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Bottom-Up Creativity and Insurgent Citizenship in “Afro Lisboa.” Racial Difference and Cultural Commodification in Portugal

Introduction

This article explores the potential of bottom-up creative initiatives produced in so-called peripheral areas of Lisbon to develop insurgent uses of the public space and visions and materializations of citizenship. The musical and visual practices analyzed in this essay were produced by neighbors of Quinta do Mocho and Cova da Moura at the outskirts of Lisbon as a way of challenging the assimilation of racial difference that occupies a central role in the resignification of Lisbon as a cultural touristic destination. Focusing on several artistic and cultural productions arising from the spaces of Cova da Moura and Quinta do Mocho in Lisbon, among them the *Kova M* festival and the articulation of “alternative visits” to the street art repertoire in Quinta do Mocho, we examine how collaborative creative processes developed by people of African descent are challenging straightforward and unproblematic understanding of the country’s relation with its colonial past. In particular, two main strategies are identified: the use of visual and musical production to make structural racism visible; and the production of bottom-up, collaborative cultural initiatives to challenge the repurposing of racial difference in the process of transforming Lisbon into a creative capital.

The cultural practices analyzed in this article invest in self-conscious and yet active processes of place-making, redefining the sociocultural geographies of Lisbon while also decentering its position within and investing in subversive alliances across and beyond the Portuguese-speaking geography. In the specific case of Portugal, these practices are directly facing the insufficiencies of postcolonial debates and creative productions grounded in “traditional” academic and artistic institutions and restricted to an educated, minority, mostly white audience. Recent debates over the Portuguese contemporary art scene have shifted in order to address the complex relationship of institutional practices and cultural programming with the neoliberal agenda of “creative capitalism.” (see, for example, Garrido Castellano and Lança 2019; Restivo 2016). The artistic and musical responses to that agenda have been less analyzed.

The notion of insurgent citizenship provides fertile ground for addressing how bottom-up creative responses are challenging the mobilization of cultural production as a central instrument for the construction of a supposedly conflict-free, multicultural and multiracial image of *Portugalidade* while uncovering the structural dynamics of exclusion particularly affecting afro-descendant individuals and groups. By laying bare and directly addressing these dynamics, the creative responses examined in this article critically confront the use of whiteness as a synonym of *Portugalidade* and a marker of belonging. From this perspective, these practices identify the commodification of difference as a marker of diversity as part of a broader process of exclusion and dispossession that connects with the legacy of colonialism in present-day Portugal, a process

that reproduces and naturalizes whiteness as the central figure in the making of contemporary Portuguese identity.

Challenging the invisibility of racialized processes of exclusion was the main topic of the 2019 edition of the AfroEuropeans Conference in Lisbon. AfroEuropeans is a central forum for the analysis of the processes of activist and socially transformative creative initiatives developed against the invisibility of structural racism. By applying the notion of insurgent citizenship to the case of Lisbon, we intend to further analyze how bottom-up creative activism developed by nonwhite subjects living in Europe is actively challenging the naturalization of whiteness as a synonym of national identity and belonging (see El-Tayeb 2011, Rollefson 2017, Pitts 2019, Small 2014 [1994])¹. Applied to the underexamined case of Lisbon, the concept of insurgent citizenship provides fertile ground for addressing the potential of collaborative creative practices developed by racialized bodies and collectives for materializing insurgent modes of citizenship and belonging. In the case of Portugal, this also implies countering the idea of Portuguese colonialism as a (supposedly bygone) softer and more benevolent version of European colonial govern/mentality. Examining how this recent wave of cultural production is challenging racial demarcations and the assumed notion that present-day Portuguese society has overcome the legacies of colonialism are this article's main goals.²

The case of Lisbon is hardly unique in this regard. Debates over immaterial labor and creative economies have emphasized the capacity of neoliberal capitalism to appropriate and repurpose any form of difference³. The ways in which this process of resignification is mobilized to produce urban spaces palatable for a mobile creative class is also well explored (see, for example, Jackson 2011; Massey, 2005; Sassen 2014, 2018). Finally, there is consensus over the idea that "cultural diversity" stands among the most valuable assets mobilized by property developers and policy makers to gauge the coefficient of originality and "trendiness" of cities and regions to attract the creative class.

Our two areas of study are precisely marked by migration and more specifically by the presence of Africans and Portuguese of African descent, a direct consequence of the continuity of colonialism in present-day Portugal. Portuguese colonial experience is recognized as the oldest in Europe, reaching up to 1999: the independence of Angola, Moçambique, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé will only happen as late as 1974-1975), while territories such as Macau and Timor will only become independent in the late 1990s. Furthermore, the economic dependence towards Britain and the *sui generis* relation between Portugal and Brazil, especially after the Portuguese Court settled in Rio de Janeiro between 1808 and 1821, introduce further specificities. The Portuguese colonial experience was crucial in configuring the shape of a post-dictatorial, postcolonial country, with one of its most decisive consequences being the weight of migration from former colonized territories. These migratory fluxes, which began before 1986, when Portugal joined the European Union, have redefined the contours of Portuguese society. Decisively, they have triggered important debates on the invisibility of the colonial legacy in contemporary Portugal and the persistence of racism and racial exclusion at the heart of the supposedly modern, cosmopolitan and receptive contemporary Portuguese society. The wider scope that these debates have reached in the

second decade of the twenty-first century has not implied the disappearance of intrinsic contradictions having to do with the legacies of colonialism. On the contrary, new forms of discrimination have surfaced under the umbrella of intercultural citizenship, impelling cultural industries to remain entangled between supporting and rejecting that image. Confronting this issue, Fernando Arenas is wary to relativize and call that “specificity” into question, pointing out that the impact of migration and intercultural relations in the definition of cultural and artistic citizenship brings Portugal closer to other (Southern) European countries. A similar interpretation was already proposed by Miguel Vale de Almeida. Writing in 2000 (in a quite early moment if we take into account the belatedness of Portuguese postcolonial thought⁴), Vale de Almeida (2002: 33) criticized the use of “culturalist tropes” in the reconfiguration of a nostalgic, Portuguese-centred “Lusophone geography”. Arguing against such vision, he emphasizes the need for adopting comparative approaches that could attend to the singularities of the “Portuguese case” while at the same time remaining attentive to the similarities between Portuguese modern-day society and other cases across Europe. From the late 1980’s immigration and interethnic cultural relations determined the composition of Portuguese society. This transformation, which refashioned the traditional landscape of Lisbon through the strategic visibilization and invisibilization of racialized bodies, would not impede the persistence of more or less subtle forms of racism and a benevolent remembrance of the imperial period (see Dias and Dias, 2012). Immigrant and “local” racialized subjects became a familiar presence in the streets of Lisbon, but were perceived largely as a homogeneous, unfamiliar other as opposed to a traditional, national (white) we still invested with the power of demarcating what (and who) belongs to the place and what (and who) does not.

The Making and Unmaking of “Afro Lisboa”

When Ariel de Bigault coined in 1996 the expression “Afro Lisboa” to address the African presence on the Portuguese cultural scene, she was prematurely musing over the incorporation of Lisbon into the creative economy competition. Twenty years later, the Portuguese journalist Vitor Belanciano used this expression to deal with the contradictory rebranding of the old metropole into a cosmopolitan, multicultural city with a vibrant cultural scene. Within that context, the relevance of cultural productions linked to African referents were identified as one of the main assets Lisbon could recur to in order to “catch up” with European creative economies. If Lisbon can be seen as singular in this respect, it is because of two largely contradictory “singularities”: the lack and inefficiency of public artistic and cultural infrastructures, and the belated date putting an end to the *Estado Novo* dictatorship and Portuguese colonialism in Africa⁵. As Ana Teixeira Pinto (2018: 97) argues, it is all the more contradictory that “a country that never had a strong contemporary art scene could witness a contemporary art-led gentrification.” The fact that this “contemporary art-led gentrification” is making active use of Lisbon’s “Africanness” by strategically recalibrating the physical and immaterial legacies of the city’s past as the head of a colonial empire renders the case of Lisbon all the more thought-provoking.

Central to our understanding of the contradictions deriving from the rebranding of postcolonial Lisbon is the idea that those contradictions were produced through mobilizing racialized bodies and discourses as creative capital that ought to differentiate the former metropolitan city from other European creative hubs (hence the idea of Lisbon as “the second more African European city” after Paris.) In relation to this, the emergence of a strong body of creative practices developed within the last decade by people of African descent as a response to the mobilization of “Africanness” has been crucial in challenging an idea of postcolonial Lisbon as an unproblematic, multiracial, multicultural city that left behind its past as a colonial metropolis. Working against the politics of containment and the institutional expulsions through which racialized subjects are managed and mobilized in the Portuguese context, but also rejecting processes of gentrification and cultural commodification, the creative actions of racialized collectives and activist groups examined in this article are significantly creating and *spacing* insurgent modes of citizenship, actively redefining how creators of African descent negotiate their own position in the context of the Portuguese cultural landscape. The actions developed by the racialized creators from Cova da Moura and Quinta do Mocho can be understood as situated and spontaneous responses to the placelessness that more institutionalized and intellectual forms of cultural production that are becoming part of the rebranding of Lisbon as a “multicultural capital.”

To understand the insurgent potential of the cultural practices here analyzed is necessary to examine first how “Afro Lisboa” was created, which voices and bodies were mobilized during that process, and for what purpose. Once marginalized and hidden, the Portuguese capital faced a radical transformation after the country’s entrance in the European Union in 1986. As part of this cultural rebranding of Lisbon, a process consolidated in 2017 by the election of the city as World’s Leading Destination by Lonely Planet, the presence of an “Africanized imaginary” both in the city’s creative landscape and in cultural and touristic policies became crucial in the definition of the city’s image.

Portugal’s cultural rebranding (its gentrification) partakes of some characteristics with other European cities, among them the weight of “alternative” cultural spaces, the celebration of vernacular culture and the creation of an aura of conviviality. At the same time, however, the case of Lisbon emerges as singular for several reasons. A first one has to do with the role of contemporary art in the gentrification of the city despite the historical scarce public support that contemporary creativity received in Portugal (Teixeira Pinto 2018: 97). Equally contradictory and far more complex results the mobilization of racialized, “africanized” bodies and discourses for cultural and touristic reasons linked to the long-lasting relation that Portugal has with colonialism.

“Afro Lisboa,” then, is not without contradictions. As Gorjão Henriques (2016: 11-12), author of one of the most comprehensive studies so far on racism in Portuguese-speaking countries, argues:

The fact that nowadays there is no correspondence between the number of black persons we see in the streets and black persons

occupying positions of leadership in society is surprising to say the least. The lack of representativeness of a significant segment of the Portuguese society—a segment that is simultaneously used by some official entities as banner of its population’s cosmopolitanism—evidences a system that discriminates by skin color.⁶

Despite the difficulties in getting statistical data on this reality in Portugal⁷, the research undertaken on educational institutions provides clear evidence on how the unequal structure of opportunities affects afro-descendants from an early age. The children of PALOP countries, for example, repeated courses in the first stages of elementary education compared to Portuguese (16% versus 5% in 2013/2014) (Abrantes and Roldão, 2016). In lower and higher Secondary School, the rate of PALOP students retaking courses doubles that of “white” Portuguese students. Among the PALOP students arriving to high school, the vast majority of them join professional courses (80% versus 43% of Portuguese students in 2013/2014), paths considered less prestigious than scientific or humanistic curricula, which also constitute the most common access to university. It is not by chance that young afro-descendants are highly underrepresented in higher education: 16% versus the 34% of Portuguese students in 2011. The difference is even bigger if we consider students from Cape Verde, Guinea and São Tomé: 8% versus 34% (Seabra *et al.*, 2016). Besides this, African nationals of African descent are overrepresented in prisons, with ratios of imprisonment twelve times bigger than Portuguese. Indeed, despite the fact that more than three decades have passed between the end of the decolonization of Angola, Moçambique, Guinea, Cape Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe, many of the Portuguese citizens of African descent are still considered as “others,” being that process, as Mata (2006: 293) has argued, one of “*estranhamento*,” of banishment. While Portugal has started to look at its own identity “with multicultural eyes,” Mata adds, the process of othering of a significant part of the country’s sociocultural reality has also persisted⁸. The consequence of this process is that several elements associated with “African” culture are still considered exotic or marginal despite the fact that they are produced in the spaces of the metropolis, by communities born in Portugal or have been inhabiting the country for decades⁹. Despite remaining largely marginalized and unacknowledged by official institutions, the cultural productions of these communities are very much behind the urban and cultural transformations that contemporary Lisbon is experiencing.

Both Cova da Moura and Quinta do Mocho were shaped by the settlement of several communities of African descent in what for a long time was characterized as “illegal” urban neighbourhoods. Originally created in 1960, the main settlement of what constitutes today the Cova da Moura took place in 1974, with the massive affluence of “*retornados*.”¹⁰ Then, the construction of several habitational structures took place, especially with the arrival of Cape Verdean families that quickly became the majority in the neighbourhood (Raposo, 2005; Horta, 2008). In 1978, the neighbourhood created a first Commission of Dwellers, while basic services such as electricity and public water were made available (Godinho, 2010). A shared yet heterogeneous African identity with a strong Cape Verdean influence is also configured then, developing what Aderaldo and Raposo (2016: 282) called, with the similar case

of Arrentela in mind, a transnational “periphery.”¹¹ Far from being homogeneous, then, the history of the neighbourhood is shaped by the exchange of ideas and hybrid cultural values, as well as for the development of a sense of belonging. From this perspective, if it is true that the Cova da Moura and Quinta do Mocho exemplify the contradictions of “Afro Lisboa”, at the same time that they challenge the pessimistic belief on the lack of alternatives to the neoliberal commodification of difference behind the transformation of Lisbon into a creative capital.

Reterritorializing Afro Lisboa

“Afro Lisboa” can only be understood by paying attention to the continuous attempts by cultural producers of African descent to redefining the relationship between cultural production and citizenship. The configuration of “Afro Lisboa”, as Belanciano (2015) calls it, not only draws attention to people of African descent living in the territories surrounding the Portuguese capital; more importantly, it also problematizes the cultural appropriation and commodification of artistic-cultural productions fashioning the idea of a multicultural Lisbon that would justify the diversification and internationalization of the city’s cultural offer.

A good example of this are the musical initiatives organized in the Cova da Moura neighborhood.

Each weekend, the Cova da Moura is transformed into the “Cova da Música” (Varela, Raposo and Ferro, 2018). Then, several bars and restaurants populate the neighborhood to experience Cape Verdean gastronomic delicatessen and dancing by the pace of *coladeira*, *morna* or *funaná*¹². Besides Cape Verdean musicians, São Tomean bands also perform. There exist in the Cova da Moura five remarkable spots with live music and a public mostly integrated by African migrants and afro-descendants coming from the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (Ferro and Raposo, 2015). This presence transforms the context of the Cova into a neuralgic spot within the “African musical circuit” of an urban space expanding beyond the capital city¹³. One of the most popular meeting points for youngsters is the musical studio of the Cultural Association Moinho da Juventude. In this space, the sounds produced oscillate between celebratory *batida* or *afro-house* and politically-charged rap. Created in 2009 by local rappers, the activity of the Kova M Studio consolidated the musical production of the Cova’s younger inhabitants, offering them a space for recording their own compositions in a semi-professional environment. One of these productions, the musical theme “Kova M Fronta”, became one of the first videoclips in creole language going beyond one million reproductions in *Youtube*.¹⁴

Launched in 2012, this song narrates the climate of permanent tension motivated by police violence, pointing out how this climate affects the everyday life of the local youngsters:

In times of distress run. Otherwise you can be hit nigga, I told you already that here in the street the situation is though. In times of distress run. If he runs and is hit: he goes to jail, processed and many lives are injured (...) They [police] invade our ghetto. Beating in

white and black. They disrespect us. They pull their pipes. Humiliate us. Tell us to lean against the wall. Register the boys. Light another WI [weed]. The devils are passing by. Look at them there, in times of distress run. Otherwise you are arrested nigga. Whoever is by your side is arrested too. Keep your feet steady, ready for any result. In the street you have to be ready.¹⁵

The increasing popularity of musical expressions among the young population of the Cova da Moura encouraged several inhabitants to organize a hip-hop festival. Created in 2012, The Kova M Festival soon became one of the most important events held and attended by younger populations living at the outskirts of Lisbon. It agglutinates a wide range of cultural practices, including debates, workshops, sport events, film screenings, fashion shows, dance spectacles and several musical expressions. For the inhabitants of Cova da Moura, and more particularly for the younger population of the neighborhood, the Festival provides a platform for affirmative expression. The Festival is, in any case, conceived as an open event oriented to the entire population of Lisbon. Its origin is linked to the use of public space around the *chafariz* [public fountain] of Cova da Moura as meeting point for local conversations around the improvement of the conditions of living of the local Cape Verdeans inhabiting the zone. As the *chafariz* was also the place where musicians and artists normally met, social and cultural issues used to go hand by hand. In its eight editions, one of the Festival's main concerns has been with keeping this link between cultural expression and sociopolitical transformation active.

Through these events spanning across one week, the festival celebrates black and African cultural identities, approaching Cape Verdean and other cultural traditions from Portuguese-speaking African countries. This focus turns the festival into a privileged locus of affirmative creative forms, in which the populations of Cova da Moura and Quinta do Mocho reinterpret the ethnic heritage of their countries of origin, while also redefining cultural symbols from the perspective of a transnational black aesthetics with a strong American influence. Furthermore, The Kova M Festival also counters the stereotype still at play within the Portuguese (imagi)nation that associates the neighborhood with episodes of violence and marginality. During the Festival, both residents and visitors are encouraged to confront issues of structural racism and social exclusion. At the same time, however, creativity and dialogue are mobilized as a way of challenging any straightforward and negative identification of Cova da Moura with these prerogatives. A vast plurality of styles is mixed and expressed through clothes, hair styles and fashion accessories (strings, rings, earrings, kerchiefs and caps), in which Creole is the most widely spoken language. This aesthetics celebrates black bodies and black identities, promoting the visibility of African and afro-descendant culture within the context of an intercultural society that nevertheless continues to have problems in assuming itself as such.

The Kova M Festival embraces all kinds of musical productions, including traditional styles such as *batuke* or *funaná*, as the participation of the Finka Pé group or the musician Ritchaz Cabral demonstrates in 2017. However, it is more oriented towards transnational expressions such as rap, zouk, kuduro, reggae and batida, which constitute the festival's main attraction.¹⁶ In the 6th

edition of the Festival, which took place in the sports court of the neighborhood, local rappers such as Puto G, Mynda Guevara, Soul Jah, Timor and Thugs shared the space with visitant musicians such as Vado, GFemma or Muleka. This edition also featured several bands that mix African sonorities with electronic music such as Samba, Afrokillerz and Os desbloqueados, a dynamic made popular and continuously refreshed after the international success of groups such as Buraka Som Sistema.

Graffiti and visual arts are also present in the Kova M Festival since its creation: during the last edition of the festival the walls of the sports court were painted, and a graffiti workshop was organized. Although the number of writers in the Cova da Moura is scarce, street art enjoys a positive valorization among the Cova's dwellers. The neighborhood is populated by the image of icons of a globalized black culture, many of them done by the writer Odeith such as Bob Marley, Tupac, Eusébio or Martim Luther King. The streets of Cova are also covered by messages of affirmation and proudness, and large portraits of Malcolm X or Cape Verdean and Guinean anticolonial leader Amílcar Cabral can be found. Police violence and exclusion are also dealt with through visual means, as in the stencil showing a young boy being registered by the police and pointing to the sentence *Nu ka kré más riprisóm pulisial*, "we don't want more police violence" in Creole.

Born in 1976, Odeith is one of the most renowned Portuguese writers. From Damaia, an area close to the Cova da Moura, his first large-scale murals were designed in local schools and the walls of Amadora self-built areas¹⁷. He was responsible for the initiation in the graffiti milieu of Tazy, one of the few writers from Cova da Moura. Aged 26, he currently lives in London. Tazy describes his beginnings in the graffiti world in the following terms:

One weekend I wondered looking at a really big graffiti that him [Odeith] had made in the D. João V School. I was a kid. Then this dude appears in a car. He sees me looking at the graffiti, and I even thought he was a cop (...) Then he asks me "do you like graffiti?" I answered "I really like it, I really like these paintings. Was it you who made them? You are kidding me, are you?" "Yes, it was me." And I was a kid. Then he gave me a flyer with the address of a tattoo store in Benfica: "look, if you like my graffities go to my shop, I have more work you will also like" (...) And after this day I went to his shop every day.¹⁸

The support of Odeith and the recognition of local inhabitants of the Cova was essential for Tazy to advance within street art. Several years later, the name of Tazy became indissolubly attached to the Cova, as he started working side by side with Odeith. Together they decorated one of the entrances of the neighborhood with an effigy of Bob Marley joined by a lion along with the motto "Kova M." In 2013, Tazy joined the "World Smurfs Day" along with the Brazilian writer Utopia, decorating several houses of the Cova da Moura with the famous blue characters.

Quinta do Mocho and the Space-Time of Resistance

Another supposedly “conflictive” area of Lisbon is the Quinta do Mocho¹⁹, located in the nearby city of Loures²⁰. Counting with more than 100 large-scale street artworks in social housing buildings that gather around three thousand inhabitants, the Quinta do Mocho recently became one of Europe’s largest open-air art galleries²¹. This rebranding project began in September 2014, in the context of a street art festival organized by the Loures City Council and the Associação Teatro Ibisco. Its main objective was to “show the neighborhood to the world and to bring the world to the neighborhood.” To do this they rely on street art and collaborative participation of some youngster dwellers responsible by the guided tours. In 2015, the project was rebranded as Galeria de Arte Pública (GAP), while the number of painted walls grew in number and regular guided visits to the intercultural environment of the Quinta were established. Some of these artworks dialogue closely with the neighborhood’s inhabitants, largely of African origin. This is the case of several paintings of black women or the portrait of the anticolonial leader Amílcar Cabral. Another painting results eloquent of the contradictions surrounding the everyday life of black communities in Portugal; it shows a black woman removing a white mask in a clearly Fanonian gesture. The Worker Ghetto Box, created by the French artist MTO, in turn, denounces the disregard of public powers and the difficult conditions faced by those who live in neighborhood such as Quinta do Mocho. Showing a map of Africa joined by the continent’s name, this painting also displays overalls next to a cleaner’s smock, symbols of jobs most commonly done by immigrant men (construction work) and women (cleaning). The lack of public reconnaissance of the tasks developed by immigrants within Portuguese society emerges in the words of one of the neighborhood’s guides:

We know that many of the good things Portugal has, from the Vasco de Gama Bridge to the International Exhibition [the 1998 World’s Fair site], was done thanks to a great deal of immigration, a lot of hard work, right?! And that was also important. That’s why the artwork’s name is “Worker Ghetto Box”, which symbolizes Africa and the role of immigrants in Portugal.²²

Turned into a street art hotspot and counting with a vast production of large-scale pieces that includes the work of the renowned Portuguese artists Odeith, Bordalo II, Nomen or VHILS, Lisbon’s visual landscape cannot be imagined nowadays without the ubiquitous presence of street art in spaces such as Quinta do Mocho²³. Dealing with a wide diversity of topics and addressing a wide diversity of historic, cultural and social referents, these pieces are well preserved, appear in national and international city guides, and are modelling the image of an alternative, cosmopolitan and multicultural city. Street art and graffiti also an important role in the definition of the Quinta do Mocho, yet in a different way. Those artistic interventions modify the neighborhood’s external image, partially challenging the stereotype of urban violence associated to it. In the Quinta do Mocho, the proliferation of street art turned the area into a cultural and touristic hotspot.

The graffiti decorating Quinta do Mocho have been recently touched by the process of cultural commodification and gentrification the whole city is experiencing. They are exemplary of the fantasies that Sarah Brouillette (2014: 158) detects in many processes of urban development and art-led gentrification, in which writers and artists are invited to “become members of a vibrant cultural workforce, integrated into a harmonious civic body rather than divided by diversities of race and class. [...] These communities are imagined as not yet fully integrated into the economy, not yet fully productive, and as able to use their innate creativity to write themselves out of their current contexts and into middle-class contentment.” In fact, as tourism grows and several “alternative” cultural tours are being developed, the interest for street art has also increased in the case of Lisbon, and the spatial negotiations between artists, cultural promoters and inhabitants are not always taking place in horizontal terms.

The inhabitants of Quinta do Mocho are coping with an increasing number of visitors wanting to escape from more official tourist circuits. This recent attention has not gone unnoticed by the local authorities. In the case of GAP, the participation of local inhabitants was reduced to a minimum: not only they are not allowed to choose the issue to be represented in their buildings, they cannot either paint or acquire graffiti skills through the process²⁴. In this sense, the participation of local community in the construction of the neighborhood’s collective image remains limited, dependent on the artist’s sensitivity in incorporating them in the creative process²⁵.

At the same time, however, we can glimpse in the creation of alternative guides and experiences within the neighborhood an interesting example of insurgent place-making. The recognition of Quinta do Mocho as a public art hotspot was very much indebted of the labor of community guides, responsible for enhancing the public visibility of the neighborhood and attracting visitors. The interpretation of the street art catalogue shaping the area by the guides is the base of a process of cultural translation that makes use of street art to deal with the social context of the Mocho in much more implicit ways than the increasing number of episodic and express tourist tours. The local guides also achieve to address the contradictions implicit in the alleged “regeneration” the neighborhood is going through, putting aside the glamour of having top-tier public artists represented in the Mocho’s wall and focusing instead on the effects that graffiti played in specific members of the community. In this sense, the engagement of local guides in creating alternative views of street art arises as a powerful way of challenging gentrification and the reproduction of ethnicity-based exclusionary policies disguised under the celebration of visual creativity. As one of the guides states about the GAP:

It is being transforming, important, inspiring. This neighbourhood needed something like this to change, it was an opportunity (...) Because there were many people covering themselves with masks, being ashamed of going to school and saying they were from the Quinta do Mocho, ashamed of looking for a job because they knew they weren’t getting it because of being from here. This stigma was very present (...) And in essence we are experiencing a transformation from a negative mark to a positive one.²⁶

The articulation of alternative guides and cultural initiatives around the public art landscape of Quinta do Mocho is eloquent of the fact that the dark side of “Afro Lisboa” racializes expulsion, while also hiding and naturalizing exclusion. There is a clear link between gentrification, the spectacularization of cultural production, and ongoing exclusion. At the same time, however, we believe that the bottom-up creative practices analyzed here are producing a space of negotiation and discussion where the darkest side “Afro-Lisbon” can be discussed and even countered.

Turning Race and Racism Visible

The proliferation of technologies of surveillance, the criminalization of racialized individuals should be understood in relation to the rampant and aggressive gentrification campaign quickly expanding well beyond the center of Lisbon and impacting neighborhoods traditionally shaped by afro-descendant and immigrant communities from heterogeneous origins²⁷. To these processes we have to add the weight of police violence, which has contributed to generate a distorted image of the outskirts of Lisbon inhabited by populations of African descents. Spaces such as the Cova da Moura have been systematically featured in national press in relation to police interventions, and several public causes on torture, falsehood and abuse of authority have been presented in the Portuguese court. The episode of police violence that took place in February 2015 in the Cova da Moura exemplifies the regime of exception concentrated in areas of Lisbon mostly inhabited by people of African descent. In this occasion, five young black men were brutally attacked, tortured and humiliated inside a police station. When asking for information concerning a colleague that had been recently jailed in the context of a disagreement, they were punched, hit with sticks and even shot with rubber bullets. Once inside the police stations, they were attacked, threatened and humiliated again. During the same day, false news relying only on the police’s side appeared, arguing that they attempted to “invade the police station.” Such invention intended to publicly legitimize the police’s incoherence, taking advantage of the public opinion that equates black young communities inhabiting “infamous neighborhoods” with criminal attitudes.²⁸ After 48 hours of detainment, the youngsters were released, and an unprecedented demonstration against police and racist violence was organized in front of the Portuguese Parliament.²⁹ In July 2017, a sentence declared that the five youngsters were innocent, stating also that they were victims of police violence. At the same time, seventeen police agents were accused of multiple felonies, including torture, kidnapping, injury and offense to the victims’ physical integrity, these accusations being aggravated with crimes of hate and racial discrimination.

Despite the impact generated by such cases of police violence and the gutter approach of these events made by the media, spaces like the Cova da Moura or the Quinta do Mocho are rightly famous for another reason: its aesthetic and cultural production. Through these means, some of their dwellers are joining vast creative and activist networks going far beyond the physical boundaries of Lisbon. Their participation makes them capable of enjoying an array of cultural and symbolic capitals, being therefore repositioned as agents and participants of a transnational Lisbon. Similarly, the transformation of the neighborhoods analyzed in this article into central nodes of musical and artistic

creativity is countering the still frequent stereotypes associating these spaces to criminality and drug trafficking.

In this context, several young creators from the Cova da Moura and Quinta do Mocho are articulating strategies of visibility that challenge what it is to be black and African in Portugal, affirming an “insurgent citizenship” (Holston, 2013) and challenging normative views about their place within Portuguese society. Those creators are using at least three different strategies to that purpose. The first one has to do with making police violence explicit, thus generating creative discourses that collide head on with the benevolent view of Lisbon as a multicultural, racism-free city. The act of spelling out violence crosses over artistic disciplines and mediums, being present in musical productions, stencils and graffiti. Importantly enough, this strategy has been mobilized to counter the exclusionary image of both neighborhoods as “dangerous zones” broadcasted by the official media that is still prevalent in the minds of many Portuguese. Another creative strategy is related to the creation of zones of exchange at the margins of the city’s cultural landscape. In the meetings and “local” visits organized in Quinta do Mocho, the creation and contemplation of visual products is produced at a different pace than that of more formal art spaces. In this case, informal meetings are organized without the need to label them “cultural processes” and without any need of delimiting any sanitized and exclusionary “cultural space.” Though this means, a space for alternative engagements outside the hyper-surveilled and culturally-commodified is temporally produced. Finally, a third strategy is related to the contexts in which musical and visual production circulate. Far from being contained within the Cova da Moura and Quinta do Mocho, many of the creative initiatives produced in both contexts have succeeded in reaching broader audiences within and beyond the space of Lisbon. This is particularly evident in the case of Kova M Festival. Although this festival is conceived by and for the inhabitants of Cova da Moura on a first level, it has also worked as a platform for black musicians and visual artists from different areas of Lisbon and other Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. The use of these resilient strategies has proven effective in fueling affirmative and emancipative processes of space-making. Driven by local creators wishing to make explicit their situatedness, their uneven yet productive place of speech, these are redefining the cultural geography of Lisbon.

Specialization and/as Coloniality

Within the last decade, a new wave of artistic discourses emerged in the last decade in response to the social transformations undertaken by a multi-ethnic Portuguese society. This is especially evident in the work of Portuguese contemporary art creators such as Mónica de Miranda, Délio Jasse, Pedro Neves Marques, Filipa Cézar, Grada Kilomba or Salomé Lamas, who are raising pressing questions related to the legacies of colonialism in the Portuguese-speaking world and the invisibility of African descent in Portuguese society.³⁰ This transformation can also be noted in the curation of art exhibitions³¹, where the number of visual practices related to postcolonial issues has increased drastically within the last ten years, or in the cultural programming of major institutions such as the Fundação Gulbenkian, Culturgest, the Centro Cultural de Belem or the Teatro Maria Matos, in some

cases going back to the late 1990s.³² Finally, within the last years there have been several artistic interventions in landmark locations (such as Belem³³) that have sought to critically reposition the ideological charge accumulated in these locations concerning the kindness and “specificities” of Portuguese colonialism³⁴. Challenging the idea that *saudade* for empire is something from the Estado Novo, all these agents and institutions are trying to demonstrate how the legacy of an unproblematic vision of Portuguese’s imperialist intervention is still very much at play.

Interesting as they are, these cultural productions have centered in great degree the main debates on cultural production and commodification, leaving more informal and community-based creative practices (such as those encompassed by the Kova M Festival) on a secondary place. Formality and informality, specialized and unspecialized, have emerged as the boundary separating what enters (even in the form of informal production) the space of the museum and the (alternative) art space and what doesn’t, a categorization that has is strongly felt in terms of race and education.

The creative productions here analyzed urge us to redraw the ways in which cultural commodification is often employed to describe visual and other creative manifestations by communities of African descent in Portugal. Without denying the importance of the multiple voices emerging from the Portuguese academy and more formal art and cultural institutions concerned with deconstructing the ways in which a colonial imagination has been perpetuated from the Portuguese Estado Novo to the post-revolutionary, democratic period, it is also necessary to acknowledge that those debates have more often than not spoke for (or even silence) Black voices. It is impossible to deal with the legacies of colonialism in Portugal without paying attention to the active role of racialized subjects in creating spaces of resistance and cultural affirmation. In this sense, bottom-up creativity provides a privileged observatory to explore the limitations of cultural criticism in relation to the cultural appropriation at the heart of the emergence and crisis of creative cities. In our particular case, this means that any analysis of the exclusionary forces linked to the cultural rebranding that Lisbon is going through at least since the 2000s should be accompanied by an attentive exploration of the collective and individual responses articulated by the racialized bodies and voices targeted by institutional (and) racialized violence.

In this sence, the idea of artistic contemporaneity as something emerging out of specific, autonomous “cultural” context (in public but not publicly available for everyone) has survived almost untouched. Finally, although opening up interesting spaces of thought, the inclusion of racial difference into curating and cultural programming has put emphasis on the capacity of cultural institutions to swallow criticism and display racialized discourses and bodies, paying less attention to the active and creative productions of those.

Reacting against this specialization, musical and visual creativity are being also repurposed in Quinta do Mocho to challenge elitist aesthetic categorizations. Several actions pursue this goal, including open air dinners and cultural parties. These events encouraged social exchanges, while also potentiate their creative skills and “ways of doing”, in De Certeau’s terms (1980). If the organization of alternative visits by hand of local artists sought to respond to the inclusion of the Quinta do Mocho into an alternative guide of Lisbon, something similar happened with musical production. The parties that took place in the neighborhood between 2003 and 2007 were decisive for the

emergence of a new rhythm that nowadays stars in Lisbon nightlife, the *batida*³⁵. Strongly influenced by *kuduro*, this sound is made through music production software and incorporates a mixing of styles including funaná and tarraxinha, afro-house and electronic music. Everything started in the Quinta do Mocho, when DJ Nervoso started playing in kuduro parties his own musical creations. The collective effervescence provoked by the original *batida* of his “resident DJ” attracted persons from different areas, which contributed to the dissemination of this musical style throughout Lisbon. The performance of DJ Nervoso in other areas and the dissemination of his music in digital devices were essential for the circulation of *batida*, which presented a face of Lisbon unknown to that date.

Marfox was one of the many youngsters who followed the footprints of DJ Nervoso, learning with him the secrets of musical production. Former inhabitant of the Quinta da Vitória³⁶, Marfox presented his music for the first time in the parties of the Quinta do Mocho, where he moved in 2011. Nowadays Marfox, 28 years old, is the main ambassador of this style—recognized by the *Rolling Stones* magazine among the top ten artists to know in 2014. He is also responsible for introducing *batida* to a global audience and for giving the floor to new talents. Such notoriety does not prevent Marfox to express the respect he feels by DJ Nervoso, whom he considers his mentor.

He is the person who created this by himself. Do you understand?! He didn't go to Angola to steal beats. He created his own stuff alone (...) Many DJs performing in the African nightlife were inspired by Nervoso to be DJs. This is what many people don't recognize. The main DJs playing nowadays in African discos during the weekend were and are inspired by Nervoso. He is not only who makes this music. Besides making it, he also has a nervous way of playing. That's how he got his nickname.³⁷

The partnership established with Editora Príncipe in 2011 was crucial to bring to the Lisbon's core the music created by these young artists and to internationalize their production³⁸. The use of digital platforms—social networks, websites, *Youtube*—for the dissemination and sale of their musical projects granted them professional status, while the circuit of events where they perform acquired transnational presence. The Quinta do Mocho is the heart of this process, based on new technologies and collaborative processes linking musicians, artists and cultural agents worldwide. These artistic and symbolic exchanges challenge binary demarcations between the global and the local or the centre and the periphery. Home of DJ Nervoso, Marfox, Firmeza and alike artists, this neighbourhood appears as a node of global and local networks including artists from other locations of Lisbon: Nigga Fox, Maboku, Liofox, Dadifox, Liocox, etc. In this context dominated by imagination and creativity, populations historically excluded from the hegemonic spaces of cultural consumerism feature symbolic and material exchanges that are playing a central role in transcending stereotypes and renegotiate the frontiers of Portuguese society. In this sense, *Batida* is being crucial for many young people of African descent in claiming a space of affirmation that could

remain attentive to the exclusionary policies still drawn by the Portuguese cultural industries.

Conclusions. Expanding the “Periphery”

Reacting against the universalistic and exclusionary situatedness of more formal postcolonial debates, the practices examined in this article are invested in active processes of place-making. In this sense, although afro-descendant creative productions are being appropriated by neoliberal capital to play a central role in the transformation of a former imperial metropolis and Southern European capital into a multicultural touristic and cultural hub, it becomes all the more urgent to acknowledge also the multiple ways in which Black subjects and communities are resisting that process while also inventing ways of linking their subversive imagination to broader transnational solidarities. In this sense, we argue that collaborative creativity can be mobilized as a way of subverting the appropriation of racialized discourses by creative capitalism. In this sense, creativity is mobilized in the case of Cova da Moura and Quinta do Mocho as a particularly powerful, strategically situated mode of everyday (art) politics used by young afro-descendants to affirm their active role in the spatial redrawing of postcolonial Portugal.

The cultural productions that we have analyzed are not confined within the space-time of Lisbon. On the contrary, they are part of a multicentered, transnational cultural network that reaches Cape Verde, Angola, Brazil and other locations. The cultural referents produced in spaces such as Cova da Moura or Quinta do Mocho, in that sense, are consumed, mobilized, discussed and followed by a vast community spread across several continents and contexts. This dissemination explains, for example, the popularity of hip hop videoclips produced in small studios and posted on *Youtube*, whose reproductions are counted by millions. Not only are these productions oriented toward a transnational black audience; they are informed by a multiplicity of cultural referents that are sampled and transformed along the creative process. Although they are exposed to the ongoing processes of cultural commodification and gentrification affecting the Lisbon cultural landscape, their structure and the agencies involved in their production also result more difficult to appropriate. In this sense, the transnational dimension of these cultural productions has a decisive impact in the affirmation of African identities within the postcolonial landscape of Portuguese culture.

Besides having an impact on how Africanity is defined, enhancing aspects of proud and self-valorization over the traditional image of marginality and exclusion constructed through the colonial and postcolonial genealogies of racialized labour, these cultural productions are also repositioning the role of community agency in the cultural exchanges taking place across the “Lusophone Black Atlantic” (Naro, Sansi-Roca and Treece, 2007).

Dealing with colonial Cape Verdean mobility, Fikes has argued that immigration, and more specifically, the consequences of transnational racialized labor requirements, acted as a central element in the configuration of Cape Verdean citizenship and cultural identities. In challenging the racial

constructions that determined the production of racialized identities both in the metropolis and within the archipelago, she asks for a critical reconsideration of the potentiality of transnational mobility to envisage alternative identities and cultural agencies: “If the racial politics of the sending and recipient contexts (through independence) mutually produced de-historicized narratives and perceptions of Cape Verdean social practice, across space, how then can we reconsider the organizing capacity of race, at the transnational level?” (2007: 98)

The examples analyzed in this essay corroborate the continuities between immigration, racialized labor and identity production, while also offering productive answers to Fikes’ question. First, through the dissemination of cultural and aesthetic values originally produced at the outskirts of “multicultural Lisbon,” they are redefining the codes of acceptance and definition. They are also challenging the logic of circulation prevailing in more “official” cultural circuits that seek an impact on the cultural programming of Lisbon. Whereas in the second case cultural production is incorporated and made available in culturally-sanctioned spaces of downtown Lisbon³⁹, in the examples we have analyzed a wider network of producers and consumers are brought into the equation as part of a process that spans across countries and contexts and that does not have a single purpose. Finally, contemporary urban creativity is politicizing debates over racism and racial exclusion both in Portugal and Cape Verde. In the case of Lisbon, these productions are consciously revealing the persistence of patterns of racial exclusion and both institutional and day-to-day racism even through masked within the official policies of postcolonial Portugal. Moreover, they are also challenging the claim that identifies Cape Verdean citizenship with *creoleness*, overshadowing the dynamics of racial exclusion operating in and beyond the Cape Verdean archipelago. . Although including elements of cultural affirmations, these are positioned within a shifting sociocultural landscape which is transformed through individual and collective insurgent mo(ve)ments within and beyond the Portuguese-speaking world.

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¹ The authors of this essay were an active part of the organization of AfroEuropeans 2019. This article results from the discussions and exchanges held at the AfroEuropeans forum.

²The use of the terms people of African descent and afro-descendants in this essay attempts to give account of the ways in which racialized subjects define their own identities in a transnational context, challenging official notion of what is to be a citizen and restrictive and exclusionary policies of citizenry.

³ On the relevance of cultural production for the configuration of “creative capitalism”, see Brouillette (2014), Lloyd (2006); Ross (2004, 2010).

⁴ The debates over the legacies of colonialism in post-dictatorship, postcolonial Portugal slowly developed from the mid-1990s, through the theoretical contributions of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, Miguel Vale de Almeida and Claudia Castelo (among others) and the creative production of Ângela Ferreira or Lídia Jorge. In multiple ways, those emphasized how a nostalgic view of Portuguese imperial imagination pervaded the socio-political negotiations taking place in democratic Portugal. Despite the relevance of those early works, in the case of the Portuguese academia postcolonial criticism will only be popularized after the mid-2000.

⁵ 1974 marked the formal end of the dictatorship; the independence of the African territories linked to Portugal (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe and Guinea-Bissau) took place between 1973 and 1975.

⁶“O facto de, ainda hoje, não existir qualquer correspondência entre o número de negros que vemos na rua e o número de negros em lugares de liderança na sociedade é, no mínimo, surpreendente. A ausência de representatividade de uma fatia expressiva da sociedade portuguesa – fatia essa usada como bandeira de cosmopolitismo da população por algumas entidades oficiais – espelha um sistema que discrimina pela cor da pele.” Our translation.

⁷The Portuguese State forbids the gathering of ethno-racial statistics despite the innumerable amount of international advices otherwise. Among these we can mention the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, 2013) and the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/ONU, 2016).

⁸One of the most effective mechanisms used in order to legitimize this process of banishment in Portugal (and Europe) is related to the obstacles imposed for children of immigrants to get national citizenship, something that turns ethno-racial origin (*jus sanguinis*) a determinant factor in the access to the rights granted through citizenship.

⁹ African cultural expressions are part of Portuguese culture at least since the 15th century. This includes a wide range of elements from vocabulary to religion, from literature to theatre and music. According to Didier Lahon (2004), Africans (enslaved and free) in the Portuguese capital may have represented 15% of the population between the end of the 17th century and mid-18th century. This is evidenced by the names of major landmarks in Lisbon (Rua Poço dos Negros and Rua das Pretas), the existence of several black confraternities (Tinhorão 1997), or the former Mocambo District that was located in the territory of the current “popular” Madragoa area (Coelho 2014).

¹⁰ After the end of the so-called “Guerra Colonial [Colonial War]”, Portugal received vast groups of immigrant populations from Africa, including both Portuguese citizens from the group of Portuguese-speaking African countries. The label “retornado” refers to thousands of people, mainly white, who came to Portugal from the former colonies during the independence processes of 1975 and 1976, although its usage is subjected to discussion. See Peralta (2017).

¹¹ Although Cape Verdeans are by far the most numerous, also live in the Cova da Moura populations from São Tomé, Guinea-Bissau and Angola, as well as Portuguese “retornados”. These last inhabit the lower part of the neighbourhood, whose houses are clearly of better quality.

¹²These rhythms are the main “traditional” musical genres from Cape Verde. *Morna* is a melodic composition whose lyrics evoking themes of nostalgia and loss. More accelerated, *Koladera* is influenced by Latin American rhythms and usually portrays satirical lyrics. *Funaná* is a fast music that the Portuguese Dictatorship forbid for its so-called sexual and primitive style (Sieber, 2005).

¹³ Although concentrated within a very different area of Lisbon, it is also important to emphasize the importance of Brazilian musicians in this process, as they play an active role both in the dynamism of the nightlife of Bairro Alto, a playful neighborhood in the city center, either through performances in the public space to spread their music (Ferro and Raposo, 2016).

¹⁴ Creole is the language spoken in the archipelago of Cape Verde and Guiné-Bissau, whose phonetics have several similarities with Portuguese and multiple internal variations.

¹⁵“Na hora da aflição corra. Senão podes ser pego nigga, já te disse que aqui na street a situação está complicada. Na hora da aflição corra. Se ele corre e é pego: vai preso, fichado e muitas vidas são injuriadas. (...) Eles [polícia] invade-nos o ghetto. Porrada em branco e preto. Faltam-nos o respeito. Puxam os seus canos [armas]. Humilham-nos. Manda-nos encostar na parede. Revistam os rapazes. Acende mais um WI [ganza]. Os diabos estão a passar PI [polícia]. Olha eles ali, na hora da aflição corra. Senão tu és pego nigga. Quem tiver ao seu lado é também arrastado. Mantém os pés firmes, preparados para qualquer resultado. Na street tens de andar preparado” [Kova M Fronta, 2012 – Katana Produções]. Our translation.

¹⁶ An in-depth examination of the relation between these musical productions can be found in Varela et al. (2018).

¹⁷ See <http://www.odeith.com/>

¹⁸ “Num fim de semana fiquei a apreciar um graffiti muito grande que ele [Odeith] tinha feito na Escola D. João V. Eu era miudinho. Então o gajo aparece num carro. Ele vê-me lá a apreciar o graffiti, e eu até pensei que fosse polícia. (...) Ele aparece e faz a pergunta “tu gostas de graffiti?”, respondi “gosto bué, gosto muito desses desenhos. Foste tu que fizeste? Ah tás a brincar, foste tu?”, “Sim, foi eu que fiz”. E eu era miudinho. Lá ele deu-me um flyer com uma morada de Benfica da loja de tatuagem: “olha, se gostas dos meus graffitis vais lá a minha loja que eu tenho uns trabalhos que tus vais gostar também”. (...) E depois desse dia comecei a ir à loja dele todos os dias.” [Tazy, 26 years old, 17/06/2015] Our translation.

¹⁹ Both the Cova da Moura and the Quinta do Mocho are commonly described as “problematic,” “critical” or needing “priority interventions.” Such stereotypes reinforce the image of these spaces as uncivilized and anomalous.

²⁰This neighborhood was built by the Loures City Council between 2000 and 2002 to allocate families inhabiting from the late 1980 unfinished buildings with scarce habitational conditions.

²¹ Despite the fact of these productions being commonly framed under the term graffiti, they put into practice a wide range of artistic techniques, including different forms of painting and collage.

²²“Nós sabemos que muitas das coisas boas que Portugal tem, desde a Ponte Vasco da Gama à Expo foi feita à custa de muita imigração, muito trabalho duro, não é?! E isso também foi importante. Por isso que o nome da obra é “Worker Ghetto Box”, e simboliza a África e representa o papel dos imigrantes em Portugal.” [Kedy, 30 years old, 30/04/2016]. Our translation.

²³ Other peripheral areas of Lisbon have also been the target of requalification public policies through street art, including Marvila, Bairro Cruz and Bela Vista.

²⁴ The choosing of the painting’s main issue is usually done by the artist beforehand, being discussed only with the local City Council.

²⁵ An in-depth examination of Quinta do Mocho case can be found in Raposo (2010, 2019).

²⁶ Está a ser transformador, está a ser importante, está a ser inspirador. Este bairro precisava de uma coisa dessa para mudar, era uma oportunidade (...) Porque havia muita gente que se tapava com uma máscara, tinha vergonha de ir para a escola e dizer que era da Quinta do Mocho, tinha vergonha de procurar um trabalho porque sabia que não iria conseguir por serem da Quinta do Mocho. Havia muito esse estigma. (...) E no fundo está a haver uma transformação de uma marca negativa para uma marca positiva. [Kedy, 30 years old, 18/04/2016 Our translation.

²⁷ A clear case of this happens in Graça, a “traditional” neighbourhood located near the charismatic spaces of Alfama and Mouraria.

²⁸ The sensationalist tone with which the press used in this case is eloquent of the violent collective imagination grounded on the racialization and geographical demarcation of criminality within the contours of peripheral areas of Lisbon. See Raposo (2010) and Raposo *et al.* (2019).

²⁹ See Fletcher (2015) and Raposo *et. al.* (2019).

³⁰ It is worth noting that some of these artists are people of African descent, while others do not have any familiar link with Africa. In their works, in any case, there is a common interest for understanding how the legacy of colonialism is affecting current Portuguese socio-political predicament. Alongside, platforms such as Buala are bringing the voices of afro-descendants in Europe, America and Africa closer.

³¹ After the political commemorations linked to the “discovery” of Brazil, which took part in 1998, several art exhibitions dealt (in more and less critical ways) with the weight of colonialism in contemporary Portuguese identity.

³² Projects such as Fundação Gulbenkian’s *Próximo Futuro* or the recent cultural cycles on coloniality organized by the Teatro Maria Matos have turned the attention of vast segments of the Portuguese populations to cultural manifestations engaging with postcolonial issues. On these, see Restivo (2016).

³³ Belem constitutes the site of cultural memory *par excellence* linked to a celebratory vision of Portuguese’s “civilizational mission.”

³⁴ In 2017, a memorial to the victims of slavery was approved to be funded through Lisbon City Council’s participative budget. This unusual event calls attention to the public dimension of the processes above described.

³⁵ Many of these parties were organized in unclaimed commercial spaces in the ground floor of the neighbourhood, which were occupied by the youngsters.

³⁶The Quinta da Vitória was a self-constructed neighbourhood located in the Portela demarcation (Loures), which was demolished about ten years ago as part of the Special Program of Resettlement (PER).

³⁷ “Ele é a pessoa que criou isso sozinho. Está a perceber?! Ele não foi lá a Angola roubar beats não. Ele criou mesmo a cena dele sozinho. (...) Um monte de djs que tocam na noite africana inspiraram-se no Nervoso para serem djs. É isso que muita gente não associa. Os grandes djs que hoje tocam nas discotecas africanas ao fim de semana ontem ou hoje inspiraram-se no Nervoso, não é só quem faz essa música. Para além dele fazer essa música,

que é batida, ele também tinha uma maneira nervosa de tocar. Por isso que lhe deram o nome de Nervoso.” [Marfox, 28 years, 9/09/2016] Our translation.

³⁸ Mostly descendants of African immigrants, the Dj’s and producers of this musical style gather around in this small-scale editorial imprint, which has been promoting music events in the downtown area of Cais de Sodré for several years.

³⁹ The clearest case is Martim Moniz, a square located near the *Baixa* or downtown area and that has been historically associated with multicultural exchanges. Martim Moniz concentrated migrant population from Indian, Bangladesh and Chinese origin. The actual structure of the square is shaped by the Estado Novo project of developing a “ethnically-mixed” urban market during the first decades of the democratic period. See Oliveira (2013).