

DISSI DENT PRAC TICES

Brazilian
Women
Artists,
1960s–2020s

Claudia
Calirman



Dissident Practices



Duke University Press
Durham and London
2023

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Designed by Aimee C. Harrison | Project Editor: Ihsan Taylor
Typeset in Portrait Text, Canela Text, and Helvetica Neue LT Std
by Copperline Book Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Calirman, Claudia, author.

Title: Dissident practices : Brazilian women artists, 1960s–2020s /
Claudia Calirman.

Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2023. | Includes
bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022036259 (print)

LCCN 2022036260 (ebook)

ISBN 9781478019404 (paperback)

ISBN 9781478016779 (hardcover)

ISBN 9781478024026 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Women artists—Brazil—History—20th century. |
Art—Political aspects—Brazil—20th century. | Art and society—
Brazil—21st century. | Women artists—Brazil—History—21st century. |
Art—Political aspects—Brazil—21st century. | Art and society—
Brazil—21st century. | Art and state—Brazil—History. | Art, Brazilian—
20th century. | BISAC: ART / Caribbean & Latin American | ART /
Women Artists

Classification: LCC N6655 .C355 2023 (print) | LCC N6655 (ebook) |

DDC 700.981—dc23/eng/20221018

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022036259>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022036260>

Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from
the Millard Meiss Publication Fund of CAA.



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Cover art: Berna Reale, *Palomo*, 2012, performance.
Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo,
Rio de Janeiro, and New York.

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To Joe,
Your love and
support breathes
throughout
these pages.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ten years ago when I began to envision a book on Brazilian women artists, it was, to say the least, not a prominent topic. It was an overlooked and thorny subject. Moreover, it was difficult to engage artists and scholars willing to discuss it. Thankfully, since then the reception of the theme has significantly changed, as it became not only timely but also necessary and indispensable: a fascinating and complex story worth telling.

Over the years, I had conversations, exchanges, and interactions with many people. Their voices, ideas, and contributions constitute the amalgam of this book. First of all, I would like to thank the artists addressed here: Sonia Andrade, Lenora de Barros, Fabiana Faleiros, Renata Felinto, Anna Bella Geiger, Anna Maria Maiolino, Lyz Parayzo, Rosana Paulino, Berna Reale, Rosângela Rennó, Sallisa Rosa, Gretta Sarfaty, Aleta Valente, and Regina Vater. My gratitude also goes to the estates of the late artists Lygia Pape, Leticia Parente, Wanda Pimentel, and Márcia X. I extend my appreciation to the numerous artists, individuals, galleries, and institutions that provided images and copyrights for the illustrations, including Tarsila do Amaral, Fernando Gabeira, Galeria A Gentil Carioca, Galeria Jaqueline Martins, Galeria Nara Roesler, Eduardo Kac, Nora Martins Lobo, Antonio Manuel, Maria Evelia Marmolejo, Priscilla Monge, Beatriz Pimentel, Projeto Lygia Pape, the Carolee Schneemann Foundation, Wagner Schwartz, Annie Sprinkle, Adriana Varejão, Ricardo Ventura, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Univer-

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sidade de São Paulo, Museo de Arte Latinoamericana de Buenos Aires, and Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro.

My encounters, interviews, and dialogues—brief, long, and in-between; in person, on Zoom, via email, and by phone—with so many interlocutors during this process permeate and animate this book. In particular I would like to acknowledge Roberta Barros, Sérgio Bessa, Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni, Roberto Conduru, Tania Cypriano, Márcio Doctors, Alex Hamburger, Paulo Herkenhoff, Fabiana Lopes, Tertuliana Lustosa, Katia Maciel, Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, Bernardo Mosquera, André Parente, Margareth Rago, Claudia Saldanha, Talita Trizoli, and Gary Zabel. In addition, I am indebted to the professor and philosopher Auterives Maciel, who helped me navigate my inquietudes throughout the process.

My colleagues in the Department of Art and Music at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and many friends, artists, and scholars offered their support at different stages of the project: Margaret Barlow, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Marta Dziewanska, Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, Tatiana Flores, Clara Gerchman, Andrea Giunta, Agata Jakubowska, Elizabeth Jobim, Simone Klabin, André Lepecki, Ana Maria Reyes, Marcos Steuernagel, Edward J. Sullivan, and Katerina Valdivia Bruch.

This project has been supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, several PSC-CUNY (Professional Staff Congress-City University of New York) grant awards, the Millard Meiss Publication Grant, and the Office for the Advancement of Research at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. I am thankful to Ken Wissoker, senior executive editor at Duke University Press, for his guidance throughout the process. My deepest and most sincere appreciation goes to my editor, Tom Fredrickson, for his input in shaping this project and to my research assistants, Vitoria Hadba and Gabriela Davies, for their thorough work.

I am grateful for the encouragement and reassurance of my parents, Arnaldo and Loris, and my daughter, Ana Carolina.

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INTRODUCTION

Freedom isn't
enough. What I
desire doesn't have
a name yet.

—Clarice Lispector,
Near to the Wild Heart

A young female crouches over piles of cheap construction materials and debris in front of an unfinished cinder-block wall, striking a provocative pose and staring at the viewer. She wears a white T-shirt, tiny shorts, sneakers, and a green-and-yellow cap (the colors of the Brazilian flag) (fig. 1.1). The image is part of a series of selfies titled *Material Girl* (2015) by Aleta Valente (b. 1986), in which the artist turns herself into a tropical, impoverished version of the pop star Madonna.

Instead of Madonna's affluent, glamorous material world, the setting for this image is the rubble and bricks used to erect homes in lower-income communities. Valente grew up on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro—in Bangu, famous for being the hottest place in the state and home to a maximum-security prison. Like most of the West Zone of Rio de Janeiro, Bangu is featured on no tourist postcards of the city. It was once a working-class neighborhood and a commuter town, but over the years it became a run-down area surrounded by favelas where crime and drug trafficking are rampant. Valente uses the unappealing social landscape of Bangu as the site for the photo performances she takes with her cellular phone and then posts on social media. In these images, Valente juxtaposes the derelict zones of Bangu with her own body, becoming a composite body environment in which both are fully exposed.

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I.1 Aleta Valente, photograph from the series *Material Girl*, 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Galeria A Gentil Carioca, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Valente is part of a generation of artists who came to the scene at the dawn of the twenty-first century, using social media to build visibility, form virtual communities, and create connections with different constituencies. They explore the internet, where communication and interaction are instantaneous, to experiment with new forms of self-presentation, self-construction, and self-recognition through memes, selfies, and videos. Through them, discussions of gender inequality and debates on race and class discrimination long overdue in Brazilian society came to the forefront, marking major changes (and ruptures) with past generations, over the span of sixty years covered by this book: the 1960s to the 2020s.

These artists arose from diverse social backgrounds. They no longer only came from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo—Brazil’s hegemonic cultural centers—but also from various regions of the country outside major urban centers. Through the more inclusive digital and social-media networks—and the system of racial quotas that were instituted at public universities in Brazil in 2012—this new generation was able to ascend into the artistic scene. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, when this study begins, there were fewer opportunities for social mobility, and the art scene was restricted to members of the upper and middle classes who had the economic and cultural capital to navigate an elitist art world. Those decades witnessed an explosion of vision-

ary women visual artists, such as the ones addressed here: Sonia Andrade, Lygia Clark, Anna Bella Geiger, Gretta Sarfaty, Anna Maria Maiolino, Lygia Pape, Letícia Parente, Wanda Pimentel, and Regina Vater.¹

This book starts from the premise that Brazil had and still has a unique position in the global scene with regard to the prominence of women artists. They had long been accepted and even lauded as key figures in a vibrant and progressive culture, enjoying more notoriety and critical recognition in the country's cultural sphere than their North American and European counterparts. Since the 1920s they had been praised for introducing modernist trends to the country and creating a visual identity for Brazilian art. Later, many exhibited in major art institutions and at the São Paulo Biennials (initiated in 1951). Their works were included in prestigious international private and museum collections, and, moreover, some had even commanded higher prices in the market than their male peers.² According to the curator Paulo Herkenhoff, "Women were more than contributors to the visual arts in Brazil: they were the driving force of Brazilian art in the twentieth century."³ There was no "Brazilian" equivalent to Linda Nochlin's 1971 essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" because there was no need: the assumption was that female artists already "had a place at the table."⁴

While Brazilian women artists enjoyed a unique position in terms of visibility and prominence that does not mean that they were not vulnerable and did not face adversity and constraints because of their gender. Brazilian women artists may have been part of the local art scene in ways their sisters elsewhere were not, but they still faced challenges and pressures—many of which have yet to be accounted for. This book gives a nuanced account of the adversities and contradictions faced by many of these artists, even if they admittedly didn't feel discriminated against because of their gender. While many disavowed the term "feminism," they still employed feminist strategies without naming it as such or finding a better term to define their specific practices.

This book addresses many artists from different periods, and it contains a multiplicity of voices. The women discussed succeeded in exposing (and continue to uncover) power relations with the aim of blocking and destabilize those stifling forces through "practices of resistance," a term coined by Michel Foucault to convey strategies to build new forms of living and resistance to power. These artists saw discourse not only as an instrument of knowledge and power but also as a tool of resistance that would allow them to create new potentialities and possibilities. As Foucault wrote, "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it,

renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.”⁵ Here, *resistance* refers to actual practices that produce change rather than reactive approaches toward power. *Power* is seen as a pervasive relation of forces that doesn’t have an essence or a specific attribute but rather is erratic, widespread, and creative. There is no unifying term or universal practice that collectively defines the artists discussed here. They opposed normative policies, resisted authoritarianism, transgressed on imposed boundaries, pushed back against female objectification, challenged the constructions of “woman” as a fixed category, contested prescribed gender roles and morality as ordained by society, fought against the corporeal mechanisms of power, and rebelled against patriarchal culture. In their artistic productions it is possible to identify attitudes and themes clearly connected with feminist agendas of the time.

This book raises crucial questions: What were (and still are) the obstacles faced by women artists in Brazil? What strategies did they employ to create political agency and new modes of subjectification? What ruptures took place over the sixty-year span covered by this study? What still remains unchanged? A series of complex, underlying related themes run through the works discussed here: the coercion of women’s bodies, the mechanisms of social discipline imposed on them, the conduct and behavior expected of women, and the transgressive and irreverent ways in which these artists used their bodies to defy gender norms and transcend social codes and taboos. For them, a women’s body is not just a place of oppression, but the locus of resistance to the patriarchal order. Explored throughout are various constructions of subjectivity, including the use of language as an instrument of multiple significations, the nonconformative being, and the defiance of established rules.

These artists refused religious dogmas related to virtue, vice, and the cardinal sins. They also rejected strategies of control over the female body via scientific discourses of normalcy and abnormality, asepticism and abjection, convention and deviancy. They challenged the concept of hygiene as a form of corporeal discipline deeply entangled in notions of eugenics and modernization. Although many artworks discussed here address women’s subjectivity, gender politics is only one aspect of their multifaceted strategies of resistance against apparatuses of power, whether it be coloniality, racism, capitalism, or patriarchy. As this study demonstrates, these women’s artistic practices, in myriad creative and evocative ways, became inseparable from a multiplicity of battles against censorship, state violence, social inequality, systemic racism, police brutality, and the exclusion of marginalized groups. I draw on their multiple and diverse dissident practices as a guiding force for the book’s organization.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a particularly vibrant environment blossomed in Brazil. This moment was marked by the decline of neo-liberal policies that had dominated Latin America throughout the 1990s and culminated in the 2002 election of the left-wing Worker's Party candidate Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (known as Lula). It also echoed the social uprisings taking place around the globe in 2011: the Arab Spring targeting repressive regimes; widespread protests in Latin America opposing structural inequality and corruption; large-scale demonstrations in Greece, Italy, and Spain sparked by economic crises; and the Occupy Wall Street and the Black Lives Matter movements in the United States protesting economic disparity and racism. In Brazil, the catalyst for this new moment took place in June 2013 with a stunning surge of public rallies in what became known as the Tropical Spring. Few saw it coming, and no one anticipated the consequences. What began as a minor complaint against a small increase in municipal bus fares rapidly mushroomed into a massive and unprecedented wave of protests unlike any the country had seen in decades. With more than a million demonstrators from across the socioeconomic and ideological spectrums taking over public spaces in big cities, it was a major turning point: the giant had awakened.

Some have called the Tropical Spring a before-and-after moment—a new beginning. And yet, since it lacked a unified target, the movement's claims and complaints were diffuse. Protesters filled the streets demanding the imprisonment of corrupt politicians, better education and public transportation, improved health policies, and more efficient security measures. Rejecting any political affiliation, they burned party and union flags. Discontent grew after a federal investigation emerged in 2014 exposing fraud in the state-owned oil company, Petrobrás.⁶ Expressing anger over financial stagnation and rampant corruption, more than a million people poured into the streets on March 15, 2015. All these circumstances, financial and political, led to a major polarization in the country, culminating a year later with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, successor to Lula, on August 31, 2016, shortly after the beginning of her second term. Many considered her ouster a coup to end the thirteen years of rule by the Worker's Party. Further destabilizing the political situation was the advent of the internet and social media, which facilitated the dissemination of hate and intolerance and the public rise of right-wing and Evangelical groups.⁷ The most active of these was Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL; Free Brazil Movement), which (among

other things) called for censorship of the arts. This marked the beginning of an intense campaign against artists and cultural institutions that would culminate in a series of disquieting events in 2017.

In September 2017, conservative factions, including Evangelical groups and the MBL, succeeded in shutting down a month before the scheduled closing of the exhibition *Queermuseum: Cartografias da diferença na arte Brasileira* (Queermuseum: Cartographies of difference in Brazilian art), presented at Santander Bank's Cultural Center in the state of Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil. The exhibition had been charged with promoting blasphemy, pedophilia, and bestiality, and the building was defaced with spray-painted comments such as "Anti-Christ" and "Santander supports pedophilia." Among the images that triggered the protests was *Cena de interior II* (Interior scene II; 1994) by Adriana Varejão (fig. I.2). The painting includes scenes depicting the brutal colonization of Brazil by the Portuguese, such as one showing a Black man being raped by two white men. The scene alludes to the Indigenous Natives and enslaved Africans who were subjugated by European conquerors and subjected to unspeakable violence, including sexual assaults. In another scene, a man is depicted having intercourse with a goat. The image comes from narratives of sexual interactions between animals and *sertanejos* (inlanders) as well as males from sugar plantations in the northern part of the country as described in Gilberto Freyre's seminal book *Casa Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*; 1933).⁸ Misrepresenting Varejão's decolonial critique, detractors accused her of promoting zoophilia.⁹ The controversy escalated when many lesser-known queer artists felt excluded from the exhibition. As the art critic Daniela Name acutely pointed out, *Queermuseum* lacked queers.¹⁰ Angered, some of the excluded artists refused to support the protests against the exhibition's closing, which ironically reinforced demands to shut it down.¹¹

Less than a month later, another protest by conservative groups erupted at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo; MAM-SP) when a video of performer-choreographer Wagner Schwartz's piece *La bête* (The beast) (fig. I.3) circulated on social networks. A nude Schwartz lay on the ground holding a plastic copy of one Lygia Clark's hinged interactive sculptures called *Bichos* (Critters) and invited members of the audience to manipulate his body as if it were one of Clark's objects. During the event, a four-year-old girl—accompanied by her mother, an artist herself—approached Schwartz and touched his feet.¹² The video went viral, spurring the MBL to mobilize its membership against the performance, the artist, and the venue. Schwartz was accused of inciting pedophilia, and the museum's public funding was threatened.

1.2 Adriana Varejão, *Cena de interior II* (Interior scene II), 1994, oil on canvas. Courtesy of the artist.



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In October 2018 a right-wing former army captain named Jair Bolsonaro was elected president of Brazil. One of his first measures was the dissolution of the ministry of culture, in the process attacking “big-time artists” who, he claimed, were getting rich off public money. Inflammatory rhetoric denigrating women, Afro-Brazilians, Indigenous people, and LGBTQI+ communities had marked Bolsonaro’s climb to power. He once described having a female child as a “weakness” and affirmed “he would not treat or pay women the same as men in the workplace,” adding that he would “rather have a son who is an addict than a son who is gay.”¹³ In the midst of this period of political turbulence, a diverse collection of progressive professionals, artists, and activists mobilized to expose censorship of the arts as well as hatred, intolerance, and violence against minority groups. A new generation of women visual artists came to the fore. This time, they were adamant in considering the personal political—and the political personal.

- I.3** Wagner Schwartz, *La bête* (The beast), 2017, performance, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2018. Photo: Benoit Capronnier. Courtesy of the artist.



ANTECEDENTS: INFLUENCES AND INSPIRATIONS

This book is neither a survey of Brazilian women visual artists nor a history of feminism in the country. It does not pretend to cover the lifetime production of the artists mentioned herein, and it is not an essentialist or a nationalistic reading of contemporary Brazilian women's art. Rather, my intent is to highlight key works by prominent and emerging women artists—from the 1960s onward, the period covered by this study—that illuminate significant moments of change and that engage with important debates and theoretical frameworks permeating the local and international spheres. The practices of these women artists are analyzed in light of historical perspectives, temporal events, and cultural specificity. This book rejects the global trend toward the attenuation of differences, where it is thought better to promote a universal language diluted by hegemonic cultural representations than to affirm dissident subjectivities. Why did I choose to write about this select group of women visual artists among so many other significant possibilities? The choice was based on the issues raised by these artists' practices of resistance in relationship to main historical moments in Brazil: the military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985; the return to democracy and the first direct elections for president in 1989; the social changes and turmoil of the 1990s; the rise of the Worker's Party in the early 2000s; the return of the Right in the mid-2010s; and the emergence of a new "activist" generation and the overtly feminist artists who emerged in 2015 and after. Though this text respects a chronological structure that traces the changes that have occurred over the decades, it has less to do with neat generational divides than with major historical transformations and ruptures that took place in the sociopolitical and cultural spheres.

This study builds on my 2012 book *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles*, which analyzes the intersection of the visual arts and politics during the most repressive years of Brazil's military regime, the so-called *anos de chumbo* (leaden years) of 1968–75. The springboard for the present project is my article "'Epidermic' and Visceral Works: Lygia Pape and Anna Maria Maiolino," published in the *Woman's Art Journal* (2014), and my chapter "Lygia Pape: A gula e a luxúria" (Lygia Pape: Gluttony and Lust) in the 2017 exhibition catalogue *Invenções da mulher moderna: Para Além de Anita e Tarsila* (Modern women and their inventions: Beyond Anita and Tarsila), edited by Paulo Herkenhoff.¹⁴ The groundbreaking 2017 exhibition *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985*, organized at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles by Andrea Giunta and Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, and its catalogue were motivational for this book.¹⁵ That project gave an overdue

visibility and legitimacy to the production of Latin America women artists during a period of intense political and social unrest, stressing the inventive ways in which Latin American women artists used their bodies in the fight for political emancipation.

Aracy Amaral and Herkenhoff's exhibition catalogue *Ultramodern: The Art of Contemporary Brazil* was one of the earliest attempts to address the reasons for the lack of interest in feminism in Brazilian visual arts. Herkenhoff and Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda's *Manobras Radicais: Artistas Brasileiras, 1886–2005* (Radical maneuvers: Brazilian artists, 1886–2005; 2006) provided an invaluable overview of the innovations wrought by prominent women artists. Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni's *Mulheres artistas: As pioneiras 1880–1930* (Women artists: The pioneers 1880–1930; 2015) is a significant contribution to the discussion of amateurism versus professionalism in the formation of Brazilian women's artists. Roberta Barros's *Elogio ao toque: Ou como falar de arte feminista à Brasileira* (Eulogy to touch: Or how to talk about feminist art in Brazilian; 2016) is a crucial study that punctures the fallacy that no gender discrimination exists in the visual arts in Brazil. Barros boldly states that even today, works of art are still being analyzed through formalist lenses, purposefully eschewing discussions of feminism. Also significant are the writings of renowned Brazilian art critics, art historians, and feminist scholars including Ana Mae Barbosa, Sueli Carneiro, Maria Angélica Melendi, Margareth Rago, Cynthia Sarti, Luana Saturnino Tvardovskas, Talita Trizoli, and Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, among many others.¹⁶ Sonia E. Alvarez's *Engendering Democracy in Brazil: Women's Movement in Transition Politics* (1990) is central to this study in its thorough historical account of the development of feminism in Brazil in the sociopolitical sphere. It relates the rise of the progressive women's movements amidst a climate of repression in the 1970s and the emergence of gender politics in the final stages of the military regime in the 1980s.

Brazilian psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Sueli Rolnik uses the term *micropolitical insurrection* to suggest the creation of adequate means of resistance to Brazil's systemic racist and patriarchal regime, an expression that aptly fits the artists discussed here, who resist the powers of colonial-capitalist society by assuming creative and ethical responsibility in their lives.¹⁷ The writings on unpaid reproductive work in capitalist society by Italian theorist and activist Silvia Federici are also informative.¹⁸ Judith Butler's theory of performativity is central in discussing the ways these artists used different codes of signification—such as language, gestures, images, and affects—to challenge power discourses.¹⁹

In *O que é lugar de fala* (What is the place of speech?; 2017), the Afro-Brazilian philosopher and activist Djamila Ribeiro proposes the dismantling of the fallacy of a universal voice by exposing different social conditions of disparate groups in society.²⁰ For Ribeiro, it is crucial to build a new societal “lugar de fala” (place of speech) that grants agency and visibility to subjects who have been subsumed or taken for granted within the hegemonic discourse, be it for their race, gender, or class. Based on Ribeiro’s assertion, artists’ biographies are used here to mark their privileges, dislocations, adversities, and exclusions. It is necessary to question the hierarchical order of narratives and to create space for the emergence of new voices, as this study indicates. Writings by Gloria Anzaldúa, Susan Bordo, Patricia Collins Hill, bell hooks, Grada Kilombo, Audre Lorde, and Nelly Richard contributed to the discussions that permeate this book. Coming from diverse backgrounds, these authors sought new strategies to unveil networks of power that disguise gender inequalities through notions of universalization and neutrality. They questioned transhistorical and transgeographical views that reproduce colonialist practices based on hegemonic discourses. Decolonial studies as theorized by Walter D. Mignolo, Enrique Dussel, Anibal Quijano, and Maria Lugones and the debates on epistemological and ontological extractivism by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, are also relevant.²¹

OVERVIEW

Chapter 1, “Political Practices,” discusses how in the 1960s and 1970s a prominent group of women artists came to the forefront of Brazilian visual arts in the face of the military regime that ruled the country for twenty years (1964–85). While they may have addressed the fight for women’s emancipation and deobjectification, they rejected the label of *feminism*—a dismissal influenced by a complexity of issues: the country’s authoritarian and patriarchal structures; the *machista* attitudes of cultural agents; the seemingly prominent place female artists enjoyed in the artistic community; the view of the dictatorship as a unifying enemy; and the disdain of both the sectarian Left and the Right for women’s personal experiences. Moreover, the feminist movement was considered one more hegemonic enterprise orchestrated by the United States, thus the choice of these artists not to claim it became part of an anti-imperialist gesture. All these factors contributed to create a narrative of Brazilian women’s art unique to its historical con-

text. Groundbreaking works by Anna Bella Geiger (b. 1933) and Lygia Pape (1927–2004) articulated social and ethical responses to authoritarianism as they also embraced Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian cultures.

Chapter 2, “Discursive Practices,” explores how artists Sonia Andrade (1935–2022), Anna Maria Maiolino (b. 1942), Leticia Parente (1930–1991), Gretta Sarfaty (b. 1947), Regina Vater (b. 1943), and Lenora de Barros (b. 1953) explored the semiology of the mouth as a source of sensorial experiences and a site for the intricacies of communication. In the late 1960s and 1970s these artists powerfully interrogated established constructions of women’s subjectification, addressing immobility and entrapment within prescriptive social norms. They acted against biological determinism and pseudoscientific theories. They played with the double connotations of the word *língua*, which in Portuguese means both “tongue” and “language.” It became a potent symbol of the mother language and the nation, and, moreover, served as a tool of resistance to authoritarianism, the patriarchal order, and the systemic structural mechanisms of reproduction of social hierarchies. The tongue was regarded as an instrument of multiple significations; an apparatus of knowledge, discourse, and power. The chapter also discusses the later work of Lenora de Barros, an artist whose practice spans the era, delving into linguistics and bringing the interrogations that women were putting forward in the 1970s into the present day, demonstrating their continued relevance.

Chapter 3, “Transgressive Practices,” focuses on artists from the mid-1980s to today whose works refer to violence, trauma, and power. In the wake of the military regime’s downfall in 1985, there was a wish to leave the authoritarian past behind and to forget issues related to the politics of repression, by then considered as outmoded as the dictatorship itself. Yet new agents of violence soon entered the scene, including militias, extermination groups, and drug gangs, among others. To counter this nascent repressive apparatus, new strategies of resistance emerged to push back against social inequality, systemic racism, gender discrimination, corruption, police brutality, and the abysmal conditions of the prison system. Márcia X (1959–2005), Rosângela Rennó (b. 1962), Rosana Paulino (b. 1967), Berna Reale (b. 1965), and Renata Felinto (b. 1978) came to the fore in Brazil’s postdictatorial era, challenging patriarchal structures and the myth of racial democracy in the country. They convey a sense of urgency to address the harsh reality that surrounds and affects them.

Chapter 4, “Practices of the Self,” analyzes artistic developments by a group of artists who became active in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Special attention is given to Aleta Valente (b. 1986), Fabiana

Faleiros (b. 1980), Sallisa Rosa (b. 1986), and the queer artist Lyz Parayzo (b. 1994). By overtly embracing feminism, they advocate for women's potentialization via aggressive strategies such as self-exposure and shock. They employ debauchery, parody, satire, and humor. Acting as agents' provocateurs, they question compulsory motherhood while fighting for women's reproductive rights and access to abortion. Their platforms, mostly promoted on social media, became even more powerful and noteworthy in view of the #MeToo movement that attained worldwide prominence in 2017.²² These artists work at the intersection of gender, race, and class; they claim their right to occupy public spaces while erasing the lines between the private and the public.

As art critic and curator Moacir dos Anjos wrote, "By negotiating in various ways the conditions underlying exchanges with other corners of the world, the producers of symbolic goods in Brazil contribute less to establishing a politics of difference than to the formulation of a poetics of diversity."²³ By comparing and contrasting the production of different generations of women artists at key moments from the 1960s onward, this narrative unfolds the transformations that took place over that time—while also indicating that many changes have yet to take place.

NOTES

Introduction

Epigraph: Clarice Lispector, *Near to the Wild Heart*, 61. Originally published in Portuguese as *Perto do coração selvagem* (1943).

- 1 Just to cite a few more: Vera Chaves Barcellos, Pietrina Checcacci, Odila Ferraz, Yolanda Freire, Iole de Freitas, Mona Gorovitz, Carmela Gross, Nelly Gutmacher, Judith Lauand, Wilma Martins, Ana Vitoria Mussi, Vilma Pasqualini, Jeannette Priolli, Ione Saldanha, Maria do Carmo Secco, Mira Schendel, Theresa Simões, Regina Silveira, Terezinha Soares, Amélia Toledo, Celeida Tostes, and Cybéle Varela. For a detailed analysis of the production of Brazilian female artists from the 1960s and 1970s, see Trizoli, “Atravessamentos feministas.”
- 2 In the 1920s and 1930s, modernist painters Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral laid the foundation for subsequent generations of Brazilian women artists. In the 1950s and 1960s Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape, and Mira Schendel came to the forefont—all of whom have recently enjoyed international recognition with exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Tate Modern in London. The trend persisted in the 1980s, when artists such as Adriana Varejão and Beatriz Milhazes became leading artists in the market being represented by Gagosian Gallery and Pace Gallery, respectively.
- 3 Herkenhoff and Buarque de Hollanda, *Manobras Radicais*, 45.
- 4 Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”
- 5 Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, 101.
- 6 The *Lava Jato* operation began in 2014 to uncover bribery, kickbacks, illicit funding of political parties, and the plunder of public assets on an immense

scale, all centered on the oil giant Petrobrás and its contractors. The scandal led to the arrest of several business tycoons and elected officials, who were accused of an unprecedented scheme of corruption, and plunged the Brazilian elite into crisis.

- 7 Evangelicals make up 22 percent of Brazil's population of roughly 209.3 million and represent the fastest-growing religious demographic in the country. Between 1991 and 2000 the number of Catholics in Brazil decreased by 1 percent each year, while the number of Evangelicals rose by roughly 0.7 percent. In more recent years, it is believed that the decline of Catholicism has reached 1.2 percent per year, while the rise of Evangelicals has reached 0.8 percent a year. By 2022 Catholics are estimated to shrink to less than half of the total population, and by 2032 they will be surpassed by Evangelicals. Baloussier, "Evangélicos podem desbancar católicos."
- 8 Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala: Formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal*, 211–12. The book was first published in 1933.
- 9 *Cena de interior II* addresses several sexual practices, including some drawn from *shunga*, the classic erotic images of Japanese popular art. In 2021 Roger Moreira, the vocalist of the rock band Ultraje a Rigor, was ordered to pay R\$100,000 (approximately US\$20,000) to Varejão for his misogynistic attacks on the internet in 2017 concerning the inclusion of *Cena de interior II* in the *Queermuseum* exhibition. Other polemical works in the exhibition, curated by Gaudêncio Fidélis, included Antonio Obá's *Et verbum* (And the word; 2011), in which communion wafers were scrawled with words such as *vulva*, *tongue*, and *asshole*; and Fernando Baril's *Cruzando Jesus Cristo com Deusa Shiva* (Crossing Jesus Christ with the Goddess Shiva; 1996). Bia Leite's series *Crianças viadas* (Gay children; 2017), showing images of smiling children juxtaposed with inscriptions such as *Queer Child: Queen of the Waters*, was accused of promoting child prostitution. Leite had appropriated the humorous subtitles from social media users who identified themselves as being queer in their childhood and gave full consent for their use in the captions.
- 10 Name, "Falta 'queer' em 'Queermuseu.'" *O Globo*, August 19, 2018. See also Name, "Imagem, ficção e gueto," 67–71.
- 11 Evangelical Christians and members of Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL), the same right-wing group that was instrumental in the impeachment of President Rousseff, targeted MAM-SP and its employees. The mayor of São Paulo, João Doria, refused to condemn the attacks. Marcelo Crivella, an Evangelical Christian and the mayor of Rio de Janeiro, blocked a proposed restaging of the *Queermuseum* exhibition at the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR). Through a crowd-funding initiative, the exhibition was restaged in Rio de Janeiro's Parque Lage in August 2018. The then director of the Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage (School of Visual Arts of Parque Lage), Fábio Szwarcwald, was fired a month before the opening of the exhibition and rehired after a large protest organized by the 342Artes group, a self-defined "supra-partisan

movement against corruption [that was] supportive in the struggle for a better Brazil,” led by the cultural producer Paula Lavigne.

- 12 Luiz Camillo Osório, the curator of the 35th Brazilian Art Panorama—the event that included Schwartz’s performance—was required to testify, along with Schwartz and Elizabeth Finger, the mother of the girl who touched the artist’s feet, before the Congressional Investigative Committee at the Federal Senate in Brasília, a body that addresses child and teenager abuse. A judge later ruled that there was no erotic or pornographic content in the performance.
- 13 Simões, “Brazil’s Polarizing New President.”
- 14 Calirman, “‘Epidermic’ and Visceral Works”; Calirman, “Lygia Pape,” 183–86. Herkenhoff’s book recounts the adversities endured by Brazilian women artists since the nineteenth century and highlights their artistic contributions to modern and contemporary art.
- 15 *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985* originated at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (September–December 2017) as part of the Getty-sponsored initiative *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA*. The exhibition traveled to the Brooklyn Museum (April–July 2018) and the Pinacoteca de São Paulo (August–November 2018). I was honored to be part of the advisory team for the exhibition and to participate in the symposium at the Hammer Museum in 2017. Andrea Giunta’s *Feminismo y arte Latinoamericano: Historias de artistas que emanciparam el cuerpo* (Latin American feminism and art: Histories of artists who emancipated the body) is also important in providing a theoretical and visual analysis of feminist practices and works by selected women artists from Latin America.
- 16 In Portuguese, I would also highlight Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda’s *Explosão feminista: Arte, cultura, política e universidade* (Feminist explosion: Art, culture, politics, and the university). It gives an interdisciplinary analysis of the advances of feminism in the visual arts, poetry, cinema, theater, music, and academia in Brazil. Luana Saturnino Tvardovskas’s *Dramatização dos corpos: Arte contemporânea e crítica feminista no Brasil e na Argentina* (Body dramatizations: Contemporary art and feminist critique in Brazil and Argentina), analyzes theoretically and historically works by Brazilian and Argentine women artists from the 1980s and 1990s. Margareth Rago’s *A Aventura de contar-se: Feminismos, escrita de si e invenções da subjetividade* (The adventure of self-telling: Feminisms, self-writing, and inventions of subjectivity), offers an insightful narrative of the sagas of seven Brazilian feminist militants born between 1940 and 1950. Rago investigates how these women were instrumental in opening spaces for their peers in the political life of the country since the fall of the military regime.
- 17 Rolnik, “Spheres of Insurrection.” Rolnik is coauthor with Félix Guattari of *Micropolítica*.
- 18 Federici, *Wages against Housework* and *Caliban and the Witch*.
- 19 For Butler, gender identity is not an ontological manifestation of any in-

- trinsic essential subjectivity, but rather the product of language, speech utterance, actions, dress codes, and social behaviors—and thus, a result of performative actions. See Butler, *Gender Trouble*.
- 20 Djamila Ribeiro's *O que é lugar de fala?* denounces the ways in which power relations legitimize or delegitimize the speech—or even existence—of certain categories of people. Also relevant are Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* and Grada Kilomba's *Plantation Memories*.
 - 21 On decoloniality see Quijano and Ennis, "Coloniality of Power"; Mignolo, "Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference"; Dussel, "Eurocentrism and Modernity"; and Lugones, "The Coloniality of Gender." On extractivism, see Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa."
 - 22 The #MeToo movement was founded by activist Tarana Burke in 2006 to help survivors of sexual violence. It gained national and worldwide attention in 2017 with allegations of sexual harassment against film producer Harvey Weinstein. The independent NGO Think Olga was an instrumental player in spreading and documenting women's mobilization in Brazil. See the Think Olga website, <https://thinkolga.com/>.
 - 23 Anjos, *Contraditório*, 46–47. This insightful book analyzes the conundrums raised by the discussion of local production in a globalized world.

Chapter One. Political Practices

Epigraph: "É o tempo da travessia: e, se não ousarmos fazê-la, teremos ficado, para sempre, à margem de nós mesmos." From the poem "Tempo de Travessia" (Time of Crossing) by Fernando Teixeira de Andrade (1946–2008).

- 1 Galeria Arte Global was founded in 1973 by the private media conglomerate TV Globo; it sold artists' multiples at affordable prices and advertised on TV Globo during prime time, just before the evening's *telenovelas* (soap operas). Prominent dealers Raquel Arnaud and Franco Terranova spearheaded the Arte Global galleries in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, respectively. Arte Global closed in 1983, and its collection was transferred to the Roberto Marinho Foundation. Pape's *Eat Me* is a ten-minute experimental 35mm film, made after a first 16mm attempt.
- 2 For the closing of Pape's exhibition, see Trizoli "Eat Me." See also Sneed, "Sex, Satire, and Censorship."
- 3 Sonia Andrade, interview with the author, August 4, 2014, Rio de Janeiro.
- 4 Osthoff, "De musas a autoras," 78.
- 5 Freitas, "Entrevista à Ana Maria Machado," 94.
- 6 Chiarelli, "Sobre a exposição mulheres artistas," 7.
- 7 Amaral, "A mulher nas artes," 221. Author's translation.
- 8 As Simioni notes, despite being enrolled at the school, Brazilian women artists still had no effective access to live models—an essential training tool for creating the most prized paintings by the academy. Simioni, *Profissão artista*, 29.