



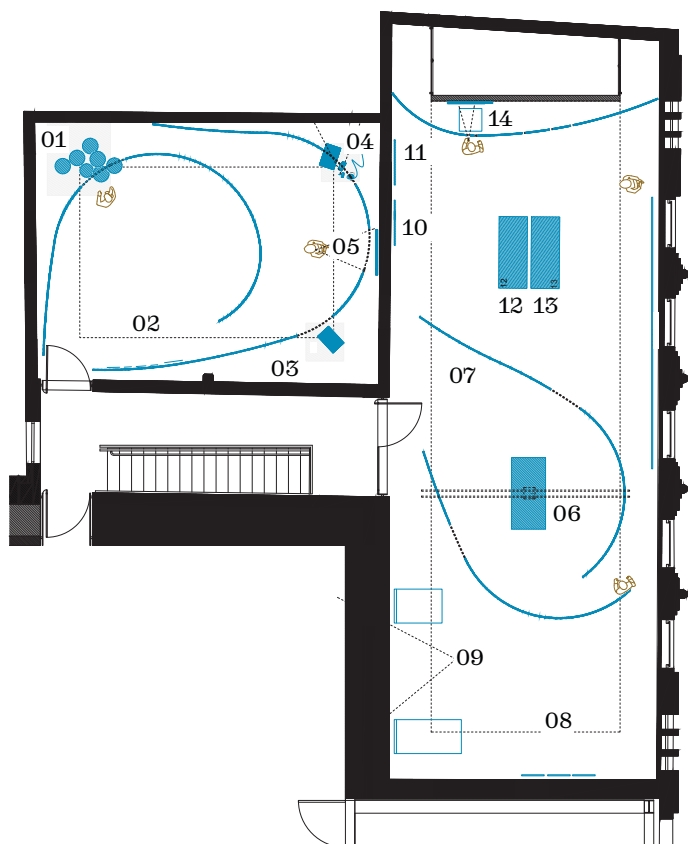
FAZER FALAR OS OSSOS

PRESENT ENGAGEMENTS
WITH THE PAST

CURATORS:
FERNANDA CRUZ,
LORENZA MONDADA,
EDSON TELES

14.08.26 TO 27.09.26
CENTRO
MARIANTONIA
SÃO PAULO

MAP



The exhibition brings together two perspectives and two very different worlds: the work of researchers in the social sciences and linguistics, and the work of forensic specialists in their laboratory. This articulation emerged from a partnership between Fernanda Cruz (Federal U. of São Paulo) and Lorenza Mondada (U. Basel) coordinating the research project *Fazendo falar os ossos/Making Bones Talk* (MBT), and the Center for Forensic Anthropology and Archaeology (CAAF, represented by Edson Teles), whose activities have been video-documented daily by the researchers since 2022. The exhibition explores the work of forensic specialists investigating the bones of people killed or disappeared during the Brazilian dictatorship (1964–1988), as seen through the lens of video analysis developed within the research project MBT. Connecting the past and the present, it invites the public to engage with a set of contemporary practices committed to a history that still needs to be uncovered. It revisits knowledge and imaginaries related to the dictatorship as well as the role of forensic practices in the aftermath of mass violence and violations of human rights. The close attention devoted to audiovisual and textual materials, produced and studied within the framework of conversation analysis and ethnomethodological research by the *Making Bones Talk* project, enables an original analytical and aesthetic understanding of forensic work, observed through the details of talk, gestures, gaze, bodies, and the specialists' sensory engagement with the bones. Based on video research materials the exhibition enables the public to understand both the research and the researched practices.

Conception, Curatoship and Research

Conception and Research:

Lorenza Mondada, Fernanda Cruz

Curatorship:

Fernanda Cruz, Lorenza Mondada, Edson Teles

Advisors in forensic anthropology:

Aline Oliveira, Talita Máximo

Expography, Visual Communication, Graphic design Production and Set Up: Goma Oficina

The exhibition emanates from the project *Making bones talk: language, body, materiality and knowledge in the work of the forensic laboratory* (MBT), directed by L. Mondada (U. Basel / SNSF, Switzerland), F. Cruz (UNIFESP / FAPESP, Brauil). Scientific team: David Monteiro (U. Basel), Ana Guerra (UNIFESP).

In collaboration with the Centro de Antropologia e Arqueologia Forense (CAAF/UNIFESP). Coordination: Joana Barros, Edson Teles; Team: Aline Oliveira, Aline Medeiros, Ana Paula Velloso, Bruna Borba, Caroline Lemos, Caroline Kazumi, Glenda Gathe, Júlia Vital, Juliana Carolina da Silva, Magnus Dias, Maria Amélia da Silva, Maria Laura de Souza, Marília Calazans, Matheus de Araújo, Michelle Borges, Pádua Fernandes, Paula Nishida, Patrícia Bertozzo, Rafane Paixão, Renato Panunzio, Sarah Costa, Talita Máximo.

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MariaAntonia



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01

Anatomic bags

Installation (2026)

Anatomic bags and soil

Anatomic bags scattered on the floor, (dis)ordered in public spaces or open places are a distinctive element of the landscape of mass violence. They characterize the aftermath of violence in many countries, the first steps of the forensic teams collecting bodies, and the coverage made by media. The bags make metonymically human remains vividly present.

02

Anatomic bags on sites of mass violence

by F. Cruz & L. Mondada

Photomontage (2026)

Black and white negatives of press photographs

Photographic sources: 1. Vala de Perus mass grave, Brazil, 1990 (Claudio Rossi) / 2. Vala de Perus mass grave, Brazil, 1990 (@marcelovigneronfotografia) / 3. Rwanda, 1994 (The Color Archives) / 4. Human remains of Srebrenica massacre (Bosnia, 1995), collected and preserved by the International Commission on Missing Persons / ICMP, 2010 (Jasmin Brutus) / 5. Ukraine, 2022 (Vojtěch Dárvík Máca) / 6. Penha, Complexo do Alemão, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2025, (Imago)

Bodies collected in anatomic bags characterize ecologies of mass violence in numerous countries and across different periods— including Bosnia, Ukraine, Rwanda and Brazil. Salient in the first phases of the forensic work, these bags also have a central place in the visual repertoire of the press.

03

Opening a new forensic case

by MBT

Video-installation (2026)

Small television in a bag; vídeo (loop, duration: 00:03:57

Source: Video MBT-2022-0216.

The arrival of new human remains to be investigated at the forensic laboratory are always an intense moment. This installation shows the opening of the case studied by the project MBT. The experts of the CAAF (Centro de Antropologia e Arqueologia Forense) receive a series of bags containing bones and begin their work, taking the bones out of the bags, ordering them on the anatomic table and photographically documenting them.

04

Opening: starting the MBT scientific project by MBT

Multimedia installation (2026)

Two blue boxes with video equipment, handycam with projector on triploid, video (loop).

Sources: Video MBT; Laboratory boxes (courtesy Integrative Prehistoric and Natural Science Archaeology Lab IPNA)/Basel).

Fieldwork and methodology in Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis centrally aim at gathering video recordings of actual activities in the very setting where they actually take place. Here some video equipment used by the project *Making Bones Talk* (MBT) for producing the videos of the project and the exhibition.

05

About the MBT project

Conception and realization: F. Cruz & L. Mondada.

Video editing: A. Guerra.

Video-installation (2026)

Flat television screen (65").

The video offers some glimpses into the making of the project *Making Bones Talk* (MBT) showing the researchers at work and presenting some fragments of interviews.

06

Anatomic table

by MBT

Video-installation (2026)

Video (loop, duration 00:31:48), vertically projected on a table. Source: Video MBT-2022-0216

A glimpse into the day-to-day work at the CAAF's forensic anthropologists around the dissection table.

07

Anatomic tablecloth

Installation (2026)

*Surgical tablecloth, cotton, royal blue, dimension
1,0 x 1,5m.*

The anatomic tablecloth made of blue surgical drape fabric is used in forensic investigations and is recognized worldwide for its blue colour. This colour provides a strong contrast between the bones and the surface on which they are placed, enabling better identification of their visual characteristics.

08

Forensic embodied routines:

A video study of their systematicity

Conception, analysis and design: L. Mondada.

Video editing: D. Monteiro.

Multi-channel video-installation (2026)

Three parallel synchronised screens showing a series of clips; video (loop, duration 00:06:41).

On three screens, three series of videos show in short video fragments some routine manual and embodied practices characteristic of the post-mortem work in the forensic laboratory. This composition shows how repeated practices constitute the professional embodied repertoire of forensic anthropologists. The choice of short clips highlights detailed gesture, their skillfulness, their routinization across persons and contexts.

09

Understanding forensic practice: Video and multimodal transcription

by MBT

Video-installation (2026)

Video projection (loop, duration 00:00:57), multimodal transcription, bookrest with the multimodal transcription convention. Source: Video and transcription MBT-2022-0224.

The video shows moments of a post-mortem session in which the forensic team is inspecting details of the pelvis. The video shows how this anatomical investigation can be done a) individually by an expert (beginning of extract 1), b) collectively by one expert asking the opinion of another one (cont. extract 1), c) by two experts asking the advice of a third expert (extract 2). Thanks to the video and its multimodal transcription, it is possible to grasp the embodied and sensorial practices enabling the experts to produce some description of anatomical details and to discuss them in their interaction. Here the experts produce different results which they will later renegotiate and recalibrate. This installation casts light both on the postmortem work of forensic anthropologists and on the methodology of transcription of conversation analysis used in the MBT project.

10

Materiality in action within *post-mortem* investigations by MBT

Multimedia installation (2026)

Osteometry table, tablet with headphones; video (loop, duration 00:01:52); transcription.

*Sources: Video and transcription MBT-2022-0224;
Osteometry table (courtesy CAAF).*

The situated practices of the experts talking and manipulating the bones and the osteometry table are documented in a video recording of them measuring the length of a femur, and by a transcript of that action. The video and its transcription enable us to see in detail how tools and artefacts become meaningful and relevant within the work of the forensic experts and how their use is not straightforward – since the practices of manipulating them are always situated, depending on the manual skills of the practitioners and on contingencies affecting the work. It is by engaging in interacting and re-doing some actions together and collaboratively that the experts secure the intersubjectivity of their measures.

11

Materiality in action within *ante-mortem* investigations by MBT

Multimedia installation (2026)

Document, tablet with headphones; video (loop, duration 00:00:51); transcription.

*Sources: Video and transcription MBT-2025-0320;
Declassified document, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).*

This composition tackles the relation between some archival sources used by the forensic experts in their ante-mortem investigations – working on documents available on the web or searched in archives, reports of the National Truth Commission, declassified reports from intelligence agencies, and other sources – and the reasoning of the experts collaborating together to find evidence about the disappearing of political activists. This articulation is captured by the video of the experts reading archival sources aloud and by a transcription making available the details of their collective investigation, based on securing a public and shared access to the documents by reading them aloud, and on elaborating possible questions, evidence, and inferences in interaction.

12

The ecology of the MBT research work

by MBT

Installation (2026)

Table with research materials, documents, printouts, books, annotated transcripts, Mac computer, video (loop, duration 00:16:15).

Source: Video (D. Monteiro).

This table reconstructs the work ecology of the research in Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis characterizing the project *Making Bones Talk* (MBT). It shows some fundamental references (like Sacks' *Lectures* 1992), working documents (transcripts, conventions) but also ordinary objects, which also connects Brazil/Sao Paulo and Switzerland/Basel, where the two partners of the project live. The video on the MAC shows the work of video synchronization in real time, about meetings at the CAAF and *post-mortem* work.

13

The ecology of forensic work

by MBT

Installation (2026)

Table with forensic tools, documents, manuals, books, PC computer, video (loop, duration 00:09:25).

Source: Vídeo (L. Mondada & D. Monteiro); laboratory objects (Courtesy CAAF); Dossiê dos Mortos e Desaparecidos Políticos, reports of the Truth Commission (Courtesy Crimeia de Almeida).

This table reconstructs the ecology of work of the experts in forensic anthropology at the CAAF. It shows some fundamental references (like the *Dossiê Ditadura*, the Reports of the Truth Commission) but also ordinary objects and tools. The video on the PC shows the work of researching and reading documents in the *ante-mortem* investigation.

14

Making genetic analyses possible

by MBT & Goma Oficina

Video installation (2026)

Video (loop, duration 12:00:20); laboratory objects.

*Sources: Video (MBT_2023-1208, MBT_2024-05-15);
objects (courtesy CAAF).*

This immersive installation enables to position the visitors inside the transparent Plexiglas chamber where, shielded from any external contamination, the bone is ground into a fine powder. This preparation then enables DNA analysis to be carried out. The soundtrack incorporates the deafening noise of the sander, allowing the viewer to experience the discomfort of this environment where bones are destroyed to be generically analyzed.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Exhibition *Fazer falar os ossos: engajamentos presentes com o passado* / *Making bones talk: present engagement's with the past.*

Place: Centro MariAntonia – USP, Rua Maria Antônia, 258, São Paulo, Brasil.

Dates: from August 14 to September 27, 2026

Schedule: from August 14 to September 27, 2026

Guided visits available

Free entrance

More information:



<https://www.mariantonia.prceu.usp.br/>

 @fazerfalarosossos