cm

10. TRAMOYA (IV)

2023

Synthetic leather,
polyurethane foam
70 x 55 cm

11. TRAMOYA (V)

2023

Synthetic leather,
polyurethane foam
70 x 55 cm

12. UNTITLED (MARAÑA III)

2023

Velvet, felt, synthetic
leather, wadding
80 x 100 cm

13. UNTITLED

2024

Velvet
80 x 60 cm

14. TRAMOYA (II)

2023

Synthetic leather,
polyurethane foam
70 x 55 cm

15. SIN TÍTULO (MARAÑA IV)

2023

Velvet, felt, synthetic
leather, wadding
60 x 80 cm

16. SONAMBULAR I

2024

Velvet, wadding, metal rods
200 x 110 cm

Biography

THE FIRMO

Theo Firmo (São Paulo, 1983) holds a degree in Linguistics and a Master's in Visual Culture from UAM / Museo Reina Sofía. His practice moves fluidly between drawing, sculpture, installation, video, and painting. Through a continuous poetic analysis of communication processes, Firmo transposes emotional and tactile charges into material form, generating traces of gesture, dialogue, and touch. His work reveals a deliberate preference for formal synthesis, as a response to a world oversaturated with narratives and meanings. He lives and works in Madrid.

RAFAELA SALGUEIRO

Visual artist and creative designer Rafaela Salgueiro (Mogi das Cruzes, 1991) works across disciplines at the intersection of art and fashion, with the aim of uniting these two powerful creative forces. As a result of her research, she explores new forms of expression between the body and material, addressing themes of affection and sensitivity as an introduction to contact with other material realities. She lives and works in Lisbon.

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