

Discussion : Dialogue over Time : Reception, Improvisation, and Mediation in Collaborative Ethnographic Filmmaking

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Discussion

Dialogue over Time: Reception, Improvisation, and Mediation in Collaborative Ethnographic Filmmaking

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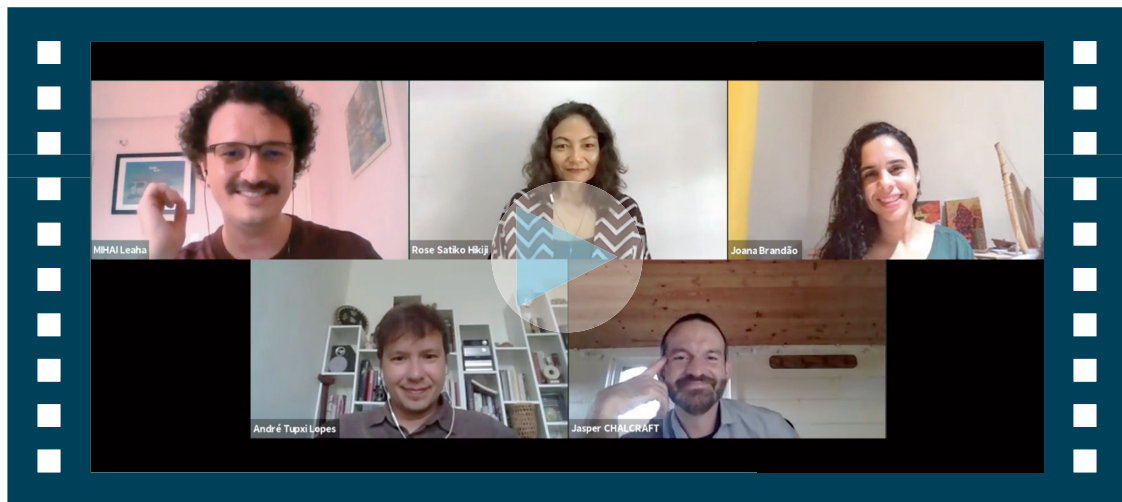
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Part 1 Shambuyl's Revolt

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (00:00)

It's a fantastic time to be more creative, to be more innovative about our work and to find new solutions of presenting and discussing about our audiovisual products together with text, together with meetings that are spontaneous in a way in the sense of discussion and that's what I would like us to do today, to have an open talk to address questions to each other as filmmakers, as researchers, as curators in my case, as whatever hats we want to wear we can wear and we can try to have this dialogue which I find it very important for the whole process of presenting these two films online because we have the opportunity to actually reflect together with our protagonists that are going to appear in the form of interview that is already made and cut and meant to be provocative for us.

I believe it's a great beginning to maybe start with who are our protagonists because both films are character-based films. They have a great deal of collaboration and a great deal of improvisation as well in the way they are made. And also, it's on the topic of museums that we can come back to. Also, our protagonists in the interviews they both reflected upon. But I would like to invite you to make a short presentation of the moment of the encounter with each of the protagonists, how these films came about, and also who are the protagonists maybe to start with that actually. Then we can see bits and pieces of the interviews and see where this discussion is taking us after. Who would like to start?

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (02:33)

I can start talking a little about this moment of encounter and then I will ask Jasper to talk about the protagonists himself. As Jasper said, we have begun this research on African migrants, artists, and musicians coming to São Paulo, Brazil in 2016. The one situation of fieldwork that was a concert, in the end of a big conference on African thoughts and art that was being held at the University of São Paulo, we went to a bar, cultural center. That's a very important cultural center for the Afro-Brazilian movement in São Paulo that's called Aparelha Luzia. In this place, I met lots of African musicians and artists, and one of them was Shambuyi Wetu, the Congolese artist who is the protagonist and the co-director of Tabuluja. In this situation, he was playing with the newsgroup in a show that was a kind of – how do you say "*homenagem*"?

Jasper Chalcraft: (03:56)

"Homage".

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (04:00)

For Papa Wemba that's a Congolese, very important musician. They were playing and they were playing together. Then he introduced himself to us, to me, in fact, and he said that he was Congolese. He was an artist. He had studied art in Kinshasa-Brazza faculty. But he was in São Paulo for 1 or 2 years, and he hadn't worked with art at all since he arrived and he was just making some kind of manual works, working, building houses, this kind of informal work, not registered work in Brazil. And he hasn't worked with art since his arrival.

Some weeks later, he sent me a message in messenger, and he said, Rose, I would like to meet you. I need your help because I want to make a performance, artistic performance.

So, we are not artists or a producer, I don't know, how can I help you. I said, no, you have a camera, and you know lots of people, it's all I need. That's how our collaboration began. It was through his desire and his initiative, and then we began to work together. Sometimes he wanted to make a performance. We went to his place. We went somewhere to film his performance. Sometimes we helped with the collection of materials, sometimes we suggested a place for the performance. It was a collaboration in terms of making performance together with him, filming his performance, and then editing some of them. This was the beginning of the whole process.

Jasper Chalcraft: (05:57)

Rose, I think you've done a great job of introducing also Shambuyi as a protagonist. Maybe I'll just briefly add a couple more things. As you said, what is nice for us, I think, is that Shambuyi was both the protagonist in the film, but a protagonist of our shared collaboration really by inviting Rose to come in and start working with him. That's been the nature of this particular relationship that we seem to be exploring, improvising, as you said, Mihai, as well before, improvising all the time which is his way to work as an artist. When we've asked him specifically about this, in any of the performances he's done, he is a little bit, not shy, but he doesn't say I have this plan. We're going to do A, B, and C and then it's done. It's like, well, I will get these materials. It will be.... So, it's very site-specific and very also specific to that moment in time when he's putting on a particular performance.

I suppose, I don't know, maybe I'm being nostalgic or whatever, but for us, it feels like it's always been very much a collaboration of minds and thoughts as well. So, we're improvising together to find ways to represent the thing that Shambuyi wants to represent. Now, of course, we have our own take and our own spin on it. But as I'm sure, we'll discuss later on in the editing of the film and the post-production of the film was particularly important to the nature of this collaboration.

On Shambuyi, as a protagonist, it's difficult because there are aspects of Shambuyi's life that he hasn't shared with us. He may have shared them with you, Mihai, in your interview. I look forward very much to seeing that.

This has been the case, I think, with all of the African artists that we've been working with in this project. And quite understandably, they will share some aspects of their lives but not others. So, a lot of personal details, personal biography, details of these things are emerging now after a long period of working together. There were things we didn't know when we were making this particular film, and it's why the sort of afterlife of the film is so interesting because I think it's been a film that's been useful for Shambuyi and it can enable us to continue our discussions and to take them to another place. And that's been a particularly exciting aspect of this collaboration.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (08:27)

Jasper, I'm really glad you said that because I think one of the aspects of this maybe, let's say, contemporary way of doing anthropology is actually working with these multiple perspectives, but also with this technologically mediated processes and encounters that we can do. In this case, we as – of course, I was in a way involved in the process of your film. Since the beginning I remember our discussions that we had, I was in Romania, you sent in material, what do you think about this film, and I kind of accompanied the process of the film from the very beginning. And now 3 years after, I got the chance to interview your interlocutor. And I think it's amazing because we can discover together things about Shambuyi as our shared interlocutor in this perspective.

I think that before going to New York and other city to the other film, we should maybe see this selected piece of interview that I made with Shambuyi and after that we can go to the next film and have a mixed, shared opinions upon the two materials and interviews.

Shambuyi Wetu (in Portugues): (10:11)

What I saw there convinced me to film a performance about the suffering that we, the black race, have had to endure. They shocked me—the images, the statues, and the paintings I saw there.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (10:42)

What was shocking? I am curious.

Shambuyi Wetu: (10:46)

What shocked me? A lot of things that I had only heard of and never seen. At the museum, I managed to see the chains that were used on the slaves, and parts of the ships, even a written story about slavery. I saw many things there that struck me powerfully.

So, I said to myself: *No! I must do something about it.* It all started from there.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (11:34)

I would like to talk more about the improvisation moment. From what I understand, you were seeing the images on a big screen at the university, and Rose and Jasper asked you to talk about what you were seeing. How did that work out?

Shambuyi Wetu: (12:01)

I did not imagine that Rose would film this as she did, because it contained my performance at the Ibirapuera park. This part will appear in the end of the movie, as one of the performances I did there. They added the images we made at the Bienale (of Art) in the beginning. We were in the cinema room, and they asked me if I could explain everything as a commentary as the film was showing. I said, 'This will be difficult for me because I don't speak Portuguese well; can I speak in my mother tongue?' She responded that it would be no problem at all, 'Speak in whatever language you feel is best'. So, they projected the film, and I started speaking, and that was it. This film was a miracle; I don't know how to explain it. Because, all of it happened in one day. It wasn't like, 'let's cut here and there afterwards'. Rose said to me, 'Look Shambuyi, it doesn't work if you take one thing out and leave another in. So, it is cool. Let's leave this film like this'. When I saw the film, I was really happy with it. It was like a spirit directed the whole film. I was not thinking about it, nor her nor Jasper.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (14:37)

And how was it afterwards? Tell me a bit about your experience. You saw the film finished and then it had a great trajectory though the festival. How was your relationship with the film after it was done? What did people tell you? Did you manage to participate in some debates afterwards? Please tell me more about it.

Shambuyi Wetu: (15:10)

Sure! I was very happy because I had this foundation now. How can I explain foundation? What touched me and made me happy was that the film managed to pass on a message, my inner preoccupation was to pass on a message, about the difficulties that the black people, this race, is

traversing. When people speak about the *black race* and *being black*, I worry a lot because, “a human being is not the color of their skin,”—to be white to, be yellow. No! It is what’s inside. We are what we are inside, not this envelope.

We African artists, and I am talking about this because I’ve met a lot of them working here in São Paulo, it’s hard for us. The immigrants that come here and work with art, just a few of them are called international artists. Only the artists that come from France or other countries in Europe or America are called international artists. We are considered ... I was already called a refugee artist.

We are fighting to change things. And the things have to change, so that in the future, our kids won’t suffer the way we do, because we are suffering a lot.

Part 2

“I Don’t Like Museums.”

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (00:00)

If you can briefly introduce Patrícia, and then we can go to our interview.

Joana Brandão: (00:09)

May I start?

André Lopes: (00:11)

Yes, please.

Joana Brandão: (00:13)

Thank you. Well, just about how I came to meet Patricia before the film, I was talking through Internet with her since I think 2 years since I started to research about indigenous women films, cinema in Brazil. I had invited her for a festival that I was organizing of indigenous women films cinema. I was talking with her about my research that I wanted to talk deeply with her and maybe make an online interview or I will come to visit her in her village.

So, we were in this conversation when I traveled to New York. We didn’t have the opportunity to meet personally because when she was to come to the festival, she fell sick and she could not come. We had her film, but she was not there. So, when I heard from Faye Ginsburg, our supervisor in NYU that she was coming for the festival, I was very happy to have the opportunity to meet her personally and it was like a stranger that was going to help me in New York. Not in her village or any place in Brazil.

So, with this surprise, I get the idea and I talked to André and to Faye that we could take the opportunity to make some. We didn’t have like which film we would do. We didn’t have a fixed idea, just had the idea to film with her in New York. We said we’re going to talk with her. Maybe ask her what we could do, and think something together.

So that was when she came, we sat for breakfast and we shared with her the idea of making a film, and it starts a kind of very light and free conversation about what we could feel. But we didn't have many days and she was busy. She had her agenda with the festival. We decided okay, let's film her in the festival and we'll see what comes out.

So, it came at the museum and when we went to the museum and everything that was — it was like she started to comment in, and we said, okay, let's get it. She wanted to visit Times Square because her mother asked her to take a picture. I said, great, I am going to go to the Times Square with her. About her, I think before being a filmmaker, she's a leader in her village, to her people. She comes from a family of leaders. I didn't see her, like, she learned to be a person that is articulating many, many relations and she is very young, but she had a kind of wisdom, like the way that she looked at the things, she analyzed, she was very quiet. But when she speaks, I think that she speaks from a place of a person that's really analyzing the words and she comes with her perspective from her culture and cosmology. It is very strong always when she speaks.

But like her leadership, I think in the village in Brazil, like when you study indigenous cinema, we see that this place have the filmmakers are placed out, sort of leadership that's like mediating many relationships. When they are doing the filming, they are also mediating like political relationships. So, it's a place that like over... I don't know how to say in English, but comes *se sobrepeõe*.

André Lopes: (04:08)

"Overlap".

Joana Brandão: (04:10)

Overlap, and to be a leadership. So, I see that she's in this place and also, she's in a place I was relating with the juruá board, the white board, so since she started to do cinema, she has been to many festivals. She's always visiting and presenting her films in many events. She talks about this place that she's been in since many years. That she has to prepare herself that she talked with her mother, her grandmother, how to get strong to survive, in other words of the juruá because she's always there. I think she's kind of this woman that she's not just a filmmaker, she's a leader. She's a woman that's in a place of negotiating with future with the culture of the juruá and in this place of speaking about her people to the world of white people through the cinema and through the talking also like through relations.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (05:19)

Thank you. André, you want to add up something or...

André Lopes: (05:24)

Yes. So, it was a great introduction also about Patricia and her work and I would like to add that me and Joana, we both are fans of the work that Patricia has been doing with the Mbyá-Guarani collective of cinema. And then it was like pretty much an opportunity to register. And then when we saw the strongness of her words and this potential of her speeches, we thought that it was very worthy to try to amplify her discourse and try to make it in a format of a film. Unfortunately, our

relationship in New York, our time together was very little, so we had 3 or 4 days. After that, we spent months in the editing room and like I was exchanging with Patricia. But unfortunately, it wasn't like the long-term relationship between — at least in presence. We did this format, like Patricia as a character and not as a director together. But it was like an agreement between us that in this case, it was like more fair to put her as a protagonist and not as a director.

I think that also for us maybe we had this admiration of her work and maybe we didn't want to — if it was a bad film, we didn't want to like to ignore.

Joana Brandão: (07:58)

To taint her name maybe her name or I think which was like to make a bad spot... I'm sorry to interrupt you. We talk about it together many times.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (08:13)

Well, certainly it wasn't the case, right?

André Lopes: (08:17)

We hope. I think that Patricia...

Joana Brandão: (08:19)

I hope so. We hope so.

André Lopes: (08:21)

I think that Patricia liked very much the final result, but a big institution didn't like it. So, the...

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (08:33)

Let's talk about this later. I know this story, it's amazing. But we can postpone after this interview.

André Lopes: (08:43)

Okay.

Mihai Andréi Leaha: (08:45)

It's more like a 10 minutes' interview of Patricia and also André is reflecting a little bit on this issue of reception and then we can continue with focusing a little bit on the aftermath of the films.

Patrícia Ferreira Pará Yxapy (in Portuguese): (09:03)

I don't particularly like museums, you know... I really don't like them. I don't feel good about it, but I also find it interesting to express that kind of opinion about museums, right? And I really talked about what I was feeling at the time. Here too, in the missions, there is a museum, which is different, but it is a museum of the Jesuits. The works that were produced by the Guarani are also exhibited, but in museums they usually speak a lot, and tell the story in a very distorted manner. I felt that, so I went with that vision to this museum too. The museum is complete; there are many things there, including things that, for me, shouldn't be there, you know? They were... I don't know,

stolen. Yes, in a way, I think they were stolen.

The film is practically all the material we had, which was very little. We only had two days there, or maybe one day, a morning and a night. I remember, I had to go to that, how do you say? Times Square.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (11:01)

Times Square. Which is another museum, right? A museum of tourists.

Patrícia Ferreira Pará Yxapy: (11:11)

Yes. I insisted on going there, and Joana and I managed to go there at night, and that is how it was. I also made a speech there about what I think of this consumption thing, of being there in the city, which is a city where there is a lot of consumerism, and people want to go there. But for me, it was just another place I managed to go to. It's another place that the Nhanduru allowed my feet to step upon. It's like that, right? Anyway, that's it.

Patrícia Ferreira Pará Yxapy: (12:11)

Actually, in those moments that we lived, when presenting the films, you know, there was always someone with bad or even crazy intentions. There is always that person in the audience, wherever we are presenting. 'When we went to present it, we really went through this moment where we felt it was 'just another city', but actually it was a short film that was shown there, you know?' 'When we went to present it, we really went through this moment where we felt it was us and the city, but actually it was a short film that was shown there, you know?' That's exactly why this film is called 'just another city'. So I thought in giving this name "New York: just another city".

And it was, I remember, a time of politics, and there was general concern among the people about his Bolsonaro's statement, that he would no longer demarcate, and so on. In fact, it was never demarcated, as we wanted.

But, anyway, something worse was coming. I went to talk about it, and then there was this guy who didn't like it and said that I actually had to talk about my culture. This was because most people want us to talk about how beautiful our culture is, although we almost no longer have it, because cities are invading our territories. But many people do not realize this; they want us to continue with our culture, with our dance, with our food, and for us to talk about it. So, when we talk about our concerns, about our deterritorialization, people don't like it. They, the majority, don't like it when we talk about politicians who don't do anything, and, there always is, you know, that kind of person, and they are the majority. There are few people who are there to listen to our reality. In all the presentations that we go to, as I said, there is always this type of person, so we always have to deal with it. Both me and the collective staff, we always go through this situation.

André Lopes: (15:05)

I just wanted to mention a detail, that you had commented about the reception of the film. I screened this film in some villages, to indigenous friends from other places in Brazil, and I wanted

to say that they were very touched and very excited by Patricia's speeches in the city of New York and felt very represented by her speech. Many said, 'Wow, I also want a film like this, maybe one day when I go to a big city. I also want them to film me because I have a lot to talk about as well'. In this sense, I felt that these people felt very well represented, by everything that Patrícia spoke about in these spaces, in both the city and at the museum. Anyway, it was just an observation about the reception to the film.

Part 3

Improvising Reception

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (00:00)

Yeah, so this was our plot, spontaneous one and improvisation as we all hear. I suppose, it's proven that we like improvisation in many ways. Wow! I thought both speeches were so powerful, and I would like to invite you to reflect a little bit upon maybe the process of the filmmaking or we can just go straight to reception to see how important was this film for Shambuyi for example, and for you, as filmmakers, as anthropologists. Also, how important was this film for Patricia as statement and I thought André's reflection upon how this film is important for other indigenous leadership and other filmmakers in the indigenous cinema world and also what about for you because this film was also a great success in many ways. It has been traveling a lot, both films actually.

Joana Brandão: (00:37)

The idea initially was that we're going to film together towards. So, we have the camera. We're going to film you and you're going to film. You can film us; you can film anything you want. But at the end, she didn't want to film anything in the museum. So, André offered her the camera a few times and she didn't want to get the camera. And I think what she said is not a place that she's comfortable. She doesn't like to be there. She doesn't like to — that's what she talked about. She just wanted to talk about how that place made her uncomfortable. I think the filming came up showing this like this place that's not very — like this place that she is there in the middle, she's communicating about a culture with no indigenous people, but that's not a nice place, like it's not a very comfortable place to be because she has to confront many people that come with ideas that are very limited and *pré-conceitual*. I don't know in English *pré-conceitual* idea, is this? There is this word.

Jasper Chalcraft: (02:49)

Preconceived.

Joana Brandão: (02:51)

How's that, Jasper? Please...

Jasper Chalcraft: (02:53)

Preconceived.

Joana Brandão: (03:00)

Like preconceived ideas about her people and I think that we came up like to show in this place in the middle, like she said. Here she is saying that it's just one more seat because also like when I go to events, it's always the same questions. There are always some people making this kind of position. So, for me, it's just another seat, it's just another event. There is something that is the same when it's coming from new white people, from new white culture.

André Lopes: (03:38)

I think that it's very interesting. Like when she talks about the beautiful side of the culture that everybody wants to see, everybody wants to listen about. But they don't want to listen about the struggle for land and for the rights and the other sides of culture or how those objects, the beautiful objects, they ended up there. And I think that it is very interesting, like, one thing that Jasper commented about like cultural heritage, how it can exclude or include, and it's very interesting how the museums are different also. Like the Afro Brazil Museum, it has a lot about like this process of oppression and slavery and everything. And then you have this other, The American Natural History Museum, that's very focused on objects, a big collection, and it doesn't talk about like those colonialism processes of the ethnocide and the genocide, and it didn't talk about it at all. So, it's very interesting like how they can react very differently about those different collections. And I think that it has a connection with her speech about, like, what people want to see and what people don't want to see or don't want to hear about.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (05:46)

So, I just wanted to react on this, because, in another part of the interview that didn't come in this cut. She was speaking about how museums are definitely an institution that speaks about the past, but actually speaks very little about the present. And that making films, it's very much about doing things about the reality that they live, that we live today, and the problems and all the issues that indigenous people are being confronted with. And that's part of the same reaction of the Q and As that you guys were doing all the time, because people want to see things that are "museified" in a way, in a film to see traditions, cultures, beautiful things, but not the fighting, the problems that we are facing, and they are facing, of course.

André Lopes: (07:05)

And when they try to face... I'm sorry, just to add like a little bit of phrase, when they try to show those struggles, those fights, the institution doesn't allow. They don't want the presence of these discourses. I'm sorry. Just...

Joana Brandão: (07:31)

I just say bye. I am sorry, Jasper.

Jasper Chalcraft: (07:39)

Very nice to meet you, Joana.

Joana Brandão: (07:44)

Jasper, nice to meet you. Thank you again for the invitation for you Mihai and for the institution that's organized. It was very nice to meet Rose and Jasper. I am an admirer of Lisa, Rose, and congratulations. It was very nice to meet you. Bye-bye. Sorry that I couldn't stay long.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (08:01)

Thank you for the opportunity.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (08:04)

Nice to meet you. Bye, bye. No problem. Thank you so much for your time.

Joana Brandão: (08:08)

Bye André, I will talk later.

André Lopes: (08:09)

By Joana, regard.

Jasper Chalcraft: (08:18)

If it's okay I just wanted to say something about this thing I had. You were talking about André and Mihai, around this kind of museum approach to cultures. It seems to me that we're in a cultural moment, in particular, where as fetishization of the past is still putting people in this identity box. It's something that Patricia was talking about and you were just mentioning again, André, this idea of beautiful cultures okay. Songs, dances, baskets, people want to see this. They don't want the politics.

But it brings me to a question for all of us, I think which I'm not sure there's a clear answer to it perhaps, but Shambuyi in an interview interestingly says Mihai that this thing of being recognized as an international artist is something that he's having to fight for because he's still put in this box of being a refugee artist or a migrant artist. The way Rose and I have framed our work or the way it's funded or the way we get things shown in different university context, for example, is always with the migrant label or the refugee label. So, we in a way are perpetuating in some ways, this older identification of Shambuyi as a migrant artist, not as an international artist because we're interested in the struggle, the politics of what he's doing, perhaps. We're not art historians. We're interested in different art worlds, but not to the same degree. We're interested in the struggle for culture. It's something that can create greater social inclusion.

I wondered if there's a difference there because in the politics of indigeneity within Brazil, for Patricia, it's clearly really important to be seen as a representative of various indigenous voices and you've said the reception of the film, André, has been really well met by other indigenous groups, and people who see themselves represented in the way she talks about New York and the past and its relationship to the present. And yet for Shambuyi, there's clearly a tension between being identified as a refugee artist and making a new artistic space for himself within São Paulo.

I don't have any clear answers of this. This is something that it's troubling me, in my mind at the moment. I think it's interesting. We should reflect on it more.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (10:36)

I'd like to add some things. I think they are related to Jasper's answer, but listening to Patricia, I was thinking that differently from Patricia, she wants to be in the museum as an artist, and Museu Afro Brasil he has, it has a difference because it's the biggest collection on African and Afro Brazilian art in Brazil. But it has also this aspect of bringing objects from our colonial and slavery history. It's a museum that meets art objects and memory objects. Art objects are mixed in a kind of — it's a kind of Baroque museum with lots of things mixed together. But there are some spaces and some compartment...how do you say this, when you put fingers in a place, in a book? Compartmentalization?

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (11:42)

Compartments, right? Don't know. Just...

Jasper Chalcraft: (11:46)

Thematic areas.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (11:48)

Yeah. That separates in a way contemporary art, historical art objects that's these beautiful objects from cultures that I understood as traditional, as traditional cultures, and the historic cultures that represent Brazilian slavery, I think there are these three things. And I think in my idea when we took Shambuyi to the museum, the idea was let's see a museum where there is African and Afro-Brazilian art. And then what made him more – his response to the museum was to the slavery representational part, more than to the Afro-Brazilian and African contemporary arts that he knows from his art education, the African ones at least. But his feelings, all the suffering that he says that he felt leaving the museum is related to this part. So, I think it's very interesting because they are different views on museums. And I think putting these two films together also show how a museum is a complex thing, and how it can create different answers from the visitors and viewers and artists. And this is something that made me think that Shambuyi wanted to be in that space. And he wanted to be as an artist because there are Congolese artists that are exposed in the museum.

And it's the place where the Congolese artists or the other African countries' artists are not the migrants or the refugee artists, they are artists in this museum. So, I think it's interesting, and about how the film was shown and used and how Shambuyi got involved with this film, that after the film was ready, we showed in many festivals like ethnographic film fest, documentary fest, it was universities mainly. But Shambuyi took the film to art galleries and to his spaces of art that he is conquering here in São Paulo, and in Brazil.

Many times, I was asked at press release for Sesc, that's an important art and cultural institution in Brazil, asking to explain a little about the film and Shambuyi's work because we became kind of press supporters of himself in a way. So, he got the film for his artwork too, I think. I think we can

say that because he has been using not only Tabuluja, but also the short films that we made with him of his other performance. So, I like it a lot this thing that was brought, and this difference between different museums. Museu Afro Brasil is not a perfect museum. It has lots of problems that are being discussed in the main academic works too. But there are different tattoos for different museums and ways of representing art and memory. I think.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (15:31)

I just wanted to do react a little bit and also maybe move on to the next question because I think both films speak a great deal about this politics of the two museums, actually. But also, I was curious and interested to know, of how these two particular museums received the films after. If you had some sort of reaction, if they had some sort of interest or not in showing the film that was made inside the museum, or I know André has a particular story about this because in this case, you have two institutions, you have the Margaret Mead Film Festival, actually the festival that hosted and invited Patricia to go to New York. By chance, you were there already with this scholarship.

And this traditional Anthropological Film Festival in New York that is held for years, it's held inside this museum. So, it has this double take — so to speak — on what to do with ethnographic films, what to do with this kind of message, but I'm interested in what happened after the screens.

André Lopes: (17:03)

I just would like to add just a little bit, a little comment about what Rose said also because you have a lot of layers, right? Like the different museums and the different speeches of the museum and the different approaches on objects and art and history and different relationships that our friends had with those institutions. And then, it's just good to remember that in the perspective of a lot of indigenous people that live in South America lowlands museums could be compared to cemeteries and the improper ways of retaining, retaining, and exhibiting those objects makes museums potentially cursed places and even dangerous places.

So, just to give a little example like when we showed the films to other indigenous friends, the reception was great in almost all the cases, but we had one experience very interesting.

Like in one village, the Myky people, they asked to don't see the film anymore because the images of the museum, they pictured like such sacred objects that for them it's terrible to see. It can be a cause of murder for uninitiated people, for example. So, you have these different cultural traditions also that add another layer and their relationships with objects, right? Because, you have this also in South America lowlands, in general, people they like to obliterate the past like to leave the object with the dead people because you have this difference between living people and dead people that it has to keep separated in general. So, you have this also, but just you have driven to me like to get back to this museum question very fast. Just to tell this story behind the film was *censurado*. How can I say that?

Jasper Chalcraft: (20:02)

“Censored”.

André Lopes: (20:05)

The film was censored by the directors of the American Natural History Museum. So, at the time, Faye Ginsburg and another teacher, they indicated the film to be shown in their Margaret Mead Film Festival. But then, the directors of the museum censored the film because *Isso pode gerar um mal estar*. I don't know how to say this expression. *mal estar* in the museum.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (20:50)

I think it will generate that position for them maybe after *mal estar e diferente*. How would you translate that in English, Jasper?

Jasper Chalcraft: (21:04)

It's not discomfort, is it? A mess, more than discomfort.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (21:08)

Might be.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (21:09)

It's the title of Freud's book on the *O mal estar da Civilização*. I don't know how it's...

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (21:19)

Sickness, yes. Almost sickness.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (21:22)

Yes.

André Lopes: (21:23)

Then, it's so paradoxical, so contradictory because the name of the festival, in which Patricia participated, it was really 'Resilience in Motion'. And then it remembers me a lot like Jasper taught me concept that contacts zones. This is very interesting to understand like how museums have this cultural exchange space, but at the same time, like reveals the neocolonial anatomy of the institution, so...

Jasper Chalcraft: (22:03)

Just on a point of translation, so the title is in German, I just checked. Now it's '*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*', the uneasiness in civilization. But the English title is civilization and its discontents. So, it seems there's not a perfect word to express. There is a one word that directly translates. Each culture has its own version of uneasiness, discontent. What is it in Portuguese? *Mal estar*?

André Lopes: (22:29)

Mal estar.

Jasper Chalcraft: (22:30)

Mal estar like bad being. It's good that there is a lot of difference.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (22:36)

It's more Heideggerian in Portuguese like the being is bad like, it's turned inside.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (22:47)

It's the opposite of welfare state.

Jasper Chalcraft: (22:52)

Wellbeing.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (22:53)

The state of, in politics, welfare state and then *Mal estar* is the opposite of this. Difficult.

Part 4

Ontological Incommensurability

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (00:00)

Jasper, do you want to talk about this point. They mentioned...

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (00:05)

In your case, in Tabuluja film, which is also like 'Wake Up,' right? The name is 'Wake Up.' They both are very political in a sense. New York, just another city and Tabuluja, Wake Up, they have the same kind of title structures.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (00:27)

And it was Shambuyi who chose the title as now I know that Patricia chose the title.

Mihai Andréi Leaha: (00:32)

There's Patricia.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (00:36)

Right now, on the reception of the museum, we don't have anything. Museu Afro Brasil never wanted — I don't know. In fact, we didn't offer them film to be shown and they didn't invite us to be there. Shambuyi wanted to make one performance in the museum. The performance that he makes in the tree — tied to the tree and is in front of Museu Afro Brasil. He wanted to make it inside. But this was not allowed. They said that it was very difficult. We would have to have a project to be curated by the director of the museum and he wanted to make it by 20th of November that celebrates black consciousness in São Paulo and in some other cities in Brazil. And then we decided to make in front of the Museu Afro Brasil in this day of the Black consciousness.

But there is another institution, I think that's not a museum, but it's museum like, that's the Biennial

of Arts in São Paulo and this was very interesting because after leaving Afro Brazil Museum, Shambuyi wanted to make another performance soon in a response to this performance. And we were walking in this park, that's the Ibirapuera Park Ibirapuera. And we passed in front of the montage of this biennial. It was natural. It's the most important contemporary art exhibition in Latin America, one of the most important in the world. And they said, Ah, Shambuyi, we could make another performance here in the biennial, but we had no idea if they would allow. Of course, he was not a curated artist for this exhibition. But, he said, okay we can try. It's going to open in 2 weeks. We can try and come here and he created that performance that is in the film with the fish and vegetable and fruits and the art. And we made it outside the museum, and we decided to enter the museum without asking for anyone. And we said we are going to film. If they stop us, we go away. And instead, he was very well received by the audience first of all. That was like he became the main attraction of the biennial that day. And also, the team that was supporting the biennial, they came. They asked what it was about, but in a very nice way. So, it's interesting that two different institutions, the one dedicated to the African memory and art didn't accept our proposal for a performance there and the biennial that's this important art exhibition, accepted without paying him of course, or us, but he was accepted, and we were free to circulate inside the biennial for 2 hours with cameras and everything. This is funny.

Jasper Chalcraft: (03:52)

I mean, obviously, there were practical reasons why they accepted us in the biennale. I think nobody knew if we were officially involved or not. But it was super interesting. The title by the way of that, I think it was the 33rd or 32nd Biennial of São Paulo was Live Uncertainty, Incerteza Viva. And this thing of uncertainty, improvisation is of course what characterized the making of this particular film and Shambuyi's work. But yeah, it's interesting to reflect further, I think, on institutional acceptance or resistance to representations of images. Maybe Rose we've been lazy. We should have tried with the Museo Afro Brasil to have the film screens inside. Why not? It's a meta-representation of the of the museum in some way. So maybe we should follow that up.

Mihai Andrei Leah: (04:49)

As our time has already passed, but probably I'm going to cut the introduction part and put it in writing, so we gain a little bit time for discussion. I wanted to ask you a last question. But of course, if you have some other comments, feel free to do it.

I wanted you to reflect maybe a little bit upon this way of presenting films after they're already done because when we are writing an article in the academia, then we kind of expect that to be there for a long time and people to consult it, and you have these libraries, but with films are kind of like widespread in all over the place, you don't really know what place to go and fetch these films, to look at them for a long time and sometimes they lose the context. They lose a little bit of — they flak contextualization. I think one of the efforts of this journal is one, to have a new way of presenting films which is not that new anyway. But it's a way to put films online and that's one point. And another point is to think of how to accompany these films with maybe other kinds of reflections like this meeting or some text or different kinds of abstracts. And then to follow up, like maybe an interesting output of this discussion would be to organize something at the Afro Brazil

Museum to see what's happening after 3 years, how the museum reacts to that, how can you create something, the many outputs out of that. What do you think about this way of presentation? How would you think of maybe better ways of doing it or...?

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (07:14)

Can I begin?

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (07:15)

Please.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (07:17)

I think the film has a life after it has been finished. And its life, it's much longer and I think much brighter than the life of a text of an article that we write. And it has a limited life in the academic journals and spaces. The film has a longer life. We can't control the life of films, I think. And this is great. I think it's very good that the films are free, and they can go everywhere. And sometimes we don't know where they are being shown, by whom, it's good too. And I think that, in our case, we write articles all the time and mainly I've been writing articles and Jasper now with me too about films. So, this is a right way of accompanying the film with a reflection that it's independent, it's a compliment. I don't think the human needs an explanation, an article or someone talking about it. But it can produce these kinds of discourses, and it's good, like the discourse that we are having now. We discovered things about the films talking now at this moment that we didn't know and more people are going to know.

But all of this is part of this biography of the film, the trajectory of the film, we can think. The films have their own lives and sometimes they have myths around them too. And now, can I make a little parenthesis, we discovered that both Patricia and Shambuyi, very different people from very different backgrounds and life histories, etcetera, both of them added to these two films. No human trajectory that we as, I don't know, anthropologists probably hadn't thought when we made the film. Shambuyi said there was something there that made me the discourse watching the film. Patricia said being in the square, what's the name?

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (09:38)

Times Square.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (09:41)

This one. I haven't been there. I was sent there. There were beings with me in that place. I don't know, she said something like that in her narrative. So, it's interesting. The films, they have their own stories, their biographies, and now they also have these added beings that are responsible for the making of these films that we did with co-authors.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (10:19)

That's really, really interesting what you said. I wasn't thinking about it, but it's true both of them mentioned, even the improvisational moment whether it was Shambuyi said about that it's a

spirited way of doing this kind of improvisation. And improvisation always has something sacred, of course, also for the indigenous people. I don't know, maybe André can tell us more about this kind, but it was some sort of an improvisation also, like, there was an initial plan, and then it was completely broke during the production and what came out didn't actually — it was out of control. As the trajectory of the film, you don't know exactly what is going to end up and and who's going to see the film, what would be the reaction.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (11:20)

I'd like to add one more thing before passing to André because André said another very interesting thing that the museums are like cemeteries for indigenous people. I think these dimensions that's about the cosmologies and the ways of knowing and seeing and producing images or knowledge or other stuff by the people with whom we work. They have a special place when we make films with them. They are ways of understanding visually the world and representing the risks of image, the power of image. We know — there are many discussions in in anthropology that discuss the meanings, that image is not the same for us and for them. And it's not always about representation. Images can be agents, not only forms of representation.

So, I think it's interesting because these two films, it's very good, Mihai, that you put them together because they are dealing with different cosmologies, different ways of thinking about things, about things in museum, about representations, about the presentations put in places by the white people, not in the culture of Brazil. It is not the culture of of Brazil, but by accidental institutions. And it's interesting how our protagonists Patricia, Shambuyi, they are producing a deep reflection on these institutions, the museums, the cinema, anthropology maybe; it's their way of thinking about all of these.

Mihai Andrei Leahu: (13:29)

There's been a lot of discussion about these times, the new roles of what anthropologists can play as facilitators, as curators, as someone that mediates these kinds of visions or these kinds of cosmologies. How do we translate them? How do we give them space? It's a very, very good point of thinking of how our interlocutors come from a different standpoint in terms of envisioning things in terms of creating. It's not only about visual literacy, which is definitely connected to non-literacy, which is text-based or in this case, visual-based. But it's indeed something that is more conceptual, more spiritual many times. I'm really glad you said that Rose. I think it's very valuable to think about all these aspects. Also, now, our ways of presenting these films, right? To accompany this kind of discussion, I think they do have certain relevance for the films themselves.

Jasper Chalcraft: (14:48)

For sure, and for me, there's this aspect of this ontological incommensurability to borrow from Arnd Schneider which is valid for both between the discipline and the public, but also between different world views and everything else and trying to unpack or there's a tension here between accepting commensurability, maybe you cannot know it but you want to develop a sensibility towards toward it, a recognition as far as a kind of another way of both making, seeing and using film to communicate perspectives on things.

Yeah, I find it very interesting, Andre, how you were saying that or was it Joana saying that you'd wanted more participation originally from Patricia, but then you had a tension because if the film turned out not to be the wonderful film that it is, you didn't want her to have a reputation damaged by the film. And so, I guess there were incommensurabilities in that as well, in those aspects of making your film.

André Lopes: (15:56)

Wow! There are a lot of very interesting questions. So, I was wondering, I am completely contemplated by your comments and about the visual reception and the films. And I just would like to stress this point like how both films together can shed light between each other and to other questions of both incommensurability of words and like institutions, trajectories. Even if we can think about difference between ontologies or cosmologies — it's an honor to be here and to hear and to watch the thinking 'pensamento caminhar'.

Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji: (17:09)

The walking thinking.

Mihai Andrei Leaha: (17:14)

Looking for a title to my article, what would it be put all this together? I was thinking that we also maybe reflect a little bit less on our own... Let's force this a little bit like academic ontology because we are also having our own agenda, our own way of producing these kinds of films. We are always making things about, but we also have our own ways of conceiving the world or seeing the world through cinema, through text, and how these fits with other ontologies that we are dealing with.

Film 1

Leaha, M.A., R.S.G. Hikiji, J. Chalcraft, A. Lopes, and J. Brandão
2021

Part 1: Shambuyi's Revolt. *Dialogue over Time: Reception, Improvisation, and Mediation in Collaborative Ethnographic Filmmaking*. Recorded on Dec 19, 2020, 17: 38.

<https://vimeo.com/516494684> (Retrieved March 11, 2021)

Film 2

Leaha, M.A., R.S.G. Hikiji, J. Chalcraft, A. Lopes, and J. Brandão
2021

Part 2: I Don't Like Museums. *Dialogue over Time: Reception, Improvisation, and Mediation in Collaborative Ethnographic Filmmaking*. Recorded on Dec 19, 2020, 18: 50.

<https://vimeo.com/516495436> (Retrieved March 11, 2021)

Film 3

Leaha, M.A., R.S.G. Hikiji, J. Chalcraft, A. Lopes, and J. Brandão
2021

Part 3: Improvising Reception. *Dialogue over Time: Reception, Improvisation, and Mediation in Collaborative Ethnographic Filmmaking*. Recorded on Dec 19, 2020, 23: 09.

<https://vimeo.com/516495711> (Retrieved March 11, 2021)

Film 4

Leaha, M.A., R.S.G. Hikiji, J. Chalcraft, A. Lopes, and J. Brandão
2021

Part 4: Ontological Incommensurability. *Dialogue over Time: Reception, Improvisation, and Mediation in Collaborative Ethnographic Filmmaking*. Recorded on Dec 19, 2020, 18: 00.

<https://vimeo.com/516495802> (Retrieved March 11, 2021)