

# No-no Land

Patricia Borges



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# Proposed Work

Experiencing a foreign urban environment makes us extremely attentive to street prohibition and warning signs. Even when we speak the local language, these 'don't do it symbols' can become dubious and subject to individual interpretation. Add to this the fact that we are often on the move when facing them, which means that the reaction to printed street signs tends to be instinctive. How long does it take to decode a binding image? Will two people understand it the same way? To whom are these signs addressed? By whom and why are they placed here?

In "No-no Land" I propose that we insert a collection of existing and invented circle-backlash symbols in public spaces, with the hope that the passersby can explore the many layers of meaning and cultural associations contained in a given visual order that is legitimized by its formal location.

My intention with this project is to explore the politics of language that comes through translating visual signs as a method of listening, a way of awareness and caring for others. There is no such thing as a universal language. We are individuals living collectively. With this project I aim for less violence, less automated responses and greater reflection on our daily lives in the city.

## **“No but Where Are You Really From?”**

The way we humans interpret and comply with street signs is far from being standardized. Individual values, behaviors and language skills will generate a personal message for every contextualized symbol. My photographic collection portraying urban signs in different countries (in my interpretation) ranges from funny to the aggressive, from the strange to the obvious, from the unintelligible to the unnecessary. And I wonder: obvious to whom?

No-no symbols can be thought triggers too. And I would really like to encourage people to ask themselves if the ban in question makes any sense, if it's been understood correctly, maybe ask the person nearby how they read that sign or why it is there. Extra layers here would be questioning blind obedience to "don't do this" signs and the assumption of being in a safe space as long as one follows the warning, directional and hazard signs.

"No but where are you really from?" denotes overt bias, an explicit prejudice, intimidates the respondent, forces a detailed response, and constitutes a violent action because it implies that someone looks or sounds different than expected. As if there was a right place to be. When I displace no-no signs around the city, I intend to ask others if the context itself plays a role in the non-sense of prohibitions and how we instinctively adhere to pre-conceived ideas.

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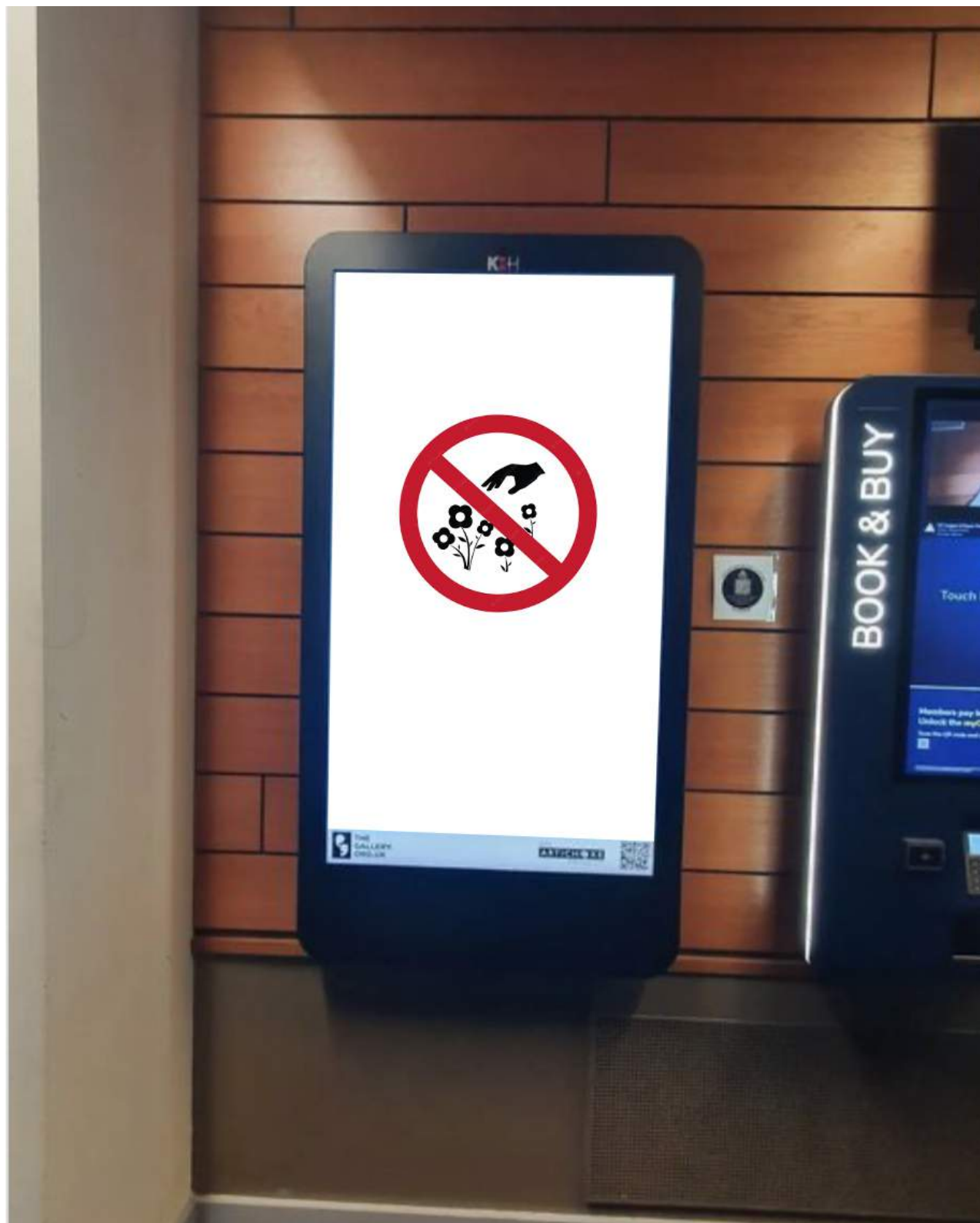
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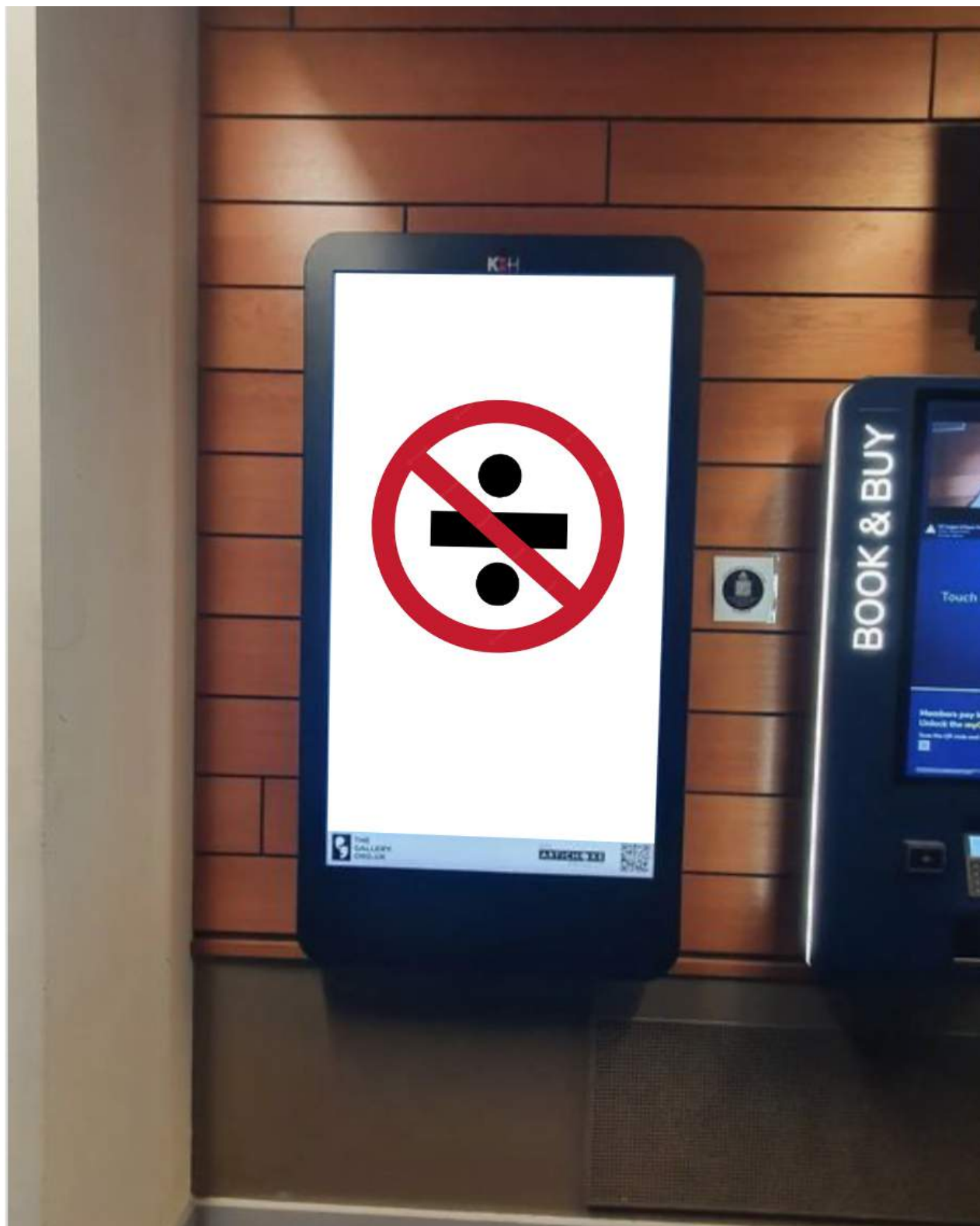
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# Patricia Borges

PATRICIA BORGES (Brazil, 1974) In 2000 I graduated in Architecture and Urban Planning from PUC-PR in Curitiba (BR), then I studied photography at the Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney (AU). After living in several countries and cities, I currently attend classes at Parque Lage School of Visual Arts in Rio de Janeiro.

My works speak about an internal state, an inner noise, while the silence presents itself to the outside world. They whisper the absurdities of reality on this paradoxical and ambiguous era. I am interested in the notion of insubordination and the discomfort that arouses from our unclear perception of reality. I inhabit where not everything presents itself despite being there.

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