

Rewriting History: Media Art Activism in the Fight against Racism

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Abstract:

I analyze media art activist initiatives created by black artists and collectives in the face of the importance of performance and subtitling as devices for translating (black) art marked by erasure and silencing. I understand media art activism as a practice made by the use of expressions in art and media resources to make a cause public. I'm interested in works that draw attention to the condition of being black in Brazil. The pedagogical purposes of this type of art are also of interest, in the sense that the performances and subtitles promote learning by sharing knowledge in non-formal educational spaces. I reflect on works that find perennality in the media record (video or photography with subtitles or audio narrations) and translate the meaning of the work for the viewer (in a kind of second-order reading). The research is exploratory in nature, based on content analysis (of registered works) and on-site observation (of ongoing exhibitions of works).

Keywords: media art activism, black art, media art, art activism, Afro-Brazilian art, anti-racist art

1. Introduction²

The text presented here develops considerations about the phenomenon of the proliferation of black collectives, artist groups and artists, who use media resources and expressions in art to expose their causes, making their problems, priorities and demands public, through subtitled works of art, in a type of educative and pedagogical practice. As they are both black collectives and artists, I say that they make public causes about being black in contemporary Brazil. I call this phenomenon media art activism, which is a neologism made up of the media, art and activism words. I recognize that this type of production has extended to other segments of the population, but that it is above all on subordinate bodies that these types of production have been structured, drawing attention to the condition of being black in racist, sexist, misogynist, homophobic, genocidal and classist Brazil and to the use of media art for pedagogical purposes, in the sense that the performances (and their respective captions) analyzed here promote learning by sharing knowledge in non-formal educational spaces, such as museums, streets, alternative galleries, etc.

I'm not saying that in previous decades there was no combative, interested, engaged, black or Afro-Brazilian art. But I say that what we saw was Afro-Brazilian art that was more concerned with the forms and features that make up a so-called Afro-Brazilian aesthetic, the result of the heritage of the African presence in the diaspora. The exaltation of beauty (aesthetics) did not give way to the exaltation of problems (social activism), as if aesthetics and activism inhabited absolutely different spheres. Mestre Didi, Emanuel Araújo, Rubem Valentim and many other groups and artists are examples of the high quality of Afro-Brazilian art produced in the 1960s and 1970s. However, now, driven by the use and abuse of information and communication technology resources, with the advent of digital media, what we are seeing is the creation of expressions that, more than their aesthetic formats, manifest a commitment to rewriting the history of the black presence in the Brazilian civilizing process (which includes the fight against epistemicide, genocide and structural racism that plague the black population). I'm referring to the action of "rewriting history" when I say that such works (almost always performative) are educational practices. These are expressions, actions and initiatives that have never, at any other time, been so expressive, powerful, rebellious and insurgent. They are, therefore, art and education that liberates.

As the object we are analyzing here is the black body and memory serving the performance, the work of art, I assume that the marker of difference in black media art activism is the fact that it rewrites the history of Brazilian media and art or, if you prefer, Afro-Brazilian media and art.

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Artistic works are increasingly narrative, autobiographical and self-referential. Memory, the body and, in some cases, history and locality are imprinted on aesthetic objects as a form of specificity. Multicultural discourses make the voices of homosexuals, women and less privileged ethnic groups resonate in these objects. Everyone tries to make sense of existence, whether it's their own or that of the community. Unveiling personal memories becomes a movement of resistance against apathy and amnesia - feelings generated by a context of excess, established by media culture and dominant social sectors. The personal reading of memories contrasts with the amnesia and apathy that the frequent supply of information brings about in today's culture (OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 37).

The interest in the subject is related to the emergence of the debate on ways of positivizing the representativeness of the minority provided by the advent of technologies, as well as the end of the silencing and erasure attributed to Afro-Brazilian art, which is the reason for its absence in the official history of national artistic production. What has changed in Afro-Brazilian art in the last twenty years? What are the texts created by classically silenced Afro-Brazilian art? Which voices speak and which bodies become visible in the history of silencing and erasure?

2. Sphere of media visibility(discussion)

The end of the 20th century saw the emergence of other modes of production, with a boom in autochthonous productions, which symbolized a blurring of the boundaries between center and margin, inside and outside, which would mark the analyses centered on post-modern theories (de-colonies, post-colonies, cultural studies, etc.). It is enough to say that other representations of the outskirts were emerging at this time, in addition to the classic representations of the urban peripheries, marked by the violence of drug trafficking. Now, rural peripheries, meta peripheries, since peripheries of peripheries, marked by other types of violence (agrarian, above all), also had the chance to expose their causes to the world.

The peripheral rewriting of history, or the deconstruction of the West carried out by contemporary Cultural Studies and post colonialism, therefore, implies a constant attack on Western hegemony and, if not a complete reversal, the reaccommodation of the cultural canon, the de-centering announced by postmodern theories (PRYSTHON, 2003, p. 44).

The field of the arts in Brazil, itself configured as another expressive field of exclusion, divided between the center(mainstream) and the margin(underground), was thus opening up to new forms of production and, by extension, representations that presented themselves as important allies in the counter-hegemonic struggle. As FERREIRA (2022, p. 51) quotes, what we saw "in those spaces often occupied by white art, was a rupture not of art, but of the monopoly of a class".

Advances in information and communication technologies have also been important allies in this transformation. At the service of art, they enabled not only the creation of new modes of production, but above all of distribution and enjoyment of the work and, due to their power of reach and breadth, of new audiences, new enjoyers of the work of art, thus creating other forms of production of discourse and representations (about themselves), moving from objects (of other people's discourse) to subjects of (their own) discourse.

These changes were fundamentally important for the emergence of media activism, which, by putting the causes of the most diverse legally vulnerable minorities on the stage, would occupy the "new" political public sphere and the unprecedented sphere of media visibility.

Here, I use the concept of the public sphere, as proposed by Habermas (1984), which is the social space of (public) representation, which must be managed by argumentation, discourse, publicity and privacy, which mediates and is a place of conversation and influence between the state and the private sphere. However, I maintain the caveat proposed by Nancy Fraser's (1992) contribution, criticizing the idea of univocity contained in the Habermasian concept of the public sphere.

Fraser amplifies what was proposed by Habermas, by defending the existence of several subordinate public spheres, created by groups and communities that did not find in the political, singular, univocal public sphere, as thought by Habermas, the necessary accessibility to ensure broad and unrestricted participation. Fraser calls these subordinate counter-publics. For the author, Habermas is wrong not to recognize the different modes of exclusion contained in the political public sphere, just as he is wrong to believe that all social groups seek equal ways to join this sphere. Fraser believes that this type of generalization disregards the diversity and heterogeneity of the different modes of action and participation in the public sphere, as well as disregards the different modes of exclusion, which are important devices for sustaining inequalities in societies such as Brazil.

This historiography records that members of subordinate social groups – women, workers, people of color and gays and lesbians - have repeatedly found it advantageous to constitute alternative audiences. I propose calling them subordinate counter publics to point out that they are parallel discursive arenas in which members of subordinate social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs (Fraser, 1992, p. 123).

Based on Fraser's proposal, Fernando Perlatto defends the idea that two types of public sphere have been created in Brazil: a selective and always hegemonic public sphere; and an endless number of other subordinate public spheres, created by groups that understood the importance of "perceiving other forms of association as legitimate that are not tied to the organizational paradigm of the European or North American world" (PERLATTO, 2015, p. 121). The same author also points out that the public sphere in Brazil was marked by a selectivity that concerned both who could participate and what was worth debating. Hence the importance of recognizing in the combative fronts and projects of production, distribution and reception, which elaborate new forms of representation and discursivity, types of inclusive public spheres governed by dialogism and de facto democratic deliberation.

For Perlatto, subordinate public spheres are not opposing forces to the selective public sphere. On the contrary: the two relate to each other, even though they are separate (but not distant), when they engage in dialog in search of conflictive or non-conflictive negotiations.

In this way, the popular sectors in Brazil were able to resist the hegemonic imposition built in the selective public sphere, managing to establish, at certain times, subordinate public spheres, which, despite not being able to raise their demands to the elitist public sphere and, therefore, dispute the hegemony of society, were able to build other discourses, anchored in a popular culture full of innovative strength, creativity and potential (PERLATTO, 2015, p. 133).

In this sense, the arts and popular culture take on an important role as mediators, tools for dialog, forms of communication and forces of resistance to the dominant flows, since, in dialog with Spivak (1988), "it is possible to say that, although the subordinates are hardly heard, they have been able to speak out in different ways against the hegemonic discourses and repressive practices of everyday life" (PERLATTO, 2015, p. 132).

The theme of the artistic use of the media in order to promote critical and combative actions draws attention to the importance of occupying the public sphere, whatever it may be, since every public sphere is always a political space, a place where demands are made visible, where problems and priorities are exposed. Therefore, when we think about the artistic use of technologies to promote a cause (this is the maxim of media activism), we move away from the idea of contemplative art, which conveys emotions but says nothing.

Is there, in fact, an art that says nothing, that is purely contemplative, but not necessarily communicative or interpretative? In response, we assume that all art, in terms of what it says outside the author and the work, is always marked by traces of intentionality, it is always an engaged art, an art in favor of a cause. In other words, by being used as a resource to promote activism, which is always social and therefore political, art reaches the level of interested art, as opposed to the idea of disinterested art, art that doesn't mean anything, art that speaks for itself, art for art's sake. That's why it becomes engaged art, art in favor of a cause, therefore political art, political media art, educative art.

3. Media art activism (results discussion)

Various authors have described media art activism as a set of practices that move away from the classic modes of institutionalized political activity, which find in artistic expressions a way of criticizing the classic representations disseminated by institutional politics, thus producing a redesign of the notions of politics and the state. A decade ago, Fernando Gonçalves (2012, p. 180) realized that there were indications "that the very notions of politics, activism and art seemed to be being redesigned today or that the phenomenon could correspond to new configurations of these elements in our societies".

At the same time, as "critical action", art and activist actions, at least in Brazil, escape the models of "political art" and activism. They are produced in an interstice and form a composite where the political embodies the poetic and vice versa and where one instance is not reduced to the other, but together produce variations of one and the other, (as we see today in Brazil). (GONÇALVES, 2012, p. 190).

In the case of media activism, what we see is media, art and activism working together for a cause. Some of these causes are not only related to what is outside the work, outside art. Often, it is the artistic expression or language itself that deserves recognition, in the idea that art is political, just as the body, skin and memory are political.

The performance is therefore the best of illustrations. Firstly, because it takes place, above all, through the body. Secondly, by considering that, because it is punctual, momentary and ephemeral, it is in the media that the performance finds perennality. Finally, because it is the subtitles of the record that promote the permanence in time of the performative work and that, in a way, translate the meaning of the work and, according to our interest, the cause defended by the work to the viewer of the work (in a kind of second-order, second-hand reading). In other words, in addition to functioning as a critical action, even when it doesn't mobilize the public, the performance calls on the viewer to read either the expression or, at the very least, the subtitles. Fruition, in this sense, depends on the spectator's reading and interpretation, since this is an art that speaks outside the work. The idea of art for art's sake no longer has a place here.

As far as collectives are concerned, it's worth remembering that these are not groups of artists formed from the communion of ideologies, but are structured around articulations, negotiations, sharing, affinities, commitment to art and the cause announced. As interested art, the collectives produce conceptual tactics, in a combination of art and thought. As Ricardo Rosas (2005, p. 34) points out, "collectives can make good use of the media through guerrilla communication tactics", in a kind of manipulation of the media and its audience, drawing their attention to "what you want to say". This type of action is called intervention, cultural or artistic intervention, which is nothing more than a type of communicative social practice developed by artist-activists, which we consider here to be any and all artists. After all, many of the expressions that emerge with militant collectives and artists are expressions that have hitherto been invisible (just like their causes). They are artists and collectives who problematize their own, often traditional, artistic languages, as well as the norms about being in the world. That's why it's correct to say that they are expressions that speak of the things of minorities, minority groups and communities, discredited, disadvantaged, underprivileged, subordinate, that question hegemonic forces and everything that is included within these forces: binarisms, naturalizations, rules relating to gender, sexualities, race, class, religiosities, regionalisms; often intersectionalized. That's why media activism is always a dissident, insurgent movement, since it breaks with the rules that have been in force until now. It is in the presence of bodies, black, fat, stained, scarred, razor cut bodies that this type of art, of media art, has established itself, through products and works composed "of - social, political, historical and subjective - demands specific to black individuals - that are hidden by society's rules in a generalized way" (FERREIRA, 2022, p. 47).

I also understand that this art is in favor of teaching and learning, of transformation through education, through art education. For this reason, media activism is always a formative and pedagogical militancy, an educational action and practice. The very idea of rewriting the history of the black presence in Brazil in official history, as well as the fight against epistemicide, with the kidnapping and concealment of African and Afro-Brazilian contributions to Western "knowledge", is a didactic, formative action, an educative practice, which arises in the midst of the debate on dissident and minority identities, brought about in the wake of queer studies, cultural studies, de-colonial studies, increased access to ICTs, the use and abuse of digital media, the significant plunge into the world wide web, the strengthening of social movements, the expansion of the LGBTQI+ debate in the media, the rise of non-binary identities, the positivization of ghettos, *favelas*, slums, tenements and *terreiros* (afro religions places), the visibility achieved by the anti-racist struggle and the creation of policies to promote racial equality.

In this sense, media art activism updates the history of slavery and post-abolition in Brazil; it draws attention to other producers of non-canonical, but no less creative, thought and art; it speaks of underestimated, stolen, kidnapped aesthetic practices that have remained anonymous, despite their power as strategic and war art.

Materials and methods: the media art activism in Bahia

For the analysis of the captions and images of the works, we used the approach proposed by Laurence Bardin (1977), who defends the idea that content analysis is the best resource for expanding research in the field of Social Communication and the Arts, because it presents a set of instruments and methodological steps that contribute to the effectiveness of results in the analysis of communication products. For Bardin, content analysis would thus be a method made up of a "set of techniques for analyzing communications that uses systematic procedures to describe the content of messages" (BARDIN, 1977, p. 38) and which contributes greatly to the analysis of images (records of the works) and their respective captions, with special attention to the analysis phases of inference and interpretation.

In this way, I can say that this is a qualitative study, structured from the interpretative point of view of the data presented, supported by the idea that qualitative analysis "[...] uses non-frequency indicators that can allow inferences to be made; for example, presence (or absence) can be as (or more) fruitful an index than frequency of appearance" (Bardin, 1977, p. 114).

I analyze captions integrated into works, all of which are performative, created by black artists and artist collectives, who act, both in their aesthetic, political and didactic terms, in favor of the anti-racist and anti-colonialist struggle. The proposal was to collect "subtitled", "translated" works, either through audio resources (videos with voice-over narration) or through text (subtitles, folders, websites, etc.). The works (or captions) I analyze are components of perennial works, perpetuated through video, photography or written texts. The selection of artists or collectives to be investigated focused on some common aspects: the fact that they produce performances; the fact that they produce performances that contribute to the anti-racist and anti-colonialist struggle; the fact that they are works produced by black artists and artist collectives. The procedures adopted are therefore:

My intention was to reveal the ways in which artists and groups of artists organize themselves (in collectives or not) to make artistic use of technologies, in order to carry out militancy through the elaboration of modes of autochthonous representation, of positive representation that oppose the erasure or the classic pejorative and negative representations produced by the mainstream media and crystallized by Brazilian society.

I also consider the fact that they are black artists, residents of the peripheries, often sexual and gender dissidents, often members of African religions, members of the lower classes and have all sorts of minority identities that have threatened legally vulnerable groups and communities for centuries. The idea was therefore to reveal the importance of media activism, the artistic use of technologies and the technological use of art in the Afro-Brazilian art scene in order to expose problems and priorities; in this case, to speak, through the caption, to speak to the world, even though Afro-Brazilian art has been so ostentatiously silenced, if not erased. This expands the reach of their speeches through artistic, informative and educational actions, multiplying and encouraging other artists and audiences to engage in the fight for human rights. It is art in favor of fighting for the rights to be dissident and to combat exclusionary rules, narrative disputes, the decentralization of canonical production centers, and standardization in general. In other words, this so-called artistic militancy can reveal ways of confronting and fighting intolerance, racism, sexism, colonialist forces and all sorts of exclusionary actions, in times when these actions have become commonplace.

The selection of the artists presented here was determined by their proximity to Bahia, the state where Salvador is located, the blackest city in the world outside Africa. But it's worth noting that this is a national phenomenon, which has been seen in many different Brazilian cities, from the Amazon to the southern of the country. As well as thinking about issues of race in their work, many of these artists move around the idea of intersectionality, present in more recent concepts, schools, theories and trends such as cultural studies, subordinate studies, postcolonial studies and de-colonial studies, with their critiques of Eurocentrism and the dynamics of colonialism. As Arturo Escobar (2005) says, these studies create an enunciative space whose point of coincidence is the problematization of coloniality in its different forms.

It's also worth pointing out, as already mentioned, that media activism has almost always been presented through performances, which, more often than not, only exist while they are being carried out or when they materialize through recording resources, at which point the work becomes mediated by technology (videos, photographs, texts, audio). In this sense, it is important to draw attention to the importance of subtitling performances as a guide to fruition, the sensitivity and the aesthetic experience, a phenomenon very similar to what Walter Benjamin (2018) thought in relation to the captioning of photographs. The subtitles of the performances draw attention to the perpetuity of the work and the translation of the work as a second-order work; a moment when discussions about the record as an element of interference in the work come to the fore, questioning the status of the record in the performances as a resource of a metalanguage or a second-order art. The textual aspects of the subtitles and folders presenting the works, which, in a way, also add to the critique of the work, take on the role of translators of the aesthetic experience, which is not always intelligible to the viewer of the work.

It's also interesting to think about the academic nature of the caption texts, which reflect the hermetic nature of the works. Understanding the relationship between artists, academia (considering that a significant part of it is made up of postgraduate students and university professors) and the social movement (black movements, above all) can explain both the academic nature of the captions and the almost indecipherable nature of the works.

If black people in the past created art and beauty in the process of liberation, as Angela Davis (2016) reminds us, enabling both engagement in politics and sustaining black people in order to guarantee an encounter with happiness, today, black people continue to create art as a device for the struggle for liberation - now, a post-colonial liberation, which combats racial violence, structural racism, epistemicide, re-actualizing the history of the black presence in Brazil.

Let's look at a few cases.

In the work entitled *Refino #4* (Figure 1), the artist Tiago Santana covers with sugar images created by the French painter Jean-Baptiste Debret, one of the greatest references in terms of iconography produced about colonial Brazil and its slave system. Tiago doesn't just focus on the history of colonial Brazil. Contemporary Brazil is also the subject of his work, even if echoes of slave-owning Brazil from the past are still present here. In the artist's portfolio, part of the text that captions the image of the work reads:

Sugar appears in the video out of a need to erase the reproduction of violence, drawing attention once again to how sugar has been and is present in the construction of social stratification. And, at the same time, excavate/reveal how vile the colonial process surrounding the production of this product was and the impact it has today, a century after the decline of this mode of production. What is uncovered when we carry out an archaeology of sugar? (SANTANA, 2019a).



Figure 1. Title of the work: *Refino #4* (Refining #4). Source: Santana, 2019a.



Figure 2. Title of the work: *Apagamento #1* (Erasure #1). Source: Santana, 2016b.

The performance entitled *Apagamento #1* is another example (Figure 2). It refers to the *Cabula* massacre, which took place in the neighborhood of the same name on the outskirts of Salvador, when twelve young black men were barbarously murdered by the state police. The caption for *Apagamento #1* reads:

February 2015. 12 young black men have their lives taken by the military police in the *Cabula* neighborhood of Salvador. The young people who were murdered bore racial and social marks on their bodies that have historically categorized them as dangerous and abject. On the outskirts of Salvador, young people style their hair with drawings made with razors. On their heads, international marks or words that reveal their belonging - a way of representing and writing about themselves. "*Apagamento #1* (*Cabula*)"

immerses itself in this double context. The artist reproduces the word "*Cabula*" in his hair and photographs himself, day after day, until the name disappears completely. The work is a strategy for citing a cruel process of extermination and systemic silencing of young black people and their presence in the contexts of the metropolis of Salvador (SANTANA, 2019b).

Another Bahian artist is Ayrson Heráclito. It dialogues with issues of race, enslavement and Afro-diaspora. The artist also questions the remnants of slavery in Brazilian society, as in the performance-intervention *Transmutation of the Flesh* (2000, Figure 3), when he mobilizes performers who are dressed in clothes made of dried meat and "branded with the insignia of plantation owners from colonial Bahia" (HERÁCLITO, 2015).

I bring back the memory of the abuse. I bring this idea of the holocaust that was slavery to the stage. I began to think about the body, a body that had a certain connection with this history, with this past, with these ghosts. The idea of meat emerged, of jerked beef, a mixed meat, a blend of fat and meat. Then I thought of the flesh precisely as a metaphor for this body of enslaved men. The pain and hurt of black slavery in the world do not only concern Afro-Brazilians, Afro-Americans, slaves and their descendants or the men who were enslaved. And I invite these people to experience this process. The physical act of branding a body brought back and awakened very old memories. So, it's the smell, the sound of the meat roasting and the combustion that touches this wound that for me must be transmuted by aestheticized art, but never forgotten. And to transform the energy of these ghosts, these spirits, all dead, which in Bahia we call *Egum*, into a revolutionary energy, a positive and transformative energy. Seeing it, hearing it, being present at it, taught me things that literature and history didn't, it wasn't as efficient in its accounts and descriptions. My main objective as a performer, as a person, is precisely to seek cures (HERÁCLITO, 2015, sic., audio transcription of the artist's *voice-over* describing the performance in the video).



Figure 3. Video. Title of the work: *Transmutação da Carne*. Source: Heráclito (2015).

Finally, it is worth highlighting the work of Afrobapho Collective (Figure 4), which, according to the introductory texts contained in two of its social media profiles, is a "collective made up of young black and LGBT people who use integrated arts as a form of social mobilization. Intersection of race, genders and sexualities"ⁱ or a "Collective formed by young black LGBT people, which uses the arts as a social tool"ⁱⁱ. The texts don't say which arts the Collective deals with, but I can say that it deals with almost all of them. Afrobapho's greatest expression is in dance, creating a kind of ballroom sceneⁱⁱⁱ in the Brazilian style. It's also important to say that Afrobapho is experimenting with a number of other potentialities, such as the arts of dressmaking, scenography, design, etc., as well as organizing parties, concerts, shows and performances. These performances, which I'm calling *lucração* (queerness), which are as much about the forms of corporealities, the ways of the body, as they are about visualities, break with the canonical, paradigmatic, heteronormative, hegemonic norms and rules of behavior, by presenting the world with liberated bodies and spirits, free from moralistic bonds. They also contribute to the emancipation of other young people, by realizing the possibility of escaping the "restrictions that mainly affect individuals who see themselves as different and at the same time lonely in their supposed singularity" (VICTORIO FILHO; NASCIMENTO, 2017, p. 544), when they find in the collectives the liberating praise of the conditions or characteristics that afflict or condemn them.



Figure 4. Video. Title of the work: *Popa da Bunda*. Source: Afrobapho, 2017.

Final considerations

The relevance of this type of art lies in its aspect of rewriting official histories that have been built up and consolidated over the centuries, but which have been presented as unique stories, constructed by a single side of history. At a time when dissident actions and initiatives have been taking shape, above all in the fields of culture, the arts and politics (extending to the most diverse spheres of contemporary life) and claiming the appearance of a plural, diverse, inclusive, egalitarian world, rewriting the official history of Brazilian artistic production is a more than necessary task.

The research, in turn, fits into the list of productions that aim to present critical and interartistic results about the uses of languages, covering the multiplicity of possible phenomena in the field of arts, letters and the media (whether literary, communicational, artistic or media phenomena) in their comparative aspects. It is important to emphasize its role in contributing to the strengthening of research that intersects Literature, the Arts and Communication in Brazil, committed to criticism, updating and the dissemination of knowledge, taking as a challenge the transformations that contemporaneity presents and that directly impact Brazilian culture and society.

It also aims to contribute to the expansion and dissemination of bibliography for the teaching of arts, literature and communication and, by extension, to the training of professionals with conceptual competence, who work both in the production and dissemination of cultural goods (material and immaterial), which have cultural and artistic value and constitute the national memory as a heritage of humanity, contributing to the development of policies and projects for the generation of Brazilian artistic and cultural heritage, supported by the multidisciplinary, interdiscursive and intersemiotic profile of this field of study.

Black media activism, by breaking with paradigms that reiterated and perpetuated exclusion and erasure, reveals the beauty of what was kidnapped, silenced and considered inhospitable for a long time. Black media activism is a phenomenon that allows insurgent dissidents to create strategies to overcome erasure, marginalization and alienation and share knowledge about being black in modern Brazil. It is therefore art that serves educational and pedagogical practices. It's art and media, *mediart* (media art), which brings new discourses and representations to the center of the debate, which until then had been subordinate, erased. It is art that "goes beyond the limits of the painting, the frame and even the walls of the museum [...] to install itself in absolute reality, in everyday life" (FREITAS, 2007, p. 86). It's media art activism that connects with its audiences. It is media activism in favor of transformation, the restructuring of power relations, the regeneration of spheres of power, privilege and prestige. "It is in this Brazil of the marginality of dissidence that these artists (r)exist" (BRAGA; GUIMARÃES, 2017, p. 29).

Special attention needs to be paid to these new movements, the fruit of the counter-conduct and subversion of those who use aesthetic weapons to make their voices echo. The advent of the Internet has intensified these new political configurations, which are more libertarian and no less efficient, allowing new voices to emerge, affecting the freedom of new bodies and subjectivities. This new way of doing politics, based on the exploitation of the body and often on laughter and debauchery as instruments of transformation, is almost always considered strange and delegitimized by those who only believe in the authoritarian and bureaucratic way of doing politics. *Queer* bodies, strange but not unrelated to the struggle

for representation, break paradigms and contribute to the annihilation of hate speech (SANTOS; FREITAS, 2019, p. 276).

No longer disinterested art, art for art's sake, contemplative, which marks the distance between those who enjoy the object of art and those who produce it. What we see now are expressions of interested, engaged, militant art. Art that is in the street, that is in the body, that is in us.

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ⁱConsidering that I'm talking about art and media productions that oppose a hegemonic model of production and expression, I must stress that I use the concept of hegemony as proposed by Gramsci (2004), when I think of media art activism as an expression of art and media in favor of counter-hegemonic causes and when I translate media art activism as a set of actions and initiatives in favor of the causes of subordinate, legally vulnerable, minority groups and communities, in their qualitative terms; in this case, black media activism in favor of the black cause (or, if you prefer, struggle).

ⁱ Available at: < <https://www.facebook.com/AFROBAPHO/>>. Accessed at: July 20, 2022.

ⁱ Available at: < <https://www.instagram.com/afrobaphooficial/>>. Accessed at: July 20, 2022.

ⁱ The ballroom scene is one of the expressions of LGBTQIA+ culture that began in New York City at the end of the 20th century, created by Latino and African-American LGBTQIA+ people. It was a response to the exclusion of these people from the big drag queens contests, which are marked by racism and regionalism.