

Sex and Censorship in Art



ISSN 1646-1762

N. 15 2020

II | INSTITUTO DE HISTÓRIA DA ARTE

FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS E HUMANAS – NOVA





Sex and Censorship in Art

N. 15 2020

Instituto de História da Arte
Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Published by
Instituto de História da Arte

Contents

Editorial	7
Bruno Marques, Érica Faleiro Rodrigues and Miguel Mesquita Duarte	
Interview with Julião Sarmiento	10
Bruno Marques and Miguel Mesquita Duarte	
DOSSIER – ARTICLES	
Queermuseum. Contemporary art in Brazil has a huge past ahead	20
Simone Amorim	
Madness and Sex: meetings between psychiatry and art	34
Stefanie Gil Franco	
After The Persecution: The Human Body represented In Ukrainian Photography Of The Post-Soviet Period.	48
Viktoriiia Myronenko	
Sex, Satire, and Censorship: Lygia Pape's <i>Eat Me: Gluttony or Lust?</i> (1975/1976)	64
Gillian Sneed	
Art, Censorship and Historical Revisionism: Mining the Museum, Afro-Atlantic Histories and Queermuseum	86
Clara Sampaio	
Spanish Censorship and Buñuel Film <i>L'Âge D'Or</i>	96
Ángeles Alemán Gómez	
VARIA	
The House That Jack Built - A post-freudian divine dark comedy?	114
José Gabriel Pereira Bastos	
AUDIOVISUAL ESSAY	
Júlia Machado	
Júlia Machado and the Sexual Audio-Visual Essay	130
Érica Faleiro Rodrigues	
BOOK REVIEWS	
T.J. Clark. Heaven on Earth: Painting and the Life to Come (2018)	134
João Oliveira Duarte	
Arunà Canevascini. Villa Argentina (2018)	138
Susana Lourenço Marques	

This issue of *Revista de História da Arte* presents a collection of articles aiming to contribute to an understanding of how censorship and the repression of sexuality and eroticism have impacted the creation, circulation, exhibition, and interpretation of works of art in different contexts and across several geographies; and, in turn, how the structures of censorship and control of artistic production are shaped by a range of forces including political control, forms of institutionalisation, acts of transgression, and social and historical dynamics.

These articles draw on an eclectic range of case studies, theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches. Taken together they amount to a comprehensive reading apparatus and a critical examination of several of the questions that we consider to be of the utmost importance for the investigation of sexuality and censorship in art. How have social inhibitions and taboos been addressed by contemporary art? Today, in a climate marked by neoliberalism, and by such phenomena as the “hyper-sexualisation” of culture or the “pornification” of art itself, what limits are there to the permissible, to the “decent”, and, conversely, to freedom of expression? Within the limits of so-called western culture, these issues summon up the battles waged around tensions between art, eroticism and pornography. Intensifying as the twentieth century progressed, such tensions reveal how the limits to the socially permissible have been tied to sexual explicitness and erotic representation. It is in this context that a re-reading of “decency” and of obscenity standards has surfaced, propelled by a renewed historiographical focus on the relationship between art and sexuality, focused on such controversial themes as censorship, prohibition and taboo. On the one hand, the decline of colonial power and the collapse of the Eastern bloc have released a considerable amount of fresh archival material that helps shed new light on the relationship between state control and artistic production. On the other, the phenomenon of globalisation, which allays institutional constraints and the limits imposed by national state policies, has triggered innovative debates around the very definition of censorship. The perspective according to which control of artistic production is perceived as ‘a state of exception’ is challenged by what has since been labelled “new censorship”.

This topic takes on redoubled importance in the wake of a recent wave of censorship acts on works of art and exhibits. Perpetrated by museums, the press, and social networks (especially Facebook and YouTube), this type of incident has increased, stretching to numerous forms of expression. From cinema to photography, painting, performance and installation art, the impulse to suppress has left no artform untouched and has ignited widespread debate in the public sphere. Positions are generally polarised between safeguarding freedom of expression, and the values of “decency”, “discretion” and the protection of the image of women and children against sexual objectification and exploitation. It is in this context that a few important voices warn of the dangers of a “neoconservative”, puritan climate that reactivates “surveillance” and “control” systems, directly affecting artistic production in its capacity as a positive transgressive agent. Concerns are raised with respect to freedom of expression and the sexual rights attained by the decisive struggles (and reflecting their bold claims) of feminist and LGBT movements. The issue opens with an interview with the interdisciplinary artist **Julião Sarmiento**, a prominent contemporary Portuguese artist, whose work has been celebrated in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout the globe over the past five decades. In this conversation, Sarmiento reflects on his early days as an artist, influenced by the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Portugal: the role played by his experimental films from the mid-1970s; the importance of desire, sexuality and voyeurism as axial features of his multidisciplinary work; and the weight of censorship in his oeuvre and in contemporary cultural landscapes.

The articles collected in the “Dossier” section provide insightful approaches to a range of pertinent topics, offering original perspectives on a number of issues. Focusing on the exhibition *Queermuseu: Cartography of Difference in Brazilian Art*, **Simone Amorim** provides ample material for a discussion around the politics of art, especially in the context of some striking setbacks stemming from the authoritarian action of Brazilian conservative groups. **Stefanie Gil Franco** explores the meeting-point between sexuality and the disruptive work of artists who have somehow generated inventive proposals “outside the continuum of art history”. Taking as reference the exhibition *Known/Unknown: Private Obsession and Hidden Desire in Outsider Art*, Franco discusses the ‘psychiatrisation’ of those individuals with a background of so-called sexual deviation and the sense of sexual freedom with which these minds respond. **Viktoriia Myronenko** considers the historical, social and cultural circumstances that shaped the representation of the body and of sexuality in Ukrainian photography of the 1990s. She stresses the rupture with the Soviet tradition after independence, the impact of artistic experimentation within a complex and contradictory period of cultural transition, and the cross-fertilisation of aesthetic freedom and sexual liberation. **Ángeles Alemán Gómez** examines the censorship of the copy of Buñuel’s *L’âge d’or* André Breton took to Tenerife in 1935, which became embroiled in a heated polemic leading to the punishment of those who supported the screening and the disappearance of the film. **Clara Sampaio** dissects the work of contemporary artists whose work questions the ideological roles

played by major art institutions, as well as curatorial projects that turn exhibitions into critical platforms for debating socio-political issues. **Gillian Sneed** focuses on two works by Brazilian artist Lygia Pape, attempting to demonstrate how Pape appropriated and satirised—or “cannibalised”—commercials, pornography and erotica as part of a broader strategy for resisting the Brazilian dictatorship’s conservative sex and gender ideologies.

The section entitled *Varia* includes José Gabriel Pereira Bastos’s article on *The House that Jack Built* (2018), the latest provocation by controversial filmmaker Lars von Trier. While attempting to put forward a post-Freudian interpretation, **Pereira Bastos** interprets the film as a severe critique of contemporary civilization, addressing topics around the disruption of the postmodern family, the loss of love, and the multi-secular Phallic battle of the sexes.

“Book Review” includes two distinct proposals. **João Oliveira Duarte** discusses T. J. Clark’s most recent book, *Heaven on Earth: Painting and the Life to Come* (2018), delivering a critical and comprehensive reading of an invaluable publication in the field of art history; and **Susana Lourenço Marques** focuses on Arunã Canevascini’s photobook *Villa Argentina* (2018), to address the notions of identity, intimacy, and desire activated by the photographic representation of the female body.

This edition is also an opportunity to engage with the work of Brazilian visual artist and academic **Júlia Machado**, by showcasing some of her work in video that more patently pushes the boundaries of transgression. Machado’s work asks if and to what extent may the erotic body become excessive in art films, in a filmic essay exercise that poses a challenge to the notions of boundary between the erotic and the pornographic, between “good taste” and the frontiers of contemporary visual voyeurism.

We would like to thank all the writers and artists who have contributed to this volume, and also the reviewers, for their valuable insights and revisions. This edition is particularly relevant for the interview with Julião Sarmiento and the article by José Gabriel Pereira Bastos, which are published here posthumously, as a testimony to their intellectual brilliance and generosity. This edition results from a long and complex process, which reflects the collective work and passion of all those involved.

Bruno Marques
Érica Faleiro Rodrigues
Miguel Mesquita Duarte



JULIÃO SARMENTO. (photo: ©AL-&-K)

Considered the most international Portuguese artist of his generation, Julião Sarmiento (b. 1948, Lisbon) studied painting and architecture at the Lisbon School of Fine Arts. He began showing film, video, sound, painting, sculpture, installation and multimedia in the early 1970s, but has also developed several site-specific projects throughout his career. He has shown his work extensively around the world in solo and group shows, including an artist room showing at London's Tate Modern in 2010 and a major retrospective at the Serralves Museum in 2012/2013. Sarmiento represented Portugal at the Venice Biennial in 1997. His work is represented in several museums and private collections.

At an early stage of his career, in the first half of the 1970s, an anti-localist attitude and a desire for international dialogue led Julião Sarmiento to explore

a disparate range of interests and research vectors updated in relation to the neo-avant-garde tendencies (already present in a small but significant way in the Portuguese artistic context of those years). In an attempt to make the complexity of both human desire and the image of the female body the subject matter of conceptual approaches, his main concerns related to fetishism, absence and sparseness, deferral of touch, indexical traces of the body, contexts, objects, film montage and the interactions between the observer and the object of desire. Who is watching who? – *that will be the question*.

We must consider the revolutionary character of the explicitly erotic images produced by a young Julião Sarmiento against the backdrop of Portuguese Salazarism, which lasted forty-eight years and only ended with the so-called Carnation Revolution of April 1974. The

political repression of the New State (Estado Novo), the autocratic and nationalist regime that prevailed from 1933 to 1974, had imposed a stifling morality at the service of the most conservative sections of Portuguese society. Sarmiento's experimental films openly oppose state repression by confronting the mechanisms of cultural conservatism that repress sexuality and eroticism. In the light of his interest in perceptual and intellectual expressions of desire, voyeurism and fetishism, much of Sarmiento's work can be thought of as dissident in its integration of sexual pleasure and the desire for knowledge.

WITH JULIÃO SARMENTO

CONDUCTED BY BRUNO MARQUES AND MIGUEL MESQUITA DUARTE

Entrevista

BM and MMD – Julião, you began your artistic activity in the late 1960s. Focusing on your personal experience, what was it like to live as a young artist in Portugal before the Carnation Revolution?

JS – [laughs] I can't remember when I was a young artist. So, it's kind of a very difficult question. Anyway, it was virtually impossible. Virtually impossible because we couldn't survive as artists. Being a young artist is a contradiction in terms, because when you're very young you just *want to be*, rather than really being. But the reality is that before the revolution artistic practice was very scarce and artists had no possibility of surviving, except one or two or three that were very well-known, people that we all know. Someone like Pomar or artists that were really established and well-known. There were maybe half a dozen. Not even half a dozen! Two or three. Apart from that, artists had to keep secondary jobs. Basically jobs that enabled them to survive, to pay for rental and utilities. I myself did a bunch of jobs. So, it was very difficult to survive. But we did. But we prevailed. And here we are.

BM and MMD – How did the constraints inherent to a dictatorship determine not only the type of work you created at that time, but also the work you would later create in the post-revolution period? Were you interested in confronting taboos and social inhibitions?

JS – No, not at all, and yes. Yes and no. Yes, because I did do that. But no, because I didn't set that up as a goal. My work is extremely personal. I'm really worried about my world. My work is political just as any artist's work is political. Some more so than others. Some more evidently so than others. But I didn't use it as a flag or as a standard. I knew what I wanted to do. I had my own ideas of my work, all based on intimacy. It was a very intimate work. Totally based on my personal life, my personal feelings, and my personal thoughts; on my personal interests, rather than collective



Julião Sarmento, *Legs*, 1975, Super-8 film, colour, silent, 3' 45". Collection Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (photo: courtesy of Julião Sarmento's studio)



Julião Sarmiento, *Untitled (strip)*, 1975/2002, ten b&w photographs mounted on PVC, each 29.3 x 19.8 cm, total size 29.3 x 233 cm. Collection of the artist, Estoril (photo: Divisão Documentação Fotográfica / IPM. Courtesy of Julião Sarmiento's studio)

interests. So, I had some problems, obviously, because I was... as I am still now, but at the time I was extremely interested in working within the barriers of gender, of eroticism, of sexuality. And, of course, before the revolution that was forbidden, totally forbidden. Anything that had to do with sex, or gender, or religion, or politics, was forbidden. Basically, almost everything was forbidden [laughs]. That was the only problem I had. Apart from that, everything else was cool.

BM and MMD – What strategies did you find to break through constraints and blockages at a time when the echoes of sexual liberation, and the revolution in customs taking place in other countries, were gradually being heard in Portugal?

JS – Well, I just did my work. [laughs] It's as simple as that. The thing is censors are stupid. Censorship is inherently stupid. Basically, if you don't put things in front of your face, and if you don't actually *hurt* people with reality so that they can feel it in their faces, they don't understand it. I cannot tell you if I've ever felt inhibited from doing something that I was not allowed to do. Everything I wanted to do I did. It would be very easy for me to say that "oh, I had all these problems in doing this or that". But I actually did it! Because you have just to think that repressed governments and censorship are inherently dumb, and stupid. Censors are inherently stupid. Basically, you can twist them, they are ignorant and stupid. So, basically, you can do whatever you want, and they won't understand it, they don't get it. So, I had no problem.

BM and MMD – Your work permanently expresses a tension between explicit sexuality and situations of deferral and irresolution. In a certain way, your projects expose licentiousness as an alternative politics of desire. Does your interest for licentiousness, for the perversion of desire, have to do with the desire for knowledge?



Julião Sarmento, *Faces*, 1976, Super-8 film, colour, silent, 44' 22". Collection Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (photo: courtesy of Julião Sarmento's studio)

JS – Of course it does. It did then and it does now. It always did. They are totally connected. One cannot live without the other. I mean, it's not a dumb quest for sexuality and desire. It's just an intelligent way to deal with fundamental things that are part of our life. It is part of nature; it is part of us. Libido and sexual drive, everyone has it. Some more than others, and obviously in different directions, but it's here, it's part of our being animals and alive. So far!

BM and MMD – In a conversation we recently had in London you mentioned an episode in which a group of feminists protested against



Julião Sarmiento, *Quatre mouvements de la peur*, 1978/1995, nine b&w photographs mounted on foamboard in artist's frames, each 186 x 125,5 cm, total size: variable dimensions. Collection of the artist (photo: courtesy of Julião Sarmiento's studio)

the opening of an exhibition of some of your work. Can you tell us a little about that?

JS – There is not much to say. I think it was in 1989, at my solo exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, in Washington, D.C. When I landed in Washington I was warned by the curator of the show [(Neal Benezra)], who was also actually the chief curator of the museum, that we had several problems with

the exhibition, because there was this extremist group of feminists that basically wanted to ban the exhibition – the same way as now the Gauguin exhibition was not allowed to go to the Metropolitan Museum of New York, which is a completely stupid situation. So anyway, I then asked: 'But why?'. And they said: 'Because they're just protesting against your exhibition'. And I thought: 'Well, they just don't get it. So let me talk to them'. So I asked to have a meeting with them. And I did have that meeting with them. They all came, 32 or 33 of them. Initially, they were enraged. They wanted to kill me [laughs]. But, then, after a good conversation with them, we all parted as friends and they all came to the show opening. So, I mean, because I'm not a woman-hater. And I'm not what they were accusing me to be. Like a male chauvinist pig. I'm not! I've never been! So, it was a complete misunderstanding.

(6) *Legs, Shadow and Faces* reflexively approach voyeurism in cinema. It seems that you want viewers to become aware of the fragility implicit in their role as voyeurs. Chrissie Iles even speaks of an



A Ferida da Noite, 1981
Técnica mista sobre papel
155 x 133 cm
Coleção Galleria Lia Rumma, Napoli, Itália
Foto: Julião Sarmiento's Studio

ambivalent and paradoxical situation where 'desire, fascination and guilt' coexist. Can we speak here, psychologically, of an attempt to deconstruct processes of censorship and self-censorship that have long been rooted in individual and collective terms?

JS – But you want to do a treatise on sexuality! You sure have a canny approach to all this! [laughs] We can talk about that. We can talk about anything you want. Chrissie has her point of view which I think quite interesting and I agree with her almost 90%. And yes! You know what? What is great about an artwork is that... It's like Eco would say about the open work. I mean, any explanation will portray the artwork's capacity for being an artwork. So, I mean, this frailty we have... When an artist is doing a work, when he is presenting and exhibiting a work, he is exhibiting himself, in a way. Because the work is himself, it is part of him. So, it's like a child that comes from the womb of a woman. For the artist who produces it, an artwork like giving birth. It is an intrinsic part of the artist. So, along with all the frailties that the artist has, with all the intellectual capacity that the artist has, there are also the infinite possibilities of the artwork's interpretation. So, to answer your question, yes, it's a possibility. [laughs]

BM and MMD – How important were Andy Warhol's films to you? And what is your perspective on the connection between underground film and a search for sexual freedom?

JS – No, the relation does not exist. I was having my own sexual freedom. The films only portray the sexual freedom that I've had. I was not interested in conveying nothing like that. I was not interested in waving a banner of sexual freedom. I was interested in making films about me, about my life, about what I was interested in. So, strangely enough, we can say that those films are me. They are what I was at the time. And, of course, Andy Warhol's presence is overwhelming. It could not *not be!* But it's not just Andy Warhol. There are also some early experiments in German film, people like Bernd Schroeder. Or, for instance, the cases of Jonas Mekas and Michael Snow. All these directors were important for me, not only Andy Warhol. Of course, we tend to connect those films immediately to Warhol's influence, but the fact is that there's a certain romanticism in my work, which is closer to the German experimental film, for instance, just to give you an idea.

BM and MMD – The controversy surrounding Robert Mapplethorpe's exhibition in Serralves corresponds only to one of the several examples of sexually explicit works that, in recent years, have been subject to restrictions in the museum space. In your opinion, does it make sense to speak of a return to a more puritanical and conservative environment? Do you consider that new forms of censorship are emerging? Has your work been censored in any way?



JS – Oh, yeah! We're going back into the dark ages! This is horrible, it's terrible! I just mentioned to you that the Gauguin exhibition was banned in New York! Can you imagine Gauguin's retrospective being banned from the Metropolitan Museum? This is ridiculous; it makes no sense at all! So, yes, we are coming very rapidly and dangerously into a new era of censorship. And I hate that. Because all my life I fought against it and I'm not going to stop now.

Returning Good for Evil
(London-Dublin 1909), 1996
Técnica mista sobre tela
220 x 380 cm
Coleção particular, Chicago, Illinois, E.U.A.
Foto: Orcutt & Van Der Putten

BM and MMD – We often talk about the existence of a mainstream 'pornification of culture', taking place in the neo-liberal context, in which sex is consumed as a mere commodity. We would like to know your position on the subject and how you understand the role of art in affirming the poetic, political and subjective values of sexuality and desire.

JS – But art is not only about sex! That's a wrong premise. I mean, it's not just about sex, not necessarily. Art is art. Sex is sex. Food is food. It's part of our life. I see it as naturally as possible. I mean, it's part of life! What I do not understand, or rather, understand but don't acknowledge, is all the discussions that are lately taking place about it, because it makes absolutely no sense. It's total rubbish. Look, I'm completely in agreement with this need to have equality in terms of gender relations. Look, Artemisia Gentileschi, Aurélia de Sousa in Portugal and a couple of others... I mean, how many women artists do we know from the *Seicento*, for

instance? Do you think they didn't exist? Of course, they existed! Except that there was a predominant male culture, so that they were totally driven away. But that's one thing. I understand that if you have the [balance] scale going like this [(unbalanced pans)], you can't suddenly put the scale like this [(balanced pans)]. I mean, the movement has to be like this, and this, and this [(several unbalanced stages in which the scale is tilted at different angles)]. Until it gets to the right position [(balanced)]. So, it's understandable that now it falls to one side in a completely stupid and idiotic way. But it's part of it. And then you tend to the other side, and the other side, until it gets to a balance. Now we are on one side [of the balance, it leans towards male dominance]. But we have to understand it and level it.

QUEERMUSEUM

CONTEMPORARY ART IN BRAZIL HAS A HUGE PAST AHEAD

SIMONE AMORIM
DINÂMIA'CET-IUL, ISCTE,
xsimoneamorimx@gmail.com

Introduction

Queermuseum: Cartographies of Difference in Brazilian Art is an exhibition that explores the expression of gender and difference in Brazilian art through a set of works spanning a period from the mid-twentieth century to the present. The exhibition brings together some two hundred and sixty four works, both from public and private collections, by eighty-five Brazilian artists from diverse artistic backgrounds, representing the aesthetical and generational diversity of artistic production in various parts of the country. This is the first-ever exhibition with an exclusively queer approach in Brazil, as well as the first of its scale in Latin America. From the organizers' viewpoint, the exhibition is a fictional and metaphorical 'temporary museum', wherein inclusion is exercised beyond the restrictive parameters of the artistic canon, usually exclusive and discretionary in nature. Works were chosen taking into account the aesthetical, cultural and historical aspects of the artistic object, as well as its material and conceptual reality, in order to highlight its contribution to the contemporary viewer. *Queermuseum* seeks to promote the 'decolonization' of the artistic form by moving towards an approach on gender expression and identity that leaves aside the notion of gender as a binary category. For the curator of the exhibition this exploratory character constitutes a non-traditional cartographic investigation aimed at intersecting a wide variety of artistic problems that concern the issues of gender and its diversity from a non-normative queer perspective.

The exhibition was organized by Gaudêncio Fidelis, a curator and art historian specializing in modern and contemporary art from Brazil and the Americas. It brings

¹ Description presented in the exhibition proposal submitted to the Brazilian Ministry of Culture (MinC) for sponsorship funding through the Cultural Promotion Law in Brazil (known as Rouanet Law). Available at www.cultura.gov.br (accessed on 2/1/2018).



'Queermuseum: Cartographies of Difference in Brazilian Art', Brazil's largest queer art exhibition, Porto Alegre, 2017, Photo: Internet.

together works by such notable names as Adriana Varejão, Cândido Portinari, Fernando Baril, Hudinilson Jr., Lygia Clark, Leonilson and Yuri Firmesa. Among other works, the exhibition popularized a painting of a multi-armed Jesus Christ (the work *Crossing Jesus Christ with the God Shiva*, by Fernando Baril); images of children with the inscriptions *Transgender child lambada's transvestite* and *Queer child goddess of the waters*, by Bia Leite, and Adriana Varejão's *Interior Scene II*, which, according to the artist, 'is a compilation of existing sexual practices, some historical (such as the classic Chunga images of erotic Japanese popular art), others based on literary narratives or collected on trips across Brazil'.

The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue featuring a critical approach to its various aspects, such as its curatorial model and artworks, as well as discussions about the queer universe from an artistic perspective of gender and the expression of diversity and difference in our time.

The Episode

In accordance with the Culture Promotion Law, the Brazilian Ministry of Culture approved the general plan for the project, which allowed its organizers to raise a R\$ 800,000 sponsorship. Santander Bank hosted the exhibition as part of the programme of the Santander Cultural space, which has been fostering the visual arts, cinema, music and knowledge since 2001. The cultural centre has seen more than four million visitors over a twelve year period. *Queermuseum* opened on 16 August 2017 in Porto Alegre.

In the days following the opening, a wave of protest from conservative and religious groups took over social networks and received wide media coverage. Artists,



Bia Leite, 'Adriano Bafônica e Luiz França Shehá', 2013, Acrylic, oil and spray on canvas, 100 x 100 cm, Antônio Henrique Abinave Collection, Photo: Laura Fraiz, Courtesy the artist.

Bia Leite, 'Transvesti da lambada e deusa das águas', 2013, Acrylic, oil and spray on canvas 100 x 100 cm, Cláuder Diniz Collection, Photo: Laura Fraiz, Courtesy the artist.

² El País: 'Queermuseum: o dia que a intolerância pegou a exposição para Cristo'. Available at https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2017/09/11/politica/1505164425_555164.html (accessed on 3/3/2019).

³ BBC Brasil: 'Queermuseum', a exposição mais debatida e menos vista dos últimos tempos, reabre no Rio'. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-45191250> (accessed on 12/3/2019).

⁴ Cf. *Rio Magazine*: 'Não vejo censura, diz dirigente do MBL sobre a mostra'. Available at <https://veja.abril.com.br/blog/rio-grande-do-sul/>

cultural institution managers, public managers, and the curator of *Queermuseum* himself, were taken by surprise and denounced such mobilization as a form of art censorship²: 'I've organized two Mercosul Biennials, but had never seen anything like this. The demonstrations were very organized and focused on some very specific works that do not represent the true scope of the exhibition. [These] groups showed hate in distorting their content, which is not offensive', said Gaudêncio Fidelis, curator of *Queermuseum*, at the time. 'Art is the best place for debate. I see this type of movement, with its intolerance of debate, as disturbing. These intolerant views are incompatible with art. They represent censorship', said Antonio Grassi, former president of the National Arts Foundation and former executive director of Inhotim Institute. 'They saw in the art milieu a chance to ignite a kind of cultural war, playing a moral card whose rhetoric of scandal is easily appealing, especially in the current social media ecosystem', commented Sérgio Bruno Martins, Professor at PUC – Rio³.

Conservative and religious groups, along with some sections of the population, condemned the works, claiming that their content was a direct apology of paedophilia and zoophilia, and an attack on certain religious symbols: 'I find nothing educational in a child seeing an adult or two adults fucking a kid, (...) we believe that (culture) must be promoted by the market and private entities. The State does not have the money to sponsor everything. In some Northeast states people don't even have sewage networks', said Paula Cassol, coordinator of Movimento Brasil Livre [Free Brazil Movement] in Rio Grande do Sul⁴. 'There were children looking

at this Christ-mocking “art”, wrote blogger Felipe Diehl⁵. ‘This is absurd! Leftists try to promote paedophilia and zoophilia among children and use public money to do it’, said Kim Kataguiiri, co-founder of Movimento Brasil Livre⁶.

Once the controversy was on the exhibition was officially (and prematurely) closed on 10 September. It did not last a month. Faced with the barrage of criticism, Santander issued an official statement clarifying its institutional objectives and recognizing that some of the works were disrespectful of certain beliefs and people: ‘Our role as a cultural institution is to promote the work of Brazilian curators and artists, and to generate reflection. To preserve authorial independence we never interfere with content, which has proved the most effective way to bring innovative and quality work to the public. This time, however, we became aware of the protests and understood that some of the works in the *Queermuseum* exhibition disrespect certain symbols, beliefs and people, which is not in line with our worldview. When art is not capable of generating positive inclusion and reflection it loses sight of its greater purpose, which is to elevate the human condition. The Santander Cultural does not endorse any particular type of art, but rather art in its plurality, based on the deep respect that we have for each individual. For this reason, we decided to

nao-vejo-censura-diz-coordenadora-do-mbl-sobre-fim-de-mostra/(accessed on 10/03/2019).

⁵ Cf. *Rio Magazine*: ‘Veja imagens da exposição cancelada pelo Santander, no RS’. Available at <https://veja.abril.com.br/blog/rio-grande-do-sul/veja-imagens-da-exposicao-cancelada-pelo-santander-no-rs/> (accessed on 13/03/2019).

⁶ *Capital Magazine*: ‘Queermuseu e o falso liberalismo de Kim Kataguiiri’. Available at <https://www.cartacapital.com.br/cultura/queermuseu-e-o-falso-liberalismo-de-kim-kataguiiri/> (accessed on 12/03/2019).

Queermuseu’s curator Gaudencio Fidelis during a protest in Porto Alegre, 2017, Photo: Itamar Aguiar, VEJA Agency, São Paulo.



⁷ Santander Cultural (posted on their social account on Facebook): 'Nota sobre a exposição Queermuseu'. Posted on 10/09/2019: <https://www.facebook.com/SantanderCultural/posts/nota-sobre-a-exposiçao-queermuseunos-ultimos-dias-recebemos-diversas-manifestaçã/732513686954201/> (accessed on 13/03/2019).

⁸ Federal Public Prosecutor. Available at <http://www.mpf.mp.br/rs/sala-de-imprensa/docs/recomendacoes/2017/recomendacao-queermuseu-porto-alegre/view> (accessed on 12/3/2019).

close the exhibition on Sunday, 10 September. However, we remain committed to promoting the debate on diversity and other major contemporary issues⁷.

Following an investigation the Federal Public Prosecutor (MPF) concluded that the works did not incite to crime, and instructed Santander Cultural to reopen the exhibition immediately in Porto Alegre, in addition to organizing new exhibitions with diversity as the main theme. A note emphasized that '(...) according to the Rio Grande do Sul Public Prosecutor's office, the most attacked artworks on social media do not make any reference to, nor encourage the practice of, paedophilia. The rights of children and young people visiting the exhibition have not been harmed⁸. While it is true that works of art are the reflection of their time, including its contradictions, this episode uncovered the image of a conservative and authoritarian society. It also generated the possibility of a discussion on the micro politics of art (market, public sphere, taboos, etc) and the limitations of this field in contemporary Brazilian society.

Cartography of Difference

This episode has several nuances, and the proposal to bring together works that formed a cartography of difference was accurate in foretelling the events that followed the opening to the public. Cartography, as a research route (increasingly used in the field of the arts) privileges an emphasis on process over the achievement of goals defined a priori. In a cartography nothing is given; it is made of instabilities. By questioning the Cartesian-representational character of a phenomenon, it anchors itself in the recognition of the multiplicity of intersections that affect it.

Population protest in front of Santander Cultural at Porto Alegre, 2017, Photo: Isadora Neumann, RBS Agency, Porto Alegre.



As proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987): 'Multiplicities are reality itself, and do not suppose any unity, do not enter any totality, nor do they refer to a subject. Subjectivations, totalizations, unifications are, on the contrary, processes that are produced and appear in multiplicities'.

In analogy to processes that forge a vision of the body according to a pattern based on difference and multiplicity, as opposed to the normative standard currently accepted in the culture of modern western societies, particularly in the context of Latin American countries (the native territory of all the featured artists), a cartography of the effects generated by the exhibition unveils the connections, articulations, and prismatic reflections of how difference is perceived in contemporary Brazilian society, especially when diversity is expressed in relation to body and sex. It also shows the variations that this triggers. Cartography attempts to make explicit 'the network of forces to which the object or phenomenon is connected, giving account of its modulations and its permanent movement' (Barros et al, 2012, 57). By choosing the procedure over the outcome of the critical effort to represent an object or phenomenon in itself, the underlying message was that what is to be made explicit cannot be grasped as a conclusive set of considerations. Instead, it reinforces the primacy of the subjectivities' dynamics and the non-categorical character of the underlying processes that determined the phenomenon/object under analysis: 'for this reason, cartography defends the maintenance of a flexible positioning and open thinking beyond everything that may emerge in the context of problematization in which the object under study is situated' (Souza et al, 2016, p. 813).

In light of this, it is interesting to keep in mind the anticipatory character that the exhibition materialized, even if by analogy, in the totality of the works that it put together. What happened in the social realm following its opening is the effect of a different set of meanings, which it unlocked, and which were already latent in that society at that moment; it is these nuances, their paradoxes, and the conservative character of society, in collision with the open and flexible proposal of *Queermuseum*, which have exposed a society that stands against the freedom of expression and possibilities for dialogue that are characteristic of art.

To begin with, the censorship imposed on the exhibition revealed the power of social media mobilization, along with the disinformation of the general population and the programmatic fragility of cultural institutions more interested in guaranteeing returns on their marketing investments (achievable by promoting culture) than in actually fostering the cultural sector, as well their inability to deal with the subject (as shown in press releases). It became clear that, at the threshold of the twenty-first century, sex, sexual diversity and gender are still major taboos in Brazilian society. Moreover, the significance of having gathered the works of major modern and contemporary Brazilian artists, such as Alfredo Volpi, Candido Portinari, Clóvis Graciano and Lygia Clark was utterly disregarded. That conservative society aimed their weapons at a very small set of artworks which, despite not representing the spirit of the entire exhibition, pointed to what these good people did not want to

recognize: a cultural, sexual and political reality that differs from the standards they consider acceptable.

The strategy of questioning binary categories, even those supposed to cover diversity propositions, is central to a queer approach; that is where its strength lies: in doubting pre-established categories. Aiming at the construction of a wide questioning of the heteronormative, the exhibition proposed an open dialogue between art and society. Strangeness is the typical effect of such artistic proposals, which provoke a rethinking of historically marked categories. This is indeed the objective: 'In the cultural and artistic context, both the queer and the gender perspectives are making tensions in the way of producing knowledge in areas such as art history, as well as in the criteria for the elaboration of curatorship. Aesthetically, the way the exhibitions operate can change the thinking and self-image, both in audiences and artists, during the artistic process and (re) invention of self. The gay, the lesbian, the woman, the trans, the queer, the stranger, or the unidentified, propose themselves as affections, survive in streams of constant intervention in art' (Blanca, 2017, 105). In the course of this episode, some of the most commented artworks were *Crossing Jesus Christ with the God Shiva*, by Fernando Baril and *The Weight of Things*, by Sandro Ka, both promoting the encounter of the sacred and the profane. In a conservative society like Brazil, the largest Catholic nation in the world, (65% Catholics and 22% Evangelicals, according to the 2010 IBGE Census), this dialogue is obviously impossible. Some other works brought similar provocations, questioning the sacred and profane binomial, but those were the ones that received the most criticism from the religious groups active in social media. Works not dealing with Christian iconography, such as those focusing on African imagery, were not targeted. Indeed, the proposal to discuss the binomial 'things of the spirit' versus 'physical things' found no space in that context. Bia Leite's works *Adriano Bafônica* and *Luiz França She-ra, Transgender child lambada's transvestite* and *Queer child goddess of the waters* were the most circulated and commented images in the context of hysteria. They proposed a deconstruction of the taboos around the idea that sexual diversity may present itself even in childhood, calling for a frank and open discussion of the topic. Instead, the works were seen as promoting pornography and paedophilia, which spoke of a clear preference for obscurantism rather than information.

Beyond Simone de Beauvoir's widely accepted idea that one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one, Judith Butler (2003, 37) – who was also harassed during a visit to Brazil in November of the same year *Queermuseum* was opened/cancelled⁹ – questions the cultural mechanism of gender construction: 'What underlies the presupposition that there are identities identical to themselves, persistent over time, unified and internally coherent?'. For her, 'Gender is a complexity whose totality is permanently postponed, never fully displayed in any given conjuncture. An open coalition, therefore, would affirm identities alternately instituted and abandoned, according to the proposals in progress; it will be an assembly that allows multiple convergences and divergences, without obeying a normative and definitive *telos*'. (Idem)

These formulations never had the opportunity to come to light, even in the content of the exhibition's Educative Programme.

Finally, the most repudiated work in *Queermuseum* was the one that most openly proposed the debate about the triad of pleasure, sex and culture; *Interior Scene II*, by prestigious Brazilian artist Adriana Varejão, elicited the fiercest comments from those who saw in it nothing but immorality. As mentioned above, the work is a compilation of sexual practices, some historical, others based on literary narratives or collected in the artist's travels around the country. Maybe the opposition between a 'quiet life' and the 'vitality of the sexual scenes' depicted in Varejão's work was her intended mockery, but the only argument against it was that it featured a couple having sex with an animal, which therefore qualified it as 'degenerate art', to be persecuted and eliminated. Any similarity to Hitler's Nazi Germany is not a mere coincidence.

⁹ *Diário de Pernambuco*: 'Filósofa Judith Butler é recebida no Brasil sob gritos de 'bruxa', protestos e bonecos queimados'. Available at http://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/app/noticia/viver/2017/11/07/internas_viver,729978/filosofa-judith-butler-e-recebida-no-brasil-sob-gritos-de-bruxa-pro.shtml (accessed on 27/03/2019).



Fernando Baril, 'Cruzando Jesus Cristo com Deusa Shiva', 1996, Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 125 cm, Artist Collection, Photo: F. Zago, Studio Z, Courtesy the artist.

This paper does not intend to make an extensive commentary on the aesthetics and the possible purposes of the works shown in *Queermuseum*, mainly because there are more than two hundred of them. Moreover, it is also not in our central interest to reconstruct a historically informed argument about the reasons why certain issues still remain taboos in societies, especially in those moments of greater conservative backlash, as in the Brazilian experience of recent years, because much has already been written and because the relevance of this topic is perhaps no longer of interest to anyone, despite the validity of our findings.

About forty years ago (1980), in a work that became seminal in the country, Brazilian anthropologist José Carlos Rodrigues had already discussed aspects of the social construction of the body and how it is located in different societies and human cultures. For Rodrigues, the challenge is to show how the social dimension is the one that appropriates the body, so that the presumption of an 'increasingly physiological physiology', as well as that of an 'increasingly anatomical anatomy' becomes, for modern man, and in the face of hegemonic scientism, a kind of naturalization of what is in reality relational and symbolic (Rodrigues, 2006, 116). And yet the debate remains impossible to establish in more critical, open, and non-obscurantist terms. In this episode it is even more interesting to notice the role of art as an agent of discomfort, or of the artist / curator as a provocateur of reactions that otherwise remain hidden in the social and even artistic context. It has never been the role of art to pacify modes of understanding or to shape behaviours, but to provoke, to cause strangeness to instigate sensations and thoughts, and perhaps to open up possibilities for social debate. In this sense, among the many effects of *Queermuseum* is the ability to evoke a fruitful debate in the context of art itself (and beyond). Some of the various analytical explanations generated by the episode turned the prolific formulation of *Queermuseum* into an umbrella that would cover something larger, whose focus was indeed the provocative potential of art. Taking a step forward from this initial contradiction, we must pay particular attention to the curatorial strategy of this 'cultural enterprise' that takes queer history and imagery as a 'great umbrella' under which 'advanced knowledge about artistic production will be produced by deviation of the canonical norm'. The queer is 'instrumentalized' to 'subvert the consolidation of an essentialist identity politics as it allows for the deconstruction of gender barriers without imposing others', where it simultaneously focus on debates about sexuality and difference. The queer umbrella is armed to select some of its 'aspects' which, taken as conceptual, are 'instrumentalized' to think of art, its history and curatorial practice: 'Queer is therefore a gateway, a device, a conflict generator, evidence from which this exhibition was generated to build a platform for critical investigation of the formation of meaning through exhibitions' (Diniz, 2018, 241).

Given the total impossibility of establishing any dialogue about what was causing such strangeness, it seems to us reasonable that the biggest legacy of the exhibition is the debate around art and its possibilities. The curator himself designated the exhibition as a 'museum of detour', a curatorial platform to take a diversity

led approach. For Gaudêncio Fidelis, the exhibitions that generate challenging situations or call for the rethinking of the canon of art history are still few and far between. Which is why, from our point of view, *Queermuseum* served to open up a path that will hopefully be further consolidated in the country.

Final Considerations

This paper focused on the innovative artistic proposal of the exhibition *Queermuseum: Cartographies of Difference in Brazilian Art* and the effects it had on a conservative society. A section of the public received it with disgust and immediately rejected it; the two camps defended something that seemed indefensible to the other; between them stood a cultural institution committed to a programmatic project whose social function limits were exposed by the context. This last aspect seems especially relevant to us, precisely due to the institutional characteristics it incorporates.

While here we have not presented all arguments concerning the aesthetical or technical aspects of the curator's artistic choices, that does not mean they did not exist. Instead they were not as prominent as the political aspects that are the object of this analysis. Even regarding the political aspects, a host of other issues were not addressed here, such as the supposed lost opportunity for deepening the debate about the queer context in the country and in Latin America¹⁰, or its setting in less 'mercantile' terms. In the curator's words (Amorim, 2019), the group that had the most difficulty in understanding the exhibition's proposal was that of art critics. Questioned about the lack of representativeness of queer artists in the exhibition, Fidelis defends himself by stating that the exhibition could not falsify a reality that actually does not exist and that *Queermuseum's* goal was never to be an inclusive exhibition. These and dozens of other aspects of *Queermuseum* are still to be addressed, as it remains an excellent exemplar for social, cultural, political and artistic analysis.

The role played by Santander Cultural, as a cultural institution whose mission is to endow the arts and knowledge, in no way corresponded to their own discourse. Not only in Brazil, but also throughout the world, transnational corporations have used the promotion of the arts as an institutional marketing strategy. In Brazil, the Culture Promotion Law deployed around R\$ 50 billion between 1993 (when it was passed) and 2018. This mechanism is, in fact, misappropriated by business interests, which use the State's tax waiver to promote the reputation of private companies, almost always privileging large-scale prestigious artistic proposals and betting little on experimental expressions or on those with potential for development of the cultural field in the country. The surprise of having the *Queermuseum* promoted by Santander, through the Incentive Law mechanism, opened an excep-

¹⁰ See for example: 'Falta Queer em Queermuseum', available at <http://revistacaju.com.br/2018/08/19/falta-queer-em-queermuseum/> (accessed on 11/24/2019) and 'Queermuseum Parque Lage 2018: você sabe o que significa queer?', available at <https://coletivoseusputos.wordpress.com> (accessed on 11/24/2019).



Flávio Cerqueira, 'Amnesia', 2015,
Latex on bronze, 137 x 30 x 26
cm, Edição de 5, Artist Collection,
Courtesy the Casa Triângulo Gallerie,
Photo: Rômulo Fialdini, Courtesy the
artist and Casa Triângulo Gallerie,
São Paulo.

tion that was never again to occur, since the company gave in to conservative claims so as to benefit its own image.

Brought by the increase in private investment in culture, the expansion of the cultural offer experienced across the world has no validity when this type of strategy is adopted, and such has invariably been the programmatic line of these cultural spaces. It is up to us, managers, artists, curators and other specialists to challenge a type of promotion that fosters neither a democratic and plural culture nor the arts as a space for experimentation and symbolic representation, but is used to promote the brands, goods and services of the companies themselves and, in some cases, is funded by public resources that should be invested in the plurality of expressions within the culture.

Finally, it is very likely that the institutional response to which we are referring is a reflection of the political strategy of the current times. The conservatism of the present moment promotes a certain policy of adaptation to the model rather than questioning the naturalization of what is not natural. The postmodern man wants mirrors while this type of art delivers magnifying glasses; perhaps that is the cause of the objections to it. What is certain is that, at least concerning this episode, the artists aligned themselves with the purpose of an art exonerated to fit into the societal patterns from which they departed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amorim, S. 2019. 'Queermuseu: Criminalização da Produção Artística e o Papel da Arte nas Democracias', an interview with Gaudêncio Fidelis, curator of the exhibition *Queermuseum: cartographies of difference in Brazilian art*. CCT – Cities, Communities and Territories Journal. DINÂMIA'CET-IUL. ISCTE. 39 (Dez).
- Barros, L.P., Kastrup, V. 2012. 'Cartografar é acompanhar processos', in Passos, E.; Kastrup, V.; Escóssia, L. (Org.). *Pistas do método da cartografia: pesquisa intervenção e produção de subjetividade*. Porto Alegre: Sulina.
- Blanca, R.M. 2017. 'Exposições queer: Contextos mundiais e locais'. *Cadernos de Gênero e Diversidade*. UFBA, 3, 3: 93-107.
- Butler, J. 2003. *Problemas de gênero: feminismo e subversão da identidade*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira.
- Deleuze, G., Guatarri, F. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Diniz, C. 2018. 'Queermuseu: decifra-me ou te devoro'. 2018. *Revista Concinnitas*, 19, 33, pp. 238-263.
- Fidelis, G. 2018. 'O museu do desvio', in *Queermuseum: cartografias da diferença na arte brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: AMEAV.

Fidelis, G. 2018. *Queermuseu: cartografias da diferença na arte brasileira*, exh. cat. Rio de Janeiro: AMEAV.

Rodrigues, J.C. 2006. *Tabu do Corpo*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fiocruz.

Souza, S.R.L., Francisco, A.L. 2016. 'O método da cartografia em pesquisa qualitativa: estabelecendo princípios, desenhando caminhos'. 2016. *Investigação Qualitativa em Saúde//Investigación Cualitativa en Salud//Volume 2: Atas – Investigação Qualitativa em Saúde*, pp. 811-820.

MADNESS AND SEX: MEETINGS BETWEEN PSYCHIATRY AND ART

STEFANIE GIL FRANCO

Instituto de História da Arte
Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas
Universidade Nova de Lisboa
steffranco@gmail.com

¹ The fair was created in New York in 1993 with the aim of bringing together outsiders and self-taught artists. Twenty years later, the fair expanded to Paris. It currently takes place in both cities, on an annual basis.

² 'Known/unknown: private obsession and hidden desire in outsider art'. Museum of Sex. https://www.museumofsex.com/portfolio_page/known-unknown/ (accessed 14 April 2020).

³ Battersby, Matilda. 'The Museum of Sex: The show of outsider artists and sex is set to shock'. Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/the-museum-of-sex-manhattan-new-york-outsider-artists-a7529896.html> (accessed 14 April 2020).

In 2017, the Museum of Sex, in Manhattan, featured an exhibition titled *Known/Unknown: Private Obsession and Hidden Desire in Outsider Art*. In collaboration with the Outsider Art Fair¹, it intended to show self-taught artists who expressed themselves somehow through erotic or sexual themes. It emphasized the meeting-point between the theme of eroticism, or sexuality, and artists who had somehow produced 'outside the continuum of art history'. As the summary on the museum page explains:

The art in *Known/Unknown* is a long way from the typical art world. Many of the artists in the exhibit are self-taught, with little formal education, and range from institutionalized mental patients, to intellectually disabled people, to untutored isolates and eccentrics. Their pieces were often created in seemingly unlikely places; ranging from the sanctuary of psychiatric hospitals to private realms hidden within the lonely, impersonal jungles of teeming cities.² As *The Independent* reported: 'It is believed to be the first time a collection of erotic artworks by outsider artists have been brought under one roof'³. It is possible that this was the first time a curatorship had been designed on this aspect of outsider art. While the close connection of outsider art, or art brut, with the themes of sexuality, pornography and eroticism is already well-known among scholars and art brut specialized collectors, it is not so well known outside this inner circle. If we attempt to tie these themes together, a link emerges the fact that most outsiders come from backgrounds with a psychiatric history, which in turn carries with it a history of confinement of the attitudes considered as 'sexual deviations'. Looking at it from another angle, these artists, sometimes called self-taught, would often have a propensity to expose their innermost thoughts in a way that could not be

vetoed by the ego or by social morality. In this sense, there are two basic principles that link outsider art and the themes of the exhibition; on one hand, it was brought about by the psychiatrization of those with a background of so-called sexual deviations and, on the other, by the sexual freedom these minds would be apt to.

One way or another, the central axis of this relationship is 'sexual deviance' as conduct. However, what is of artistic interest is precisely the possibility to deviate from the norm – both in the formal sense and in terms of ideas – by joining an 'outsider' existence and an 'eccentric' theme. Well known amongst art theorists, the German outsider Friedrich Schröder-Sonnenstern (1892-1982) is an example of this erotic manifestation:

...erotic compulsions erupt in a series of startling scenarios, polymorphous and spectacular. His creatures range from caricatural humans, including females with grotesquely exaggerated sexual attributes, to dragons and devils of weird shapes and colours.... (Cardinal 2012, 107).

The Schröder-Sonnenstern expression, along with other outsiders, as art subject and not just as delirium is part of a complex tangle of issues, involving nosographic criteria and the politics of art. To be more specific, the way art theorists present and conceptualize such artists contains, between the lines, a close and conflicting relationship between art theory and psychiatry.

In order to have a better understanding of this process, it is necessary to understand how 'sexual deviants' become psychiatric subjects. Or rather, one must understand why 'sexual deviance' and 'mental deviance' are intimately connected historically, and at which point it becomes possible to speak of an erotic aesthetics in outsider art or *art brut*.

This article proposes a contribution to this debate, connecting psychiatric and art issues, with an emphasis on themes of sexuality as topics of interest to *art brut* or outsider art. It is not the aim of this article to make an historical or bibliographic survey, but instead to raise some questions about such relations, which will certainly depend on the specific contexts and authors. This article develops in two ways, the first being the conceptual and theoretical recollection of some nosographic models that transform deviant sexualities into mental illness, and the second, a proposal to think about the ways in which art contacts with these expressions of madness and fits them into the world as *art brut* or outsider art.

First, however, a brief appendix is necessary. The term outsider art emerged in the early 1970s, when it was coined by the critic and art theorist Roger Cardinal – partly in contrast and partly in addition to the term *art brut*. In short, the concept in the English language suggests it as being broader than in the French vernacular, by incorporating within its limits other forms of marginalized art, such as urban art itself, naive and folk art, as well as some (but not all) artists from art therapy studios: Now, it might well be objected that is not individual art works which change but rather people's perceptions of them, and what Dubuffet and Thèvoz have ended up doing is to mark out a defensive buffer zone around art brut (...) This, I submit, is as unsatisfactory in principle as it is in practice (Cardinal 1994, 27).

⁴ Prinzhorn argued that between the mind of the sick and the minds of normal subjects, there was a very tenuous transition, and moreover, a continuity as far as creative impulses were concerned. His work is essentially a thesis on what drives men to impulse, and therefore, focuses heavily on a comparison between the aesthetics of the primitive, alienated, the children and the naive. Theoretically it departs from phenomenological and psychoanalytical readings, separating the objectivity of the form from the symbolic emblem, considering that to understand this creative impulse it was necessary to look at the expressiveness of the formal structure, which would lead us to the psychological processes.

⁵ From a conversation between Jean Dubuffet and the researcher John MacGregor held in 1976. In MacGregor 1989, 358, note 4.

⁶ I quote here the English edition *Artistry of the Mentally Ill: A Contribution to the Psychology and Psychopathology of Configuration* (1995).

⁷ The collection, which still exists today at the Heidelberg Hospital, was founded by the director of the clinic, Dr Karl Wilmanns, who, given Prinzhorn's academic background and knowledge of the arts in general, supported him in expanding the collecting of works and writing about them. The Prinzhorn Collection can be visited at one of Heidelberg Hospital's pavilions.

⁸ Walter Morgenthaler, a psychiatrist who was particularly influenced by the readings of Carl Jung, published a study of one of his patients, 'Ein Geisteskranken als Künstler: Adolf Wölfli' ([1921] 1992). This is the critical and psychological analysis of the artistic expressions of a patient at the Waldau Clinic, near Bern. An important issue to note is the identification of the patient by name, that is, a subject, rather than a diagnosis, is identified. Someone with an identity, life history and a large pictorial production that expresses itself through a peculiar language. Wölfli today is one of the most well-known representatives of *art brut*. In turn, Marcel Reja published the study 'L'art chez les fous: le dessin, la prose, la poesie' in 1907. There is no evidence that his

The concept of *art brut* was born in the 1940s, when Jean Dubuffet started an art collection – from drawings and sculptures, to paintings and writings – that had in their context the quality of not being produced as artistic expressions, that is, of being 'non-cultural' expressions. The main idea, then, was not only to collect artworks exclusively from psychiatric hospital patients, but also from subjects who were somehow inspired to create without considering the approval of, or exhibition by, art institutions as an end to their works, which were, in most cases, completed without formal training or technical knowledge. These were 'innate' creators, so to speak. However, it is well known that a large part of the works in his collection came from institutional psychiatric environments, in short, because it was in such places that a great number of asylum subjects, with their own original ideas and imaginations, lived and created.

The definition of the concept of *art brut* was in part inspired by the work of Hans Prinzhorn⁴:

Prinzhorn's book struck me very strongly when I was young. It showed me the way and was a liberating influence. I realized that all was permitted, all was possible. I wasn't the only one. Interest in the art of the insane and the rejection of established culture was very much 'in the air' in the 1920s. The book has an enormous influence on modern art (Dubuffet apud MacGregor 1989, 292)⁵. The book, *Bildneri der Geisteskranken* (1922)⁶, sought empirical proof that there was a basic impulse that somehow led individuals to expressive practices:

... *des productions de tout espèce – dessins, peintures, broderies, figures modelé ou sculptées, etc – présentant un caractère spontané et fortement inventif, aussi peu que possible débitrices de l'art costumier ou des poncifs culturels, et ayant pour auteurs des personnes obscures, étrangères aux milieux artistiques professionnels* (Dubuffet 1967, 175).

It is important to mention that Prinzhorn propagated the idea of the 'schizophrenic masters' starting with ten cases selected by him from his experience as a psychiatrist at Heidelberg Hospital. The rules for choosing the works analysed were based on well-established principles⁷:

We should say only this about the types and origins of our materials: it consists almost exclusively of works by inmates of institutions – by men and women whose mental illness is not in doubt. Second, the works are spontaneous and arose out of the patients' own inner needs without any kind of outside inspiration, third, we are dealing primarily with patients who were untrained in drawing and painting; that is, they had received no instruction except during their school years. To summarize, the collection consists mainly of spontaneous created pictures by untrained mental patients (Prinzhorn [1922] 1995, 3). In his view, the self-taught subjects would introduce into their expressions the most intimate elements, without worrying about the ideals imposed by art, or rather, the 'cultural' ideals of art. In short, theorists like Prinzhorn – such as Walter Morgenthaler and Marcel Reja⁸ – cast an interested eye on the mentally ill and, in an inventive manner, helped develop art criticism of the insane.

However, it was thanks to Jean Dubuffet's concept that it became possible to give the 'schizophrenic masters' an identity that went beyond the scientific pragmatism of the psychiatric sciences and made possible their insertion in the universe of the arts, more specifically galleries, fairs and museums. Dubuffet proposed a notion to open up institutional spaces to 'non-cultural' art expressions outside psychiatric hospitals⁹. However, it should be clear that when we talk about *art brut*, we talk about a collection of specific characteristics, which can be appreciated from an aesthetical perspective. In other words, it is not any mental scrawl that will become an art object. In short, they are artists who generally construct a continuum in their works, with respect to the technical qualities or conceptual definitions. This is very close to what Prinzhorn observed.

On some occasions, the concepts of art brut and outsider art are merged, such as in the Outsider Art Fair, which considers one term a precursor of the other¹⁰. As defined, by the organization itself:

Dubuffet and Cardinal were writing primarily about extremely marginalized European artists: psychotics, mediums, and eccentrics. This has caused the common misconception that Outsider Art is essentially pathological, when in fact the central characteristic shared by Outsiders is simply their lack of conditioning by art history or art world trends. Over the years, the parameters of Outsider Art have expanded dramatically to include art made by a wide variety of art-makers who share this common denominator of raw creativity. Outsiders come from all walks of life, from all cultures, from all age groups¹¹.

This idea that outsiders are, in general, the result of pathological or eccentric conditions is not necessarily a misunderstanding, instead it represents the course developed for constructing this idea further.

To begin with, at the turn of the twentieth century, all individuals who somehow corrupted good moral conduct, whether by physical or behavioural causality were rendered incapable of living within society and were placed in asylums. The theory of degeneration, which prevailed in the process of institutionalizing psychiatry as science, predicted that alienation was, in general, an organic type generated and transformed by successive hereditary reproductions. That is, the primary background of the degenerative disease was hereditary, so it was necessary to protect individuals of 'good genetic composition' so that humanity would not corrupt itself into degeneration. The theory of degeneration predicted that the excessive transmission of defective characters would lead mankind to be aborted – after all, 'idiotia' would be the last evolutionary stage of degeneracy, 'in which sterility comes to a happy conclusion to this degeneration of the race' (Bombarda 1896, 34). It was a civilizing project above all, which provided for educating society about marriages, hereditary processes, moral deficiencies and their physical defects. This scientific stance led to a clearly political and social position, after all, society had to be educated in order to recognize the danger before it became a disease.

Deviant sexuality – whether in the form of homosexuality, pederasty, paedophilia, impulsiveness or obsessive desire – was, in these terms, a degenerative symptom

book intends to produce a catalogue of illnesses from expressive forms, rather it is a study of the different ways people express their emotions, ideas and feelings. From his point of view, to arrive at the complexity of nature, every science must rather understand it in its simplest or most elementary forms. He applies the same analysis to art criticism, that is, to comprehend the purest forms of expression, and then to understand the more complex ways of manifesting 'the nature of the beautiful'. A biographical note is important: the playwright, essayist and art critic Marcel Reja is, in fact, the pseudonym of the psychiatrist Paul Gaston Meunier.

⁹ There were already numerous collections of art in psychiatric hospitals at the time, as well as in the private collections of avant-garde modernist artists. In the I Congrès Mondial de Psychiatrie (1950), in Paris, collections from seventeen countries around the world were gathered in an exhibition titled *Art Psychopathologique*, including the *art brut* collection of Compagnie de L'Art Brut, created by Jean Dubuffet. On this, see the analysis made by Robert Volmat (1956).

¹⁰ Hall and Metcalf indicate other differences: "In Europe much more of the debate on the artist outsider focuses on what was originally known as art brut, and more recently as outsider art – the art of obsessive visionaries or the patients of mental institutions. In the United States, outsider art has been understood more broadly than in Europe and has often been popularly conflated with folk art, ethnic art, and many other gestures produced by various outsider groups and individuals". (Hall and Metcalf 1994, xii).

¹¹ 'Outsider Art Fair'. <https://www.outsiderartfair.com/the-field> (accessed 14 April 2020).

¹² Atavism, an idea initially developed in Italy by psychiatrists Eugenio Tanzi and Gaetano Riva, presupposed that humanity evolved towards a decreasing subjectivism, in which the egocentric state, typical of childhood, was what combined degenerations as a deviation towards ancestry.

¹³ In other words, if Lombroso regarded the criminal as the reflection or resurgence of a distant past, he also considered the expressions of the mentally ill as a return of savage scrawl. The Lombrosian atavism (1887) predicted that much of what was in the expressions of the 'geniuses' was no more than a reunion with the primitive ancestors, concluding that the genius seemed like a morbid condition of epileptic nature.

of atavistic and hereditary causality¹². In short, deviant sexual behaviour was instituted as a disease. There is a social weight when one speaks of the acceptance of a scientific discourse as a social norm. In other words, from the moment psychiatric science proposed normative axes of sexuality, this created a tangible effect on people and society:

C'est vers les années 1870 que les psychiatres ont commencé à en faire une analyse médicale: point de départ, c'est certain, pour toute une série d'interventions et de contrôles nouveaux. On commence soit à interner les homosexuels dans les asiles, soit à entreprendre de les soigner... (Foucault 1996, 260).

All sexual behaviour comes to be understood, so to speak, within a key of observation of symptoms:

The sexual instinct toward the opposite sex may be strengthened by the exercise of will and self-control; by moral treatment, and possibly by hypnotic suggestion; by improvement of the constitution and the removal of neuroses (neurasthenia); but especially by abstinence from masturbation. However, there is always the danger that homo-sexual feelings, in that they are the most powerful, may become permanent, and lead to enduring and exclusive contrary sexual instinct. This is especially to be feared as a result of the influences of masturbation (just as in acquired inversion of the sexual instinct) and its neurasthenia and consequent exacerbations; and further, it is to be found as a consequence of unfavourable experiences in sexual intercourse with persons of the opposite sex (defective feeling of pleasure in coitus, failure in coitus on account of weakness of erection and premature ejaculation, infection). On the other hand, it is possible that aesthetic and ethical sympathy with persons of the opposite sex may favour the development of heterosexual desires. Thus, it happens that the individual, according to the predominance of favourable or unfavourable influences, experiences now hetero-sexual, now homo-sexual, feeling (Kraft-Ebing 1894, 231).

In this same way, the expressions of the alienated and degenerate have come to be read as a significant part of the symptomatic picture. And from expressions such as facial and bodily, which included the tattoos that were common in collections of photographs, as in plastic, artistic or literary expressions, that is, in drawings, paintings and texts. To express intimate feelings could ultimately serve as an alert of a mental condition.

Under the strong influence of degeneration theorists, more specifically August Morel and Césaire Lombroso, there was the idea of a close connection between the man of 'genius' and the 'madman', which led many physicians to seek concrete examples of this relationship in empirical research within hospitals and asylums¹³. Such investigations brought much more than illustrative examples to include not only nosographic pictures, but also a series of 'expressions' which denoted interesting aspects relating to formal and aesthetic characteristics. In other words, psychiatrists began taking interest over the expressions of the 'insane' with the purpose of grouping degenerate types into 'common motives'. In the same way

that skulls were collected for anthropometric analyses, drawings and paintings, tattoos and writings were collected in order to corroborate with mental evaluations.

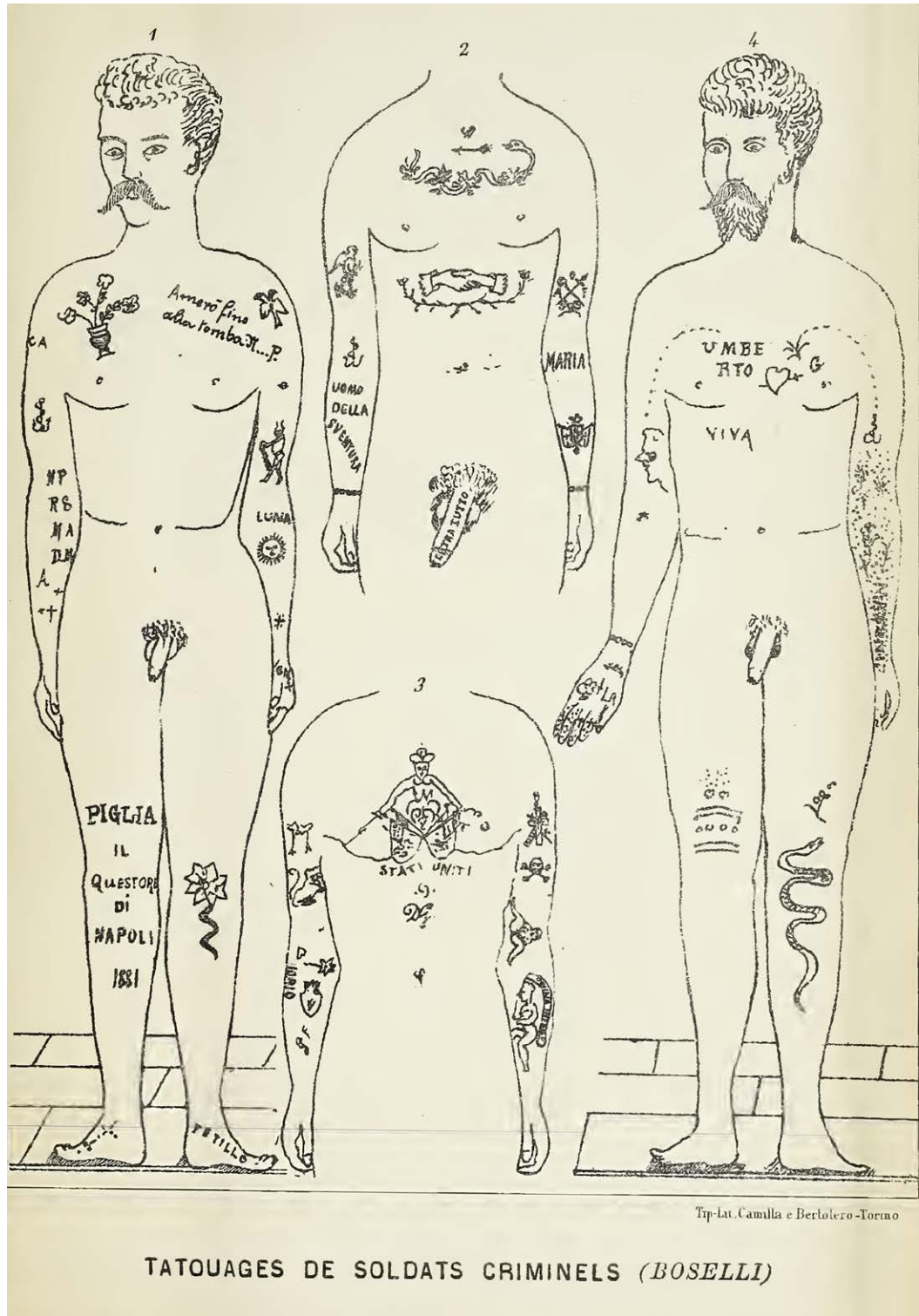
In this process of the delimitation of degenerative causalities 'deviant sexuality' represented one of the main sources of hospitalization and criminalization. Obscenity, above all, came to be understood as a behaviour to be prevented in society. Lombroso, in his book *L'uomo di genio* (1894), analysed cases of patients with artistic tendencies – based on the method prescribed by the theory of degeneration – in order to understand the qualities of subjects. From this starting point, his greatest certainty was that degenerate individuals could only translate into expressions what was the intrinsic representation of their degenerative state. The drawings, the paintings and the writings thus maintained a relation of coexistence with the psychic state of each individual. Lombroso witnessed a series of common characteristics among the analysed works, having as an analytical principle the triad: formal aspects, content or matter and the author's behavioural state. Among the identified characteristics, there is obscenity¹⁴, which he describes:

In some work done by erotomaniacs, paralytics, and demented patients, the salient characteristic, both of the drawings and of the verses, is the most shameless indecency. Thus, a cabinet-maker would carve virile members at every corner of a piece of furniture, or at the summits of trees. This, too, recalls many works of savages and of ancient races, in which the organs of sex are everywhere prominent. A captain at Genoa was fond of drawing scenes in a brothel. In many the obscene character is marked by the most singular pretexts, as though it were demanded by artistic requirements. A monomaniac priest used to sketch his figures nude, and then artfully drape them by means of lines which revealed the generative organs. He defended himself against criticism by saying that his figures could only appear indecent to those who were in search of evil (Lombroso 1917, 200).

It is important to point out this moment because, as stated above, it determines 'deviant sexuality' as a degenerate and, as such, criminal attitude. It must also be considered that while not every degenerate was a criminal, every criminal was, as a rule, a degenerate. Sexual deviations, including homosexuality, became criminal matters for Lombroso and his followers.

Psychiatry, independent of theoretical choices, was founded as a science from aspects that could be observed as 'symptoms', and it is from this analytic approach that the 'sexual' or 'erotic' characteristics in the artworks of asylum subjects emerged. In the words of Marcel Reja, in a reading as artistic as it is alienist: *La traduction de l'émotion sexuelle, si fréquente chez l'homme normal n'est pas indifférente au fou. Le nombre de dessins simplement obscènes confectionnés par des fous est prodigieux. Ici encore on retrouve tous les degrés, suivant l'habileté et le sens artistique de l'auteur, de la plus basse obscénité jusqu'à stylization la plus élégante.* (Reja 1907, 36)

¹⁴ These include, among others: originality, eccentricity, symbolism, criminality and moral insanity, uselessness, insanity as a subject, absurdity, uniformity, summary, bizarre. These characteristics were largely in the works analysed by Lombroso, which for him confirm the thesis that in the mentality of degenerates they reproduced forms, colours and subjects in a constant way.



Anonymous. Tattoos of criminal soldiers observed by Boselli. In Lombroso, Cesare. Deuxième Édition. Bocca Frères Éditeurs, Rome, Turin, Florence, 1888, PL XXXII)



Anonymous. Drawing-type of megalomaniac creator of the world. In Lombroso, Cesare. *L'uomo di genio*. Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1894, Tv. XIV)

¹⁵ Diseases were categorized and divided into two major groups: ‘Manic-depressive psychoses’, which included the types of melancholy and mania; and the ‘dementias praecox’, containing all the regressive frames such as catatonias, paralysis, dementias, and so on.

¹⁶ Unlike Kraepelin, Bleuler considered that the mental illness disorder would be a disintegration of the associative capacities of thought, suggesting the term schizophrenia-like concept. Influenced by Freud’s theories, he did not see disease as a deterioration of the subject and therefore suggested a hypothesis based on the symbolic experience of the schizophrenic patient, something very close to what Carl Jung later called ‘archetypes of the collective unconscious’. With this association, Bleuler created the possibility of thinking a psychodynamic of the mental illnesses, as opposed to the classic, strictly biological vision of Kraepelin.

¹⁷ The concept of ‘homosexuality’ actually became part of the CID in 1948: ‘from the 6th Revision (1948), in Category 320 Personality Pathology, as one of the inclusion terms of subcategory 320.6 Sexual Deviation. The 7th Revision (1955) was thus maintained, and in the 8th Revision (1965) homosexuality left the category ‘Pathological Personality’ was in the category ‘Sexual Deviance and Disorders’ (code 302), with the specific subcategory being 302.0 – Homosexuality. A 9a. Revision (1975), currently in force, maintained homosexuality in the same category and sub-category, but, considering divergent opinions from psychiatric schools, put the following orientation under the code: Code homosexuality here whether or not it is considered mental disorder. (Laurent 1984). In http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0034-89101984000500002.

¹⁸ Homosexuality had already been excluded in 1973 from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) by the American Psychiatric Association.

At this point in time, different theories converge and diverge in the attempt to understand and to categorize the different forms of sexuality. One of the most important contributions, certainly, is Freud’s *Three Essays on Sexuality*. In Freud’s view, it is a serious error to consider the ‘sexual inversions’ – such as homosexuality or hermaphroditism – as, in essence, degenerations, and much less should they be thought of in the debate about whether they are ‘innate’ or ‘acquired’. Above all, Freud criticizes the positivism of Valentin Magnan and August Morel, for whom ‘sexual inversions’ were considered morbid ‘aberrations’, that is, essentially degenerative.

In contrast to the Freudian ideas, there was the taxonomy proposed by Emil Kraepelin – recognized as the ‘father of modern psychiatry’¹⁵ –, which was based strictly on the terms of the natural sciences and whose main tool was the triad ‘observation-description-classification’. An important point in his studies is that the idea of subjectivity is practically annulled, as the description of the subject about himself and his psychic state was seen as counterproductive to the clinical diagnosis, since a large part of psychic illnesses made it impossible for the subjects to speak clearly or falsify incongruent ideas¹⁶.

Between one imperative and another, biological psychiatry has always predominated in terms of state policies or institutional practices. ‘Sexual deviations’ endured both medical and religious intolerance, culminating in various treatments such as hypnosis, lobotomy, and later psychotropic resources. To summarize, without trying to make a history of sexuality or of psychiatry, it is important to realize that if there is a relationship between erotic or sexualized expressions and outsider art, it begins at the moment of criminalization of ‘sexual deviations’. It becomes common in this context to seek symbolic meanings for such expressions; after all, they appeared as atavistic remnants that subjected the minds of the insane to certain forms and contents.

In the 1970s, three events converge in the same logic of sense. With the emergence of movements fighting for the recognition of sexual diversity, there began to appear a separation, in terms of deviant sexuality, in what should be considered either a pathological or criminal issue (such as paedophilia) or biological and / or identity issue (such as homosexuality). Concomitantly, there was the growth of anti-psychiatric and anti-asylum movements. And, thirdly, it was at the same stage that the term outsider art arose. As much as these may seem issues totally isolated from each other, they are in fact events that arise from the same historical context.

Some groups linked to homosexual movements, in as early as the 1980s, demanded that the World Health Organization (WHO) withdraw from the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) the sub-category 302.0 referring to ‘homosexuality’ – included in Category 302 ‘Deviations and Sexual Disorders, Chapter V: Mental Disorders’¹⁷. Such a feat only came to pass in the 1990 revision, when the WHO effectively eliminated Homosexuality from the ICD classifications¹⁸. The action, in short, not only removed homosexuality as a mental disorder, but beyond that eliminated it

from the biological normalization that saw the inherent issues of sexual variability as 'pathological'. Being homosexual became, in the view of medical classifications, a variation of biological and / or psychological behaviour, but not a pathology: Nevertheless, the idea that one must indeed finally have a true sex is far from being completely dispelled. Whatever the opinion of biologists on this point, the idea that there exist complex, obscure, and essential relationships between sex and truth is to be found – at least in a diffused state – not only in psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and psychology, but also in current opinion. We are certainly more tolerant in regard to practices that break the law. But we continue to think that some of these are insulting to 'the truth': we may be prepared to admit that a 'passive' man, a 'virile' woman, people of the same sex who love one another, do not seriously impair the established order; but we are ready enough to believe that there is something like an 'error' involved in what they do. An 'error' as understood in the most traditionally philosophical sense: a manner of acting that is not adequate to reality. (Foucault 1980, X).¹⁹

Certainly, years of violence, exclusion and the pathologization of homosexuality as sexual deviance, instilled in social morality a series of judgments and values that would not be escaped from instantaneously following the change in definition. However, it was from this advance that there was a greater possibility of seeing eroticization in outsider art not as the result of a disease, or the representation of it, but, as an expressiveness similar to any other: 'from a few artists who have developed an obsession for sexual matters, it seems that there is no more sex in outsider or self-taught art than in any other artistic field; far less anyway the other prevalent themes' (Danchin 2012, 125). In other words, outsider art, as a concept within the artistic domain, enables these self-taught artists to represent their sexual and erotic imaginations without being interpreted through the lens of a pathological background.

In 2012²⁰, *Raw Vision* published a special issue titled 'Raw Erotica', questioning, above all, the existence of a predisposition or a way of recognizing eroticism in outsider art. Colin Rhodes begins his introduction by distinguishing 'pornography' and 'erotica':

Pornography is produced in a disinterested way, to be consumed by strangers... Erotica, on the contrary, is engaged and connected. Audiences that are not the artist (who, of course, is also audience) join a continuum of reception and interaction with representations in which the artist is more centrally located. Moreover, it is much more likely that erotica can be regarded aesthetically without the central sexual demand in pornography that results either in a response of sexual arousal or revulsion. (Rhodes 2012, 5)

For Rhodes if there is a 'raw vision' in art, or rather an art that can be distinguished from others by its experience as outsider or *brut*, there is also a 'raw erotica', defined as a 'singular theory or science of love constructed without recourse to cultural convention' (idem, 1). In this sense, the idea is to construct a non-path-

¹⁹ Michel Foucault became an important reference both in the discussions about madness and sexuality, his two most important subjects of study. He is cited here not only because of this, but to point out a moment when these themes, considered within biological psychiatry, begin to be faced also in a philosophical proposal of thought. It is important to remember that Michel Foucault was not only a philosopher, but he also held a diploma in pathological psychology (1952), proving a keen interest in the psychology of Merleau-Ponty, Freud and Lacan, among others. His thinking corroborates the history of psychiatric practices in order to question how madness becomes 'mental illness', with concrete and describable symptoms. The same can be thought about the subject of homosexuality (Bert and Basso 2015).

²⁰ Many of the artists mentioned in the magazine reappear in the exhibition of the Museum of Sex, such as Henry Darger or Eugene Von Bruenchenhein.

²¹ Some of the names quoted in *Raw Erotica*: Josef Schneller, Oskar Deitmeyer e Heinrich Lutz, Friedrich Schröder-Sonnenstern, Henry Speller. And more contemporary: Gérard Sendrey, Johann Garber and Ota Keiti.

ological argument between the erotic expression and the outsider subject. From another point of view, if outsider art is dependent on the artists' life stories or trajectories, since they define the self-taught character of production, 'erotica' is in many cases a reflection of these trajectories. Specifically, 'sexual inversions', to retake the Freudian term, become significant parts of the life stories of many outsider artists.

The great inventive possibility of outsider art as a concept is to provide visibility to certain forms of expressiveness, often considered hermetic in the ideas they manifest. This ideal, 'is more complicated in the case of erotica, where art production as private or hermetic act is joined by visual and psychological content whose exposure has in general been regarded conventionally' (Rhodes 2012, 12). Following this idea, Roger Cardinal declares:

It is indeed the case that the erotic productions of outsiders tend to be outspoken and uncompromising, for this private art is also an art of self-assertion, one which entirely ignores the fact that an audience of other people might one day approve or disapprove of that is being shown. Private imagery is all the more satisfying to the artist who is his own first and potentially sole spectator (Cardinal 2012, 107-108).

Outsider art opens up the concepts of contemporary art and often projects this possibility as a narrative for scenes of eroticism or other customary themes in outsiders' expressions. In this way, it projects the signs of 'illness', 'symptom' or 'deviation' as particular characteristics of certain outsiders, or rather, as the concept or intentionality of the work and the artist, before being defined as 'outsiders'.

There are numerous examples of outsiders or *bruts* dialogues with the erotic themes, which is not for this article to explore²¹. The *Raw Erotica* magazine emerges, despite the title, from a stance of demystification of erotic themes in outsider art. To wit, eroticism or explicit sexuality in outsider art does not stand out from other subjects, but it is as subjective as it is. Finally, if outsider art is supported by the subjectivity of the expressions, the eroticism or the 'object of desire' also have singular meanings, intentions and intentionality and to seek an external explanation for such expressions can go into disagreement with the very meaning of outsider art:

The erotic impulse can achieve expression in many ways. Artistic statements fuelled by sexual desire typically veer between the poles of the explicit and the oblique, the outspoken and the discreet. Some artists let loose a joyous flow of pointed references, unashamedly signalling sexual excitement in stark formations that require no caption: here a phallus, there a vulva, no explanation needed. (Cardinal 2012, 97)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bert, Jean-François and BASSO, Elisabetta. 2015. *Foucault à Münsterlingen. À l'origine de l'histoire de la folie*. Paris: Éditions de L'Éhess.
- Bombarda, Miguel. 1896. *Lições sobre a epilepsia e as pseudo-epilepsias*. Lisboa: Livraria de António Maria Pereira.
- Cardinal, Roger. 2012. 'Depicting the object of desire', in Maizels, John and Rhodes, Colin. *Raw Erotica*. UK: Raw Vision Magazine.
- Danchin, Laurent. 2012. 'Sex as a matter of fact in the work of five European outsiders', in Maizels, John and Rhodes, Colin. *Raw Erotica*. UK: Raw Vision Magazine.
- Dubuffet, Jean. 1949. *L'art brut préféré aux art culturel*. Paris: Galerie René Drouin.
- Dubuffet, Jean. 1967. *Prospectus et tous écrits suivants*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Gilman, Sander. 1985. *Difference and pathology. Stereotypes of sexuality, race and madness*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1980. 'Introduction', in *Herculine Barbin: Being the recently discovered memoirs of a nineteenth-century French hermaphrodite*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, Michel. 1994. *Dits et écrits 3*. Paris: Édition Gallimard.
- Hall, Michael D. and Metcalf, Eugene W. 1994. *The artist outsider: creativity and boundaries of culture*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Krafft-Ebing, Richard Von. 1894. *Psychopathia sexualis, with special reference to contrary sexual instinct: a medico-legal study*. Philadelphia, London: R.J. Rebman.
- Laurenti, Ruy. 'Homossexualismo e a Classificação Internacional de Doenças'. *Rev. Saúde Pública* [online]. 1984, vol.18, n.5 [cited 2019-02-27], 344-347. Available at <http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0034-89101984000500002&lng=en&nrm=iso>. ISSN 0034-8910. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-89101984000500002>.
- Lombroso, Césaire. 1887. *L'homme Criminel*. Paris: Félix Alcan Éditeur.
- Lombroso, Césaire. 1888. *L'homme Criminel: Atlas*. Deuxième Édition. Bocca Frères Éditeurs, Rome, Turin, Florence.
- Lombroso, Césaire. 1894. *L'uomo di genio*. Torino: Fratelli Bocca.
- Lombroso, Césaire. 1917. *The man of genius*. London: Havelock Ellis.
- MacGregor, John. 1989. M. *The Discovery of the art of the insane*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Maizels, John and Rhodes, Colin. 2012. *Raw Erotica*. UK: Raw Vision Magazine.
- Morgenthaler, Walter. [1921] 1992. *Madness and art: the life and works of Adolf Wölfi: the life and works of Adolf Wölffi*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Prinzhorn, Hans. [1922] 1995. *Artistry of the mentally ill. A contribution to the psychology a psychopathology of configuration*. New York, Wien, Germany: Springer-Verlag.

Reja, Marcel. 'L'arte malade: dessins de fous'. In *Revue universelle 1*, Paris. 1901, 913-15, 940-44.

Reja, Marcel. *L'art chez les fous: le dessin, la prose, la poesie*. Paris, 1907.

Rhodes, Colin. 2012. 'From Compulsion to Repulsion', in Mailzels, John; Rhodes, Colin. *Raw Erotica*. UK: Raw Vision Magazine

Volmat, Robert. 1956. *L'Art psychopathologique*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France,

Wallace, Marina, et al. 2007. *Seduced: art & sex from antiquity to now*. London, New York: Merrel.

AFTER THE PERSECUTION

THE HUMAN BODY REPRESENTED IN UKRAINIAN PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD

VIKTORIJA MYRONENKO

The Kyiv National K. Karpenko-Kary
Theatre, Cinema and Television University,
Kyiv, Ukraine

Introduction

In 1991, the once powerful USSR ceased to exist. As a result, the Ukraine, as a former part of the USSR gained independence after almost seventy years of totalitarianism. The early 1990s were a difficult, and at the same time a very busy period in Ukrainian art. Back in the late 1980s, irreversible processes in society developed. These processes significantly influenced the way society thought. As is known, mental changes and certain worldviews are the basis for any culture. In such periods, artists and their work become a reflection of the thinking of the era. The era that began immediately after independence was primarily an ideological revolution. This created a new Ukrainian art. This can be called the post persecution era. This includes particularly the context of repression of the Nude body in art.

The changes in Ukrainian culture were mainly due to the fact that the previous historical period was a form of an anti-democratic political regime. The main indication of totalitarianism is comprehensive intervention, state control and prosecution of dissidence. It is common knowledge that the stronger the state displays such ascendancy, the more constrained conditions its citizens are forced to exist in. Such an extreme form of political regime imposes patterns of behavior on society through the educational system and the media. Undoubtedly, the Soviet totalitarian regime had various methods of control and influence on culture and art. In the Soviet society a certain type of people was formed. For them the aspect of belonging to the general mass of the collective was important, not personal opinion or self-expression. There was also isolation from the rest of the world and from the global cultural situation (Il'in 1991). 'The state possessed various methods for

enacting those policies, but its main goal was to stifle the individual and collective initiatives of its citizens. These include members of the particular societies, more or less dependent on the monopoly of the political apparatus. The state was also to subordinate the public sphere to the ideological doctrine' (Piotrowski 2012, 7). The period of political and social changes after 1991 enabled artists to go beyond the framework of regulated behavior, censored art and the information vacuum. The period of the late 1980s – early 1990s was a time of liberation from control, persecution, and censorship. Describing the 1980s, Ukrainian artist and photographer Boris Mikhailov contended that it was the time of 'information hunger' and the need to hide his art, but also the time to search for a new visual statement. 'The laws caused the prohibition, and each prohibition corresponded to its resistance (it's NO) ... And all this prompted the search for a new language in art' (Kizevalter 2014, 393). In order to understand the conditions under which Ukrainian photography was formed after 1991, it is necessary to clearly understand the main factors that influenced it. First: photography in the USSR had its own history, different from the European history of photography. This is because being a part of the Soviet Union, the Ukraine, like all the republics of the USSR, was isolated from the European cultural processes. It was in a cultural vacuum. Ukrainian photography had not passed through the stages of development that the world had. It was shaped by photographers who worked intuitively and often had no special training. Secondly, the turning point in history and culture coincided with the spread of post-modernism as a certain model of consciousness. At this time, there was the formation of artistic groups, such as the Ukrainian new wave'. Thirdly, there have always been regional peculiarities in Ukrainian art. That is why photographic experiments with a nude body will differ not only visually, but also with conceptual features depending on the region of the Ukraine (West, Centre or East).

The first decisive factor that directly influenced Ukrainian photography was total control by the authorities and isolation from world cultural processes. Art was ideologically subordinated to the totalitarian government, and any manifestations of dissent were strictly persecuted, the activities of artists and photographers were tightly controlled. Cases of arrests of artists did not cease until the early 1980s. In order to understand the relation of the so-called official culture to nudity it is enough to analyze the main photo magazine of the USSR *Sovetskoe Foto*². It is quite noticeable that throughout the history of the magazine nudity was prohibited. Attempts to publish such photos appeared only after 1991. Nevertheless, it later became clear that in photography, as in art in general, there is an official line and the so-called unofficial one. It turned out that along with the canonical Soviet body (healthy, athletic, radically non-sexual, a body that does not focus on sexual differences) there was a nonconformist body. An example of such radical gestures of the 1970's was the Kharkiv School of photography. The Kharkiv group 'Time' used the nude body as the language of political protest. It was a shocking, cruel nudity, which acted primarily as a blow to ideological values. Kharkiv photography researcher Tatiana Pavlova (2014, 4) notes: "In the period of the "Time" group it

¹ Literature about the Ukrainian art of the post-Communist period is written mainly in the Ukrainian language and is diverse, but not comprehensive. It includes studies by Ukrainian art critics such as Gleb Vysheslavsky, Victor Sydorenko, Olesya Avramenko, Galina Sklyarenko and others and represent a comprehensive analysis of the overall artistic situation in Ukraine of the post-Soviet period and do not relate to photography. General trends of Ukrainian photography of the period of Independence are described in my article *La photographie ukrainienne de la période de l'indépendance* (Mironenko 2015).

² The magazine *Sovetskoe Foto* [Soviet Photography] was the main official publication for photographers and photo amateurs in the USSR. The magazine was founded in 1926 and for many years remained the mouthpiece of the official ideology and a propaganda tool. The digitized archive of the magazine is available here: https://archive.org/details/sovetskoe_foto?sort=downloads

was anger and rage, canned inside, that turned into idiotic muttering when set free. Behind the visual or verbal “noise” there was always hidden an acute statement’. For photographers of the 1990s, political protest was no longer relevant. Censorship and total control had disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and its repression of frankness and sexuality in art. However, the consequences of the previous era were obvious: along with the photographic environment’s lack of knowledge of the history of world photography, there was a real explosion of release from pressure and control. This led to truly unique experiments in the theme of nudity. The 1990s were a period of mental transformations and a completely new aesthetics in Ukrainian photography.

The second factor that influenced Ukrainian photography is post-modernism as a certain model of consciousness. In the early 1990s, a new movement was formed, called ‘Ukrainian new wave’. It was formed by young artists who had almost no direct contact with the nonconformist generation of the 1970s (with the exception of the Kharkiv circle of artists). For Ukrainian artists of the 1990s, it was natural to abandon any foundation. This was as seen as an exemption from the restrictions and prohibitions that had existed not so long ago. Secondly, artists refused socialist realism. This was an expected result, as the obsessive Soviet ideology had declared realism as a true and categorical creative method. The artists turned to self-irony, skepticism. In addition, a special feature of this phenomenon in the territory of the former USSR was excessive politicization, absolutely unnatural for western post modernism. Having arisen not ‘after modernism’, but ‘after socialist realism’, it (post-modernism) tried to break away from the totally ideologized soil by purely anti-totalitarian methods (Mankovskaya 2000, 293).

The third factor in the formation of certain features of Ukrainian photography, especially noticeable in nude body photography, will be obvious regional differences in the aesthetics and concept of the image. The conditional division on the principle of West-Center-East will be especially noticeable in the analysis of the representation of the nude body by photographers from different regions. Western regions focus on the Western European cultural context and demonstrate their dependence on lyrical historicism. Meanwhile, the Central regions of the Ukraine looked for their own way, based on the postmodern irony that arose under the circumstances of the dead aesthetics of socialist realism. Eastern regions that did not interrupt the connection with the non-conformist art of Kharkov, will demonstrate rude, shocking and truthful nudity.

Nudity as a trauma

Kyiv became the center of cultural life in the Ukraine in the early 1990s. An important sign of the time was the release of non-conformist underground art and its rapid institutionalization. No less important in many cities of the Ukraine was the

emergence of a whole generation of artists, known as the ‘new wave’, in the late 1980s. They became the basis for the formation of trends and groups in the next decade (Vysheslavsky 2006, p. 425). Back in the late 1980s, the artists of the ‘new wave’ from Kyiv settled on the streets of the Paris commune, in a house, where for quite some time it became possible to feel the existence of a free art workshop. In fact, the squat ‘Paris commune’ concentrated in itself a single community of artists who were united not only by their common views on art, but also by a purely personal relationship. This was a truly unique phenomenon – the first in independent Ukraine; a free, unbiased creative community, which would no longer tolerate repression from the authorities and was beyond the control of the Union of artists³. The squat ‘Paris commune’ in Kyiv was the center of new trends for post-Soviet Ukraine post-modernism. But it is important to note that Ukrainian post-modernism arose not so much in the controversy with modernism (which was destroyed in the 1930s and glowed only in some places, mainly underground), but as an opposition to totalitarian discourse and socialist realism. This was especially true for Kyiv, because of the strong academic structure that existed there (Barshynova 1990, 48). Among the artists of the squat, there was only one photographer – Mykola Trokh⁴ (1961–2007). Among the Kyiv post-modernists, he appeared almost by accident. Most likely, he was attracted by the free and unrestricted atmosphere and worldview of the squat. Trokh was not an artist, and had no special creative training. He was engaged exclusively in photography, unlike other artists who were engaged in painting, video art and performance. Mykola Trokh will be the first Ukrainian photographer of the new wave, who most powerfully was able to express the idea of abandoning the old cultural model through the image of the nude body; namely the body interpreted as an internal trauma.

As noted above, post modernists manifestations in the visual arts in post-Soviet countries are often politicized and have ironic overtones. That is because this generation of artists remembered the period of ‘velvet terror’⁵ and the adjustment period. The 1990s were a period for reinterpretation of the wound. Mykola Trokh studies the nude body as an artist who belongs to the time after the persecution. It is an experience of an act that whose border with pornography is very thin. This indicates the desire to finally cross the boundaries as much as possible. Indicative are several works of Trokh, dated 1992, notably the photo titled *Achtung Baby*⁶ (Fig. 1). At the center of the composition is a woman’s nude body, which, at first glance, stands in a rather awkward position: a woman takes a step forward, and her left hand is strongly set back. However, the position seems unnatural. The photographer excludes the woman’s head and her right hand from the composition. The field of attention is taken over by female flesh, a large belly and large hips. Trokh chooses as a model a woman with a far from perfect body, emphasizing the imperfect forms by strengthening the shadows on her body. Naturalism and sexuality are definitely the dominant elements of the image. In addition, there is quite a clear political implication. Apparently, the woman’s right hand, which Trokh excluded from the composition, was raised up. And if we imagine the formulation

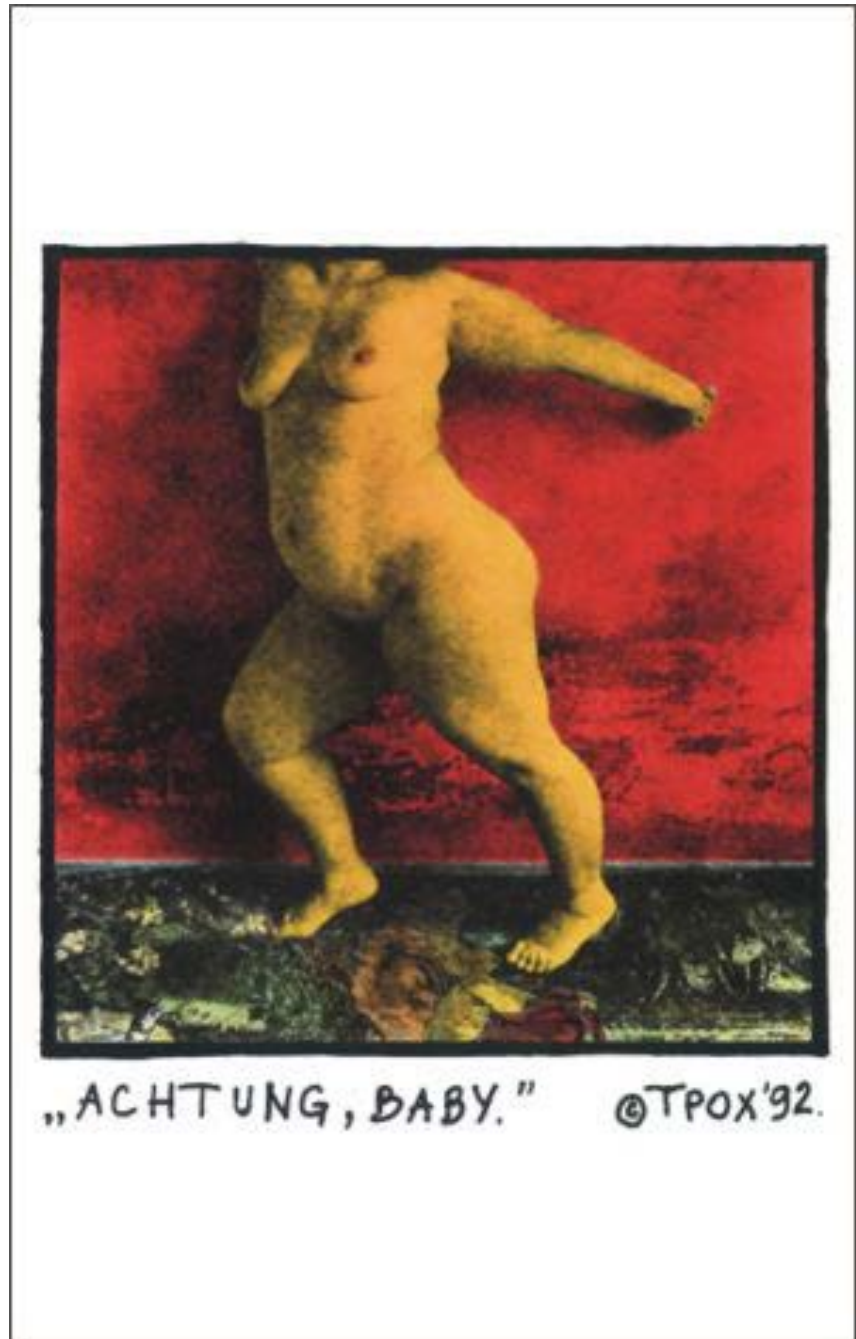
³ The Artists’ Union of the USSR – the official state Union of artists and art critics that existed since 1931 and was the body of ideological control of artists’ creative activity.

⁴ In the literature a Russian variant of the spelling of the name can be found – Nikolai

⁵ Vladimir Paperny calls ‘velvet terror’ the period of Leonid Brezhnev (Paperny, 2002). In the Ukraine, this period was marked by severe pressure on the creative intelligentsia and numerous arrests of artists and other representatives of the creative community.

⁶ The photo is in a private collection. In 2017, *Achtung Baby, Golden Carp* and several other works were included in the book *Ukrainian Erotic Photography* (Kostyrko, Kurmaz, Marushchenko and Myronenko, 2017)

⁷ The famous Soviet symbol – the sculpture of Vera Mukhina, *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, is a monumental sculptural group consisting of two figures of a man and a woman holding the symbols of the Soviet Union – a hammer and sickle. The monument was made for the USSR pavilion at the international exhibition in Paris in 1937. Later it was installed in Moscow. The monument *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman* was a model of socialist realism and the expression of the ideal of the Soviet man.

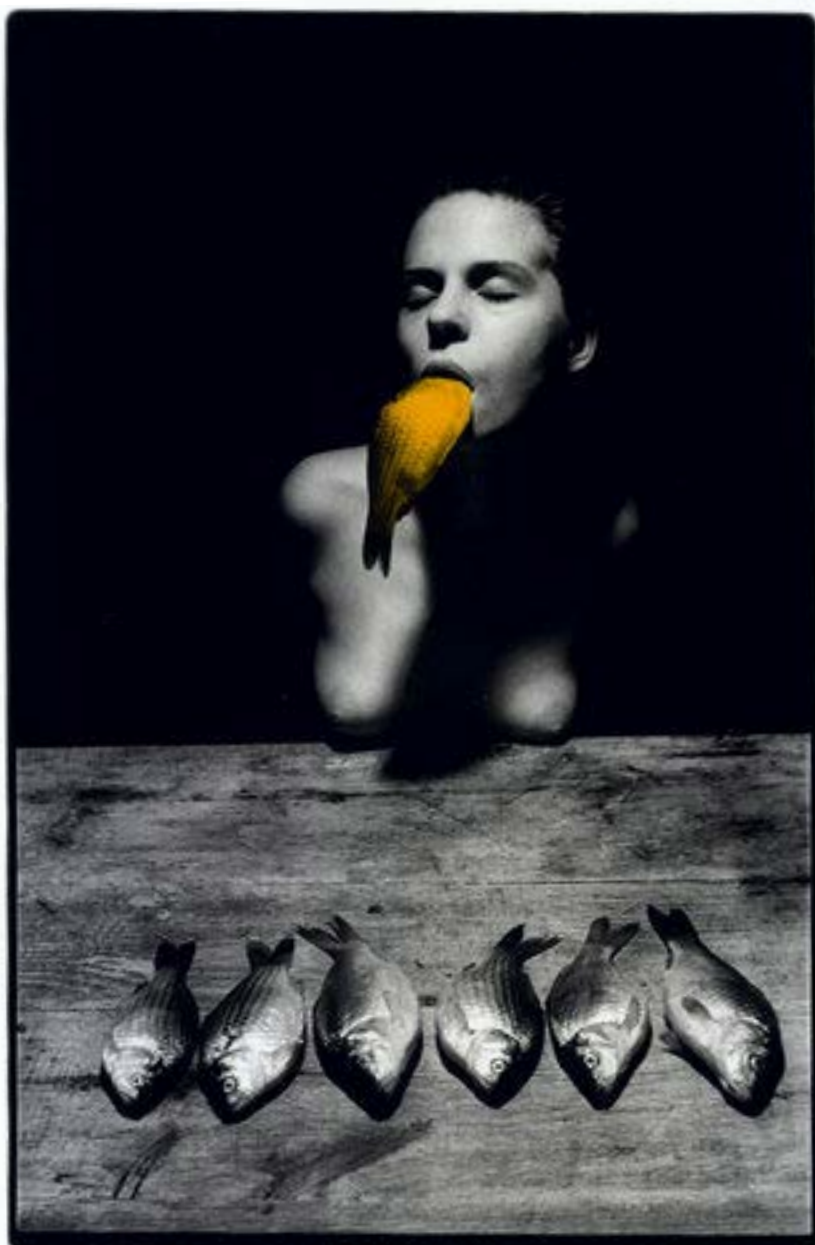


Mykola Trokh – Achtung Baby, 1992
(private collection, Kyiv, Ukraine)

of a woman's body in its integral form, it immediately becomes clear that it stands in the pose of the Kolkhoz Woman of the famous sculpture of Vera Mukhina *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*⁷ – one of the most recognizable symbols of the USSR. On the one hand, the photograph quotes; on the other, it is ironical and cynical – two obvious obvious postmodern features. At the same time, the author does not use any element of Soviet era symbols, only hinting at them. This can only be understood

as an ironic mockery of the Soviet theme. The use of a red background as a symbol of the Soviet era is no accident. But in this case, a more frank meaning is possible. It can be assumed that the naturalistic body (the body that becomes the object of desire) in this case coexists with the idea of suppressed sexuality in the Soviet era. Trokh's portfolio includes male images⁸ that also deserve attention. He chooses a fragile model for his photos. His accentuated subtlety imbues the photographs with internal vulnerability and fragility. In one of the works, a man lies on his back and holds his hand outstretched. In another photo, he is standing on the background

⁸ Two of these are part of a private collection and were shown at the Ukrainian Photography exhibition: 1989-2009, and during the Month of Photography in Bratislava (Slovakia). A small number of works by Mykola Trokh is in private collections, several works are in the National Art Museum of Ukraine. Most of his archive, including films, was lost after the artist's death.



Mykola Trokh – Golden Carp, 1994
(private collection, Kyiv, Ukraine)

of a scuffed wall. In both photos, the model hides his genitals, clutching them between his thighs. Perhaps there is the implication of voluntary or forced castration, or of repressed sexuality. This is also associated with the traumatic experiences of prohibition to demonstrate overt sexuality in Soviet art.

The photos of Mykola Trokh always suggest and never indicate the direct content. This 'caution' is also a consequence of trauma after a period of aggressive censorship. *Golden Carp* (Fig.2) is one of Trokh's most famous works. In the center of the composition we see a nude girl with her eyes closed, holding a fish in her mouth. In this case there is an obvious subtext of a sexual nature, as the image hints at oral sex. Here, it is interesting that in Ukrainian mythology the fish is a symbol of Chthonian creatures (Kulish 2015, 53), associated with otherworldly existence. It is also the symbol of fertility and sexual power (Voitovych 2002, 418). For Trokh the body is an object with which he carries out various manipulations, bringing to the fore not its beauty and plasticity (at times he focuses on ugly physicality), but rather trying to impart coded meanings.

The body as release

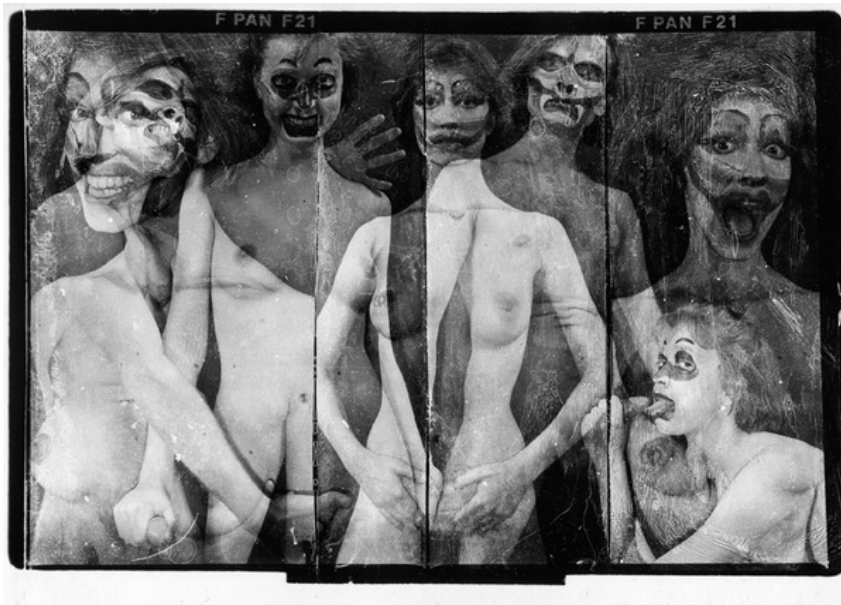
The representative of the generation after the non-conformists of the Kharkiv school of photography, Roman Pyatkovka describes his experience with the nude body as an experience of 'hunger and anger' (Lyuk.media 2016). The concept of hunger for many artists of the post-Communist period meant primarily visual hunger, the deficit of the nude body in art, photography and film, as well as sexual hunger. The end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s was a period of profound transition for the Soviet Union. As already noted, this period saw the elimination of government censorship, control, and prosecution of free creative gestures. Therefore, the first years of political change were marked by hope. The political and economic instability of the 1990s forced photographers to become more critical, to resist traditional Soviet aesthetics, and to parody the outward signs of Soviet life and ideology.

As already mentioned, in 1970s Kharkov there was a powerful nonconformist movement, whose representatives used nudity as a tool of protest against the political system. Of course, the generation of Kharkiv photographers formed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, had a non-conformist movement as a model, and they did not interrupt the connection with the previous generation. The pictures remained descriptive, permeated by an aesthetics of brutality, naturalism, provocations, and such methods as the deliberate damaging of the negative, artificial scratches, and an unkempt staining of positive.

Roman Pyatkovka's series *Games of Libido* (Fig.3, Fig.4) and *Wrong Pictures* are not openly marked by protest, which was a hallmark of the previous generation's photographs, but rather illustrate the rampant hunger for sex that reigned in society after



Roman Pyatkovka – from “Games of Libido”,
1991 (private collection, Kharkiv, Ukraine)



Roman Pyatkovka – from “Games of Libido”,
1991 (private collection, Kharkiv, Ukraine)

the final collapse of the Soviet Union and the disappearance of repression and total control over the artists. Hunger and anger, liberation and complete freedom – are the main paradigms of Pyatkovka’s series created in the late 1980s and during the 1990s. Moreover, Pyatkovka depicts another inherent phenomenon of time – private space. All the series were made in his apartment – a small space typical of the apartment buildings built during the Communist era. Because this is a private space, in it unfolds a purely private story, a veritable record of their own intimate life: bold, mostly naturalistic, sometimes almost bordering on pornography.

⁹ Yevgeny Pavlov is an outstanding Ukrainian photographer and one of the initiators of the famous Kharkiv 'Vremia' (Time) group.

For the photographers of the Kharkiv circle, the body was indeed a symbol of freedom: primarily sexual, but also political. In the photographs of the Communist era, there was no explicit nudity, especially masculine. In the post-Communist period, the masculine begins to appear not only in shocking semi-pornographic frankness, as a symbol of the final release from ideology, but also as the image of male nudity. Roman Pyatkovka, Yevgeny Pavlov⁹ and other artists often focus not only on the naked male body, but (in the case of Pyatkovka) on the phallus. The phallus in the Ukrainian art of the 1990's was the main symbol of the release (Savitskaya 2009, p.34).

The Soviet body was as 'typical' as any Soviet model project, and it was portrayed, in paintings, film or photography, so as to eliminate the possibility of sexual desire. In the 1990s, eroticism stopped being repressed, and hence, photography was allowed to aestheticize attraction. The standardized, asexual body of the Soviet man, the exponent of the ideological platform, became outdated. Instead of a limited body in the photo, nudity gains another meaning, a nudity reflecting bodily desire, open sexuality, and the permission for sexual freedom.

The theme of release was interpreted in Ukrainian post-Communist photography not only as a release from sexual prohibition. For some artists, the problem of acquired political freedom will prevail. 'By exposing the disadvantages of the previous epoch, they offered salvation from the mistakes made' (Velikanov 2007, p. 15). A vivid example are the photographic projects by representative of the Ukrainian new wave Arsen Savadov. His most famous project, *Donbass Chocolate*, was created in one of the mines of Donbass with the participation of real miners. Savadov explained the essence of his project as an image of people with erased sexuality

Arsen Savadov – from "Donbass Chocolate", 1997 (private collection, Kyiv, Ukraine)





Arsen Savadov – from “Donbass Chocolate”,
1997 (private collection, Kyiv, Ukraine)

and concepts of reality, which are engaged in a sort of internal geography. His characters – nude, dirty men, some of whom dressed in women’s ballet outfits – engage in a symbolic escape from Soviet power and the communist system, towards their own freedom. Through the nude male body, the artist powerfully reflects the idea of mental liberation through absurdity, and the mockery of Soviet norm. In this case, nudity in this case is an instrument of rebellion against the old norms, the pathos of exposing the communist myth and the abandonment of the spiritual component in favor of corporeality. Indeed, Savadov’s *Donbass Chocolate* could

¹⁰ The perestroika was the period of political reforms in the USSR from 1985 to 1991, after which the Ukraine gained independence.

be considered one of the most resonant works in the Ukrainian art environment, because it is the most consistent with the situation of the time. For the first time after the Communist cultural vacuum, the viewer saw more than just male nudity. A politicized, shocking, unsightly body desacralized the Soviet myth and openly materialized the idea of a liberation from the rubbish of socialist realism. It should also be noted that, apart from their explicit politicization, Arsen Savadov's projects are openly masculine. *Donbass Chocolate* (Fig.5, Fig.6), *Angels*, and several others unabashedly speak the language of the male body. An equally interesting interpretation is given by Serbian researchers when they point out that Savadov's projects are 'intense, distressing and acrid statements on the inadequacy of masculinity in the impoverished patriarchal societies' (Dimitrijević, Andjelković 2018, 71). It is also interesting that masculinity in post-Communist Ukrainian photography prevailed only because it did not have a powerful feminist answer.

The body as a nostalgia

The specificity of photography of the West Ukrainian regional art schools differed from the Central and Eastern ones. Of course, this difference was primarily due to their geographical, historical and cultural proximity to Western countries. The uniqueness of the West Ukrainian art school is connected, first of all, with the fact that the national background was not completely lost, and because at the same time there was continued contact with Western art. The persecution of the creative intelligentsia in the 1970s was particularly cruel here. In addition, the powerful artistic movement of these regions, from nonconformists to the perestroika,¹⁰ had a rebellious foundation, as it was a systematic opposition of the creative community to the official line of art. The main idea was to escape from the ideological line, which was the removal of socialist realism and the borrowing of Western European aesthetics. From there arose experimentation in order to constantly cross the border of what was allowed. However, in Western Ukrainian photography there are no radical gestures, unlike in works by Kharkov. Instead, the resistance to socialist realism and official art was always quiet but strong.

Especially interesting phenomena in art and photography took place in Lviv. It was in Lviv's artistic environment that the idea, or rather the consequences, of 'the Empire's crepuscule' were most fully and emotionally felt. It is also important to note that that Lviv, a former part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was forcibly annexed to the Soviet Union much later than the other territories of the Ukraine. The aesthetics of photography in Lviv are quite specific, which will become noticeable in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This is when the photography of the adjustment period and post-adjustment period will turn to a visual material where the dominant sense is one of anxiety and disappointment. In Lviv in this period, photography undergoes a flight to almost surrealistic worlds, manifest as a sharpening of con-

ventionality, mythologization, romanticism, decorative, and quasi 'mannerism'. At the same time, however, there was also a 'progressive provincialization' (Holubets 2005, p. 89) of the artistic environment.

These features of Lviv photography are due to the fact that the region experienced a permanent state of nostalgia associated with the culture of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Nostalgia as a substance is not primarily a feeling of longing for the image of what is lost. It is the feeling that there is an opportunity to return to this image. Therefore, 'nostalgia' is part of Lviv's system of images. It can manifest as sadness for the lost style, for a sense of belonging to something bigger. Sometimes this sadness becomes especially expressive in terms of style. Time is gone, but there is a certain space for authentic Lviv, with all the external signs of a bygone era. However, this feeling of belonging to a great style would also become a kind of guide. That, above all, is the cultural experience inherent in Lviv. Lviv's cultural conflict in the context of photographic images takes place, at the crossroads of this nostalgia. Nostalgia for the Imperial style of lightness, romanticism and mythology and the inevitable influence of another cultural model, another Empire – the Soviet. Amidst Lviv's photographic environment of the post-Communist era, along with the theme of nudity and representation of the body, there worked simultaneously several of the most expressive photographers. Among these was Ilya Levin (Fig.7). He worked with staging and imitation, based on the conceptual foundations of the local Western Ukrainian aesthetics. The most expressive series of Levin, where he boldly works with a naked body, are a direct citation of classics and flirt with archetypes. This is natural was natural in Lviv's artistic environment. The uniqueness of this series is not even in the fact that Levin quite confidently demonstrates one of the most common elements of postmodernism – citation. Levin's photos require a certain preparedness from the viewer, because the citation is there to be decoded correctly, at least in one of its many layers (usually the superficial one), i.e, the identification of the cited classic image. More important is that while exploiting classical painting as a point of reference, Levin uses an absolutely typical post communistic environment with all the details of the local interiors: Soviet stools, rugs, beds with books for legs. There is a wardrobe containing typical Soviet articles, very recognizable furniture from school interiors, and even Soviet sports equipment. Against the backdrop of this ordinary, grim post-Soviet world there is an Arnolfini couple, Adam and Eve, Ingres' Odalisque, and many other characters from the history of art. On the one hand, there is a certain irony, since Levin's models sometimes have quite typical Soviet faces, reminiscent of employees of Communist state institutions rather than classical images; on the other hand, there is an absolutely depressing picture of the 1990s, and most importantly, the aesthetics of the frame, which is reminiscent of Soviet staging. Given that Ilya Levin's photos exist in the postmodernist plane, all these features remain solely superficial, ready for the viewer's interpretation. Also in Alexey Lutin¹¹ – another representative of Lviv's 1990s photography –, there are features of expressive gestures and images in Levin's photography, which immediately catch the eye. Features that immedi-



Ilya Levin – The Couple, 1990-s (private collection, Lviv, Ukraine)

ately draw attention to the fact that in the direction of Lviv's photography you can hear accusations of bad taste. But it should be noted that this theatrical staging style is only a part of the visual text, which is easy to prove by the example of Ilya Levin's photography. Here, the nude body is as sacred; the body, which represents nostalgia for classical art, a bright historical era, the end of which was a real tragedy for Western Ukraine. All this in combination with subjective vision and purely Western individualism, distinguishes Western Ukrainian photographers, and their interpretation of nudity, from representatives of other local schools in the Ukraine.

Conclusion

¹¹ Alexey Iutin (b.1940) is an outstanding Ukrainian photographer who lives and works in Lviv. He is known for his staged photographs with elements of theatricalization and the use of multi-figure compositions.

After the era of persecution, (Communist period) Ukrainian photography has undergone radical transformations. This was especially noticeable in the image of a nude body. After a period of total control, censorship, denial of sexuality as such, and a ban on outright nudity in art, a period of new art and a new vision of the body began. Experiments with the nude body, the various interpretations of nudity, the use of the

body for the expression of freedom, irony, traumatic experience and the post-modern game with ideological codes, absurdity, stylization – all of this was new to the photography of post-Communist Ukraine after decades of immersion in a cultural vacuum. Sex and nudity in the post-Soviet period are no longer taboo topics. The removal of all constraints and the disappearance of censorship were the reason for photographers and artists to appropriate a completely new concept. Attempts to experiment with nudity were varied and not always successful. The aesthetics of Soviet photography remained in some cases, because in Ukrainian photography there was no historical basis on which to frame world photography, as it were. But at the same time, an absolutely new wave of Ukrainian photography was in the process of forming, and the nude body became an expression of culture, which had been freed from ideological restrictions.

The analysis of Ukrainian photography should take into account the regional factor, the existence of which is a feature of Ukrainian culture. The regions of the West, the Center and the East have demonstrated a different vision of the body as a tool that is able to convey a certain experience arising after the era of persecution. The very concept of ‘persecution’ and ‘repression’ is interpreted according to specific local school as well as the theme of release. For the East (Kharkiv School of photography), where there was a powerful connection with the generation of non-conformists, it was freedom from censorship and the possibility to depict nudity both as an erotic and a political gesture. In the West of the Ukraine, the nude body in photography was the expression of a play with the archetypes of high art, citation and nostalgia for the pre-Communist era. At the same time, the capital of the Ukraine remained the centre of cultural transformation, where the powerful movement of the Ukrainian new wave was formed and where the image of the nude body could be both a subjective experience of internal trauma and a political gesture that mocked the Soviet and Communist myths.

Representatives of Ukrainian photography that worked with the theme of the representation of the body in the 1990s, in their experiments (and almost all of these experiments can, indeed, be called experimental) moved away from the tired Soviet body, which declared everything: impersonality, swiftness, energy, and sometimes even outright unattractiveness, but certainly not eroticism. Therefore, the nude body in Ukrainian photography (after a cultural vacuum and persecution) became an act of experience, often next to the gestures of protest and the idea of liberation, as it demonstrates an excess of intimacy and remaining utterly subjective.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barshynova, Oksana. 1990. *Ukrainske malARTstvo 1960—1980-kh rokov. Try pokolinnia ukrainskoho zhyvopysu* [Ukrainian painting of 1960s-80s. Three generations of Ukrainian painting]. Kyiv: Soviart.

- Dimitrijević Branislav & Andjelković Branislava. 2018. 'Body, Ideology, Maskulinity, and some Blind Spots of post-communism', in *Art and Theory of Post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Ana Janevski, Roxana Marcoci, Ksenia Nouril, 315-324. New York: Duke University Press Books.
- Holubets Orest. 2001. *Mizh svobodoiu i totalitaryzmozom. Mystetske seredovyshe Lvova druhoi polovyny XX stolittia* [Between freedom and totalitarianism. Artistic environment of Lviv in the second half of the twentieth century]. Lviv: Akademichnyi ekspres.
- Il'in, Ivan. 1991. O soprotivlenii zlu [About the resistance to evil]. *Novyj mir*, no.10:217
- Kizevalter, Georgij. 2014. *Perelomnye vosmidesiatye v neofitsialnom iskusstve SSSR* [Crucial 1980s in the Informal art of the USSR]. Moskow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie.
- Kulish Oksana. 2015. 'Mystetstvoznachnyi diskurs shchodo vyavlennia arkhetyviv u khudozhnii tvorchosti' [Art-study discourse on the identification of archetypes in artistic creativity]. *NEWSLETTER of the Lviv National Academy of Arts*, no. 26:49-60.
- Lyuk.media. 2016. 'Krestovyj Pohod: Roman Pyatkovka' [Crusade: Roman Pyatkovka]. (accessed January 2019. <http://lyuk.media/projects/krestovyj-pokhod-roman-pyatkovka>).
- Mankovskaya N. 2000. *Estetika postmodernizma* [Postmodern aesthetics]. St. Petersburg: Aleteya.
- Mironenko Viktoria. 2015. 'La photographie ukrainienne de la période de l'indépendance'. *La Règle du Jeu*, no. 57:171-180.
- Myronenko V. Kostyrko O. Kurmaz S. Marushchenko V. 2017. *Ukrainian Erotic Photography*. Kyiv: Osnovy Publishing.
- Pavlova, Tatiana. 2014. 'The Kharkiv Photography School. The "Shilo" Group (V. Krasnoshchok, S. Lebedynskyy, V. Trykoz)'. *Widok. Teorie i praktyki kultury wizualnej*, no. 7. <http://pismowidok.org/index.php/one/article/view/236/422>
- Paperny, Vladimir. 2002. *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Piotrowski, Piotr. 2012. *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd.
- Savitskaya L. 2009. 'Diskurs telesnosti v sovremennom iskusstve Ukrainy' [Discourse of corporeality in contemporary art of Ukraine] *MIST*, 6: 303-311.
- Velikanov Andrey. 2007. *Simulyakr li ya drozhaschii ili pravo imeyu* [Am I trembling Simulacrum or do I have the Right?]. Moskow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenije.
- Voitovych V.M. 2002. *Ukrainska mifolohiia* [Ukrainian mythology]. Kyiv: Lybid.
- Vysheslavsky, Gleb. 2006. 'Suchasne vizualne mystetstvo Ukrainy periodu postmodernizmu'. [Modern visual art of Ukraine in the period of postmodernism]. In *Suchasne mystetstvo. Naukovyi zbirnyk* [Contemporary Art. Scientific collection], edited by Viktor Sydorenko, 424-481. Kyiv: Modern Art Research Institute.

SEX, SATIRE, AND CENSORSHIP

LYGIA PAPE'S *EAT ME: GLUTTONY OR LUST?* (1975/1976)

GILLIAN SNEED

Assistant Professor of Art History, School
of Art + Design, San Diego State University
gsneed@sdsu.edu

The Crusade Against Pornography

In March 1982, during the final years of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985), then-President João Figueiredo made headlines for his radio and television announcements of a new “crusade against pornography.”¹ At the time of Figueiredo’s proclamation, pornographic movie production was on the rise in Brazil, accounting for 59% of all film production in the country (Johnson 1993, 363). This was despite a 1970 censorship decree enacted by the Brazilian dictatorship that had come to power via a U.S.-backed military coup in March 1964, that had outlawed pornography outright (Fausto and Fausto 2014, 271).² Even so, by the late 1980s, national Brazilian cinema had become synonymous with hard-core pornography productions (Shaw and Dennison 2014, 90; Quinalha 2017, 1). Given this state of affairs, one might wonder how pornography achieved such a meteoric rise in the country despite strict censorship laws? The answer lies in the regime’s history, as well as its inconsistencies and contradictions.

When military president General Artur da Costa e Silva came to power in 1967, he enacted an iron-fisted approach to law and order. He issued the draconian Institutional Act Number Five (AI-5), a decree that dissolved Congress and state legislatures, suspended the constitution, gave the president dictatorial powers, institutionalized repression against dissidents, and imposed wide-ranging censorship. His successor, General Emílio Médici, who replaced him in 1969, executed the AI-5, initiating the most repressive period of the dictatorship, known as the *anos de chumbo* (years of lead, 1969–1974). During this period, the regime imprisoned and tortured dissidents and sponsored gruesome assassinations and disappearances.

¹ This essay is adapted from a chapter of my doctoral dissertation, *Gendered Subjectivity and Resistance: Brazilian Women’s Performance-for-Camera, 1973–1982* (2019). I would like to thank my doctoral supervisors Dr. Anna Indych-López and Dr. Claire Bishop for their guidance on this project, as well as Tie Jojima, for sharing her insights into the history of Brazilian pornography with me. “Cruzada contra a pornografia” (“Figueiredo convoca a nação para combater pornografia” 1982, 4). All translations by the author, unless otherwise noted.

² Fearing that leftist President João Goulart was a Communist sympathizer, the U.S. supported the Brazilian military coup with training and material support.

After Médici enforced the AI-5 in 1969, censorship of all kinds of so-called “subversive” material increased. In 1970, the Decree-Law no. 1.077 was enacted, deeming anything that “offended morality and proper behaviour,” such as depictions of nudity or sex, as subversive, dangerous, and immoral (Risério 2010, 243–44; Shtromberg 2016, 8).³ The justification, according to the Minister of Justice Alfredo Buzaid (quoted in Risério 2010) was that such materials would stimulate “licentiousness, insinuate free love, and threaten to destroy the moral values of Brazilian society”⁴ (243–44). Erotica and pornography were lumped together with homosexuality and transgenderism, all viewed by the regime as part of a broader threat to national security (Quinalha 2017, 31). “Traditional family values,” which were also in line with conservative Catholic values, were seen as uniting Brazilian society against these perceived threats, underscoring the ways that patriarchal heteronormativity structured the authoritarian disciplinary apparatus. As political scientist Sonia Alvarez (1990) has argued, the dictatorship enshrined “traditional womanhood [as] a cornerstone of authoritarian ‘order and progress’” (55).

Yet, as art historian Elena Shtromberg (2016) points out, despite the dictatorship’s authoritarianism, its policies were “neither united nor consistent” and “riddled with myriad contradictions” (7–8). In fact, despite its anti-pornography laws, the censors were highly bureaucratic, and their approach was arbitrary and inconsistent. In reality, pornography and erotica had persisted in various forms—both clandestine and legitimate—throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Lamas and Reis Junior 2018, 37–62).⁵ One early genre of Brazilian pornography was the *revistinha de sacanagem* (dirty comics), cheaply-printed, black-and-white illustrated booklets depicting explicit nudity and sex, which circulated underground throughout the 1960s.⁶ By the 1970s, higher-quality pornographic magazines and movie reels replaced them, clandestinely imported into the country from northern Europe in “neutral” packages to circumvent customs (Lamas and Reis Junior 2018, 39).

When General Ernesto Geisel came to power in 1974, he adopted a more moderate position toward political repression than Médici, instituting the political programs of *distensão* (relaxation, 1974–1979), and *abertura* (opening, 1979–1985)—the latter a policy continued by Geisel’s successor Figueiredo, who was elected in 1979—in an attempt to slowly re-democratize the country. Under Geisel, some restrictions were loosened: though erotic materials were still highly regulated, they were allowed to circulate more freely. This led to what historian Ben Cowan (2019) has described as a virtual “explosion of pornography in the 1970s.”⁷

One of the major contradictions of the state’s approach to censorship of sexually explicit content, was the proliferation of a cinematic genre known as *pornoanchadas* (sex comedies). Blending bawdy comedy with sexual parody and a trashy, lewd aesthetic, the dictatorship conveniently overlooked them because they were not critical of the regime and they did not depict explicit sex or nudity, though both were suggested.⁸ Because of their success at the box office, they also enjoyed a cosy relationship with the state-funded production company, Embrafilme, which financed some of them under its loan program. Produced cheaply and with poor

³ “Contra a moral e os bons costumes.”

⁴ “licenciosidade, insinuarium o amor livre e ameaçariam destruir os valores morais da sociedade brasileira.”

⁵ I use the terms pornography and erotica somewhat interchangeably, though they can be distinguished: generally, pornography shows more explicit nudity and sex, while erotica is more sensual and suggestive (Steinem 1978, 53–54, 75).

⁶ Finotti (2010, n.p.)

⁷ One example of this resurgence of porn was the return of *Playboy* magazine, which had been banned in 1970, but permitted back on newsstands in 1975. However, it was renamed *Revista do Homem* (Men’s Magazine) by the censors and its photographs no longer explicitly depicted nudity (Risério 2010, 244).

⁸ Some well-known *pornoanchada* titles are *Os paqueras* (The Flirts, 1969), *A superfêmea* (The Superwoman, 1973), and *Bacalhau* (Codfish, 1975). The term came from *chanchadas*, a cinematic genre of musical comedies from the 1930s–1950s (Shaw and Dennison 2014, 91–94).

production values, *pornochanchadas* were largely filmed in São Paulo's red-light district, the *Boca do Lixo* (Mouth of Garbage). They catered to the heterosexist male gaze and ultimately conveyed conservative values: for instance, most of their plots were resolved in marriage (Dennison 2011, 232). Despite their popularity, by the early 1980s, regulations restricting foreign films and explicit nudity loosened. As Brazil was inundated with Hollywood pornography, audiences lost interest in *pornochanchadas*, and the *Boca do Lixo* filmmakers shifted to making hard-core pornography.

Lygia Pape and the *Eat Me* Film, 1975

It was against this backdrop, that in 1975 Brazilian artist Lygia Pape (1927–2004) created a short experimental film titled *Eat Me: a Gula ou a Luxúria?* (Eat Me: Gluttony or Lust), and the following year, a related art installation of the same title (fig. 1). Both contained erotic images and sexual themes, and were faced with varying degrees of censorship by the Brazilian regime. Despite Pape's apparent interest in gender and sexuality in both works, she explicitly denied that they had a feminist message. In this essay, I closely analyse both works, as well as Pape's own writing, to historically situate them within the Brazilian socio-cultural and political context within which they were made, including the contradictory history of Brazilian pornography. Despite Pape's explicit disavowal of feminism, I argue that the *Eat Me* film and installations represent a feminist critique of the heteronormative and patriarchal discourses undergirding the Brazilian dictatorship, as well as the

Fig. 1 – Lygia Pape, *Eat Me: a Gula ou a Luxúria?* (Eat Me: Gluttony or Lust), 1975. 16mm film in colour with sound, 9 mins. © Projeto Lygia Pape. Photograph by Gillian Sneed, taken at the exhibition *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, U.S.A. (September 15 – December 31, 2017).



Brazilian mass media's commodification of women and sex, especially in advertising and *pornochanchadas*. I contend that by satirizing commercials, pornography, and erotica, Pape "cannibalizes" these mass media forms as part of her broader strategy of resisting the dictatorship's conservative sex and gender ideologies.

Lygia Pape arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1952 at the age of twenty-five, where she took art classes at the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM/RJ) with printmaker Fayga Ostrower (1920–2001) and painter Ivan Serpa (1923–1973).⁹ By the mid-1950s, she began to establish herself in the *Carioca* art scene. She initially participated in the Concrete art movement, a style of analytical geometric abstraction that emerged in Brazil in the early 1950s, joining the Rio de Janeiro-based *Grupo Frente* in 1954, along with other artists including Lygia Clark (1920–1988) and Hélio Oiticica (1937–1980).¹⁰ Pape and the other Carioca artists then formed a splinter movement called Neoconcrete art (1959–1961), a form of geometric abstraction that emphasized organic expression and sensorial experience over the strict dogmatic rationalism of Concrete art. During this period, Pape created prints and sculptures exploring geometry, Gestalt, and phenomenology.¹¹ With the rise of the Brazilian dictatorship in the mid-1960s, the Neoconcrete artists shifted toward dematerialized and participatory art practices that challenged the regime's strictures. By the late 1960s, many visual artists began working in a variety of new media (including Super-8, 16mm, and 35mm, and slide shows known as "audio-visuals") (Cruz 2016). The emerging interest among artists in time-based media developed out of the experimentalism of Neoconcrete art, its focus on the body, and its shift toward conceptual practices.¹²

Around this time, Pape began to collaborate with Cinema Novo filmmakers, before starting to make her own short films between 1967 and 1975.¹³ Cinema Novo was a realist film genre of the 1960s that focused on the Brazilian popular classes and their ways of life.¹⁴ Over time, Cinema Novo became more mainstream, and by the 1970s, it became associated with high-budget films sponsored by the state-run Embrafilme Company. Backlash came in the form of a younger generation of experimental filmmakers who developed a cinematic style known as "Cinema Marginal" or "Udigrudi" Cinema, which challenged the cinematic forms of their predecessors.¹⁵ These new films were characterized by subversive themes, low budgets, and poor production values. Like *Pornochanchadas*, many Marginal films were produced in the *Boca do Lixo* district, and both genres valorised poor production values and representations of marginalized groups not often seen in mainstream films (such as people of colour and gays); they also sometimes overlapped in content, as in *O pornógrafo* (The Pornographer, 1970), a Marginal film about a fictional porn magazine editor (Dennison 2011, 231). Marginal filmmakers like Júlio Bressane and Rógerio Sganzerla socialized and collaborated with visual artists like Pape and Oiticica, who in turn became interested in experimenting with film. Later, video art emerged in Brazil when it became available in the 1970s.¹⁶ In 1974, several Carioca artists (excluding Pape) gained access to a single shared camera and created new videos in response to an invitation to participate in an exhibition at the ICA Philadelphia.¹⁷

⁹ Pape married chemist Günther Pape in 1949 at the age of twenty-two. She had two daughters: Cristina (b. 1952) and Paula (b. 1958) (Crockett 2017, 168–75).

¹⁰ The São Paulo Concrete group, the *Grupo Ruptura*, was formed in 1951. The *Grupo Frente* was led by Ivan Serpa, and included Aluísio Carvão, Rubem Ludolf, César Oiticica, Carlos Val, Décio Vieira, and Franz Weissman.

¹¹ Gestalt was a school of psychology that emphasized the perception of a whole pattern over its individual components. Phenomenology was a philosophy that theorized of subjective experience. Both theories influenced Concrete and Neoconcrete art practices (Amor 2016, 71–90).

¹² This point has been made by André Parente (2007, 31), Simone Osthoff (2010, 81), and Christine Mello (2008, 78–80).

¹³ Pape did the graphic design and titles for several Cinema Novo films, including Nelson Pereira dos Santos's *Mandacaru Vermelho* (1961) and *Vidas Secas* (1963), and Glauber Rocha's *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (1964). Her own first short film, *La Nouvelle Creation*, won an award at the Expo-67 World's Fair in Montreal in 1967. Her other films included: *O Guarda-Chuva Vermelho* (1969), *A Matemática e o Futebol* (1971), *Mário Pedrosa: PT Saudações* (1978), and *Catiti-Catiti* (1978), and five Super-8 films: *Wampirou*, *Arenas Calientes*, *Wanted*, and *Carnival in Rio* (all 1973). She also created a video on Brazilian folk art titled *A Mão do Povo* (1974) for a solo exhibition at CAyC, Buenos Aires (Bentes 2015, 337; Pape 1983a, 43–44).

¹⁴ Cinema Novo was influenced by Italian Neorealism and the French New Wave.

¹⁵ "Udigrudi" is a mocking way of pronouncing "underground" in Portuguese (Dunn 2017, 92).

¹⁶ A limited number of Brazilian artists conducted early experiments in video in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including Analívia Cordeiro, Gabriel Borba, Rubens Gerchman, José Roberto Agui-

lar, and Antonio Dias. In 1974, Pape presented her first video *A mão do povo* at CAyC, Buenos Aires. However, video was not widely accessible to most artists in Brazil until the mid-1970s, due to its expensive cost (Mello 2008, 84–86).

¹⁷ The Carioca video group was led by Anna Bella Geiger, and included Sonia Andrade, Fernando Cocchiarale, and Ivens Machado (who joined in 1974), and Letícia Parente, Miriam Danowski, Ana Vitória Mussi, and Paulo Herkenhoff (who joined in 1975).

¹⁸ The screaming was Yoko Ono's voice, from one of her musical tracks with the Plastic Ono Band (Pape 2001, 91).

¹⁹ "Caldo de feijão; feijão sem caldo; feijão com caldo; sempre as Conchas Cook."

²⁰ Other examples include Paulo Herkenhoff's video *Estômago embrulhado/Jejum/Sobremesa* (Upset Stomach/Fast/Dessert, 1975), depicting the artist eating newspaper articles about censorship, and Sonia Andrade's video *Feijão* (Beans, 1975), in which the artist eats a bowl of beans in front of a television tuned to the Globo Network, both of which I discuss elsewhere (Sneed 2019, 115, 143–155).

²¹ By the 1970s, the Globo Network garnered the highest ratings of any other national network. Between 1968 and 1985 Globo maintained a 60–80% share of viewers in all major cities (Rosas-Moreno 2014, 22; Shtromberg 2016, 107).

²² In 1950, only 200 households owned a television; by 1965, there were 3 million spread across the country (Reis 2005, 272).

²³ The regime initially tolerated a joint venture between Globo and Time-Life that violated foreign ownership restrictions, delaying the enforcement of those rules for four years (1964–1968); Globo then used government loans to repay Time-Life (Straubhaar 2001, 140).

In 1975, at the tail end of Pape's foray in experimental film, she created *Eat Me: a Gula ou a Luxúria?* in 1975. The nine-minute, 16mm colour film opens with a close-up of a man's mouth, moustached and painted with lipstick, as he sensually sucks and expels a ruby-coloured jewel with his tongue. A soundtrack of a female voice moaning sexually accompanies this sequence as the jewel turns blue. The film then cuts to a woman's mouth erotically sucking on a hot dog, before returning to the male mouth as he expels the blue jewel and swirls saliva with his tongue around the open cavity, appearing almost vaginal. Shots of the male and female mouths performing different actions evoking sexual acts and consumption and ingestion—inhaling/exhaling smoke, sucking the hotdog, writhing their tongues suggestively—alternate with increasing speed while off-screen voices rhythmically chant the phrase "a gula ou a luxúria" (gluttony or lust) in various languages, including German, English, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. The sound of a woman's moaning culminates in an orgasmic scream.¹⁸ The audio of a "Conchas Cook" ladles commercial abruptly interrupts this shrieking, with a female voice stating in Portuguese: "bean soup; beans without soup, beans with soup; always Conchas Cook."¹⁹

Representations, like this one, evoking mass media genres (like advertising) and eating and gluttony gained particular currency in Brazilian film and video of the 1970s.²⁰ At the time, many artists were turning to film and video to critique the monopoly of the country's leading media conglomerate, the Globo Television Network (*Rede Globo*), and its complicity with the dictatorship.²¹ Following the coup, the military government understood television's potential to prop up the regime: it was a useful tool for transmitting and managing political information, encouraging a sense of national unity across the country's disparate geographic regions, and expanding the consumer economy through advertising.²² The Globo Network complied with the regime's censorship and promulgated its propaganda by promoting "positive" messages of national integration, modernization, and developmentalism (Shtromberg 2016, 99–102). As such, most Brazilians viewed Globo as a "mouth-piece of the dictatorship" (Rosas-Moreno 2014, 22). It was also affiliated with U.S. economic interests, such as the U.S. Time-Life Company, which initially provided technical expertise and financial support to the network.²³ Artists turned to time-based media like film and video to invoke and contest Globo's complicity with the regime and its U.S. interests, and as media historian Lidia Santos has argued, to resist state power more broadly (Santos 2006, 167).

Images of eating and ingestion were also linked to the resurgence in the late 1960s and early 1970s of the postcolonial theory of *antropofagia* (cultural cannibalism), which originally emerged as a decolonizing cultural strategy in May 1928, when the poet and catalyst of Brazilian modernism Oswald de Andrade (1890–1954) published his "Manifesto Antropófago" (Anthropophagous Manifesto) (Andrade [1928] 2004, 3,7). His interest in *antropofagia* was based on the cannibalistic rituals of the Tupinambá Indians that inhabited Brazil at the time of the European conquests. De Andrade was fascinated by their ceremonial practice of capturing and eating their prisoners, which they believed enabled them to absorb their enemy's strength and

assimilate their identities (Clastres 2015, 226–30). Building on this historical practice, his “Manifesto Antropófago” asserted a new conception of antropofagia, in which European cultural and artistic influences would be “cannibalized” to make them authentically Brazilian, rather than derivative (Lagnado 2015, 112). In its first, modernist phase, then, antropofagia emerged as a tactic of the Brazilian avant-garde to adopt European artistic and literary styles, while still asserting cultural agency in the face of pervasive European cultural hegemony. It also served as a nativist instrument for Brazilian artists to celebrate their own “authentic” *Brasili-dade* (Brazilian identity).²⁴

After its initial conception as a cultural theory in the 1920s, antropofagia re-emerged in the late 1960s as an influential anti-authoritarian and anti-imperialist political strategy during the harshest years of the Brazilian dictatorship by artists associated with the Brazilian popular music and arts movement of Tropicália. Influenced by the “Manifesto Antropófago,” these artists drew on the concept of antropofagia to assert a form of *Brasili-dade* that resisted the dictatorship’s nationalism and critiqued U.S. economic and cultural interventions in the country (Asbury 2009, 27; Basualdo 2007, 15). They did this through the assimilation and transformation—or “cannibalization”—of cultural forms to subvert them from within (Dunn 2001, 121). Though the Tropicália era had passed, by the mid-1970s, antropofagia still dominated in the Brazilian cultural imaginary as a metaphor of political resistance, and Pape returned to the theme several times in her art practice.²⁵ Her anti-authoritarian anarchism and receptivity to Leftist ideas also cemented her stance against the dictatorship.²⁶ In fact, just two years before she created the *Eat Me* film, she had been imprisoned and tortured by the military police for her dissident activities.²⁷ Given Pape’s radical politics and the film’s references to eating, it can be read as drawing on the metaphor of antropofagia as a mode of critique. For instance, Pape’s evocation of “gluttony” and “lust” in the film’s title recall Christianity’s Seven Deadly Sins, and as such, the work can be interpreted as a critique of the religious disciplinary values intrinsic to Brazil’s pervasive Catholic culture (Machado 2006, 98, 142).²⁸

More importantly, the film compares consumerism to hunger and sexual desire. It could even be said to “cannibalize” television by “consuming” the language of marketing in order to critique the dictatorship’s collusion with mass media propaganda entities (like Globo) and U.S. economic interests. In part, this “cannibalization” is achieved through the film’s high production values and its tightly controlled framing and pace of montage, resulting in a slick aesthetic that recalls television.²⁹ Its saturated colours also lend an eroticism that also mimics the language of advertising and underscores what one critic described as “the use of eroticism as a vehicle of consumption.”³⁰ Pape equates cannibalistic “eating” not with decolonization or cultural appropriation, as it had been mobilized by Oswald de Andrade during the modernist period, but rather with the ways capitalist media exploit sexuality to stimulate the lust for consumer goods.

The titular term “luxúria”—translating as “lust” in English—also has connotations with the words “luxury,” “decadence,” and “excess,” thus evoking consumerism and

²⁴ De Andrade was a member of the white, bourgeois, urban artistic elite, and wrote the Manifesto for a similar demographic (Rolnik 1998, 139).

²⁵ Pape’s previous work, *Roda dos Prazeres* (Wheel of Pleasures, 1968), an interactive installation in which participants were invited to “taste” different colours from a circle of bowls containing coloured liquids, spurred her interest in the sensual pleasures of the mouth. Her later 16mm, black-and-white film *Catiti-Catiti* (1978) explicitly addressed the history and myths of cannibalism with a plot that followed a protagonist (played by Luís Otávio Pimentel) who eats continually (Candela 2017, 10; Ferreira 2017, 49).

²⁶ Pape described her politics as such: “I’m intrinsically an anarchist . . . I have this terrible inclination not to respect rigid structures. I cannot abide power and hierarchies . . .” (Pape [1997] 2017, 23).

²⁷ Pape participated in the anti-dictatorship “March of the One Hundred Thousand,” on June 26, 1968 in response to increasing police repression of student protests. Later, she provided logistical support to political dissidents, who turned her in when they were arrested. In February 1973, she was arrested, imprisoned, and tortured for several months. Under pressure from her husband Günther Pape, who had connections with military personnel, she was given a military trial and was barely acquitted by a jury of four to three (Candela 2017, 11; Crockett 2017, 171–72; Mattar 2003, 79–80).

²⁸ Pape’s interest in the confluence of the Christian sins of gluttony and lust with sexualized mass media representations of women’s bodies echoes an erotic *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* painting by Teresinha Soares, titled *Pecados Mortais* (Deadly Sins, 1968), which may have influenced *Eat Me* (Gotti 2015).

²⁹ *Eat Me*’s 16mm film stock boasts a rich colour quality and a crisp image, and the film’s editing is systematic: the timing of the cuts was mathematically determined (Pape 2001, 91).

³⁰ “... o uso do erotismo como veículo de consume” (“Mulher-Objeto: da fome ao sexo, da gula a luxúria” 1976, n.p.)

³⁰ The film's titular phrase, "A gula ou a luxúria" (gluttony or lust), came from Pape's earlier sculpture *Caixa das Formigas* (Box of Ants) that she had exhibited in 1967 in the *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* exhibition at MAM/RJ. Intended as a critique of the institutional space of the museum, it comprised an open mirrored box, on the bottom of which was drawn a bull's eye of three black circles: on top of this was placed a small piece of raw meat along with live ants. Above the circle appeared the words: "a gula ou" (gluttony or), and below it: "a luxúria" (lust), which according to Pape, referred to the relationship between "sexual devouring and hunger" (*devoração sexual e da fome*), concepts that she returned to in *Eat Me* (Pape 1998, 28–29; de Moraes 1995, D5).

³² Vanessa Rosa Machado (2006, 361) suggests that Pape may have utilized the "Conchas Cook" advertisement for its association with women's traditional roles as cooks and because ladles have a "suggestive" feminine form.

³³ I thank Luisa Valle for pointing out the meaning of this double-entendre to me. Maggie Kilgour (1990, 7) has also highlighted the fact that in many cultures, eating and consumption are often used as metaphors for sexual intercourse.

³⁴ According to Pape ([1998] 2017, 44), the *Eat Me* film was projected within the *Eat Me* installations, but should be considered an independent work.

advertising.³¹ By "cannibalizing" commercials, Pape reveals how the literal "consumption" of food and objects mimics sexual acts (such as the suggestive image of a mouth sucking a sausage), as a critique of the "consumption" of products in consumer culture. According to art historian Claudia Calirman, the abrupt interruption of the soundtrack of the Conchas Cook ladle advertisement over the sexual moaning of the pulsating female voices at the end implies "an interrupted sexual consummation," replacing a consumer product with sexual satisfaction (Calirman 2014, 25).³²

Pape also marshals images evoking gluttony, desire, and excess to resist the dictatorship's conservative values around gender and sexuality. Its alternating close-up shots of a female mouth (that of Pape), and two male mouths (those of artists Cláudio Sampaio and Artur Barrio), which are bearded, but also wearing lipstick, present gender as fluid and non-binary. The title is also a play on words—"to eat" ("comer") is a double-entendre; it is also slang for "to fuck."³³ By directly addressing the viewer to "eat me," Pape also implicitly invites them for sex, a provocation which can be read as a tactic for claiming agency over her sexuality. This also parallels a common tactic used in *pornochanchada* titles: employing double-entendres to bypass the censors (such as the use of the verb "dar," in titles like *Eu dou o que ela gosta* [I Give Her What She Likes, 1975]: "dar" means "to give," but also suggests sex) (Shaw and Dennison 2014, 92). Representations of excess and gluttony were also common in *pornochanchadas*, particularly in scenes depicting gluttonous pre- or post-sex overeating in films like *Essa gostosa brincadeira a dois* (This Tasty Game for Two, 1974). Such scenes, according to Brazilian cinema studies scholar Stephanie Dennison, "celebrate a state of barbarity that functions as a challenge to the ethos of the dictatorship" (Dennison 2011, 236). Pape also used excess to challenge and undermine the regime's norms. Pape described the film as "an attack on the mass media," but explains that the censors "read [it] as pornography," and for this reason, it was banned from distribution in cinemas for three years (Pape 2001, 91). Though it shared much in common with the more "accepted" genre of *pornochanchadas*, the film's privileging the female gaze and sexual agency was probably what made it so intolerable to the censors.

The *Eat Me* Installations, 1976

In addition to the film version of *Eat Me*, there were also two iterations of an installation with the same title created a year later, one at Galeria Arte Global (GAG) in São Paulo, and one at MAM/RJ, both of which treated themes around gender and sexuality and which were also censored to varying degrees.³⁴ The first *Eat Me* installation was presented as a part of Pape's exhibition *Lygia Pape: Obras* (the first solo show of her career), in May 1976 at the now-defunct GAG. Owned and operated by the Globo Television Network, its goal was to promote contemporary Brazilian

art and young artists (Shtromberg 2016, 99–102). As a part of the gallery’s programming, Globo Television reported on its exhibitions during primetime national broadcasts, right before the most competitive timeslot of the eight o’clock *telenovela* (“novela das oito”) (Enciclopédia Itaú Cultural, s.v. “Galeria Arte Global”).³⁵ Like the film, Pape intended the *Eat Me* installation as a critique of the objectification of women in consumer culture and the mass media, but through the use of actual objects and spaces that hybridized a sales showroom and a nightclub (Pape 1983b, 47).³⁶ Pape divided the white cube space into two sections lit with coloured lights: one room was red and one blue. In the middle of each coloured space were cube-shaped display cases, which presented small paper sacks (the size and shape of popcorn bags), imprinted with a lipstick “kiss” and signed by the artist (figs. 2, 3). Pape filled these sacks with what she called “Objects of Seduction”—perfumes, nudie calendars, aphrodisiac lotions, pubic hair, magic recipes, peanuts (believed to be a male aphrodisiac), and what she described as “feminist texts.”³⁷ Each bag was for sale for one cruzeiro a piece (Pape 1983b, 47).

In addition to the projection of the *Eat Me* film inside the gallery, the GAG show also included an auxiliary element outside the exhibition space: a thirty-second video of what Pape ([1998] 2017) describes as “a frankly pornographic mouth” (44), which was broadcast on the Globo Television Network. While it is unclear what exactly the video looked like, or how many days the ad actually aired, Pape (1976, 6) insisted that by “penetrating” people’s homes through the mass media, she was displaying a virtual exhibition.³⁸ Moreover, by appropriating a television commercial, Pape effectively “cannibalized” it by absorbing its form and reformulating it. She infiltrated the actual broadcast circuits with a sexy image as an ironic critique of the ways real advertisements exploited lust to sell products, an act made even more radical by undertaking it on the Globo Network, the official communication arm of the dictatorship.³⁹

The GAG exhibition was supposed to run for about two weeks (May 11–28, 1976), but the authorities closed it within a day, censoring it for its allegedly pornographic content.⁴⁰ Since GAG was directly tied to the television network, it was under more intense scrutiny from the censors than other experimental art galleries. The network claimed that audiences complained about the immoral and pornographic content of the film via letters and telephone calls to the station (Trizoli 2018, 269).⁴¹ Ironically, it was precisely pornography that Pape sought to appropriate in order to critique it—not for its eroticism, which she playfully endorsed—but rather to expose the direct links between the sale of women’s sexuality and the sale of products.

The second and longer iteration of the *Eat Me* installation took place at MAM/RJ from August 12–30, 1976, in what was called the “experimental space,” which was larger than GAG and black instead of white.⁴² Along one wall of the gallery were three small booths, structured with draped black plastic and lit with red spotlights (fig. 4). Inside each booth, Pape placed the sacks containing the Objects of Seduction on low black platforms. The sacks in the first room contained coloured perfume bottles, makeup, and hand mirrors; those in the second room contained

³⁵ Of the four Globo telenovela timeslots, the 8pm slot was the most widely viewed (Rêgo 2003).

³⁶ Because I was unable to locate photographic documentation of this show, my description of this installation is based on contemporaneous exhibition reviews.

³⁷ I have been unable to discern which specific “feminist texts” were included in the sacks, but they are mentioned in Francisco Bittencourt (1976, 3).

³⁸ I could not find a visual record of this work, and thus cannot analyse it visually beyond Pape’s description. It was likely from the same footage of the sexy mouths used in the *Eat Me* film.

³⁹ Pape also claimed that the video had a viral effect and it actually influenced real advertisements on the channel (Pape 1977, 8–9).

⁴⁰ This was not the first time that art containing explicit nudity had been censored by the authorities. When Brazilian artists Wesley Duke Lee and Nelson Leirner presented their Happening, *O Grande Espetáculo das Artes* (the Great Spectacle of Arts, 1963), in the João Sebastião bar in São Paulo, which included a striptease show and a series of erotic prints on the walls that audiences had to use flashlights to see, it was shut down by the police (Calirman 2012, 38). In a later performance titled *O Corpo é a Obra* (The Body is the Work, 1970), Antonio Manuel attended the opening of MAM/RJ’s “Modern Art Salon” completely nude, which was also blocked by police (da Costa 2005, 86).

⁴¹ See also Vilma Homero (1988, 6), and Wagner Barreira (1988, n.p.).

⁴² My description of the MAM/RJ *Eat Me* installation is based on photographs. The São Paulo show was held in May 1976, and the MAM/RJ show—originally intended to be held in October 1975—was held two months later from August 12–30, 1976.

Lygia Pape, *Objetos de sedução* (Objects of Seduction), original items: 1976, refabricated items: 2017. Paper bags, dentures, false eyelashes, mirrors, perfumes, and other cosmetic items. © Projeto Lygia Pape. Photograph by Gillian Sneed, taken at the exhibition, *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. (May 21 – July 23, 2017).



Figs. 2, 3 – Lygia Pape, *Objetos de sedução* (Objects of Seduction), original items: 1976, refabricated items: 2017. Paper bags, dentures, false eyelashes, mirrors, perfumes, and other cosmetic items. © Projeto Lygia Pape. Photograph by Gillian Sneed, taken at the exhibition, *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. (May 21 – July 23, 2017).



Fig. 4 – Installation view of *Eat Me: A Gula ou a Luxúria?* (Eat Me: Gluttony or Lust), Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1976. Photograph by Maurício Cirne. © Projeto Lygia Pape. Image in: Lygia Pape, Luis Otávio Pimental, and Mário Pedrosa, *Lygia Pape, Arte Brasileira Contemporânea*, edited by Afonso Henriques Neto (Rio de Janeiro: Edição Funarte, 1983), p. 38.

hair, cigarettes in the shape of lipstick, and calendars with photos of sexy women; and those of the third room contained peanuts and “feminist texts” by Brazilian women authors.⁴³ On the back wall of each room hung neon signs spelling out the words “Eat Me: a Gula ou a Luxúria”—one in green, one in yellow, and one in red—creating a glow that critic Frederico Morais (1976) described as a “mix between a motel, a nightclub, [and] a cabaret.”⁴⁴ Evoking peep show booths, the little rooms conjured the spaces where sex is bought and sold.

Opposite the booths were three large glass-covered, cube-shaped display cases, inside of which Pape presented an array of quotidian and erotic things, all brand new and neatly arranged as if for sale, including twenty shiny red apples dotting a bed of curly-haired wigs, an artful array of objects including a corset, a curved hairpiece, a pair of dentures, fake nails, fake eyelashes, nylons, and other “clichés of seduction.”⁴⁵ These were all flanked by rows of neatly aligned circular mirrors, posters of nude women, and “literature for men.”⁴⁶ As with the film and the black booths, these display cases created an ironic equation between economic consumerism and physical consumption (eating and sex/gluttony and lust).

While Pape had previously “penetrated” the private spaces of people’s homes through a television advertisement, in the MAM/RJ version of the work, she infiltrated public space with a film projected on the external wall of the museum, depicting herself sexily beckoning spectators to enter with her index finger. Two photographic stills of this film depict the artist standing before a red curtain and in a green velvet blouse, her head cocked slightly to the side, smiling playfully at the camera, her hand thrust forward with her index finger erect and curling toward her, as if seductively beckoning the viewer.⁴⁷ The exterior projection faced a busy highway outside the museum and was quickly censored for “interfering with traf-

⁴³ Pape included the feminist texts as a “contradiction” (Bittencourt 1976, 3; Pape 1983b, 47).

⁴⁴ Frederico Morais (1976, n.p.).

⁴⁵ Lygia Pape quoted in Bittencourt (1976, 3).

⁴⁶ Bittencourt (1976, 3).

⁴⁷ I have not seen the film, and I do not know if it is extant. Curator Glória Ferreira (2017, 50) compares Pape’s image to a prostitute summoning a client to a brothel.

⁴⁸ I determined the set-up of the space (including my assumption that the chairs facing the wall were intended for film screenings) from installation photographs. The film's screening schedule is unknown.

⁴⁹ "... Lygia revela o que se esconde atrás deste falso brilhante do consumismo—a sociedade patriarcal."

⁵⁰ "este projeto referem-se a mulher-objeto e seu uso no consumo: ... que impregna a visão da sociedade de consumo de massa em moldes patriarcalis."

⁵¹ "... a exposição não tinha um discurso ideológico assim direto no sentido de ser uma transação feminista, porque eu tenho sérias dúvidas sobre essas posições."

⁵² For instance, curator Paulo Herkenhoff (2016) has acknowledged that many Brazilians think the discussion of feminism "is inappropriate in the context of Brazilian art" (190). (Here Herkenhoff is speaking of a general anti-feminist bias in the Brazilian art world at large, not about his own views). Feminist curator Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda (2002) has also written, "Historically, it has always been uncomfortable for Brazilian women to hold public commitment to feminist struggles" (321–31).

fic" (Ferreira 2017, 50). An identical image of Pape beckoning spectators to enter was positioned inside the show, hidden behind a curtain at the entrance. It is likely that Pape also projected the *Eat Me* film inside the gallery near the display cases, on a wall in front of two rows of chairs.⁴⁸

As with the previous installation at GAG, these moving image projections inside and outside the museum connected its interior and exterior spaces, an arrangement which Pape claimed was grounded in her Neoconcrete roots and fascination with the moebius strip (a half-twisted, looped strip with one continuous surface) (Pape [1998] 2017, 44). Yet, a more obvious reading is that it represented her exploration of the dichotomies between public and private spaces, and revealed her observations about which aspects of women's sexuality must remain hidden and which could be made explicit during the regime, thus gendering the moebius strip's formal thrust.

Uneasy Feminisms

Ultimately, both the *Eat Me* film and its two related installations functioned as a critique of the objectification of women and the exploitation of sexuality in Brazilian advertising, and other mass media forms like *pornochanchadas*. Frederico Morais (1976) even described the project as revealing "what is hiding behind consumerism's false shine—patriarchal society,"⁴⁹ and Pape (1976) explained that the project referred to "the woman-as-object and its use in consumerism: ... which permeates consumer society's vision in patriarchal ways"⁵⁰ (6). Yet, despite her use of language evocative of feminist thinking, Pape (1983b) did not label herself this work as feminist. Instead, she claimed that she did *not* intend it as a "feminist transaction, because I had serious doubts on these positions"⁵¹ (47).

Pape's disavowal of feminism was probably due to a number of factors, including Brazilian stereotypes that feminism was doctrinaire, aggressive, and man-hating, and moreover, imperialist (Alvarez 1989, 21; Trizoli 2012, 410–20). Pape (1976, 6) saw herself privileging instead phenomenological sensory experience, and she likely felt that her own light-hearted play with eroticism and desire was at odds with a dogmatic feminist argument, views rooted in the broader histories of feminism in Brazil. Though there had been women's movements in the country since the turn of the twentieth century, the concept of "feminism" remained contentious in the country until recently.⁵² After a "first wave" struggle for improved educational access and suffrage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a "second wave" emerged in the 1970s in response to oppression and economic instability under the dictatorship (Miller 1990, 10–26; Sarti 1989, 75–90). This women's movement materialized from two branches of the anti-authoritarian resistance struggles: a broad umbrella of Marxist and Leftist political organizations and dissident groups and the progressive sec-

tors the Catholic Church, which formed an unexpected coalition in opposition to the regime (Hollanda 2003, 17). Even so, many Brazilian women rejected the term “feminism” because they associated it with the U.S. and viewed it as a tool of “Yankee imperialism” (Alvarez 1989, 21, 62). In fact, all sectors of Brazilian society—the Right, the Left, and the mass media—stereotyped self-labelled “feminists” as privileged *petites bourgeoisies*, frustrated man-haters, or lesbians, in turn revealing the pervasive homophobia of this era (Fisher 1993, 204; Trizoli 2012, 473). The dictatorship deemed feminism subversive, and members of the working classes and the Left suspected it was a bourgeois attempt to weaken the labour movement (Fisher 1993, 204).

As such, Brazilians initially dismissed U.S. and European second-wave feminist texts when they arrived in Brazil. Though Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) was first published in Portuguese in 1960, male Leftist intellectuals deemed this work by the “wife” of Jean-Paul Sartre as too “cerebral.”⁵³ When Betty Friedan visited Brazil in 1971 to release the Portuguese translation of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), the press mocked her as an ugly, bourgeois, man-hater, and many sectors of society derided the book.⁵⁴ It was not until the late 1970s that these texts became more widely read, mainly among Brazilians living in exile abroad.

Instead, many Brazilian women read Brazilian authors who addressed feminist themes in their writing, but who did so while assiduously avoiding the negative stereotypes and connotations of U.S. and European feminism. These included Rose Marie Muraro (1930–2014), Heleieth Saffioti (1934–2010), Carmen da Silva (1919–1985), and Heloneida Studart (1937–2007). As local women who had gained visibility writing for popular magazines and newspapers, and who distanced themselves from foreign brands of feminism, they were well liked among Brazilian women, especially the white urban middle classes. Under the auspices of Marxism and anti-imperialism, they incorporated ideas from both de Beauvoir and Friedan in their writings, all the while disavowing an overtly “feminist” label (Trizoli 2012, 471–72).

By the mid-1970s, Left-wing, middle-class feminists and working-class women joined forces in the fight against dictatorship, and they eventually began to reject the idea that gender struggle had to be subordinated to class or democratic struggle (Alvarez 1989, 61; Sarti 1989, 75). In 1979, the government granted amnesty to exiled dissidents, allowing them to return to Brazil. This provided more space for feminist mobilization, because returning exiles brought with them U.S. and European feminist politics and theories, which were received with less resistance than before (Alvarez 1989, 25, 40). These feminists encouraged the women’s movement to be autonomous from the overarching Leftist umbrella groups in which they were previously subsumed, finally permitting a broader feminist mobilization in Brazil in the 1980s (Fisher 1993, 205).

Even so, the Brazilian art world still did not fully embrace feminism.⁵⁵ As Simone Osthoff has pointed out, “issues of gender have never been high on the [Brazilian] artistic-political agenda” (Osthoff 2010, 76).⁵⁶ While Brazilian women artists’ own

⁵³ *The Second Sex* first circulated in Brazil (in French) in the 1950s, prior to the Portuguese-language edition being published in 1960. Although de Beauvoir was in Brazil with Sartre for about two months in 1960—where she attended intellectual circles and gave a few lectures and interviews to newspapers—it was not until the 1970s that *The Second Sex* became more commonly read (Candiani 2018; Borges 2008, 5).

⁵⁴ Rose Marie Muraro, editor of Editora Vozes, which published *The Feminine Mystique* in Brazil, invited Friedan to the country. Friedan gave several talks in Rio de Janeiro, which the press reported on negatively: Rio’s leading newspaper, the *Jornal do Brasil*, described Friedan as appearing like an “aging transvestite,” and a female reporter described her as “ugly” (Hahner 1990, 189).

⁵⁵ For an overview of the resistance toward feminism in Latin American art, see Fajardo-Hill (2017, 21–22).

⁵⁶ “. . . questões de gênero nunca terem sido uma prioridade na agenda artístico-política.”

⁵⁷ Some examples include Tarsila do Amaral, Anita Malfatti, Maria Martins, and Mira Schendel. This fact problematizes Linda Nochlin's (1971) famous question, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (22–39).

⁵⁸ In 1991, Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda presented her essay, "O Estranho Horizonte da Crítica Feminista no Brasil" (The Strange Horizon of Feminist Criticism in Brazil), at the Ibero-Americanist Institute Presussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, November 20–24, 1991, which she later published. In the late 1990s, artists, critics, and scholars organized a series of feminist debates about Brazilian art history at the Museu da República in Rio de Janeiro (Osthoff 2010, 78, fn. 12). Roberta Barros (2016, 14) has pointed out that in the scholarly field of literary studies in Brazil, feminist theories faced less resistance.

⁵⁹ For instance, in a review of the MAM/RJ *Eat Me* installation, critic Francisco Bittencourt (1976, 3) highlighted the work's critique of sexism in advertising and society, while placing the blame on women themselves.

⁶⁰ "arroubo feminista"

⁶¹ See, for instance Nelson (2012, 40), Calirman (2014, 19), Lamoni (2015, 71), and Barros (2016, 121–25).

⁶² *A Mulher na Iconografia de Massa* resulted from twelve months of scholarly and sociological research by Pape, and was completed with funding from the Funarte Foundation (Fundação Nacional de Artes) in Rio de Janeiro in 1977. It also echoes the title of an exhibition in which Pape had participated, titled *O Artista Brasileiro e a Iconografia de Massa* (The Brazilian Artist and Mass Iconography), curated by Frederico Morais in April 1968, which explored the impact of mass media on Brazilian artistic production (Gotti 2015).

resistance to feminist readings of their work reflects this persistent cultural taboo, it also stems from legitimate critiques and regional differences. Their hesitance to fully embrace an explicitly feminist position was understandable given the repressive conditions of the regime. Also, some Brazilian women felt that while in the U.S., women artists were side-lined by macho art movements like Abstract-Expression, in Brazil, many twentieth-century women artists thrived and rose to great prominence.⁵⁷ Furthermore, they did not want their work pigeonholed as solely "women's art" or as "feminine" (Osthoff 2010, 77). It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that Brazilian artists and critics began to more explicitly confront feminism(s) and adopt a feminist label.⁵⁸

Hence, despite the obvious feminist messaging of the *Eat Me* film and installations, because of Pape's own refusal, feminist analyses of the work have been limited. At the time the installations were first shown, only male art critics reviewed them, acknowledging the gendered theme, but through a misogynistic logic that both critiqued feminism and denied that Pape was a feminist.⁵⁹ Surprisingly, it was not until 1992 that anyone referred to *Eat Me* as an overtly "feminist" artwork, when the journalist Angela Pimenta (1992) described it as a "feminist ecstasy"⁶⁰ (2). In recent years, several authors have begun to position Pape's art practice within the broader context of feminist art.⁶¹ For instance, art historian Claudia Calirman (2014, 19) has argued that while Pape adamantly refused the feminist label, she contributed to the feminist canon. Pape, she maintains, was "able to question traditional gender roles and introduce topics related to women's constructed identity in Brazilian art without any overt engagement with the discussion of gender" (Calirman 2014, 19). This seems to be wilfully blind: Pape is explicitly dealing with gender. Pape not only represents non-binary gender and gender fluidity in the *Eat Me* film, but she also criticizes the Brazilian mass media's objectification of women in the installations. In contrast to Simone Osthoff (2010), who has argued "there is no approach or feminist theory connecting [Brazilian women's] works" (75), I argue that Pape's ideas can be squarely framed within feminist discourses on gender.

The Woman in Mass Iconography

As further substantiation of this argument, we can turn to a research project Pape undertook in 1977 titled *A Mulher na Iconografia de Massa* (The Woman in Mass Iconography), which directly relates to the ideas in the *Eat Me* film and installations.⁶² Pape's thesis-like project, comprising over fifty pages of "poetic" text, infographics, and photographic documentation, developed a visual archive of representations of women in mass media (billboards, advertising, etc.) in and around the urban centres and outlying favelas of Rio and São Paulo, in order to examine how such images were constructed and consumed. It reads like a second-

wave feminist critique of representations of women in the mass media, recalling U.S. and European feminist writings, including de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, as well as the writings of Brazilian feminists Studart and Muraro.

By way of example: Friedan and de Beauvoir discuss the "othering" and "objectification" of women in society and cultural representations, ideas that Pape also rehearses in her text. Echoing Friedan's argument ([1963] 2013, 242–76), that the mass media constructs women's identities, Pape maintains that the Brazilian mass media transforms women into mythological figures, thus coercing them to accept as normative the idealized beauty represented in telenovelas, films, and women's magazines (Pape 1977, 23). While it is unknown if Pape had read de Beauvoir or Friedan, she was likely aware of Studart and Muraro, who wrote for popular women's magazines at the time. Studart's *Mulher Objeto de Cama e Mesa* is even mentioned in a 1976 review of *Eat Me* at MAM/RJ by Frederico Morais, so it likely Pape was aware of the book.⁶³ Much like Pape's equation in *Eat Me* of women's bodies with products for sale, Studart (1974) writes in *Mulher: Objeto da cama e mesa*, "Like soap, shampoo, fashionable dress, women must be consumed"⁶⁴ (28). Studart's concern with the use of women's sexuality to sell products directly aligns with Pape's critiques.

Although Pape did not include any feminist texts in the bibliography for *The Woman in Mass Iconography*, she did include Rose Marie Muraro's *A automação: e o futuro do homem* (Automation and the Future of Man, 1968).⁶⁵ While not explicitly feminist in terms of its focus on the Information Age, Muraro's book (1968, 121–22) does include a section on women's sexual liberation, and the books she published directly before and after were overtly feminist, even while strongly informed by socialism and essentialism. Her previous book, *A Mulher na Construção do Mundo Futuro* (Woman in the Construction of the Future World, 1966), argues that because of women's "inherent" maternal instincts, they are especially positioned to create a more egalitarian society; and her subsequent book, *Libertação sexual da mulher* (Women's Sexual Liberation, 1970), a critique of capitalism, argues that within the era of technological innovation, mass culture's harmful effects can only be overturned through gender equality and sexual liberation.

I hypothesize that Pape had read both *A Mulher na Construção do Mundo Futuro* and *Libertação sexual da mulher*, and that they impacted her feminist provocations in the *Eat Me* works. Like Muraro (1966, 58), Pape (1977, 25) writes about "mass culture" and its nefarious effects on women and their roles in society. In *Libertação sexual da mulher*, Muraro (1970, 48, 64) critiques representations of women's representation in the mass media, complaining they function merely as erotic objects for men's pleasure, a critique that Pape also makes in *Eat Me*. Muraro (1970, 57) also anticipates Pape's equation of sexual consumption and market consumption in *Eat Me*.

Yet, given these similarities, it is surprising that Pape repeatedly insists that these views are not "feminist." For instance, on the ways patriarchy oppresses women,

⁶³ Morais (1976, n.p.).

⁶⁴ "Como sabão, xampu, roupas da moda, as mulheres devem ser consumidas."

⁶⁵ Pape's bibliography lists European theoreticians of semiotics and phenomenology, such as Umberto Eco, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean Baudrillard, and Roland Barthes. The text also demonstrates affinities with cybernetic and information theories, such as Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (not listed on the bibliography).

⁶⁶ "Sem nenhum preconceito feminista, a sociedade de massa e seu caráter patriarcal, confere a alimenta essa postura de ser de segunda linha para a mulher . . ."

⁶⁷ “Não há aí nenhum travo de feminismo, somente que o arcabouço mantém a mulher presa de uma postura que até mesmo nos lazes permanece a mesma: subsidiária dos desejos masculinos.”

⁶⁸ “Há dois tipos de feminismo: um antigo . . . que põe a mulher contra o homem . . . Mas há outro que usa a opressão da mulher dentro de uma luta mais global e sintetiza dialeticamente essa luta pela justiça. É nesse sentido que eu me coloco.”

⁶⁹ “Há hoje em dia, uma tendência mistificante de falar em essências e de teorizar sobre os caminhos ‘naturais’ da mulher.”

⁷⁰ In some ways, it anticipated the later Brazilian Movimento de Arte Pornô (Porn Art Movement, 1980–1982), an avant-garde performance and poetry group that used explicit nudity and sex to promote “pansexuality,” an open form of sexuality that rejects normative sexual orientations and gender binaries (Kac 2013).

she writes: “Without any feminist preconception, mass society and its patriarchal character confers and feeds this position of women being second string”⁶⁶ (Pape 1977, 27, 29). On women’s social relationship of subordination to men, she states: “There is no aftertaste of feminism, only that the framework keeps the woman trapped in a position that even in leisure remains the same: as a subsidiary of male desires”⁶⁷ (Pape 1977, 27). However, Pape’s approach is very much in keeping with feminist politics in Brazil at the time, in which feminists attempted to distance themselves from U.S. feminism. Even Muraro (1972) was hesitant to identify as an outright feminist until the early 1970s, and then she was careful to distinguish what “type” of feminist she was, stating, “There are two types of feminism: an older one [which] . . . pits woman against man . . . [and] another, which sees women’s oppression within a more global social struggle and dialectically synthesizes that struggle for justice”⁶⁸ (45).

It is likely that Pape, like Muraro, wanted to avoid what was perceived as “bad” (imperialist) U.S. feminism because she did not want to alienate her male colleagues and collaborators, and thus focused instead on media theory, semiotics, and Marxism to structure her feminist arguments. Pape may have also taken issue with the biological determinism of writers like Muraro (1966, 70–71) who equated the “feminine” with essentialized characteristics like maternity and sensitivity. Similarly, French-Brazilian feminist critic Sheila Leirner (1980) commented on her dissatisfaction with essentialist approaches in Brazil to analysing women’s art, writing, “There is now a mystifying tendency to speak in essences and to theorize about the ‘natural’ ways of women”⁶⁹ (49), a critique with which Pape likely agreed.

Given Pape’s ludic treatment of erotic imagery in the *Eat Me* film and installations, I speculate that she sought a less essentialist, more sex-positive feminism, especially given Muraro’s (1970, 80) condemnation of pornography as the outcome of the social repression of male sexuality. In her play with gender and satirizing of pornography and erotica, Pape questions the gender binary and challenges sexual mores as part of her broader strategy to resist the heteronormative and patriarchal values promoted by the dictatorship and mass media. Pape’s brand of feminism embraced gender fluidity and women’s sexual agency, but critiqued the ways the mass media objectified their bodies and instrumentalized female sexuality to sell products. This was a nuanced feminist position at the time, one that was difficult to articulate in the face of the purist positions of U.S. second wave feminism.⁷⁰ Pape’s proposals in the *Eat Me* film and installations were intolerable to the dictatorship’s disciplinary apparatus, which could only interpret her imagery as pornographic, rather than as a subtle critique of mass media images of women, and for these reasons the state censored it in its various forms.

Copyright Disclaimer and Fair Use Statement

This essay contains copyrighted images, the use of which was not authorized by the copyright owner. Under section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, allowance is made for “fair use” for purposes such as criticism, comment, scholarship, education, and research. The material contained in this article is distributed without profit and is for research and educational purposes only. Only small portions of the original work are being used and those could not be used easily to duplicate the original work. This should constitute a “fair use” of any such copyrighted material.

REFERENCES

- Alvarez, Sonia E. 1989. “Women’s Movements and Gender Politics in the Brazilian Transition.” In *The Women’s Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy*, edited by Jane S. Jaquette, 18–71. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.
- – –. 1990. *Engendering Democracy in Brazil: Women’s Movements in Transition Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Alvarez, Sonia, Patricia Chuchryk, Marysa Navarro-Aranguren, and Nancy Saporta Sternbach. 1992. “Feminisms in Latin America: From Bogotá to San Bernardo.” *Signs* 17, no. 2 (Winter): 393–434. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3174469>.
- Amor, Mônica. 2016. *Theories of the Nonobject: Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, 1944–1969*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Andrade, Oswald de. (1928) 2004. “Manifesto Antropofagia” (1928). In *Inverted Utopias*, edited by Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea, 466–67. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Barreira, Wagner. 1988. “Volta para o futuro.” *Revista Seja*, July, 6, 1988.
- Barros, Roberta. 2016. *Elogio ao toque: ou como falar de arte feminista à brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Relacionarte Marketing e Produções Culturais.
- Basualdo, Carlos. 2007. “Vanguarda, cultura popular e indústria cultural no Brasil.” In *Tropicália: Uma revolução na cultura brasileira*, edited by Carlos Basualdo, 11–28. São Paulo: Cosac Naify Edições Limitada.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. (1952) 1989. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Deirdre Bair. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Bentes, Ivana. 2015. “Chaos-Construction. The Formal and the Sensory in Lygia Pape’s Films.” In *Lygia Pape: Magnetized Space*, edited by Manuel Borja-Villel. Zurich: JRP Ringier.

- Bittencourt, Francisco. 1976. "A Gula e a luxúria segundo Lygia Pape." *Tribuna da Imprensa*, August 21–22, 1976.
- Borges, Joana Vieira. 2008. "Leituras feministas no Brasil e na Argentina: circulações e apropriações." Paper presented at Fazendo Gênero 8 Conference: Corpo, Violência e Poder, Florianópolis, Brazil.
- Calirman, Claudia. 2012. *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 2014. "'Epidermic' and Visceral Works: Lygia Pape and Anna Maria Maiolino." *Women's Art Journal* (Fall/Winter): 19–27. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24395414>.
- . 2018. "Brazilian Modernism: Feminism in Disguise." *Frieze*, August 23, 2018. <https://frieze.com/article/brazilian-modernism-feminism-disguise>.
- Candela, Iria. 2017. "The Risk of Invention." In *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, edited by Iria Candela, 2–15. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Candiani, H. R. 2018. "Quelques notes sur la réception du Deuxième Sexe au Brésil." *Chère Simone de Beauvoir: Écritures des femmes et des hommes anonymes*. Published June 28, 2018. Accessed March 1, 2019. <https://lirecrire.hypotheses.org/611>.
- Cardoso, Erika. 2014. "Carlos Zéfiro: o herói incomum." In *À Sombra das Ditaduras*, edited by Janaína Martins Cordeiro, Diego Omar da Silveira, Isabel Cristina Leite, and Daniel Aarão Reis. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: MAUAD Editora.
- Crockett, Vivian A. 2017. "Chronology." In *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, edited by Iria Candela, 168–75. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Cruz, Roberto Moreira S. 2016. "Breve Percurso Histórico: O filme e o vídeo de artista no Brasil a partir da Coleção Itaú Cultural." In *Filmes e vídeos de artistas: Coleção Itaú Cultural*, edited by Roberto Moreira S. Cruz, n.p. São Paulo, Brazil: Itaú Cultural.
- da Costa, Cacilda Teixeira. 2005. *Wesley Duke Lee: um salmão na corrente taciturna*. São Paulo, Brazil: Alameda/Edusp.
- de Moraes, Angélica. 1995. "Lygia Pape investiga a sedução e a perda," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 22, 1995.
- Dennison, Stephanie. 2011. "Sex and the Generals: Reading Brazilian Pornochanchada as Sexploitation." In *Latsploitation, Exploitation Cinemas, and Latin America*, edited by Victoria Ruétalo and Dolores Tierney, 230–44. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dennison, Stephanie, and Lisa Shaw. 2014. *Brazilian National Cinema*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Dunn, Christopher. 2001. *Brutality Garden Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- . 2017. *Contracultura: Alternative Arts and Social Transformation in Authoritarian Brazil*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Enciclopédia Itaú Cultural Online Encyclopedia*. 2016. S.v. "Galeria Arte Global (São Paulo, SP)." Accessed Sept. 17. <http://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/instituicao017516/galeria-arte-global-sao-paulo-sp>.

- Fajardo-Hill, Cecilia. 2017. "The Invisibility of Latin American Women Artists: Problematizing Art Historical and Curatorial Practices." In *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985*, edited by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, Andrea Giunta, and Rodrigo Alonso, 21–28. New York, NY: DelMonico Books/Prestel.
- Fausto, Boris, and Sergio Fausto. 2014. *A Concise History of Brazil*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferreira, Glória. 2017. "Irreverence and Marginality." In *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, edited by Iria Candela, 46–51. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- "Figueiredo convoca a nação para combater pornografia." 1982. *Jornal do Brasil*, March 16, 1982.
- Finotti, Ivan. 2010. "Esse obscuro objeto do desejo." *Folha de São Paulo*, June 19, 2010.
- Fisher, Josephine. 1993. *Out of the Shadows: Women, Resistance, and Politics in South America*. London: Latin American Bureau.
- Friedan, Betty. (1963) 2013. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Gotti, Sofia. 2015. "A Pantagruelian Pop: Teresinha Soares's 'Erotic Art of Contestation.'" *Tate Papers*, no. 24 (Autumn). https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/24/a-pantagruelian-pop-teresinha-soares-erotic-art-of-contestation#footnoteref27_r2yj501.
- Hahner, June E. 1990. *Emancipating the Female Sex: The Struggle for Women's Rights in Brazil, 1850–1940*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Herkenhoff, Paulo, and Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda. 2006. "On Women and Radical Maneuvers." In *Manobras radicais: Artistas brasileiras, 1886–2005*, edited by Paulo Herkenhoff and Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda, 161–208. São Paulo, Brazil: Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil.
- Hollanda, Heloísa Buarque de. 2002. "Gender Studies: Rough Notes from a Very Local Perspective." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3 (December): 321–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1356932022000041912>.
- — —. 2003. "O estranho horizonte da crítica feminista no Brasil." In *Vozes femininas: gêneros, mediações e práticas da escrita*, edited by Flora Süssekind, Tânia Dias, and Carlito Azevedo, 15–25. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: 7letras/Fundação Casa Rui Barbosa.
- Homero, Vilma. 1988. "A criatividade em ebulição." *Tribuna da Imprensa*, June 21, 1988.
- Johnson, Randal and Robert Stam. 1995. *Brazilian Cinema*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Johnson, Randal. 1995. "The Rise and Fall of Brazilian Cinema, 1960–1990." In *Brazilian Cinema*, edited by Johnson and Robert Stam, 362–86. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Kac, Eduardo. 2013. "O Movimento de Arte Pornô: A aventura de uma vanguarda nos anos 80." *Ars* 11, no. 22, 31–51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.11606/issn.2178-0447.ars.2013.80655>.
- Kilgour, Maggie. 1990. *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Lamas, Caio Túlio Padula, and Antônio Reis Junior. 2018. "Film Industry, Pornography and Censorship in Brazil: the Case of *Coisas Eróticas*." In *E Pornô, tem Pornô? A Panorama of Brazilian Porn*, edited by Mariana Baltar, translated by Arthur Germano Santos, 37–62. Gorizia, Italy: Mimesis International.
- Lamoni, Giulia. 2015. "Unfolding the 'Present': Some Notes on Brazilian 'Pop'." In *The World Goes Pop*, edited by Flavia Frigeri and Elsa Coustou, 59–70. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Leirner, Sheila. (1980) 1982. "Feminismo: uma nova escola?". In *Arte como medida: críticas selecionadas*, edited by Sheila Leirner, 48–50. São Paulo, Brazil: Editora Perspectiva.
- Machado, Vanessa. 2006. "Anarquia e crítica em Lygia Pape." II Encontro de História da Arte – IFCH/UNICAMPE, 356–63. Accessed May 1, 2019. <https://www.ifch.unicamp.br/eha/atas/2006/MACHADO,%20Vanessa%20Rosa%20-%20IIIEHA.pdf>.
- Mattar, Denise. 2003. *Lygia Pape. intrinsicamente anarquista*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Relume Dumará.
- Miller, Francesca. 1990. "Latin American Feminism and the Transnational Arena." In *Women, Culture, and Politics in Latin America: Seminar on Feminism and Culture in Latin America*, edited by Emilie L. Bergmann, et al., 10–26. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Mello, Christine. 2008. *Extremidades do vídeo*. São Paulo, Brazil: Editora SENAC.
- Morais, Frederico. 1976. "O brilho, a gula e a luxúria na exposição de Lygia Pape." *O Globo*, August 31, 1976.
- "Mulher-Objeto: da fome ao sexo, da gula a luxúria." 1976. *Ultima Hora*, May 12, 1976.
- Muraro, Rose Marie. 1966. *A mulher na construção do mundo futuro*. Petrópolis, Brazil: Editôra Vozes.
- — —. 1968. *A automação e o futuro do homem*. Petrópolis, Brazil: Editôra Vozes.
- — —. 1972. "Homem não é homem, mulhomem. Mulher não é mulher, homulher." Interview by Jary Cardoso. *Bondinho*, March 3–4, 1972.
- — —. *Libertação sexual da mulher*. Petrópolis, Brazil: Editôra Vozes, 1970.
- Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro. N.d. "Eat Me: A Gula ou a Luxúria." Exhibition Press Release, Lygia Pape Folder, MAM/RJ Exhibition Archives, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- Nelson, Adele. 2012. "Sensitive and Nondiscursive Things: Lygia Pape and the Reconception of Printmaking." *Art Journal* 71, iss. 3 (Fall): 26–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2012.10791101>.
- Nochlin, Linda. 1971. "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *Artnews* (January): 22–39.
- Osthoff, Simone. 2010. "De musas a autoras: mulheres, arte e tecnologia no Brasil." *Ars* 7, no. 15: 75–91. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1678-53202010000100006>.
- Pape, Lygia. 1976. *Lygia Pape*. São Paulo, Brazil: Galeria Arte Global.

- — —. 1977. *A Mulher na Iconografia de Massa*. Unpublished text, October 1977, Funarte Foundation Archives, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- — —. 1983a. "Filmes." In *Arte Brasileira Contemporânea: Lygia Pape*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Funarte Foundation.
- — —. 1983b. "Objetos de Sedução: Eat Me," In *Arte Brasileira Contemporânea: Lygia Pape*. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Funarte Foundation.
- — —. (1997) 2017. "Birds of Marvelous Colors." Interview by Lúcia Carneiro and Ileana Padilla. In *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, edited by Iria Candela, 16–24. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- — —. (1998) 2017. "Outside the Frame of the Screen." Interview by Angélica de Moraes. In *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, edited by Iria Candela, 42–45. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- — —. 1998. *Palavra do artista: Lygia Pape*. Interview by Lúcia Carneiro and Ileana Padilla. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Lacerda Editores.
- — —. 2001. "My work in Marginal Cinema." In *Virgen Territory: Women, Gender, and History in Contemporary Brazilian Art*, edited by Susan Fisher Sterling, Berta Sichel, and Franklin Espath Pedroso, 90–91. Washington, DC: National Museum of Women in the Arts.
- Parente, André. 2007. "Avant-garde, Experimental and Device Cinema." In *Filmes de Artista, Brasil 1965–1980*, edited by Fernando Cocchiarale, 23–44. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Contra Capa Livraria.
- Pimenta, Angela. 1992. "Cor que flutua," *Revista Veja Brasil*, November 11, 1992.
- Rêgo, Cacilda M. 2003. "Novelas, Novelinhas, Novelões: The Evolution of the (Tele) Novelas in Brazil." *Global Media Journal* 2, no. 2. <http://www.globalmediajournal.com/open-access/novelas-novelinhas-noveles-the-evolution-of-the-telenovela-in-brazil.pdf>.
- Reis, Raul. 2005. "What Prevents Cable TV From Taking Off in Brazil." In *Television: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*. Vol. 5, edited by Toby Miller, 266–83. London, UK: Routledge.
- Risério, Manoel. 2010. "Playboy vs Censura: 1975–1980." *Revista Playboy*, n. 423 (August): 231–47.
- Rolnik, Suely. 1998. "Anthropofagic Subjectivity." In *XXIV Bienal, Arte Contemporânea Brasileira: Um e/entre Outro/s*, edited by Paulo Herkenhoff, 128–45. São Paulo, Brazil: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo.
- Rosas-Moreno, Tania Cantrell. 2014. *News and Novela in Brazilian Media: Fact, Fiction, and National Identity*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Rowley, Hazel. 2007. "Beauvoir, Brazil and Christina T." *BookForum* (April/May). Accessed December 1, 2016. http://www.hazelrowley.com/beauvoir_brazil.html.
- Sarti, Cynthia. 1989. "The Panorama of Brazilian Feminism." *New Left Review* 173: 75–90.
- Shtromberg, Elena. 2016. *Art Systems: Brazil in the 1970s*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

- Straubhaar, Joseph. 2001. "Brazil: The Role of the State in World Television." In *Media and Globalization: Why the State Matters*, edited by Nancy Morris and Silvio Ricardo Waisbord, 133–45. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Studart, Heloneida. 1974. *Mulher: Objeto de cama e mesa*. Petrópolis, Brazil: Editora Vozes.
- Sneed, Gillian. 2019. "Gendered Subjectivity and Resistance: Brazilian Women's Performance for Camera, 1973–1982." Ph.D. diss., City University of New York.
- Steinem, Gloria. 1978. "Erotica and Pornography: A Clear and Present Difference." *Ms. Magazine* (November): 53–54, 75, 78.
- Cowan, Ben. 2017. "Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil." Interview by Zeb Tortorici. *Notches: (Re)marks on the History of Sexuality* (April). Accessed October 1, 2019, <http://notchesblog.com/2017/04/04/morality-and-repression-in-the-making-of-cold-war-brazil/>.
- Trizoli, Talita. 2012. "Crítica de Arte e Feminismo no Brasil dos Anos 60 e 70." In *Anais do V Seminário Nacional de Pesquisa em Arte e Cultura Visual*, edited by R. H. Monteiro and C. Rocha, 410–423. Goiânia, Brazil: Faculdade de Artes Visuais da Universidade Federal de Goiás.
- — —. 2018. "Atravessamentos Feministas: um panorama de mulheres artistas no Brasil dos Anos 60/70." Ph.D. diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2018.
- Quinalha, Renan Honorio. 2017. "Contra a moral e os bons costumes: a política sexual da ditadura brasileira (1964–1988)" Ph.D. diss., Universidade de São Paulo.

ART, CENSORSHIP AND HISTORICAL REVISIONISM

MINING THE MUSEUM, AFRO-ATLANTIC HISTORIES AND QUEERMUSEUM

CLARA SAMPAIO

University of Coimbra, Colégio das Artes,
Portugal
clrsampaio@gmail.com

In 2018, the French press reported¹ that the Government would start the repatriation of African artifacts to where they once belonged. Starting with Benin, this announcement has turned into a huge debate on the decolonization of contemporary museums and the return of looted objects taken during the colonial era, namely from the African continent.

The situation makes us reflect on the genesis of the museum institution. It is well known that the formation of Modern museums is linked to the idea of preserving objects and artifacts in order to tell a particular story: the one that will be presented in the future in such a way as to establish 'the official history'. In order to turn this narrative into a valid one, it is necessary to fill the museum space with elements that can illustrate it. Thus, to offer a view on topics such as sovereignty over other nations, objects and artifacts taken from exotic countries would be displayed in exuberant exhibition arrangements: first in Cabinets of Curiosities (seventeenth century), and then, a few hundred years later, within a physical space open to the general public and run by the State: the museum as we know it.

In this sense, the concept of museum that is still extant to this day is from the eighteenth century, mainly because most of those collections have survived. Although there is always room for critical reassessment, like the French government's decision, there has been little mobilization around this discussion because it is sure to expose political fragilities. Which in turn could open a whole *can of worms* regarding the functioning of existing museums and their future survival. On the other hand, to disclose the institutional backstage means to deal with the equally problematic relationship between museums (their procedures for validation and valuation of art objects) and artists. As Walter Benjamin (2003, 392) states: 'There is no document

¹ The news was reported in many different newspapers. One example is the article 'França irá devolver à África obras de arte saqueadas durante período colonial' posted on RFI, November 2018, available at <http://br.rfi.fr/franca/20181121-franca-ira-devolver-obras-de-arte-africanas-tomadas-durante-colonizacao>.

of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is never free of barbarism, so barbarism taints the manner in which it was transmitted from one hand to another’.

From the 1960s onwards we can find a tendency within the artistic practice towards what would become known as *institutional critique* two decades later. Andrea Fraser (2005, 281) conceptualizes the term *institution*²:

From 1969 on, a conception of the “institution of art” begins to emerge that includes not just the museum, nor even only the sites of production, distribution, and reception of art, but the entire field of art as a social universe.

It is precisely this notion of a *social universe*, the institution and the art exhibition as a field of forces, that will be thought critically to re-examine the rules of exhibiting and the symbolic set of interpretations that is generated by such presentations in museums and art galleries.

Many artists have addressed that debate through installations, curatorial projects, and writings. These gestures would, in turn, uncover the barely visible ‘backstage’ of negotiations between museums and galleries, its boards of trustees, art dealers, and investors, to the point of questioning even the figure of the curator as we know it today – as an important vector of decisions in the game between institutions, artists and the audience. An emblematic case is that of artist Daniel Buren, who broadly theorized the ideological issues behind the functioning of museums in essays such as *Function of Studio* (1979) and *Function of the Museum* (1983). Fraser would also make important reflections in this direction while addressing gender, sex and politics in her works. One of them is the 1989 performance *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk* (that would later become a book with a collection of her essays and works), in which she performs a guided tour of the Philadelphia Museum of Art under the codename of professor Jane Castleton, while quoting seemingly random phrases taken from philosophy books, museum archives and art reviews.

Many artists around the world chose to reflect upon the displacement of utilitarian or religious objects to the museum environment (shifting them with its specific codes and narrative devices).

In *Museum of Modern Art* (1968-1972) Marcel Broodthaers plays the roles of museum director, curator, critic and others while managing his own version of a museum. In one of its sections, Broodthaers featured an eagle representation (*Department of the Eagles*) in a number of photographs, stamps, illustrations, sculptures and other objects. The installation-museum is a strategy to make a critical comment about the validation procedure of art institutions. As Bishop (2007, 17) clarifies: ‘by appointing himself the museum’s director, Broodthaers ensures that he cannot be spoken for, and curatorial ventriloquism dislodges with twofold authorship – selection/creation, but also mediation’. All sorts of examples can be found in works that also make a critical examination of institutionalizing procedures, namely by artists such as Hans Haacke, Louise Lawler, Michael Asher and Daniel Buren. For this particular matter, we will be focusing on two important contributions made by artists of African descent: Fred Wilson (United States, 1954-) and Meschac Gaba (Benin, 1961-).

² The term would be adopted, from the 1980s on, by artists such as Andrea Fraser, Hans Haacke, Martha Rosler and critics like Benjamin Buchloh to characterize an artistic production interested in questioning the domains of art institutions (museums, galleries, cultural centers) and their agents (artists, curators, critics, spectators and others).

³ Three historical and revolutionary figures from Maryland, the astronomer and self-taught researcher Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) and the abolitionists Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) and Harriet Tubman (1822-1913).

⁴ *A Change of Heart – Fred Wilson’s impact on museums*. This presentation was part of The Sackler Conference for Arts Education – *From the Margins to the Core?* An international conference exploring the shifting roles and increasing significance of diversity and equality in contemporary museum and heritage policy and practice held at The Sackler Centre, V&A, 24 – 26 March 2010, <https://vimeo.com/11838838>.

⁵ The project, although in a different arrangement, was also featured at Documenta 11 (2002, Kassel, Germany).

The artist Fred Wilson was be directly involved with the aforementioned issues in one of his best-known projects called *Mining the Museum*. Wilson, known for works that discuss the universe of museums and their collections through politically sensitive topics, would choose the Maryland Historical Society as the starting point (and destination) for this exhibition-installation.

The Maryland Historical Society is the oldest cultural association operating in the city of Baltimore (1844). Its vast collection of historical objects (including artworks, weapons, clothing, jewellery, and furniture) and documents tells the story of this State’s foundation in 1788. After seeing the permanent exhibition, Wilson was intrigued by the objects kept in the technical collection; the ones not on display. After an intense year-long research process, he chose to create frictions between the official narrative of the institution by rendering the presence of African-American historical characters visible that were previously absent in their permanent exhibition. With his work, Wilson argues their indisputable contributions to understand the present. By juxtaposing objects and identification labels in the museum, the artist meant to debate the situation of structural racism in the United States.

The installation happened mainly on the third floor of the museum, requiring visitors to walk through the permanent exhibition first. Wilson chose to start the exhibition with a golden globe (found in storage) on which the word *Truth* was engraved. Formerly a prize awarded to advertising companies, the object set the tone for the exhibition: a seemingly trivial object, lacking its author’s name, served to discuss anonymity, the story behind museums. Upstairs, objects such as a real whipping post in front of a set of wooden chairs with a clearly posh character enacted a scene of connivance and entertainment. A slave ship replica (*Baltimore Clipper*, 1940) stood on top of a showcase with signs warning of escaping slaves. Next to it, three marble busts of white men stood alongside three other empty pedestals in a sort of mirrored projection, followed by labels with the names of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Benjamin Banneker³.

The artist emphasized⁴ his wish to go beyond what an ‘African American exhibition’ should look like. Here, the aim was rather about dealing with elements both absent and present in the museum’s collection as a way of investigating and questioning the history of Maryland. As he points out: ‘What is on view tells a lot about the museum but what is on storage tells even more’ (Wilson 2010). The project’s disruptive nature would have profound impacts on how the staff would deal with the collection from then on. The art researcher Terry Smith (2012, 125) highlighted the importance of this project in the artist-as-curator debate, as it contributed to provoke a twist between traditional exhibitions organized by cultural institutions and a more critical action in the exhibition space.

A few years later, this kind of critique would resonate in projects such as *Museum of Contemporary African Art*⁵ (1997-2002) by artist Meschac Gaba. In this project, the artist rethought not only the norms for exhibiting artworks, but also their content and the production of meaning about them. To do so, he transformed the rooms of London’s Tate Modern Gallery into a sort of metalinguistic installation in which he

dealt with the very constitution of 'African art'. Is it possible to determine a single predominant code or style for the entire artistic work of a continent? The artist would answer that question by creating around twelve rooms in which *Library, Museum Restaurant* and *Museum Shop* ironically mimicked the common spaces of great museums and galleries. Bringing the museum's ancillary equipment to the central discussion of his work, the artist discussed 'the nature and function of the museum and our relationship with it' (Greenberg 2013), in a similar manner to the aforementioned museum by Broodthaers. In addition to the rooms mentioned above, Gaba would also create spaces where visitors could stay, read or play, confronting the traditional notion of the exhibition as a passive, contemplative environment. Gaba has been committed to the broadening of African culture's representativeness in the world art scene. Both *Museum of African Contemporary Art* and *Exchange Market* (2014, Tanya Bonak Gallery, New York) are examples of how the artist aimed at expanding the understanding of the diversity of the African art scene, dismantling the subjugating conception of those countries, usually deemed 'exotic' or 'ethnic'.

The biased way in which African artists have been placed into collections and exhibitions worldwide makes us understand this work as a critique of the conceptual conflicts of representation in exhibitions such as *Magiciens de la Terre* (Grande Halle de la Villette, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1989), by curator Jean-Hubert Martin. Despite the effort in bringing visibility to non-Euro-American artists, the project was criticized at the time for not taking into critical consideration the economic and political issues involved in its elaboration. The curatorial project became known for selecting works for their visual aspects while presenting them from a neo-colonial point of view that allegedly looked upon them as 'primitive'. Smith (2012, 118) claims that, fortunately, some works managed to exceed the curatorial framework that aimed to leap across the yawning gap between indigenous and Euro-American worldviews by recourse to a generalized notion of 'magic' and a string of poetic speculations concerning "spirituality" around which each of the sixteen subsections of the exhibition was organized.

In the following examples, the exhibition is a powerful tool to raise and renew a critical social debate. It not only faces the challenges of addressing complex topics in the form of an exhibition as it also relies on the power of artistic mediation strategies to achieve its ultimate goal.

As huge as the discussion that it intended to pursue, *Afro-Atlantic Histories* was organized in the Museum of Art of São Paulo – Masp and at Tomie Ohtake Institute in 2018. It was curated by Adriano Pedrosa, Lilia Schwarcz, Ayrson Heráclito, Hélio Menezes and Tomás Toledo, in a vast partnership with art institutions around the world. The exhibition is an unfolding of *Mestizo Histories*, held in 2014 at Tomie Ohtake Institute, also curated by Pedrosa and Schwarcz, whose research process lasted almost two years and generated a publication that comprised over seventy essays.

⁶ A transcript of the interview was published in the Afro-Atlantic Histories website and it can be retrieved from: <https://www.institutotomiohtake.org.br/exposicoes/interna/historias-mesticas>.

The curatorial project adopted strategies combined with overlapping thematic sections (*Maps and Margins, Rituals and Rhythms, Afro-Atlantic Modernism, Emancipation, and Activism and Resistance*, to name a few), organized without temporal linearity, in order to discuss symbolic exchanges between civilizations and featuring works from Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean. Brazil stands out as the converging point of these exchanges since it would receive around 40% of the total number of enslaved people coming to the Americas (it is important to mention that in 2018 the country reached the 130-year mark of its belated abolition of slavery).

In *Maps and Margins*, the curators aimed to explore the migratory flows of slavery, both externally, with the slave ships, and internally, within the African continent. They sought out other possibilities of cartographic representation to tell these stories (some works were commissioned especially for the exhibition *Mestizo Histories*). A centrepiece of this section was *Africans in America, a place to call home* (2009) by African-American artist Hank Willis Thomas. The work reflects on questions of belonging and identity. It is comprised of a metallic map painted in black that shows the full extent of the American continent and, replacing the conventional representation of South America, there is Africa.

In addition to the massive exhibition with over four-hundred and fifty works by two-hundred and fourteen artists, the project included an important artistic mediation project that comprised several activities, such as conferences, courses, and videos. One of the conferences, *Art, Religion and Ecology in the sacred forest of Oxum* (Nigeria), coordinated by the researcher and anthropologist Moisés Lino e Silva, reflected on the intersection of such ancestral knowledge as a way of confronting the contemporary capitalist system. The film and video screenings featured works such as *Conakry* (2016), by Filipa César with Grada Kilomba and Diana McCarthy, (made from little-known documental records on the liberation of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde headed by intellectual and anti-colonial leader Amílcar Cabral); and *Soul in the Eye [Alma no olho]* (1973), by Zózimo Bulbul, an important landmark in the Brazilian film industry. The latter, an experimental short film, presents the performance of its own director and tells the story of African people through the processes of slavery, subjugation, and social liberation.

The curatorial team chose to overlap narratives rather than to focus on each formerly slave-based country. Commenting on *Mestizo Histories*, Pedrosa⁶ would remind us that the word *history*, in Portuguese, can mean both 'history' and 'story'. The concept of miscegenation was told using this strategy of double meaning: the mixture of lived and created reports, daily life and fiction, that can amplify, distort and reconstruct a seemingly official narrative.

Schwarzc argues that

This transatlantic way of thinking has been gaining momentum, as exchanges have been revealed not only among the enslavers but also among the black populations of the Diaspora: religions, rites, philosophies, and many other exchanges that have taken place in this process. The exhibition seeks to bring this

kind of perspective to reflect on the visual conventions that circulated through this transatlantic universe. (Schwarcz 2018, 01, own translation)⁷.

Another recent case of historical re-examination happened with the exhibition *Queermuseu – Cartografias da Diferença na Arte Brasileira* [Queermuseum: Cartographies of Difference in Brazilian Art](Porto Alegre, 2017). The project, financed by Spanish bank Santander, was curated by Gaudêncio Fidélis and launched a great discussion about censorship in contemporary Brazilian art. The show wasnty on during the queer debate, featuring a selection of two-hundred and seve works by modern artists such as Alfredo Volpi and Cândido Portinari, as well as by contemporary artists such as Lygia Clark, Leonilson, Adriana Varejão, and others. The event became a kind of tragic landmark for the uprising of conservatism in Brazil led by political parties linked to religious groups. Some works were deemed excessively erotic, depraved and disrespectful of religious symbols, which led to the premature closing of the show.

The main sources of irritation were works that allegedly represented zoophilia and paedophilia. The former accusation refers to the work *Interior Scene II* [Cena de Interior II] (1994) by Adriana Varejão, a painting that presents several sexual practices in *Shunga* style (a type of Japanese pictorial representation that emerged in the seventeenth century, celebrating pleasure and sexuality), which, among other things, showed a scene in which two male figures hold a goat; the latter refers to Bia Leite's *Queer Child* [Criança Viada] (2013) series, inspired by an eponymous account on the Tumblr platform for the sharing of photographs of children (sent by the subjects themselves) whose habits deviated from heteronormative patterns. Some authors consider that the censoring of the exhibition, an episode also marked by an apologetic and empty press release from the organizing institution, is explained by the recent *cultural wars* phenomenon. The term, coined by American sociologist James Davison Hunter in 1991, can be generally understood as the altercations between liberal/conservative and democratic/progressive segments of society, especially using social media as a way for spreading their thoughts. In Brazil, the MBL (Movimento Brasil Livre), a new political movement founded in 2014, gained exposure during this event and became very popular during former president Dilma Rousseff's impeachment (2015-2016). The MBL is connected to an international organization called Students for Liberty, and present themselves as free neoliberal thinkers, not connected to any political party. Using the same tactics as in the United States, i.e., strategically creating content through social media, starting a series of mass public shaming of artists, cultural workers and left-wing politicians. The movement also argued that the resources, obtained through public funding, were misused and served to finance an event that did not reflect the moral values of most of Brazilian society. All kinds of graphic content was generated to misplace and decontextualize information about the artworks and artists in the exhibition, creating a rapid and misinformed public opinion reaction. The show remained closed, though it was visited by a State Prosecutor who claimed that the sole problem was the lack of age-rating signs. Later, in 2018, the exhibition

⁷ Schwarcz, Lilia. 'Entrevista concedida à Theo Monteiro', 2018, <https://www.institutotomiohtake.org.br/participe/post/histasrias-af-ro-atlacnticas-entrevista-com-a-curadora-lilia-schwarcz>.

⁸ Mbembe, Achille. 'La vérité est que l'Europe nous a pris des choses qu'elle ne pourra jamais restituer'. *Le Monde*, 1 December, 2018, https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/12/01/achille-mbembe-la-verite-est-que-l-europe-nous-a-pris-des-choses-qu-elle-ne-pourra-jamais-restituer_5391216_3212.html

⁹ Here I am referring to the exhibition at SESC Pompéia (São Paulo, Brazil), in which Bo Bardi argues about value judgments built around popular and erudite art. The manifesto, in Portuguese, states: 'A expressão Kitsch surgiu na Alemanha no fim do século XIX quando a Revolução Industrial tomou definitivamente o poder. É o estigma da alta burguesia culta contra os setores da mesma classe', ao "Belo". Esta pequena exposição não é uma – Integração do Kitsch – é apenas um pequeno exemplo do DIREITO AO FEIO, base essencial de muitas civilizações, desde a África até o Extremo Oriente que nunca conheceram o "conceito" de Belo, campo de concentração obrigado da civilização ocidental. De todo esse processo foram excluídos uns ainda menos afortunados: o povo. E o povo nunca é Kitsch. Mas esta é uma outra história'. (In: Almeida, Eneida de. 2010).

was reassembled at EAV – Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, financed by the largest-ever national crowdfunding campaign. Despite the quality of the curatorial project and its lack of proper signage, the success of the campaign and the exhibition's reopening can be seen as a democratic victory, especially if democracy is perceived as a place of *dissent* instead of consent (Deutsche 1996). Finally, as the article mentioned at the start of this paper reports, the news of the return of more than forty thousand artifacts was followed by a debate on whether African institutions were properly equipped to receive them. The matter is extremely relevant. If we want to expand critical reflections on the colonization story/history and its reflections on contemporary society in order to render possible the existence of multiple historical narratives, it is crucial that such objects and documents remain intact. On the other hand, this seems to indicate that the return of these collections is more than a change of place: it must come with a sustainable return project that also involves financial contributions for the physical renewal of the institutions, management of the collections and professional training of specialized staff. As the philosopher and historian Achille Mbembe warns us, *what has been taken can never be returned*⁸. The restitution of African works to their countries of origin is not an act of benevolence, but an obligation. This first step, Mbembe continues, can be seen as the beginning of the reconstruction of the fragile ties between Europe and Africa.

The countries that have lived through battles keep in their language, traditions and in their people, traces of a brutal history that still lives on. While Brazil did not experience the tragedies of war, or great natural disasters, that European countries did, it nevertheless suffered the violent colonization of its native population. It is about time we talk about such a brutal past and understand that many of the problems Brazil (and other colonized countries) faces as a modern nation (corruption, depletion of its natural reserves, tax evasion, the extermination of people of African descent, etc) are closely tied to this not-so-distant past. The fact that there is still some infatuation with the caprices of the ruling elite, probably reminiscent of the colonial period, alongside with a constant rejection of popular culture reminds us of how much the reflection proposed by Lina Bo Bardi on the occasion of the exhibition *The Beautiful and the Right to the Ugly* (1982) remains topical⁹.

As Fred Wilson pointed out with his work, institutional silencing can also be understood as a form of censorship. Exhibitions such as *Mining the Museum* and *Afro-Atlantic Stories* are interesting examples of how contemporary art institutions can play a decisive role in transforming the present (and the future). The spectrum ranges from not addressing these topics at all to generating a complex and multi-layered debate, where not only artists, curators, museum directors and so on have a saying on the matter, but the entire society as a whole. The aforementioned exhibitions highlight the important contributions that artists, curators, and art researchers have made to contemporary society, allowing issues that were previously relegated to oblivion to resurface for public discussion. In this sense, by understanding current museums as a place for deepening social discussions, this

reflection can also help design future museums. If there is a fear that European historical museums will lose their collections because of the return of war spoils, one must think of alternatives for their existence. As mentioned earlier, if the idea of museums as cultural platforms already fits in contemporary art institutions, we can certainly imagine ways of facing this new challenge.

Alternatives can be found in already existing museums worldwide. In Spain, the exhibition *Intangibles* (2019-2020), curated by Colección Telefonica, presented the digital versions of renowned works by artists such as Torres Garcia, Tapiès, Picasso and Magritte. Reflecting upon impact of the digital revolution art collections, the exhibition also tackles the issue of artistic mediation through the abstraction of a few concepts present on the selected works, engaging the audience in an immersive experience.

In Brazil, the institutions dealing with intangible cultural heritage, such as *Museum of the Portuguese Language* [Museu da Língua Portuguesa] and the Football Museum [Museu do Futebol] (both in São Paulo) focus on the use of audio-visual elements, such as projections and interactive installations. Worldwide, the partnerships between museums and collectors can also produce relevant temporary exhibitions in the same terms.

Exhibitions such as *Mining the Museum*, *Afro-Atlantic Histories* and *Queermuseum* go beyond the mere presentation of physical objects. They are a focal point from which several mediation activities coordinated by the curatorial project can emerge, in events that resonate inside and outside the museum. In that sense, it seems paramount to highlight the important work developed by curatorial and education teams in art institutions, especially the ones that really do intersect these two fields. Artistic mediation has become an audience empowering audience, bringing together conceptual, aesthetic and critical aspects of works, aiming at the deepening of social debates and reflections that go beyond the exhibition itself.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Almeida, Eneida de. 2010. *O “construir no construído” na produção contemporânea: relações entre teoria e prática*. PhD Thesis, Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo. Universidade de São Paulo: São Paulo. 121-2, <http://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/16/16133/tde-26042010-150955/pt-br.php>.
- Benjamin, Walter. 1940. ‘On the Concept of History’, pp. 389-411, in: Eiland, Howard and Jennings, Michael W. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 4: 1938-1940*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, <http://cscs.res.in/dataarchive/textfiles/textfile.2010-11-02.7672177498/file>.
- Bishop, Claire. 2007. ‘What is a curator? Shifting Practice, Shifting Roles: Artists’ Installations and the Museum’. *Idea: arts + society*, issue #26, 12-21, <https://idea.ro/revista/pdf/IDEA26.pdf>.

- Buren, Daniel. 1979. 'The Function of the Studio', in *October*, Cambridge, n° 10. 51-8, http://bortolamigallery.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/buren_studio.pdf?a13e11.
- Buren, Daniel. 1983. 'The Function of the Museum', in *Museum by artists*. Bronson, AA and Peggy, Gale [eds.]. Toronto: Art Metropole, http://vivi.akbild.ac.at/Video_und_Videoinstallation/Archiv_files/Buren_Museum.pdf.
- Crimp, Douglas. 2005. *Sobre as ruínas do museu*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Deustche, Rosalyn. 1996. *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*. 1st ed. Vol.17. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, https://monoskop.org/images/o/0a/Deutsche_Rosalyn_Evictions_Art_and_Spatial_Politics.pdf.
- Fraser, Andrea. 2005. 'From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique'. *Artforum International* 44 (1): 278-332, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=18117384&lang=pt-br&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Greenberg, Kerryn. 2013. 'Meshac Gaba: Museum of Contemporary African Art', <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/meschac-gaba-museum-contemporary-african-art>.
- Smith, Terry. 2012. *Thinking Contemporary Curating*. New York: Independent Curators International.

SPANISH CENSORSHIP AND BUÑUEL'S FILM *L'ÂGE D'OR*

ANGELES ALEMÁN GÓMEZ

Senior Lecturer

University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria,
Canary Islands, Spain

e-mail:angeles.aleman@ulpgc.es

Introduction

In 1935, André Breton, Jacqueline Lamba and Benjamin Péret were invited to Tenerife by the editors of *Gaceta de Arte* to organize the Second International Surrealist Exhibition at the Ateneo of Santa Cruz, as well as to give some lectures and sign the Second Surrealist Manifesto.

André Breton brought a copy of Buñuel's film *L'Âge d'Or* [The Golden Age] with him and planned to screen it as part of the activities surrounding the Exhibition. The screening did not take place and he offered the copy to Eduardo Westerdahl, Domingo Pérez Minik and Agustin Espinosa. Breton's intention was good as this would allow them to screen the film in a cinema and recover some of the large sum of money that had been spent on this trip. However, Catholic censorship and the newspaper *La gaceta de Tenerife* [Tenerife News] carried out a ruthless campaign making public screening of the film impossible.

Due to the nature of the film and the ferocity of the campaign against it, the editors of *Gaceta de arte* decided to send it to Gran Canaria. And there is where we lose track of it.

Forty years later, in 1975, Domingo Pérez Minik published the book *Facción española surrealista de Tenerife* [The Spanish surrealist faction of Tenerife], in which he wrote about this copy of *L'Âge d'Or*:

We cannot forget the treasure that didn't make us rich except on the artistic level. *L'Âge d'Or*, the film had been an instrument of battle, which we brought from Paris. We lost this great travel companion after a private screening in Santa Cruz. In order to offer it to the public, the film was sent to Las Palmas de Gran

Canaria, where it remained in the hands of a German friend with an interest in new forms of art, whose name we cannot mention for now. When the Spanish Civil War broke out, he had the film at home. Frightened by the war, he hid it in a waste dump near his place.

After World War II, our man had already vanished from Las Palmas. At the time, we assumed that he had gone back to his country. Some years later, we learned that a house had been built over *L'Âge d'Or's* hiding place. It is very possible that it still remains there, turned into sand, mixed with cement, maybe under bricks, or turned into dust or some dangerous scorpion. But maybe [...] it has become a strange rock, just like any other on the island...the truth is that we know nothing of its whereabouts. Our treasure slipped through our fingers; this is the only truth... (Pérez Minik, 1975, pp. 151- 152)

Domingo Pérez Minik, whose memory was always prodigious, kept silent about the name of the person who had received *L'Âge d'Or*. We must not forget that 1975 was the year Franco died and the period called *Transición*, the origin of democracy in Spain, begun. For Pérez Minik, a man who had known political repression, protecting the name of the person who had been in charge of Buñuel's film copy was still necessary. Certainly for various different reasons, we cannot find a single word about this case in Luis Buñuel's book of memories *Mi último suspiro* [My last breath].

In this article we present the case of censorship against *L'Âge d'Or* and the Canarian surrealists involved in its screening, as well as the role played by surrealist writer Agustín Espinosa (author of the surrealist novel *Crímen*) in the transmission and possible disappearance of this copy.

***L'âge d'Or* and Surrealism**

The origin of a film: the Viscounts de Noailles' private financing and their relationship with Oscar Domínguez

In 1930, Marie Laure de Noailles and her husband, the Viscount de Noailles, both collectors and patrons of the arts, commissioned Luis Buñuel to make a film. Their help was essential in terms of directorial freedom. The date is also of interest to our work as Marie Laure de Noailles later become the lover of Oscar Domínguez, the Canarian artist who served as the link between Breton and the Canarian surrealists. Years later, Luis Buñuel declared that he had felt the freedom to provoke with this film thanks to de Noailles' help (Buñuel, 1982, p.97). On the other hand, Buñuel already had ties to the Canary Islands through his friend, Canarian sculptor Juan Márquez, who had participated in *Un chien andalou*.

¹ Domínguez, Oscar: letter to André Breton, 8 April 1934, Breton's Archive, Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, Paris.

Buñuel made *L'Âge d'Or* and showed it in Paris to an uproar of scandal. Several Catholic associations asked for the film to be banned. *L'Âge d'Or* attracted hard criticism. This, however, was not enough to prevent its screening, and the scandal ensured the film a legendary status among more forward-thinking audiences.

1.2. Oscar Dominguez and André Breton: the trip to Tenerife

In Breton's Archive there is a letter signed by Oscar Dominguez in which he presents himself as a surrealist artist¹. This letter must have been promptly answered by Breton, judging by his next epistle to the French surrealist, which shows a close relationship between them.

Dominguez was born in Tenerife and he had a very particular character, so *bizarre* that for Breton he was the incarnation of what a surrealist should be. His father had sent him to Paris to deal with the banana shipments from his estate, but Dominguez

Eduardo Westerdahl- Oscar Dominguez at the Café Select- 1935 – Fondo Westerdahl, Gobierno de Canarias.



spent his nights drinking, although he was always impeccably dressed for the morning visits to the market². Dominguez loved painting, but he was lost because of alcohol. In the dazzling, bohemian atmosphere, charming Dominguez persuaded Breton to travel to his native island. Breton would write about this in *L'Air de l'eau: On m'a dit que là-bas les plages sont noires De lave allée à la mer*. (Breton, 1934, p.28)

The invitation to travel to Tenerife was sent to Breton through Dominguez, but the actual hosts were the editors of the literary and arts magazine *Gaceta de arte*. Eduardo Westerdahl, Dominguez' closest friend, was the chief-editor of the magazine, which included such contributors as the writers Domingo Pérez Minik, Agustín Espinosa, Pedro García Cabrera and Domingo López Torres, all of them very close to Surrealism. By 1935, Agustín Espinosa was also the director of Ateneo de Tenerife, where the Second International Surrealist Exhibition was held in May of that year. Eduardo Westerdahl, Pérez Minik and Agustín Espinosa were in charge of organizing the surrealists' trip and had to cover for all the expenses. Except for the ship tickets, which they obtained thanks to the collaboration of a Canary Islands businessman, the rest was paid by the young, enthusiastic writers.

Initially, the guests consisted of three poets: André Breton, Paul Éluard and Benjamin Péret. Breton's idea was to bring with him Man Ray's film *L'Étoile de mer* [The Starfish]. Last minute changes meant that instead of Paul Éluard, it was Breton's wife who travelled to Tenerife, the charming and talented Jacqueline Lamba, who designed the Exhibition catalogue. In Fondo Westerdahl there is a telegram sent by André Breton hurrying Westerdahl to make all the arrangements for the trip scheduled for 27 April³. They arriving in Tenerife on 5 May.

The day before their arrival, Agustín Espinosa published in the newspaper *La Tarde* [The Evening]:

Here comes the Treasure – which is also a gift – brought by these Three Wise Men to the Canary Islands. It does not come in fragile shell chests as was fashionable according to the imagination of the Bible, but in wooden boxes, packed by the best Parisian transportation agency, and insured by the most stringent European company. It travels under the sky, next to the new *Kings*, cradled by the sea and watched closely by a star: the surreal star – rough and noble star –, lashing the cretins and wringing the heads of the old fashioned.⁴

The French surrealists arrived in Tenerife on 5 May with boxes of surrealist paintings. They were guests at the Hotel Victoria and we can see Breton looking down at the street from the balcony in a picture taken by Jacqueline Lamba.

The days were filled with of activities, some of them unforgettable, like the trip to Puerto de la Cruz, where Breton gave a lecture about Surrealism at the Sociedad XIV de Abril. Agustín Espinosa was the translator of this lecture and, years later, Pérez Minik wrote about its free-spirit and originality.

The Second International Surrealist Exhibition opened on 11 May. All of them, the French surrealists and their hosts, were proud and happy, as seen in the pictures

² Márquez, Juan: "Mi amigo Oscar". Unpublished, Fondo Juan Márquez, Museo Casa de Colón, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

³ Breton, André: cable to Eduardo Westerdahl, 1935, Fondo Westerdahl, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Tenerife(AHPT), Tenerife.

⁴ Espinosa, Agustín.1935. "Navidades de primavera, Breton, Péret y Éluard, nuevos Reyes Magos en Canarias", *La Tarde*, 4 May.

Eduardo Westerdahl- The trip to Teide: López Torres, Benjamin Peret, Jacqueline Lamba and André Breton- 1935 – Fondo Westerdahl, Gobierno de Canarias,



of the opening. The show included paintings by Dalí, Miró, Oscar Dominguez, Yves Tanguy and other surrealist artists.

However, more than the cultural activity, the most powerful aspect of the experience for Breton and his companions was the Canary Islands landscape. For Breton, the trip to Teide, the ancient mountain volcano, offered the image of a surrealist landscape.

It made such a profound impression in him that as soon as he arrived in Paris Breton wrote the surrealist poem, *Le Château étoilé*, published in the surrealist magazine *Minotaure*. Later on, Breton included this poem as a chapter of his book *L'Amour fou* [Mad Love], published by Gallimard in 1937. In chapter V Breton wrote about the thwarted screening of Buñuel's film:

L'Âge d'or! For me these words, which crossed my mind as I began to surrender to the inebriating shades of Orotava, remain associated with a few unforgettable images of the film of Buñuel and Dalí, which had appeared formerly under this title and with which, precisely, Benjamin Péret and I would have acquainted the public of the Canaries in 1935, if Spanish censorship had not chosen so rapidly to show itself even more intolerant than French censorship. This film remains, to this day, the only enterprise of exaltation of total love such as I envisage it. (Breton, 1937, p.113)

The exaltation of absolute love, *L'Amour fou*, and the landscape of Tenerife came together at that special time in Breton's life to form a reflection of the most intense and surreal passion.

After the Surrealist Journey. Gaceta de Tenerife and the Censorship

Given the impossibility of screening Buñuel's work during their stay, Breton gave his hosts the copy of the surrealist film. The idea was that they could show the film in a cinema and thus ease some of the debt that the invitation to the surrealists and the Exhibition had left, a total of 5.000 pesetas [circa 15,000 Euros].

In fact, this was an enormous debt given the poor financial situation of Westerdahl, Minik and Espinosa. They had to turn to a loaning agency and apply for an instalment loan in order to pay back the amount, but this problem could have been lessened by screening the film, which they initially tried to show at Cinema Numancia. As the invitation card demonstrates, they took precautions. The invitation warned about the film's images and the screening was scheduled for 11 a.m. Despite this, the Catholic newspaper *Gaceta de Tenerife* launched a fierce attack on 14 June by publishing a front page piece urging the authorities on the island and the at capital to suspend the film:

L'Âge d'Or. The title of singular attraction that brings us the theme of the day. However, this is nothing but the old wolf in a sheep's skin ruse. 'The golden age' is a surrealist film and it was imported here, by some people who call themselves artists, at the invitation of Ateneo of Santa Cruz and *Gaceta de arte*. Two enterprises whose prestige gives cover to this film made specifically for heresy, for poisoning the souls in order to deteriorate and turn them against the Catholic Religion.

The Cinema Numancia has supported this degeneration. What does this businessman think of Tenerife? And what do the Ateneo de Santa Cruz and *Gaceta de arte* think of the people of Santa Cruz?

We have before us, Mr Governor, the invitation that both the Ateneo de Santa Cruz and the editor of *Gaceta de arte* have distributed to the population in secrecy to attend the function that will take place next Sunday at Cinema Numancia. The monstrous film, on which we will expatiate in the future, has not been censured and was banned in the Mainland. Every conscience, even the most sectarian, rejects it. Because it hurts, Mr Governor, not only to the Christian sentiment of the people, but also the family, our ancestors and parents.

'The golden age' is the new poison that Judaism and Freemasonry want to use to spread revolutionary sectarianism and corrupt the people. Governor: we expect from you an attitude that befits the dignity of Santa Cruz. Lord Mayor

Author unknown – Invitation to L'Age d'or
screen – 1935 –Fondo Westerdahl Gobierno de
Canarias

DOMINGO
2 de junio
en el **CINE NUMANCIA**
‘LA EDAD de ORO’

LA PELICULA MAS SENSACIONAL.

NOTA.-Dado el carácter de esta película y a fin de que el público no se sienta herido en sus convicciones, la película será proyectada en función especial a las 11 de la mañana.

⁵ Unsigned.1935. ‘La edad de oro’, *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 14 June.

of Santa Cruz: your political affiliation, your ideology, should not prevent you from acting according to your conscience, that of an honest man. This film is only appropriate for those who have lost all sensitivity, but not for these people whose culture is above this other culture that the Ateneo and *Gaceta de arte*, in a display of cynicism, want to infiltrate in Santa Cruz⁵.

The following day, 15 June, the eve of the expected screening at Numancia Cinema, a new attack to its owner appeared in the cover of the Catholic newspaper. The article against the businessman had the unnecessary tone of a lynching call, as the newspaper had also published the Governor’s ban to the film. The title was striking: ‘Figures of the Passion of Christ in the surrealist film *The golden age*’. Moreover, the article was based on rumours:

The owner of Cinema Numancia has shamelessly made his venue available to the surrealist film *The golden age*. We have learned, from someone that deserves all our trust, that when asked why he had allowed the film to premiere at his cinema, the owner replied that he was not interested in the Catholic element; that his premises were often visited by radicals and, therefore, he would make things easy for this radical film.

...*The golden age* is riddled with Soviet-style blasphemy.

Symbols of the Passion can be seen in worldly scenes, clubs or brothels, ridiculing Jesus Christ in a way not known to date. It is a true display of heresy, a brutal and savage, inconceivable and unacceptable assault against any educated person who has not fallen into the abyss of spiritual degeneration.

(The Ateneo de Santa Cruz, *Gaceta de arte* and Cinema Numancia) try to abuse this peaceful people, presenting them with scenes that can skilfully usher in the poison of heresy. And, with the utmost bigotry, Ateneo de Santa Cruz and *Gaceta de arte* dare tell their guests: 'This film has a documentary character, we thank our guests for seeing in it our contribution to the island'.

Were it not for the fact that Santa Cruz has let these madmen thrive, speak seriously in their delirium, there would all around laughter in the town.

But in this case there can be nothing but contempt, even among the small number of the unwary, for those who conduct their ridiculous artistic activities⁶.

On page 8, *Gaceta de Tenerife* published the news of the Government ban:

'The Governor's decision. The screening of the film *The Golden Age* is forbidden. We inform you that the Civil Governor of this province, Mr Malboysson, has banned the screening, public or private, of the aforementioned film...

We are very pleased with the Government's ban, as this film is a disgusting heap of religious desecration and immorality, unworthy of being shown to any decent audience.

Gaceta de Tenerife have done their duty of denouncing the exhibition of *The Golden Age* at Cinema Numancia to the authorities and the general public, and of calling for its ban as an urgent and vigorous moral therapy.

As we achieve our purpose, we applaud the administrative authorities, which have done their duty by forbidding such cinematic trash – sponsored by the Ateneo and *Gaceta de arte*! – from being shown in Santa Cruz or any town in the province under their jurisdiction⁷.

On same day, the republican newspaper *Hoy* [Today], confirmed the suspension of the screening with a brief note:

Suspension of a surrealist film.

The civil Governor Mr Malboysson told us yesterday in the morning that he forbade the screening of the surrealist film *The golden age*, which had been announced for tomorrow at Cinema Numancia.⁸

The atmosphere was very tense and after the attack by *Gaceta de Tenerife* the response by Benigno Ramos, owner of Cinema Numancia was published on the 16 June:

I have read [in yesterdays' newspaper] a few comments relating to *The Golden Age*, [claiming] that I have been paid to be the enabling instrument for the exhibition of the film.

I regret very much your unflattering opinion of this Cinema, and cannot but disagree with it, because here I have only screened, and will continue to do so, films that are authorized by the relevant authorities. A business of this kind cannot be subject to programmes [that satisfy only] a certain ideology.

⁶ Unsigned.1935. "Figuras de la Pasión en el film surrealista 'La Edad de oro'", *La gaceta de Tenerife*, 15 June.

⁷ Unsigned.1935. "Resolución plausible. Se prohíbe la proyección de la película "La Edad de Oro"", *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 15 June.

⁸ Unsigned.1935. "Suspensión de una película surrealista", *Hoy*, 15 June.

⁹ Ramos, Benigno. 1935. 'Una carta. Sobre la prohibición de ser proyectada la película "La edad de oro"', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 16 June.

¹⁰ Unsigned. 1935. "Una carta. Sobre la prohibición de ser proyectada la película "La edad de Oro"', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 16 June.

¹¹ Unsigned. 1935. 'Gaceta de Tenerife falsea la verdad', 16 June, in Pérez Corrales, Miguel. 1987. *Agustín Espinosa, entre el Mito y el Sueño*, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria: pp. 726-728.

This Cinema does not have any political ideology, which is proved by the fact that several conferences have been held in it, including Catholic⁹.

To this dignified and elegant letter, the editorial of the *Gaceta de Tenerife* answered with insulting disregard, in a paragraph that appears next to the previous letter:

The letter from Mr Ramos means that he would have allowed the screening of *The Golden Age*? What do the morality or the perversion of society matter to Mr Ramos? Is this not what you want to say, Mr Ramos?

Precisely! Public opinion and the people already know that they cannot trust Cinema Numancia¹⁰ anymore.

Meanwhile, the editors of *Gaceta de arte* and the director of the Ateneo de Santa Cruz defended their position in the newspaper *La Tarde*. On the 16 June, *La Tarde* published an unsigned article, later attributed to Agustín Espinosa (Pérez Corrales, 1986, 726-728):

Gaceta de Tenerife blows things out of proportion. They (the editors) ring their acerbic bells on the occasion of the thwarted screening in the Canary Islands of surrealist film *The Golden Age*, which they qualify as 'criminal heresy at the hands of those who have lost all sensitivity'.

Despite the unfounded statements of *Gaceta de Tenerife* that the 'Monstrous film has not been shown in the Mainland', *The Golden Age* has indeed PREMIERED in the Mainland.

Yes, SIRS, *The Golden Age* has already been released in Spain. Yes it has, *Mr know-it-all*, *Mr fake-it-all* of *Gaceta de Tenerife*, it has been released in Madrid, at the end of 1931, in a special invitation-only session, as it was going to be shown in Santa Cruz. Yes, gentlemen, it has been released already. Contrasting his deep and wide culture and his fine critical acumen to the rude stridency of *Gaceta de Tenerife*, it was precisely your Ernesto Giménez Caballero who wrote the following about *The Golden Age* (*El Robinson Literario de España*, p. 9, n. 4): *The Golden Age* is an exciting, honest, POETIC and great film. I say it with all my strength. AND IT SEEMS POETIC TO ME BECAUSE IT IS MORAL. It is the most religious film that has ever been made in Cinema so far. There is such a strong yearning for purity in it that its allusions to Sade and Freud are unimportant¹¹.

On the following day, Pedro García Cabrera, poet and editor of *Gaceta de arte*, published an article defending the screening of *L'Âge d'Or* and the owner of Cinema Numancia:

Gaceta de Tenerife made a fuss and pulled their hair out in frustration (or even kicked themselves) as they saw masons, Jews and Bolsheviks where none ever existed. They saw cynical, immoral degenerates and maniacs among those who have tried to present a cinematographic work in a private session. And it collected fables about Jesus Christ entering 'brothel clubs', when this is not true at all...

But although there are several aspects related to the failed exhibition of *The Golden Age*, all of them picturesque, in this article we will collect the diatribes against the Cinema Numancia owner whose property was the venue for the film

that was going to be screened. *Gaceta de Tenerife* says ‘whether or not censored by the authorities, this immoral show seems wrong to all of us’. ‘Immoral’, in this specific case, aside from hints of religious character contained in this film, is under the dominant influence of Eros and is instinctively against all social prejudices. The role of the owner is limited. He shows every kind of film, attending only to the discretion of the authorities regarding morality, because if films depended on the push-pull of moral individuals or groups, no cinematographic work would merit general acquiescence. The owner makes his profit [percentage] and moves on. And this is, exactly, what makes *Gaceta de Tenerife* a newspaper company, which, as a company, is faithful to the morale of percentage.¹²

Despite such grounded and reasonable articles against the virulence of the *Gaceta de Tenerife*, the editors of the newspaper did not stop, even attacking those who defended the screening of *The Golden Age* in private conversations, as in the case of Elfidio Alonso, a member of the Tenerife Partido Republicano, who had complained about the handling of censorship and the consequent ban of *L’ Âge d’Or* in the corridors of the Congress.

The disdainful and dangerous comment by the *Gaceta de Tenerife* was ad hominem: Don Elfidio has allowed himself this pointless talk in the corridors, saying that ‘because of a poor understanding of morality by Catholic elements in Tenerife’ *The Golden Age* has been banned. And there is one of two options: Either that novel Member speaks without knowing such a film, the disgusting and reprehensible nature of its script and development, or Don Elfidio has a very poor concept of morality...

Not one line justifies Don Elfidio’s childlike behaviour. The country can now once more see how Members of the Partido Republicano of Tenerife use their time in Parliament. Instead of working in the Chamber of the Congress to address the many problems that exist today in the economy of Tenerife, they are busy coming out in defence of pornographic films in the corridors of the Camera¹³.

As we can see, *Gaceta de Tenerife* was not only waging war against Buñuel’s film. Their targets were also the young politicians of the Republican Party of Tenerife, the Cinema Numancia owner, the editors of *Gaceta de arte* and the director of the Ateneo de Santa Cruz, Agustin Espinosa. We must not forget that this environment, already overshadowed by censorship and bigotry, resounded with the first echoes of rebellion in certain sectors of society, which explains why *Gaceta de Tenerife* attacked their targets with impunity. Not content with banning the screening of the film, (which had plunged Westerdahl, Pérez Minik and Agustín Espinosa into debt), *Gaceta de Tenerife* continued attacking everything having to do with the surrealist adventure, including Breton and Péret. A month later, the Catholic editors published a piece by Alonso Tabares during the Semana de la Buena Prensa [Week of the Good Press] held at the Catholic Youth of La Laguna headquarters: *Gaceta de arte* claims to represent a new universalist sense, but it is plunged in the absolute aberration led by Picasso, of whom is said that he is not even responsible for himself. And this was brought to us, the people of Tenerife, by

¹² García Cabrera, Pedro. 1935. ‘El pleito surrealista. La moral del tanto por ciento’, *La Tarde*, 17 June.

¹³ Unsigned. 1935. ‘Mientras desatienden los intereses del país. ¡De lo que se preocupan los diputados del Partido Republicano Tinerfeño!’, *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 22 June.

Eduardo Westerdahl- Agustín Espinosa – 1936 –
Fondo Westerdahl, Gobierno de Canarias



¹⁴ Unsigned.1935. 'En La Laguna. Semana de la Buena Prensa', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 13 July.

¹⁵ Unsigned.1935. "Comentarios del día", *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 27 September.

the leading figures of Breton and Perait (sic), both nullities in the artistic and cultural life of France. They did not succeed to show the film *The Golden Age* in Santa Cruz Cruz due to the magnificent *Gaceta de Tenerife* and the Catholic associations' campaign that unmasked the *Gaceta de arte* editors¹⁴.

Continuing their tireless personal and political fight against freedom of expression and the 27 September 1935 issue, with a cover featuring the new Government of the Republic, insisted:

Our vigorous campaign against the screening of *The Golden Age*, sponsored by the Ateneo and *Gaceta de arte*, was successful: We tenaciously opposed it and the awful film could not be shown¹⁵.

The consequences of this campaign were dramatic: the screening of *The Golden Age* was banned, the owner of Cinema Numancia was discredited, Member of Parliament Elfidio Alonso was slandered, and the Ateneo de Santa Cruz and *Gaceta de arte* were viciously attacked.

These problems were echoed in *Gaceta de arte's* issue 36 (October 1935):

The case of the surrealist film *The Golden Age* in Tenerife

One of the events planned for the Surrealist campaign organized by *Gaceta de arte* in collaboration with the Ateneo of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, was the screening of the surrealist film *The Golden Age* made by Spanish artists Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí.

When we started negotiations for the screening of this film, the Catholic associations began to mobilize against it, launching a violent campaign in its mouthpiece *Gaceta de Tenerife*. . . . We had never seen such insolent language against a cultural and artistic exhibition on the island, or such an attack against freedom of expression by the reactionary forces¹⁶.

Forced to leave Ateneo de Santa Cruz, a month later Agustín Espinosa was transferred to Gran Canaria to head the Instituto Pérez Galdós. On 12 November 1935, newspaper *Hoy* announced that Fulgencio Egea was now director of the Ateneo. Vice President Pedro Pinto de la Rosa and the librarian, Domingo Pérez Minik, had been supporters of the modern project that Agustín Espinosa had directed.

¹⁶ Unsigned. 1935. 'El caso del film surrealista "La edad de oro" en Tenerife', *Gaceta de arte*, n. 36, October, p. 2.

The Spanish Civil War and the Lost Film

The Spanish Civil War started on 18 July 1936.

Pedro García Cabrera was arrested on the 18 July at the gate of the Santa Cruz Town Hall, where he served as city councillor for the Socialist Party. He remained in prison until 1947.

Domingo Pérez Minik was also immediately arrested but he was released three months later. Domingo López Torres, another surrealist editor of *Gaceta de arte*, was arrested and killed at the beginning of 1937.

Eduardo Westerdahl, whose Swedish passport allowed guaranteed his freedom (under pain of silence), received a letter from Breton dated 15 July:

My dear friend:

I have heard neither from you nor from our friend Oscar Domínguez in a long time. He had promised me that he would write, but he must have locked himself in a very worrisome silence. I suppose you will know that the Surrealist Exhibition in London has had a triumphal welcome (25.000 visitors). Have you received the catalogue on time? I'd like to know your opinion about these latest publications and especially about my last poem "Le château étoilé" that has

¹⁷ Breton, André: letter to Eduardo Westerdahl; 15 July 1936, Fondo Westerdahl, AHPT, D. 183.

¹⁸ Pliego de cargos. Expediente de Depuración de Agustín Espinosa García, 31 April 1937. Archivo Familia Agustín Espinosa.

¹⁹ Espinosa, Agustín: letter to Eduardo Westerdahl, undated, Fondo Westerdahl, AHPT, D.303.

been translated in the magazine “Sur”... My dream is that this poem, which is very special for me, can be published in Tenerife, either with illustrations by Domínguez or photographs by any of you two. Do you think this could be possible? It would make me very happy, dear friend, if we could make it possible.¹⁷ Agustín Espinosa, whose surreal fervour had not prevented his sympathy for the Spanish Falange, suffered a cruel persecution. In the first months of the war, he was denounced by the priest Manuel Socorro, a teacher at the Institute where he worked. Agustín Espinosa was expelled from the Institute and accused, among other things, of having written ‘The crime of Augustin’ and trying ‘to show in the cinemas of this city an immoral and sacrilegious film in which the most pure person of Jesus Christ appears in a cabaret’¹⁸.

His fragile health condition and his fear of losing his freedom and even his life, after having lost his job and being barely able to support his family, made him join the Falange Española. In spite of this he did not end his relationship with his friends at *Gaceta de Arte*. He wrote to Eduardo Westerdahl in 1938 giving him news of his poor health and financial situation. Despite these, he still continued to pay the existing debt:

I send you back the signed payment notice. I’ve been sick for several days, which is why I haven’t been able to pick up your letter before. Anyway, I don’t think the deadline will expire, as today is still the 18th. I live with my mother-in-law. *I have no salary*. If there was any vacancy at the newspaper, that would be something good. If I am sent to the front, which would be in the second half of August, I’ll see you in Tenerife, because I will pay my family a visit before leaving¹⁹.

He could not have gone to the front. The ulcer he had been suffering of for a long time prevented him. He would die in January 1940, a few months after the war ended, in after a surgical intervention.

The copy of *L’Âge d’Or*, which Espinosa had surely received (since he was the only person that Westerdahl and Pérez Minik could trust in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), was lost forever. The brutal censorship they had suffered was so hard that either he, or the mysterious German citizen (Pérez Minik would speak about him years later), made sure it disappeared.

Conclusion

Through correspondence and articles published in 1935, this article has made it possible to trace this case of censorship against a work of art, Luis Buñuel’s film *L’Âge d’Or*.

Breton’s relationship with the Canary Islands was over, although, in a letter from Barcelona, during the Civil War, Benjamin Péret wrote to him about García Cabrera, who had been deported to North Africa.

Oscar Domínguez and André Breton maintained their friendship until 1940, the year in which Breton departed for exile in United States. Domínguez remained in France. Although they tried to mend their relationship through Maud Bonneaud, Domínguez' wife, this was impossible.

Eduardo Westerdahl and Domingo Pérez Minik continued working for culture in the Canary Islands. In 1981 they both organized a publication on the 2nd Surrealist Exhibition in the Canary Islands. And, despite having written about it in *La facción surrealista española de Tenerife*, neither Pérez Minik nor Eduardo Westerdahl wrote a single word about the lost copy of *L'Âge d'Or*.

Censorship against a work of art had been so effective that forty-six years later the protagonists of this story were still afraid of speaking about it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Breton, André. 1934. *L'air de l'Eau*, Paris: Ed, Gallimard
(1937/1987), *Mad love*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Letter to Luis Buñuel, Fondo Luis Buñuel, Filmoteca Española
- Buñuel, Luis. 1982. *Mi último suspiro*, Barcelona: Random House
- Domínguez, Oscar. Letters to André Breton, Archive Breton, Bibliothèque Litteraire Jacques Doucet, Paris.
- Fondo Westerdahl, AHPT, Tenerife: Correspondence with André Breton
Correspondence with Agustín Espinosa
- García Cabrera, Pedro. 1935. 'El pleito surrealista. La moral del tanto por ciento', *La Tarde*, 17 June.
- Márquez, Juan: 'Mi amigo Oscar', unpublished, Fondo Juan Márquez, Museo Casa de Colón, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.
- Pérez Corrales, Miguel. 1987. *Agustín Espinosa, entre el Mito y el Sueño*, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria
- Pérez Minik, Domingo; Westerdahl, Eduardo. 1981. *2ª Exposición Surrealista en Canarias*. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria.
- Pérez Minik, Domingo. (1995, 1st ed. 1975). *Facción española surrealista de Tenerife*. Islas Canarias. La Palma.
- Ramos, Benigno. 1935. 'Una carta. Sobre la prohibición de ser proyectada la película "La edad de oro"', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 16 June.
- Roche, Gerard (ed.) 2017: *André Breton, Benjamin Péret, Correspondance 1920- 1959*, Paris: Ed. Gallimard, p.7.
- Unsigned. 1935. 'La edad de oro', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 14 June.

Unsigned. 1935. 'Figuras de la Pasión en el film surrealista "La Edad de oro"', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 15 June.

Unsigned. 1935. 'Resolución plausible. Se prohíbe la proyección de la película "La Edad de Oro"', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 15 June.

Unsigned. 1935. 'Suspensión de una película surrealista', *Hoy*, 15 June.

Unsigned. 1935. 'Una carta. Sobre la prohibición de ser proyectada la película "La edad de Oro"', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 16 June.

Unsigned. 1935. 'Mientras desatienden los intereses del país. ¡De lo que se preocupan los diputados del Partido Republicano Tinerfeño!', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 22 June.

Unsigned. 1935. 'En La Laguna. Semana de la Buena Prensa', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 13 July.

Unsigned. 1935. 'Comentarios del día', *La Gaceta de Tenerife*, 27 September.

Unsigned. 1935. 'El caso del film surrealista "La edad de oro" en Tenerife', *Gaceta de arte*, n. 36, October.

Varia

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

– A POST-FREUDIAN DIVINE DARK COMEDY?

JOSÉ GABRIEL PEREIRA BASTOS
APPPA – Associação Portuguesa de
Psicanálise
CRIA – Centre for Research in
Anthropology

The enigma of human duplicities

It is with Freud, in *Civilization and its discontents* (1930) that we first identify the enigma of the human double face: on the one hand cooperating in the struggle for survival, in reproduction and family life; on the other, the *homo hominis lupus*, the narcissistic man, compelled by competitive and confrontational contexts (identity-related, erotic, economic and martial).

Lars von Trier confronts us, in his last two films (*Nymphomaniac* and *The House That Jack Built*), with another kind of human duplicity, one also explored by Sigmund Freud: female polymorphous perversity, which, in its erotic form, can propel a man to his Seventh Heaven, but may also destroy them; and the narcissistic male's phallic destructive psychopathy, which can thrust us all into Seventh Hell and extinction. Von Trier confers upon both films a reflective tenor, through the voice of a cultivated and chaste pair of interlocutors, Seligman (the Jewish 'happy man') and Verge (Vergil, the founding poet of the Greco-Roman World), both representations of western civilization's difficulty in dealing with the most extreme forms of gender conflict: extramarital 'perverse' female eroticism and phallic violence enacted on women, which, in its warlike form, also decimates children and men.

But Von Trier isn't trying to build a stratifying categorization that distinguishes between psychopaths and perverts, such as with the psychiatric approach. Rather, by contrasting the sexes to the extreme, he is trying to annul Aristotle's vision, in *Politics* (a work of prodigious power, still greatly influential in civic life today), of a political, albeit irrational, category, 'Man', a 'Citizen' amongst the Proprie-

tors, ostensibly 'superior by nature', who reduces his women, his subjects, to submission, together with the children and slaves. The woman, subservient to her 'man', and the man, as omnipotent Master of his submissive women and potential executioner of those womenfolk who resist him, is an idea that persists even today, under the cover of 'philosophical' unconsciousness, in all the ideological discourse about 'Man' and 'Humanity' that demagogically homogenises gender, generations and cultures.

And yet this is nothing new in the realm of Nordic culture. Ibsen was one of the first to expose, in the theatre, the kind of suffering caused by the Battle of the Sexes that philosophy, law or classical political science suppress, and sociology reduces to statistics (the superior form of rationalism which, in a sleight of hand, replaces humans with numbers). Something which Bergman returns to in the cinema, and Stieg Larsson, more recently, to Swedish literature, demonstrating that the arts do carry the power to confront us with what the Academy enshrouds.

From structural-dynamic duplicities to rationalist binarisms

In this modern Jack, the ripper, we are confronted with a set of dichotomies, treasured by rationalists and indispensable to them as a shield against the truth. Crucially, the 'rational-irrational' opposition, which presents 'Man' (but not women, the 'primitive', the 'poor' or the 'mad') as a 'rational'; a feat that Marx (1844), Durkheim (1912) and Freud (1895, 1913) thoroughly contested, calling attention to the centrality of delirium in culture, and compelling Edgar Morin to propose that '*homo sapiens demens*' (Morin 1973) replace '*homo sapiens*' – in the process, rejecting gender hierarchisation.

We advance, with Morin, from dichotomy to complexity. And, with von Trier, we witness for a moment (for the sake of examination) the weakening of the normal-pathological opposition; a dichotomy dear to the discrete charm of the bourgeoisie, and the psychiatry that underpins and legitimises it. Moreover, we also witness the contrast between citizen and murderer fade (a contrast reversed by the actions of hunters and soldiers, prime examples of the citizen-murderer genus); and also, what is not new, the dissolution of the opposition between Genius and Crime, which Lombroso has questioned, and that between Crime and Art, which is enfeebled by the Criminal Arts and the Arts of War, that is, by historically structured crime and the Arts of Hunting, decoratively displayed as trophies high up along the stately walls of such mansions as those owned by the aristocratic masters of Europe and its Colonies.

¹ In French, 'verge' is a popular term to allude the male sex.

Von Trier return to complexity and reflective nihilism

In Lars von Trier, nihilism is less political than reflective. Whether we agree with it or not (and on the margin, Verge, representing western civilisation, disagrees with Jack and confronts him), von Trier is not the first to pose these (and other) distressing questions in a meditative type of cinema that persists in opposing the mere story-telling of so-called popcorn-film, which is already depleted the minute the lights are turned back on.

What motivates the director to make such a film is, according to what von Trier himself has stated in interview, the intense curiosity women possess for psychopaths and other 'destruction-and-crime' phallic heroes. Which complements the strong inquisitiveness men in turn hold for the perverse and polymorph life of the opposite sex; the intense museological and ethnographical interest the 'white man' has in *his* overseas 'primitives', and the disturbed curiosity the 'normal' hold for the secret psychopathology that inhabits and undermines them from within, in a movement that also perturbs them, culturally, from the outside, and leads to the type of personal and historical infraction they wish could be forgotten. Such as the amnesiac investigator in *The Element of Crime* (1984), von Trier's first feature about the figure of a serial killer.

Questioning the links between double eroticism, battle of sexes, religion, imperialism, racionalism, art and criminality

Joe, in *Nymphomaniac* and Jack, in *The House That Jack Built*, form a dyad that demands the consideration of male and female patterns of disturbing behaviour and their hidden motivations. Another dyad, Seligman and Verge¹ represent Academic Rationalism, assuring the false dialogue between asymmetrical worlds, the lived and the institutionalised. In the first film, nymphomaniac sadomasochisms, only apparently 'passive', and in the second, psychopathic phallic violence (what nearly amounts to a pleonasm), only apparently 'active', although impulsive and, later, obsessive-sadistic (OCD), pointing to the Gender Wars, and the civilizational malaise first detected by Freud (1915, 1930).

With both films receding from Erotic and demanding, similarly, in parallel, a debate about religion and politics, art and criminality (underlined by the false dialogue with Verge, who defends, through his homilies, the proud and unquestioned West-

ern Civilisation), it is our civilizational discontentment (Freud 1930) that is exposed by the extremism of their sadomasochistic gamut, which is compulsively repeated. Far from the labelling provided by psychiatry (which the director ironizes) and from the aggrieved bourgeois spectator who would see him as another 'case' of unsettling marginality (which von Trier could have saved us from), Jack emerges as a metaphor for the dark side of western civilisation, Judaeo-Christian, Greco-Roman, an Imperial Civilisation which torments and plagues us with its sacred imperialistic wars, they too, obsessively replicated.

That von Trier should have relieved us all from this torment is what one of the most esteemed film critics in Portugal has defended, berating the man while, at the same time, he casts aside the analysis of the cultural artefact at hand; revealing, even, an unsuspected cognitive regression and a drastic censorial vocation, whose roots rest in Portuguese Catholicism and its long-lasting fascist *Estado Novo* tributary². According to Jorge Leitão Ramos, since the last decade, "Lars von Trier has been drawing nearer the most diabolical pornographic ferocity (...) what proves his need for urgent psychiatric attention" and signposts *The House That Jack Built* as "a film to be avoided by all means." (Expresso, Revista 2410, 5/1/2019: 77).

Contrary to Sartre, since it is not philosophy that is at issue here, in these two films, 'Hell is us'. It is not the director's unconscious that ought to be examined by psychiatry, it is our 'cultural normality' (our perverse sexuality and criminal aggressiveness, in their historical dimension), which, condensed and rid of negation, becomes strangely disquieting (*Unheimliche*), when *ex-posed* and placed outside us (Freud 1919). Encroaching perversion, crime, the Academy and Art, the memory of our lives and of the History we have been imparted ('the Real') becomes a veiling representation which, in the name of 'normality', we may want to compulsively repress again, as an intolerable idea, instead of wishing to see it projected in the cinema. "This is the secret" of vulgar criticism. A fool's secret, the puerile return to super-egoic Filmmaker evaluation, be it as Censorship, the originator of scapegoats, be it as filmic Ideal to be prized ritualistically, in place of the analytical probing of civilizational malaise. In this Von Trier's Divine Comedy, Dante idealism bequeaths *Hollywoodesque* critique the model of vulgar criticism.

Structurally, then, Lars von Trier, by stretching out his protagonists to the limit, grants Joe's feminine sexuality a precociously hyper-erotized biographical tone, and enriches Jack with traumatic childish memories and sceptic dialogues with Verge. Besides, von Trier organises this *peregrinatio ad loca infecta* following two spectres: Joe's revenge over the emissary of Academic Power, dispatching Seligman, the transferenceal pater who had presented himself asexual, as his own father had also shown to be; and Jack's uterine retreat into a plant world, troubled by the harvesters, turning aggression into a form of female harming chastity, into a search for refuge in Art, and ambivalent oscillation between the identification with Phallic Power (deified) and the revolt against that same constabulary authority he ridicules, ending with a compromise between anonymity and Fame, punishment and the decamping to Eternal Peace.

² The dictatorial regime that ruled Portugal between 1933 and 1974.

³ In the film, the interplay of action with the voicing of the noun “jack” convokes a range of interweaving meanings, from formal to informal and slang, here impossible to reproduce: ‘jack’, as a colloquial term descriptive of any or the common man; ‘jack’, as in Jack’s own name; ‘jack’, as in the hydraulic hand tool normally used to lift a car and change a tire; ‘jack’, meaning very little or nothing, as in the expressions “you don’t know jack” or “you *ain’t* got jack”; ‘jack’, as in jackass, a male donkey or a human tomfool; and, more obliquely, ‘jack’, as in the phallic ‘tool’ men normally possess and will readily use, but Jack seems to lack, or is unfit to utilise or to know how to employ – pointing to the phonetic proximity (bar the initial consonant) between “jack” and “lack” and the transience between having and wanting. Trans. note.

Von trier clues to a non-literal, metaphorical and thoughtful reading

Clues for a nonliteral, metaphorical and thoughtful reading overflow the comical interludes, the scholarly referencing and the profound dialogues that supervene, signalling that only by favouring a reflective and complex Freudian interpretation can one avoid reducing the cinema to the telling of a character’s story, to a performative narrative devoid of distance; a form of objectification that confounds Art and Reality and which, after Bertolt Brecht and Hannah Arendt, can only fall upon the peripheral cinephile.

In his exchanges with Verge, Jack confesses the vocational ambition to identify with the Holy Father – monarchic religion’s Supreme Architect (and also Leibniz’s and the republican freemasonry’s) –, but reminisces about how his mother castrated his identity when she condemned him to becoming nothing more than an engineer, to best equip him for making a living. Castrated by his mother, Jack realises that he is just the failed engineer of unliveable constructions, such as those in the nursery rhyme *This Is the House That Jack Built*, full of the human chaos and creature misconduct conjured by the film’s title:

This is the farmer sowing his corn, / That kept the cock that crow’d in the morn, / That waked the priest all shaven and shorn, / That married the man all tatter’d and torn, / That kissed the maiden all forlorn, / That milk’d the cow with the crumpled horn, / That tossed the dog, / That worried the cat, / That killed the rat, / That ate the malt / That lay in the house that Jack built. Jack also understands that, lacking the Grace of loving maternal integration (once again, he is humiliated, now as an adult, because he *ain’t got ‘jack’*³ and hence is perceived as a sexual ‘coward’), all he has left is the will to transform the Torment he and his utensils have brought upon the smashed lives of his victims into the grace of recreating their destroyed bodies in the realm of Art, in a New Architecture of Frozen Death, placing outside the performative and neo-baroque Artistic Tomb he erects the bodies which, according to Euro-normativity, should have been hidden inside. In this remorseless cinema, “to show or not to show, that is the question”. Uncared-for by his mother, incapable of finishing his own House, which he repeatedly demolishes, repudiated by his woman – although we will only learn this with the final song obsessively repeating “*Hit the road Jack and don’t you come back no more, no more, no more*” –, Jack gifts us his Frozen Performative Artwork, returning humanity to the rigid Ice Architectures populating the WASP Northern Parts of Europe (the equivalent of the more precarious ‘sand castles’ found in the Mediterranean south).

In support of his destructiveness, Jack (the common man) summons up three cultural models, all devoid of empathy – with Nature, the animals and humanity –, which stratify three periods of historical evolution: agriculture, hunting (resulting in colonialism) and the military emergence of the Imperialist State.

In the film, the harvesters come first, in rigid formation, devising automated work and mutilating mother-nature's fecundity by cutting close the spring herbage that served Jack-the-child's first return to womb. Then come the hunters, forerunners of the military and Kantian philosophy, expunging the Beautiful, the feminine and the puerile, through the Sublime destruction of the helpless 'game', which is turned into trophies of artistic merit, warranting the passage from Necessity to Sublimation and from Crime to Decorative Art, with the narcissistic exhibition of such morbid Trophies high up the walls of aristocratic manors. Finally, the soldiers at the service of the Imperialistic economy, Nazi or any other, for decades American, to cite Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*, committed to killing, most efficiently, the largest number of prisoners with the smallest amount of bullets.

The Genesis Of Psychopathy And The Merge Of Phallic Imperialism

This mode of presentation, as a series of 'incidents', hides here the fact that the genesis of phallic psychopathy is situated in childhood, triggered by (castrating) maternal humiliation. It does not stem from an 'education for crime' (which will come later, in the guise of heroic cinema, as in Quentin Tarantino's *The Hateful eight*, 2015), but from identification with the phallic aggressor, which acts collectively, an affinity culturally institutionalised by Phallic Civilisation.

Returned to womb on the pasturage that will later be reaped, little frightened Jack, fascinated by the rhythmic sound emitted by the harvesters who castrate Mother-Earth's salient herbs (an indirect reference to the primal scene), identifies with their castrating sadism and clips a duckling's foot (a structuring movement which Freud identifies as the passage from passivity to activity, through identification with the aggressor, a form of identity transformation linked to Castration anxiety, leading, in the boy, to the Negative, homoerotic Oedipus, then to machismo and Phallic violence).

For fear of the Father (telluric or celestial), the boy assumes the principles of violence over women and children which, in his adult life, he will try to rationalise, framing his cruelty in the rationalist synthesis of religion, philosophy, politics and the arts – a phallic unification initiated by Dante, "Christianity's poet", in the *Divine Comedy*, , advanced by Machiavel, in *The Prince* (1513), taken by Hobbes in the *Leviathan* (1651) and later by Leibniz, in the eighteenth century, when, in the *Monadology*, he equates the celestial Father, the Human Artists becoming 'Creators', the Princes and the biological fathers, inter se, in their relationship with humans, artistic endeavour, subjects and offspring.

⁴ WASP – White Anglo-Saxon Protestants

⁵ “Why won’t you shut up?!”

In psychopathy, elimination of others occults castration anxiety

As an object to be eliminated, men are also of service, on a political (ideological) level. But it is women (and their children) who, on a different psychoanalytical plane, propel Jack’s obsessiveness to compulsively repeat his crimes with the amount of detail he then invests in their occultation. It all starts with the initial, impulsive incident, when a female stranger, in a chance meeting, venturing a ride with Jack, outdoes him, throwing his sexual impotence and cowardice in his face, for he hasn’t even been able to rape her when she has shown not to fear him, because she finds him incapable of such phallic feat.

Given the female paradoxical injunction which torments the American Century, in its new, challenging and dominating, #MeToo guise – “See if you can rape me, or else you’re nothing but a useless coward; but if you do fulfil my command and try to do it you’re just a crook and I’ll report you to the police” –, Jack (who doesn’t even have a jack) declines to serve her (refusing to change her punctured tire, this time using her ‘jack’), to then impulsively grab her tool as the partial object symbolising the *phallus* (‘jack’, as he himself) to smash her silent forever. (And here returns the memory of the Spanish King, still looking upon himself as Emperor of the Spanish Americas, but already harmless, sovereignly fronting the revolutionary President with a “*Por que no te callas?!^{4,5}*”)

Two different types of women appear in the first couple of ‘incidents’: the Archaic Woman (the Mother cautioning her daughter not to go inside a stranger’s car alone, for he might want to rape her); and the Modern, #MeToo Woman, undaunted by strangers, disqualifying them genitally, between the threat of punishment and humiliation, what perpetuates the battle of the sexes instead of overcoming it.

Following this first ‘episode’, we switch over to a second phase of the script, during which time two distinct but complementary movements will recur. Women incarnate, for the unloved male, either excessive autonomy, which stands for abandonment, or disorder and, principally, humiliation. It is necessary to kill them so that this crumbling phallic order is restored, deceiving them and cutting back their defences to then rationalise the phallic crime aesthetically, exploiting the bodies as artistic productions.

Lars von Trier grants this second victim (a widowed, maternal figure) an unexpectedly longer resistance time before he finally nudges Jack to acting out her departure. First, at the moment when Jack is still negotiating his entry and manipulatively switches from the role of patrolling policeman to that of an insurance salesman who might double her pension. Later, as he neurotically vacillates, simultaneously trying to strangle and comfort her, to then stab her right in her chest (Jack-the-child’s elected area, the portion of female body he will tear up later) and watch, riveted, as blood gushes out of her body, apparently forever.

It is this blood which threatens his impunity, and which he deliriously believes may be, hazardously, concealed behind a picture frame or hidden under the legs of a stationary chair; but which he will then spread all over town, as he drags her corpse behind his car, painting a long impression of the crime he has just committed. The loss of this maternal figure is offset by religious over-dimensioning, when the Great Architect (Jack's totemic figure) ordains a well-timed rainstorm to wash away all traces of blood, showing that Divine Providence Phallic Planning can bond together, in impunity, the different strata of virility and criminality (celestial, religious, political, social and artistic).

And yet, the Art of Crime cannot be displayed right away. Jack's trophies first need to be frozen and then worked by the Artist. What Jack, or even God, could not avert has, now, such as with Culture, to be methodically organised and legitimised, through the ideals divinised by that same cultural compass (hunting, punishment attached to female erotic overture, war and the arts).

The first two 'incidents' draw together two different generations, two single women and two greatly dissimilar sets of norms: no fear of getting into a man's car, never opening the front door to a stranger (such as in *The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats* fairy tale) – since male sexuality can, in an instant, transmute from a desire for phallic penetration into a craving for metallic incursion; and the desire to kill into metamorphic, artistic, philosophical or political enterprise.

Mocking public opinion supported by psychiatric and media simplicities

From a formal standpoint, it is attached to this second incident that, in a mocked form, the 'diagnostics' of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and the PSYCHOPATHIC label emerge (fig. 3): and also the recollection of that childhood scene with the harvesters (fig. 4), after which he committed his original crime (clipping the duckling's foot); the accelerating sequence of female murders; compulsively running over an old woman; starting to twist his victims into bizarre, seemingly artistic positions; Verge's various interpellations; and William Blake's (1794) the metaphorical interrogation about the Tiger and the Lamb⁶ – 'one as perfect as the other, but only the lamb will forever live in Art History'.

Growing in self-esteem under the Omnipotent guard of his Celestial Father, protective of those sons who execute their Mothers (what Freud characterised, tardily, as the simple and negative Oedipus complex, and interpreted as the process of identity transformation which protects Phallic Society), Jack mocks psychiatric 'truth', mimics the media and organises the private displaying of his feats, arranged from newspaper clippings which dub him "Mr Sophistication", as he will shortly begin to sign himself, and artsy photographs of sets of corpses assembled in comical posi-

⁶ "When the stars threw down their spears / And water'd heaven with their tears: / Did he smile his work to see? / Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (a strophe of 'Tiger', from "Songs of Experience"). This poem has been considered "the most famous" and "the most anthologised poem in English". "Tiger" can be seen as a figure of the British Colonial Empire and "the Lamb" as a figure of the Christ sacrificed to the will of the Father. Political and biblical contradictions or complementarities can be read in the interdependence of the two poems. Terror, Fear and Blood intertwines the two poems from "Songs from Experience and Innocence". In modernity, the political 'sacrifice' of Jack Kennedy figures the Lamb.

tions – whose relational disorder is uncovered by the displaying of the negatives, the black light metaphor that only technology can convey. The importance of this rapport with light is illustrated by the changing shadow Jack-the-walker projects as he paces beneath the streetlights; a metaphor for all the variations his compulsion to kill evokes, whose fulfilment temporarily alleviates the obsessions resulting from the obstruction to the elaboration of anguish – a barrier rooted in childhood, as the film indicates.

The bourgeois appetite for killing in hunting and war

The third ‘incident’ is more premeditated and no longer involves stalking a woman. Lifted in status by identification with the belligerent aristocracy, Hunting emerges as the original liquidation art legitimised by the colonial bourgeoisie – the bourgeois may no longer go to war, but he surely hasn’t lost his appetite for killing. Following the murder of a ‘seductress’ travelling alone (who could conceivably have been his lover) and the killing of a suspicious widow (who could well have been his mother), comes the assault on maternal fecundity, perpetrated by a man who never led to his own family. This involves, as per the Arts of Hunting, the implementation of a plan to kill mother and children (as if they were animal trophies), first by seducing the victims to identify with the hunter, and then by turning predator into prey, accomplice into victim. Such as with Aristotle, Leibniz and Kant, the world is hierarchised binarily: between aristocracy and the people; between Males and mothers (whether animal or human); between the ‘Sophisticated’, Phallic and Sublime, and the merely Beautiful, who live despondently. Artistic irony now arrogates the child, transfigured into Gotham’s clownish Joker (turning Jack into Marvel’s super heroic figure of the Batman); a vision that sees criminal America enthralled by its own image, splitting the world into the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ (such as with religion), to legitimise and globalise imaginarily its own lack of empathy, its compulsion to repeating its attempts to dominance and its military psychopathy.

Phallic Battle of Sexes Between Sophistication and Simplicity

In a longer fourth ‘Incident’, Jack flirts with Jacqueline while putting on the haughtiness of a Mr Sophistication who, momentarily, has had to settle for his Ms Simple. He challenges her to scream for help (he himself helping her by screaming even

louder), eventually slashing her envied saliences (he who lacked the kind of 'jack' that could lift a car and help fix a flat tire) and pasting one to the windscreen of a police car, while the officer remains reliably oblivious and inept. An officer who treats the threat of serial crime, confessionally yelled, as a mere few words between a drunken couple, instructing that Jacqueline take her man home, back to the space that will shelter the crime. After the Supreme Architect, it is now the Police that underprops the impunity of Male violence against women, rather complicitly. Jack faces the crimes he perpetrates on women quite ambivalently, between culpability and the helplessness of a "no one cares, no one helps!" Captive to his own compulsiveness, he wants to be stopped, denouncing his crimes, demanding serious investigation, or even shouting his culpability as a serial killer; in a bipolar mix of crying for help from the authorities, and a megalomaniac belief in the impunity ratified by the Supreme Architect and the prevailing culture.

Von Trier Calls Woody Allen Comedies to Face the Anxiety of Castration by the Mother

More explicitly, because de-dramatized by how laughter tends to disarm aggression (Freud, 1905), the two great threats faced by the desire for phallic pretention are clearly exposed in a few of Woody Allen's comedies. Both derive from the unconscious association between the face of the Mother, when castigating, and the breasts of lovers that excite him, as an obsessive memory. In the sixth episode of *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex * But Were Afraid to Ask* (1972), a pair of scientists try to defeat a giant breast flying over Central Park, ravaging the countryside; and years later, in *Oedipus Wrecks*, Allan's part in the *New York Stories* film triptych (1989), he puts his hero (played by himself) under the humiliating spell of his diseased mother's face-in-the-sky, forever cold, sadistic, ceaselessly and overtly censoring him, from high up, as if he was still a child.

As *The House That Jack Built* constantly reminds us, pointing to Dante, Leibnitz, Hitler and the postmodern performing arts, by way of which architecture returns to its Renaissance status, equating as Workers the hand of God and mankind's creative (but also murdering) hand, the aggressor is the epitome of the artist and the victim his material in the Arts of Crime. Jack himself makes it explicit that what fascinates him is the Art of the Negative, since in Art 'it is the material that makes the Work', and it is the bodies that best make up the substance of all performing arts, narcissistic, of Egos inflated by individual exposition, if possible transgressive. In such a case, the materials are, mostly, the bodies of assassinated women. And the House of Dead, presented for artistic effect, represents western civilisation's necrophagous dimension. The Art of War, recalled in the final 'incident', works here

as an Interrupted Melody, rendering Peace precarious and illusory (such as with the familistic milieu), and our Armistice as long as the Korean.

From Castration by the Mother to Phallic Omnipotence

This last 'incident' evokes another film, Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*, by staging an attempt to execute a line of handcuffed prisoners with a single full metal jacket bullet. It is at this moment that the police intervene, attesting the impermissibility of assailing the State and its organised violence, since, such as with God, the State constitutes and represents the social organisation of phallic violence. The increasing success of this phallic fortification, based upon sexual crime and the identification with both hunters and the military, leads, with Jack, and now irrevocably, to a Dantesque flight through the interior of his Funerary Installation and into Mother Earth's tunnels. This return-to-uterus is escorted by Verge, who shepherds Jack towards the expectation of a coming back to light, having him face the challenge of walking an insuperable wall over the opening to a burning Hell, into which he will fall and with which he will fuse, in a conclusively fiery uterine becoming, far from human History and its cold stores, which, similar to funeral parlours, attract the crimes of the flesh.

This is *The House That Jack Built*; this is the World of Modern Civilisation that the WASP, the Founding Fathers, and their paired Empires (such as the Nazi, and the Soviet in rural Ukraine), heirs to the Greco-Roman Empire chanted by Vergil and to medieval witch-hunts, have built for us, in the course of their first American Century. A world where, with Jack, one can "believe heaven and hell are one and the same."

The new Lars von Trier's Critique of Civilization and its Referents

Renouncing the whodunit of his first film (*The Element of Crime*, 1984) to revisit this same subject (the serial killer's assault on femininity), Lars von Trier opts here for the kind of distance that repudiates realist dramatization ('descriptive' and casuistic), assuming a Dark Comedy tone reminiscent of the Hitchcock of *Psycho*, the Kubrick of *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Shining*, *Full Metal Jacket* and *Eyes Wide Shut*, the Lynch of *Blue Velvet* and *Twin Peaks*, and the Haneke of *The Piano Teacher* and *Funny Games*. Von Trier does this without shunning the questioning of a Civi-

lisation erected over the phallic crime, forcing us to face the extreme forms of a non-casuistic malaise that cannot be cured by reinstating psychiatric or cinephile forms of censorship.

This is adult cinema. Not because it is perverse or psychopathic, but rather since it is equipped with a complex, multi-referential structure, and because it reflects (on the Battle of the Sexes, on Sadistic Violence and on Phallic Society's Malaise) and confronts us with the blind alleys that the Academy promotes in its increasingly imposed teachings, ever more fragmented into 'disciplines' and myopic specialisms, and less and less reflective. Coming back to Dante, if the dialogue between Jack and Verge warrants continuation (Verge, who keeps declaring, from the high-minded stance of his academic omnipotence, that the narratives men insist in telling him never bring anything new), it would then be our turn to now become reflective, instead of attempting to kill the messenger.

Lars von Trier may look, to the troubled film critic, as if he was trying to align himself with Rotterdam's Witte de With 2014 collective exhibition *The Crime Was Almost Perfect*; a city destroyed by Nazism which, rooted in Thomas de Quincey's *On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts* (1827)⁷, proposes here, in this exhibit, an aesthetic approach to crime. Instead, what the 'damned' filmmaker is seeking to highlight (with his reflective approach to film) is how the American Century has led to hell on Earth, intensifying the battle of the sexes, the indifference before narcissistic aggression, and the legitimisation of the aesthetic and economic use of weaponry – in hunting, psychopathic crime and the extension of military Imperialism into the twenty first century.

This American Century's performative Civilisation (individualistic, hypercompetitive, sporty, economic, statistical, indifferent before pain and death – which have become mere journalistic and mediatic fodder), conceals Imperial authorship and splits the lesser social World between the free, supposedly logical 'Citizens', and the incomprehensible, ostensibly obsessive-compulsive Criminals; that is, between 'Normality' and Madness. It is sustained by its own sacralisation and exaltation, thoughtless and, allegedly, incomprehensible. In the arts, what appears as "strange (*unheimliche*) is that category of the frightening that appoints to what is known, as ancient and from long time familial", (Freud 1919), phallic violence against the feeble and the weak.

Psychoanalytic Illiteracy and 'Critical' Trumpist Despotism

The reception of "Nymphomaniac", Lars von Trier's latest film turned it into a scandal. As in Freud's times, the unrest of critics is embodied in a cognitive mirroring, in the rejection of any project of 'reading' this 'scandalous object', and its substitution

⁷ Influencing Poe, Baudelaire and Borges.

by *ad personam* attacks disguised as ‘critical’ argumentation. Psychoanalytical illiteracy becomes aggressive in its defence of the discreet charm of the bourgeoisie, and makes it clear that without Freud, a congruent reading of the cultural productions of the unconscious becomes impossible.

Thus, more palpably in his two last features, Lars von Trier has employed the strange power of placing film critique outside of itself, taking down its rational appearance. Converging with the Freud of *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (1930), the filmmaker screams, through and beyond Jack’s character, that this PERFORMATIVE CIVILISATION IS A PSYCHOPATHIC CIVILISATION, countering Verge’s academic deafness and the Trumpist film critic’s wanting to silence the film (which, in their mind, not even adults should dare watching, in an attempt to restore despotic censorship). Cultural Trumpism has arrived to academicized cinephilia. Walls are being raised by ‘critique’, separating between the irreflective, the ‘good’ cinema of entertainment, and the ‘bad’ cinema of reflection.

Conclusion

As Freud mentions humour is “a rare and precious gift” (1927, 221), that “has in it a *liberating* element, (...) something fine and elevating, (...) the triumph of narcissism, the ego’s victorious assertion of its own invulnerability. It refuses to be hurt by the arrows of reality or to be compelled to suffer. It insists that it is impervious to wounds dealt by the outside world, in fact, that these are merely occasions for affording it pleasure. This last trait is a fundamental characteristic of humour.” (idem, 216-217).

With Lars von Trier’s dark humour, ‘Jack’ is to be understood not in a clinical register but as a symptom of the *malaise* in civilization, induced by the work of the third type of man, the omnipotent Action Man (Freud 1930, 144) or Narcissistic man (Freud 1931). In this type, sadism allows “the satisfaction of the instinct (...) accompanied by an extraordinary high degree of narcissistic enjoyment, owing to its presenting the ego with fulfilment of the latter’s old wishes for omnipotence.” (Freud 1930: 144). “The ego has a considerable amount of aggression available, one manifestation of this being a proneness to activity; (...) People belonging to this type impress others as being ‘personalities’ (...)” (Freud 1931: 249).

‘Jack’ appears as a condensed mask of the sociopathic millenar criminality of Occidental ‘civilization’ against women, and their children, in the battle of sexes, and against colonised or invaded peoples in Imperial Anglo-American aggression, as it appears in this American Century conducted by Machiavellian presidencies “prepared to lie, violate the law, and betray principles to achieve (their) ends” (Friedman 2012, xvi). A Culture of Narcissism (Lasch 1979) marked by brutal sadistic sexual, religious and political aggression promoted and accepted as a competence of the omnipotent Father Figure (as by Aristotle, Leibnitz, Monotheisms and Imperial-

isms), hidden in post-democratic Olympus, the political counterpart of Super-ego in History.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle, 1999. *Politics*. London, Batoche Books, Kitchener.
- Blake, William. 1794. *Songs of Experience and Innocence*. (Library of Congress): electronic edition". www.blakearchive.org. Archived from the original on 2016-03-04. Retrieved 2015-11-05.
- Blake, William. *Dante's Divine Comedy*. Taschen.
- Dante, Alighieri. 2003 [1320]. *Divine Comedy*: Berkley; 1 edition.
- De Quincey, Thomas. 1827. *On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts*. London: One World Classics, 2015.
- Durkheim, Émile. 1912. *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press, 1995.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1895a. Draft H. Annexed to the letter from 24 January. *Standard Edition*, vol. I.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1905. Jokes and their relation with the Unconscious. *Standard Edition*, vol. VIII.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1913. Totem and Tabou. *Standard Edition*, vol. XIII.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1915. Reflexions on War and Death. *Standard Edition*, vol, XIV.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1919. 'The Uncanny' (Unheimliche). *Standard Edition*, vol, XVII.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1924. The passing of the Oedipus Complex. *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX
- Freud, Sigmund. 1927. Humour. *Standard Edition*, vol, XXI.
- Humour'. 1928. *Collected Papers*, vol. 5. The International Psycho-analytical Library 37. The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, edited by M. Masus R. Khan, London 1971: 215-221
- 'Libidinal types' . 1931. *Collected Papers*, vol. 5. The International Psycho-analytical Library 37. The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, edited by M. Masus R. Khan, London 1971: 247-251.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1929. The Future of an Illusion. *Standard Edition*, vol. XXI.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1930. Civilization and its Discontents, *Standard Edition*, vol. XXI.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1931. Libidinal Types. vol, XXI. *Standard Edition*, vol. XXI.
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1651. *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*. Penguin Books.

- Kant, Emmanuel. 1764. *Observações sobre o sentimento do belo e do sublime (Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen)*. Campinas: Papyrus Editora, 1993.
- Larsson, Stieg. 2005. *Os homens que odeiam as mulheres (Män som hatar kvinnor / The girl with the Dragon Tattoo)*. Lisboa: D. Quixote.
- Leibnitz, Gottfried Wilhelm. 1720. *Monadology*. Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 2014.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. 1532. *The Prince*. Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Marx, Karl. 1844. "Marx's critique of Hegel's philosophy of law", *Early Writings*
- Morin, Edgar. 1973. *Le paradigme perdu: la nature humaine*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1883. *Thus spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. London: Penguin Books.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1886. *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. London: Penguin Books.

Filmography

- Allen, Woody. 1972. *What you always want to know about sex, but was afraid to ask*.
- Allen, Woody. 1989. *Oedipus Wrecks*, in *New York Stories*.
- Bergman, Ingmar. 1973. *Cenas da vida conjugal (Scener ur ett äktenskap)*
- Haneke, Michael. 1997. *Funny Games*
- Hitchcock, Alfred. 1960. *Psycho*
- Kubrick, Stanley. 1971. *A Clockwork Orange*
- Kubrick, Stanley. 1980. *The Shining*
- Kubrick, Stanley. 1987. *Born to Kill. Full Metal Jacket*
- Kubrick, Stanley. 1999. *Eyes wide shut*
- Von Trier, Lars. 1984. *The Element of Crime*
- Kubrick, Stanley. 2013. *Nymphomaniac I and II*
- Kubrick, Stanley. 2018. *The house that Jack built*.

Music

- Franklin, Aretha. 1968. *The house that Jack built*.

Audiovisual essay

JÚLIA MACHADO AND THE SEXUAL AUDIO-VISUAL ESSAY

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

BY ÉRICA FALEIRO RODRIGUES

It needs only a few glimpses of Julia Machado's work to realise how fitting British academic Catherine Grant's suggestion was that we include it here: the Brazilian artist's audio-visual essays fit this issue like a glove, unsettling the boundaries of our safe viewing of sexuality, and making us question the limits of sex and sexualisation as represented by the moving image.

The words "taste" and "decency", implanted in notions of what is or is not permissible as sexual content, are here politicised and set in tension with the opposite concept of freedom to display and be seen. If censorship of sexuality still plagues the public presentation of art across the globe, with recent cases as those of Russian artist Yulia Tsvetkova (currently under house arrest and awaiting trial) or Brazilian choreographer Wagner Schwartz (accused of paedophilia for a performance involving his own nakedness at São Paulo's Museum of Modern Art and for the fact that a mother let her child touch his foot), then Julia Machado's oeuvre is a pertinent reminder of the need for a continuous discussion on this important topic. The trilogy presented in this issue touches upon a wide range of sexual themes that have commonly fallen prey of censorship, from the lust of a white woman for a black man, to masturbation, to swinging, to sex with disabled partners and menstruation.

If it is true that these films may be disturbing, then it is also certain that by taking us outside of our comfort zone they allow us to reflect on crucial issues of our biology, humanity and society. Recently, when writing about her visual work, Júlia Machado referred to it as "Undressing the Excessive Image". And it is precisely with this enquiry, this questioning, that we want to unsettle perceived boundaries.



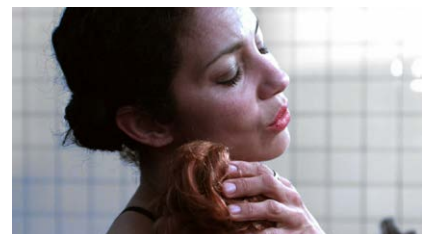
Paradise [6 min]

<https://vimeo.com/juliamachadofilms/paradisepotfestival>



Bliss [6 min]

<https://vimeo.com/juliamachadofilms/blisslink>



Femme [5 min]

<https://vimeo.com/juliamachadofilms/femmelink>

Book reviews

ARUNÀ CANEVASCINI (2018). *VILLA ARGENTINA*

MADRID: LA FÁBRICA. ODALISCA'S ARCHETYPES. THE VILLA ARGENTINA OF ARUNÀ CANEVASCINI

SUSANA LOURENÇO MARQUES
I2ADS/ FBA.UP
IHA, NOVA FCSH

The androgynous images, which haunted painters and photographers since the second half of the nineteenth century, have accommodated distinct intersections between the two media, as Michel Foucault delineated in his comment on Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres: *when painting re-covers the photograph, it does not admit that photography is beautiful. It does better: it produces the beautiful hermaphrodite of instantaneous photograph and painted canvas, the androgynous image* (Foucault, 1975: 1575).

Placing the female body at the centre of a visual essay on desire and privacy, in Arunà Canevascini's book *Villa Argentina* this androgenic assertion is extended to a wider conception concerning the representation of women's intimacy in-between Western and Eastern culture. Echoing the announced *photogenic painting* that Foucault examined in 1975, and switching between documentary and staged photography, Canevascini develops a work interested in thought-provoking conventions and, as she declares, the way *it hides a woman's identity behind a socially constructed cliché. (...) I want to provoke the viewer to reflect and question his or her own perspective on the stereotypes and clichés imposed on women by society* (Canevascini, 2019).

The photographs display an exploration of the relationship with her mother, the Iranian artist Anahita Tahery, made at their family house in the south of Switzerland. Across the book's pages, their cultural identity is revealed through the reinvention of the domestic space, defined by personal objects, paintings, and sculptures. These objects are confronted with the nudity of the artists, both indifferent to the concepts of the idealized body, and the prohibition of the body's visibility by Islamic doctrine. This theatricality of private life is, for Canevascini,





Villa Argentina, © Arunà Canevascini



Villa Argentina, © Arunà Canevascini

a way of creating a world parallel to what we normally deem banal and ordinary. The house is often seen as a prison for women, but in Villa Argentina it's actually a place of emancipation: for me and my mother, our home is and has always been



Villa Argentina, © Arunã Canevascini

like the stage of a theatre where we can freely express and shape our identity (Canevascini, 2019).

The evocation of *La Grande Odalisque* by Ingres, which was also chosen for the cover of the book, is now depicted as a portrait of a contemporary woman who challenges the viewer with the notion of mediation and the knowledge of being an image. This private *Odalisque*, portrayed by another woman, deals with a complex equation on exile, domesticity and the tradition of nudity in European painting, where women were commonly represented to be looked at: *in "Odalisque with Pot" my mother's face is hidden by an object typically associated with household work. Through this image I wanted to draw attention to how women have been mostly depicted in the history of art by male artists who have always represented them as idealized creatures, and how society has preconceived ideas on what role women should have, ignoring entirely their individual identities* (Canevascini, 2019).

Intentionally *offering up her femininity as the surveyed* (Berger, 1972: 55), as John Berger qualifies the *Odalisque* expression, in the picture of Canevascini this appropriation celebrates the ambiguity of private space, acknowledging the pose as a right to a perimeter of visibility and defiance that confirms the identity of these two women. Therefore, it does not serve to legitimize or recognize primordial images, but rather — admitting a system of resonances that marks the making of all images — proposes a reading on the fragmentation of the experience of the contemporary being and the perception of an omnipresent media landscape, which insists on a continuous state of alertness in relation to the image, to its codes and successive unfolding. As Berger defended in his well-known *Ways of Seeing*, *women are depicted in a quite different way from men — not because the feminine is different from the masculine — but because the ‘ideal’ spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him.* (Berger, 1972: 64) When the *Guerrilla Girls* asked in 1989 *Why do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?*, appropriating the same *Odalisque* picture covered with a gorilla mask, the response of the museum consisted in the very musealization of their revindication and a slight change in the statistics that at the time figured in their written statement: *less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art Sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female.*

In a period marked by the rise of gender-equality claims, in which, simultaneously, the tolerance for difference seems increasingly compromised and the censorship of the women’s body is trivialized, *Odalisque with Pot* attempts to break through prejudice in homogenous public narratives, sustaining the validation of women’s emancipation and claiming the power to reveal or conceal intimacy as a personal political manifesto. For both artists, the viewer witnesses a relationship, also as a voyeur, becoming aware of the place s/he doesn’t belong to, and realizing what s/he is able and unable to see.

T.J. CLARK, 2018, HEAVEN ON EARTH. PAINTING AND THE LIFE TO COME LONDON, THAMES & HUDSON, LDA

JOÃO OLIVEIRA DUARTE
IHA, NOVA FCSH
joaooliveiraduarte@gmail.com
Received: 21/04/2019
Accepted: 25/04/2019

Ever since T.J. Clark published *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 revolution*, in 1973, his research has mainly focused on the relationship between modernism and politics – understood as an urge, as a utopian configuration. In his latest book, *Heaven on Earth. Painting and the life to come*, the political link remains a key issue. However, this political dimension is not subsumed into a modernist horizon. The paintings addressed in this book span from the thirteenth century to Picasso, conveying a much more pessimistic tone.

Divided into five chapters, starting with a text on Giotto and the frescos of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua and ending with a mural by Picasso (*The Fall of Icarus*) made for the UNESCO building in Paris, *Heaven on Earth* includes a coda, a text T.J. Clark published on the *New Left Review* in 2012. Interestingly, this last text, which is a sort of political manifesto by Clark, quite distant from any art historical approach, gives a kind of emotional, more than theoretical, framework for the rest of the work. 'Utopianism, on the other hand – that invention of early modern civil servants – is what the landlords have time for. It is everything Carlo Levi's peasants have learnt to distrust. Bruegel spells this out. His *Cockaigne* is above all a de-sublimation of the idea of heaven – an un-Divine Comedy, which only fully makes sense in relation to all the others offers of otherworldliness (ordinary and fabulous, instituted and heretical) circulating as Christendom fell apart' (255).

This melancholic point of view – that something is falling apart, that the promise of salvation lies "on the other side of despair" (43) – points to a known twentieth century tradition that the historian Enzo Traverso called 'left-wing melancholia'. It is this particular angle, this almost Shakespearean tone – 'our Hamlet of Europe is watching millions of ghosts', as Paul Valéry said during World War I – uniting the disparity of times and the pictorial gestures, that constitutes the cornerstone of *Heaven on Earth*. In fact, what can possibly unite Giotto, Bruegel, Veronese, Pous-

sin or Picasso if not this feeling conveyed in some paintings, or, in Picasso's case, in a mural, of an 'experience of sterility and solitude'?

Central to Clark's argument is Bruegel and his *Land of Cockaigne*. Even if Giotto, in *Joachim's Expulsion* and, in a much less highlighted manner, in *Joachim's Dream*, points to a 'bleakness of vision' (32) in which the colour plays a fundamental part – Giotto's blue, says Clark, 'remains as cold as colour can be', so material and separated from earth as to constitute 'heaven's utter strangeness' (53); even if the woman on the left of Poussin's *The Sacrament of Marriage* is, in Clark's interpretation, 'the figure who stands outside the feast' (153), the figure of 'apartness, of that which always threatens the togetherness of the group' (153); or even if Picasso's mural remains a sort of 'bleak gaiety in the face of catastrophe', with a sinister, but also 'shapeless, weightless, insubstantial, silly, not really present in his black container' Icarus, it is in *The Land of Cockaigne* by Bruegel that heaven on earth realizes itself in all its paradoxical consequences.

'It is typical of Bruegel that his vision of things transfigured, when at last he allows himself one, should not be *The World Upside Down*. The hereafter in *Cockaigne* is the world as it would be if it became more fully itself, with its basic structures unaltered and above all its physicality, its orientation, intact'.

Contradicting art history's view of Bruegel, which sees him as a 'pessimistic and comically condescending, and at worst detached, moralistic, crisply repressive' (80) painter, Clark points to a kind of radical materialism in *The Land of Cockaigne*. This painting is not, according to Clark, a vision or a utopia, nor even a wish-fulfilment. In its 'unfathomable cynicism and materialism – including its cynicism *about* materialism, at least in utopian guise', – *Cockaigne* is about 'what being fully and exclusively in the material world could be like'.

This non-utopian peasant dream, in which the hereafter is a land of pure actuality, of the existing world's utmost completion – Clark's description recalls a famous political reading of Dante's *Divine Comedy* made by Auerbach in the 1920s –, functions as a sort of allegorical key through which we can establish a link between the diversity of paintings and our own time. Actually, this is one of the most interesting things about *Heaven on Earth*. Even if the five chapters are all about the paintings, and even if Clark denies the possibility of portraying linguistic propositions, all of them bear a sort of allegorical wisdom through which we can question our own time. As Clark underscores in the introduction, 'we need the wisdom – which includes the bitterness – of men for whom the *Massacre of the Innocents* and the smell of heretics' burnt flesh were commonplace'. However, that there's something connecting Veronese, Giotto, Poussin or even Picasso to the political agenda of the twenty-first century is not something straightforward.

Quite paradoxically, the key to understanding the relationship between those paintings and twenty-first century politics lies in their muteness and, strangely, in another paradox: this inherent muteness of painting, its deflection from language, gives way to long and detailed descriptions. One way of understanding this is to subsume it to a known rhetorical device often used when standing before a work

of art: the ekphrasis. However, that would be to miss the point of what T.J. Clark does – in a conversation with Jeremy Harding, contributing editor at the *London Review of Books*, Clark states: ‘every time I hear the word ekphrasis I pull out my gun’. Another way of coming to terms with this paradox would be to understand those long descriptions as a kind of allegorical thinking, in which paintings several centuries apart from us suddenly illuminate some aspect of it, without ever establishing a possibility of comparison, a clear and distinct liaison between them. Historical knowledge, therefore, does not provide us with the elements with which we could make sense of our time, nor those with which we could place ourselves in the political arena – these paintings are not political in such manner, they teach nothing. However, they carry with them a sombre wisdom, a ‘bleak gaiety’ that ultimately leads to a strange affirmation of life as it is, with, to quote Nietzsche, ‘the same logic and illogic of entanglements’ (18).



Este número da *Revista de História da Arte* apresenta um conjunto de artigos com o objetivo de contribuir para a compreensão do modo como a censura ao erotismo e à explicitação da sexualidade tem, em diferentes contextos e geografias, influenciado a criação, a circulação, a exibição e a interpretação das obras de arte, definidas no contexto alargado da interação entre diversas forças e fenômenos políticos, institucionais e socio-históricos.

This issue of *Revista de História da Arte* presents a collection of articles aiming to contribute to an understanding of how censorship and the repression of sexuality and eroticism have impacted the creation, circulation, exhibition, and interpretation of works of art in different contexts and across several geographies; and, in turn, how the structures of censorship and control of artistic production are shaped by a range of forces including political control, forms of institutionalisation, acts of transgression, and social and historical dynamics.

APOIO
