

ARTE MEMORIA

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Witness Testimony



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Witness Testimony

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ABOUT ARTEMEMORIA

ARTEMEMORIA.ORG

Artememoria is a digital magazine that has the goal of representing writing, music, and art that resists and remembers authoritarianism, with a focus on Brazil's last dictatorship established through a military coup in 1964.

The title of this site, *Artememoria*, is the meeting of the Portuguese words *arte* and *memória*, meaning “art memory” as well as “art and memory”. Reminiscent of artistic initiatives in the Tropicália movement that similarly combined Portuguese words, *Artememoria* captures the intersections between two seemingly separate categories. Cultural production is not something that merely represents the past; it is inextricably linked to the way a society – and the world – remembers.

The terms *arte* and *memória* are mutually intelligible between Portuguese, Spanish, and English. This site will hopefully find similar relevance across the Americas. Brazilians either experienced this dictatorship firsthand or inherited its legacy, and Spanish-speaking Latin America carries the heavy history of many authoritarian regimes, some of which were organized along the same repressive principles as Brazil's. English-speakers from the United States, meanwhile, can become aware of the violence that their own country endorsed and enabled. The aim is that all readers will gain valuable frameworks for resistance in art that can be leveraged to in struggles against state violence globally.

All content is published in English, with the original Portuguese available online when possible. By publishing in English, *Artememoria* seeks to expand the information available in English about Brazil's dictatorial regime, very little of which is about the arts, and in that way challenges the bounds of nation-state that too often circumscribe collective memory.

EDITORS NOTE

LARA NORGAARD

Welcome to the special print edition of the inaugural issue of *Artememoria*, a free-access, nonprofit, English-language magazine about art and the memory of Brazil's military dictatorship. With the commitment of collaborators and the generosity of interview subjects, I am thrilled to release “Witness Testimony.”

Featured in the issue are the memories of two artists who witnessed dictatorship. Richard Goodwin, a writer for the humor magazine *O Pasquim*, recalls his experiences working under censorship and satire's role in political resistance, and Brazilian documentary filmmaker Silvio Tandler guides us through photos from his personal archive to reveal personal stories from his youth and snapshots of the moments before Augusto Pinochet's military coup in Chile.

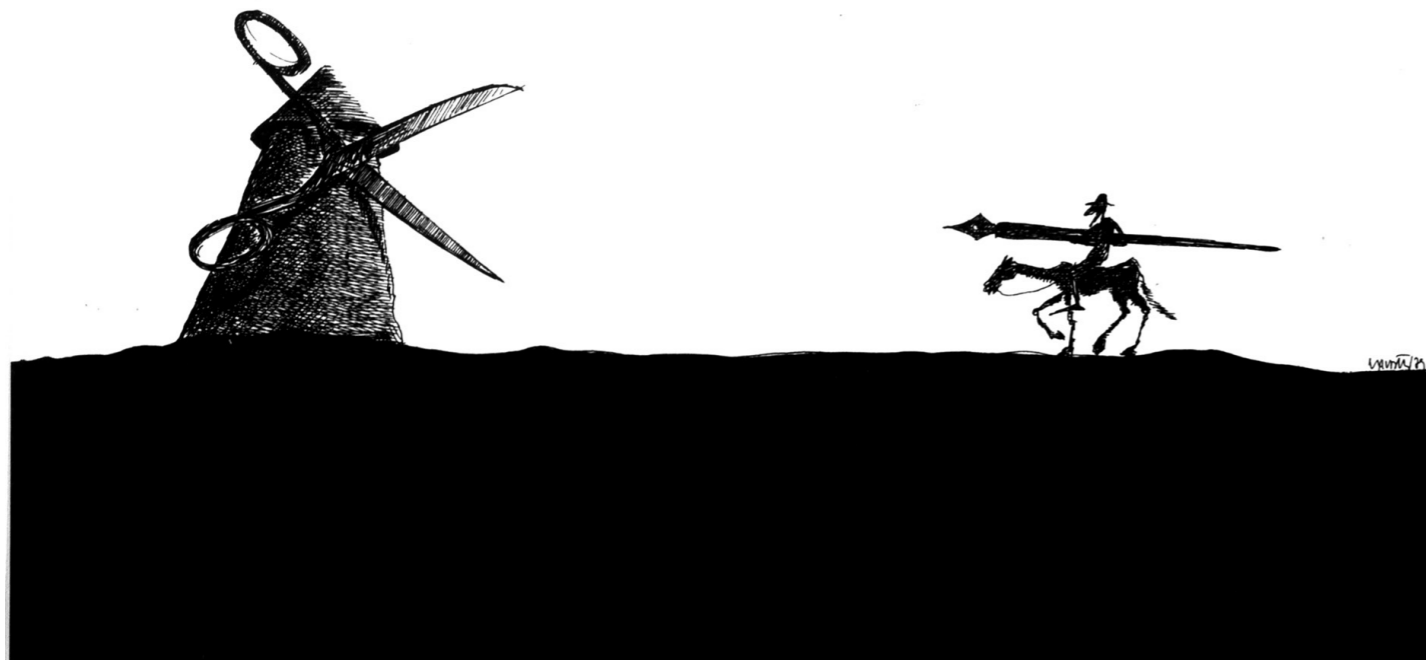
The idea of witnessing appears in forms both literal and conceptual. Critical texts approach the literary act of witnessing, and award-winning novelist Bernardo Carvalho contributes a translated section of his novel set under the dictatorship but written in its wake. The Visual Section includes a virtual tour of the art exhibition *Hiatus: The Memory of Dictatorship Violence in Latin America*, with work by artists such as Flúvia Molina and Marcelo Brodsky. US-based photojournalist Shay Horse contributes a photo essay that witnesses state violence across cultural contexts, and the interview series “On Censorship” discusses the continuities of dictatorship into present-day Brazil with contemporary

artists whose work has been censored.

“Witness Testimony” preserves testimonies to state violence – but also explores what it means for the artist to witness authoritarianism, both in a dictatorship and in its unlabeled presence under democracy. I seek to generate ideas and discussion rather than definitive answers. Ricardo Lísias's critical essay, for example, might be read in light of the interview series “On Censorship” to better understand continuities from dictatorship to democracy. Shay Horse's photo essay could be viewed alongside Silvio Tandler's archival images as two examples of photography's testimonial power. Bernardo Carvalho's fiction carries interesting connections with the work of young artists like Clara Ianni in the virtual Exhibit Memory, as both artists represent memory of an era not their own. Individual contributions form an intricate network; I hope you find relationships between texts that I never considered.

This is just the first of at least four issues of *Artememoria*. In future editions, my goal is to seek out a wider range of perspectives. *Artememoria* is a collective work in progress, and I welcome pitches and submissions of interviews, critical texts, reported articles, fiction, visual art, and multimedia content, particularly from women and people of color. See the *Artememoria* website, artememoria.org, for more details about how to get involved. This is just the beginning.

Below: A cartoon in *O Pasquim* about censorship, by Claudius. Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.



WIT, WHIM, AND WHISKEY

NEW STORIES OF SATIRE AND CENSORSHIP FROM *O PASQUIM*, THROUGH THE MEMORY OF RICHARD GOODWIN

Satire inverts hierarchies rather than directly confronting power; irony says what must be said without really saying it. Jokes have an essential role under censorship and oppression. One publication that played the part of humorous resistance is the Brazilian magazine *O Pasquim*, and one writer from that magazine is witness to over a decade of that paper's raucous newsroom: the pranks and the heavy drinking, but also the struggles. Here, in this in-depth interview, is Richard Goodwin and the life of a newspaper.

LARA NORGAARD

"Do you know the story of *O Pasquim*?"

Richard Goodwin asks me this simple question and takes a sip of water. We sit at a wooden kitchen table in his house in Paquetá, an island in the Guanabara Bay of Rio de Janeiro.

I pause. Before this interview, I thought I did know the story of *O Pasquim*, a famous satirical magazine printed in Brazil between 1969 and 1991 that published brazenly political and morally loose articles and cartoons during some of the harshest years of dictatorship censorship. It was the newspaper that became the most important voice of resistance to the military regime in written media, the only independent publication to survive every stage of institutional censorship.

There exist academic articles on *O Pasquim*'s particular use of satire, archived copies of the magazine,

and interviews with the big names, like the celebrated cartoonist Ziraldo and the columnist who wrote on underground counterculture, Luiz Carlos Maciel. But the man across the table from me did not fully fit into the story I had researched. When he asked me if I knew the story of *O Pasquim*, he spoke in perfect English, his accent surprisingly lilted in a southern drawl. He was originally from the United States but had begun working for *Pasquim* when he was only 18 years old and stayed at the paper for 14 years.

"Rick is the living memory of *O Pasquim*," Daniela Thomas, Brazilian film director and daughter of the cartoonist Ziraldo, told me in an email.

I did not fully understand how this fellow North American was the memory of the famously raucous and underground newspaper of satirical resistance — let alone how he had come to Brazil and, eventually, ended



up living in a red house covered in green vines on a pastoral island off the coast of Rio. His mysterious life story seemed to contain a yet untold story of *O Pasquim*, one that went beyond the narrative I had already read second-hand.

I take a sip of sweet Brazilian coffee before replying to Richard's question:
"Tell me."

What comes next, along with new stories of satire and resistance from a remarkable magazine, is the strange life of a quirky North American humorist wandering through the dark history of his adopted country.

Richard Goodwin – nicknamed Rick, or Ricky – was born in 1953 in Durham, North Carolina to a wealthy family. And not just to any family. Richard's full name is actually Richard Winston Goodwin. The Winston side of his family owns the Winston Cigarette Company, meaning that he comes from the old, white wealth of the American South.

Richard's father was not in the cigarette business, though. He was a sociologist at Duke University connected to the Methodist Church and focused his research on South America. When Richard was four years old, his family had planned to move to Chile for field research. His parents studied Spanish and prepared for the trip. But during a layover in Rio de Janeiro, Richard's father found Brazil so interesting that he decided to study there instead. With not a single word of Portuguese, Richard's family moved to Brazil, and not to bustling, cosmopolitan Rio de Janeiro. Instead, Richard spent six years of his early life between the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santos living with the Krenake tribe, one of Brazil's indigenous groups. Though the tribe had been forcibly westernized by the early 1960s, the Krenake people did not have a western understanding of possessions. Until he was ten, Richard owned few things, including clothes.

He returned to North Carolina at age ten. That was his father's academic schedule for all of Richard's childhood: research in South America for a few years, then return to Duke to teach for a year, and then head back to Brazil. The first transition back to the United States was clearly jarring.

Richard had to find a way to adapt to the schizophrenic cultural shifts. Humor became his weapon of choice, not in a political struggle, at this point, but in a personal quest to understand the dramatic changes in his life and to find social acceptance. When he went to an American public high school for one year at age 13, he started a school paper where he would write funny stories and mock teachers. It was a huge success.

It was in Brazil, though, that journalism went from being Richard Goodwin's hobby to the beginning of a profession. He spent most of his teenage years in the capital of the state of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte. The dictatorship had already begun in 1964. In 1968, the same year that the Brazilian dictatorship began intensifying and formalizing state censorship and extrajudicial arrests, Richard turned 16 and began to work at the Belo Horizonte regional branch of the media giant *O Globo*.

"When you start out in journalism, at least when I was a kid, they assigned you either to do police work or sports. You start at the bottom rung of the ladder. So I began working in the sports section of the paper, which would have been

a bad thing since I wasn't that interested in sports, but it turned out to be great. Each person covers a specific soccer team in Belo, and by coincidence, my turf was a team called Cruzeiro Sport Club."

His luck was twofold: not only did Cruzeiro become very successful in Brazilian soccer while Richard covered the team, but many of the players also had wide-ranging interests beyond sports. At this point, Richard was deep in Brazilian counterculture. With hair past his shoulders, he wrote plays, composed music, read underground newspapers, and had little interest in doing journalism in a conventional way. So he pitched a new idea to the biggest newspaper in Minas Gerais, *Estado de Minas*:

"Why don't we do a Sunday interview, a big Sunday interview, a two-page interview with football players? They said, 'well, we already do interviews.'" Richard smiles as he recalls the conversation. "But the new thing with these interviews was that no one would speak about soccer. I'd interview these soccer players and we'd talk about anything other than soccer. It was something nobody had ever done."

The first interview, with the soccer player Tostão, was more interesting than anyone had expected.

"It was 1970 and we were in the middle of a dictatorship. But the fact that I knew Tostão, that I'd seen him practically every day, made him give a very bold and daring interview with leftist political opinions."

No one had imagined that political content could appear in a soccer interview, and the piece was published. With his two-page sports spread, Richard evaded the dictatorship censor for the first time. It would not be the last.

"Why am I telling you this?" Richard asks me, keeping track of the pacing of our conversation as only a journalist does. The mid-afternoon heat settled over the island, and Richard's house, airy with huge windows looking out to a verdant garden, was still muggy with humidity. Bugs hummed in the mass of green plants outside the window and a fan whirred slowly in the background.

"Because it leads to 1973," Richard answers his own question. "Because of those interviews I was doing, I caught the attention of Ziraldo, who also lived in Belo Horizonte. That was the reason I was invited to work at *O Pasquim*."

The story of *O Pasquim* had already begun before 1973. It's a story that many Brazilians already know: after the increased censorship from the Fifth Institutional Act (AI-5) in 1968, a group of famous journalists and humorists, dissatisfied with their inability to speak freely in the mainstream press, decided to start a newspaper.

"They came together and decided to make this paper called *O Pasquim*. The word 'pasquim' is actually very derogatory. It refers to a terrible, scandalous kind of tabloid, worse than the *Daily Mail*," Richard says. He was still covering sports for *O Globo* in 1969, but when he later joined the paper, he heard the stories about the way the publication started. "They were trying to decide on a name and then in a meeting, Jaguar, one of the humorists, said, well, they're going to call us a pasquim anyway. Why not just make that our name?"

The first issue of the paper came out in June of 1969. To everyone's surprise – including the journalists who staffed the magazine – the publication was a total hit.

"No one expected the strength and resistance of *O Pasquim*," Márcia Neme Buzalef writes in her doctoral thesis on the newspaper. "By the 16th issue it was selling 80,000 copies, and by December of the year it was founded, it sold 250,000 weekly copies and printed ads from major multinational companies such as Shell. It sold more than the weekly *Veja* and *Manchete*, two of its contemporaries, put together."

I ask Richard why he thinks *O Pasquim* was so successful. He answers that, in part, it was the content. *O Pasquim* did not have a fixed editorial line. Instead, all of the famous writers and humorists in the paper wrote what they wanted.

"Some of them were more politically oriented. Some of them wanted it to be the newspaper of resistance to the dictatorship, which it later became." Richard catalogues the different approaches to the magazine: "Some of them came from the countercultural movement and wanted it to be an underground newspaper. Some of them just wanted to be funny. And others, like Tarso de Castro, wanted it to be a gossip paper that would talk about what was going on in society. Others thought it was a good opportunity for a magazine to publish openly about sex in Brazil."

Readers from a range of social classes could find in *O Pasquim* something that they found funny or interesting. But the magazine was also radical in its style. Rather than publish articles in stiff formal Portuguese, which is what most other newspapers did, this new humor magazine had a more vernacular style, printing curse words and slang. Sometimes the writers would even come up with their own slang, which would then catch on in popular parlance. And *Pasquim's* interviews, which would run for pages, were radically different from the standard journalistic interview of the time.

I ask Richard to explain this new style of interview and how it came to be.

Richard: Some things at *O Pasquim* that everybody considers to be a stroke of genius was just lucky, or even a lack of a notion of how to do things, you know? That happened with the interviews. When they got together to make *O Pasquim* they said, 'What are we going to do for the first edition? Let's do an interview that will shock everybody.'

So they interviewed a guy named Ibrahim Sued, a very rightwing fellow who was a social columnist. He only wrote about social gossip. He mainly covered high society women. He was a very foolish, silly, and apolitical guy. The only political views he had were very right wing, so no one expected *O Pasquim* to interview Ibrahim Sued. But they did.

And then you have to transcribe the interview. Transcribing an interview is lots of hard work. Nobody likes to do it.

Lara: It's the worst part.

Richard: So when they were putting together the first issue of *O Pasquim*, nobody wanted to transcribe the interview. They drew straws to see who would transcribe the interview. The guy who drew the shortest straw was a cartoonist named Jaguar.

O PASQUIM

Rio, 16 a 22 de outubro de 1969 — N.º 17 — NC\$ 0,50 — A alegria do confinamento é a chegada d'O PASQUIM (Hélio Fernandes)



CAETANO

Jaguar was a great cartoonist at the time, top of his field, but he had no journalistic experience. He went home with the tape recorder and probably slaved at it for days, but he finally transcribed it. But he transcribed exactly what the people on the tape said, with no grammar corrections, with no editing, with no putting it in a proper perspective, nothing.

Because he had never transcribed anything before, it took him a long while. The newspaper was ready to go to print and he still hadn't finished. He was the kind of guy who never showed up. "Jaguar, you have to finish this. Jaguar, you have to finish that." So when he finally showed up with the interview, there wasn't time for anybody to look at it. They printed it exactly as he had transcribed it. And he had transcribed exactly what people had said on the tape.

That turned out to be what everybody considered the big revolution. That's how *O Pasquim* revolutionized interviews.

And so *O Pasquim* began, unprecedented in its success and birthed from a series of ingenious, humorous mishaps.

The unorthodox interviews with soccer stars that Richard printed in *Estado de Minas* were in line with the kind of interviews *O Pasquim* printed. In early 1973,

Cover of *O Pasquim*, issue no. 17 (October 1969). Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.

Richard was just 18 years old and Ziraldo invited him to join the paper as the interview editor. He moved from Belo Horizonte to the bohemian Santa Teresa neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro and expanded on this idea of the unedited interview.

“I had this concept that an interview with *O Pasquim* was like a play. You know, you have the characters and they have their lines,” Richard says. “When you write a play, it hasn’t been staged yet, so you have to describe what people are doing. I would write what was going on while people were talking. I would put in the whiskey they were drinking, the music that was playing in the background. Or, if somebody would leave to go to the bathroom and come back and crack a joke that didn’t have to do with the interview, I would also put that in. In parentheses I would include things like ‘Jaguar, laughing’ or ‘Jaguar, being sarcastic’. The aim of the thing was to make people feel like they were there, at the interview.”

During my own interview with Richard, there is a much subtler kind of humor, a sort of playful quirkiness in the way Richard acts. It was evident from the morning of the interview, when he messaged me to say that he would meet me by the ferry wearing a bright blue and red striped shirt that no one else on the island of Paquetá would possibly wear. That way, I would easily be able to recognize him.

After I turn on my tape recorder, the only interruptions come from Richard’s two dogs, which occasionally wander through the room. The big black one, Jack, sits on my foot until it falls asleep while the smaller, spotted one, Kino, sneezes loudly during the more dramatic, impassioned moments of the conversation.

Richard also has a small black and white cat named Pink. I raise my eyebrows at the name, and he explains that he also used to have a cat named Floyd. But Floyd had disappeared, allegedly stolen from the ledge of his garden wall.

“How do you know Floyd was stolen?” I ask.

“Because we never found the body,” Richard replies.

Though Richard’s jokes during the interview might not be the laugh-out-loud *Pasquim* variety, he is passionate about the value of humor as something political, not just entertainment. Indeed, *O Pasquim* managed to be so successful under the dictatorship because of the way its writers used jokes. As Richard puts it, “the wit and whims of humor managed to get through the cracks in the censorship.”

The dictatorship did not harshly censor *O Pasquim* when it was first published. The military – like the writers themselves – thought it was going to be a local humor paper, nothing like other explicitly political publications in the independent press, such as *Movimento* or *Opinião*. That is, they thought that up until the newspaper began selling hundreds of thousands of copies per week. By then, it was too late.

With a huge following, the paper printed explicitly about sex, evading the strict moralism of the dictatorship. The actress Leila Diniz, for example, in her interview with *O Pasquim* in November 1969, revealed her sexual exploits

and described how she lost her virginity. This was at a time when the very word “virginity” was blacklisted by the military dictatorship – but *O Pasquim* would simply print those blacklisted words using asterisks, avoiding a direct violation of the rule. On the level of politics, there were limits to what the paper could do – no one could print cartoons of anyone in the military, for example – but irony and double entendre filled the pages of the magazine, allowing for criticism of the regime.

But these choices did have consequences. Bernardo Kucinski reports in his book *Jornalistas e Revolucionários* that a rudimentary bomb was planted in the back of *Pasquim*’s offices in March 1970. Staff at *O Pasquim* believed that the conservative group *Tradição, Família, e Propriedade* (Tradition, Family, and Property) was behind the attack, motivated by their anger after the Leila Diniz interview.

Then, in November of 1970, the military itself tried to shut the paper down. Luiz Carlos Maciel, the journalist in *O Pasquim* who wrote the counterculture column “Underground,” describes in an interview published with the Moreira Salles Institute how, in November of 1970, the military arrested everyone on the masthead – besides two members, Henfil and Millôr Fernandes – and took them to the barracks of the Vila Militar in Rio. A captain, who had led an investigation against *O Pasquim*, wanted to know if the magazine was receiving money from Moscow.

Richard says that this group arrest was actually meant to prevent the paper from being printed. But if that was the military’s strategy, it did not work.

“When word got out that people had been arrested and that the next edition of *O Pasquim* might not come out, artists and intellectuals from all over Brazil started sending articles to keep *Pasquim* going. People like Glauber Rocha, big names, like Caetano Veloso, all pitched in. Even people with little journalistic experience went to work at *Pasquim*’s office. They put together a paper,” Richard says. The contributors managed to put together a full issue of *O Pasquim* – and then keep the paper going for over two months – as though no one had been arrested at all. “For the public, *Pasquim* continued.”

The actual writers of the paper were released in January 1971. Having survived the mass arrest, *O Pasquim* still had to deal with local censors. Members of the dictatorship who lived in Rio were assigned to supervise the paper’s content. Here, the journalists used humor in a strange and unprecedented way.

“Stories about *Pasquim* and its editors are full of tales about how humor was fundamental to the relationship between the paper and its censors,” Neme Buzalef writes. The staff at the paper befriended their censors in order to get content published.

It was between *O Pasquim*’s founding in 1969 through 1973 that official censors signed off on content before it went to print. According to Ziraldo, a total of six censors dealt with the paper in this period but two are particularly notable: Marina Brum Duarte – known as Dona Marina – and general Juarez Paz Pinto. With the former, Jaguar recounts in his memoir, *Confesso que Bebi – Memórias de um Amnésico Alcolólico* (I Confess that I Drank – Memories of an Amnesic Alcoholic), how he noticed that Dona Marina had a drinking problem and used whiskey to lure her into

Cover of *O Pasquim*, issue no. 22 (November 1969). Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.



Cover of *O Pasquim*, issue no. 73 (November 1970), published while masthead was imprisoned. Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.



a friendship with the journalists at *Pasquim*.

But the editors of *Pasquim* were nervous when they were assigned Juarez Paz Pinto. “You can argue with a low-level bureaucrat,” Richard says. Clearly, that is not the case with a top general.

Juarez Paz Pinto was the censor before Richard’s time at the magazine, but Richard knows the story of what happened when the editors first met the general. Instead of asking *Pasquim* to come to an official military or government office for him to sign off on the paper, he asked them to come to an apartment in Copacabana.

“So they arrived, trembling. But when they got there, and over time as they kept going, they discovered that this apartment in Copacabana was his bachelor pad, the place where he would receive the women he wanted to have sex with,” Richard says. “He would sit on his bed and they would show him the copies to be censored. He’d laugh and say, ‘Oh this is so funny. Oh, now, I’d like to let you say that, but I know you’re going to cause trouble for me.’”

Jaguar recounts similar juicy details about the general in an interview with *Jornal da ABI*. Juarez Paz Pinto would even tell the women he was seeing that they had to wait to come in until after he finished censoring the paper. Ironically, that censorship would often block content on moral grounds.

Sérgio Augusto, also a journalist at *Pasquim*, describes how Juarez Paz Pinto would read copies on the beach, near Post 6 on Copacabana, and then come to the office of *Pasquim* barefoot and in a towel to hand back the censored copies.

Needless to say, *Pasquim*’s censorship was not as strict because of these friendships. Humor was the paper’s way to navigate censorship under the dictatorship.

It was after Richard Goodwin’s first interview for *Pasquim* in 1973 that everything changed.

Richard: There was an American anthropologist here in Brazil named Angela Gilliam. She was doing research about the *movimento negro* [the black rights movement in Brazil] and racism under the dictatorship. We thought she was interesting, and we interviewed her. We talked about racism, but racism was a forbidden word.

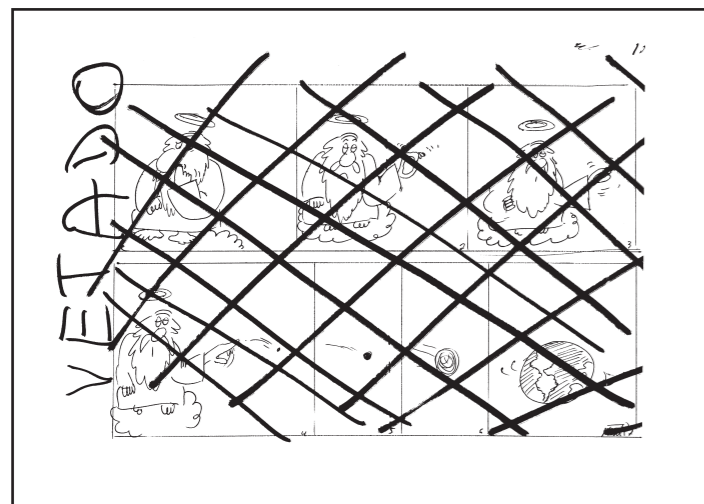
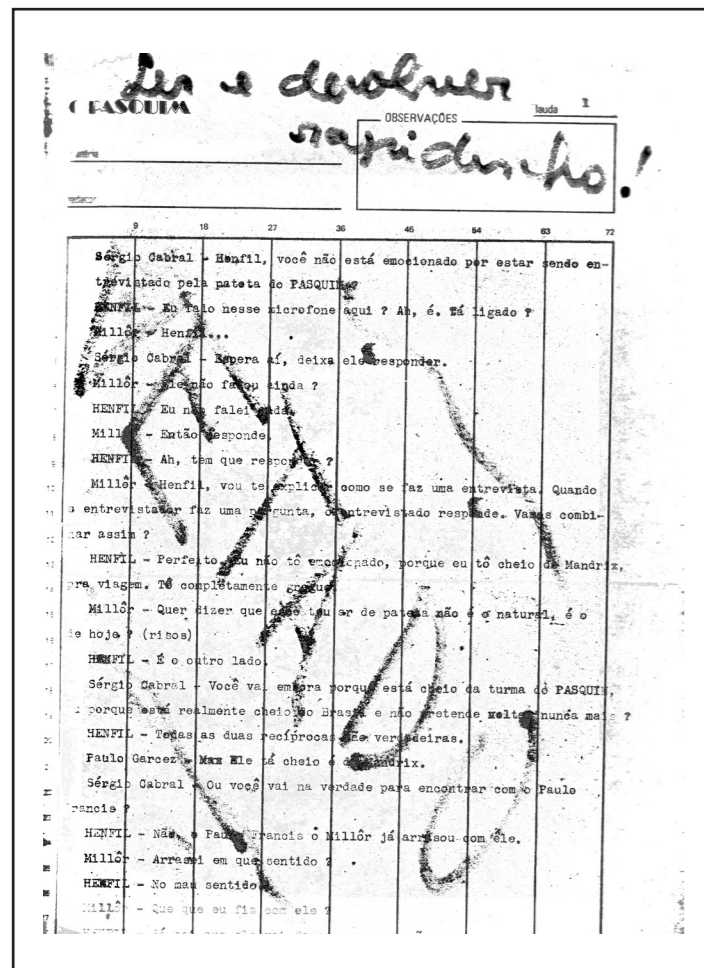
Lara: You couldn’t say the word racism?

Richard: It was blacklisted. You couldn’t say someone was racist. You couldn’t say someone was black. But it was such a good interview that we decided to publish it anyway. I don’t know how it passed through the censorship.

Lara: Who was the censor at that point?

Richard: There were three. They decided that the problem was having one censor, who would end up being chums with the *Pasquim* people, so they assigned three different women to take care of the paper. These three women were in charge and let the Angela Gilliam interview go to print. And that’s when the real crackdown started on *Pasquim*, political more than moral. They went to all the newsstands and confiscated the copies of the paper, which

Top and bottom:
Content sent
back to *O Pasquim*
from censorship
apparatus in
Brasília. Printed
with permission
of Richard
Goodwin



is something they would do with *O Pasquim* a lot, whenever they got word that something they didn't like was coming out. But they transferred the censorship to Brasília, to the headquarters of censorship.

Lara: So there was no way to make friends with these new censors.

Richard: No way. And we had to send everything that was going to be published in the paper to Brasília at a time when there was no fax or Internet. It would go by mail. That's terrible for a weekly newspaper. It took two, three days to send things to Brasília. It would take however long they wanted for the paper to be censored, and then it would have to come back by mail again.

Lara: Did that mean you had to come up with content really far in advance?

Richard: Yes. So we lost a lot of our up-to-date content. It really hit the paper. It was the first crisis that *O Pasquim* had. We would do everything three or four weeks in advance. And we would have to prepare enough content for three papers with the hopes that enough for one would pass through the censor. We counted. I would have to do three interviews, or an interview that was three times as long. The paper was 40 pages long, and we would send 120 pages to the censor. They started censoring everything. If you insinuated a blacklisted word, it would get censored. And, of course, the censors weren't very smart, so they didn't get a lot of the jokes. They would censor what they didn't understand simply because they didn't understand it, thinking that people might be passing along a message.

Humor was still a strategy in dealing with these new censors, but not in the same sense as before. Richard and his coworkers would take classics like James Joyce's *Ulysses* (unintelligibly dense for a censor) or Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (stock full of sexual content), divide the books into article-sized chunks, and sign them with the name of *O Pasquim* writers as though they were original content meant to be published in the magazine. They would send in these "articles", which were sure to be censored, along with the real content *O Pasquim*. Not only did they mock the system from afar, but they overwhelmed the censors with material.

Despite the courageous effort at humorous resistance, the culture in *Pasquim*'s newsroom suffered from the new model of censorship.

"That stage I'm telling you about, 1972 to 1976, that's when most of the original people left," Richard says. Some of the famous writers and cartoonists left the paper because of interpersonal conflicts, but Richard asserts that the exodus also had to do with the new political pressure.

"And I'm talking about censorship," Richard adds. "I'm not mentioning jail, detention, or people being arrested."

Later, Richard does mention jail, detention, and people being arrested – specifically, he recounts his own arrest. I sit on his couch, flipping through the complete collection of *Pasquim* while petting Pink, who is curled up next to me. Richard is on his computer, pulling up digitized images of the paper. He comes across one that brings up a memory and calls me over.

On the screen is an image of a man with a speech bubble that reads, "*Telma, eu não sou gay*" – "Telma, I'm not gay."



The image that resulted in Richard's arrest in 1983. Antônio Delfim Netto with the quote 'Telma, I'm not gay.' Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin

Richard tells me the backstory. He interviewed the rock band Calúnias in 1983. The band had done a satirical cover of a song in English, "Tell Me Once Again" by Light Reflections, twisting the lyrics a bit in the Portuguese version. Originally, the plan was to print photos of the band to accompany the interview, but the film got damaged. Richard, who at this point was the interview editor, decided to accompany the interview with a series of photos of members of the government cabinet, each with a speech bubble containing a lyric from the song.

"It was totally random," Richard says. Printing song lyrics alongside unrelated images was actually a typical joke in *Pasquim*. But this time, Antônio Delfim Netto, the man who had the lyric "Telma, I'm not gay," happened to really be gay, and the dictatorship thought Richard was trying to expose the illicit sexuality of a member of the regime. That episode resulted in his arrest.

Arrest happened frequently enough that Richard kept a small suitcase packed next to the door in his house. Usually, as with the Delfim Netto incident, the military held him for one day or less. Richard had a tendency to get out of these situations by citing his age, saying that he was just a kid in the paper, someone with no say in the content. But that did not always work. Once, the military came to Richard's house, woke him up, and arrested him. They interrogated him all day and night in an unknown location.

Fortunately, Dona Nelma, *Pasquim's* secretary, was well connected and had a very efficient scheme for locating disappeared staff (she also had an underground network of connections for smuggling goods and letters to Brazilians in exile). No one knew where Richard was for 24 hours, but Dona Nelma discovered his location by the second day and worked to get him out. On day three, Richard was released without having been tortured.

"I was lucky," Richard said.

A kind of omnipresent fear and paranoia hung over the years of dictatorship, one that was not limited to the writers of *O Pasquim*. Richard eventually saw his file with the military police. In it, he found one of his high school essays that he had written back in Belo Horizonte. There was also a tip that he had xeroxed an article on police violence from *Opinião*. High school teachers and store clerks would watch and report people.

"Neighbors were the worst," Richard still has the image of the cabinet member pulled up on the computer, but he looks past the screen. He remembers once thinking that a man who lived a few floors beneath him in his building in Santa Teresa was crazy. The man would constantly say, "They're watching me." But one day, the man disappeared. At the time, militant resistance organizations would work to uncover the identities of secret army agents and make that information public. They reported that the person who had rented the apartment adjacent to the disappeared man was a secret army agent from CENIMAR, the Navy intelligence organization. In other words, Richard's neighbor was not crazy: they really were watching him.

O Pasquim's use of humor to resist dictatorship oppression becomes all the more remarkable in light of the violent slashes of thick censorship pens and stark

memories of disappearance.

The years leading up to the end of dictatorship carry the story of *O Pasquim's* slow death.

When the dictatorship began loosening the grip of censorship in 1976 to begin the extended process of opening Brazil up to democracy, the newsroom at *O Pasquim* breathed a collective sigh of relief. With this new era of the dictatorship, editors did not have to send a full issue of the magazine to be censored in Brasília. Nor did they have to take the paper to the desk of alcoholic Dona Marina or to general Juarez Paz Pinto's bachelor pad on the beach. *O Pasquim* would not be censored at all before it went to print.

That sigh of relief, however, was soon cut short. *O Pasquim* still did not have the freedom to publish openly. "For edition 300, we decided to do something big. It was the first edition that wasn't pre-censored. Millôr wrote an editorial about censorship. It was really scathing. It was the first issue that really stepped up to talk about censorship," Richard says. "And then the copies of the paper were apprehended. It was confiscated."

Between 1976 and 1979, the dictatorship's new style of censorship allowed *O Pasquim* and other papers to say what they wanted – but it was their responsibility. If the paper made a misstep, the state would charge the paper exorbitant sums and the issue would be confiscated before it hit newsstands, which was a big hit to independent publications. *O Pasquim* was financially forced into self-censorship.

"We learned a lesson with number 300," Richard says frankly. "We still had to say things by not saying them for a long time."

O Pasquim managed to speak its mind despite a new, subtler form of censorship. During this phase, the newspaper managed to be the outspoken proponent for the amnesty law that would protect political prisoners and allow exiled Brazilians back in the country.

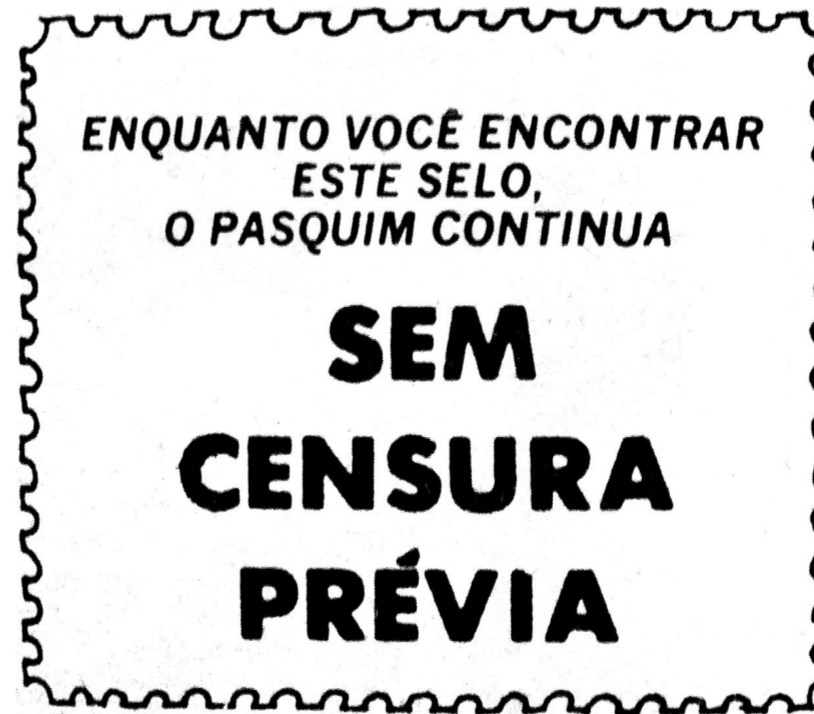
O Pasquim grew increasingly direct and explicit in its political opinions in 1978 and 1979, when censorship loosened further. As political exiles returned to Brazil from abroad, some would begin writing for the paper, bringing new ideas to Brazilian media – the publication became a vocal proponent for the environmental movement, for example – and everyone, at the very least, would want to do an interview with *O Pasquim*.

But if the first years of self-censorship took a toll on *O Pasquim* financially, it was actually the next phase, when state censorship was least strict, that dug the newspaper's grave.

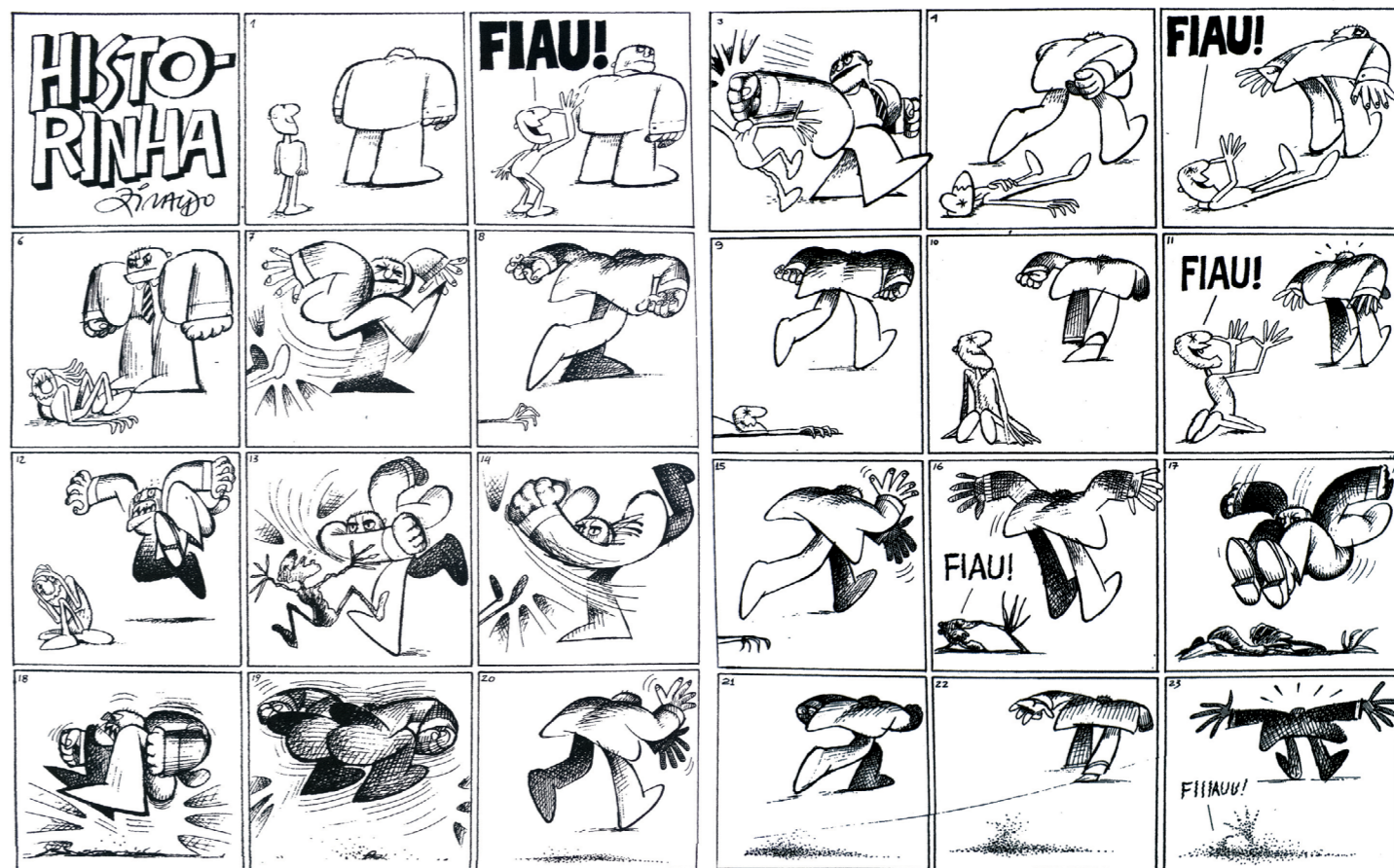
Richard: We get to '79 and we have a new president, Figueiredo, which marked a new, terrible phase for *Pasquim*. The extreme right in the military wasn't so happy with the idea of gradually lightening up and giving power back to civilians. They wanted to keep the power. So during Figueiredo's term, there were rightwing, militant terrorist groups.

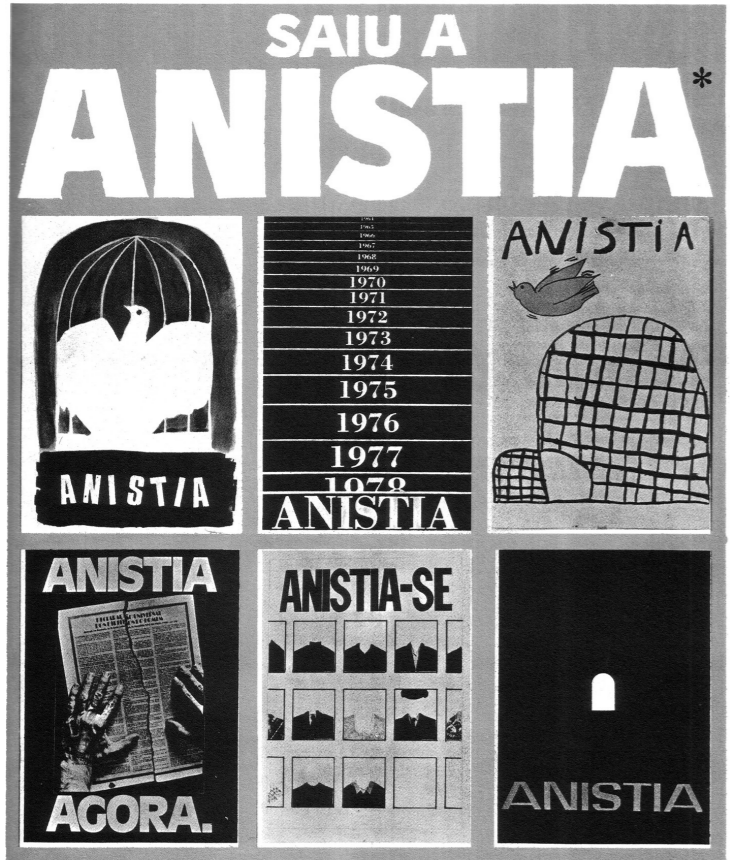
O Pasquim was starting to sell a lot again, finally back on its feet after all those years. But we had become really outspoken politically. What happened is that this terrorist group started bombing newsstands that would

When you see this stamp, *O Pasquim* continues without previous censorship.' Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.



A cartoon by Ziraldo that Richard describes as the 'story that symbolizes *O Pasquim*.' Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin."





Top: Cover of *O Pasquim*, issue no. 473 (July 1978), demanding amnesty. Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.
Bottom: Cover of *O Pasquim*, issue no. 456 (March 1978) featuring Lula da Silva's first interview in a national newspaper. Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.

sell *Pasquim*. They would throw a Molotov cocktail on a newsstand and leave leaflets saying, "If you sell *Pasquim*, we will destroy your newsstand. Don't sell *Pasquim* or you'll hear from us."

Lara: What was the timeframe for this?

Richard: This is '78 through '81. And that really hit *Pasquim*. There was another slump in sales and the newspaper never recovered.

Lara: Did newsstands stop selling the paper?

Richard: Newsstands didn't sell *Pasquim* anymore. Some crazy brave bookstores would sell it under the counter. But in Rio, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, and Porto Alegre, four main cities, there was this terrorist campaign that would explode leftist newspapers. Later, everything got a bit more under control.

Lara: And then you could sell openly in newsstands again?

Richard: Yeah. But by then *Pasquim* had lost its audience. It was a wreck.

Richard worked at *Pasquim* until 1986. He only left when the paper owed him 10 months' salary, when he was so in debt that he had to sell his apartment. Even then, leaving the paper was not easy.

"*O Pasquim* was like a second family for me," Richard says. "When I was a teenager, these guys were my idols. They were the best, the top journalists, and there I was as an 18-year-old, working with them as an equal. And I worked there for 14 years."

The end of *O Pasquim* was not the end of Richard's career. Under Brazil's democracy, he worked for the Ministry of Culture, in the organization Funarte, which is essentially a Brazilian National Endowment for the Arts. He was part of the team that started *MAD Magazine* in Brazil, using his knowledge of the US and Brazil to translate humor from one cultural context to the next. He collaborated in the humorous TV show, *Casseta & Planeta*, which he describes as a Brazilian *Saturday Night Live*. He even edits a local paper for the island of Paquetá.

But just by looking around Richard's house it is clear that *O Pasquim* held a special place in Richard Goodwin's heart. The walls have framed prints of *O Pasquim* cartoons. On his coffee table are the three volumes of *O Pasquim*, as well as a book of Ziraldo's collected cartoons.

Reflecting back on the magazine as a whole, Richard

POSTER DOS POBRES



Top: A famous poster by Ziraldo, reading: 'It only hurts when I laugh.' Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.
Bottom: A cartoon by Ziraldo that Richard describes as the 'story that symbolizes *O Pasquim*.' Printed with permission of Richard Goodwin.

remisces on the craziest and most memorable interviews. He interviewed former president Jânio Quadros, a conversation that ended in the following scene: "It's night time. It's already dark and on the lawn of this mansion in Sao Paulo, lies the former President of Brazil, Jânio Quadros, completely drunk, and Jaguar, now president of *Pasquim*, completely drunk, snoring in each other's arms, sleeping off the interview." Richard was also part of the team that did Lula da Silva's first interview for a major paper. It was this interview that gave the politician – who would later become president of Brazil – national attention.

But Richard recognizes that *O Pasquim* was far from perfect. While it supported many social movements, like the struggle for racial justice, it was dominated by men and skeptical of feminism.

"*Pasquim* is a paper made by men in the 1960s," Richard says. In terms of the feminist movement: "It was a *Mad Men's* paper. It didn't catch on."

The magazine folded completely in 1991, but a group of its original writers always dreamed of bringing the magazine back. In 1999, Ziraldo brought Richard and some other writers together to start a color magazine in glossy paper called *Bundas*, which lasted three years. When it failed, former *O Pasquim* writers gave the comeback yet another shot with a paper called *OPasquim21*. That lasted through 2004. Something about the new iterations of *O Pasquim* simply did not stick.

By the time the interview is over, the sun is just beginning to settle over the horizon in Paquetá. The island's dirt roads bustle with people riding bicycles and walking around as the oppressive heat of the summer day finally lifts. Richard and I talk about current politics. Over the course of the day, he had mentioned Brazilian candidate Jair Bolsonaro, who has openly expressed his support for the Brazilian dictatorship in congress, the coordinators of the rightwing group *Movimento Brasil Livre* (Free Brazil Movement) that received training from the Koch brothers, and other stories of the far right on the rise in Brazil.

"What I lament is that there's no *O Pasquim* to cover everything that's happening," Richard's main takeaway from the discussion of current events is not an adamant political statement but an appeal to humor and satire. If there is a thread that runs through his life, it is an insatiable love of jokes and consistent irreverence towards authority, even the authority of the newspaper that was so formative in his life.

"On the other hand, something like *Pasquim* wouldn't work well today, not on paper," Richard immediately qualifies his original statement. "It would need to do something online, decentralized."

With that comment – or was it a suggestion? – I say my goodbyes to Jack, Kino, and Pink and turn off the tape recorder.



MEMORY MACHINE

How does personal memory surface in our minds? Material objects, and photos in particular, have a way of pulling the past to the present. Those photos mark the unique intersection of space and time, carrying forward an event that was witnessed.

For his upcoming films, documentary filmmaker Silvio Tendler has been exploring and cataloguing his personal archive. He invited *Artememoria* to join him in the room stacked with boxes of photos, negatives, and documents. The concept: explore snippets of the filmmaker's past through photography, focused mostly on moments from the early 1970s when he went to Salvador Allende's Chile and saw both a hopeful democratic government and the seeds sown for Augusto Pinochet's military coup. The result: a video portrait of this filmmaker's memory, a moment in history revealed through an artist's lens, available in English and Portuguese on artememoria.org and reproduced here as a series of photos. All images are printed with permission from Silvio Tendler.

"The photos are out of order, unorganized, just like memory itself is. Memory isn't chronological or linear. It just appears. In it, you remember some things more than others, and some things that you've completely forgotten. There are situations here, for example, that I don't even remember being at or having photographed. And those photographs reveal to me my own memory. You are about to see a disorganized memory, because that's how it is in real life."



"This photo here is from 1973. I took it when I was 23 years old. I was living in France but I'd already lived in Chile, and I went back in 1973 on vacation. And this photo of Salvador Allende on the advent of his government, the Unidad Popular, was taken on September 4th, 1973. The coup that overthrew him took place on September 11th, 1973. One week later he was dead. This is from a big rally of his supporters, all in solidarity with him. Everyone in Chile knew that the coup was going to happen."

"This is from the same rally. Allende was a bit media-conscious and so, during the day he wore a dark-colored jacket, and he wore a light-colored one at night. So there you have Allende in his two jackets."

"This is me in 1971 when I lived in Chile, becoming a filmmaker. I worked at the government publisher, *Quimantú*. I made, from life in Chile, *Nosotros los chilenos* and I made a series about work, *Así el trabajo rodeó*. I filmed in the El Teniente copper mine, I filmed coalmines in Concepción and Lota, I filmed people in prison who made guitars. I think the best way for anyone to know a country is by working there."

"This is '71, Salvador Allende giving a speech. This is at the beginning of his presidency and everything's good, everything's working well. I documented everything, I watched, I participated. I loved it, too. It really moved me. And that man in the middle is a naval commander who was murdered one week before Allende, in an attack in Chile, because he supported Allende. The Chilean right was already making attacks, and they killed him. His name was comandante Araya."

“These are children I photographed in Chile. Social reality. I took this picture 40 years ago. That girl must be a 45-year old woman now.”



“This here is from 1971, Fidel Castro visiting Chile. Cuba had been isolated in Latin America since 1964 or so. And this is the first big trip Fidel is able to make to Chile. He’s with Salvador Allende there. I took a picture but shook the camera since I was only 20 years old and very excited.”



“This is from 1973, days before the rally I showed you. It’s one of the support pillars for the Santiago Radio Tower that was blown up when Salvador Allende, President of the Republic, made speeches on the radio. He would speak on the radio, and they took down the Santiago tower so that people wouldn’t be able to listen. Right-wing terrorists, who’d soon after perform the coup d’état. Then Allende’s government ended, and the dictatorship lasted 20 years.”



On the day of the explosion, I was in the street. The lights had also gone out in Santiago. People were dying of fear. I passed by the entrance to a building where two doormen were having a conversation, saying, ‘Do you think they already cut the water, too?’ There was already that atmosphere of terror. And then I heard Allende giving a speech. It was on the radio, which they’d managed to put back on the air. His voice shaking, The President of the Republic said that he didn’t know what was going on but that everyone should stay calm. It was a very difficult, very dramatic moment.”



“That filmmaker is Jorge Miller, who was also killed right after the coup. There, he’s shooting footage for Patricio Guzmán’s *La Batalla de Chile*.”



“A family of workers. Allende supporters, at an Allende rally that Jorge Miller photographed.”



“This picture is funny. My dad came to visit me in January of ’72 when I was leaving Chile. My dad was a liberal. He wasn’t a leftist, he was a liberal, but he tried to understand my views. And he came to visit me in Chile. He also wanted to see what it was like. He was curious. That’s where this photo’s from, taken against the light, which kind of threw this shadow over us. One day, I was going to send a card to my dad, and at that time I lived with a graphic designer. He took that photo and drew the outline of our silhouettes to send. It looked really good. I sent that letter to my dad. He went to a psychoanalyst for six months, trying to figure out what that contour drawing was trying to say.”



“This is the work I did in Chile’s slums, which are called *poblaciones*. We showed movies from that jeep. So I was there, and that’s a poster that reads, ‘Movie screening today.’”



“This is another filmmaker. He’ll show up better in a different photo. I really like these contrasts, shadows. This guy’s name is Hugo Araya, not to be confused with comandante Araya, the murdered commander.”



“He was a Chilean filmmaker, and he was also killed on the day of the coup. He’s Hugo Araya. And we’d go film in public areas. I was his assistant.”



“This is me with two close friends in Chile in ’73. I wasn’t there during the coup. I’d already left when the coup happened. I left on September 5th. The coup was on the 11th.”



“Here’s another thing to note. My different haircuts. I spent six years, since the day I left Brazil in November, 1970 until December of 1976, when I was abroad, without once going to the barber to get my hair cut. I cut it myself, which meant it did whatever it wanted.”



“This is a good friend of mine. She’s Portuguese and a female clown. We lived together for a while, in a commune. I really like these pictures of her. She’s so happy. She always dressed as a clown, with those bright, striped clothes and her eyeliner drawn in those clown-like stripes.”

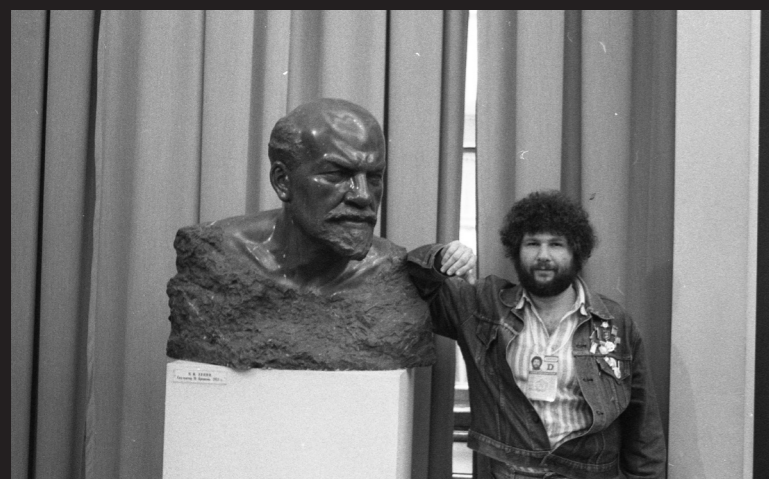


“This is my first movie. This man’s name is João Cândido Felisberto, and in 1910 he led the Revolt of the Lash here in Brazil, which abolished the practice of whipping on Brazilian naval ships. He’d lived in England for three years, working on the construction of the Brazilian Navy fleet, and then, when they returned to Brazil in 1910, they took over the ships, took aim at the Catete Palace, which was the presidential palace, and said, ‘Either stop whippings in Brazil or we’re bombing the city.’ So they had to agree. And he was the leader of that revolt. I was the last person to interview him. I took that picture in the interview.”

I feel a very strong connection to photography as a kind of memory because I filmed him, but then my group had some political issues, we were persecuted by the Brazilian dictatorship, and the person who kept the film negatives burned everything. This picture is the only thing that survived. And so I kept it as a memory.”



“This photo must be from ’71 when I thought I was going to die because of the revolution. So I took a picture for posterity. My generation lived through a very radical time. He died in ’67, and so this was taken four, five years after his death. There was a whole generation that wanted to follow his example. Those who didn’t manage to follow his example would give up politics and turn to drugs. There’s a song by Caetano Veloso and Capinam, “Soy Loco Por Ti, America”, and there’s a part that says, ‘I’m going to die from fear, a bullet, or addiction.’ Deep down, my whole generation felt doomed to a premature death. I didn’t think I was any different. I thought I could die at any point, so I wanted to leave this portrait for posterity. I imagined it as a poster, plastered across cities. I was never very humble.”



“I went on a trip to the Soviet Union when it was opening up, under Gorbachov. This was when Gorbachov first announced unilateral nuclear disarmament. I was there when he gave the speech. It’s interesting to date photos because time carries a layer of narration. This photo with Lenin wouldn’t mean anything if it had been taken now. It would just be another picture. But it was taken right before that entire world collapsed. It was 1985, and the USSR would fall in 1991. I was in the museum in the Kremlin, right next to where the Soviet Union made major decisions for over 70 years. I find that intersection between time and memory interesting.”

Silvio Tendler was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1950 and is a renowned Brazilian documentary filmmaker with over 40 films to his name. His career began in Brazil in the 1960s through the Movimento Cineclubista, a nonprofit association meant to inspire discussion and reflection about film, and he has since traveled widely and collaborated internationally on Chilean, French, and German films. His documentaries are wide-ranging in historical topic but often focus on defeated leaders of the left. *Jango* (1984), for example, is a film about João Goulart, the Brazilian president overthrown in the 1964 coup, and *Marighella, Retrato falado do guerrilheiro* (Marighella, Spoken Portrait of the Guerilla Fighter; 2001) tells the story of Carlos Marighella, a leader of the guerilla resistance to the Brazilian military dictatorship. All of his films are publically available on his production website, caliban.com.br.



Photo: Book cover from the first edition of *O Caso Morel* (1973), photographed and edited by Lara Norgaard

RUBEM FONSECA AND THE CASE OF THE FICTIONAL WITNESS

Witnessing carries a sort of credibility in its sense of liveness and presence. But what happens to testimony in the context of a state that silences the witness? This, and a meditation on a murder mystery, from *Artememoria* editor Lara Norgaard.

LARA NORGAARD

Consider, for a moment, the following five ways of coming into contact with an event in the world.

Three days before the 2016 Rio Olympics began, I stood on a ledge overlooking a demolition site. One of my feet rested firmly on the smooth asphalt of a new parking lot in the Olympic Village while the other stood on uncertain, rocky ground leading down the slope to Vila Autódromo, a local community that Rio de Janeiro's municipal government was in the final steps of demolishing. Just a minute before, I had been interviewing Luiz Cláudio Silva, one of twenty people who had fought to keep living in the community. We spoke in one of the new Vila Autódromo homes, a small, white, box-like structure in a complex of identical buildings that the government had built for the few residents who'd stood their ground through threats and bribes, managing to escape the coerced displacements that affected hundreds of other families. Luiz's daughter had sprinted into the house to tell us that the second-to-last original Vila Autódromo home left standing was being demolished. We went outside to bear witness to the destruction. I saw a bulldozer climb over rubble and paw at the house until it crumbled. Carlos Augusto Pereira, who had built the house by hand for his family, was there too. He shouted his frustration, anger, and pain into a swarm of cable news cameras. He had put a Brazilian flag on the top of his house before the demolition. It, too, toppled.

On April 17th, 2016, months before I arrived in Rio de Janeiro to report on housing demolitions, I witnessed Brazilian representatives vote in favor or against Dilma Rousseff's impeachment through a live TV broadcast in Buenos Aires. I was sitting at my dining room table and heard representatives vote yes to oust the president. Many dedicated their votes to God and country. Still reeling from that political upheaval, I watched as the news announcers switched to a different segment, all about candidate Donald Trump's successes in the Republican primary. Less than a year later, and once again on live TV, I would see Dilma Rousseff officially removed from the Brazilian presidency. I would then witness Donald Trump's assumption of the American one. After CNN called the US election, I sat numbly in front of my laptop to watch Trump give his acceptance speech. It was nearly 3 A.M.

and I did not sleep that night.

I was not able to watch President Trump's inauguration live later that year. I was on a plane, headed to Argentina and Brazil to visit sites of memory from each country's last military dictatorship. In Buenos Aires, I visited the largest former clandestine detention center, the former Higher School of Mechanics of the Navy (ex-ESMA). I read the exact messages that disappeared prisoners wrote on the walls, preserved in cold concrete. I saw the precise size of the coffin-like holes where living people were kept for years. In São Paulo, I walked around the Memorial da Resistência, a Brazilian site of memory, to reach the entrance at the back of the building. As I circled it, I thought about how that same nondescript exterior had for many years disguised the events that took place inside. It was the very subtlety of the building that allowed political dissidents, perceived as "terrorists" and "subversives", to be held without trial. The past violence was palpable, like a ghost haunting the walls. Even though I was not alive then, I managed to remember, in a way.

Back in the United States, I read Caroline Silveira Bauer's history book on the Brazilian and Argentinian military dictatorships and their aftermaths. I discovered the massive number of extra-judicial kidnappings that human rights groups estimate to have occurred at the hands of the military regime in Argentina: 30,000. Brazil's numbers felt small in comparison: the National Truth Commission, which very likely has an incomplete list, collected just over 400 testimonies of disappearances.

But before I ever went to Brazil, I read a novel, *O Caso Morel* (The Morel Case), written by Rubem Fonseca in 1973, in the middle of the dictatorship. It's about an avant-garde artist, pseudonym Paul Morel, who is imprisoned as the main suspect in the murder of his lover, Heloisa. I devoured the gritty noir mystery, exploring a Rio de Janeiro I had never seen. In the final pages I encountered the most frustrating ending possible. It's unclear whether or not Morel is guilty, but he gets released from prison anyway. In his place, the police arbitrarily choose to arrest the people who found the body, two low-income local residents, without compelling evidence. Why? I demanded. Well, the book answered, what it would mean to live under a military government that con-

siders artists and poor people the two greatest threats to society?

These five vignettes recount the different ways that I have encountered political events over the past two years, ranging from emotionally charged firsthand witnessing to the distanced reading of a second-hand account. But my experience reading Fonseca's novel was entirely different from reading a history book. And that raises an interesting question: is it possible to witness an event through art?

Many people would say no, scholars in fields like media studies included. In his essay "Witnessing" John Durham Peters says that the attitude of witnessing is dependent on the proximity of that witness to an event in space and time. So, in that framework, seeing the demolition of Carlos Augusto Pereira's house is the most compelling form of witnessing I experienced, since I was physically present at Vila Autódromo at the moment of destruction. A less compelling form of witnessing – but a kind of witnessing nonetheless – is the live broadcast: I was not physically, immediately present for Rousseff's impeachment or Trump's election, but by watching events unfold at the time in which they occurred, I felt that same sense of presence. That presence was also there when I stood in the exact locations and buildings where a past event took place, like the sites of memory from Argentina and Brazil's military dictatorships. The torture and imprisonment took place decades before, but it stays somehow in the bones of those buildings. Peters shows how space and time carry witnessing – and so, in his argument, written accounts do not allow us to bear witness, separate as they are from an event.

Peters offers a very useful framework for witnessing, captured in the table above. His concept gets to the core of the emotional experience of presence and liveness; it gestures towards why we lend witness testimony so much authority in the first place. And it expands on the legal definition of witnessing – which only includes being there in space and time – to reveal the range of ways people encounter events.

But fiction, and art more generally, does not enter into Peters' framework at all. Media and literature are different because fact requires witnessing and fiction does not – that's what Peters claims. He takes that argument one step further, saying that facts, especially when communicated with that liveness of witnessing, gives an audience a political imperative that fiction will never demand.

In a political moment when the US president shouts the term "fake news" from the Oval Office whenever a journalist ruffles his feathers, this definitive separation

of fact from fiction is tempting. It is a deceptively simple separation, though, as it assumes that witnesses are allowed to speak and are given the credibility they deserve, that media remains uncensored and critical to systems of power, and that monuments and memorials expose the mistakes of a country's past as often as they laud its successes.

The communication of events, particularly those related to state violence and oppression, have never functioned in so clear and undoctored a way, not in Latin America and certainly not in the US. Take Eric Garner, a black man who died from a white police officer's chokehold. His case had some of the clearest witness testimony to police brutality and even video footage of intensely disturbing violence – and yet, the officer who continued to strangle Garner as he gasped the words "I can't breathe" was not indicted. Garner's death remaining unpunished is not an issue of the reliability of the witnesses, but rather a testament to the inequality of a justice system built on racism.

Starting in 2016, concerns of unreliability in US media institutions that enshrine testimony have both intensified and entered into public discourse. The Trump administration currently seeks to dismiss what it labels as the media of the liberal elite and as a result discredits information garnered from real sources – and sources, after all, are witnesses. On a level of historicity, the general public in the US has only just begun to consider how Confederate monuments might obscure rather than represent the country's history of slavery.

These are just brief examples of how the US prevents access to testimony, be it live, transmitted, or historically situated. Silencing is not just the demand that someone not speak. Philosopher Rae Langton argues in her essay "Subordination, Silence, and Pornography's Authority" that other, less explicit mechanisms of silencing exist. Democratic systems chip away at witness testimony by twisting the meanings of words and spreading inaccurate histories. Ranking, legitimating, and depriving groups of people certain rights and powers can effectively shape the context under which testimony occurs and is communicated.

But the manipulation of witnessing across institutions takes place on a wider and more egregious scale under authoritarian regimes, when witnessing of all types becomes marginal. This was the case during Brazil's dictatorship, and particularly during the harshest years of oppression (1968-1974, after the regime passed the Fifth Institutional Act (AI-5)). That's when the military government intensified its practice of "disappearing" people perceived to be political dissidents. Consider the term itself. To disappear, as a transitive verb, captures the total silencing effect of these hidden kidnappings. When a government disappears prisoners, testimony to state violence becomes increasingly difficult – either because the prisoner never resurfaces or because the state can argue the person was never a prisoner in the first place. And since the Brazilian regime did not use prisons but rather buildings that in official discourse served other roles, the very spaces where this violence occurred were made absent and invisible.

Silencing the witness was not a side project under the

dictatorship. The regime's ideology was grounded in the National Security Doctrine, an idea imported from the US that demands the destruction of an internal leftist enemy. That was the priority. Alongside the extrajudicial arrests and destruction of spaces tied to violence, the state censored media. According to historian Mélanie Toulhoat in her study of cartoonists under the dictatorship, the majority of mainstream Brazilian media organizations accepted and supported the 1964 coup and the military dictatorship that followed. In the presence of such immense self-censorship within established media, many journalists created new, small-scale, independent media organizations that reported verifiable fact and criticized the regime. But the dictatorship threatened even those new forms of communication when it formalized and institutionalized censorship with the AI-5 in 1968. Though the independent press acted to resist and represent authoritarianism even during the harshest years of oppression, witnessing across space and time was pushed to the margins.

My original question about fiction and witnessing might now seem more urgent and relevant. Fiction might indeed carry the attitude of the witness in an authoritarian context: after all, fiction has a way of both revealing and disguising that engages the reader and baffles the censor.

In the early 1970s, a Brazilian genre of documentary fiction called the *romance-reportagem* became a popular way of bearing witness. Novels were some of the least censored forms of media, compared with music, theater, and journalism, and so authors would investigate and write about real state crimes under the guise of fiction. Fiction absorbed components of journalism because of the repression of public discourse.

Like the *romance-reportagem*, socially committed literary fiction also represented the violence and injustice of the authoritarian period. But rather than blending fiction into a journalistic investigation, which, according to literary theorist Amelia Simpson, weakened these and created a journalistically unsound and moralizing final product, some of the finest and enduring literary novels from the period balanced literary concerns and political witnessing.

Rubem Fonseca did not begin his life as a novelist. His first job, actually, was as a police officer in Rio de Janeiro. He mostly worked on the administrative side of things, not on the street, and ended up leaving the police force to dedicate himself to writing in 1958, when he was 33 years old. He began to attempt the careful balancing act between literature and witnessing in 1973 with his first novel, *O Caso Morel*. Through story frames – a story within a story – Fonseca brings his readers to the crux of the case of the fictional witness.

Paul Morel: visual artist, protagonist. He lives in a bohemian neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, Santa Teresa, in the early 1970s. This Rio is harsh, dark, and dystopic. Morel lives in a household with many women, ranging from the daughter of an ambassador to a woman who has to work as a prostitute to support her child because she left home after her sister's husband

raped her. What Morel considers a happy polyamorous household – the ideal of a modern family, he calls it – must be read with scrutiny given the clear power differences between the different residents. Some choose to live there because they have no other choice, while others opt in, and Morel, the owner of the space and the only man in the house, dominates. And any illusions readers may have had about the twisted reality of the situation crumble when one of the residents, Joana, is found murdered – possibly by Morel.

Fonseca infuses the setting, the premise, and the relationships in *O Caso Morel* with violence. As pointed out by literary critic Luciana Paiva Coronel, Fonseca's fiction only takes on this aesthetic of brutality after 1968, which is when the AI-5 increased the repression of the real military regime. Fonseca's style runs parallel to politics.

Morel's world is also rife with inequality, constantly juxtaposing the direly poor and the hyper-rich, both within the Santa Teresa household and in nearly every street scene. At a time when the military regime celebrated the Brazilian "economic miracle," *O Caso Morel* witnesses a Brazilian economic disaster, a system of violent capitalism that invades every corner of society. Fonseca poses an alternative and highly critical narrative of Brazil under the dictatorship. That narrative intensifies in the excruciating final pages when Morel is released from prison and the police arrest two presumably innocent, low-income people instead.

But Paul Morel is a fictional character, even within the novel. *O Caso Morel* actually begins with a character named Paulo Morais, who is in jail. Paulo Morais is a visual artist suspected of the murder of a woman named Heloísa. Morais, in a switch from painting to prose, writes a novel in which the main character is Paul Morel, and the plot is what I just described. Vilela, a writer originally meant to help Morel with his literary project, is the character who tries to solve the crime based on Morel's fictional account. So, it is through a novel within the novel that we hear of Morel's life leading up to Joana's, death – one that supposedly bears a remarkable resemblance to Morais' life leading up to Heloísa's murder, for which Morais is convicted.

All of Vilela's information about the crime is mediated, in other words. This is a criminal investigation grounded in textual interpretation. And that's something that Fonseca does not allow us to forget for a single second as we read *O Caso Morel*. In Morel's fictional story, which is directly printed into the book, unattributed citations constantly interrupt the plot. The first quotation, for example, provides totally unnecessary historical information after a character in Morel's story tells him to get a condom:

"The romans invented the condom, according to what Antonius Liberalis writes in *Metamorphoses*. In 1564 Dr. Fallopius rediscovers it, recommending the use of a linen sack to prevent venereal infections."

(Fonseca bolds *Metamorphoses* in the original). Other textual inserts are far more relevant to the content at hand, like the repeated line:

"We have nothing to fear
Except for words."

Source:
John D. Peters,
"Witnessing," in *Media,
Culture, and Society* 23
(2001): 720.

	Presence in time	Absence in time
Presence in space	BEING THERE Assembled audience e.g. concert, game, theater	HISTORICITY (dead not 'live') Serial mass audience e.g. shrine, memorial, museum
Absence in space	LIVE TRANSMISSION Broadcast audience e.g. radio, TV, webcast	RECORDING Dispersed, private audience Profane, witnessing difficult e.g. book, CD, video

There are probably around two of these citations per page. And no matter how closely they relate to the text, they compel us to remember that what we are reading is a novel within a novel, not a straight narrative.

The meta-content here is more than an interesting literary technique. It is also a comment on the very relationship between fiction and witnessing. Morel's novel is no less important than the autopsy report that Vilela accesses at the end of the book. Both inform Vilela's hypotheses about Joana's death, and the policeman assigned to Morel's case, Inspector Matos, is desperate to get his hands on Morais' novel, as he feels it will help him convict Morais of Heloísa's murder.

In this context of literary witnessing, the reader of Morais' novel, Vilela, is a co-creator of meaning. Literally, he edits and changes Morais' text – but he also decodes it, investigating how the fictional content relates to reality. In a world with no access to witnessing, interpretation determines consequences.

The final result is extremely dark. Félix, a poor man who had been previously convicted of robbery, is ultimately held responsible for the crime. Vilela narrates: “A thief is considered to be a bit more dangerous than an artist . . . Félix's conviction is a perfect ending to our story. We're going to forget that he's innocent . . .” In the next paragraph, Vilela reveals that he's planning to write Morais' biography, which very well might be the text that we are holding in our hands, the text that I now interpret and write about. The book ends on this hyper-meta and hyper-concerning note, and I closed it with the intense desire for a firsthand account of what happened, some connection in space and time to Heloísa's murder, even though I knew it was fictional.

So where does this novel fit into the five opening vignettes of my various experiences of witnessing politics? Is Fonseca a witness to the violence, inequality, and injustice of the early 1970s in Brazil? Is he instead an analyst of witnessing itself, given how he exposes the fictions and silences that a dictatorship rests on? Or is witnessing, grounded as it is in communication and therefore interpretation, always a literary concern?

Maybe the best thing about artistic testimony is that it leaves the reader asking questions, not just about the time and place of an event but also about the very concept of bearing witness.

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Ricardo Lísias.
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THE VOICE OF THE WEAK

CHARACTERS AND NARRATORS OF “REDEMOCRATIZATION”

Two famous Brazilian authors, Sergio Sant'Anna and João Gilberto Noll, began their respective literary careers as dictatorship transitioned to democracy in Brazil. How might the early work of these writers reflect Brazilian society in the 1980s? In this critical essay, contemporary novelist Ricardo Lísias turns to the sordid, isolated narrators of Sant'Anna's and Noll's stories to describe a generation caught between past trauma and continued violence.

RICARDO LÍSIAS

Sergio Sant'Anna published his first book, the short story collection *O sobrevivente* (The Survivor), in 1969. In the 1970s, he would release two more novels and another volume of short fiction. In 1982, thirteen years after his initial debut, he publishes *O concerto de João Gilberto no Rio de Janeiro* (João Gilberto's Concert in Rio de Janeiro) and finally receives broad critical acclaim. João Gilberto Noll has a very different start: debuting in 1980, also with a short story collection, *O cego e a dançarina* (The Blind Man and the Dancer), he is immediately recognized as a skilled and original author.

Perhaps this mismatched beginning is the most marked difference between the two bodies of work. Beyond that, the parallels are numerous, in part due to the very fact that both authors became critically relevant at the end of the military dictatorship. The uptake was different, but the final result, the same. Prolific (they both regularly release work to this day), they move easily between short story and novel, though Sant'Anna seems to have a slight preference for the shorter form. By 2015, the author of *O sobrevivente* had published ten short story collections and five novels. In the case of João Gilberto Noll, the numbers were roughly the inverse. In any case, it remains clear that prose was both authors' literary expression of choice, even if their work varies in length. Sergio Sant'Anna writes poetry from time to time, but he lacks a propensity for the genre, and his poems do not merit much discussion.

Consisting of dialogues between a writer and a journalist, *Um romance de geração* (The Novel of a Generation), which Sergio Sant'Anna first published in 1980, tries to capture some of the traits of the urban middle class that arose in the first years of that decade while also taking an ironic look at establishment literature, the “novel with a plot, the kind that everyone reads”

(Sant'Anna). While both characters crumble under mutual accusations of frivolity and political cowardice, the writer in the novel begins to reveal, emphatically, the only kind of fiction that is possible in a country broken apart by the dictatorship: “that which tore to pieces the very concept of literature in this country. Period.” What ultimately appears here in its incipient form is one of the most important questions in Sant'Anna's body of work – the legitimacy of artistic representation: “stagnation, which is what we could call the proletariat, cannot speak for itself and still hasn't made art of its own because it didn't have access to culture.” Machismo and a lack of professional ethics complete the pair's drunken night.

Two years later, *O concerto de João Gilberto no Rio de Janeiro* would further solidify the author's approach to urban characters. The book consists of twelve stories, most of them made up of fragments in which various narrators and characters find it enormously difficult to express themselves, unable to articulate even their own inadequacy. The title story, which consists of a collage of different speeches, thematizes these same challenges of communication and the rage of artists confronting the limitations of their craft.

In 1984, Sergio Sant'Anna releases *A tragédia brasileira* (The Brazilian Tragedy) and affirms his propensity for testing the limits of representation in a literary text. This is an author who never hides the underlying structure of his writing. He instead emphasizes it, leaving the artifice of the text all the more exposed. The goal seems to be to share with the reader something constructive: the mechanisms behind the narrative. In this way, according to literary critic Regina Dalcastagne, reader and author approach one another, making even more compelling the political effects of the work: “And his

objective is to involve us as well, to make us commit to his point of view or, at least, to always see that there is a point of view to which we could commit. That's why [the points of view] fold onto themselves, they multiply and hide, exposing the artifice of the narrative." Continuing with this idea, Jaime Ginzburg, a scholar of Brazilian literature and culture, finds the weak, solitary narrator particularly effective aesthetically: "Literature, in search of the poetics of traces, gains expressive potency and allows us to empathize with those who experienced Brazil as a space of repression or trauma."

Deemed a "novel-play" by the author, *A tragédia brasileira* narrates the story of a twelve-year-old girl getting run over by a car from various points of views. Often hallucinatory and almost always dream-like, the plot reveals the fragility of life in a society in which nothing is truly established or fixed, not even literature itself. The mixing of genres, which ultimately favors the theatrical play (for which, evidently, the term "representation" is more central than for other genres), further confuses what is already extremely absurd. This is captured in the following section:

Lawyer (acting disinterested): It's not that I'm totally against Juscelino. Brasília is an exceptional project. But the automobile industry and the highways were directly responsible for severing the Brazilian from traditions and cultural roots. Because of Juscelino Kubitschek, the Brazilian became, above all, a Motorist. And the Brazilian from the Northeast, the nordestino, was no longer strong, as the great Euclides da Cunha wanted, but instead rootless. Without Juscelino, my client wouldn't have been over there with his car back then, such a nordestino, and his poverty, the result of rural immigration...

Police commissioner (extremely irritated): Who is this nordestino you're talking about?

Lawyer: The black guy. I went about investigating it on my own.

It is likely that title of the book demonstrates with clarity the author's views on the Brazilian political landscape in the 1980s.

Made up of twenty-five short stories, *O cego e a dançarina* is João Gilberto Noll's first book. There is nothing epic or grandiose in these stories: the characters, mere supports to historical events, are generally middle class, interested in philosophy, culture, and, more than anything, surviving the disaster history has dolled out: "I suddenly remembered that I'd been a prisoner in 1970 and that I might have been on the brink of death" (Noll). The characters are afraid and self-absorbed, going about their lives with their heads down.

By 1985, João Gilberto Noll would have published two novels, *A fúria do corpo* (The Fury of the Body) and *Bandoleiros* (Misfits), which have similar and complementary plots that differ only in the social class of the protagonists. In the former, the nameless narrator-character

roams through Rio de Janeiro, getting lost amidst drug traffickers, prostitutes, and all types of tricksters and whistlers, detached from any stability, social or psychological. Police brutality strikes repeatedly, making clear that even the characters' bodies are not fully their own. *Bandoleiros* depicts the same emotional disarray, but this time among the elite. Prostitution, as it always does for Noll, replaces any kind of feeling, mediating the relationships between the narrator and other characters, how they attract and repel each other. Both books carry symbols of the era, now components of the Brazilian national imaginary, as though objects, music, and illnesses could serve to locate the characters in time: the Brazilian airline Panair, the first cases of AIDs, música popular brasileira songs, etc.

It is in this way that Sergio Sant'Anna and João Gilberto Noll's fiction entered into democracy: for them, Brazil in 1985 had to be built from sick, lost, sordid characters suffering the consequences that history had flung on the country. Those protagonists who must articulate this history are the weak, the part of society that truly represents Brazil.

One of the most striking characteristics of both authors' work in this period is de-identification. Characters are often nameless, referred to by their professions or even just by personal pronouns, like the "Him" and "Her" in Sergio Sant'Anna's *Um romance de geração*. In *O concerto de João Gilberto no Rio de Janeiro*, also by Sant'Anna, the reader passes through the first three stories before encountering finally, in the fourth, the first character name in the book: Cristóbal in "O Recorde" (The Record). Even there, the named character interacts with another figure, one identified only by one of his actions – a so-called "Anticipator".

Incidentally, it is not just his characters that remain nameless. Anonymity is at the narrator's core in *A fúria do corpo*. He chooses to lack a name and even seems to protect himself with that de-identification:

No, not my name. I live on the streets at a time when telling someone your name is cause for suspicion. To whom? I'm not naïve: no names, no one. . . Don't ask after my age, marital status, place of birth, affiliations, ties to the past, nothing, not the past, no name either: no.

The entire book seems to be a long series of removals: the narrator omits his own name and then doesn't provide the people around him with any individualizing identity. Not in the company of a kid drug dealer, not with the man who pays him for sexual services. One could say that the removal of the name in the first line of the novel is simply preparation for all the other absences that follow: the people he knows will disappear, his wife (who, by the way, is referred to by the archetype Aphrodite) will come and go with little cause or consideration, money for lunch and coffee will vanish, he will be left without even a place to sleep . . . The lack of his own name is a cover for this narrator who, ultimately, doesn't even know if he is even alive or dead:

That's with them, the living. I might have already

been buried. Alive? . . . And here, in this state, I only recognize in myself the body that once denounced the denial of flesh amongst the living, and that now works to form scars from all my disillusionments because everything that I've lived through makes sense in this moment in which death thickens in the splendor of anonymity.

De-identification, we should emphasize, serves to underline another trait of Noll's characters: failure. He who has no name risks never achieving anything at all.

. . . I know that this woman will not forgive any of my weaknesses, I know that our love will be shaped by a pain that our bodies have never known, I know that our most scandalously anonymous failures will not know a breath of relief but instead the worst of wounds. . .

João Gilberto Noll's narrator omits his name for his own safety. And if personal safety is one of the central pillars of civilization, then here we find a contradiction: to be secure is to stop being an individual. The conclusion is simple: civilization no longer guarantees safety.

The presence of a name may be rare, but the body seems to exist in nearly every space. It's not that the body becomes strong or omnipresent. It is instead what we find leftover from the narrators and characters of these books. *A fúria do corpo*, more than symbolizing some sort of Dionysian revolt, essentially narrates what happens when the only thing left of a person's identity is their flesh: the body constantly pushes to survive while, internally, it falls into a paralyzing depression.

In fact, survival is a keyword for interpreting one of João Gilberto Noll's best short stories, "alguma coisa urgentemente" ("something urgently," translated by Sophie Lewis). Recently kicked out of boarding school, a teenager has to figure out how to get by, while his father (there is no mother), outside of the meeting in which he hoped to recover some remnant of their relationship, comes up against dictatorship forces. In the end, he suffers in front of a son who, upon seeing his father's body, feels more of a sense of abandonment than sadness or even solidarity. Here, too, there are no names.

When the body needs to survive and has nothing left to sustain it, the only way out is prostitution, pervasive in Noll's texts from the period. Sex here is often an affectionless negotiation between beaten-down creatures. At best, it allows one body to feed on another, even if both are empty shells. Even at the pinnacle of their decadence, the characters in *Bandoleiros* can't manage to consummate the sexual act, resorting to mutual masturbation, which distances them even further. Clearly, Noll works with bodies that lack names and, even more so, love.

We should also note that gay relationships are very present here. Beyond carrying the same impossibility for affection that we see in the heterosexual couples, homoerotic love is also subject to the systematic persecution of

LGBT groups under the military dictatorship, making those relationships even more marginalized. As Renan Honório Quinalha, law expert and former advisor to the National Truth Commission describes:

In addition to the political repression that tightened its grip across society, LGBT groups were a particular target for various types of violence: the persecution of transvestites exposed to surveillance, above all in areas with prostitution, where they would be stopped by the police for vagrancy (for not having registered employment) or for the disturbance of public order; the censorship of theater and artwork that openly depicted nonconforming sexualities; the institutionalization of homophobia and lesbophobia in agencies of repression and control (applied even to officials in the Armed Forces, a phenomenon that continues to this day); purges of political offices . . . ; the spread of discrimination, through the press, against "deviants", which aimed to reinforce the idea of the degeneration of moral values and the stereotype of an "internal enemy" that justified repression; the dismantling of the then-nascent LGBT movement and its means of communication and expression (such as the well-known newspaper *O Lampião da Esquina*). . .

If in Noll's work intimacy is almost entirely absent, in Sergio Sant'Anna's books it is destructive. Here, affection actually incites violence:

"But, ah, these men get tired, living on just their idiocy and their weak sperm. Now, it's his wife that scares him, and a pregnancy that could only lead her to abort the child in disgust. That's what you do when you know that it would be impossible to love that child, yes, his child, that of the brute, who loves idly, a 'real man.' A man who is more able to give her an affectionate slap on the ass than utter empty words. And when he hates, he hates – and says, 'little bitch,' almost punching her. A man who is also capable of saying, 'Today I'm going to use you like I use an object; I'm going to fuck you today, woman.' And then dry her tears, as though he hadn't said anything at all. And, finally, he's capable of admitting, 'I like you, babe.'" (Sant'Anna, *O concerto de João Gilberto no Rio de Janeiro*).

In other cases, sexual encounters represent a generation and little else:

Sometimes I run into a woman on the street and say hello, a bit puzzled, and so is she, and I keep walking,

wondering: how do I know her; how do I know her? And suddenly the realization comes: ah, we fucked, that must be it. (She walks in the direction of the bathroom.) It must be the same for her. The way she said, "Let's go," without hesitating. Old sluts, that's what we are. We drink, fuck, leave, and that's it. That's our generation. Yes, if we had a revolution, it was a sexual one. It's as if a teacher said during recess, now everyone can go screw whoever they want.

(Sant'Anna, *Um romance de geração*).

One way or another, for both Noll and Sant'Anna, intimacy does not build subjectivities. If it doesn't destroy the characters completely, it leaves them degraded:

It soon passes, but they love each other, yes, more and more and that's what makes their world turn. And then one day the husband leaves his wife and many children for the little slut, because that one, yes, she knew how to simulate the perfect sigh and that way of digging her nails into his chest and for that she won, just a tad more each day, like bumps of cocaine, bit by bit, because at first he thought that this might be happiness and, later, he just couldn't live without the vice. Until it leaves him with so little strength that he can't even kill himself. (Sant'Anna, *O concerto de João Gilberto no Rio de Janeiro*).

In passing, it is worth noting that sex here is not heroic or affirming as it is often described in memoirs from the same period. While for Alfredo Sirkis, for example, sexual intrigue foments the courage necessary to face the dictatorship, Noll and Sant'Anna view copulation as a possible complement to (or confirmation of) the precariousness of their characters.

Given the lack of physical or emotional closeness in these books, we can see that the characters lead profoundly solitary lives. In this context, the big city serves as the perfect setting into which narrators and characters disappear, as with the disappearance of names that already took place. According to critic Silviano Santiago, this book serves precisely to indicate what remains of the observer and his realizations: "Bearing witness to what one sees and experiences is all that survives the written word in our post-industrial society." In the big city, as we know from all literature after Modernism, people disappear. Those who stay always end up alone:

I felt so alone. Eva was murdered by the driver when he caught her in the act with the shady gambler, Diana was transferred to the police beat in the newspaper and found herself professionally. Since then she became definitively apolitical and began writing love letters to Miro and saying that the world should be viewed in the way we see a police report, in a coldly descriptive way; journalistic style, as with any other attempt to perceive the world, she said, must be armed with a certain kind of skill and not with feeling. Miro didn't want to see her and only replied to one of her letters, claiming to be in love with his wife, even though he didn't believe in love. (Noll, *A fúria do corpo*).

The big city acts as the stage for the loneliness of Noll's and Sant'Anna's sick and adrift characters, but it also brings about their problems with the authorities. The term "marginal" doesn't simply define someone in relation to the social norm. Many characters, especially in Noll's works, are almost entirely on the margin of the law, a position that is always more intense in urban contexts. Sometimes, they readily hand themselves over

to oppressive forces:

A big patrol car soon pulled up, the cops came over and asked for my ID. My pockets were totally empty except for what was left of the cash the kid had lent me. I got up and went with the cops, got into the back of the patrol car, without hope or any illusion about what would happen, surrendering like a bull in a bullfight, let them take me, slaughter me, throw me to the Death Squad. (Noll, *Bandoleiros*).

In other passages, though, these encounters are very different. The father of the narrator in "alguma coisa urgente," for example, takes his son from a rural area and places him, disoriented, in the big city, which is where the boy would be safe according to his guerilla fighter logic. And it is in the same tangled mass of buildings, streets, and beaches of Rio de Janeiro where the father dies at the hands of the repressive apparatus of the State.

These clashes obviously create a context of extreme violence that, organized along the new social order that Brazil began forming, could only exist in urban settings, as literary critic and theorist Tania Pellegrini explains:

There is no denying that violence became the central protagonist in urban Brazilian fiction after the 1960s, particularly during the military dictatorship with Brazil's entrance into the circuit of advanced capitalism. The growing industrialization during the period ultimately bolsters fiction depicting urban centers, their swell and decay, and so highlights the resulting social and existential problems, including the rise of violence.

The military is of course present in both authors' work from the period, but it is the police force that acts as the central apparatus for repression, which shows how these writers were attuned to the shifts in a society that sociologists like Anthony W. Pereira would only consider slightly later:

An important pillar of legal authority in the Democratic Era is the police. In Brazil, despite the transition into democracy, the Police most frequently act to defend the status quo of the State rather than the interest of its citizens, broadly defined. Social pressure for change sometimes results in conservative responses from the political establishment, which include police repression of the opposition . . . Most often, police violence is not ordered but rather tolerated by those in power, when it serves their interests. In this way, the police sustain illegal authoritarianism both directly and indirectly, by practicing violent repression of opposition movements when political authorities demand it, but also by exploiting their autonomy to act against poor and marginalized people and any other group perceived as rebellious.

This state of tension is another element present in our two authors' work. Of course, it is intertwined with city space. In Sergio Sant'Anna's case, urban commo-

tion, symbolized through rapidly moving cars, mirrors the emotional turmoil of his characters:

Driver revs the engine and unconsciously strokes the clutch. All the others, nearby, make the same gesture, in unison. Driver gazes out into the vast night in the direction of Teenage Whore. The driver, at that exact moment, sees a star and asks himself if it could be Mira the Wonderful. And wasn't it Mira that led the Three Wise Men towards Belém? Driver shifts into first and pulls away, heading towards that star, unaware that it could also be the Demon Star, Beta Persei. Driver, drunkenly zigzagging down the highway, turns on the radio and happily shouts, "Yeah, Brazil!" (Sant'Anna, *A Tragedia Brasileira*).

If we take the classic short story "O concerto de João Gilberto no Rio de Janeiro," the talented musician's famous annoyance aligns perfectly with the agitation of the city in which he arrives. All of this overlays the babble of different voices that Sant'Anna's collaging technique creates, and the result is a portrait of the tension from that time period:

RIO GALEÃO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The airport terminal was full of people waving strips of paper and placards. "It's Prestes", a mechanic told JG. "Prestes is back."

Getting off a different plane was Luís Carlos Prestes, back from exile and carrying a small James Bond-style suitcase.

João approached Prestes at customs and whispered:

"What would you call the Aesthetic of the Party in power?"

"An aesthetic for the people, an aesthetic for the people," the Gentleman of Hope replied quickly.

"Good answer," João smiled. And he left, singing for the customs officials:

"*Só danço o samba, só danço o samba, vai, vai, vai, vai, vai.*"

Prestes walked with him, drumming on his James Bond suitcase filled with Party documents.

For characters left with nothing but their bodies (and, as we saw, some lost ownership even over that), the metropolis is, one way or another, where the government is most active and effective:

The state of exception, which is what the sovereign each and every time decides, takes place precisely when naked life – which normally appears rejoined to the multifarious forms of social life – is explicitly put into question and revoked as the ultimate foundation of political power. The ultimate subject that needs to be at

once turned into the exception and included in the city is naked life. (Agamben, *Means Without End – Notes on Politics*, translated by Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino).

It is in this way that, through the makeup and placement of their characters, Sant'Anna and Noll expose the state of exception that would not end in Brazil in the 1980s, but would instead just change hands.

The cited examples make clear that the characters at hand (both the oppressors and the oppressed) are minor, trivial figures without significant goals. João Gilberto Noll's characters move through shadows, living an existence of fetid sexuality and breathing the thin air of stilted affection. For Sergio Sant'Anna, the struggles of the city dweller since the beginning of the 1980s can be summed up, in general, by the spread of sickness, the pursuit of state favors, and the limited movement through streets that violence would still allow.

The narrators are similarly deplorable in their inarticulate communication and total lack of interest in seeing or describing in a daring way. We should remember that these figures fight to perceive only once they are in hiding or even disappearing entirely. It is this kind of person that political scientist Pilar Calveiro identifies as essential to the existence of the spaces of repression that the dictatorship created:

The majority of the men who made the concentration camp mechanism function seem to have the profile of a mediocre and cruel bureaucrat, capable of carrying out any order given his subordinate position and eager to take personal advantage of the situation. A swarm of mediocre men, of perfectly submissive non-subjects, of simple know-it-all's full of contradictions, fascinated by power and ready to use it, whenever possible, for personal gain.

As these books were published at a time when a debate was just starting about the possibility of putting on trial the members of the State who practiced this violence – a process that the Amnesty Law would then impede (as it does to this day!) – we can argue that these narrators and characters, in their formal construction, carry Jürgen Habermas' quest: they have "a responsibility for disfigured ways of life, which grant happiness, or simply the existence of a select few at the price of ruined happiness, the taking of life, the suffering of others." (Habermas, 1987, translated by Rolf Norgaard).

Now, maybe it is possible to synthesize all of these various elements and see how they form a sort of portrait of Brazilian society at the end of the military dictatorship. These are weak characters and narrators, decidedly weak, unable to rebuild what the most intense years of dictatorial oppression, the *anos de chumbo*, had torn apart:

HIM: "The problem is that I don't believe it anymore. Get it? All the dialogue is fake, all the books are fake. As fake as this laugh (he imitates his own hysterical laugh from earlier). You only hear that kind

of laugh on a stage. All this dialogue is fake and I'm tired of it." (Sant'Anna, *Um romance de geração*).

I suddenly remembered that I'd been a prisoner in 1970 and that I might have been on the brink of death. I touched my scar and realized I desired him. He had an elegance about him. He told me that he also didn't want that moment to end, that he wanted us to stay there like prisoners. I felt wounded. And I said that I didn't want the ecstasy of a prison sentence. (Noll, *O cego e a dançarina*).

Confrontations with authority, as we saw, seem forever doomed to violence and to the subjugation of people in the name of institutions. Incidentally, the survival of those same institutions is what maintains the Amnesty Law and allows the state violence committed under the dictatorship to go unpunished. In fact, before leaving power, the military worked to guarantee:

the preservation of the repressive apparatus and the control of information; the conservation of the spirit of the National Security Doctrine in the new law in defense of the State; election law that favors the elite and conservative political forces. (David Maciel, "A Aliança Democrática e a transição política no Brasil").

Weak narrators and characters, tense settings, and uncontrollable authority that acts with impunity. These are the fundamental characteristics of Sergio Sant'Anna and João Gilberto Noll's first books. But not only theirs. Indeed, this is Brazil as it left the dictatorship: weak, damaged, and on its knees before the oppressive apparatus of the State.

For a full bibliography, please see the Portuguese version of this essay online at artememoria.org.

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Translated from the Portuguese by Lara Norgaard.

THE DRUNKS AND THE SLEEPWALKERS



The 1996 novel *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos*—*The Drunks and the Sleepwalkers*—is set during Brazil's military dictatorship, plunges the reader into a kind of narrative quicksand, one made up of amnesia, uncertain identities, and the endless search for an unusual kind of witness testimony. Read on for an English translation of the beginning of Bernardo Carvalho's compellingly contorted narrative, followed by a conversation with the author.

BERNARDO CARVALHO

When someone witnesses an accident, someone who happened to be there at the time of the incident or who lived in the area and unwittingly stumbled upon it, that witness has a purpose and their testimony does not just serve legal or journalistic ends but rather something else, some other thing that I could never put my finger on—and it was right in the middle of this muddled and unfinished thought that I decided to search for the woman the journalists had interviewed back then.

When they removed the tumor from my mom's brain five years ago, another person was there. On the night of the operation, when the doctor called me, the intercom ringing at 5 a.m. in the empty hospital hallway where I'd waited in the dark with Sérgio, a friend of my mom's, and Ivone, who had just come in from New York, another person was there. That person came running up the stairs with me after the nurse called from the surgery room to say that the doctor wanted to see me. The doctor could have wanted to tell me that my mom died on the operating table, the one she'd already been lying on for nine hours, or that she was going to be ill for the rest of her life, just like she'd been the week before—my mom had begun to feel sick before going

Book cover from the 1996 edition of *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos* (Companhia das Letras), photographed and edited by Lara Norgaard.

into a coma, getting headaches and feeling nauseous and losing her mind, but I hadn't known that at the time.

I ran up the stairs to the fourth floor, and that other person was with me. I heard breathing. It wasn't Sérgio or Ivone who were behind me. It was someone who ran alongside me, in front of me, actually, but at the same pace, and who was by my side when the doctor came out covered in blood, carrying a metal bowl with the tumor there, floating inside it—like a tennis ball, he told me proudly—and I began to cry even though I'd kept my cool the entire night before, but I was grateful, and I said thank you, I think I said it more than once, and he hugged me. There was another person there before Sérgio and Ivone reached us and saw me spurring tears in the doctor's arms. A witness, to continue my muddled and unfinished thought, who smiled at me in the middle of it all.

He was a seventy-something year old man, short, fat, worn-out and wheezing (I didn't know it then, but it was because of his emphysema), with a sparse comb-over slicked over his bald head and beads of sweat collecting on his forehead and neck. He was wearing a navy blue suit and a very thin red tie. He came over to me, smiled again, and told me his name was Bob. His smile calmed me down, and not just because he was a distraction, since it took me a minute for me to figure out who he was. He asked me if I remembered him. When I was five years old, he'd boarded a plane in Houston, drunk, and the next day arrived in Rio de Janeiro, just to ask my mom to marry him. He called her from the Houston airport, to say that he was getting on a flight to Rio. He didn't say why. He only said he had broken up with his wife. He had had an affair with my mother ten years before, before my mom met my dad, while they were working together at an American bank in Brazil. He'd rung the doorbell at my house at 9 am—and at that night at 10 pm he was already on a plane, on his way back to Houston, after having rented a car, taken us out to lunch, proposed to my mom while I played with a friend (it was already Jorge, that Saturday), and received a simple, emphatic rejection. A year later he was married again and brought his new wife, who he'd met at Alcoholics Anonymous, to meet my mom. He was excited about his new business venture, which involved looking for oil on a stretch of bone dry land in Texas that he'd gotten from the government. I remember more from that second time. How he looked at my mom from across the table, seeking approval. The two of them wrote letters to each other for twenty years, recounting every detail of their lives, the everyday tedium but also the struggles and joy. That night in the hospital he told me that he got on a plane to Rio again because, after calling and after weeks of no letters, he knew she'd gone into a coma.

I looked at him standing in the doorframe of the surgery room. He was still smiling, fat, and bald. "You know, I never told anyone. Definitely didn't tell my wife. But now I have to say it. You're the only person I can tell. This stays between us. Your mom was the only woman I've ever loved." He also said he believed in the

afterlife and that there, he was sure, they'd finally be together.

Two years later, I was passing through Houston when I was on vacation. My mom, who'd miraculously recovered, asked me to call Bob, since he'd suddenly stopped writing to her, and when I asked to speak with him, the woman on the other end of the line was all chocked up and asked if we'd gotten the telegram. Back home, when I told my mom (he'd been buried for a month—he told my mom that he wanted to be cremated and have his ashes scattered in the Guanabara Bay, but she was the only one who knew that), she said nothing, opened a closet, and spent a week sitting on the floor of her room, surrounded by boxes, reading his letters one by one.

A year and a half ago the same neurologist who operated on my mom told me that there was an "inexplicable trend", a "strange preponderance" in my family—that was the least he could say after my mom's two sisters were diagnosed with brain tumors and her brother died from one, malignant in his case—and implied that I might have been developing a similar illness for years. Why not do a scan? Just as a precaution. It was only after he saw the results of the MRI and told me that it was inoperable (there could be even more damage with surgery; this was very serious and I needed to be kept under observation so they could decide what to do next), it was only then that it occurred to me to look for the only witness, the woman who the journalists interviewed back then and whose story I'd spent my whole life hearing about—which annoyed me—ever since my brother and dad died in the accident, the same witness who would end up following me, my shadow, the last witness of my own self.

My neurologist told me that the tumor wasn't very big—and probably benign—but that even though it would be slow (and here I thought it would be like the meningioma my aunts had), I was going to change, in my behavior and personality, at first imperceptibly and then completely, and all without my realizing it; I was going to turn into a different person before I died. He didn't say exactly that. He was more humane. Gradually, I would become someone else and the person I used to be would disappear "because of the lesion." I would be a different person—but maybe the fact that I wouldn't notice the transformation, the changes, maybe that was a good thing, and after unknowingly going through it all I wouldn't grieve for the person I once was—no one is anyone, everything's relative, he said, just a nudge here (he touched my forehead) and poof! what you call you will go away, and then, on his way out of the room, seeing my silent horror, he hugged me. He said it wasn't that bad. It could take years. It was unnoticeable. Souls are just physiological. He didn't say it in so many words. But that's what I took it to mean.

It could have occurred to me sooner. I wanted to know, so badly. For years, questions hammered through my head (this was before the tumor) every time I heard the story about the airplane, which annoyed me. But it was only after I found out that I would turn into a different person, that it was inevitable—and worse,

that it would happen without my noticing, without any indication that the process had begun, without my being able to tell if it had even started: I wouldn't remember who I used to be after I stopped being me – it was only then that I realized, without really knowing why, that the witness to the accident might be able to give me an explanation or some sort of clue – if not of who I was, then at least of who I could have been – and act as the memory that I was about to lose, if I hadn't already lost it, since she'd seen everything, since she was there when it all began.

In the photos, she's only pictured on two occasions and she's not as fat, almost unrecognizably so – at the site of the accident, when she was still seen as just another person who happened to be nearby, one of many people who heard the crash and ran over to see what had happened, and then at her house, sitting on the couch, after she was already deemed the only witness to the disaster, since she saw everything from start to finish (you could almost say the plane crashed at her feet) – but the most startling thing was her voice, the one preserved in radio archives that I associated with the image of the plane half submerged in water, the voice that explained what had happened, which only she had seen up close. Her voice was what I remembered when she opened her apartment door in the Flamengo neighborhood of Rio and asked me to come inside.

Her car had broken down on the shoulder of Beira-Mar Avenue and she had been walking to find help when she heard it nosedive, which started with strange sounds from the motors – the same sounds that would soon draw other onlookers – and, later, the crash into the bay. She talked about the motor's strange noises, and the photos showed men in suits, some of them grasping their soaked briefcases as the rescue teams attended to them. She said: "They swam still clutching their briefcases." After I finally found her, having searched through old newspapers and radio archives, she finished her story by saying, "And in the midst of them all appeared a woman, holding a baby." She didn't need to ask why I was interested in the accident. I said: "That baby was me."

She had guided me down a long, dark hallway, one that led from the front door to the living room, which was so flooded with light that the view of the bay only slowly came into focus. It was blinding. It was impossible not to close your eyes and then, upon blinking them open, be astounded by that view – and also, by the painting. From the first second, I had to close my eyes, close my eyes before opening them. It was the same apartment. But on the wall, behind the exact couch she'd been sitting on twenty years before when the journalists interviewed her for the second time, the same couch she would sit on to tell me about the accident, there was a painting, and that was the first thing I saw after my eyes opened and adjusted to the light. It was a desert landscape, an expanse of sand and rocks, like a waterless ocean floor, and there were five people there – four of them men, old and fat men, to be specific, and one woman – all stretched out, sunbathing on chaise lounges angled in the same direction, side by side, and they all had their eyes closed, I think. She saw that I was interested in the painting

when I came in. "It's called 'The Sunbathers'. But it's a copy, a reproduction," she said. And since I didn't move or say anything, she continued: "My grandfather was a regular at the Academy – you know, the Academy of Fine Arts?" she explained. "This was at the turn of the century, around 1905, or – no, it was before that. He had a lot of friends, all of them painters. My mom gave me this when he died. She said it was just a copy. He wasn't a very good painter, didn't have the imagination for it. He'd just copy his friend's paintings," she said, laughing, and asked me to have a seat. In addition to getting fatter, she'd grown old. Her hair had gone white and her face was bloated, like her arms and legs. She'd told the newspapers the same thing she told me, the story about a woman who'd suddenly appeared in the water, holding a baby. It was exciting to talk about the accident again after so many years, now that no one came to visit her anymore, she said. But she stopped talking when I spoke. When I interrupted her and said I was the baby. She wasn't expecting that. She felt bad about being so excited. She didn't know where to look (she closed her eyes as though blinded by sunlight) or what to do about her earlier enthusiasm. She'd thought I was a researcher. That's what I'd told her before, afraid that otherwise she wouldn't meet with me. She felt embarrassed, unmasked, like I was there to counter her version of events, to temper the exaggerations of her imagination because the story was more mine than hers, since I'd also seen everything – and, more than that, I'd lived through it all. I asked her to continue. Her tone changed. She was more restrained. "Soon, they started to come out from the plane, some of them on the wings, others in the water. They swam with one arm, the other holding their briefcases. She wasn't on the wing like the others, no, she just surfaced. She must have come out from the front of the plane, which was underwater – the plane had nosedived," she made a gesture with one hand. "She headed straight towards me, not like the others who swam through the oily, sludgy water to get somewhere a bit further along. I was frozen during the whole thing, I think I was in shock. I didn't do anything. I didn't know what was happening. The woman coming towards me was holding a baby. When she got to the shore, she climbed onto the grass without asking for help. I still wasn't able to do anything. I didn't manage to take the initiative. But it was like she didn't see me. She was filthy, covered in silt and oil, and she stank, and, through it all, she was holding that baby."

"And what did she say? Did she say something?" I asked eagerly, interrupting her.

"She walked over to me, held out the baby – she gave me the baby, you know?" she said, like she was asking me, "and I took it, dazed, as she kept walking down the empty road. She got maybe 150 feet down the median before coming back over to where I was standing and then she asked: 'Do you know where to get a cab around here? I'm in a rush.' She said exactly that. I remember it to this day. Like nothing had happened. She had an accent. I didn't say a word, I was speechless. She looked at me – she must have thought I was totally useless, but I just couldn't – and she didn't say anything else. I felt bad, but I don't know what for. I don't know what I could have done differently. She crossed the street and I never saw

her again." The witness paused for a second and then said, "The baby screamed," and looked at me.

I asked if the woman had mentioned another baby (I didn't say that I was referring to my dead brother, whose body was never found) – or if she'd mentioned the man who acted as a shield (that's what they'd said) for the two baby boys, or, to put it differently, the man who'd caused the whole thing, which is what my mom told me when she was going crazy, right before her coma. The witness nodded. In the pictures, the ones from the site of the accident, she was the one holding the baby on her lap, before they realized that she was the witness, the only witness. Everyone was frantically rushing around. According to the witness, the baby was screaming and kicking, not crying in the way babies usually do; it was howling, and she rocked it back and forth, trying to speak. She said: "Right here, it was right here that the woman appeared with the baby, and then she left, I don't know..." In one of the pictures, she's looking over her shoulder, back towards the avenue, trying to look past all the police and journalists and other onlookers, but there were just cars passing by and the crowd surrounding the accident, no sign of someone else walking. "She was tall. I don't know, maybe twenty-five, thirty years old? At the most. She had an accent," she said, as though, in her mind, the woman who'd handed the child to her was a ghost simply for having disappeared that day. She turned to me and said, "Later, they figured out who she was using the passenger list. But it seemed like when they looked her up, she didn't want to talk. They never found her, actually. There isn't a single photo of her. She had a foreign last name. Let me see..." She stood up, putting her hand to her head: "I have it somewhere here, just give me a minute." When she came back into the living room, I was standing up, gazing at the painting, at the four old men and the woman lying out in the sun, eyes closed. "Finklestone," she said. "That was it: Finklestone."

I was the only one left. We were taking off from Santos Dumont Airport and the pilot made a mistake at the end of the runway – or did the motors malfunction? (When my mom was crazy, she implied that it was my father himself who, drunk, had planned and caused the whole thing with the goal of killing my dead brother – she never said how he did it -- and that he'd regretted it at the last second). The air shuttle between Rio and São Paulo defined my life, even before the accident, which was just the climax, I think, a confirmation of that fact, and even a rebirth. After all, I wouldn't have been born if my parents hadn't met each other at the baggage claim in Santos Dumont. They lived between the two cities, on that air shuttle. They'd split a cab. They turned their lives upside-down for each other. It wasn't easy. There was more than one goodbye and more than one reunion. Each would head straight for the airport when they left – he was from São Paulo and she was from Rio. It lasted four years. And then it got harder. He came to get us, the kids, drunk. That was the official story, the one I was told. He was determined to leave and take the kids with him. The kids that he didn't want but who he grew to care

about over time (or so I thought until my mom, when she went crazy from her tumor, right before going into the coma, said that he actually killed my brother because he'd figured out that Bob was the father, and that what had happened was not an accident but rather a suicide-murder, even though she never explained how he did it, and I survived in a stroke of luck). He could have been sued for kidnapping. If he'd survived. That's how it seems. Because I don't remember a thing. He hit his head during the crash. He hit his head because he threw himself in front of his two children, like a shield, to protect them (this contradicts my mom, in her insanity, unless he had regretted his murderous act at the last second and decided to shield the boys out of love – which she also considered). That's what people told me. There's no way to know for sure. I don't know what they were like. If they looked like me. My first memory is from when I was three years old, on my third birthday, specifically, a little more than a year after the accident, and I was already misbehaving. For years, my mom would cry on my birthday. I was the only one left. She locked herself in her room and sobbed. One of my first memories is of me kicking my babysitter in the shins when everyone was singing Happy Birthday. What, congratulations for being born? It took them a while to get it (my outrage at being there with them, an emotion that had already been documented in the newspaper photos: the child who screamed) and to get that the anger was going to last. For as long as I can remember I'd heard about the plane crash. About the disappearance of my dad and brother. It isn't easy. I was the only one left. I had to react, somehow. It's natural. It's just that it took me a while to snap. And now, finally, the witness had to know something else. When she stopped talking, it felt like I hadn't heard anything new (I was wrong), and we looked up at the painting above the sofa again. She went right up to it and traced her finger along the corner of the canvas: "It's getting dusty!" she exclaimed, disgusted, and then gave me a smile that didn't reach her eyes, as though she'd thought she was alone and only just realized I was there. "That's the painter," she said (I came over) and she pointed to the third sunbather who (I only now noticed) was different from the others who had their eyes closed to block out the sun. He had a camera on a tripod in front of him and, while seated, was taking a picture of something outside the painting. "It caused a huge scandal here in Rio de Janeiro. Apparently they went out to secluded beaches and swam naked. I always thought it was a weird, that landscape. But I can't put my finger on it. Those people in that landscape. They shouldn't be there!" she said, almost indignant. In a way she was right. What were those sunbathers doing in the middle of a desert? And what's more, with their eyes closed? I remembered what she'd said, that her grandfather wasn't very good at painting, that he didn't have the imagination for it. "Sometimes it makes me sick," she said. "Just looking at it." The painting unsettled me, too. It felt like it didn't belong. It pulled me in. It forced the viewer to want to live in a different era, not their own, that's what I thought. A hungry kind of nostalgia. She turned to me and said: "I'm

sorry, it's just bizarre to meet you now and think about that baby. It's hard to believe. What happened to you, after the accident?" and even though I didn't want her to think that I'd come there as a counselor, the only answer that came to mind was: "I'm a psychiatrist."

I lied. It would have been really complicated to tell the truth, to explain the whole thing. I didn't want to get into the details of it and draw the story out. I wanted to be a psychiatrist. I actually went to medical school, or at least I tried to go to medical school before dropping out. I think it was the dead bodies. But I only actually dropped out after my neurologist told me about the tumor and I realized I didn't have much time left. When I was a kid, I'd go to the dentist in downtown Rio by bus, and the bus was always crammed with people, almost tipping over as it turned the corner in front of the Pinel Institute, the mental institution, and seeing all the patients in their blue uniforms terrified me. I'd feel queasy. Nauseous. I actually puked once, the one time I took the wrong bus and had to get off right in front of the Institute. The patients were on the terrace wearing those blue uniforms. I could barely walk when I looked at them. I saw one of them looking straight at me, too. I threw up right after he shouted my name. I heard it loud and clear: Guilherme! He was calling out to me. No one else heard, no one could hear anything because all of the buses were turning the corner, breaks screeching to a halt as they stopped in front of the Institute. The crazies were calling out to me. I decided on psychiatry as a precaution more than anything else. That way, I'd be certain never to find myself locked up there, against my will, like them. I'd go in there on purpose, as a doctor, so as to avoid being taken there unaware as a patient.

I dropped out when I was in my second year of med school. Mostly because of the dead bodies. After realizing I didn't have much time left. It was only later, months after meeting the witness, that I'd find out how psychiatrists can also go crazy. Jorge didn't tell me the name. He just said that a man had gone into hiding in the south of Chile and needed to be brought back. I said that I dropped out of med school because of the dead bodies, but it was also because of Jorge, because I wanted to stay close to him while I was still me, after realizing I didn't have much time left. He was already the one on that Saturday when Bob asked my mom to marry him. He's stronger, taller, and bigger than me, my polar opposite with his small eyes, very white skin, and thin red lips. We took different paths when we were young. I knew he would end up in the army, since he didn't have a lot of prospects. He'd be a soldier. As for me, I couldn't avoid training in the reserves, but afterwards I went to med school. Then we didn't see each other. I dropped out and scandalized my family, and it was because my neurologist told me about the tumor, because of the dead bodies and then also because of him (when my neurologist told me I'd forget who I was, I thought about Jorge and realized that I might forget him, too, and I didn't want that – I turned him into the image of who I used to be, preserving myself, externally, in him). Right before looking for the witness, when I realized I didn't have much time left, I found Jorge and shut myself away in that barrack as an aspirant officer working at his side, under his orders,

actually, since by then he was a lieutenant, at a time when it wouldn't have crossed anyone's mind to become a soldier. Besides, it went against everything I was, or everything I once was. The person who I'd never be again. I became an aspirant officer. I turned into the one thing I thought I could never become.

It was Jorge who gave me my assignments. He was the only person there who knew about my tumor, who was aware of the whole story. I thought he could act as my memory when it left me and when I disappeared along with it, someone who would keep dreaming for me, in my place. I thought he wanted to test me. I'd almost forgotten about the dead bodies and the medical procedures (that was what I once wanted to do) when he came to me with the case of the insane psychiatrist. While I was still studying medicine, I had to do medical check-ups, emergency procedures, and medical evacuations. The med evacs were the least common and the most work. I only ever did two, actually. A kid in Germany, who had a psychotic break after an unexplained suicide attempt, and a girl in Africa who was misdiagnosed with dementia. In general, the cases involved people who'd left Brazil for an extended period of time (it rarely happened with tourists on vacation), and they'd go crazy in their country's absence. They'd often be people with no history of mental illness, which made things worse, since they were caught off guard, unprepared. Suddenly, they went crazy. It was necessary to look for them and bring them back. It was necessary for a medical escort, a medical student at the very least, to accompany them. It was recommended that the escort speak the same language; this would comfort the patient. It was essential to have the right contacts in order to get the job. After having done one med evac, I ended up being called to do another. People trusted me. I never spoke to anyone directly responsible for the patients. I didn't even know who was responsible. There'd always be some intermediary from the medical school. I never thought this would keep happening to me in the army. "Why does an aspirant officer need to go?" I asked Jorge. I knew that his colleagues were jealous of him and that they didn't like me by association. They didn't trust me. When we saw each other again, it was inevitable. It had been so many years since we'd seen each other, since we were little, since that same day when Bob proposed to my mom and Jorge told me that he wished he'd been born a girl, and then, when we picked up where we left off, there in the barracks, it was unexpected and intense but also very fast, and he wanted to forget about it as quickly as possible, always avoiding the subject whenever it threatened to come up in the following months, after we stopped having a thing. We didn't mention it when the case of the insane psychiatrist came up, acting like nothing had ever happened. And so I thought about what he might be trying to tell me with that test. Jorge always said that no one could fuck him (it was unclear if he said it with regret or pride). Now that he didn't want anything to do with me, he only sought me out when he was drunk (he was only himself when he was drunk), and then, with no pretext, he'd just say he wanted to be fucked.

For better or for worse, when things start to happen, they happen all at once, I'd told Bob when we were

standing in the doorway of the surgery room on the night they removed the tumor from my mom's brain. It was the first thing that occurred to me when he asked if I remembered him. In fact, if it hadn't been for my mom's brain tumor and, as a genetic result, my own, which changed me, turned me into a different person at the same time as it made me forget who I once was, made me into something no one could be, I might never have heard of that name, Finklestone, or might never have noticed something out of the ordinary with that particular medical evacuation. Jorge called me into a corner of the barracks and said that it would be a different thing this time. This assignment was different. I had no idea. His whole act started to annoy me. I asked what the problem was. He said there wasn't one. But that I also shouldn't be asking questions. A psychiatrist went crazy in Chile. He'd disappeared nine years ago, hiding in some farm at the foot of the Andes, between volcanoes, maybe, or somewhere in an ice field, whatever, no one knew. A psychiatric escort (a medical student, like I was) would come with me. I was shocked. Not because the student was going but because I was. I knew about that kind of job. Exactly, Jorge said. It was a nightmare. Why a soldier? It wasn't even close to normal. And to what end? I wanted to know why. He said that he also didn't know and repeated the thing about how I shouldn't be asking questions. I asked again. Why an aspirant officer? There had to be some reason for them to call in the army. Why did I have to go? Why me, now that I was done with all of that? He was annoyed. He said that if I didn't want to he'd get someone else to do it. Then I stayed quiet. Before I left, he told me that, along with the plane ticket and the money that would be in the package delivered to my building the day before the trip, there'd also be a file on the psychiatrist with a sample of some of his work, a couple of the clinical case studies he wrote when he was still in Brazil ten years ago, so that I'd be able to get an idea of the guy (even though, in a way, I already "knew what this was about" – I think he was being sarcastic). I'd also get an envelope with the name of the man who would be waiting for me at the airport in Santiago, but no information about the medical escort who would be traveling with me, nothing, not even if we were going to be on the same plane. And then, to my total surprise, he kissed me on the lips, which was something he hadn't done in months and especially not in the barracks, and then he left. I stood there watching him walk away. When he was almost at the end of the hallway he stopped, turned back towards me, and said that he'd forgotten something important: the psychiatrist, who'd disappeared for nine years, had turned up all of a sudden and for no apparent reason, in the city of Los Angeles in the south of Chile, and the next day there was a significant earthquake in Los Angeles, California.

"No one knows why he ended up there. And he won't say anything. The only thing they know is that he showed up in Los Angeles in the south of Chile and there was the earthquake in Los Angeles, California," he said. I didn't get the connection. He looked at me in silence, shrugged his shoulders (I think he was especially cynical), asked me when I was going to invite him over, and then disappeared.

Photograph of
Bernardo Carvalho
by Lara Norgaard



Now, Bernardo Carvalho sits down with *W*Lara Norgaard to discuss his novel and the complex, contradictory relationship between fiction and witness testimony.

Artememoria: You wrote *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos* (The Drunks and the Sleepwalkers) in the 1990s, when the theme of the military dictatorship wasn't very present in Brazilian literature, or in the arts more generally. Do you remember what inspired you to write about the dictatorship?

Bernardo Carvalho: I remember that in the 1980s, during the dictatorship and immediately after it ended, testimonial literature was very present in Brazil. The idea of witnessing was a priority in Brazilian literature. For example, when Fernando Gabeira came back from exile, he wrote the book *O que é isso companheiro?* (What's this, Comrade?), which was a total success. It felt that testimonial literature was almost the genre in Brazil at the time. A lot of interesting accounts came with that, but literature itself lost something.

Since I began to write, I felt a certain resistance to the testimonial literary project. It's still very present today with the idea of gender and race, of reducing literature to the representation of your experience as an individual and to your politics. I've always thought that literature could do more than that. If you reduce literature to witness testimony, whether it be to the experience of minorities today or of the dictatorship back then, it means reducing literature's potential to something normative and preestablished. It becomes something determined a

priori. And for me, fiction has in it an investigation, in the sense of exploring that which is unknown, that which we have not yet discovered. That interests me more than recounting what I myself have lived, even if the two things are somewhat intertwined.

So what happened with *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos*, I think, is that I was interested in the fragility of identity. You can think about that in terms of the private individual as well as in terms of society. That is to say, people believe too much in the social identity with which they are confronted. To believe that because you're American means one thing, or because you're Brazilian, gay, a woman, black means something else. Of course, identity has a very strong political force in how individuals are incorporated into social groups and political struggle. But it can also function as a sort of convention, and literature has the power to go beyond those categories. That's what I was thinking about when I wrote the book. I grew up in the 1970s and left my teenage years in the hegemony of testimonial literature. I wanted to return to the idea of literature as invention and imagination.

In the novel you have the central character, the one with the brain tumor and the shifting identity. With him you see that fragility of identity and, as a consequence, the fragility of testimonial discourse, too. The discourse of the witnesses presupposes that you believe testimony is one fixed thing, but memory can involve imagination and lies, too. When you recount memories, you often resort to fiction as a tool.

Beyond that, I think there is novelistic potential in the context of a dictatorship. Fascism creates possibilities for encounters and conflicts between characters that are extremely dramatic. In the novel, you see this in the character who is very rich, part of the elite bourgeoisie, who secretly finances the guerrilla resistance movements. In states of exception, under totalitarianism, you find something very potent and powerful for a novel. So, the book came from that place as well, from seeing the dictatorship as a novelistic moment, too.

Artememoria: Your point about the limits of witness testimony, or the limits of a narrative that is purely testimonial, reminds me of the first line of *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos* which says, “the witness has a purpose and their testimony does not just serve legal or journalistic ends but rather something else.”

Carvalho: That's what interested me, that something else. I don't know what that something else is and, in that paragraph, we find that no one knows what it is. The story begins with the search for the function of testimony that isn't a function at all.

Artememoria: That first paragraph of the novel also begs the question of who narrates the histories that we live and remember. That's interesting in the context of Brazil in the 1990s. Brazil didn't have very good memory politics. In fact, it often is seen as having a politics of forgetting. In the context of an official memory that forgets, what role does literature play?

Carvalho: Brazilian society didn't have the urge to

remember, it had the urge to forget. It's strange. I was in Argentina during the protests supporting Rousseff's impeachment, and Argentinians couldn't believe that Brazilians were saying that they wanted the dictatorship to return. They were apologists for torture, just as Jair Bolsonaro had been in congress. The fact that Bolsonaro could honor a torturer in political assembly, not suffer any consequences, and actually poll second for the 2018 presidential election is extremely alarming. That's inconceivable in Argentina. Though there might be fascists there, they could never announce it in public.

Brazil needed to really break away from the dictatorship, but that never happened because of the amnesty law. I remember fighting as an activist for amnesty when I was in my teens. Everyone on the left did, because the idea was to bring back everyone who was exiled. But then they gave amnesty to the torturers as well, which is something that did not happen in Argentina. Socially, that bothers me and interests me.

But in literature, I find the idea of testimonial literature unsettling. I think that in the 1980s, after the amnesty law was took effect, all of that testimonial literature acted as a sort of palliative to a lack that existed socially and politically in the macro organization of Brazilian society. The first paragraph in *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos* has to do with that. Literature is capable of something, and I'm not sure of what. That's what interests me. It's very powerful, destabilizing, and politically compelling, but that doesn't mean it can be boiled down to a topic or preestablished political norm that hasn't been realized in society. Literature and political struggle are two different things, even if they aren't completely separate. Literature is political and always will be but cannot be reduced to a politics or an identity that is predetermined.

I don't want to bear witness with my literature. At the same time, in *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos*, I wanted to recover memory in a way that interested me.

Artememoria: That's precisely why this first issue of Artememoria centers on the question of testimony. In the arts, political witnessing is a contested concept. Artists seem to agree that testimony has some role but differ in how they see what that role is.

Carvalho: I think it's very complex. There is incredible art that bears witness, like Kerry James Marshall, a black artist whose work I recently saw at an exhibition in the Met Breuer. He has these huge paintings that are political and, in a sense, testimonial. He depicts different iconic moments in African American history, but there's something there that goes beyond, that carries the sense of the unknown. Witnessing clearly plays a role there, what's interesting is how it doesn't correspond to the idea of testimony that you have before coming into contact with the art. Artistic testimony is interesting when it doesn't correspond with our shared memories. Instead, it's surprising, even when you go to Kerry James Marshall's exhibition already knowing African American history.

That kind of art that adds depth to political struggle. It doesn't circumscribe, replicate, or confirm a discourse that already exists in society. It broadens the conversation. And when that conversation expands, contradic-

tions, ambiguities, and conflicts emerge. Art cannot be normative or directive and tell you what to think of a certain concept. It requires you to think, and it's interesting because it might require you to confront a contradiction.

Another book that comes to mind is *The Sellout* by Paul Beatty. It's about a black character who decides to reinstate re-segregating racial discrimination in Los Angeles. It's extremely powerful and at the same time, very ironic. Obviously, he couldn't have written the novel if he weren't black, and testimony is at play there, but it's also a polemical book that carries conflict. He contributes something unique, adding further insight to the struggle for black rights in the United States.

In art, you have a second level of discourse, which is somewhat ironic, since what your character says is not what you yourself think. Witnessing enters art but it does not correspond to the testimony that exists in society.

Artememoria: I think artistic testimony often works with silence, as well. That's very present in *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos*. There is constantly some sort of silence, always an unfinished sentence, both in a literal and conceptual sense. In that way, I see the work as one that approaches what is absent in memory and that feeling of forgetting, all of which was very present in Brazil after the dictatorship.

Carvalho: Yes. It has to do with silence and my own experience right after the end of the military dictatorship. I was a child during the dictatorship and I remember authoritarianism as a sort of ghost that was always present, but present in a way where the danger could never reach me. Maybe that's why I think of the dictatorship as novelistic. It always affected the other. I was always the spectator, and sometimes not even that because the dictatorship was often silent and invisible.

I remember a friend's eighth birthday party where the dad didn't come home. The dad hadn't come home and the dad still hadn't come home. All the little kids were there, watching a movie, while a commotion started in the house. The mom realized that the dad had been taken prisoner, and it was her daughter's birthday. I also remember my mom talking about one of her friend's sister who had been put into a cold-storage room one night. She spent a whole night inside of a walk-in refrigerator, freezing. I lived the dictatorship through these images of the other and through the imagination of a child.

When you hear something like that as a child, your mind twists it. I think *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos* represents that. The novel is contorted and everything is a bit incomprehensible. It's filled with silences and invisibility and sentences that end without ending, all of which has to do with something that isn't seen but that is instead guessed at.

My memories of dictatorship aren't direct experiences but mediated ones. Things would happen to the people around me, but nothing ever happened to me. Maybe that's why I'm able to turn that violence into a novel. If I had directly lived it, I might not be able to express the pain. But since it never touched me, since I always saw it in the other, that's how I manage to transmit that memory and transform it into something dramatic.

I think literature has a lot to do with the urge to recount a memory that isn't your own. It's very different from witness testimony in society, where you go to court and say what they did to you and who should be held accountable. With literature, you hear someone say something and you want to live it. I wouldn't call it sympathy or empathy because I also find those terms to be reductive descriptors of literature. Beatty, after all, constantly works against empathy. Reading his book is unbearable, and that's what's so interesting. You can read something that horrifies you without it personally disrespecting you. The arts allow for the chance to reproduce what perturbs you. That itself is a contradiction, and its source is the urge to see from the other's perspective and tell a story that isn't your own.

There's a line near the end of my book *Mongólia* that reads, “*a literatura quem faz são os outros*” — “Literature is written by the other.” That is my understanding of witnessing in literature, which isn't necessarily testimony at all because it is the testimony of the other. There's something beautiful in the possibility of a kind of solidarity, one that runs against the notion of appropriation, the idea that you can't tell the story of a suffering that you never felt. If there's some ingenious about humanity, it's imagination and the ability to put yourself in someone else's skin, in someone else's body. I clearly didn't experience the pain of dictatorship myself, but in my imagined story I somehow recounted someone else's pain in a warped, twisted, and indirect way.

Artememoria: Another one of your novels, *Reprodução* (Reproduction), has a lot to do with putting yourself in the place of the other, and not necessarily an other with whom you agree. What was it like to write *Reprodução*? How did you get the idea for that novel?

Carvalho: The idea was simple and a bit ridiculous, too. I studied Chinese for a long time, and at a school where one day there would be one teacher and the next day a different one. The teachers would resign or leave, and that gave me the idea of writing a book about a person who went to a school where the teachers disappeared. With one of my teachers, I thought, I'm going to write her story. She'd come here from China, very poor, to work as a missionary for a Brazilian evangelical church. I started writing notes about the Chinese teacher. It relates to something in Brazil that I find very disquieting, which is a very heavy handed, normative take on religion.

Then, I started to write from the perspective of the teacher's student, a fascist, someone on the internet's extreme right. And I liked writing that way, saying absolutely terrible things that I don't agree with, like a kid who goes to the dinner table and talks about pee and poo.

There's a childish side to that book, and I think we are currently living in a moment of global infantilization. People who post on the internet have an extremely childish relationship with the world. That's the dark side to the story. The internet allows you to related to the world in a sheltered, irresponsible way. What people say online has no consequences, as though they were children.

The language of the fascist character has to do with that childishness and my ludic pleasure in writing those

barbarities. Everyday I would come up with something horrendous and then I went about filtering everything, since I'd written every possible discriminatory comment. Then, I took the two stories, that of the Chinese teacher and the internet fascist, and merged them. So the novel came out of that moment.

Artememoria: So you noticed these social issues and the novel was a kind of means to think through them?

Carvalho: Yes, it's a way of narrating social issues, but it also problematizes them in a way that relates to what interests me in literature, like the style of narration and a sort of self-reflection.

Artememoria: Are there any authors that have influenced you to write these narratives that are political but not testimonial, that delve into social phenomena without driving towards a specific and dogmatic idea?

Carvalho: Thinking retrospectively, I think my approach to testimony is similar to W.G. Sebald, a German author who wrote *Austerlitz*, *Vertigo*, and *The Emigrants*. His is a totally different kind of writing, but testimony is present in his work in a way that is twisted and combines with something very literary that is really elevating. He didn't influence me, since I only started reading him recently, but I think we have something parallel.

There are other authors who may have influenced me with the question of testimony. One is Thomas Bernhard, an Austrian writer, whose frenzied literature relates to the character in *Reprodução*. His seems like it might be testimonial literature in the style of narration, but it isn't, it's something else.

Bernhard has had a huge influence on what I write, particularly from a literary perspective and in terms of my understanding of fiction. I read him for the first time when I first started writing, and I had writer's block at the time. He wrote a kind of fiction that, if you were to categorize it, would be a classic kind of literature. But it's a flawed literature, filled with repetitions. He constantly repeats himself and has these strangely constructed, interminable sentences. If his prose were to fall on the desk of a traditional editor, it would either get thrown out or completely rewritten. For me, that was an epiphany. I realized that literature is the transformation of your flaws into quality. It's not when you try to get rid of your flaws, it's when you understand what your flaw is, which has to do with your own identity, and you turn that into something positive. You turn it into a work of art. Your flaws gain form.

And with that, I understood what literature is for me. It was incredible because it gave me direction, and at that exact moment I began to write. My writing itself is not very similar to Bernhard's, but reading his work made me see something I had never thought about in any of the books I had read before.

In terms of Brazilian authors, I think Machado de Assis relates to my work in some way. I read *Esau e Jacó* the other day, which is a novel I'd never read, and it was interesting how opaque the writing is. He constructs the

sentences as though they were prewritten, as though whole worlds are hidden behind those sentences. The prose doesn't have the transparency of the Portuguese realism of an author like Eça de Queiroz, for example. Eça manages to describe a transparent world, one in which you understand and see everything, everything in each character. For Machado, it's nearly the opposite. Everything is a bit nebulous and invisible. His language is masked in comparison to European writing.

That's what draws me to Machado. It's this idea that in Brazil, in the periphery of global capitalism, reality can only be communicated through a literature that is somewhat veiled. Maybe that relates to my refusal of a direct account of events. The truth in this complex, Brazilian world can only be reached through obscurity and through the provocation of saying, I'm not going to make this complete or give you clarity, I'm going to give you something difficult to see. Machado de Assis does that. Racism is present in his books, but it is left unsaid, and his characters are generally white. But that racism is there, ever-present, like a ghost.

The idea of witnessing and testimonial literature, like that of Gabeira, presumes a kind of transparency of experience, which was therapeutic for the public. Like I said, his book was a bestseller when it came out in a society that hadn't dealt with its history. The problem with the dictatorship and with witnessing is that the past hasn't been resolved. It hasn't and it still isn't. And so people needed the language of personal experience because it provided a kind of transparency that the country doesn't have.

But what I find interesting about Brazilian literature is the opposite, the opaque literature, the kind that Machado writes, the language that doesn't open a window to the world but that covers the world with something twisted. That carries an amazing amount of intelligence and a great challenge. Subconsciously, maybe, it relates to the literature I write. I try to create testimony that is witness to the unsaid and the unseen.

This interview was edited and condensed for clarity.

Bernardo Carvalho was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1960 and is a Brazilian novelist and journalist. *Os bêbados e os sonâmbulos* was his second novel, published in 1996, and the literary fiction he has written since includes award-winning novels such as *Reprodução*, *Mongólia*, and the book *Nove Noites – Nine Nights* – which is available in Benjamin Moser's English translation. He has corresponded for the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* from both Paris and New York and currently lives in São Paulo.

Translated from the Portuguese by Lara Norgaard.

EXHIBIT MEMORY

In *Hiatus: A Memória da Violência Ditatorial na América Latina*, displayed in the Memorial da Resistência in São Paulo, a group of international artists approach untold histories of state oppression from across Latin America. In this virtual exhibition, curator Márcio Seligmann-Silva guides us through the artwork and then discusses the historical and theoretical motivations for mounting an exhibition that runs counter to Brazil's official narratives of both past and present violence. All photos printed here are used with permission from Seligmann-Silva and the photographer Joca Duarte.

1. Entrance to the exhibition *Hiatus: a memória da violência ditatorial na América Latina* (Hiatus: Memory of Dictatorship Violence in Latin America). Photo: Joca Duarte

"Hiatus is the suspension of democracy, of the rule of law, which didn't only take place during the dictatorship; it's part of our history," says curator Márcio Seligmann-Silva, who walks *Artememoria* through some of the exhibition.

The art is on display through March 12th, 2018 in the *Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo*, Brazil's only site of memory related to the military dictatorship. Artists from different countries and generations contribute to the exhibition, which focuses on various Latin American dictatorships as well as continuities in state violence before and after those authoritarian regimes.



INTERVIEW WITH MÁRCIO SELIGMANN-SILVA

Artememoria: Let's begin with a question that relates to monuments, memorials, and sites of memory. We were just in the Memorial da Resistência, which is the only site of memory about the authoritarian periods in Brazil, and you chose to mount the exhibition Hiatus there. What is the role of the artist in public memory in Brazil?

Márcio Seligmann-Silva: In Brazil, there was a trend of retreating from historical themes for artists working post-1985. There was

a very strong abstract and formalist movement at the time. That kind of art has its merits. But a rapid forgetting in the arts accompanied the type of political transition we experienced in Brazil.

In Brazil, the transition from dictatorship to democracy was organized over the course of almost ten years, under General Ernesto Geisel and then under General João Baptista de Oliveira Figueiredo. When the transition finally took place, the first president was from the dictatorship system.

You can see that the pact of continuity has stayed in intact to

this day. During Lula da Silva's two terms in office, Brazil did not organize a truth commission. Under Dilma Rousseff, who herself had been a prisoner and was tortured under the military dictatorship, Brazil finally managed to organize the National Truth Commission. But it was a truth commission with limits, since it did not have access to military archives. The commission could almost only work with information that had already been researched. And so, the commission discovered hardly anything new. It deepened our knowledge of certain things and brought a lot of information together. It also acted as a catalyst, but it didn't make any real advances because the state kept its archives closed.

The National Truth Commission had very well intentioned people involved, and they make it very clear on the document, which is publically available online, that this commission is just a first step, that it should be the first of various truth commissions. But the opposite happened. The report was published and right afterwards people forgot. It was a remarkable bureaucratization of memory, not a real confrontation with the past or an incorporation of human rights into government policy.

There was always an effort to forget and deny rather than elaborate this memory. There are no marks of our violence. There is no museum about slavery in Brazil. With this very new generation of artists that works with memory, and in the exhibition, Clara Ianni and Jaime Lauriano are from that generation, there is a new project of reframing Brazil's history from the point of view of violence. It's the opposite of what the truth commission did, and specially the opposite of didactic history textbooks. Those documents have an absurd amount of symbolic violence because they make folk narratives from indigenous and black Brazilian history, masking the realities of genocide.

So I think artists have a huge role. And when I say artists, I'm referring specifically to visual artists, but this also includes film and literature. Art is a territory for conversation and dialogue. These works that deal specifically with memory propose new readings of the past. They allow for an ethical and dialogical reopening of the past, of a history that isn't written. This exhibition, for example, makes room for empathy and a kind of cathartic encounter with our suppressed past, breaking down the wall of forgetting that we have in Brazil.

Artememoria: What is the difference, then, between a monument or memory



2. *Fazer/Fusão (Doing/Fusion)*, 2017. Andreas Knitz (b. Germany, 1963). Photo: Joca Duarte

"Andreas Knitz works with the National Truth Commission report," Seligmann-Silva explains. Here, at the exhibition opening, Knitz drops the pages from the commission into a fluid-filled tank. "His idea was make this infusion, to make a kind of cure, in a curatorial sense, as though this were in a hospital." Note the intravenous tubing that goes from the tank to the floor.

"He put a hole in the wall." The intravenous tube from the tank that contains the National Truth Commission documents runs along the floor of the museum, through the hole, and hangs from the third floor, dripping down onto the pavement of the parking lot. As Seligmann-Silva says, "It leaves the museum space, rupturing the white cube, this modernist, elitist construction that tries to separate art from society. In this case, it is an especially cruel construction because this building used to be the State Department of Political and Social Order (*DEOPS*), a prison and torture center. The building was remolded in a classically Brazilian way, covering up the past. It has become a white cube isolated from history when in reality it's a historical building with a heavy past."

3. *Fazer/Fusão (Doing/Fusion)*, 2017. Andreas Knitz (b. Germany, 1963). Photo: Márcio Seligmann-Silva



project that an artist creates and official testimony and memory initiatives? Do artists add something with their interventions?

Seligmann-Silva: First, there is something that has taken place in art history in the past few decades, specifically in the 1960s and 1970s, that we call the Experiential Turn in visual art. Pieces became more performative, and that performance quality places the self in art. It is a constructed self, but a self nevertheless. The artist who works with memory incorporates historical testimony into the self. As we look at the piece, we then incorporate the artist's incorporation of that testimony into ourselves. The artist mediates memory. So it is a subjective memory, not something objective and abstract. The artist humanizes that memory, constructing an open channel for empathy.

The problem is that people don't have compassion when it comes to current violence. Through the kind of memory here, people must also face their own dead. The art breaks a barrier that society has built in the present. That is, Brazil blocks information not just about past violence, but also about violence in the present. Current violence is sensationalized to spread fear. That happens in the US and Brazil, as well as in other countries. In the US, there is a fear of terrorism, and here we have a fear of violence, one that criminalizes poverty.

Artememoria: That connection to the present is an interesting component of *Hiatus*. The exhibition includes works of art that are very focused on dictatorship but some pieces, like Jaime Lauriano's video, are about current violence. Then you also include pieces like Marcelo Brodsky's *Terra Brasilis*, which discusses continuities between colonial Brazil and the dictatorships. As a curator, how did you balance defining dictatorship as a state of exception while showing these continuities?

Seligmann-Silva: These pieces came from a process of debate and conversation. I've been working with most of these artists for sixteen years, and with Clara Ianni and Jaime Lauriano for around two, but I've been acquainted with their work for some time.

A year before *Hiatus* opened, we all met in the Goethe Institute in São Paulo. I organized a seminar that everyone participated in to discuss these very questions. In those discussions it became very clear that we needed to expand from the period of the dictatorship. These exceptional moments of violence, ones that mark a suspension of the rule of law, are unfortunately a constant

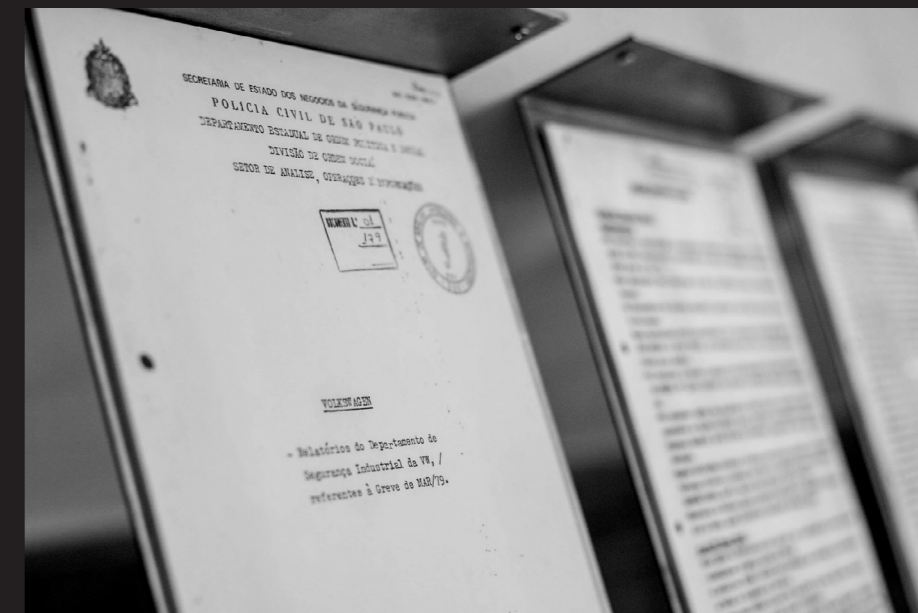


4. *Fazer/Fusão (Doing/Fusion)*, 2017. Andreas Knitz (b. Germany, 1963). Photo: Joca Duarte

"Andreas restores the historical weight of the space. And here, these life stories, the entire Truth Commission report, Brazil's history, is being worked through in this pneumatic liquid that could eventually be filtered out, transforming this into a useful tool for society."

"A lot of artists currently working with memory in Latin America are researchers. Clara Ianni went to the archive of the state of São Paulo, which has the documents related to this building, which used to be the DOPS. There, she found this document, the 'Relatório do Departamento de Segurança Industrial do Volkswagen.'" The document is a Volkswagen security report from 1979, Seligmann-Silva explains, but it's printed on São Paulo police letterhead. "It shows the company's total servility and cooperation with the dictatorship. In it, a Volkswagen employee simply recounts the things other Volkswagen workers have done that he considers politically dangerous."

5. *Detalhes observados (Observed details)*, 2017. Clara Ianni (b. Brazil, 1987). Photo: Márcio Seligmann-Silva



in Brazil. Remembering the dictatorship creates a critical lens for our own present. All work related to memory takes place in the present. You remember in the current moment. Your memory revolves around topics currently around you.

Coming out of these discussions, the artists in *Hiatus* independently developed their artwork. Some focused more on the question of continuities and others less so. In Fúlvia's case, I would say that there's almost no sense of continuity in her pieces, which isn't a problem at all. For Jaime, continuity is very visible. With *Terra Brasilis*, Marcelo Brodsky presents the ties between capitalism and dictatorship and in that way reveals the similarities to what's happening in Brazil in 2016 and 2017. I was really pleased that this aspect of our discussions ended up so central to the exhibition.

Additionally, there's the question of that mythic number, 434. It appears in Fúlvia's pieces and Horst's and in Rodrigo's a bit, too. But it's also a number that other artists call into question. That creates a debate about the official construction of the number of assassinated and disappeared, which is important, since it's a number that needs to be revisited and revised. For that reason, I think it's extremely important that the exhibition had a piece about racial violence.

To be honest, for the exhibition to be even better, we would have needed a piece about indigenous communities, which is a topic that was left out. The Truth Commission shows that in only a small region of Brazil there were over eight thousand indigenous deaths because a highway was built. That's violence on a massive scale, and it continues today. Dilma Rousseff's administration, which organized this Truth Commission, was also responsible for building Belo Monte Hydroelectric Dam, which had terrible effects on indigenous communities near the Xingu River in the state of Pará. The Juruna, the Arara, and other indigenous groups ended up without access to the river. This is state violence because it was Norte Energia consortium that built the dam. The consortium involves private businesses, public funds, and multinational corporations, representing a state violence totally coopted by capitalist forces. And indigenous groups are the most forgotten in discussions of state violence.

Artememoria: These official narratives of the past have a lot of absences, and it seems that various artists try to approach this question of how to express what isn't there. However, a related topic is the issue of how putting history inside of a museum



6. *Detalhes observados* (Observed details), 2017. Clara Ianni (b. Brazil, 1987).
Photo: Márcio Seligmann-Silva

Clara Ianni displays a Volkswagen advertisement above the document. "She intentionally creates a kind of baroque emblem where you have an image and its subscription," Seligmann-Silva comments. "She places this intended promise of happiness next to terror."

runs the risk of silencing memory in public, lived life. That's an idea that the French theorist Pierre Nora proposes. How did you and the artists in the exhibition confront that dilemma?

Seligmann-Silva: Pierre Nora also coined the expression and idea of sites of memory. This exhibition is mounted in a site of memory, which is unfortunately the only space of memory that Brazil has in relation to the 1964-1985 dictatorship.

It's key we managed to put an art exhibition in this site of memory. Normally, this space is reserved for displaying evidence and testimony. That is extremely important and plays a central role in countries that experience a sort of revisionism of the past, both in Latin America and beyond. But art creates new ways to rethink the past in *Hiatus*. It was a very original curatorial choice to bring a reflection on dictatorships in Latin America through art.

In terms of the dialectic between containment and opening in the institution of the museum, there's Viém Flusser, a Czech-Brazilian theorist, who explains that museums, in the 19th century, were created to control images. You had a museum boom that continued into the 20th century. Those museums are prisons for images, and the images want to leave.

Despite that, I think we need to face this dilemma. Just because the risk of that imprisonment exists doesn't mean that we should completely renounce these spaces. The idea of the exhibition is to make images circulate. The *Memorial da Resistência*, where it is mounted, has the great advantage of being frequently visited.

A lot of schools visit as well, which is fantastic because students get acquainted with a kind of artistic language. Art is a complex language different from bureaucratic, historical, and juridical language that aspires to be a transparent, direct language. Art presents itself as an ambiguous, as a representation that demands interpretation and freedom. When I would talk to students as I guided the exhibition, they would ask me, 'what does that mean?' I'd say, 'what do you think it means?' Art is a construction that only forms upon its reception.

There's also a terrifying fact about Brazil. Because of this silenced and suppressed history, there are no iconic images of violence in this country. A lot of those images exist, but they aren't disseminated. Our culture is the kind that makes the *Monumento às Bandeiras*, which is the biggest monument in Brazil, and it honors the bandeirantes, the group that went into the forests and es-

established Brazil's borders, killing indigenous people, enslaving indigenous people, raping indigenous people. They are our greatest heroes and the people we honor in our plazas. São Paulo is full of bandeirantes. You have bandeirantes avenues and highways and that huge monument. You also have the Operation Bandeirantes. What was that? It was the operation that began the practice of disappearance and torture in São Paulo, under the dictatorship.

Artememoria: This reminds me of the public debate in the United States over Confederate monuments. And what interests me is that you frame it as a question of national symbols and images. In that sense, artistic intervention is very important.

Seligmann-Silva: Yes. One aspect of artistic language is its ability to ironize. Francisco Goya, with his famous scenes of the destruction and violence of the Napoleonic Wars in Spain, was one of the founders of this modern movement of counter-history in art, the kind that tries to show the other side of the story, that of violence rather than heroes. And Goya was satirical. His captions are ironic.

Artememoria: Irony inverts hierarchies and systems of power.

Seligmann-Silva: It does. The center of Paris has the Vendôme Column, a huge dedication to Napoleon. Napoleon is still a hero in France. And France, like all countries with revisionist histories, took decades to come to terms with the fact that it collaborated extensively with the Nazis. It had the Vichy government, and they turned in tens of thousands of Jews to the Germans. There was French resistance, of course. But the dominant narrative is one that says, we had the French Revolution and founded human rights, which is a very acritical perspective.

Artememoria: France and Germany are actually very relevant here, since Hiatus doesn't only have Brazilian artists discussing memory politics. The exhibition covers not only different countries in Latin America, but it also includes the work of European artists. Why did you broaden the scope of the exhibition beyond Brazil?

Seligmann-Silva: The idea is to think about the dictatorship in the context of the Cold War. If you think about the Brazilian dictatorship in isolation you can lose sight of that fundamental context. Operation



7. *Memória do Esquecimento: As 434 Vitimas* (Memory of Forgetfulness: The 434 Victims), 2017. Fúlvia Molina (b. Brazil, 1945). Photo: Joca Duarte

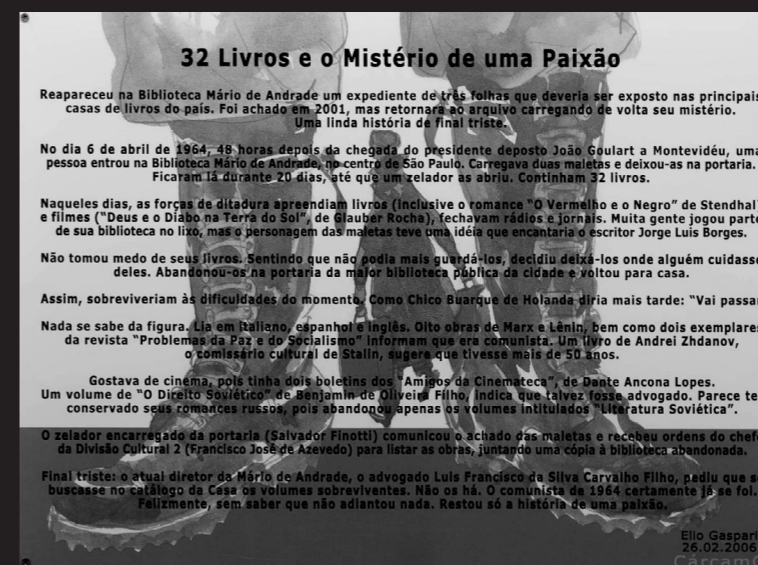
"Fúlvia makes totem poles, which are a kind of funereal tribute," the curator tells me as we reach the transparent structures. The images on these columns are photographs of the 434 people who were disappeared or killed under the dictatorship according to the National Truth Commission. "She displays these photos, giving a name and a subjectivity to each person. She makes history human."



8. *Memória do Esquecimento: As 434 Vitimas* (Memory of Forgetfulness: The 434 Victims), 2017. Fúlvia Molina (b. Brazil, 1945). Photo: Joca Duarte

The images on the wall are the same photographs as the ones on the columns. If you go up to wall, though, you see that the images are doubled. That's because Molina printed the photographs on two acrylic sheets rather than one. "It gives you a sense of depth, of life. And there's information on each person," Seligmann-Silva also points out the QR codes that are on the wall, accompanying each photograph. These QR codes allow the viewer to read biography of the person pictured.

Molina adds this sense of depth to a history that she herself lived. "Unlike Clara Ianni, who was born in 1987, after the dictatorship, Fúlvia participated in resistance movements to the dictatorship in the 1960s," Seligmann-Silva says. "This is her personal memory. She witnessed this."



9. *Memória do Esquecimento: As maletas "esquecidas": O interdito* (Memory of Forgetfulness: The "Forgotten" Suitcases: The Interdicted), 2017. Fúlvia Molina (b. Brazil, 1945). Photo: Joca Duarte



10. *Memória do Esquecimento: As maletas "esquecidas": O interdito* (Memory of Forgetfulness: The "Forgotten" Suitcases: The Interdicted), 2017. Fúlvia Molina (b. Brazil, 1945). Photo: Joca Duarte



11. *Série Perigosos, Subversivos, Seditiosos [cardernos do povo brasileiro]*, 2017 (Series: Dangerous, Subversive, Seditious [notebooks of the Brazilian people]), 2017. Leila Danziger (b. Brazil, 1962). Photo: Joca Duarte

This is an art piece made up of different components, including this text of a reported article originally published in the *Folha de São Paulo*. The article recounts this story: after the 1964 coup, someone put their collection of banned books in two suitcases and brought it to the Mário de Andrade Library, a public library in São Paulo, because they were afraid to keep the books at home. The library made a list of the books but never stocked them on their shelves.

"The idea was that the library would protect them, right?" Seligmann-Silva suggests. "But the books disappeared."

"So Fúlvia went online, to a website that connects all the used bookstores in Brazil and sells used books. She rebought all the books on the list, putting them in these suitcases," Seligmann-Silva describes the cases of books on the floor beneath the newspaper article. "This is a kind of mise en scène, since it's fake. It's her own construction of an event. She recreates the moment of this person who was afraid to keep the books that became dangerous."

Half of Leila Danziger's exhibition is a wall of censored books. "You can see that they're either political or pornographic. Cheap morality meets cheap anticommunism," Seligmann-Silva says.

He also mentions that Leila mounted the exhibition at the same time as Santander Cultural, an arts space in Porto Alegre, closed the *Queermuseum* art exhibition after pressure from the far-right. (For more information, see Artememoria's interview Gaudêncio Fidelis, curator of *Queermuseum*).

Condor was a plan that articulated these dictatorships. The dictatorships came into existence as the result of collaboration between countries. Thinking about these countries in tandem is a key aspect of critical counter-memory. And it lessens any kind of nationalistic discourse, which is very dangerous.

Artememoria: Do you think that other Southern Cone countries think about the Brazilian dictatorship?

Seligmann-Silva: No. That's only started happening recently, as Brazil itself began to reflect on its dictatorship. Before that, Spanish-speaking Latin America, and the Southern Cone in particular, had a dialogue that Brazil was not a part of. I've been to events in Santiago and Buenos Aires, and there was a lot of knowledge amongst the Spanish-speaking countries, but everything related to Brazil was relatively new.

Ideally, we'd be able to circulate the exhibition and bring it to Santiago, Buenos Aires, and elsewhere. We'll see where *Hiatus* goes next.

This interview was edited and condensed for clarity.

Márcio Seligmann-Silva is a professor of literary theory at the University of Campinas and a researcher with Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development. He specializes in a range of fields including memory politics and media theory. From 2006-2010, he coordinated the São Paulo Research Foundation's series *Escritas da Violência* (Writing Violence), a collaborative project with the aim of expanding upon current theory related to the question of representing violence.

Translated from the Portuguese by Lara Norgaard.



12. *Série Perigosos, Subversivos, Sediciosos [cardernos do povo brasileiro]*, 2017 (Series: Dangerous, Subversive, Seditious [notebooks of the Brazilian people]), 2017. Leila Danziger (b. Brazil, 1962). Photo: Joca Duarte

On the adjacent wall, Leila displays a series of photographed faces. The pictures in black and white are images of the disappeared from the National Truth Commission, and the colored photos are more contemporary; they are the faces of people of color killed directly by the police or by stray police bullets in Brazil's urban peripheries. The artist covers each face with a page from one of the censored books.

As Seligmann-Silva puts it, "Sometimes you have to conceal to be able to see, right?"

"You can interpret this in different ways," Seligmann-Silva comments. "She combines censorship and disappearance, body and crime. The images of bodies are next to the bodies of the books that evidence the crime that was the dictatorship."

13. *Série Perigosos, Subversivos, Sediciosos [cardernos do povo brasileiro]*, 2017 (Series: Dangerous, Subversive, Seditious [notebooks of the Brazilian people]), 2017. Leila Danziger (b. Brazil, 1962). Photo: Joca Duarte



14. *Posso não estar presente / Mas por mais que me ausente / Sempre estarei aqui* (I may not be present / But as much as I'm away / I will always be here), 2017. Rodrigo Yanes (b. Chile, 1964). Photo: Joca Duarte



15. *Posso não estar presente / Mas por mais que me ausente / Sempre estarei aqui* (I may not be present / But as much as I'm away / I will always be here), 2017. Rodrigo Yanes (b. Chile, 1964). Photo: Joca Duarte



16. *Justiça e Barbárie* (Justice and Barbarism), 2017. Jaime Lauriano (b. Brazil, 1985). Photo: Joca Duarte

Rodrigo Yanes works with private, intimate spaces. As he walks over to Yanes's piece, Seligmann begins singing the lyrics to the Chico Buarque song "Acorda Amor" (Wake Up, Love), the lyrics of which narrate someone being kidnapped from their house during the dictatorship.

"Intimacy ceases to exist. They take away intimacy itself," Seligmann says after he finishes singing.

On top of the unmade bed, Yanes scatters fragments of the biographies of the dead and disappeared from the truth commission report. Seligmann-Silva describes how the title of the piece also comes from the truth commission: "In the report there's a phrase that's a sort of poem that one of the disappeared wrote: 'I may not be present / But as much as I'm away / I will always be here.' It's as though he predicted his own death."

This two-minute video, available on the artist's website, shows images of present-day lynchings in Brazil. Along with the images, Jaime Lauriano includes the text of disturbingly celebratory comments that readers posted on mainstream digital news articles about these lynchings.

Semi-public violent spectacles also occurred under the military dictatorship. Lauriano writes: "Such practices can also be found in torture sessions during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship. Some of these sessions had an audience of people from the most diverse sectors of civil society who, through the purchase of a ticket, attended sessions of rape, shocks, beatings and other various

Images 17-21
continue on the next pages



17. *Terra Brasilis* (Terra Brasilis), 2017. Marcelo Brodsky (b. Argentina, 1954). Photo: Joca Duarte

On the left is the first map of Brazil, which the Portuguese named *Terra Brasilis*, superimposed with prints of 19th century European travelers. The next two maps are of Brazil during its two dictatorships: the middle map is from 1945 during the Vargas Era and the rightmost map is from 1970, during the 1964-1985 military dictatorship. On top of these two maps, Marcelo Brodsky puts the name of businesses that were documented to have supported the authoritarian regime 1964-1985. Capitalism runs through the triptych.

“You see a lot of multinational companies there, like Ford and General Electric. The most important Brazilian papers also supported the coup,” Seligmann-Silva says as we read through the names on the map. But these maps are not complete: Brodsky would have needed the whole wall to include descriptions of every company that supported the dictatorships.

“Marcelo Brodsky is an extremely well-known Argentinian artist,” Seligmann-Silva explains. “This here is his most famous piece.” Brodsky was part of the generation that resisted the Argentinian military dictatorship, like Fúlvia Molina was in Brazil. He takes his high school graduation picture – photographed in 1967, before the Argentinian military dictatorship – and after researching what happened to each of his classmates, writes the story of each person on top of the image. Claudio and Martín – circled in red – ended up getting murdered by the regime.

“He has here the question of building the history of a generation, one that was very affected by the military coup. And Brodsky himself was affected, too. He was exiled and he lost a brother.” Marcelo’s brother was disappeared and killed at the hands of the Argentinian dictatorship.

This photograph is just one component of the full *Buena Memoria* exhibition.



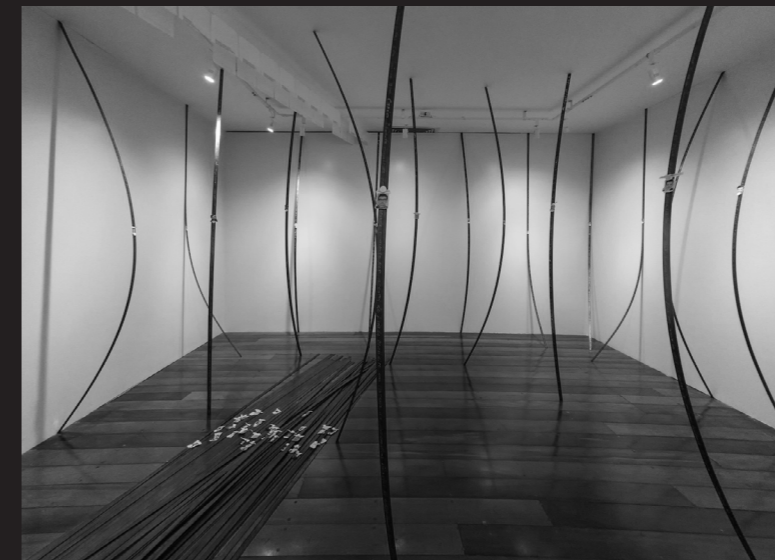
18. *Buena Memoria: La Clase* (The Class), 1996. Marcelo Brodsky (b. Argentina, 1954). Photo: Joca Duarte



19. 1968 o fogo das ideias, 2017. Marcelo Brodsky (b. Argentina, 1954). Photo: Joca Duarte

Brodsky takes photos – not his own – of protests in 1968 around the world and writes on them. Seligmann-Silva chose four from Latin America to display in *Hiatus*.

“Brodsky’s idea was that the exhibition wouldn’t only deal with the memory of horror, of state violence, and work with data, faces, names, and personal histories,” Seligmann-Silva says. “It would also remember the dreams. These people died because they had dreams and the fought for them. This is the part where he remembers that struggle.”



20. *Pega Varetas* (Rods), 2017. Horst Hoheisel (b. Poland, 1944). Photo: Joca Duarte

Horst Hoheisel displays a set of 434 rods. The number is a reference to the National Truth Commission; the rods themselves visually allude to the children’s game “pickup sticks”.

“He puts photos and sections of the biographies of some of the dead and disappeared on the sticks, which are in an ambiguous position, between Flúvia’s totem poles and the contortion of torture,” Seligmann-Silva says. Other rods carry newspaper clippings or the biographies of the torturers themselves.



21. *Pega Varetas* (Rods), 2017. Horst Hoheisel (b. Poland, 1944). Photo: Joca Duarte

The National Truth Commission comes up repeatedly in the exhibition. Faces, names, dates, and histories. “The number 434 is very low. It’s insufficient, and everyone recognizes that, including the truth report itself,” Seligmann-Silva says. That number does not include the estimated 8,350 indigenous people who were killed under the dictatorship due to government activity, for example, which is reported separately in the chapter “*Violações de Direitos Humanos dos Povos Indígenas*” of the National Truth Commission.

But the exhibition proposes precisely that: to explore limits, silences, and continuities of official memory and add a dimensionality to the narratives of the past.



During a protest on June 12th, 2014, the first day of the World Cup. Rio de Janeiro, between Candelária and Lapa.

“The black block would burn and destroy Brazilian flags as an open sign of defiance. As an American in a foreign country for the first time, it was interesting to see people say, ‘fuck this state.’ I had never seen that before, though I’ve seen people destroy American flags. Ever since Occupy Wall Street, it’s become more and more regular.”

PHOTOGRAPHS OF FANATACISM

When considering recent state violence in the United States and Brazil, some issues are remarkably similar while others are very culturally specific. Photojournalist Shay Horse, who covers civil rights and human rights in the US, also reported on the same topics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. Here, he approaches questions of current state violence, support for authoritarianism, and public resistance through a photo essay spanning both countries. Rather than focusing on immediately obvious continuities between Brazil and the United States, Shay Horse meditates on analogous emotions and visual symbols from the events he witnessed. With photos from different hemispheres that both juxtapose and blend together, this contribution allows for complex readings across cultural contexts.

After recounting the story behind each photo in the collection, Shay Horse speaks to the larger issues that come up in his work.

SHAY HORSE

Artememoria: Why do you work on state violence in both Brazil and the United States? How do you see the connection between the two countries?

Shay Horse: Brazil interested me because Americans don’t seem to care about it or really understand it. They just think of it as a crazy place to party, if they know where it lies on the map. But a lot of the crazy political issues in Brazil are also issues in Latin America and much of the world. These aren’t unique problems. These are problems that bad governments have made in the past and will make in the future.

When you try to examine those issues on the street level, with street photography, you see how they affect a class of people and individuals. You break big concepts into simple stories.

Artememoria: Some themes run through the photos. One theme is fanaticism, and not just in American far-right groups. There’s a more widespread fanaticism in this collection.

Horse: I grew up in the South of the US, so I saw religious fanaticism. As I grew older, I’ve noticed it in other locations and events. You see that type of fanaticism not just in religion, but in political rallies too. And not just at rallies, but also with movies, too. If you watch Star Wars celebrations, or see people when they watch a brand new trailer for a Star Wars movie, it’s like a religious event. People care that much and they’re so invested. That’s fascinating to me. It’s not just liking something or wanting to work with something but a total devotion to something.

Artememoria: How do you see that relating to state violence?

Horse: When people are fanatics they stop questioning things. They just do what they’re told because they’re willing to do whatever they feel is the right move for their ideology. A lot of cops, for example, are essentially on a team. You have fraternal orders of the police, ideological groups of cops that always stay close to each other. The state and other groups use that type of fanaticism, that sense of unity, to crack down and repress people.

Artememoria: As you were describing these photos, you sometimes mentioned a feeling in the air that you were trying to capture in order to show the moment that you were physically present in. Tell me a bit more about your process and how you choose moments to photograph.

Horse: To be honest, it’s not a lot of thinking. When I take pictures, I’m not just a journalist. I’m a person, too. Being a person means you have to be present. You have to listen to what people are saying, what people are feeling, and feel the emotional energy yourself. It’s not just where people move or what they say, it’s also how people feel. When you emotionally invest yourself in a situation, even just by being present, you can understand other people. And all of that helps to choose those moments. Even photographing cops or black blockers or Nazis, the

whole point is to try to get a moment, a crack in time, something that you can look back on and see that there was actually a person there.

Artememoria: What are the challenges in doing that? How are those challenges different in Brazil and the US?

Horse: I’ve done a lot of protests in America, and protests tend to work very similarly. They always follow one of a few different narratives based on what the protest is trying to do, what the negative aspects of what they’re trying to do are, from the state’s perspective. You can figure out a game plan.

The hard part is really trying to get emotionally invested and



After results were called on the night of the 2016 presidential election. 6th Avenue, New York City.

“It was such a brazen sign of victory from a very particular class of people. This is an expensive, bright, shiny new Hummer, and the people are driving up the street waving American flags and Trump flags, screaming ‘Go Trump!’ It’s a perfect metaphor.”



At a protest against the World Cup on June 21st, 2014. Rio de Janeiro, between Praça Saens Pena and Maracanã Stadium.

“The military police provoked a riot. I noticed that they have a tactic in Brazil. For protests they feel might get heavy, they’ll toss out flash bangs and percussion grenades and tear-gas around 100 feet from the protest as a sign of intimidation. Like, ‘If you guys keep going, this is what we’re going to start using.’ And it just provoked the crowd. It’s one of the most violent situations I’ve ever been in. Essentially, the cops kept provoking protesters, and then there was a confrontation on the highway near Saens Pena. People used molotov cocktails. One of them knocked out the power for the streetlights. After that happened it was just insanity for two and a half hours, with cops chasing people through the streets using flash bangs and rubber bullets, pulling handguns and shooting off rounds. After one of the confrontations I saw those two people treating each other. It was a weird, tender moment in such a violent situation.”



At the January 20th (J20) protests against Trump's inauguration in 2017. Near Franklin Square, Washington DC

"January 20th was the inauguration day for Donald Trump, and people really wanted to have a lot of protests that set the tone that no one was okay with Trump. And there was one protest where things got hectic. A few windows got broken, and then the police just started hurting people, corralling them through the streets. They've since testified to corralling people. They were using flash bangs and pepper spray guns that they called 'super soakers.' Towards the end, things just got really intense. People didn't know where to go, what to do. It was just people moving. That's why I took the photo. It was a perfect example of the moment. People just moving, trying to find safety."

I and over 230 other people were trapped on a street corner of L St. and 12th St. in DC, not that far from the White House. Personally, I was detained there for six or seven hours. And then the police started a side incident on K St., which became a war zone. The cops pepper sprayed a small child and things just exploded. Cops used what seemed like dozens of flash bangs at once. I was trapped on a street corner around a block away and all I could hear were the booms. Boom. Boom. Boom. And people screaming. You could hear hundreds of feet hitting the pavement, people just trying to get out of the way."



Watching a World Cup soccer game on July 4th, 2014. Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro.

"The reason I took this photo is because it shows an almost religious level of fanaticism over the games. It's relevant because the government exploits that kind of fanaticism. In a way, it's related to what Trump's doing. For Trump's followers, it stops being about, 'he's the best person, and that's why I voted for him.' He starts being a demigod. And here, some people were willing to go along with whatever the government said as long as they would get a win for their team."



At a protest against the World Cup on June 21st, 2014. Rio de Janeiro, between Praça Saens Pena and Maracanã Stadium.

"I took that photo after the riot that the military police provoked near Maracanã Stadium. People were just reacting to the violence. I saw protesters run up to windows and use poles and rocks and stones to break them. That guy did it in such a particular way. It was almost a movie moment, where someone does something so confidently and then just calmly walks away. It wasn't a childish anger. It was a very pure form of anger, one of, 'I'm doing this to spite you because you're hurting me and people like me.'"



At a protest against the World Cup on June 21st, 2014. Rio de Janeiro, between Praça Saens Pena and Maracanã Stadium.

"These alt-right guys started meeting up. Even as a journalist, I was wondering, are these guys going to be cool with me standing here, taking photos as they talk about being Nazis? And they were all weirdly calm about it. People are openly talking about being total bigots and organizing a mob. They were going over battle formations, talking about how they wanted to have a central column of torch holders and an outer column of defenders with weapons. They assumed they were going to be attacked and, to be brutally honest, I think they wanted a confrontation of some sort. It was one of the scariest things I've ever seen. It was so much brazen hate that you think most people hide. But it was open and honest. They were chanting, 'Jews will not replace us' and 'Blood and soil,' which is a Nazi chant. So there's no subtlety in what they're saying. It felt like something out of the '50s or the '40s, a time we all pretend isn't still happening."

making sure that you actually, genuinely care. You have to make sure you're not acting like paparazzi. The only way for your work to matter is if someone can tell that the person doing this actually cared, that they poured a bit of themselves into it.

Artememoria: What draws you to covering protests?

Horse: People shouldn't just be forgotten. All of these horrible things deserve to have a light shined upon them. It's not that no one else has told these stories, but no one else has said it like I have or for the same reasons that I've said it. The whole point of being a concerned photographer is standing up for people and standing by people, wanting things to get better.

Artememoria: In terms of the present moment, from your perspective as a photojournalist, what is the situation in terms of rising right-wing energy in authoritarianism in Brazil and the US?

Horse: Brazil and the United States are making a lot of the same moves as they quickly head towards the right. I think the entire world is turning to the right for numerous reasons. But it's nothing new. All of this has been building up. People don't realize how his-

tory is made moment-to-moment. They forget about all of the wars the US has started and all of the issues Brazil has had, and those mistakes and follies from history add up to make worse scenarios when you never address the original issue.

This interview was edited and condensed for clarity.

Shay Horse is an independent photographer and activist based in Brooklyn, New York. Originally from Oklahoma, he belongs to the Kiowa and Chickasaw nations but escaped Indian territory at age 18 to get involved in the Occupy Wall Street movement. Since, he has followed protests and social movements from Rio de Janeiro to St. Louis, focusing on groups that push the envelope on social justice and human rights, with previous work published on sites such as The Groundtruth Project. He identifies as an anarchist, and recommends that anyone confused by the term should research the definition.



At the J20 protests against Trump's inauguration in 2017. In the police kettle on L St. and 12th St., Washington DC.

"When the police cornered people, they used sting ball grenades, which are these grenades that, when you throw them, detonate and fire out hundreds of small, rubber pellets. Officers just sprayed these into the crowd, at people who had their hands up, people who were like, 'you're beating me into a corner. I can't do anything.' Police officers taunted people, saying, 'if you don't want to get sprayed, you should have gone home.' Or, they were beating people with nightsticks and screaming, 'go home, go home,' while we were being boxed in and pepper sprayed. For me, this photo is about the moment you're being cornered. The moment of no escape, when you're trapped."



During the far-right torch march on August 12th, 2017. Around the Jefferson Memorial on the University of Virginia campus, Charlottesville, Virginia.

“The torch march snaked its way through the University of Virginia campus, and when they reached the monument, there were a lot of Black Lives Matter protesters. The torch march just engulfed them, surrounding the statue, and there were people doing Nazi salutes, and you could just hear the Black Lives Matter chant being drowned out by people chanting, ‘white lives matter.’ I never thought I would see something like that, like a lynch mob. They wanted the confrontation so badly that they started beating people with torches. I took that photo right before the beatings started because you could feel everything was on a razor’s edge, like the moment before everything goes totally wrong. It was the moment when I was certain someone was going to die during that whole thing. There’s no way all of that happens and everyone just ends up okay.”



Black Bloc trying to form a blockade against the Olympic torch on August 2nd. The city center in Niterói, the state of Rio de Janeiro.

“It was mainly students and younger kids in the blockade. The university in Niterói has a pretty active radical scene since the World Cup, so it made sense that so many were coming out to the protests. Even though Rio was across the river they still felt the echoes of what the Brazilian state was trying to do.”



At the far-right torch march on August 12th, 2017. University of Virginia campus, Charlottesville, Virginia.

“That was before the far-right met up at the monument. We were in this big space with all of these plantation-style buildings with large columns. I always knew this was in the US, under the surface, but now it’s parading, on display.”



At the far-right torch march on August 12th, 2017. University of Virginia campus, Charlottesville, Virginia.

“That fits into the fanaticism idea that’s present in both Brazil and the US, with this focus on leaders and icons. These people were riding this gigantic Trump float that I actually saw on inauguration day driving past the J20 kettle. The MOAR was pretty tiny and sad, but the people who were there were really into it. It was like a drug, people were totally engulfed by what they were doing.”

The site where James Field killed Heather Heyer with his car in a white supremacist terrorist attack at the far-right torch march on August 12th, 2017. Charlottesville, Virginia.

“That’s her blood on the ground. I saw James Field’s car drive away, and that’s why I started walking towards where Heather had died. When I got there, people were already screaming. Street medics were tearing signs in half to make splints for people and just trying to do what was essentially military triage, where you have 20 people injured and 4 street medics. Everyone is almost panicking. Taking the photo was the only way I knew how to process the moment.”



After a confrontation between Brazilian military police and indigenous protesters in July 2016. Museu do Índio, Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro.

“There was a confrontation with the police. The protesters had taken over the museum and erected barricades for a day. The military police snapped the barricades in half and charged in, flushing everyone out. This protester was really upset, and they were just hanging on the fence screaming. It was a deep, heavy, weeping, screaming rage, and that was so striking to me. It was an honest emotion.”



During a protest on the first day of the Olympic Games on August 5th, 2016. Saens Pena, Rio de Janeiro.

“This was so brazen. Protesters would toss the aerosol cans underneath the burning flag, and then it would explode like a bomb. To me, this moment shows political motivation heightened by technology. You’re trying to send a message to people in power who you don’t like, but you’re willing to do it in the quickest, most effective way possible. To me, that says that you believe in something enough to want to make your message work faster and better.”

A Força Nacional officer during the Olympic torch run on August 5th, 2016. On Copacabana beach, Rio de Janeiro.

“She’s one of the cops who carried over the person who got arrested for allegedly trying to steal the Olympic torch. The Força Nacional walked the person all the way over to the patrol car with their arms twisted behind their back and pepper spray in their eyes. It’s such a brutal moment where the police were being so rough on this kid for something they did not even see, something that they just decided to charge them with. It was a weirdly reflective moment. I think even the cop realized how messed up it was. It’s like realizing that you did something but not feeling it at all.”

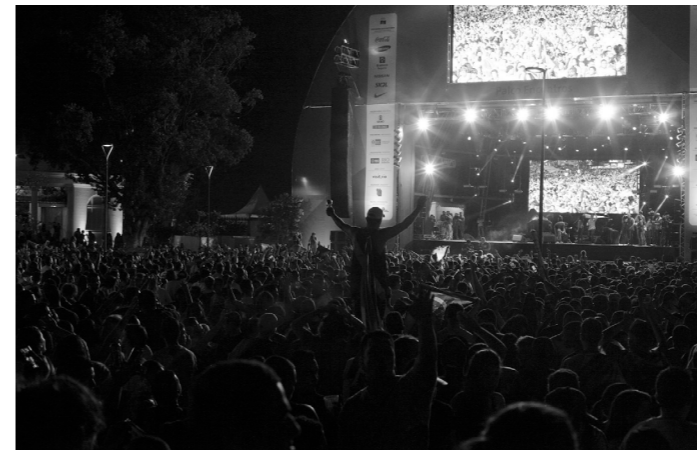
A Nazi salute during a “white lives matter” rally on October 28th, 2017. Shelbyville, Tennessee.

“It was tense and not tense at the same time. There were all of these Nazis and then me, a brown guy with a camera. They could tell I was a journalist. I saw that a few of them even recognized me from Charlottesville, but not one said anything to me. That’s the weird thing about going to these things. I’ve gotten a weird level of respect with the Nazis and the alt-right. The only reason that I can come up with is the way I shoot them. I don’t try to make them look bad because I don’t have to. They’re Nazis. They’re bad people from the start. I don’t have to do anything extra to make them look evil. But I think they kind of respect me because they know I’m not doing photography tricks.”



At a “white lives matter” rally on October 28th, 2017. Shelbyville, Tennessee.

“This is some kind of Nazi organizer who had a kind of power in the overall group. He’s in deep enough that people would go talk to him if things went wrong. Both the left and the right are developing clear iconography now. Everyone is visually trying to say what team they’re on, which you can see before you even start talking to them. These symbols are like medals. They say, these are the things I believe in, this is the side I’m on. Nazi and anarchist groups are subcultures, which is essentially a form of tribalism, so they always use cultural markers. Even if you don’t know who’s inviting you to something or where you’re going, if you see x amount of cultural markers you know what kind of people are going to be there.”



Watching the Olympic soccer game between Brazil and Germany on August 21st, 2016. Rio de Janeiro.

“You could tell people were so happy that it almost made the political problems okay. When people raise their hands like that, it’s almost a religious moment. They just want to be saved. They want to be a part of what they think is bigger than themselves. It’s not just, ‘I’m having a good time.’ It’s, ‘me and all my people are having a great time. We’re having the time of our existence.’”



A speech made by a leader of a Nazi organization at a “white lives matter” rally on October 28th, 2017. Shelbyville, Tennessee.

“The right-wing groups are much more about seniority. People who’ve been through multiple moments are the ones who call the shots. You could tell that he was like a tribal elder to them. When he spoke, everyone else shut up. The far-right organizes themselves around leaders. It’s the opposite of what the left does nowadays, which is to try to make everything decentralized.”

Ironically, at that moment, the speaker was quoting Martin Luther King. Counter-protesters kept drowning them out with everything they knew would upset them. Adele songs, any type of song by a woman or a woman of color, someone queer, gay, or anything like that. And he kept trying to use an MLK quote about how you’re supposed to listen to your enemies and accept them with love. While the tactic totally failed, it is interesting that Nazis, alt-right groups, and right-wing groups are actually starting to think about activism again. They’re talking about optics and speaking points. To me, that’s scarier than just people showing up. They’re thinking, plotting, and conspiring to do things.”



Watching the Olympic soccer game between Brazil and Germany on August 21st, 2016. Rio de Janeiro.

“The Olympic Village ruined the water. You can see almost an inch of toxic gunk on the surface. But it speaks to something larger. You have this synthetic, fake grass and then a steel tube that pollutes the river. It’s a metaphor for the Olympics. We’re going to things that look nice on top of what we destroyed. It ruins everything it touches.”

IN DEFENSE OF DIFFERENCE

Curator Gaudêncio Fidelis on *Queermuseu*, the exhibition that was closed down because of pressure from the far-right.

A visual art exhibition became the focal point of political polarization in Brazil last fall. The exhibition, called *Queermuseu: Cartografias da diferença na arte brasileira* (*Queermuseum: Cartographies of Difference in Brazilian Art*), opened at Santander Cultural in Porto Alegre in August 2017. In early September, a small group of far-right protesters recorded videos to attack the exhibition targeting the content of certain works, claiming it made apology to pedophilia, bestiality, and the debasing of religious imagery. Suddenly, Santander released a post on their Facebook page that shut down the exhibition a month ahead of schedule.

What followed was a viral online response both for and against the exhibition. Some groups, including conservative politicians and the right-wing organization *Movimento Brasil Livre* (Free Brazil Movement), or MBL, continued to accuse the exhibition for unseemly content. However, according to a study carried out by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation on Tweets related to the exhibition, bots generated nearly 13% of criticism about the exhibition, indicating that the negative reaction to *Queermuseu* was not nearly as widespread as it originally seemed. Meanwhile, the art community and others denounced the premature closure of the exhibition as censorship. In the months since *Queermuseu* was shut down, Gaudêncio Fidelis, the curator of the exhibition, has become an outspoken defender of the freedom of artistic expression. He talks to *Artememoria* about his exhibition, its closure, and the implications of these events on Brazilian democracy.

Artememoria: *Queermuseu* came from a long process of critical reflection, one that you developed through the various exhibitions that you have curated over the years. In that context, could you summarize the idea behind this exhibition?

Gaudêncio Fidelis: The idea for this platform came from the perspective of creating a space for dialogue and debate that would be open to questions of expression, identity, gender, and difference. Diversity and difference



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became generic terms but I used them in a very specific way. Diversity includes the idea of difference, political perspectives on difference, and includes here, but is not limited to, the diversity of form. In the exhibition one may think about a variety of issues that relate specifically to art but, as always, my goal was essentially to create a platform for debate. Even though the exhibition, as a platform for debate, was abruptly shut down, I've seen a considerable part of Brazilian society reopening the discussion in a surprising way. It persists and it broadens. In that sense, the exhibition met its original goal.

It's important to highlight one more aspect of *Queermuseum*, which sets it apart from other exhibitions. In dealing with questions of diversity and difference, the exhibition starts a conversation very naturally, since those topics relate to a debate already present in Brazilian society. They are also transnational issues, as many countries are advancing the debate on issues of gender expression and identity. I don't use the term "gender" very much in the exhibition, because in my mind it connotes a binary opposition. I wanted to be more specific than that. Whenever I referred to gender expression and identity, I approached the entire realm of questions involving gender. The exhibition also involved some specific conceptual questions. The show was conceived as a metaphorical museum, and a provisional one, which allowed the audience to enter and be more than just a contemplative visitor or viewer. I use the word audience very consciously here because the audience is a sort of participant in that setting. Over the years, I've begun positioning the artwork slightly lower than usual, creating a horizontal line of sight that's more approachable for the visitor. It's a friendly exhibition. I work with these questions related to reception, and how these tools of perception affect the people in the space.

One very visible thing was the safety and comfort of the exhibition entailed. Members of the educational team, who were experiencing the exhibition alongside visitors, also pointed this out. The museum created a sort of safe space where people could interact alongside artwork dealing with these questions of gender and sexuality. The exhibition became a friendly museum that lacks the intimidation of the traditional museum, whose apparatuses usually imposes rituals of interpretation on the work. Moving away from that was definitely a goal of the exhibition.

Artememoria: Did you think there was going to be a controversial reaction to this when you opened the exhibition or did it take time for that reactionary response to grow?

Fidelis: I was always fully aware about what this exhibition meant and the artistic force that it had. But in terms of reception, the most surprising and extraordinary thing was that people loved the exhibition during the twenty-six days it was open. There was a consensus on its artistic merit, and no one considered it moral or defamatory. That consensus grew until the right-wing attacks began and then intensified as they moved onto social media. Extremists approached people in the museum and made aggressive verbal attacks.



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Artememoria: It must have been very jarring to experience aggression in the context of a friendly space, as you put it.

Fidelis: There were LGBTQ couples walking hand in hand, alongside people who were eighty or ninety years old, from a totally different generation. Straight couples from several generations were there, too, along with teenagers and children. It was a space of coexistence. A safe space, in the broadest sense of the term. That environment suffered attacks and violent disruptions from the *Movimento Brasil Livre* (MBL). They are known to use tactics of militia [right-wing paramilitary groups in Brazil]. I don't say that casually. Militia strategies involve intimidation and coercion, and these same strategies were very effective in attacking the exhibition.

Artememoria: Do you remember a specific moment during the week before the exhibition was shut down, or right afterwards, that illustrates this kind of coercion?

Fidelis: I remember many. They would verbally attack people and record videos on their cellphones and cameras. They would confront members of the audience with by putting their cellphones in peoples' faces and saying, "look, this is someone who is at the exhibition, who likes porn, who is here looking at porn," and all sorts of other demeaning comments.

A case that I didn't personally witness, but that the educational team reported to me, took place on Wednesday, September 6th. A group of these individuals approached a group of pre-teens with a camera in their hand, saying, "does your family like pedophilia? Does your family like porn? That's what you're looking at here, pedophilia and porn?" They filmed everything,

with their cameras in peoples' faces. And then the teacher who accompanied these students and the educational staff helped to protect the pre-teens and leave the situation.

I also had firsthand experiences. For example, Felipe Diehl, a well-known right-wing extremist, came up to me when I was at the exhibition and asked me a number of very aggressive questions. I did not answer and, as he wasn't happy, so he started to narrate what was going on and launched extremely vulgar language against me until security removed him from the space. Then he started to bang on the door and filmed himself, alleging that he had been attacked, and posted the video that he had recorded online. Such incidents happened several times during those two and a half days, more and more frequently. Santander should have handled those attacks in a different way. They could have argued that this was over the top, even asserting that it resulted in personal damages on a legal level, since all of this was limited to the space of the exhibition. It was hardly in the media, at that point. Santander would later argue that they closed the exhibition because there was a general outcry against the exhibition on social media, but the truth is that the outcry actually only happened in the days after Santander closed the exhibition.

That's why it's important to understand the timeline of events. On Sunday, September 10th, Santander closed the exhibition. On Mondays, Santander is always closed, and on Tuesday, a huge protest took place in front of Santander. In only twenty-four hours, several organizations called the protest and over three thousand people attended. As the public reaction continued to grow, the exhibition was extensively covered in the formal press and also gained notoriety, both positive and negative, on social media. There were defamatory videos, but the exhibition also entered the realm of popular media, with critiques of censorship on popular comedy TV shows such as *Zorra Total*, and messages of support projected onto the walls of buildings in several countries.

In other words, it was after the exhibition closed that all of these right wing fanatical, fascist, fundamentalists went online and began to attack Santander because they saw that the institution was weak. The art community that was in favor of Santander right after the attacks initiated turned against the bank after the exhibition was closed. The exhibition closing down also enabled the fundamentalists and the MBL to launch a massive attack against the company. Santander's strategy was a huge mistake in that sense, since the aggression of just a few people closed the exhibition. There was no popular appeal to shut it down, and doing so had immense consequences for the art community and democracy in general.

Artememoria: The note that Santander released included an abstract statement about art rather than a practical explanation for why the exhibition needed to close. There was one quote in particular that I wanted to hear your thoughts on: "when art is not able to inspire inclusion and positive reflection, it loses its central purpose, which is to elevate the human condition."

What do you think of that?

Fidelis: Santander's statement is unfortunate and badly written. It has sentences that don't even make sense, and it's full of contradictions. They closed an exhibition about diversity, but in the note it says they support diversity. The note morally condemns and apologizes for displaying the artworks. And then the question of inclusion makes no sense, not only in terms of content, but also in terms of strategy. They closed the exhibition and then immediately released the note on Facebook. They didn't call a press conference to explain the situation, for example. It's worth remembering that Santander did not contact me, the curator, and made a completely unilateral decision.

Right after the exhibition was shut down, the mayors of Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo immediately announced their support for its closure. As this defamatory process began, there also arose a very serious problem. No one could confirm what was true and what was fake in what people were saying as the false narrative grew. The exhibition was already closed, making it impossible to verify what was accurate and what was slanderous.

Artememoria: In terms of the aftermath of the exhibition, you have done more than 160 interviews and discussions about the *Queermuseum*. You really fight to discuss what happened. Did that have a personal cost? How much has the closing of this exhibition affected you?

Fidelis: It was very frightening, but also surprising, because I found out that I was prepared to deal with it and reacted very well. The physical and psychological effects were extraordinary. I barely slept for three months, and the situation required superhuman clarity, precision, and equilibrium. I could never rest, because I was always doing an interview or writing an article. At the end of the day, I wasn't going to make a case for the exhibition in terms of its artistic merit, since I defended the merit of the exhibition from the day it opened. Once the exhibition closed, I used all of my energy to defend principles of democracy, to attack censorship, to show the gravity of what happened. That was my counter-attack to fight the defamatory and false narrative that was constructed about the exhibition. I knew I had to use all my energy to clarify what had happened for the public, to develop my narrative with clarity so that people might understand what was really going on and the implications of the events.

In the accumulation of the many interviews I've done and articles I've published, I've shown that this was an extensive process of censorship. I think people still had a view of censorship in Brazil as limited to something that the government did during the dictatorship, but it no longer is. As we know, censorship continues to happen across the world, and this was a very severe case because of scale. To close down an exhibition that included 263 works of art by 85 artists, many of them well known around the world, in an exhibition that was a very important display of Brazilian art, is something



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that should not be taken lightly.

More and more, parts of the Brazilian public began to understand the real story, but that required a huge personal effort. I viewed it as a part of my professional responsibility as a curator. I'm almost surprised that I've held up physically, but the support of many people helped me throughout those months. It's almost impossible to lead a normal life when you get thrown into a situation like this. I had to deal with the demands of the press, which I was logistically not prepared for, and there were even changes when it comes to personal security. Because of death threats, I had to take precautions. I was very visible and couldn't just walk down the street as I had before. People would recognize me easily.

Artememoria: Could you elaborate on the death threats? How did you receive them?

Fidelis: In the protest that happened at Santander, some friends accompanied me to guarantee my personal security. Even though the majority of people at the protest were there in support of the exhibition, the MBL was also there. They would sometimes get close to people and harass them or engage into fights. That happened to me that day, but there were only two or three minor incidents. Eventually they quit, simply because they were outnumbered.

Later, I started to receive a lot of death threats on the Internet. These threats did not come directly from well-known members of the MBL, who are public figures, but from fanatics who act in their name and who followed what happened. They were totally out of control. I had to take precautions so that they couldn't find out my address. Fortunately, I had recently moved,

so few people knew where I lived. Still, that kind of information isn't hard to find. The danger tapered off as I became more visible, but people close to me, and others who supported the exhibition and defended it publically, would still get threats and were relentlessly harassed on the internet.

Artememoria: Do you think there are other examples of censorship in the arts in Brazil? What are they?

Fidelis: Right after the exhibition closed, a series of incidents happened across the country. For example, fundamentalist politicians denounced a work of art by Alessandra Cunha at the Mato Grosso do Sul Museum of Contemporary Art. On the request of a right wing politician, the police took the artwork down and the artist was accused of pedophilia. But Alessandra Cunha's piece, called *Pedofilia*, was actually denouncing sexual crimes against children. The charges were eventually dropped and the work returned to the museum. Also in September, after protests from religious groups, a court order in Jundiá cancelled a play, *The gospel according to Jesus*, in which a trans actress represented Jesus. Countless incidents of censorship happened after that and are still happening.

Now we see a growing number of both federal and state Congressmen proposing bills to establish parental ratings for art. There are two laws in Congress, one in the Chamber of Deputies and the other in the Senate, and several in legislative houses around the country. In Chamber of Deputies we have the bill PL 8740/2017, written by Representative Delegado Francischini from the Solidariedade Party (SD), and in the Senate we have the bill 506/2017, written by Senator Magno

Malta, a well known fundamentalist from the Partido da Republica (PR). These laws seek to establish age thresholds indicating who can see exhibitions, which is unconstitutional in Brazil because it affects freedom of speech according to the constitution. Also, federal law currently states that there are no age thresholds for visiting art exhibitions. These new laws would affect the content of the exhibitions, which also limits freedom of speech. They state, for example, that you can't display images with nudity or eroticism, artworks that they say would incite pedophilia, as though it were possible for artwork to do that, or pieces that attack religious symbols. All of this is unconstitutional, but in municipal legislative houses lawmakers have still managed to approve such laws.

Artememoria: What are the main similarities and differences between current censorship and the censorship under the military dictatorship?

Fidelis: In terms of these attacks on freedom of expression in museums and the recent turn to censorship, I think that we need to establish a few differences. During the dictatorship, one knew who the enemy was. Censorship was a state procedure, which is much more objective than the kind of censorship that circulates now. Today, censorship comes from different sources, each with their own interests and agendas, but they converge with a shared goal.

I also think the rule of the law in Brazil is waning. Depending on how Brazilian society reacts, I think it might reach a more serious stage. Right now, things are subtle. People see the signs of what's taking place, with the criminalization of social movements and the criminalization of art. The latter is more symbolic than concrete, but as that criminalization becomes officially established within law, it becomes real.

Artememoria: It's interesting that you mention the symbolic criminalization of art. Why are images and symbols important in the current political moment?

Fidelis: Because images can easily enter into the social imaginary. *Queermuseum* had 263 works of art, and MBL basically chose five to build a disparaging narrative and to justify the censorship of artistic production. There were, for example, representations of naked bodies in the exhibition and not a single one appeared in the narrative they created to attack the exhibition. Only a small subsection of *Queermuseum* involved sexuality or more explicit images, since the show wasn't actually about sexuality. But these five images that they chose worked efficiently to build a narrative for the public. Take, for example, the painting of the Christ, *Cruzando Jesus Cristo Deusa Schiva*. Those who were uninformed and ignorant about art were outraged with it, but in the exhibition it was one of the most celebrated pieces. Surprisingly, people of various religions who visited the exhibition even prayed in front of that work. But combining these specific images, taken out of context, with a negative narrative was very effective. It's incredible that only

five images made that happen.

Artememoria: When and where will the exhibition reopen?

Fidelis: There's no exact date yet, but we think it will be either at the end of May or the beginning of June in Rio de Janeiro, at the Parque Lage School of Visual Arts. With the reopening, the exhibition will not just return to discuss its artistic merit, but it will also continue carrying the political importance of everything that took place through an extensive series of debates and lectures that will be part of this new presentation.

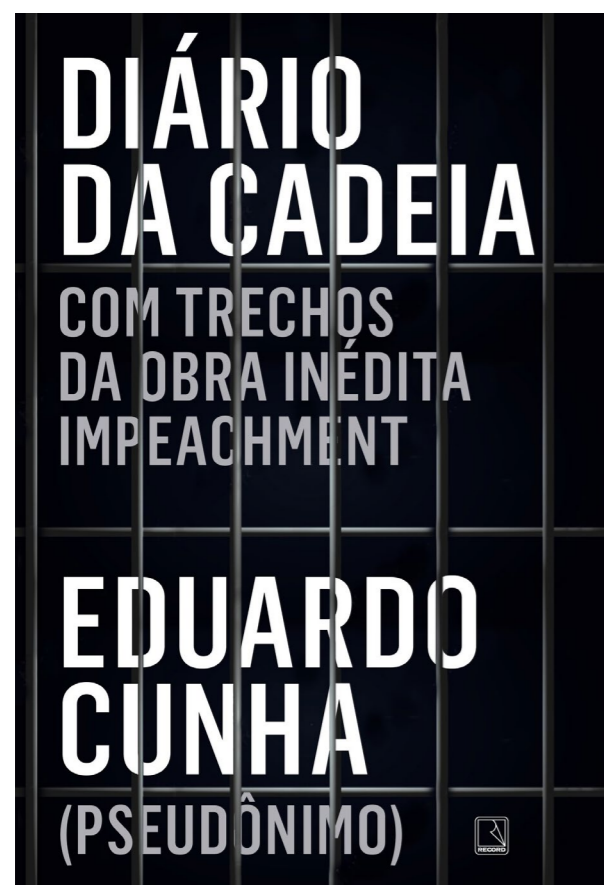
This interview was edited and condensed for clarity.

Gaudêncio Fidelis is a Brazilian curator. Before curating Queermuseum, he directed the State Institute of Visual Arts in Rio Grande do Sul (IEAVI) and founded the Rio Grande do Sul Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC-RS). He was also director of Rio Grande do Sul Museum of Art (MARGS) and organized a range of exhibitions as curator of the Ciclo de Arte Brasileira Contemporânea in the State Institute of Visual Arts in Rio Grande do Sul. Also a major thinker in the contemporary Brazilian art world, Fidelis received his M.A. from NYU and PhD in art history from SUNY-Binghamton and has published multiple books.

Translated from the Portuguese by Lara Norgaard.

WHO WROTE THE BANNED BOOK?

Novelist Ricardo Lísias on pseudonyms, satire, and a politician's attempt to prevent the publication of his work of fiction.



Eduardo Cunha, a right-wing politician who played a central role in the impeachment of former president Dilma Rousseff, was the Speaker of the House in Brazil in 2015-2016 until he was indicted for his involvement in the Operation Car Wash corruption scandal.

In 2017, the Brazilian publisher Record released a work of fiction titled *Diário da Cadeia: com trechos da obra inédita Impeachment* (Jail Diaries: with Sections from the Unedited Book 'Impeachment'). This novel was signed, "Eduardo Cunha (pseudonym)", which incited the wrath of the real Eduardo Cunha. What comes next is a saga that the real author views as attempted censorship and the destruction of a work of art. *Artememoria* sits down with that real author – the novelist Ricardo Lísias – to discuss the literary and political implications of experimental satire that intervenes rather than merely witnessing reality.

Artememoria: How did you get the idea to write *Diário da Cadeia*?

Ricardo Lísias: I got the idea on the day when representatives voted on the impeachment. In my opinion, it was one of the worst days in Brazil's history. It revealed the state of politics here. Things tend to be done behind closed doors in Brazil, but this was broadcasted to the whole world, and I was horrified.

The now ex-representative Eduardo Cunha, when he was still a representative in Congress, announced that he was going to write a book that would bring to light everything about the impeachment. Since I'd been following Brazil's political crisis from the beginning, I thought this comment about writing a book to explain what happened was interesting. We know that books don't necessarily explain what really happened, and certainly not a book by someone who had never written before.

Slowly, I came up with an idea to write a sort of counter-book. It was a joke at first, a writing exercise, but the project grew as the political situation in Brazil did. The representative lost his position, went to prison, and I had already drafted a part of the book he announced he would write, just for fun. And then I started to think about him in jail, and I began writing this fictional diary. I kept writing, but I didn't tell anyone. It wasn't a journalistic project trying to represent what had happened, but rather a satire. I was using fiction to laugh in his face.

Once I had written a lot, I reread the work. Seeing that there was something interested there, I looked for

a publisher. But I wanted this to be a full artistic intervention, one that I would sign with a pseudonym and in which my name wouldn't appear. I found an editor that I hadn't worked with before and discussed my idea with him, on the condition that he would keep everything a secret. When I finished, I showed him the book, he liked it, and he published it using the pseudonym, since we had already arranged an off-the-record contract that kept my name secret.

One week before the book launched, a newspaper released a story about the book, mentioning that no one knew the author's real name. To my surprise, this ex-representative, in prison, hired lawyers to stop the book from being published. But since no one had read the book, they didn't know what it was about. The prosecution didn't mention that it was a novel, a fictional story signed with a pseudonym. They only reported that a book in the name of the ex-representative would be sold as though the ex-representative himself had written it. That's the problem with our legal precedent. It has a lot of elements left over from the dictatorship that allow for censorship and uphold this culture of banning books without any awareness of the content.

Artememoria: Were specific laws held over from the dictatorship launched against you in this case?

Lísias: No. But there are many parallel, similar laws, like laws about non-pecuniary loss and personality rights. These laws imply, among other things, that a person cannot have their reputation tarnished. When you are a politician or a public figure, those laws should not apply, but under the dictatorship, that was not the case. There were laws that said that people couldn't make fun of the military generals, for example. That same notion remains today.

Brazil also has a culture of arbitrating art and other aesthetic concerns in the courts, but that can only happen when public money is involved. In that sense, the fact that my book is a novel should have worked in my favor when the case went to court the first time, at the Supreme Court. But since they hadn't read the book, they banned it anyway, simply for its use of a pseudonym. When I appealed, they set a deadline. If everything wasn't settled before that deadline, my name would be disclosed. The judge let the deadline pass and my name was turned in to the court. A journalist from *Folha de São Paulo* published the story.

When the case was finally judged, the actual censorship of the book was repealed on the grounds that it's a novel. So, finally, the book would be printed and signed with the pseudonym, even though my name was already public. That decision inspired eleven appeals before reaching the Supreme Court, and I won every single case.

I'm angry because my work was mutilated when the pseudonym was revealed. For that reason I am suing for the destruction of my work of art. The case hasn't been tried yet, but I'm asking for compensation, which I will donate to an association of professors and staff the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ).

Artememoria: Why was it so important for this book

that your name remain secret? What role does a pseudonym play in a work of art?

Lísias: I see it as having two important elements. First, literature that involves political satire is typically signed with a pseudonym, because it makes the question of authorship part of the work of art. Second, in my case, before my name came out, there was a series of debates and discussions about who the author might be. Some people thought it was a politician, like Dilma Rousseff or even Eduardo Cunha himself. As a result, the book turned into a political issue. My other books weren't a part of that discussion. This was only about this book, and the political dimensions of the work were effective because it entered into politics. Publishing the book ten years later doesn't make sense, and that's why it needed to be published quickly. That's also why keeping my name secret was so important. And I think the ex-representative acted against me with the primary goal of lessening the disaster that the book would cause him.

Artememoria: But the possibility of a lawsuit comes up in the novel itself. The fictional Eduardo Cunha discovers that a satirical book is being published in his name and gets upset. It was fascinating to read meta-content that actually took place in reality. Don't you think that it's interesting how the real Eduardo Cunha assumed these qualities of your fictional character, even if he destroyed the book, as you put it, by revealing its authorship?

Lísias: Yes, it is. My idea was to make the character resemble the real person in some ways and not in others. For example, there are a lot of errors in the Portuguese, and that was just my own provocation. But a lot of things do resemble his obsessive character. He thinks he controls everything, like in the way he says he's a guest in the prison when he's actually a prisoner. And the book shows that, upon being criticized in any way, the representative runs to court. Just like his fictional counterpart, he ends up losing.

Real legal action ends up becoming part of this fiction. It shows a country weak in its support for personal freedoms. But what became clear after all of the appeals that I won is that freedom of artistic expression is defended more than other rights. That is, no politicians can allege an invasion of privacy when someone critiques them in art.

Artememoria: On a literary level, what was your method of seeing from the perspective of this half-real, half-fictional Eduardo Cunha?

Lísias: I thought about what could leave him irritated and infuriate the political class. Something that really gets to politicians is being confronted with their own ignorance and ability to self-destruct, because they think they can cause disasters in this country without feeling any of the consequences. In the case of Eduardo Cunha, he caused problems in Brazil with the impeachment, but then he lost his position and then went to prison. So I came up with the idea of trying to find and create a character that would be ridiculous, pathetic, naïve, and a bit stupid.



Former President of the Chamber of Deputies, the real Eduardo Cunha.

Creative Commons: Jonas Pereira/Agência Senado

Artememoria: And who also believes in everything that he's saying. The fictional Eduardo Cunha has this very ignorant and limited vision of the world. He's not a cunning person who orchestrates everything.

Lísias: That was the idea. His life is at a standstill, but he thinks he's someone who controls everything from his little world. He was plotting everything, but in a very naïve way. He was actually used and ended up the scapegoat.

Artememoria: What's the value of satire that belittles and mocks politicians?

Lísias: Brazilian politicians hate satire. If I'd just written a story about what Eduardo Cunha had done it wouldn't have caused any impact. Politicians don't like to face what they really are. Eduardo Cunha built up this image of himself as someone who pulled the strings, but if he really controlled things, he wouldn't be in jail. This satire confronted these politicians with that fact. And I think the pseudonym adds a lot to the parody.

Artememoria: Returning to the question of meta-content, why do you refer back to your own book in the text?

Lísias: I wanted to cause even more confusion. The book was designed to cause that kind of chaos. It's a text that discusses itself and, like a labyrinth, leaves the character totally lost in the whirlwind of events that he thinks he can control.

Artememoria: You wrote this fictional account after seeing and experiencing a political event, but causing confusion, as you put it, goes beyond the act of witnessing politics. Could you speak to the difference between the fiction you write and testimony of a political moment?

Lísias: In this case, I intervened into political life. It wasn't an act of watching the world and then describing it. That would have also been an intervention, but a post hoc one. Eduardo Cunha was acting, events were taking place, and this was an effort to enter the story as it was developing. My book doesn't explain the current moment. It forms part of the current moment. Even the fact that the book was temporarily banned is a part of that, as it demonstrates the heavy-handedness of the courts.

Artememoria: That kind of intervention, which is a kind of provocation, leaves the boundaries of the traditional novel. Beyond experimenting with content, you play with the novel as a form in the way the book is signed.

Lísias: That was the idea, but in Brazil that also creates problems because of the judicial system. It's a very conservative society in relation to these aesthetic questions.

Artememoria: Has a visual artist or author influenced you in that aesthetic approach?

Lísias: In terms of Brazilian artists, Paulo Bruscky is one of the most interesting, I think. He does a lot of these kinds of experiments. But my book is also satirical. You

have Claudio Manuel da Costa, whose work also has a sort of collaged aspect to it. My book is collaged in the way I include newspaper clippings. But the artist I like best and that I learn the most from is Marcel Duchamp, I think, who is also a big influence in Paulo Bruscky's work.

Artememoria: It's interesting how you bring up the newspaper clippings. In *Diário da Cadeia*, Eduardo Cunha tries to create an archive in prison. And the entire book becomes a sort of fictional archive because it includes the diary, newspaper clippings, and sections from the fictional Cunha book. Why is so much emphasis placed on the archive in your work?

Lísias: The archive adds another element of confusion. It's a Borges-style technique. I thought readers would understand that, but no, some people thought the novel was completely true. Bookstores in various Brazilian states display the book as a biography, and that shocks me. I thought everyone would see it as a novel.

Artememoria: With satire, you create a kind of inversion. You don't just make a serious, straightforward critique of what is happening, but you really disrupt the situation with this kind of joke.

Lísias: That's because narration isn't enough. You need confrontation. Even still, these people are in power, and that's the danger.

Artememoria: In light of that direct critique of the right wing of Brazilian politics, is the increased energy of current far right movements related to a lack of public memory about the Brazilian dictatorship?

Lísias: No doubt about it. Brazil's dictatorship was fully realized. There was no justice after the transition to democracy. If there had been memory about the dictatorship, maybe more of the population and even the justice system would have separated itself from its rancid authoritarianism, which they don't even realize exists. The dictatorship ended, but presidents like José Sarney were from the dictatorship party and were elected. Torture changed, but it still happens. Before, it was political prisoners, and now it's poor prisoners. Brazilian society never freed itself from authoritarianism. The current situation is very dangerous. I'm not optimistic.

This interview was edited and condensed for clarity.

Ricardo Lísias is a Brazilian author. His books include *Divórcio* and *Concentração e outros contos*, published in Brazil by Alfabeta, and he was included in *Granta's* special edition, "The Best of Young Brazilian Novelists". Holding a doctorate in Brazilian literature from the University of São Paulo, Lísias is currently a post-doc at the Federal University of São Paulo under the guidance of Professor Mirhiane Mendes de Abreu.

Translated from the Portuguese by Lara Norgaard.

Musician MC Leonardo speaks to the value of the funk genre of music and its battles against criminalization by the state, both past and present.

Funk is a Brazilian genre of popular music related to rap and hip-hop. Originally from Rio's favelas, this genre has suffered intense censorship under the most recent decades of Brazilian democracy.

Lawyer Carlos Bruce Batista, in conversation with *Artememoria*, summarizes the story of funk's censorship: the genre began in the late 1980s in Rio de Janeiro and quickly grew in popularity. In its early years, musicians played funk at huge parties – or *bailes* – that happened across the city of Rio, in nearly every neighborhood. But in the first half of the 1990s, some of the city's biggest media outlets began a campaign against the genre, tying the music to violence on Rio's beaches. As a result, funk artists began performing primarily in favela communities, singing and rapping about the everyday realities of those parts of the city.

With the negative media image came a governmental, legal crackdown on funk. In the mid-late 1990s, Rio's government established a series of laws limiting music events in poor areas of the city on the grounds of supposed connections between the *bailes* and drug traffickers. Also in the late 1990s, a sub-genre of funk appeared, called "*proibidão*" (prohibited) by the mainstream media, referring to funk that explicitly describes sex and the world of drug trafficking. The state of Rio de Janeiro censored this sub-genre: funk artists would incur fines or jail time for making music that supposedly encouraged criminal activity. An official, *de jure* criminalization of funk lasted until a group of musicians and lawyers came together to establish a law (5.543/2009) that recognizes funk as culture. Consequently, that recognition gives the genre the same official legal protections that other art forms have. However, a *de facto* prohibition against *bailes* continues to this day.

Leonardo Pereira Mota – known as MC Leonardo – is part of the old-school generation of funk. He is one of the foundational artists who started the genre from favelas in the early 1990s. Witness to the various phases of funk's criminalization and an activist in its eventual vindication, he speaks to funk's cultural history, its value as public art, and to the continued struggle funk musicians face in 2018.



Artememoria: Let's start with background. You're from Rio de Janeiro, from the Rocinha favela, right?

MC Leonardo: Yes. My full name is Leonardo Pereira Mota. I'm 42 years old, and I've sung funk since I was 17. My brother and I work as a pair, and we've just made it to 25 years of our career. We're from the first generation of MCs, the kids from the favelas who were blown away by a beat called Miami Bass.

It's not a coincidence that Miami Bass came to Rio from Miami. Miami is an expensive, touristy, seaside city that has a lot of immigrants, just like Rio de Janeiro. Miami's immigrants are international, from Cuba, the Caribbean, and Puerto Rico, and it also has an African American community. In Rio de Janeiro, the immigration is not international, but internal. [An estimated 43 million Brazilians migrated from rural to urban areas just between 1960 and 1980, according to a 2006 study by Dr. Fausto Brito, professor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais]. Many went from the northeast to central and southeastern cities. When northeasters moved here, they began to live in the way freed slaves had, in *quilombos*, and built homes in favelas. So black residents had their cultural heritage, a rich history of culture with capoeira and samba, and the northeasters had their heritage as well. They brought music like *farrô*, *embolada*, *xaxada*, and *baião*. It's the mixture of cultural heritages that made funk.

Today, you dance *frevo* when you listen to funk, which has a samba melody over an electronic *macumba* beat. Funk didn't just appear out of nothing. Funk isn't just hip hop. We're also hip hop. Like any form of culture, funk comes from a mixture of many things, and one of the things we picked up was the beat from Miami bass.

I once interviewed Afrika Bambaataa, and he said that putting James Brown's voice over that beat in "Planet Rock" was an accident. It wasn't intentional, but it worked. Bambaataa had to convince James Brown that this was the future, that they would be able to create a kind of cultural mix from that sound. James Brown was so convinced that he recorded "Unity" with Bambaataa. But what was missing in that sound for it to get to Miami? It was missing something Latino. The beat was too hard, no one could dance to it. But then, in Miami, they added all their sounds and made that melody, da-da-da-daaa-da da da-da-da-da-daaa-da. When that sound came down here we said, shit, that's good.

It was hard to travel and hard to find music from abroad. So people started to produce their own versions of it here. And that's how funk started at the end of the 1980s. Since the 1990s, it's become 100% a national thing.

Artememoria: How did you start listening to funk?

MC Leonardo: When funk got here in 1989 and started playing on the radio, my sister bought a CD and brought it home.

Artememoria: Which CD?

MC Leonardo: It was "Super Quente". That's the CD

that first got me into funk. In 1992, I went to my first *baile*, and I signed up for my first rap contest. I won.

Artememoria: And you'd never rapped before?

MC Leonardo: Never. I signed up without no rap, no funk experience. Then my brother and I signed up for ten more contests, and we won nine. It took three years before we became nationally known and could really pursue music. We signed with Sony in 1995 and funk really began to spread in Brazil. That was at a time when most people had no clue what funk was.

Artememoria: Was it Rap das Armas that became really popular?

MC Leonardo: It was Rap das Armas, Endereço dos Bailes, and Rap do Centenário. Now, funk's popular and generally accepted, but back then it wasn't. People went to *bailes* and were like, "Funk? What's that?"

I guess I didn't expect it to take so long for funk to become accepted. The persecution has just gotten worse since it started. The only difference between this and the criminalization of samba and capoeira in Brazil's history is that, as decades went by, those art forms became accepted.

Today, funk is only accepted commercially. But the productive end of the supply chain is not YouTube. It's the *baile*. If you don't have the *bailes*, you don't have the funk photographer or videographer. You lose the supply chain. That's what was hunted down, blocked, and censored. Let me give you an idea. Twenty years ago, you and I would have twenty choices of *bailes* on a Saturday night like this one. We'd be sitting here and not know whether to turn right or left to get to a *baile*.

Artememoria: What were those *bailes* like?

MC Leonardo: We'd have a sound system in a public area. Usually it would be tented, sometimes in a square or sports court. And two or three thousand people would go, every weekend, in different places across the city. And we even started doing this regionally. Our plan was to take it regional. It started to happen. Whenever we went out to Região dos Lagos people would contact us to do a show. But then it ended.

Artememoria: So, from your experience, how was funk criminalized?

MC Leonardo: Honestly, in '96 we were still with Sony, so my brother and I were traveling and didn't see what was going on in Rio. But when we stopped by in '97 to see what was up, we'd already lost the big radio stations. Funk lost its cycle, the one where *bailes* promote funk on the radio, which promotes the artist, who promotes the *baile*, which promotes funk on the radio... That was the system, one without Facebook or email or YouTube.

In the early 2000s, I was pissed about the contracts that had signed away all of our rights. I was against the people in charge of recording MCs. That's until Tim Lopes died in 2002. Tim Lopes was a journalist who was

murdered in a favela, and the media claimed that he was filming a baile, when in reality he went there to film drug deals. I was shocked in the way people talked about funk, throwing blame on music.

I was angry and said that funk needed to respond every time the media said something against us. My idea was to start an association of funk musicians. The association, *Associação dos Profissionais e Amigos do Funk*, or Apafunk, only became formal in 2008 when anthropologist Adriana Fascina interviewed me. She saw that I was trying to find solutions, not just talk about these issues. So through Apafunk I started a thing called *rodas de funk* (funk circles) where we would go onto the street, bring together some crazy artists, and face the fear of performing.

I said that funk needed to be recognized as culture, officially, in law. Then-representative Marcelo Freixo was brave enough to fight for funk. And we managed to get that legal recognition.

Artememoria: Before it was recognized as culture, how was funk seen?

MC Leonardo: When I started looking into this, I saw that there's a law that says the government has to incentivize and support the arts. And so I looked into why. I found that the Brazilian constitution says that the state has an obligation to incentivize and protect all types of culture. I thought, shit, there are so many people involved in funk. It's so culturally valuable compared to the money it gets. This thing mobilizes more and more people in the city and state of Rio, and it gets zero. All it gets is denial.

Fine, you don't want to incentivize it. But the state has an obligation to protect it. Or to let it happen, at the very least. That's what I was trying to say. But to say that, we had to transform funk into culture. Funk is culture whether politicians want it to be or not. It's culture with or without the law. But the law could be a tool in our struggle.

In 2008, Gertúlio Vargas Foundation conducted a study that showed how funk creates roughly \$10 million reais per month in the state of Rio de Janeiro. But it could be so much more. People say that there are still bailes. There are, but you never know if they're going to happen the next week.

Artememoria: So what is the situation with funk today?

MC Leonardo: It's hard to produce, it's hard to publicize, it's hard to record, it's hard to do anything with funk in Rio de Janeiro. That's the reality today.

Artememoria: Why?

MC Leonardo: Because of actions taken by the police. The police destroy and even set fire to sound systems. The media sold this story that bailes are meetings for drug dealers, so society isn't outraged when police destroy sound equipment.

Funkeiros have to be activists. They can't just be artists. They have to use art for activism because fighting for

funk isn't just about fighting for your job. I'm ashamed to be from Rio de Janeiro and say that the police in my state crush culture. There is nothing legal about their actions.

Artememoria: In the past, in addition to criminalizing *bailes*, the state essentially censored lyrics by asserting that they encouraged crime, making it difficult to disseminate funk. There's an entire kind of funk from the late 1990s and early 2000s called "*proibidão*" (prohibited). What was going on with that kind of censorship?

MC Leonardo: *Proibidão* is more a cry for help than an encouragement of crime. Let's say a kid from a favela knows fifty words. A vocabulary of fifty words. Half are slang. The other half are curses. And he wants to talk. He has the right to talk. There is not a single sentence in the constitution that prohibits him from speaking. But he's not going to speak in a normative way. And what he says will be scathing.

There's also this intelligence, this poetry that MCs from the favela have. They speak from the perspective of the guy who's armed. It's like any art form, like acting or theater. But with funk, everyone calls the MC a drug trafficker.

Artememoria: Right. Art, as a way of witnessing, goes beyond the simple act of recounting what you see. You can also put yourself in the place of the other, leaving your own experience.

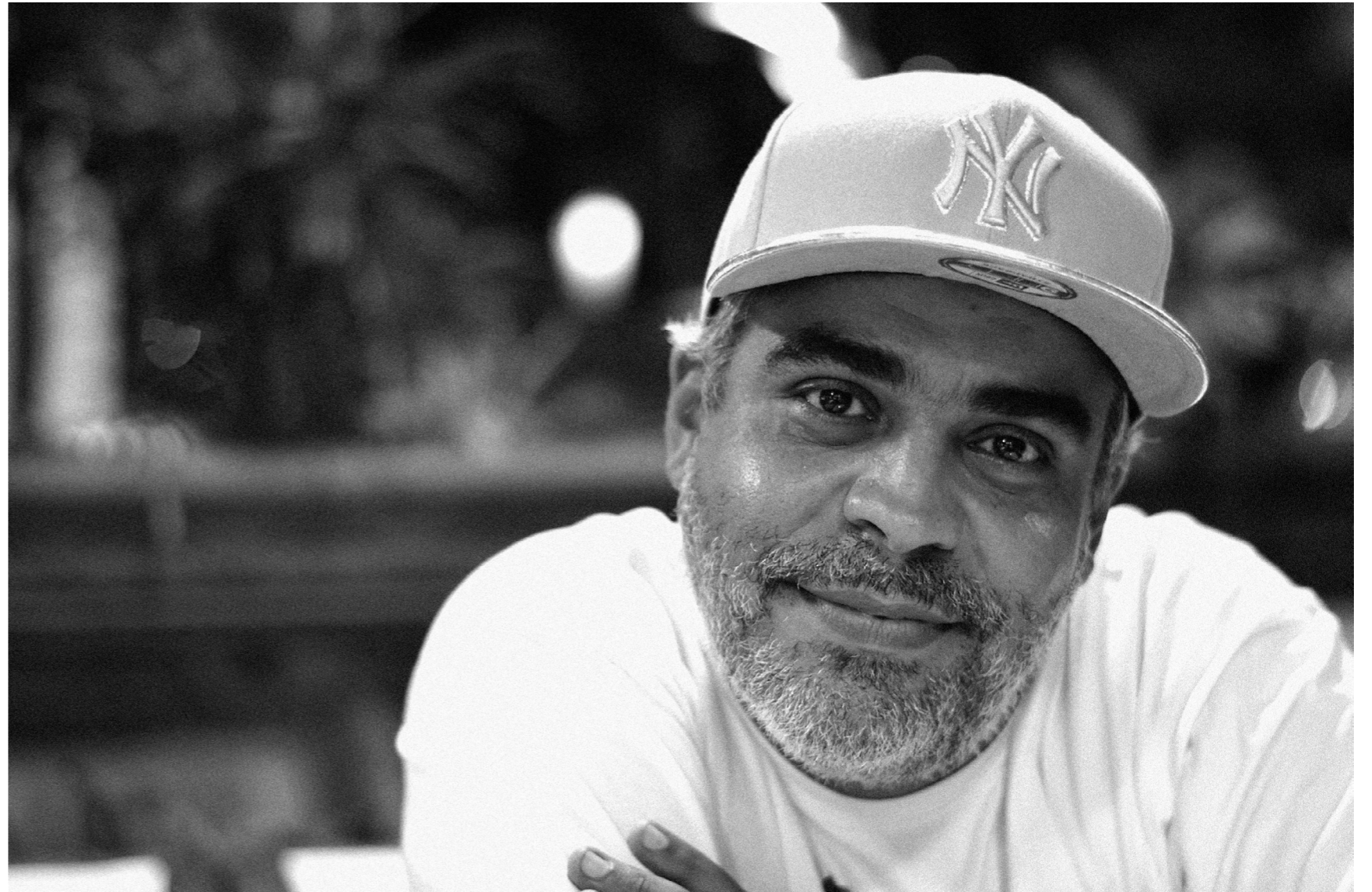
MC Leonardo: It's exactly that. Check out *Faixa de Gaza 2* by MC Orelha on YouTube.

The denial that funk is culture denies its very existence. If someone says that they don't like the sound, the noise, the education of the person who is singing, whatever, I'll take it. I'll take it. There are also things out there that I don't like. But when people say funk isn't culture, I'm revolted. That's cowardice. This is music that people like across Brazil. Even 40-year-olds at business parties listen to funk. It's full of problems, like any other profession, like any other sound. The difference is that we don't have the government as an ally. They just make the situation worse.

Artememoria: What can people do now to facilitate funk?

MC Leonardo: The most important thing is to make sure that the people who make funk aren't afraid. People don't want to use their equipment because it might get destroyed. You need a lot of bravery to make funk in Rio de Janeiro. It's been a lot of years of struggle and persecution, and there's no trust. It makes sense that a *funkeiro* doesn't want to deal with the police anymore by having a *baile*. But that shouldn't be a reason to stop. We're fighting for the freedom of culture, for the freedom of expression, for the right to employment, for everything that ties into funk.

This is also a fight for the right to use public space. It's a fight for the right to move freely. When I was 20



Photograph by Lara Norgaard for Artememoria

years old, I had already been to fifty favelas, because funk brought me there. Today, I was talking to a girl in the Rocinha favela, a 20 or 25-five-year-old woman, and she said she'd never been to a different favela. I asked her, "You never went to Complexo de Alemão?" "No," she said. "What would I do there?" She's right. What brought me to other favelas when I was young? I made friends at a *baile* and then, the next day, I'd go to that other favela to eat *feijão* or play ball. You moved through Rio de Janeiro back then. Living in a city without movement is one of the worst things. People get more and more closed off.

Now, when I go to a full *baile*, I just think about how many artists are there. I'm not even thinking about it in terms of audience. Because with funk, the audience is also the artist. Funk is a public art form. It's real public, popular culture. It's accessible. It's not expensive. A sound system only costs R\$5,000, and that's all you need. And to go to a baile, you might spend R\$10 all night. It's culture where the kind of person who produces the music is the person who consumes, is the person who sells, is the person who composes, is the person who applauds, is the person who makes money.

This interview was edited and condensed for clarity.

For more on how the criminalization of funk relates to censorship, moralism, and state violence from the military dictatorship, continue reading. Human rights lawyer Nilo Batista discusses these issues in *Funk Part II: The New Subversive*.

Leonardo Pereira Mota, known as MC Leonardo, is a musician and activist from Rio de Janeiro. In 1995, he and his brother, MC Junior, released the song "Rap das Armas", which became famous in Brazil and abroad when it was included in the 2007 movie *Tropa de elite (Elite Squad)*. Throughout his career as a musician, MC Leonardo has also written articles on popular culture for prominent publications including *O Globo* and *Caros Amigos*. In 2008, he started the *Associação dos Profissionais e Amigos do Funk (Apafunk)* to support musicians in the city of Rio.

Translated from the Portuguese by Lara Norgaard.

Human rights lawyer Nilo Batista, one of the lawyers who worked with MC Leonardo to decriminalize funk, discusses continuities in Brazil's moral censorship and state violence.



As funk went through phases of censorship, certain lawyers worked with funk musicians like MC Leonardo to defend the freedom of artistic expression. One of these lawyers is Nilo Batista, a famous human rights lawyer who began his career defending political prisoners under the military dictatorship. Nilo Batista discusses funk and its criminalization, speaking to the broader continuities in state violence between the dictatorship and the present day.

Photograph
by Lara
Norgaard for
Artememoria

Artememoria: How is it that funk remains criminalized in the context of a democratic constitution that protects freedom of artistic expression?

Nilo Batista: Art is very persecuted. In the case of funk, this is a kind of art that goes against Victorian moral values, the bourgeois family and what we could call “normal” sex. Those norms are also a judicial tradition in canon law. In the Judeo-Christian west, canon law, which is a completely Christian law built by the Catholic Church, expanded the control of morality. No system of law in the history of humanity tried to control sex like canonical law did. The results are clear. It’s an extreme project of control.

Artememoria: The dictatorship is also very tied in with that kind of moral control.

Batista: Yes. But it’s unbelievable that in the politically correct democracy we live in today, there continues to be hostility to artwork and there continues to be that cheap moralism. Under the dictatorship, the military acted in an arbitrary way. Today, it’s the judicial branch that is arbitrary. You have judges who occasionally censure artwork because of moral bias.

Artememoria: Why does that continuity exist in the legal system?

Batista: There’s a very long tradition of it. To give you an idea, in canonical law there was only one kind of permissible sex, and that was procreative matrimonial sex. Mom and dad, in everyday language. Any other kind of sex, even within a marriage, was illicit. Pleasure had that residual, illicit flavor. That tradition reigns particularly within the Romano-Germanic Law, which dominated in continental Europe and is not that of the United States or the United Kingdom. That’s what our colonization brought us. We inherited the conservative tradition of the Iberian Peninsula.

Artememoria: Brazil has that conservative legal backing, but do you find that there is selectivity within the application of those moral norms? Even within funk, you have musicians who have become very famous. Do they come up against the same kind of criminalization or legal pressure that someone making funk in a favela does?

Batista: The penal system is selective. It’s a structural characteristic of a penal system, not a mere dysfunction, especially in societies with class hierarchies.

The successful funk musicians, when they start out, have the role that Homer had in ancient Greece. They tell the stories that surround them. Those stories are the stories about kids who are dealing drugs, having violent confrontations, etc. What happens is that this is seen as an encouragement of crime, which means that the music gets criminalized. That kind of funk was called “*proibidão*” (prohibited). The corporate media invented the *proibidão* and it remained. We have since resolved that kind of criminalization in lyrics, though. Judges were convinced that it was an absurd kind of persecution.

Artememoria: You say that the corporate media invented the *proibidão*. Could you elaborate on the role of the media in this history of funk’s criminalization?

Batista: Media here in Brazil is a monopoly. Public opinion is in the hands of around ten families, who own communication networks. They are extremely conservative and spread disinformation.

Artememoria: Speaking more about your personal experience, during the dictatorship, you worked with Heleno Fragoso to defend political prisoners between 1970 and 1974. After the dictatorship, you continued to work with state violence, which has continued despite the political transition.

Batista: How many people did the police kill in the Ci-

dade de Deus (City of God) favela today? Four. The Rio police kill four or five people per day. And no one cares. Really, no one cares. It’s as though it’s natural that three, four, or five poor people are executed by the police on a daily basis.

Artememoria: Could you compare today with the era when you worked to defend political prisoners?

Batista: Quantitatively, more people are killed today. That’s not a result of population increase. They kill more people today than they did under the dictatorship. And more people disappear, too. Take a look at the statistics. There were approximately 400 forced disappearances under the dictatorship. That is, people who were taken prisoner or executed without due process. Then look at the number of disappearances in the state of Rio de Janeiro each year, which according to the *Estudo de segurança pública*, was 5,905 in 2016 alone.

It’s true that in the registry of disappearances, more than half of the people return. Registered disappearances are always somewhat temporary, and you see this with teenagers who disappear over the weekend and come back on Monday or Tuesday. But think about the percentage that doesn’t return. I would say 20-25% don’t return. That means that around 1,000 remain disappeared or dead each year. During the dictatorship, there were just over 400 political prisoners, people considered “subversives” under the theory of National Security that dominated the clandestine penal system under dictatorship. Unfortunately, there has just been a shift to a different internal enemy. The drug dealer. Dealing drugs is a survival strategy in poor urban areas throughout Latin America, but the new enemies of the state are those kids.

Artememoria: Why is it that people don’t pay attention to this kind of modern-day death and disappearance?

Batista: Read the newspaper tomorrow. Read *O Globo*.

This interview was edited and condensed for clarity.

Nilo Batista is a Brazilian lawyer and law professor. He began his career protecting human rights by defending political prisoners under the military dictatorship at the desk of Heleno Fragoso. After 1985, he began serving in prominent political positions in the city and state of Rio de Janeiro, including vice-governor of the state of Rio in 1990, and focused much of his work on police violence. In 1995, he left politics to return to the practice of law and served as president of the Carioca Institution of Criminology, launching foundational texts such as the *Revista Discursos Sediciosos*. Currently, he is a professor of criminal law at the State University of Rio de Janeiro and has a private practice, Nilo Batista & Advogados Associados.

Translated from the Portuguese by Lara Norgaard.

