

Intersections in Contemporary Brazilian Art

March 31, 2021

A conversation between Luciara Ribeiro, Pêdra Costa & Yhuri Cruz

Moderated by Diogo Rodrigues de Barros & Rodrigo D'Alcântara.

Special introductions by Deri Andrade & Hanss Lujan Torres.

Organization and transcription by Rodrigo D'Alcântara.

Translated by Diogo Rodrigues de Barros & Rodrigo D'Alcântara

Revised by Rodrigo D'Alcântara

**Roundtable discussion originally conducted in English and Portuguese and translated into English by Rodrigo D'Alcântara and Diogo Rodrigues de Barros.*

Opening paths

[Rodrigo D'Alcântara]: So, welcome everyone again. We are really happy to be here, in such uncertain times. In times that we are living so many layers of emotions and back and forth, it's really important to have these platforms of dialogue. Today we are going to have a different event, which is not a traditional academic event. It will be a roundtable discussion and we are going to have a lot of different interventions. I hope you all enjoy it. This is the Intersections in Contemporary Brazilian Art Roundtable discussion, and we are going to begin our event by having some words by Hanss Lujan Torres, that will do our territorial acknowledgments. This event is taking place virtually in Canada, in Montreal, but we are all in different parts of Brazil, as well, and representing the Global South in this inaugural event of the Global South Working Group, which is connected to EAHR (The Ethnocultural Art Histories Research Group), from Concordia University. Hanss will follow with all the announcements and thanks. Thank you, Hanss, thank you, Deri, thank you, Diogo, thank you, all the speakers to be here today.

[Hanss Lujan Torres]: Alright, thank you, Rodrigo, for that introduction. Okay, hi everyone, my name is Hanss Lujan Torres, I'm a MA student in the Department of Art History at Concórdia University, and I'm pleased to offer some opening words of welcome. We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of these lands. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

As we are convening virtually, I invite you to let us know where you are joining us from in the chat and encourage you to reflect on the lands that you are occupying. Today is also International Transgender Day of Visibility, so we want to acknowledge the work and importance of our trans and gender-extensive friends and family. I hope everyone takes some time to reflect on the labor of trans visibility, and we send so much love to all of our friends here and far.

This roundtable discussion is organized by the Global South Working Group in partnership with the Ethnocultural Art Histories Research Group (EAHR). The Global South Working Group is an ad-hoc research group founded in 2020 under the auspices of the Concordia University Research Chair in Ethnocultural Art Histories. Currently comprised of graduate students at Concordia and our inter-university doctoral program, the research group examines the colonial and colonizing implications of the designation "Global South" for the transnational study of art history. Tonight's panel is its first event. The Ethnocultural Art Histories Research group, EAHR, is a student-driven initiative based within the Department of Art History at Concordia University. Since 2011, EAHR has facilitated opportunities for exchange and creation through a series of programs and events in order to critically engage with issues of ethnic and cultural representation within the visual arts in Canada.

We invite you to check out EAHR's latest endeavor, an online exhibition titled *The Virtual Garden*, featuring the work of Costa Rica-born and Montreal-based artist Juan Ortiz-Apuy, curated by Yasmeeen Kanaan in collaboration with Sarah Piché. The

exhibition is presented in conjunction with EAHR's third annual Diversifying Academia Library Research Residency, focusing on bibliographical sources of recent and new BIPOC faculty in the Faculty of Fine Arts of Concordia University. For more information, please visit our website, www.ethnoculturalarts.com

EAHR and the Global South Working Group are supported by the Concordia University Research Chair in Ethnocultural Art Histories, Dr. Alice Ming Wai Jim. Thank you, Dr. Jim, for your care and leadership, always, but especially in this past year.

We also wanna thank the Concordia Art History Graduate Students' Association, the Interuniversity PhD Program in Art History, and the Department of Art History at Concordia University for their continued support. This evening, we are extremely pleased to be co-presenting this panel as the inaugural event of the new Global South working group, and especially to working in collaboration with a new partner in the Projeto Afro, we look forward to many more collaborations in your future endeavors. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this offering.

And with that, I'll pass it back to Rodrigo.

[RD] Thank you very much Hanss, for this amazing presentation and introduction. I will now like to pass the parole to Deri Andrade, the founder of Projeto Afro, who will briefly introduce Projeto's importance for Brazil's contemporary scene. Thank you, Deri for being here.

[Deri Andrade] Thank you, Rodrigo, for this introduction. I am Deri Andrade from Projeto Afro. The Projeto Afro is an Afro-Brazilian platform devoted to mapping and disseminating black artists. The project aiming at expanding and promoting the artistic production of black authors in Brazil. The creation of the Projeto Afro platform, which took over one year to be fully completed, now brings together more than 150 artists from all over the country; and can be seen as a space for exchange, discovery, and resignification of symbols, longings, and perspectives. This collective space of experimentation presents mapping as a systematization of ideas and causes, which

intersects minds and thoughts, founding hybrid repertoires for research and reference. So this is it. Thank you so much.

[RD] Thank you, Deri. And now Diogo Rodrigues de Barros, who kindly accepted the invitation to be the co-moderator with me, from The University of Montreal. Thank you so much to be here.

[Diogo Rodrigues de Barros]:

Hello, everyone. Well, I'm, Diogo Rodrigues de Barros, I'm a PhD candidate at The University of Montreal, and first of all thanks to all the members of the Global South Working Group. Thank you to Dr. Alice Jim for the support and also to Rodrigo D'Alcântara for inviting me to moderate this panel with him. The moderators have five minutes to say a few words before we start with the panelists and I was thinking about what I could talk about. And actually, I'd like to talk about what were you doing here. So, I've been in Canada for six years now, and I've been talking a lot about Brazilian art about Latin American art in general. I've been teaching Latin American art and then, here we are actually presenting in a way, the Brazilian art scene to a Canadian audience.

So, it's something that I'm very interested in, and always this presentation brings some difficulties along the way. So, all the reflections on the question of global art, we have been thinking about that for a long time, but we all know the difficulties around that concept. The fact that we are here speaking about Brazilian arts or a foreign audience, we are speaking in English. There's a false common ground that we have as a language. When you count and you want to speak about Brazilian art, you have to face assessing lack of historical information mainly on the colonial history of Brazil, which is the center of many of the artistic practices that we have been seen in the last few years. And something that is really interesting is the question of the Latino culture which is the Latino identity in North America. It's a diasporic identity. And we are in a way caught in that very interesting identity, and very political identity, but which doesn't really account for all the different expressions in Latin America. Then that said, I'd like maybe to address some words to the Canadian audience and to the Brazilian audience because we have many Brazilians with us today. First, to the Canadians,

recently Sandra Benites, who's an indigenous curator in Brazil, has been on Zoom as well speaking to us in Montreal. She said something very simple and very important. Decolonization is all about listening. So today it's also about listening, but listening maybe in a different way, in a way that it's not only about receiving what's already expected, in a certain idea of diversity and from Latino, Latin American cultures, but trying to listen to different nuances.

Another important element is I've heard this Latino actress in the US and she's a Black Latina. And she was saying that the media in the US, the Latino culture in the US media is all about people who could very well be Italian. So there's another diversity on that idea, of being Latin American, and I think we will get to see that today. So let's listen to that diversity. A last element to our Canadian friends is all about historiography, so it's not only seeing more Brazilian art, more Latin American art, but it's also about knowledge, about the debates we've been carrying on for such a long time. So how can you also get in touch with the debates, with the academic artistic debates, and not only with the consumption of the artistic object, the artistic event? To end, to our Brazilian friends, why should we talk about Brazilian art for foreign audiences? I think it's an important thing, and I've been doing it for quite a while now, but I think we should think about that. Why is that important? Is it about pride? I see, for instance regarding the recent Tarsila do Amaral and Lygia Clark exhibitions in MoMA, in New York, there was a certain pride of: "Oh, they finally got its importance." So is that about that? Is that about convincing foreign audiences about our cultural value or what is it about? And if we want to establish a dialogue in foreign countries, what are the conditions of that dialogue? What do we want to take out of it? In Canada, Canadian institutions of art and knowledge are very interested in having diversity. So it's all about having more diversity and how about this? What's our diversity or what we want when we make part of that diversity, we become part of that diversity. What do we want politically, financially, academically, those are all very important questions so that we can think about what we are doing here today, talking about Brazilian art too, and with our Canadian colleagues. Thank you.

[RD] Thank you so much, Diogo, for your acknowledgments and introduction. I would like to endorse my colleges' acknowledgments, and to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Alice Jim, Dr. Kristina Huneault, Camille Pouliot, Sarah Piché, Megan K. Quigley,

and all the members of EAHR, Global South Working Group, Projeto Afro, and AHGSA, for your support in making this event possible. Special thanks to our speakers and the audience, for taking this moment of your lives to be present, even if virtually. Also, I ask permission from the immaterial forces that came before us and allowed us to be here today.

The name of the unceded lands now known as Brazil was given by the Portuguese invaders after “pau-brasil”, a tree, which in English can be translated as redwood, brazilwood, or literally as “emberlike tree”. It became endangered due to its exploratory commercialization since the 1500s. At this time numerous indigenous peoples that existed for centuries in these lands, were slaved and vanished for this purpose. The bloody route behind our ember-like project of a nation was then followed up by centuries of enslavement of a vast range of African cultures, which peoples were aggressively forced to be part of this so-called “civilizing project”, resulting in the Afro-Brazilian diasporas. As we know, this Imperialist run has resulted in a strong Occidental white cis-gender model, that imposes a single narrative, centering itself as the hegemonic nuclei worldwide, and by which some lives are framed as dissident, and placed in the margins or beyond.

On a further note, before the advent of colonization, sexual and affective relationships were not seen necessarily based in a cis-gender, monogamous, or sinful spectrum, in a lot of Non-Western traditions, which indicates the urgent need for revisions and rescues on plural ideals’ of masculinities, sexual orientations, genders, and the very idea of identity. After the Western-Christian catechization, and consequent persecution of other cultural modes of existence to establish settler-colonialism in Brazil, these Non-Western iconologies and methodologies have been resisting through syncretism, peripheral articulation, ancestral resilience methods and practices, such as oral tradition, and community-building. Recognizing our historical trajectory is fundamental to liberate knowledge from a centralized perspective, and to propose non-Western values as located much beyond the colonial spectrum.

After centuries of ongoing updates and frictions with this hegemonic system and its subsequent institutional implications, changes are slowly occurring. To keep on this track is crucial to recognize that our cultures are marked by intersections,

mixtures, and hybrid epistemologies. In Brazil, our popular beliefs, our organic languages, our plural foods, our ways of understanding the modernization and globalization waves, our musical rhythms and how our bodies dance and react to them, and of course, our unique way of creating artistic practices, should all be seen as valid types of knowledge. This Roundtable Discussion is meant to invoke a place of open dialogue in these regards, within academia. The past, the present, and the future conceptions as non-linear, non-dichotomous, non-binary. Having space for the holistic and the corporeal, as for the rational co-operating with the emotional, disrupting the notion of monolithic knowledge. Coming from the chaotic and fertile South of the World, we are towards a counter-hegemonic way of occupying institutions and perpetrating dissident imagery. Therefore, here art works as a channel to project anti-colonial realities, and to challenge, denounce, and make visible the necropolitics of the past-present, which alarmingly continue to rule Brazil, as well our shared world.

In this direction, I'd like now to introduce you to our first guest speaker, Luciara Ribeiro:

Luciara Ribeiro is a Brazilian educator, researcher, and curator. She holds MA degrees in Art History from the University of Salamanca in Spain (2018) and the Federal University of São Paulo in Brazil (2019) where she was a recipient of a Fundación Carolina scholarship and a CAPES Fellowship, respectively. She is interested in issues related to the decolonization of education and the arts and the study of non-Western arts, particularly African, Afro-Brazilian and Amerindian arts. She has already worked with important Brazilian institutions such as São Paulo Biennale Foundation and Tomie Ohtake Institute. Please welcome, Luciara Ribeiro.

Crossed dialogues

[Luciara Ribeiro]: Hi everyone. Thank you, Rodrigo. Thank you everyone here today. I'm a bit nervous because I don't speak English very well. I will try to read my text for the presentation today. First, I want to thank Rodrigo and the Art History Department for the invitation. My name is Luciara Ribeiro, I'm a curator, educator, and researcher

in Art History. I want to share some thoughts with you in English although I am not fluent yet. I will try to read my text, but if you find that any of my points do not come across clearly, Rodrigo will be here to help. I will also be available after this conversation for further discussion and exchange.

I am going to share with you a study on the curatorial field in Brazil, in particular about the black and indigenous curators. In Brazil, there is an open debate on the formation, consolidation, and definition of the different modes of curatorship, and about who are the professionals working in the area. Understanding who is curating today is fundamental to rethink the arts, their spaces, and authorships. It is also necessary to acknowledge that these authorships are not neutral and that they are marked, for example, by social factors, such as class, gender, and ethnic-racial. The study I am going to present to you today is a mapping exercise meant to find out who the black and indigenous Brazilian curators are and their contributions to the national curatorial field. The research started in September 2019 and has already gathered about 76 names of black and 20 indigenous curators, of which the majority are female. They operate in the southeastern region in an autonomous or independent manner. The survey has been carried out via social media and relied on the contribution of several people who shared similar views and motivations about the relevance of this initiative.

In order to deepen in this data, the project was integrated into group the Training and Research Network on Exhibition Curatorship (In Portuguese: Rede de Pesquisa e Formação em Curadoria de Exposição), a research group coordinated by 8 people, presented as follows:

1. Carolina Ruoso,
2. Joana D'Arc de Sousa Lima,
3. Rita Lages Rodrigues,
4. Also Janaína Barros and Marcelina Almeida;
5. Cristiane Mabel Medeiros, the director of Museum of Modern Art Aloísio Magalhães
(MAMAM / in Recife, capital of the state of Pernambuco)
6. And Professors Md Saulo Moreno and myself;

The network comprises the Bisi Silva Exhibition Curation Laboratory (Laboratório de Curadoria de Exposições Bisi Silva), the School of Arts of Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), the Research Center of Museum of Modern Art Aloísio Magalhães (MAMAM / Recife), the Laboratory Art-education, curatorships, and histories from the exhibitions at the University of International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (UNILAB / in the state of Ceará), Ceará Art Museum, School of Design of the State University of Minas Gerais (UEMG) and the newsletter "Life and Art", a section of "O Povo" newspaper.

Although the study is still in its early stages, the information already gathered helps us to understand some of the dynamics and situations of such professionals. According to the data obtained so far, only 20% of indigenous and black curators work for institutions, while 80% have no choice but to operate in an independent or autonomous career format. Working as an autonomous or independent curator often involves financial instability, precarious and stressful work conditions. There is also a lack of public policies to adequately support professionals working in this modality. Obviously, this data is also crossed by other factors that do not affect only black and indigenous professionals, such as the lack of self-sufficiency in the area and the work relationships marked by professional dynamics in the art system.

It is intended, from now on, to understand the results presented and integrate them together in the study of general cartographies of curators in Brazil, which has been developed by the Training and Research Network on Exhibition Curation, seeking to understand the similarities and divergences among such professionals. What brings them together and distances them apart? As part of the same aim to write a new process for Black and Indigenous professionals in the arts, especially in curatorship, the present study was also integrated into the Afro Project (Projeto Afro), which is one of the partners of this event, and the Collective of Art Workers (Coletivo Trabalhadores de Arte), another group concerned with the collective paths of the arts in Latino America. To the Afro Project, for its concern to be a permanent space for the dissemination and research of Afro-Brazilian arts and black authorships, and to Collective of Art Workers, for the urgent need to debate the policies of labor contracts in the field of arts, the adoption of selective processes that are ethical, transparent, and combating the permanence of exclusion processes.

As the continuation of the research development, the following step was to undertake a series of interviews with the curators identified through the mapping exercise. The goal is to continue building a panoramic and therefore inclusive study also on the current curatorial thinking. The interviews focus on the subjectivity and the intellectuality of the interviewed professionals. The results of the interviewing process are being disseminated through the Afro Project website from November 2020. We have recently experienced a series of exhibitions and projects organized by artistic institutions with the aim of promoting larger racial, gender, and social class diversity in their teams. Despite the good intentions, the data here suggest that there is still a long way for these actions to have enough impact over the underlined problems and to effectively promoting a real change in the hiring of Black and Indigenous professionals in the institutional teams. When institutions seem to embrace.

Taking forward, the study of Black and Indigenous curators is a way of collaborating with the writing of new historical narratives. Understanding them beyond representativeness. Understanding their subjective and artistic processes is the goal of this mapping exercise. The initial data already demonstrates the so-called “racial gaps” placed in the professional representation of the field are the result of the permanent process of excluding bodies and voices. An example of this is the fact that the curatorial narratives of the North, Northeast, and Midwest in Brazilian regions are generally placed on the margins of the leading role of national curators and appear here prominently, demonstrating that there is no gap but a lacunary exclusion. In short, the research demonstrates that it is possible to rewrite the arts in Brazil, mainly through indigenous and black hands. We make it clear here that curatorship is a field in dispute and that represents the power of storytelling. I want the curatorships of the future to be broad, expanded, diverse, and directed to all.

Thank you, and I'm sorry for my English.

[RD]: You don't need to apologize for your English. It's about that as well, to adjust and to make dialogue happen. And now we'll follow with Diogo.

[DRB]: I will present the next panelist. Yhuri Cruz is a Brazilian visual artist and writer with degrees in Political Science (Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro) and Cultural Journalism (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro). He develops his artistic and literary practice based on textual creations involving visionary fictions, performative propositions which the artist calls scenes and installations in dialogue with systems of power, institutional criticism, relationships of oppression, healing performances, subjective rescues, and repressed or unresolved social violence.

[Yhuri Cruz]: Hi guys, and girls and everybody. I'm so thankful to be here. I want to thank Rodrigo. I want to thank Diogo. I want to thank the University of Concordia. Today our time is, I guess it's quite too short to say everything we want to say, and we dream to say, and we'd like to say, but, well, I'll organize my mind and organize my work. I decided to organize a presentation. So I will share my screen with you. I'm Yhuri, an artist from Rio de Janeiro. The name of my presentation is 'building-feeding the monuments'. I was thinking of how I would like to present myself, introduce myself to this Canadian/Brazilian public. And I thought of presenting parts of my research.

I've been working a lot with monuments, and this is a wide-open idea of monuments, is not only about the real, what we think as monuments, but also these images and these spatial images, which occupy kind of a fixed space on our minds. So, I will try to be very objective. I divided my presentation into three movements. The first movement is called "seeing constructive ghosts", constructive ghosts is an essay that I wrote during the pandemic last year, trying to reflect all my, all my works during the years of 2016, 2017, 2018. And when in 2020, looking back, I kind of understood that my works were dealing with these ghosts. So it's a quite long essay. So I won't be able to read it to you, but I'd like to read the first ghost. In this essay, I list three,... four. I don't remember how many ghosts I list, but I'm going to read to you ghost number one. So let's see, "ghost number one":

"there it was, motionless like a monument: casting shadow over the buildings which were casting shadows over other beings, too small in face of its size. It disputed the landscape at the level of mountains, reflected with them in the waters of Botafogo, in the south zone of Rio de Janeiro. Just like the silhouette of an old titan built five hundred and sixteen years ago, it was a ghost built on concrete. And I saw it ready and alive, built as an architectural project for the future, entirely imagined and realized.

The genocide. The Sugarloaf Mountain was demolished and with its wreckage, it was erected the Ministry of War. When I saw it, I didn't believe it at first either. In more than ten years watching the Sugar Loaf behind the window of the bus, while returning to the north zone, I never saw it. How many times did I have to cross paths with it to finally run into him? And today I wonder if this is how ghosts are revealed, the more I cross their faces, the more familiar I am with their outlines. The eye of the body gathers information such as a gravitational atmosphere around it, of new visibilities, levels of opacity, energies, vibrations, projections. In a memorial arena between time and power. Until the ghosts have the opportunity to finally haunt.

And there it was. A ghost standing in its four hundred and twenty meters staring at my six-foot body. Standing on the ground. It was by no means hovering, above the ground as assumed by the common idea of a ghost. It was through his weight on earth that I experienced the shock of scales. It was as if the moment I saw it for the first time, he had crushed instantly into the mountain, smashing any memory of nature with a thunderous, structural fall, yet dry and deaf. Billions of tons that land at once, in an instant; the mammoth in front of the insect, the military cannon in front of the thin spear. My body violently left its axis and soon got back like a spring. A tremor. The dizzy eye of my body. I didn't believe it, because there was no imagination to believe. And, precisely for that reason, I constructed it. To prove that I saw it."

Excerpt from the essay "constructive ghosts", by Yhuri Cruz (2020).

So, this is the beginning of the constructive ghosts, the essay. In this part, I am describing this work from 2017. It's a diptych of photography. So, I have this photography on the left, a photography that I took myself, from the Sugarloaf Mountain. Here we have the Sugarloaf, here we have the Urca Mountain. And I was just leaving my psychologist that day. And when I looked at the Sugarloaf, instead of the Sugarloaf, there was the Ministry of War. Well, actually today it's not the Ministry of War anymore. Today, we call it Palácio Duque de Caxias, but in the past, 1943 or 1945, it was the Ministry of War. This Ministry of War was built next to the Central do Brazil, here in Rio de Janeiro, which is the most important terminal where trains from all over Rio, well, actually not all over Rio, but the municipality of Rio and some other municipalities, they come to the central station. And then, just crossing the streets, it was decided to be built the Ministry of War, I guess, in an action of controlling the transport and the

communities of people. And then, these constructed ghosts, which I call in the essay are these ghosts that appear on the landscape, but I guess they appear, especially for some people, specifically for some people, not for everyone. And I guess they are also connected to this necropolitics I was dealing with back in 2016, 2017.

This is the other part of the work. So besides the diptych of photographs, I also have this marble stone, which is a kind of an institutional stone of the fictional work that would have happened, but it didn't. So, to sum up, it's a work about these necropolitical fictions that might have happened, but they didn't happen the way we expected them to happen, but they did happen. And I'm going to go through, all these images of this enslaved person still in movement number one, "constructive ghosts". This is a very important Brazilian image for Brazilian devotion, especially Black people, or *umbadistas* devotion. This is an image that came to me, I guess before I was born. My mother is very devoted to this image specifically, this one here, she has it. She has this image in her kitchen and once trying to think of a new work, trying to think of a new monument, I saw this image and I thought of creating an image that would somehow break this one or create another fiction, even stronger than this one.

I don't know how much time I have, but anyway, this image was first made by this French artist Jacques Arago, who came to Rio de Janeiro in 1814, I guess so 19th century. He came to Rio and he drew this image that he saw on the streets of Rio. This image crosses time, and in the 20th century, it becomes an image of devotion. That's all I want to say right now because of the time. So these are the two works I have selected to talk about these constructive ghosts. These images, these ghosts that are in our landscapes, and sometimes we see it, sometimes we don't. And these ghosts are in our devotional system as well. The second movement of my presentation is called "building spiritual monuments".

This is the image of Anastasia that my mum has, and this is the image that I made. I called this second image "A monument to the voice of Anastasia". And I decided to call it a monument because, well, the idea of the work here is very simple. I mean, the strategy of the work is simple. It was first to find a mouth that would fit the image, this image here that I found on Google. After I found the mouth, I had to take off the mask, and after I did these two actions, I decided to transform it into a

monument, but I would say it's a kind of a distributional monument. You can distribute the monuments, hand by hand.

This is the work “Anastasia Livre” (“Free Anastasia”). And I guess the funny thing about this work is that this is a mouth that is not the image’s true mouth, but it became the image’s true mouth. It got me very interested in how we could make this mouth talk, speak, and eat. So the third movement is called “feeding the monuments”. Feeding the monuments is about making this image of Anastasia eat. I would say this is my recent research, how can I make this image eat? And how can I make this devotional aspect of Black Brazilians eat, somehow? How this thin maybe hungry subjectivity might eat? And, I wrote a piece of writing called “Pretofagia” or “Blackphagy” if you want to translate it. “Pretofagia” or “Blackphagy” is this piece of writing in which I describe this subjective body, which is kind of staging this fiction of hate, this colonial fiction. Once this objective body explodes their new fiction would be to keep eating their healthy parts that came from within themselves.

Then, this piece of writing, is also a kind of a dramatic one. So, I invited friends of mine and Black artists, Black artists of the presence, to stage this piece of writing with me. This is an image of one of our first performances of Blackphagy. And this is a mask called “Pretusi”. These people are Mayara Velozo, Pedro Bento, this is me, this is Dani Camera, this is Nelson. Elen is also here somewhere. I'm almost finishing. Blackphagy became a research of staging fictional writing. So, after Blackphagy in 2019, 2020, and 2021, my friends and I, we've been staging and making these scenes, and I guess the one objective we have is to make our subjectivity feel more and more satisfied in terms of hunger, you know? So, I can talk more about the scenes if you want to. And that's it. Thank you for listening and thank you, everybody. Luciara, Diogo, Rodrigo, Deri, Pêdra, thank you guys.

[RD]: Thank you, Yhuri! Now we are going to have our final panelist Pêdra Costa, which is a performance artist. Can you all see my screen?

[PC] “The asshole’s investigations are theoretical and practical, always. Theory is on the skin and the practice comes from life. The theory only exists if there is the experience. It only transforms itself if it goes through the body. The Southern Butthole

is movement. The constraints and rigid systems of the body do not flow in these studies. We do not fight against anything. Our fights were always defeated. We already learned about this in the history of the world. We are Sorceresses and Healers. Our dance and our Ginga¹ is our fight, our way of Loving, playing, being in connection with our community. We are always collective, never individuals. The artfulness is the basis of our whole life against the colonizer's project. Artfulness is not learned and taught. Our knowledge would never be recognized if they were not appropriated by white and/or Europeanized knowledge and bodies. Our voices are not audible. Thus, we have all the autonomy and authority to found such studies. Try as we might, we will never be authorized as a field of knowledge by whiteness. We do not need its approval! We move forward criticizing the "colonial fantasies" about our bodies and, specifically, butts. Our fierce criticism comes from our buttocks. Our buttock is our power. So many interdictions, religious and colonial fantasies about our butts. Anthropophagy does not unite us anymore. We already ate them as a condition violently imposed by the colonial civilizing education. Now we vomit them and we shit them. To the South of the world, to the buttock of the body."

[In consonance with the Southern Buttock Manifesto², images of Costa's body are displayed in the course of her 15 minutes presentation]

[RD]:

Thank you so much, Pêdra. Pêdra asked me to introduce her/them, just as a performance artist. I was not rude, she asked me to do it this way (laughs), and now we are going to start our Q&A after these amazing contributions of you all. Thank you so much for sharing with us, and we are gonna to first start with your questions, right Diogo? And then we're going to open up for everyone's questions in the chat. If you want to ask us in Portuguese we can translate it. Diogo, would you like to begin?

[DRB]:

Yes. Sure. First of all thank you so much for the three panelists. It was really, really wonderful listening to you today. And maybe I'd like to start with trying to establish the

¹ Ginga is the basic movement of *capoeira*, an Afro-Brazilian dance/fight.

² Published in *Anti*Colonial Fantasies - Decolonial Strategies*. Editors Imayna Caceres, Sunanda Mesquita & Sophie Utikal. Publisher: Zaglossus. Vienna, 2017.

common elements in the different presentations. And well, for me, the common element is the body. So, we ended with the performance showing the body and the common element is the body. But it's a body that is not about the representation of the body, but it's a body that does something. And that's what changes the idea itself. So it's a body that brightens, that produces exhibitions, that does the curatorship, it's a body that tells stories, it's a body that shows itself. So it's a body that is an action and empowered in that action. Then, I'd like for us, maybe to start, I would ask all the three panelists to say something about how they see their own presentation related to the other two. So, we can start that dialogue of putting all of this panel together.

[LR]: The relations that I see with my own work are beyond this presentation, we cannot make it strict to this presentation, because it's much more. The body for me, for example, is a spatial concept and in this context I see the body also as a way of losing the fear for example, because we are in this dialogical context with different languages. Regarding the body, this body-framing, we need to try to avoid to get to this common place that is framed to the so-called dissident bodies, and that the debate starts much beyond as well. Our knowledge presented here shouldn't be seen just as a corporeal thing. We need to avoid this stereotype of framing the dissident identities as something just related to the body. Also, this kind of narrative can sometimes make the body be seen before the knowledges that we all brought.

[DRB] (42:50):

I asked Luciara about that two sided idea, so on one side the body, and on the other side, the knowledge, the idea of knowledge, and I asked her whether we couldn't think about the body as knowledge. So, I mentioned specifically the work by Pêdra Costa, so the video/performance we just saw, and she answered that she thinks that's also a possibility, the idea of body as knowledge, but she's afraid that the idea of body itself may become a trap in the sense that we cannot go beyond the body. And that the work of the artist can get stuck in a certain essentialized idea of the body. And so, she thinks it's important to go beyond that idea of what the body brings as an image itself.

[YC]: In the beginning, I was talking about gaps and how the works of us three, Luciara's, Pêdra's, and my own deal with gaps, but I'm not sure which are our intentions with gaps. If it's to just highlight the gaps or somehow fill in the gaps with other intentions, beyond just the highlights, the historical, and the statistic approach to these gaps. Then, I was talking about translation, how my work and the work of Pêdra both deal with translation, I guess this connects us both. And then, in the end, was talking about these ghostly layers of the body. So, sometimes it is not about the body itself, but it's about how our body, our subjective body perceives ghosts and how it is perceived as a ghost as well. Also, how we can act between these two places, trying to create a fictional scenario or a fictional narrative, as well.

[RD] Thank you! Pêdra, would you like to add something?

[PC]: Yes. I love that my mouth is in my belly in the image [Zoom filter interference]. Well, I think it's a difficult question to answer, Diogo. But what I think e logo depois eu traduzo em português também. What Connect our works, I think is the transformation of historical colonial capitalist logics, and still present violence in the Global South, specifically in the territory called Brazil. In portuguese: O que eu acho que conecta nossos trabalhos é a transformação de uma história colonial capitalista violenta, ainda presente no Sul global e especificamente no território chamado Brasil.

[RD] Perfect, thanks Pêdra. I'd like to also speak a little bit about the common places that I see going on here. For me, even before I have invited you and organized this program I thought about these frictions, as well. These disruptive narratives, and how we can be inserted in these logics of institutional neoliberalism. You know? I believe that all of us to thrive needed to deal with these layers of being framed as dissident, in a sense. In our specific senses, and our specific life experiences. The museum, the galleries, the art institutions, academia, all these institutions are a continuation of colonialism, of colonial structures of knowledge. And for me, also with this idea of our body, sometimes the Western knowledge is so concerned with the mind that we forget about our bodies, our corporeal needs. And it's for me, as Pêdra said in her work, how we need to have this ginga, we need to have these ways of being inserted in these institutions but also never losing our essence, and how we gonna position ourselves as dissident bodies. So, for me, I'd like also to hear from you, maybe later, maybe with

a mix of other questions brought by the audience, but for me, this is the common ground, the way that we occupy and challenge these institutions.

[PC]: Sorry, Rodrigo and Diogo, can I say a small explanation about the "ginga". "Ginga" is a basic movement of Capoeira. Capoeira is a fight/dance from enslaved Black people in Brazil that is spreading in the world, in each city that you go to, at least in Europe, I'm based in Europe. So, there is a group of Capoeira around the world spreading the knowledge. Thank you.

[RD]: I'll read the first question that we got from Alejandra Espinosa: "Yhuri, does this fabulation that you have built consist in an operation of deterritorialization to question the sense of imposed monuments by hegemony that doesn't relate to us? Does it deal with a kind of counter-monument in which you build a new history?"

[YC]: It's always complicated to speak in Portuguese and English, so when I deal with monuments in my work, monuments they are always related to immateriality. They are much more related to capillarity than physical space. The monuments are related to scale, the scale I try to deal with it's a kind of subjective scale. A escala com a qual eu trabalho é uma escala subjetiva. So, for example, the work of the Monument to the voice of Anastácia, it's a monument that it will forever be built as long as it's forever spread. I guess this idea of counter-monument, I never thought about this before, but I like to agree with you when you talk about deterritorialization, because it's not about a territory, it's about a moving territory. In this case, our own body.

[RD] Thank you, Yhuri. We have a lot of people also praising all of your works, all of your presentations.

[DRB] Just one common question, Pêdra. Lots of people asking whether they can see your video again on another platform.

[PC] No, but I'll write my e-mail here and I can send you to see it again.

[RD] Monique has a question. The liberation of Black and indigenous bodies and monuments in the context of colonization is such personal works. Yhuri and Pêdra,

how do you navigate the road of yourself as artists and yourself as bodies that live very personally the impacts of colonization? How do you step away from it? Or, is that even possible? And Luciara, as a curator, how do you protect that space for the artists, not only as artists but as people living the impacts of the colonization so directly.

[PC] I think it's not possible to step away from colonization, and from the consequences and effects. Maybe in one or two centuries, if we work a lot from now on.

[YC] So, I dived my presentation in these three movements. The first one was about constructive ghosts. The constructive ghosts, they talk about this impossibility of walking on lands without coming into ghosts. I didn't have the chance to read the whole essay, but the point of the essay is to somehow turn ghosts into spirits. So, I guess that Monique's question is "how to step away from it". It's quite hard, but I try to transform these colonial ghosts into spirits I cannot be afraid of. And, I also believe that in my practice the third movement, "feeding the monuments", talks about strategies to step away from it. I think that when I stage the fictions I create, I somehow develop keys to deal with historical fictions. Because I kind of build myself as a writer, so I can deal with other people's writings. This doesn't always work but it helps me to not always live the colonial history, which is always trying to scare me.

[RD] Thank you. Luciara, as a curator how do you protect these spaces for artists, not only for artists but for people who live the impacts of colonization so directly? How do you see this relationship with curating?

.

[DRB] So, she says that when curatorship is about ethics and transparency, and being in the world, that's the way it should be. And, that it should also take into account questions about education. So, the curatorship should always be connected to people in the world. Curatorship should always be opened, never closed. It should be opened to dialogue with other people. For her, what is really important in her work, in the research she's been doing is not limiting the curatorship to white people. So there is that urgency in looking at what Black curators have been doing. At the same time, and is important to say that, there is no such a thing as Black curatorship as one thing, but

each professional, each curator, will have his or hers or their way of working, their desires, their thinking. So, there is diversity inside the idea of Black curatorship as well.

[RD] Unfortunately, we already are on our way to the end, so we're not receiving any further questions. We're just going to read the ones that are already in the chat. So, Candé Costa asked about how was this process of compilation, that Luciara brought. He says they are difficult and asks how was it, how the process took place? Also, he would like to know about Yhuri, and how his movement of post contemporaneity is present in past works, and also about the articulation with an affective approach that he made with his works.

[DRB] Just complementing the question that has already been asked by Alice Jim to Luciara, now where is her work going? So, what's the next stage in her research?

[LR] The mapping I have prepared started when I was worried about hearing all the time that there are no Black curators in Brazil or that there were very few Black curators in Brazil. So I decided to start that list, mainly in social media, asking friends and trying to list a bigger number of Black and Indigenous curators. Nowadays, the work has been integrated into a bigger group studying curatorship in Brazil, where I have been studying the profile of the curators in Brazil. So, not only Black and Indigenous, but in general, white curators included. Asking questions such as, what is the class, background, gender, from which regions they come, what background education they have, etc. And, through that work, I realized that many Indigenous and Black curators, mainly come from an academic background. So, they usually have a Master's degree in Art, and that's how they get to curatorship, which is not the same when you talk about white curators who have a very different background, not necessarily coming from academic institutions. That shows that there are Black curators and that these Black curators have degrees. So, the idea that Institutions usually say that there are no Black curators because they do not exist or they don't have the knowledge to work in these institutions is completely false, as I have shown through my work. These curators do exist and they do have degrees. Now the institutions can no longer use that excuse for the prevalent whiteness inside their ranks.

[RD] Thank you so much, Diogo. Maybe we could wrap up our discussion with this Megan's [Quigley] question. "First, thank you all so much, I think the issues of language that we have come up against today are such poetic reminders of enduring colonialism, even if this conversation were to take place in Portuguese, there is still a colonial language. What other common languages we can come together in or what are other possible tactics of exchange? As Yhuri provokes, how can we betray language towards liberation? What are other intimacies we can access together as bodies in these spaces? So, I'm just saying that this bombastic last question is really nice to end our conversation because, in this context of academia, of production of knowledge, of this acclaimed knowledge, it is necessary to create a space, a platform for dialogue. So, this is the main purpose of this meeting, and I think we achieved this purpose in this sense. So I'll open now for the speakers and Diogo to make their contributions if they want to.

[DRB] So she says that it is not only about the language itself, the colonial language itself but it's about the framing that that language creates for us. So, it's how language makes us think in a certain way. It goes beyond creating the idea of creating a universal language. And, what she says is that there is a lack of understanding, there is discomfort, there are noises, and all of that is important and we should keep that. Discomfort is part of life and it's important that everyone should feel it. Everyone should feel, so it's about who feels discomfort and who doesn't and that everyone should feel discomfort. And then, she mentions a curatorial group in London, which is called "I'm sorry if I make you uncomfortable." So, this making other people uncomfortable is also something valuable.

[RD] Not sorry, thank you! (laughs)

[LR] It's an apology in an ironic place (laughs). It's not a literal apology but that's it, people need to feel uncomfortable too.

[RD] You nailed it. Who wants to go next?

[YC] Trying to answer Candé's question that went behind our schedule. When he asks me about my past works and questions the affection in my recent works. Talking about

this language thing and other tactics. I think that we have to recognize that every negotiation is complicated. Once we recognize that and we understand the forces and the vectors inside the negotiations we can discuss our terms and our agreements. I think that when I write "betray language emancipate movement", it's a kind of a mantra. It's like I am telling myself "you have to betray this book of codes in order to emancipate yourself from yourself, and from other situations and other books". And, I also think that another good tactic to go over these traps of language is going hybrid. Is really to go for translations, go for images, go for videos, as we did today, go beyond the language expected. Not only beyond, because in beyond there is this idea of ahead, but to go backward with language as well, you know? It's very hard, but one thing that I thought reading Megan's question was... she asks: "How?". You can only try, and trying involves making mistakes. But, the idea of mistake is just a part of the process. We're not interested at the end of the process, we're interested in the process. I'm not interested in any utopia, I'm interested in politics. Politics is the way we do things, not the way we get to things, because there will never be a destination, it will always be like the way we get there, you know? Something like that.

[RD] Thank you Yhuri. Does Pédra want to talk a little bit, too, in closing?

[PC] So, I think Yhuri said many interesting things. I'm astonished by Yhuri and Luciara. What I can say about language... I brought this question of languages in my talking, uh? Some of you are saying that is a video, but it's not a video, it's my talk. So, it's a decision to use this language to talk, right? In my case, as an immigrant from the South in the North, I'm based in Berlin, Germany, for 10, 11 years. So, I came here speaking only Portuguese and my main language was the body. The body language is something easy for me, but so fucking difficult for German people. I brought this in my talking, you can hear many different languages, Japanese, Brazilian Portuguese, in Germany they call it Brazilian Portuguese, they don't call it Portuguese. We don't speak Portuguese because our Portuguese is mixed, or as Yhuri said, hybrid. Because of our Portuguese, when we're in Brazil, we mix it with many different languages from the African continent and from the first nations. For example, "ginga" in my talking is not Portuguese. So, I think it is more complex. I would love to spend more time with Yhuri e Luciara. I think if it's possible to create space, to create room for us to give a

class, right? So, this is my wish for us, and thank you, everybody, for being here, thank you Luciara, Yhuri, Diogo, Rodrigo, and Hanss, for the beautiful introduction.

[DRB] Thank you, everyone, I was saying that what is interesting about the chat is that many people are asking for the material. So, people would like to consult what has been shown, to get to know more about Yhuri's and Pêdra's works, about Luciara's research. It's interesting to see that it's going beyond the event itself. There is a lot of dialogue and learning that still can take place after the event. So, thank you, again!

[RD] Also thank you, again, everyone. As Pêdra said, we're not individuals, we're collectives and I'm really pleased to be here with you all. We got beyond the time, a little bit. But I think it was necessary, it was the time that presented and invoked itself, as it should be. Good evening everyone, thank you. This talk has been recorded and we gonna share it later. It gonna be posted on Projeto Afro's website. All this content will be available in our mother language, Brazilian Portuguese.