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THE “REVOLT OF THE FERRIES”: ON PERFORMATIVE SILENCING AND PROTEST IMMATERIALITY IN CONTEMPORARY (IN) VISIBILITY OF URBAN OUTSKIRTS

ABSTRACT

In this article I intend to think the intersection between public space, political performances and media transmission from the point of view of the anthropology of performance. Through the reading of an urban riot uprising which took place in 1959 in Niterói, *The Revolt of the Ferries*, I proposed to the participants in a workshop at the Fluminense Federal University in November 2014, a performative installation to revisit the riot memory and, above all, to reenact it from a political point of view considering the recent conflicts associated with the Free Pass Movement in Brazil. I start by analyzing a set of imagery of recent protests in Portugal, the United States, Spain and Brazil in order to find out similar traits in the performance of those political mobilization and in the answer given by the dominant power. “Activism” emerges as a concept to be explored in contemporary political protests. Throughout the article I will try to highlight its activist performativity, its “carnavalization” effects and its possible articulations between repertoires and archives.

keywords

performance; “activism”;
urban riots; social movements;
digital visual cultures; Niterói

FULLY ILLUSTRATED PROLOGUE

I would like to begin this article with three ethnographic images, if we wish to accept them under this formula. Images which allow us to think a relation still open among silences, invisibilities and immaterialities in the insurgent routine of some contemporary urban outskirts. In a first reading, on the surface, these images may look somewhat out of place in the debate context which I here aim to start, that is, to think from the viewpoint of performance anthropology, the intersection between public space, political performances and media transmission through a reading proposition of an urban revolt detonated in 1959 in Niterói (*Revolt of the Ferries*¹), about which we created in November 2014, in the same place, a performative installation² to revisit its memory and above all to update it from a political viewpoint in the face of recent conflicts associated to the Free Fare Movement.³ But if we look at them - revolt,

1. The *Revolt of the Ferries* is the name given on May 22, 1959, to the violent and performative confrontations between common citizens and the military next to the haven of the ferries which crossed Guanabara bay (Niterói - Rio de Janeiro) at Cantareira Square and in the residences of the owners of the boats - Carreteiro family. At the time, Niterói was still the Capital of the State of Rio de Janeiro.

2. This performative installation took place on November 13, 2014, next to the gate of the Fluminense Federal University, at the famous Cantareira Square, the place where on May 22, 1959, took place the so-called "Revolt of the Ferries". This event was linked to the performance Anthropology course-workshop under the title "Public Space, Political Performances and Media Transmission" which I orientated at the UFF, invited by the Anthropology Department and the Coordinator of the Anthropology Graduation course, Prof. Ana Cláudia Cruz da Silva. I take the opportunity to thank particularly my friends and colleagues at NaRua - Nucleus of Studies in Urban Arts, Rituals and Sociabilities who welcomed me there: Renata Gonçalves, Nilton Santos, Daniel Bitter, Ana Lúcia Ferraz and Alessandra Barreto. And I want to thank specially the graduation and postgraduation students who attended and/or took part in the Course, in the field research and in the final performative event: Amanda Rezende, Ana Carolina Costa, Ana Vitória Belluomini, Camila Marques, Carolina Carelli, Gabriela Franca, Júlia Vita, Karime Lima, Mayane Dore, Luiza Siqueira, Luiza Nasciutti, Pilar de Miguel, Renata Souza, Vanessa Lino, Walter Lima and the irreplaceable monitors, Amanda Mello Calabria, Daphne Cordeiro, Marcela Andrade and Vinicius Lordes. Finally, I thank my center of research, CRIA - Center in Network of Investigation in Anthropology and my university, ISCTE-IUL, the possibility of academic mobility and the financing of this short displacement to Brazil, together with my colleague of department, Filipe Reis, whom I thank also for his help in our workshop with the creation and register of resonant materials for the performative installation carried out also with some of the participants in the sound workshop that my colleague taught there.

3. The Free Fare Movement is a Brazilian social movement which demands the adoption

installation and images - in a particular perspective we will see that similar and comparable natures are manifested; in this sense, we will try to highlight its activist performability (cf. Schechner 2014), carnival atmosphere effects (cf. Bakhtin 1970) and possible connections between repertoires and archives (cf. Taylor 2003).

FIRST IMAGE: STATE OF EXCEPTION

While I was writing this article, Brazil was going through a bloody Easter at one of the largest slums in Rio de Janeiro - the Complexo do Alemão. Eduardo Ferreira, a 10 year old boy, shot at point-blank range in his own home by a hooded agent of the Military Police, could be portrayed in any biblical manuscript as a Jesus of Nazareth, and his mother, Terezinha Maria, a maid, as his Holy Mother. But, in fact, in spite of an identical end, even Jesus of Nazareth had the right to something that looked like a judgement. Like Eduardo, many other dwellers in slums, outskirts of cities or neglected places in contemporary Brazil, seldom can resist the eternal state of exception lived there and that is always disguised as “a stray bullet.”

The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben declares that the state of exception in contemporary societies dangerously presents itself as an indecision level between democracy and absolutism (cf. Agamben 2004, p. 13). Charles Tilly, in several works, but significantly in *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1977), portrays political repression, particularly the one of the State, as one of the main aspects of contention and control of collective action and of challenges to the status quo, as well as of those who challenge them - often understood as social movements, but also as marginal ones. We may, then, understand the repression as a hindrance created by the State (or its agents) for the individual or collective actions of its adversaries in a given territory. In this context, Tilly refers that the violent use of force (from police blockades to armed confrontation), of preventive actions (illegality of groups or message transmission channels, space occupations, etc.), or of infiltration of provocative agents, are some of the most ordinary constants in repressive action.

of free fare for collective transportation. It was founded in a plenary session at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (2005) resulting from a protest made in Florianópolis in 2004 against the transportation fare increase and associated to that city university students claim for the gratuity of public transport since 2000. A similar revolt in Salvador, The Revolt of the Bazu, in 2003, was also on the basis of these ideas of popular insurgence linked to urban mobility. Recently, this movement has got great expressiveness in São Paulo in 2013, when there was a protest against public transportation costs which afterwards spread throughout Brazil and got a relevant international visibility.

At the Complexo do Alemão, it was exactly a superimposition of criteria in order to identify adversaries which led to the violent attack to the community which culminated in an innocent boy's death. Arguing the persecution of criminal traffickers in an action of clearing out the slum similar to so many others already carried out, the armed forces invaded the community in an unmeasurable manifestation of power and authority. Thus, the community was identified as a den of "rogues" - a designation the police officer who shot Eduardo supposedly uttered to the boy's father when he tried to help him in vain. The idea of labeling the territory of the slum complex as potentially belonging and, because of that, liable to intervention and control by the State, represents the efficacy proposed by this action which was repressive and had a symbolic and real violence.

The cartoon produced by the plastic artist and activist, Carlos Latuff 2015 and spread by Twitter, has become present in the social network Facebook, with images filmed a few minutes after Eduardo's execution and made known by the collective *Mariachi*⁴ (more than one hundred and twenty thousand visualizations and more than two thousand participations in that social network) introducing some elements for reflection on the tough interventions by the police in this slum complex in Rio de Janeiro. But, above all, trying to contradict the event hegemonic narrative, showing the police repression brutality in an obvious strategy of social movement.

figure 1
Carlos Latuff's
cartoon spread in
his account
in Twitter



4. The collective *Mariachi* is a group of media activists who, besides their page in the social net Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/coletivomariachi?fref=ts>), uses also a video channel at the YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/user/coletivo_mariachi).

SECOND IMAGE: ARCHIVE AND REPERTOIRE

Santa Filomena. Eviction of slum dwellers in the outskirts of Lisbon. In 2012, the municipality of Amadora, a satellite town of the Portuguese capital, Lisbon, began a program of eviction and forced demolitions in Santa Filomena district, involving hundreds of families, most of them African immigrants or their descendants, based on the regulating application of a more than 20 years old relocation program, the Space Program of Relocation (PER) of 1993. The data of this program are obviously completely obsolete in what refers to its population census, since in twenty years the universe of the families and their characteristics has, of course, changed.

The outcome of these evictions has been completely disastrous from the human and social viewpoint: the majority of the attached people still included by PER have suffered changes in their upbringing and the possibilities of relocation now presented are very inappropriate; and to the families not included in the obsolete PER, the municipality did not present any alternative. Similarly and in the sequence of these almost three years of conflict, a combination of protests have come to unite political activists (namely from the collective *Habita*)⁵ and concerned dwellers, in different ways of resistance.

One of the most impressionable ways of this resistance have come forth by the hands of two students who were completing the course in Design of Communication at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon, Ana Santos and Diogo Dória, who developed an art project with great intervening intensity - project # 65⁶ Their proposition to photograph dwellers' faces, print them in large dimensions and ephemerally affix them on the walls of the houses to be demolished by the writ of ejectment had some temporary visibility in the media. Diana Taylor (2003) draws two central elements in memory construction in performative terms; on the one hand the archive and on the other hand the repertoire:

5. The collective *Habita* is a group of activists who fight for the right to housing and to the city. They have a blog where we can find 39 postings about the conflict between the municipality of Amadora and the dwellers in the district of Santa Filomena. *HABITA*, 2015.

6. This project started in May 2014, in the field of an academic work of end of degree course in Communication Design at the Fine Arts College of the University of Lisbon. The # 65 project, however, emerged only in August, after a whole previous research oriented to the city/suburban territory thematics and after a monitoring by two established partnerships: *Artéria - Humanizing Architecture* and the *Architecture for Humanity*. Interview to their protagonists: *PARQ*, 2015.

“Archival” memory exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change. Archive, from the Greek, etymologically refers to “a public building”, “a place where records are kept”. From *arkhe*, it also means a beginning, the first place, the government. By shifting the dictionary entries into a syntactical arrangement, we might conclude that the archival, from the beginning, sustains power. The repertoire, on the other hand, enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing - in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge. Repertoire, etymologically “a treasure, an inventory”, also allows for individual agency, referring also to “the finder, discoverer” and meaning “to find out”. The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by “being there”, “being a part of the transmission.” Taylor, 2003, 19-20)

Here we sense a tension between institutional archive shaped in statistical data of a (more than twenty years old) Population Census Program supporting the power to represent the territory and its dwellers, and a repertoire of ephemeral images, made up of performative participation which are suddenly going to be erased by demolishing machines under police inspection, but that seem to stay present in memories assimilated by dwellers. Clearly, here archive and repertoire also bump into each other, at least when these images are fixed in the press, in websites or in school archives.

figure 2
Santa Filomena
District -
Project # 65
(Photograph:
Park Francisco
Vaz Fernandes⁷)



7. Photograph obtained at webzine PARQ, Blog from the magazine of urban culture (Parq, 2015).

THIRD IMAGE: DIGITAL INSURRECTIONS

Edward Snowden, a NSA (National Security Agency) information specialist, who in 2013 ended up revealing a series of confidential information about United States of America espionage programs dealing with their own citizens, having escaped and taken refuge in Russia, was the main subject of an activist intervention⁸ right in the middle of Broadway, in the city of New York. The group of activist artists allowed blog/Fanzine *Animal* to follow an activist guerrilla action, shielding the identity of the participants who built a false statue of Snowden and set up his bust, unlawfully and in the early hours, in a New York public garden at the top of an already existing memorial to the American Revolutionary War Dead (designated as *Prison Ship Martyrs Monument*). Shortly after, the artists justified their action in a statement with the title *Prison Ship Martyrs Monument 2.0*, published in the above mentioned blog where they say the following:⁹

Fort Greene's Prison Ship Martyrs Monument is a memorial to American POWs who lost their lives during the Revolutionary War. We have updated this monument to highlight those who sacrifice their safety in the fight against modern-day tyrannies. It would be a dishonor to those memorialized here to not laud those who protect the ideals they fought for, as Edward Snowden has by bringing the NSA's 4th-Amendment-violating surveillance programs to light. All too often, figures who strive to uphold these ideals have been cast as criminals rather than in bronze.

Our goal is to bring a renewed vitality to the space and prompt even more visitors to ponder the sacrifices made for their freedoms. We hope this inspires them to reflect upon the responsibility we all bear to ensure our liberties exist long into the future.

8. *Artivism*, concept very prolix in senses and definitions and not stabilized yet. It is a conceptual neologism still of unstable consensus both in the field of social sciences and in the field of arts. It appeals to connections so prolix as controversial between art and politics and stimulates potential purposes of art while still an act of resistance and subversion.

9. Quotation taken from the site of *Animal*: ANIMAL, 2015)

figure 3
Hologram of the
media activist
collective The
Illuminator¹²



Next day, Snowden's bust was promptly removed from the statue by local police, but a new media activist collective action - *The Illuminator*¹⁰ - returned to the place, recreated in a hologram the bust that had been put down and spread those images through network with the following note in their blog:¹¹

Inspired by the actions of these anonymous artists, The Illuminator Art Collective recreated the intervention ephemerally by projecting an image of the sculpture into a cloud of smoke. Our feeling is that while the State may remove any material artifacts that speak in defiance against incumbent authoritarianism, the acts of resistance remain in the public consciousness. And it is in sharing that act of defiance that hope resides.

10. The media activist collective *The Illuminator* is an activism and urban guerrilla group inspired on the ideals of the movement Occupy. It uses a web platform to spread its actions and messages (<http://theilluminator.org/about>) and a small car model Van equipped with audio material and video projection in order to act throughout the City of New York. In this posting they spread the action mentioned in this article about the intervention in the false monument to Edward Snowden.

11. *The Illuminator website* Cf. THE ILLUMINATOR, 2015.

In the same sense in Spain the activist collective *No Somos Delito*¹² very recently used the same hologram means to protest against the Gag Law.¹³ Faced with the prohibition of manifesting themselves next to the State of Spain official monuments or buildings, the activists decided to create next to the Congress Palace in Madrid a virtual manifestation, comprising the multiplication of images created throughout the world and sent to the collective for final assembly and hologram projection at the place. One of the most significant aspects of contemporary activism has been precisely the use of communication technologies extremely efficient and accessible to be shared that has led some authors to speak of a new media ecology (Postill 2012; Raposo 2014; Toret 2012). However, in these two examples we may also think of the question of public space while place, arena and deposit of negotiations, tensions and conflict which in urban contemporaneity has deserved a huge focalization, as it is so well documented by authors like Anna Harendt (1958), Jürgen Habermas (1962), Henri Lefèbvre (1968), Daniel Innerness (2010) or David Harvey (2012). In some cases we verify even how the public space becomes a place of privatization and of business or tight surveillance. But the fully illustrated examples mentioned are not only about observing the tension and the struggle by the voice in the formalization of the public space - the street, the square, the neighborhood, the garden, etc... - as a reinforcement of the public sphere (that is, a place where discourses, narratives, and world views bump into each other) and as *locus* of different power relations (in which to the State apparatus or to economic interests is allocated the hegemonic portion) but also the part of thinking its transformation and reformulation through new ways of participation and representation brought by informatics and digital communication tools which amplify the meaning of *public space and sphere*. In a certain way, we have revisited what Habermas has called “communicative acting”, perhaps efficiently shaped in the radical media definition by John Downing:

Today this type of media goes beyond the use of technologies; it includes a range of activities like street theater and dance, among other communication manifestations. ... Radical media is not interested in the audience because it is domesticated by the market in order to be still and ephemeral. ... Radical media proposes to its audience debate, criticism and action (Downing 2002, 39-42).

12. On the political Collective No Somos Delito see here: <http://nosomosdelito.net/>

13. On these protests against the Gag Law in Spain see more information in: <http://pt.euronews.com/nocomment/2015/04/12/protesto-virtual-nas-ruas-de-madrid/> or in: <http://revolution-news.com/first-hologram-protest-in-history-held-against-spains-gag-law/>

figure 4
Hologram
projection
of the protest
in Madrid by the
collective No
Somos Delito¹⁵



I would like to finally set out these ethnographic images as a possible transposition of the so called TAZ - Temporary Autonomous Zones, of Hakim Bey 1985 (2001). Such are those spaces of provisional and ephemeral freedom that the pirate Utopias made possible as a resistance and avoidance of power tactics. Exactly as eighteenth century pirates and corsairs, who inspired Bey to suggest these liberated zones, these new performative activisms do not need to confront power directly - like in a revolution. These images emerge as digital guerrilla operations liberating an area, a subject, information, or protest, to straight away dissolve in smoke and be born in another spot before State or power are able to overpower them totally. In short, images, such as TAZ are ideas, speech acts and performances. They explore components of Aristotelian *mimesis* (while mirror of the world), of the poetry from John Austin to Richard Schechner (creating worlds) and above all of the kinesics of Dwight Conquergood (breaking and rebuilding worlds). All things considered, they are heterotopic places, using a concept dear to French philosopher Michel Foucault, that is, places which are out of all places, although they are actually localizable, real and so, contrary to Utopias.

14. Photography of the collective *No Somos Delito* published in Revolution.News.com (REVOLUTION NEWS, 2015).

They try also, in some way, to contingently “occupy”, in an effort of counter-narrative structure, the hegemonic narratives of mainstream and official media. For that very reason, they emerge in due time in the first pages of newspapers, in informative television flashes, in official radios; they are spread in mainstream platforms like You Tube or social network Facebook or in Twitter and afterwards “hide” themselves (like the remote islands of pirates or the castles of ninth century Muslim assassins referred by Bey) among channels and platforms (for instance, Indymedia) which are independent and more or less encrypted or of restricted access (RiseUp or blogs and websites of low disclosure). And this is the acting context of new or brand new social movements, as some people would rather say, since, as Marcelo Exposito reminded us:

De hecho, se necesita sacudir el lugar común que identifica un movimiento con la exclusiva imagen reductora de las masas en la calle. Un movimiento es también la ola de experimentación en contraconductas que desde hace década remodela las subjetividades y reconfigura el comportamiento de los cuerpos sexuados de varias generaciones en todo el mundo, desmantelando la heteronorma sin necesidad de cobijarse bajo un único eslogan ni estructurarse siempre como una organización categorizable (Exposito, 2012, 19).

CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE AND BLOOD: ARCHIVES AND REPERTOIRES

“The Army occupies Niterói and restores order” - here is the first page heading in *Jornal do Brasil* of Saturday, May 23, 1959. The *Revolt of the Ferries* had broken out in the morning of Friday, May 22, and over the day there were several incidents resulting in an urban riot of expressive dimension. At night the riot had been controlled by the armed forces. The carnival atmosphere was over.¹⁵

15. *Carnavalização* (in this article translated as Carnival atmosphere) is a concept developed by the Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin concerning his work on medieval popular culture, in particular through analysis of the work of François Rabelais. The concept refers to considering carnival manifestations (which are beyond Carnival time) a holistic principle of understanding popular culture itself in terms of their world view. The unifying element would be laughter, a collective laughter which was opposed to repressive sobriety and solemnity of official culture and real and ecclesiastical power. The author later dwells on 3 central elements of *carnavalização* present, for instance, in popular feasts, specially the carnival ones, in comical compositions (for instance, sacred parodies) and in popular vernacular vocabulary used in the public square: a) the action of relativizing truth, making a world upside down, an inversion of hierarchies, times, status, etc.; b) the grotesque realism

Even today the interpretations diverge concerning the cause for the riot, and the certainties as for the true trigger of the revolt are wrapped in a thick fog. However, the most curious is the intense silence or indifference with which this event has been approached in contemporary urban history of Brazil. Besides a descriptive visibility on the riot days in some newspapers and the documented work of Edson Nunes (2000), few other inquiries deal with or refer to this urban riot. This was one of the first surprises that marked the group which was researching with me the memories of that event and its echo in present history at the course-workshop on Public Space, Political Performances and Media Transmission which I was orientating at UFF (see note 2). In fact, it was extremely difficult to establish an information archive about the *Revolt of the Ferries* because there simply could not be found much documentation (textual or visual) in local Archives¹⁶ about that event, imposing to the search a course only towards oral gathering of persons who had witnessed the event or had information about it. That was what was done during some sessions, in the vicinity of Cantareira Square, next to residents, businessmen, visitors, street vendors and the homeless.

Straight away, and following Stanley Tambiah (1997), the term

riot has conservative and authoritarian connotations and may be used as an humiliation by State authorities and security forces, or by dominant classes and by proprietary aristocracy, in order to qualify resistance, political protests and collective mobilization of the so-called lower strata of society: workers, countrymen, lumpenproletariat and “criminal classes.” Starting from this way of evaluating and of this rhetoric use, crowds are treated as ‘rabble’ or disorganized crowds [mobs], suggesting that their participants are irrational, out of control, willing to burn and ransack, deserving, therefore, repressive intervention of the police, the Army and the surveillance committee” (Tambiah, 1997, 12).

The author suggests the use of the term, however in a more neutral sense, in the line of a whole tradition of studies about crowds (E. P. Thompson, E. Hobsbawn, C. Tilly among others). In fact, in the analysis of ethnic-nationalistic conflicts in the south of Asia,

of corporal representation (the low corporal); the mask and the identity transgression.

16. The Rio de Janeiro Public Archive, the Central Library of Gragoatá, the Library of Niterói and the Niterói Historical-Geographic Institute and also the UFF Oral History Laboratory (Labhoi) were visited.

Tambiah commits himself to disclose the social composition of the involved crowds (what he calls the “faces in the crowd”), revealing the presence of socially characterized agents who orientate and stimulate the action of the masses, as well as showing that in the end these turbulent events exhibit plain and recurring sequences and organizations. Tambiah highlights also the rumor circulation centrality and the “demonization” of the victims in this process.

The *Revolt of the Ferries* emerges not in a picture of ethnical tension, but in a context of numberless strikes which at the time were happening in Brazilian chief urban centers, against the terrible living and working conditions. Thus, the workers in the waterway transport which connected Rio de Janeiro and Niterói became involved in a conflict with the ferries proprietary group - the Carreteiro family - since the group did not want to pay the salary increase stipulated by the government. Faced with this situation, the maritime labor union provoked a strike at the early hours of May 22, 1959. Similarly, the company claimed losses and troubles and demanded financial support from the government, and this may have confronted the State Governor, Roberto Silveira, with the Carreteiro family, what would visibly justify the addition of some tension to this confrontation, unleashing the *Revolt of the Ferries*. Also because of that, some descriptions of the events give weight to the thesis of manipulation of the revolt aims, which then would have been in some way “allowed” by the state government, the “(hidden) face in the crowd). Whatever are the conflictual dynamics which unleashed the riot, apparently its disorderly dynamics very quickly assumed uncontrollable aspects of a carnival atmosphere, without, however, allowing some structuring aspects to be seen.

The media coverage of those events in Niterói - that at that time, if I remember, was the state capital - describes them in a peculiar way. It is referred that the marines were then asked to organize the population boarding the ferries which were being made available by the Navy, but since the ferries did not hold the population who needed the transport, a large mass of people formed at Cantareira fluvial station. When trying to organize the boarding lines the marines started to use violence against the people who were at the station. Straight away, some stones were thrown against the marines who answered back with machine gun volleys. And that may have been the cause for the people revolt to spread. The ferries were attacked and after the facilities were destroyed, the Cantareira Station was set fire to. Shouting: “Let’s set fire to the house of these thieves” (JORNAL DO BRASIL, 1959) the demonstrators went to

the company headquarters where furniture and documents were also burnt in the street. Afterwards the demonstrators went to the Carreteiro family mansion, invading it and throwing luxury furniture on the street; family valuable objects were ransacked; and, finally, they set fire to the mansion. At last, a few demonstrators paraded the streets of Niterói wearing jewels and luxury clothes belonging to the Carreteiro family. After all that destruction one could still find on one of the mansion walls the following inscription: "Here lies the fortune of the Group Carreteiro, accrued through the sacrifice of the people."

Resuming certain version of the carnival atmosphere of the Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin (1970), Roberto da Matta (1983) suggests that Carnival is a time of controlled chaos where one witnesses the temporary inversion of social, racial and sexual roles. That author highlights the particular elements of dramatization and, therefore, of feigned illusion, of certain events. To Mariza Peirano (2003), both Carnival and the political march make up rituals, in the sense that in carnival ritual there prevails "the suggestion that the extraordinary moment may become routine" (p. 44), while in the political march the ritualistic nature has a sacrificial character, thus, dating back to processions as a unique and special event, but starting from that structure in order to have its questioning character available.

I would, however, say that the picture of this urban riot and other similar ones, in spite of all of them announcing the suspension of the regular time for some moments (hours or days), they also impose improbable and unforeseeable chronotopias. And I would add that, in a way substantially distinct from the political parades, the movements of the crowds put together with the ones of small fleeting groups fully implode the processional and play-acting dimension of the political protest events. The carnival atmosphere of popular unrest, such as Bakhtin had suggested, marginalize exactly this kind of "second life of the people", marked by laughter, grotesqueness, inversion and masquerade, forming a contrast with the ordered regularity or with the glorified dominant truth which establish themselves in the official feasts (parades, processions, military marches, State ceremonies, etc.).

Assuming, obviously, the indispensable relativism of historical act of contextualizing - so dear to the Russian thinker, by the way - we might bring to mind here in this contemporary urban riot a Carnival atmosphere of traits to be conferred. So, in a way relatively distinct from medieval feasts and shows, from parodic

works or from popular vernacular forms that Bakhtin analyses in the light of the interrelation between popular classes and hegemonic forces of nobility and clergy, the *Revolt of the Ferries* seems to be marked by a popular answer - in the broadest sense of this term - to a certain unscrupulous "capitalism" that the Group Carreteiro seemed to represent. And this confrontation ends up being represented in the destruction of real estate and properties and, like a mnemonic archive, recorded on the walls of the town by the already quoted inscription: "Here lies the fortune of the Group Carreteiro, accrued through the sacrifice of the people."

In addition, the riot morphology is not so marked by a time of play and illusion (theater and mask), but more by a performance, an improvisation and an experience (carnival atmosphere and *personae*). One aspect that reinforces this difference is attached precisely to the riot bloody dimension. A passage of *Jornal do Brasil* reporting the events mentions that the approximately 150 marines who protected the ferry station received an order from the authorities to first fire shoots of dry gunpowder into the air to scatter the revolted population, but that this would have been noticed by the populace who attacked again the forces of order with stones, sticks, and revolvers, hitting one of the marines in the face, according to the newspaper report; the marines, then, fired real bullets, hitting a boy's mouth. "There was then an explosion of the crowd." (JORNAL DO BRASIL, 1959).

In another article of *Jornal do Brasil* (1959) of the same day, we read that a "strong black man" faced the marine cordon which protected the inflammable warehouse, going in the building and bringing outside a huge combustible barrel which would be used to set fire, symbolically and literally to the place; in the street, one of the marines pointing his gun shouts nervously to the man to stop and the populace answers: "Fire, you rascal, fire and kill a Brazilian worker!" Finally, the marine does not shoot and the fire starts. But performance assumes its full role when in the streets, some people, mutinous after ransacking the houses of the owners of the company responsible for Guanabara bay crossing decide to dress themselves in the Carreteiro family ladies' clothes and to exhibit ostentatiously their luxury objects in a grotesque Carnival atmosphere.

Concerning the manifestation of ethnic conflicts in the Asian southeast, Stanley Tambiah (1997) explores two tension building concepts - focalization and transvaluation.¹⁷ In a certain way,

17. Tambiah makes explicit that "Through these processes, local incidents and small disputes

the process of tension focalization in the figure of the Carreteiro family emerges linked to a certain routinization of “violence” in the fluvial transport which had installed itself a long time ago. The conditions of the crossing were very much criticized because of delays, crossing postponements or quality of the ferries; there were frequent strikes to demand better labor conditions; and the life of incessant mobility between Niterói and Rio de Janeiro was too difficult, as attests the *Mambo da Cantareira*, by Gordurinha, a tune that rendered Guanabara bay crossing famous in the decade of 60.¹⁸ Here notorious distinctions are created between “hard

provoked by domestic problems, commercial ones and neighborhood relations, or other problems of a private order between people who are in direct contact, accumulate until they become more general confrontation among an increasing number of opponents who before had taken part in the original fights only marginally and indirectly. The progressive involvement of the ethnic population coincide with the influence of the propagandists who appeal to loyalties and cleavages of race, tongue, religion or birth place, loyalties and cleavages more emotional and more lasting and, therefore, less limited to the immediate context.

I understand that focalization is the process of progressively taking out of local incidents and fights their private circumstances. With transvaluation I allude to the parallel process of assimilation of private circumstances to a cause or interest which is broader, more collective, more lasting and, therefore, less dependent of contextual conditions. Therefore, focalization and transvaluation processes contribute for a progressive polarization and dichotomization of problems and political positions, making chance acts of violence soon become manifestations, incarnations and reincarnations of communal conflicts considered insoluble (...)” (Tambiah, 1997, 22)

18. *Mambo da Cantareira* (1960) lyrics and music by Gordurinha:

You wouldn't believe how it hurts
You wouldn't even believe how it hurts
To work in Madureira and travel by Cantareira
And live in Niterói.

Hey Cantareira
Hey Cantareira
Hey Cantareira
I'm going to learn how to swim
Hey Cantareira
Hey Cantareira
Hey Cantareira
One, two, three, I don't want to drown

Because of travelling so much
My body is limp with weariness

working Brazilian people” (symbolized in the “strong black man”) and “thieves” who amass riches through the sacrifice of the people (riotous cry and inscription recorded on the wall) - and an immediate transvaluation is made up: people versus capitalists and in some way the forces of order which were still protecting the private property of the Carreteiro family.

In the remnants of this riot there were counted 6 dead, more than 180 injured, patrimony destroyed. It could be read in the *Jornal do Brasil* of May 23, 1959:

The death of José Carreteiro, victim of a heart failure at 10:30 pm, coincided with the end of manifestations The latest shootout - with two people dead - took place in front of the State Treasury. At 10 pm, the Army occupied the town and the Police were recalled to barracks At midnight, Niterói was calm.

The consequences of this revolt, later known by “the riot”, were the transfer of the company of Guanabara bay crossing to the State and some time later, after the opening of a judicial proceeding, an indemnification paid to the Carreteiro family for damages provoked by the crowd.¹⁹ However, Guanabara bay crossing

So now I decided to sing the mambo
Let's sing the mambo Cantareira

19. By the way, in the Rio de Janeiro State Appellate Court report, by unanimous resolution, in the face of damages provoked by the crowd in the process which interposed the State and the family of the Carreteiro enterprise, we may read the following, which curiously emphasizes the coincidence of opinion of the Judiciary branch and of the official media and the influence this one already carried out in the making of public opinion: “The ordinary men manifestations of protest against the Guanabara fluvial transportation services deficiency, aggravated by the strike of the employers of the company that ran them and that degenerated in destruction, fires and ransacking, would not have come to such an extent if the government took immediately the drastic measures demanded by the situation. This is the opinion of almost all the press and of the ones who had the misfortune of watching the scenes of vandalism staged in the capital of the State. Many people were convinced that such police omission had been ordered by the Governor who would have said that ‘the Police cannot wage war against the people, in any way,’ as the newspapers reported. After the events grew alarmingly, giving the impression that they could not be controlled anymore, the government took, in the evening, the measures which were indicated since the beginning of the conflict: it demanded help from the Army troops based in São Gonçalo, who immediately established order in town. It is impossible to deny the responsibility of the State, resulting from unconcern, negligence on the part of

is again in private hands since 1998 and, paradoxically, the same complaints remain. For some reason, in March 2012, when the crossing Fare was raised more than 60%, there were again manifestations and the imminence of a new riot was present.

IMMATERIAL INSURGENCES - MOBILITY AND COMMUNICATION


Through day traffic noise right in the middle of Cantareira Square, next to the building that once was the fluvial Station, burnt right in the middle of the *Revolt of the Ferries*, and next to the bus stop, the *Mambo da Cantareira* is heard again and again, husky, almost on the quiet, coming from a rudimentary sound system that a group of young people is carrying. On the opposite direction of the lively movement of coming in and going out the bus, of anxious waiting at the bus stop, of the hurried crossing of that Square busy street, a line of a little more than a dozen young people install their performance making possible a site-specific artist. Like a statue they listen to the famous *Mambo da Cantareira* and when it ends they move forward two steps in a single file, in a direction exactly opposite the local movement. Straight away, they repeat this movement three times until they reach the central door of the building where the first *Revolt of the Ferries* confrontations took place in 1959.

In November 13, 2014, under the intense midday sun, the almost motionless sweated bodies change the routine circulation flow at that place. They are observed from a distance or ignored in the urban rhythm; questioned by accidental looks, which are incredulous, ironical, mocking or curious in the throbbing fervency of the town. They finally come together in a tiny space drawn on the ground by a plastic with images inside, right in front of the main entrance to the former Cantareira Ferries Station. And in this human amalgam among movements of tension and restraint, we end up listening to the revolt increasing cry: "let's run riot, let's run riot, let's run riot."²⁰

On the ground a small cardboard boat receives some other tiny paper boats with inscriptions inside and which will later be deliv-

authorities whose duty was to maintain public order and to guarantee the property rights. It is obvious that there was omission of a duty prescribed by law, what characterizes the guilt "in omittendo" (RIO DE JANEIRO, 1964)

20. This sonorous scenery was recorded with the support of my colleague Filipe Reis who was administering a sound anthropology workshop at UFF, at the same time and it was registered in the course-workshop under the category "Cantareira Square" and with the title of "Riot Cry." (GRITO..., 2015)




ered to accidental passers-by. The sentences were taken at random from interviews and archives about the 1959 riot. Shortly after, everybody leaves the place, and what rests on the ground is only the plastic which had kept a set of images. This piece, this destroyed object, almost grey in itself, will at last be integrated to the present history and, as a precarious installation, will be treaded on by passers-by, and moving with the wind, is inspected by any citizen a little more curious. The group breaks up in the crowd. The performance carnival atmosphere was over.

Karime Ribeiro, one of the participants in the workshop-course I taught at the UFF in November 2014, remembers in her field notes the talk that together with another colleague, Vinicius Lordes, she had with the owner of a bar on Cantareira Square in Niterói, when we were trying to recover memories of the *Revolt of the Ferries*. This interlocutor of hers, whose father had settled there several decades ago and had watched the 1959 riot, declared that in spite of the little information people have about the event “(...) theoretically, those who are from Niterói should know!” and highlights the riot’s arson dimension, according to what his father had told him: “They set fire to Cantareira, they bombed it”; he concludes that the revolt was similar to the 2013 protests in the Free Fare Movement.

Pilar Saldanha, another participant in our workshop at UFF, talked to some residents on the Square and highlights the testimony of a lady that at the time, being very young, was forbidden by her father to watch the confrontations. Apparently, her father had an opinion little favorable to the urban riot and had invoked the explanation that the reason for it was the political rivalry between the Carreteiro family and the Governor’s supporters.

Amanda Calabria, one of the course’s monitors, told at her workshop-course final reflection that her various interlocutors remembered the 1959 revolt and that the owners of the Square’s barbershop remembered especially its arson dimension; after recognizing the photos with images of fire in the ferries and of the former station, they curiously associated the fire set to the fluvial station to other fires in Niterói, in particular the circus’ one and still another revolt, the sailors’, which is known as Revolt of the Whip. The question of the recouping of memory in this case was, in Amanda’s reflection, very interesting, because everything was mixed in the testimony. It was as if the element fire were a mnemonic unifier of a hubbub time and a key to understand the subversion of everyday rhythm and harmony .



Curiously, some of the interlocutors interviewed, who were street vendors at that place, had a lot of difficulty to recognize the images of the 1959 riot, and were later amazed by its recollection and by the minimal act of contextualizing which was done of them. Only one of the “pedlars”, who was older and a Niterói dweller, recognized, after some time, the place and was able to remember the urban hubbub and, surprisingly, or maybe not, to link it to the recent situation. But the revolt’s silence and invisibility remain fueled by a certain emptiness in the historic narrative of the town, now peripheral, even when similar processes make it cyclically present again - for instance, the 2012 protests or the 2013 Free Fare Movement manifestations.

The proposition to create this performative installation around the 1959 *Revolt of the Ferries* incident originated from the need to think on the performance role in political protests in public spaces. We were also trying to set out how it could be possible to intervene in a public space concerning worrying social questions as the right to mobility in towns, the urban outskirts marginalization and the access to and circulation of information outside official channels.

Financial capitalism, especially in parliamentary democratic systems, creates two movements only apparently contradictory: motivation to financial circulation, including at the speed of a click through the so-called digital capitalism (Schiller 2000) associated to public power which is based on a “private” political system in Cabinets and closed meetings; and the repression or regulated orientation of citizen mobility and the use of public space that is made possible. It was on these (im)possibility conditions that the performative installation was imagined. But it was also a kind of immaterial protest we wished to test crossing archive and repertoire (cf. Taylor 2003), that is, going through the almost invisible document collections of the past, the actions included in recent practices of protest and also the existential of the bay routine crossing.

This discussion, presented in the first days of the workshop-course, aimed at thinking a concept little stabilized in social sciences yet - “artivism”. *Artivism* refers to social and political actions produced by people or collectives, performed in public spaces but also in private ones which make use of artistic, aesthetic or symbolic strategies in order to enlarge, sensitize and render problematic for society, social causes and claims - street art, direct actions, performances, video-art, radio, culture jamming, hacktivism, subvertising, urban art, manifestoes and manifestations or civil

disobedience, among others. Suzanne Lacy (1995, 19) suggests that there is a kind of “new genre of public art”, involving clearly an art politically engaged, where artists turn their art into a new form of activism. Some authors prefer to speak only of a new gender of public art with political engagement (cf. Felshin 1995, Lacy 1995; Jacob; Brenson; Olson, 1995), but the concept has made its route through academy, through arts and through the world of political activism. Although the relation between art and politics is not in any way original, and the twentieth century decades of 60 and 70 have revealed an art very much connected to social and political questions (even if to be contemplated in a certain niche of intellectuals and artists) it was especially from the middle of the 1990 decade that several artists and artist collectives emerged in Europe and the United States with aesthetic propositions, based on art affirmation as element of cultural and political resistance with a strong public expression, brought about for and with the audience. By the way, some of these collectives were involved in public political protests - *Reclaim the Streets*, *Yes Man*, *Guerrilla Girls*, *Reverend Billy*, to name only a few.

According to Lemoine and Onardi (2010), the term “artivism” refers to a connection between art and political activism, to the conception of a public art which encompasses cultural resistance and social, political, spiritual and ecological militancy. What stems from this singular combination is the belief that art possesses great power of transformation of the human being and of society. Grindon (2010) emphasizes the way how contemporary social movements, that is, the ones which emerged with the alter/anti-globalization (Di Giovanni 2012) move aside from the discourse of power through the destruction of territories, dissonance, fracture and several combinations associated to artistic movements. These influences generated an innovation in protest and mobilization tactics which went basically through the search of horizontal and logical organizations of self-management of DIY (do it yourself), by digital communication ways and social networks and web platforms uses, and by artistic-cultural interventions in a style that Kershaw (1999) and Boyle (2010) designate as “radical performances”, manipulating syntax, grammar, vocabulary and rituals of authority and of the established powers.

It was consequently at this conceptual crossroads that our performative installation was being nourished. Moved, on the one hand by some propositions from artistic strategies signed up to

the site-specific universe²¹ that is, a certain artistic device created to exist in a certain place, in our case Cantareira Square where was located the fluvial station burnt during the 1959 hubbub now converted into a space for displays and into a restaurant, and on the other hand, trying to combine a minimal process of recognition of the social fabric (through the short field interviews) with a fully illustrated and documentary collection we had been gathering, our intervention ended up leading to, then, to this hybrid territory of “artivism”.

Mike Pearson (2010, 9) makes explicit the site specific performances potential to explore historical spaces and materials and to mediate these stories and the present, quoting Jen Harvie:

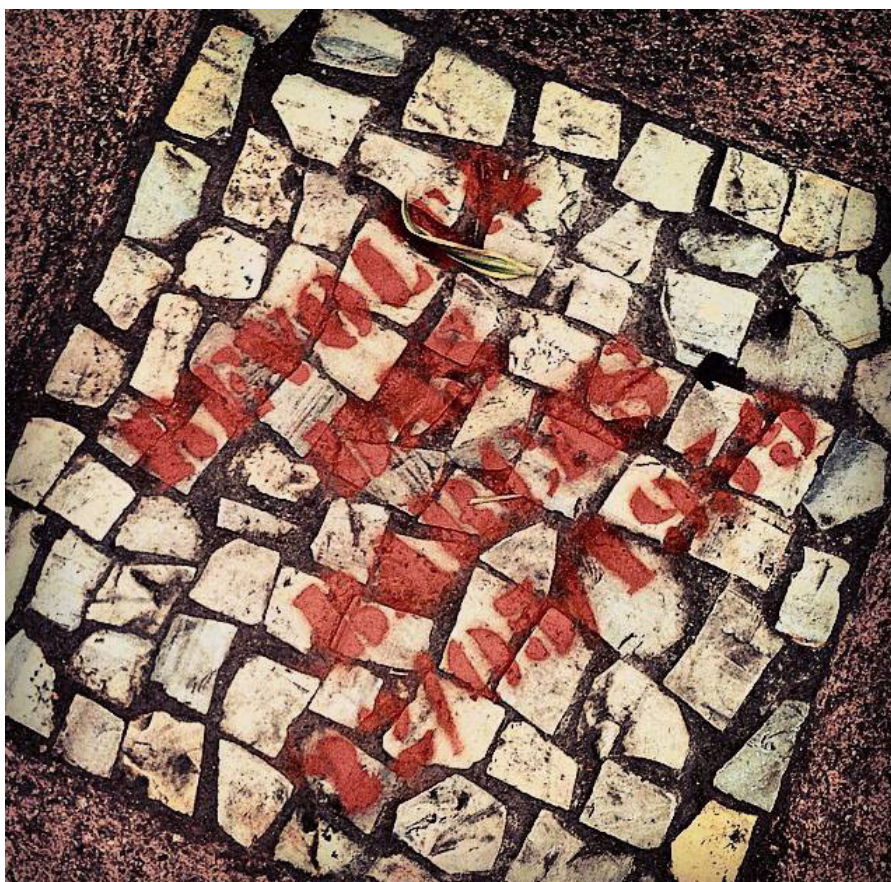
Site-specific performance can be specially powerful as a vehicle for remembering and forming a community [...]. [...] its location can work as a potent mnemonic trigger helping to evoke specific past times related to the place and time of performance and facilitating a negotiation between the meanings of those times. (Harvie 2005, 42)

Using reproductions of photos of the 1959 revolt and photos of the present place we interrogated businessmen, residents, pedlars, occasional visitors, trying with those photos to stimulate and direct their memories and also their perceptions of the visual documents. These materials would later be used for the performative installation - they were introduced in a big air-ball plastic bag created for the effect and that would be treaded on by interveners in the performative installation, referring the noise of the plastic air-balls tearing to an imaginary shootout. The bag would be left at the place after the performative action.

It was our obvious intention not only to animate the most symbolic place of the *Revolt of the Ferries* - the former Cantareira station - and because of that a graphitized stencil was made on the wall and on the ground of the place the day before the event; but we also wished to interconnect that revolt and the 2013 hubbub throughout Brazil - Free Fare Movement - and even a commemoration that took place that same year concerning the 1959 revolt and in which, by a happy coincidence, some members of the workshop had also participated.

21. Mike Pearson sums up in the prologue of his book what we can understand as site-specific in this way: “In which the scene is set, a personal history of practice is sketched and a particular context of performance making is delineated” (PEARSON, 2010, 1).

figure 5
Stencil
graphitized
on Cantareira
Square ground
Photo: Paulo
Raposo



This last memorial performance, which occurred in March 2012 at the present ferry station, on Arariboia Square, right at the time of more traffic, was filmed and posted on pages of Facebook and on the platform You Tube, according to the account of one of the workshop participants who had been present at the protest. However, the strange thing was the appeal to this initiative, recorded in video and placed in You Tube, but soon promptly eliminated and censored because it had suggestions more or less ironic and subversive inviting the demonstrators to take a lighter in order to set the place on fire, to jump turnstiles and, in short, referring to a reactivation of the 1959 riot. But the appeal censorship did not prevent the manifestation of having a reasonable media coverage, a strong State Police presence, and some political parties and social movements.

However, on the day of the protest there was a small performance on the ferry station square, in spite of a climate of fear and anxiety hanging in the air, because also of the possibility of breeding a real revolt and the station destruction. Paradoxically, this anxiety came exactly from the extreme left with an electoral basis (PSOL and PSTU) since the ferry company had entered a legal notice in the case of

riots in the value of five million reais against PSOL and one of its militants, a UFF professor, because of the publication in the social websites of videos mobilizing for the protest, which gave rise to a lot of controversy and debate. However, on the day of the protest, the environment was tense and apparently the members of the two referred parties were the ones who had formed a subtle human barrier in order to reduce a possible invasion of the station which, by the way, did not happen. This situation was afterwards much criticized by social movements more self-manageable and libertarian, which saw in that barrier a paralyzation and amputation of the popular power, of the crowd power and a revolt restraint.²²

In short, be it in 1959 in a revolt, in 2012 in a protest, or in 2014 in a performative installation, the right to public space and to circulation strengthen the fundamental right cities have to complain, paraphrasing the title of the famous work by Henri Lefebvre - *Le Droit à ville* (1968), that was, by the way, one of the fuses for the urban revolts in May 1968 and that David Harvey tried to update some years later in *Rebel Cities. From Right to the City to Urban Revolution* (2012). Although in the 59 revolt, carnival atmosphere and blood got mixed in a disorderly process where the crowd, stimulated by “faces” and by small incidents, took charge of town for a day, performative elements also showed themselves to be harmful tactics at the riot (ordinary people dressed in clothes of the Carreteiro family; dives taken in the mansion pool; and the several arson and patrimony destruction dynamics). If in the 2012 protest, tension between a strong popular mobilization and the security of the company *Barcas S.A.* and of the State ended up by emptying in a certain “bureaucratization” of the protest with political interventions more or less organized; at other moments unexpected performances broke out because of the logic of the event itself (clowns inviting to jump turnstiles or playing and offering flowers to the police officers; report from a “false” journalist - Millionaire - using laughter as an ironic weapon which afterwards will get full visibility in YouTube). Finally, in our performative installation all elements of the action were basically artistic and conceptual and not even a police vehicle slow and alert passing changed this tenor, but we could think it was also a process of “reoccupation” of the revolt memory in the field interviews carried out during the week before the event, stimulating

22. About this controversial protest see some blogs and news published in the media: (AUTOGESTÃO.ORG, 2015; BARCAS..., 2015). Finally, Alex Frechette, plastic artist and activist, has produced one of his documental diaries dedicated to the protest and where it can also be seen part of the referred performative action (DIÁRIO, 2015).

senses, and in the perception the participants could have of the new modernization of protests demanding the right to mobility and to the city.

In this frame, “artivism” emerges, as we said before, as a kind of updating of Hakim Bey’s Temporary Autonomous Zones. There are multiple activist actions: celebrations in a carnival atmosphere or theatricalities in the public space, creation of actions in internet social websites, motivation to civil disobedience, internet piracy, creation of alternative media, occupations, among so many others. The targets of this short duration are very different too: beyond the State machine and the repression forces, there still emerge themes like financial globalization, bank institutions and the wealthier people economic interests, consumerism, social injustice and exclusion, alimentary supremacy rescue, environment degradation, artistic and cultural precariousness, the public space privatization or touristic utilization, gentrification, official media, etc.

But in all activist actions possibility and resistance to repression spaces are invented, like the Madrid and Brooklyn holograms, places of visibility of the invisible are created, like Latuff cartoons or the collective Mariachi postages about the Rio de Janeiro slum invasion, the official archives are debated and ephemeral repertoires are built as in project # 61 for Santa Filomena district in Portugal. All things considered these are the Temporary Autonomous Zones which originate interstitially at the margins of capitalism itself, in the folds and fractures of the bourgeois democratic system, at the counterflows of web and its piracy.

translation

Barbara Theoto

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text received

05.06.2015

Images, revolts and performative installation bump into each other at last as subjects establishing themselves mutually.



FULLY ILLUSTRATED EPILOGUE



Installation-
Performance
Riot to the sound
of Mambo da
Cantareira
Photos: Paulo
Raposo

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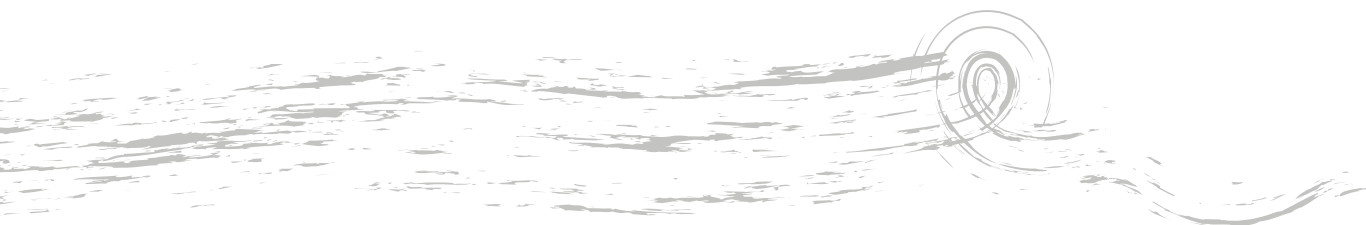
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