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Worlding Rio de Janeiro's favelas

Relations and representations of socio-spatial inequality in visual art

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3. Marvelous and/yet/or Divided: Imaginaries of Rio

*Ce limpide matin, ô Ville merveilleuse
Je veux paisiblement oublier ta beauté,
Je ne veux pas subir ta grâce fabuleuse,
Je veux parler de toi avec lucidité.*

Jane Catulle Mendès, 1912 (qtd. in Korytowski, 2015a).¹

O ideal seria que a cidade fosse única. Mas a Zona Sul é pensada de um jeito, a Zona Norte de outro, o morro de outro, o asfalto de outro. É hora de escancarar essas contradições e o apartheid, e não de colocar nuvens sobre isso, tentando encobrir essa questão

Ludmila Costa (qtd. in Rio de Encontros, 2015).²

Among the artists who have worked in and on Rio de Janeiro's favelas, we find a diversity of statements and experiences. However, we also see a few noteworthy similarities, particularly considering how they aim to influence their audiences' perceptions of favelas, changing the way we see these spaces. For example, French street artist JR (2011) says in his TEDtalk: "Art is not supposed to change the world, to change practical things, but to change the perceptions. Art can change the way we see the world." Similarly, Marcos Chaves (2006, p. 7), an artist from Rio de Janeiro, says: "Art is trying to reinterpret the world. In my case, I use humor, deviation, folds, to present new gazes at the same things. To make perceptions more fluid, to make them less rigid and dogmatic." Another *carioca* artist, Ratão Diniz (2015, p. 7, my translation), describes how his photographs show the daily life and beauty of Rio's popular territories, "which are almost always disregarded by common, or stereotypical, sense." Finally, the Brazilian-Swiss duo Mauricio Dias and Walter Riedweg (2012, p. 105) claim:

¹ Translation: "On this lucid morning, o marvelous city/ I want to peacefully forget your beauty/ I do not want to experience your fabulous grace/ I want to talk about you with clarity."

² Translation: "The ideal would be that the city would be unified. But the Zona Sul is thought of in one way, and the Zona Norte in another, the hills [favelas] in another, and the *asfalto* in another. It is time to open up these contradictions and apartheid, and to not conceal it, trying to cover up this question."

We [want] to deconstruct somehow the established discourses [...]. In this way, we hope to pit the resulting image against that which the person has already formed on that theme. To unsay what you believe about what you're seeing, about the favela, the city, the other.

Naturally, these claims are not unique to the Rio de Janeiro context, but correspond to broader ideas around art's capacity to "create imaginary spaces that shape reality in a different manner or present a new reality" (Bax et al., 2015, p. 20).

In this chapter, I take a critical look at how such ideas are put into practice in Rio de Janeiro by relating representations of this city in contemporary visual art to broader imaginaries of social, economic and spatial inequality. The first section elaborates on the expressed claims around art's societal relevance, building on the concept of urban imaginaries. After this, I discuss two specific narratives that have long dominated the imaginary of Rio, namely that of the 'marvelous' and the 'divided' city. The following three sections consider three important elements in the artistic representation of Rio de Janeiro: the city's landscape, its public spaces, and its inhabitants. Keeping in mind the concept of worlding, the main aim of the chapter is to examine not only what 'new perspectives' are provided by the artworks discussed, but also how these perspectives reach their envisioned audiences. This will lead to two interrelated arguments. First, I argue that it matters a great deal where, how and for whom these new perspectives are shown. Unfortunately, the consequences of exhibition sites, discursive framing, and strategies of audience outreach are rarely made explicit or critically examined in popular, curatorial or academic accounts of favela representations in visual art. Second, in the context of Rio de Janeiro, giving visibility or providing new perspectives to inequalities is particularly complex because the city's poor are at the same time hyper-visible and hidden, incorporated and excluded in dominant imaginaries of Rio de Janeiro.

Contemporary Art and Urban Imaginaries

As Rebecca Biron (2009, p. 15) writes, "cities live in real space and time, and they are made of real material objects like concrete and bricks. However, they carry meaning only through the ways in which people live in them, imagine them, and represent them." More generally, according to Charles Taylor (2002, p. 106), social imaginaries define "the way ordinary

people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings,” including “how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations.” While urban imaginaries are thus – in the strictest sense – immaterial, it is widely acknowledged that they have a real impact on how cities are shaped, transformed and experienced by both citizens and policy makers (Lindner and Meissner, 2018). As such, they form “part of any city’s reality, rather than being only figments of the imagination” (Huysen, 2008, p. 3; see also Iveson, 2007; García Canclini, 2008). This idea is strongly indebted to Lefebvre’s (1991) theory of space, in which “space is to be understood in an active sense as an intricate web of relationships that is continuously produced and reproduced” (Schmid, 2008, p. 41).

Lefebvre’s (1991) famous spatial triad, and particularly the notions of representational spaces and spatial practices, emphasizes the agency of each inhabitant of the city in producing urban space (see also Schmid, 2008; Lindner and Meissner, 2018). At the same time, Lefebvre (1991, p. 10-11) stresses the importance of hegemonic power relations:

Hegemony implies more than an influence, more even than the permanent use of repressive violence. It is exercised over society as a whole, culture and knowledge included, and generally via human mediation: policies, political leaders, parties, as also a good many intellectuals and experts. It is exercised, therefore, over both *institutions* and *ideas*.

For the topic at hand, it is crucial to reiterate that these unequal power relations manifest themselves – among other things – through aesthetic imaginaries (Zukin, 1995). In Rio de Janeiro, as chapter one has shown, socio-economic inequalities have a profound impact on the physical landscape of the city, its public spaces and the people that traverse them, but simplified and stereotypical imaginaries tend to widen these gaps even further. Put differently, Rio de Janeiro *is* divided in many ways, which feeds into a discriminatory social and aesthetic imaginary of the city that in turn only exacerbates these inequalities (Perlman, 2010).

This process of mutual impact is, of course, not unique to the city of Rio de Janeiro. For this reason, as Lindner and Meissner (2018, p. 9) write, urban imaginaries are “intrinsically political”:

[Urban Imaginaries] shape and are shaped by socio-spatial relationships of inclusion and exclusion, empathy and apathy, solidarity and segregation, as well as many others. Considering the conditions and processes through which urban imaginaries are produced is therefore crucial. How do socio-spatial power relations produce particular urban imaginaries, and how do these imaginaries, at the same time, reproduce those relations?

To address these questions, the next section of this chapter will consider how Rio de Janeiro is commonly imagined and how this impacts people and spaces in the city. Building on this analysis, the final three sections critically address the ways in which artistic representations hope to exert influence over these imaginaries. As the quotations that opened this chapter attest, artists often hope to question or transform urban imaginaries, for example by exposing how dominant narratives govern the ways in which we look, think and act in the city. In other words, they locate art's socio-political potential in its capacity to make certain issues, places, or people *visible* in a new or different way, which is assumed to have an impact on collective understandings and imaginaries.

The writings of philosopher Jacques Rancière (2010) have been highly influential to this philosophy, arguing that aesthetics and politics are not only connected, but inseparable. As he writes:

Within any given framework, artists are those whose strategies aim to change the frames, speeds and scales according to which we perceive the visible, and combine it with a specific invisible element and a specific meaning. Such strategies are intended to make the invisible visible or to question the self-evidence of the visible; to rupture given relations between things and meanings and, inversely, to invent novel relationships between things and meanings that were previously unrelated (Rancière, 2010, p. 149).

Or, as formulated by Chantal Mouffe (2007, p. 4), art can “[make] visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate.” Chapter one already showed some examples and limitations of this philosophy building on the work of Rosalyn Deutsche (1996) and its

critiques. This section will expand on this argument by elaborating on the relation between contemporary art and urban imaginaries.

Colombian philosopher and literary scholar Armando Silva (2003; 2014) has written extensively on the impact art can have on urban imaginaries – emphasizing that the two are mutually influential. Both have a profoundly *aesthetic* and *affective* nature, but there are also crucial differences. The most obvious one concerns materiality, as artworks usually consist of a material object, documentation or display, whereas imaginaries, as a “cognitive category,” are more elusive and in constant transformation (Silva, 2014, p. 32, my translation). In this sense, artworks are one way to document, intervene and comment on urban imaginaries (Silva, 2014, p. 20). Second, Silva (2014, p. 178, my translation) writes that “in art the aesthetic is linked to the sphere of taste, of pleasure or of emotional intelligence, although it can also be critical [...]; but in social interaction we are dealing with opinions and judgments, which are also emotional, about collective coexistence.” Building on these points, we see that imaginaries spread informally, through daily interactions among all kinds of people – although, as noted, some groups are more influential in their formulation than others. Art, on the other hand, is produced by a specific individual or group with some form of audience in mind, thereby distinguishing between creator and receiver, and implying some deliberate form of distribution. In other words, contemporary art is a form of *public address*. Because of this, as I will argue in this chapter, the process of art transforming urban imaginaries and thereby impacting the city is more complicated than many artists make it out to be.

Crucially, dominant urban imaginaries do not only have an impact on the aesthetic content of artworks, but also on the formats of display, accompanying narratives and media reception through which these works are worlded. To elaborate on this, it is useful to further examine art’s status as a form of public address. In a broad sense, we might think of the art public as an addressed audience. However, how this audience is envisioned often depends on the broader, and sometimes confusing, connotations of the term ‘public.’ For political sociologist Jeff Weintraub (1997, p. 1-2), who writes about the distinction between public and private, “different sets of people [...] mean very different things by [these two terms] – and sometimes, without quite realizing it, mean several things at once.” More specifically, Weintraub denotes a confusion between two distinct core values often associated with the ‘public’: (1) collectivity, referring to collective rather than individual interests, and (2) visibility, what is “open, revealed or accessible” versus what is “hidden or withdrawn”

(Weintraub, 1997, p. 5). This is further complicated by the fact that the term ‘public’ is used in spatial as well as in discursive terms: to denote a “particular kind of [physical] place in the city” or as “any space which is put to use at a given time for collective action and debate” (Iveson, 2007, p. 3). In the latter usage, the public becomes nearly synonymous with the political, here understood not in terms of formal politics, but as “a world of discussion, debate, deliberation, collective decision making, and action in concert” (Weintraub, 1997, p. 11). These distinctions resonate with debates on the varied meanings of the term ‘public art,’ the definition of which has been connected to spatial location (outside of an institutional context), challenging elitism (reaching ‘new’ audience groups), or the political issues art addresses.³

Exploring and foregrounding these ambiguities, as I will argue in this chapter, reveals much about the discrepancies between what art *hopes* to do and what it actually *does*. As Rancière (2010, p. 142-143; see also Rancière, 2009) emphasizes, we should not see art’s impact on ‘the sensible’ in terms of a clear-cut, causal relation, in which giving visibility to certain inequalities would compel audiences to take political action. In the words of Nestor García Canclini (2014, p. 171), “there is no direct, mechanical line that goes from viewing a spectacle to understanding society and from there to a politics of change.” This lack of a direct relation between artist and audience leads García Canclini (2014, p. 178) to argue that in addition to studying actual works of art, scholars need to consider “the structural conditions of the art world and its social context [...], paying attention to [...] the wandering route of meaning through circulation and reception.” The idea of complicity, outlined in the introduction to this thesis, is particularly useful to study how different actors involved in this process navigate and narrate the production, dissemination and reception of artistic work.

As explained in chapter one building on Sara Ahmed’s work, this thesis aims to do just this for artistic representations of Rio de Janeiro’s favelas. In this chapter, I argue that unraveling the conceptualizations of a ‘public’ addressed by the artworks under study is a crucial component of such an approach. As chapter one noted, the relation between artist and audience is often envisioned as a “conceptual engagement with generalised others”

³ The most common definition of ‘public art,’ as described by Patricia Phillips (1989, p. 332) refers simply to art “out of doors.” In response, Phillips influentially argued that art “is public because of the kinds of questions it chooses to ask or address, and not because because of its accessibility or volume of viewers.” This resonates with the approach of Rosalyn Deutsche (1996) described in chapter one. In contrast, Suzanne Lacy’s (1995) notion of New Genre Public Art aims primarily at community engagement.

(Meskimmon, 2011a, p. 50). In most instances, however, the public is also a social imaginary, “a kind of practical fiction” (Warner, 2002, p. 8; see also Iveson, 2007). As Kurt Iveson (2007, p. 40) writes, imaginaries of a public are often closely linked to imaginaries of the city – with all their inherent inequalities. In Rio, as we will see, artists often address the city as a collective actor, united through shared values, interests, and circumstances. A closer look, however, reveals that the issues and experiences they highlight are actually those of the middle- and upper-classes. Alternatively, as briefly noted in chapter one, many artists working with marginalized communities such as favelas make a distinction between a primary audience of “first hand participants,” to which the artist herself may or may not belong, and a secondary, ‘outside’ audience (Bishop, 2012, p. 19). Put differently, this implies a distinction between art *for* favelas and art *about* favelas. In an attempt to critically examine these tendencies, this chapter poses three important questions for studying how art impacts urban imaginaries in Rio de Janeiro: (1) how is the collective audience/public of artworks imagined, who is included and excluded here? (2) What are the discursive tactics and strategies employed to address this audience? (3) And where are these strategies and tactics put into practice? As noted, the answers to these questions are necessarily related to broader imaginaries of Rio de Janeiro, to which I will now turn.

Beyond Marvels and Divisions

Two narratives dominate the local and international imagination and representation of Rio de Janeiro: the *cidade maravilhosa* (marvelous city) of samba, tropical scenery and carnival, and the *cidade partida* (divided city) of violence, crime and social inequality. The former term stems from first decade of the twentieth century, when it was employed in a number of media accounts (Korytowski, 2015b). Another noteworthy early usage is found in the 1912 collection of poems *La Ville Merveilleuse*, by French poet Jane Catulle Mendès, with which I opened this chapter. The latter nickname gained prominence in Zuenir Ventura’s (1994) book entitled *Cidade Partida*, but builds on a long history of academic accounts on cities in Latin America (see for an overview Koonings and Kruijt, 2007, p. 11-13) as well as popular narratives and representations of the city (Barbosa, 2012; Gama de Almeida and Lopes Najar, 2012). Taken together, these two imaginaries have led to the idea of Rio de Janeiro as a city of extraordinary and aesthetically dramatic contrasts. In this section, I argue that we should see these narratives as related rather than opposed to each other, as they are profoundly

intertwined in both historical and contemporary contexts. To do so, I will look at three elements in the imagination of the city on which they have long had a strong influence: (1) the city's landscape, (2) its public spaces, and (3) its inhabitants.

Starting with the first, the geographical landscape occupies a central role in both narratives. The ocean, the beaches, and steep mountains covered in Atlantic rain forest are key to the idea of the *cidade maravilhosa*. They have enchanted inhabitants and visitors for centuries, and continue to be one of the main reasons for tourists to visit the city (de Azevedo Irving, et al., 2011; Freire-Medeiros, 2013, p. 28). Turning to the *cidade partida*, the landscape also plays an important role. The unusual geography of flat parts and steep hillsides is responsible for the often-heard fact that favelas and affluent neighborhoods are located in such close proximity in Rio de Janeiro. This also explains some of the vocabulary in this narrative, such as the synonym *morro* (hill) for favela, and the ever-present fear that the favela 'descends' into the city. Important to note here, however, is that this landscapes "of coastline, [...] forests and mountains [does] not correspond to more than ten out of the 260 neighborhoods in the city of Rio de Janeiro," namely the famous south zone and, to a lesser extent, the city center (Oliveira Xavier, 2015, p. 8, my translation). In the north and west zones of the city, the landscape is less dramatic, and the contrasts between rich and poor are less obvious. Accordingly, in both narratives, one part of the city – not coincidentally one of the richest areas – is becoming representative of Rio de Janeiro as a whole (Barbosa, 2012).

To understand Rio's urban landscape, a brief look at the city's historical development is in order. Considering its history of colonialism and slavery, it is clear that Rio de Janeiro has always been profoundly unequal. At the same time, the reputation of a beautiful, tropical locale has existed for centuries (see Herkenhoff, 2013). The current layout of the city, however, owes a lot to the urban redevelopment plan carried out by mayor Francisco Pereira Passos in the city center in the 1910s (Benchimol, 1992). Inspired by Georges-Eugène Haussmann in Paris, Pereira Passos' ideal was to create a modern and cosmopolitan city within Rio's beautiful, tropical landscape (Needell, 1984; Costa Mattos, 2009; Nunes de Azevedo, 2003; de Almeida Abreu, 2003). These reforms removed affordable housing from the city center, and therefore played a major role in the extensive growth of favelas during the same period (Jaguaribe and Salmon, 2012, p. 224; Carvalho 2013). As shown in chapter one, only in the 1920s did favelas become a distinctive category within the city, which strengthened the *cidade partida*-narrative. In other words, the very idea of the city as divided

gained prominence because favelas were seen as ‘counter landscapes’ to the modern, cosmopolitan *cidade maravilhosa* that Rio aspired to be (Barbosa, 2012, p. 35; see also Fischer, 2014). During the first half of the twentieth century, elite residential areas moved ever further to the south along the city’s waterfront, into what is now known as the Zona Sul (Iwata and del Rio, 2004). Accordingly, while ideas of a marvelous city predate the centrality of the Zona Sul in Rio’s elite culture and international imagery, these narratives gained prominence during the construction of these neighborhoods and influenced their popularity and design.

A second domain on which the two imaginaries have an impact is public space, here understood as physical places in the city that are openly accessible. James Freeman (2008, p. 533) writes the following about public space in Rio:

There is a common sense understanding circulating in Rio that despite the undeniable inequalities, the fear, and the violence, Cariocas put aside their differences when they step out in public: when they participate in various street celebrations, when they go to the corner bar, and particularly when they use the beach.

Here we see another discursive combination of Rio’s marvels and divisions. In this narrative, *Cariocas* are socially and culturally united in public space despite economic and spatial divisions in the city, which contributes to its marvelous character. The city’s famous carnival celebrations are a key example of such socio-cultural intermingling. Importantly, this narrative recognizes that “the city is traversed by a conjunction of circulatory practices,” particularly by the so-called lower classes (de Souza e Silva, 2012, p. 20). However, it obscures the fact that prejudice, fear and ideological divisions have a profound impact on the usage of Rio’s public spaces (Freeman, 2008).

First of all, it is worth noting that these shared public spaces are generally located in *asfalto* areas, as the city’s favelas are still widely regarded no-go areas by middle- and upper-class residents. Second, even in shared spaces, discrimination and fear – fed by the *cidade partida*-narrative – remain influential. Rio’s beaches are perhaps the most obvious example of this. As Freeman (2008, p. 534) writes, there exists a misleading belief that Rio’s beaches are democratic public spaces where people “leave their social status behind.” However, while on the beaches “the poor can remind the upper-classes of their condition, hold them to their

own ideals of democracy and equality, and make them feel the latent power of the majority,” these symbolic acts “have limited power to make fundamental changes in a society where the elite has superior control over the production of space and the production of ideas” (Freeman, 2008, p. 26). Moreover, discriminatory and fearful narratives remain powerful among affluent beach-goers. We see this for example in the derogatory term *farofeiro* (referencing home-cooked *farofa* lunches), used to denote inhabitants of favelas and the periphery enjoying the beach. Another clear example is the fear of *arrastões* (mass robberies), which can lead to widespread panic and sensationalist media narratives (Freeman, 2008, p. 547). In other words, fears that the ‘chaos’ and ‘disorder’ of Rio’s favelas and periphery will ‘invade’ the city’s marvelous public spaces are strong and widespread.

A third area I would like to focus on concerns how these imaginaries impact the treatment of the city’s inhabitants. Again, we clearly see this in the city’s carnival celebrations, another iconic component of the *cidade maravilhosa*-narrative. In local and global imaginaries, Rio de Janeiro’s renowned carnival celebration is embodied by beautiful, samba-dancing *mulatas*, queens of the samba schools from Rio’s favelas and periphery. However, as Barbosa (2012, p. 37, my translation) writes: “[Fiery mulatas] are admired, photographed, greeted, and honored as the ‘owners’ of samba. [However], these anonymous artists, revered during carnival, are often the same blacks and browns that are treated with asperity and violence by the police when they are in the favelas.” Naturally, carnival has long been regarded as a temporary inversion of local hierarchies (see DaMatta, 1979; Jaguaribe, 2014), but this symptomatic example serves to illustrate two important points. First, we see that how (poor) people are judged and treated can differ substantially from place to place. Second, whereas some of Rio’s poor are highly visible in the *cidade maravilhosa*-imagery, others (such as young black men) are purposefully made invisible. The same happens in depictions of the *cidade partida*, where drug dealers take center stage while favela inhabitants with regular jobs remain invisible (Jaguaribe, 2007). In summary, the process of inclusion and exclusion of Rio’s poor inhabitants is highly selective and can change according to its social or spatial context.

In all three domains discussed, the imaginaries of the *cidade maravilhosa* and the *cidade partida* are thus intertwined rather than parallel or opposite. In the last decades, this mutual impact has arguably become even more complex. According to Steinbrink (2014, p. 137), Rio’s government now explicitly tries to incorporate favelas into the “the sugar-loaf-

sweetened and samba-saturated event-image of the ‘marvelous city’” (Steinbrink, 2014, p. 137). We see this for example in favela tourism, the success of which is, in the words of Jaguaribe (2007, p. 126, my translation) “guaranteed by the confluence of contradictory imaginaries: the working inhabitants in their creative poverty and the drug wars that feed the flow of headlines, films, photographs, documentaries and reports about favela reality.” Important here are the spectacular views from the touristic Zona Sul-favelas and the visual contrast with the formal neighborhoods below (Freire-Medeiros, 2013). Another good example of the recent entanglement of the two narratives is the urban revitalization program Porto Maravilha, initiated in 2009. In this public-private development plan, the notion of the marvelous city is quite literally employed to brand a previously ‘deregulated’ and ‘dangerous’ part of the city on the international stage. Here too, the ‘positive’ imagery of the favela is actively called upon, as we see for example on the letters that spelled #*Cidade Olympica* on the renovated Praça Mauá (fig. 1.1).

At this point, it is crucial to return to the issue of visibility addressed in the previous section. In my view, the complex relations between the *cidade maravilhosa* and the *cidade partida* narratives have a significant impact on the artistic objective to visualize, or provide new perspectives on, Rio’s socio-spatial inequalities. First, the very idea of the *cidade partida* emerged because poor areas became highly visible as counter-landscapes to the marvelous, richer parts. In this sense, and building on the previous chapter, favelas were never invisible – although many historical depictions are simplified and discriminatory. Second, narratives of a marvelous city, united across aesthetically dramatic contrasts, actively serve to obscure how practices of exclusion and injustice (also) produce Rio de Janeiro’s public spaces. Third, the process of inclusion and exclusion within either narrative is highly selective. Some images of Rio’s poor are appropriated as marvelous, whereas others are denounced or ignored. Because of this, as Jaguaribe (2007, p. 90) notes, we should not assume that visibility is causally linked to socio-political recognition and inclusion. Rather than being hidden or invisible, Rio’s contrasts are *exacerbated* by the idea of landscapes and counter landscapes, *romanticized* by emphasizing their happy coexistence in public space, and *selectively appropriated* into dominant narratives of the marvelous and the divided city.

In sum, it should be reiterated that neither the narrative of the marvelous nor that of the divided city is completely false or made-up: both have a firm basis in the urban landscape of Rio de Janeiro and the ways in which this landscape is lived by its diverse inhabitants.

Accordingly, I am not arguing here for the complete abolishment of either view. However, as Carvalho (2013, p. 6) writes, “even the most plastic metaphor succumbs to the multifaceted dimensions of cities as lived and imagined spaces” (Carvalho, 2013, p. 6). In a place as diverse as Rio de Janeiro, I therefore argue for the need to allow multiple narratives and metaphors to complement but also contradict each other, and to maintain a critical stance toward each of these narratives. The remainder of this chapter examines how artworks and artists can contribute to this goal, analysing how the imaginaries of Rio de Janeiro as marvelous and/yet/or divided shape artistic production and display in the city. In many instances, as we will see, artists inadvertently confirm some aspects of dominant narratives while challenging others – either through the aesthetic content of their work or in its subsequent socio-political contexts of display.

Landscape

As we saw in the previous chapter, Rio’s geographical landscape has inspired artists for centuries. The city’s hills, forests and beaches have been endlessly depicted and ‘worlded’ in visual media. As summarized in a photography exhibition at the Moreira Salles institute:

The landscape leaves an indelible mark in the history and the representation of Rio de Janeiro. Since the first reports about the Guanabara Bay, the iconicity of the city’s geography has always been present. Traveling artists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century portrayed its unique location in drawings, paintings and prints, as situated between the sea and the mountains, which have shaped the city since its foundation on the 1st of March 1565 (*Primeiras Poses: Visões da cidade a partir da chegada da fotografia (1840-1930)*, 2015-2016, my translation).

In the contemporary visual arts, Rio’s landscape is especially prominent in photographic depictions of the city, which will therefore be the main focus on this section. First, I consider recent photographic imaginations of Rio’s Zona Sul, examining how these photographs portray the city’s marvels and divisions. Second, I turn my attention to a different part of the city, namely the Zona Norte. Here we will see quite a different depiction of the geographical landscape, which has an impact on the imagination of the city as either marvelous or divided.

Based on this, I argue for the necessity of multiple vantage points from which to view and document Rio's landscape and the inequalities inherent to it.

In 2015, the annual event FotoRio – consisting of exhibitions, workshops, seminars, lectures and other activities – celebrated the city's 450th anniversary by choosing Rio de Janeiro and its inhabitants as its exclusive theme. Unsurprisingly, Rio's 'marvelous' landscape took center stage in various exhibitions, for example in the show *Simplesmente Rio* (Simply Rio) by carioca photographer Rafael Duarte (*Simplesmente Rio*, 2015). At the Centro Cultural Justiça Federal (CCJF), located in the heart of the city center, this exhibition showed a series of highly aesthetic, black-and-white photographs of panoramic vistas in Rio de Janeiro (e.g. fig. 3.1). Curator Jaime Portas Vilaseca mentions that Duarte here uses "unusual angles" from which to depict his city, aiming to show "naked and raw essence of a Rio that is constantly changing" (*Simplesmente Rio*, 2015). At the time of writing, the publication of a more extensive selection of photographs from this series in a book entitled *RIO* is pending, promoted by the artist as providing "unique viewpoints" to his native city (*RIO por Rafael Duarte: Apresentação*, 2018).



Fig. 3.1. Rafael Duarte (2012) *Simplesmente Rio* [Photograph].

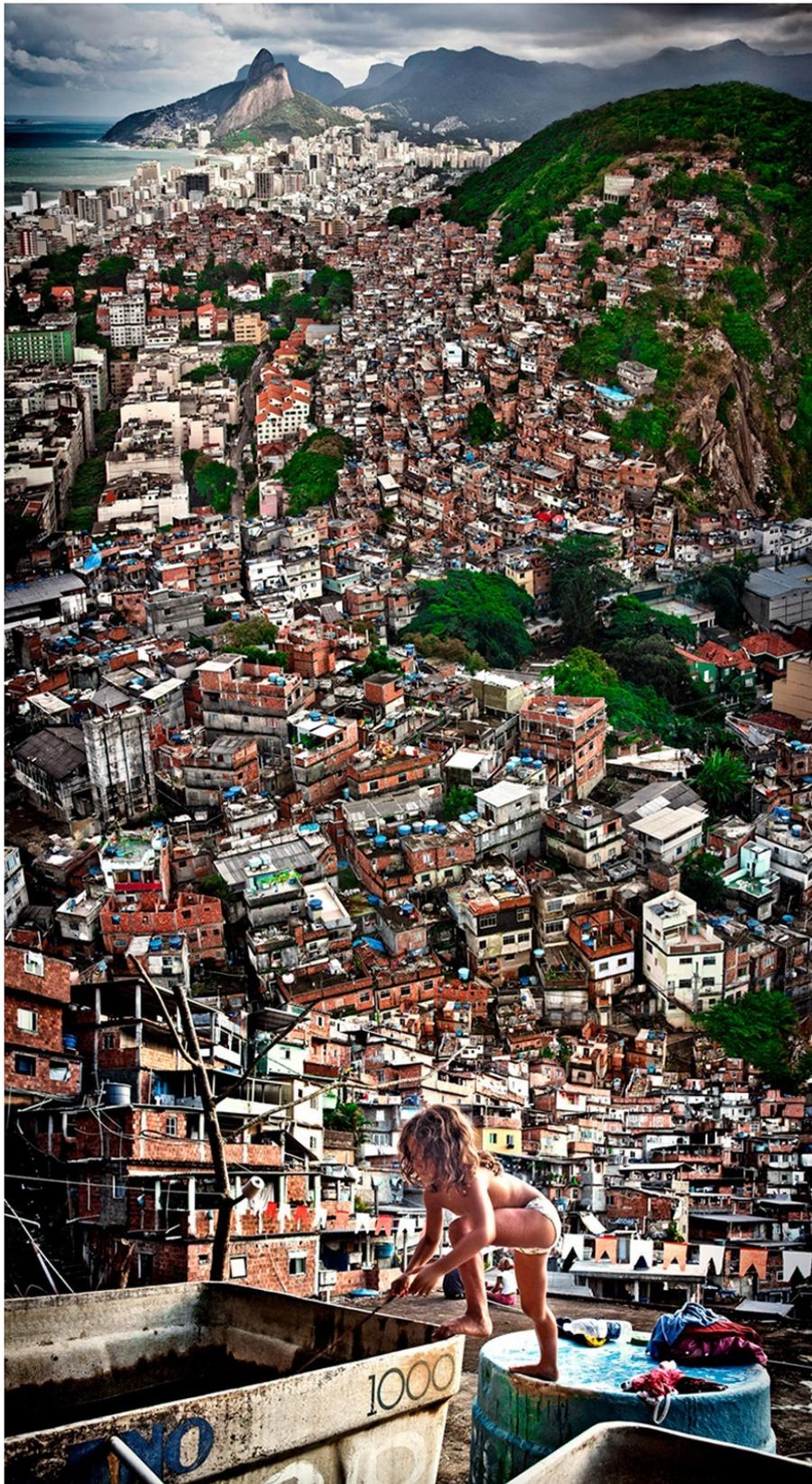


Fig. 3.2. Claudia Jaguaribe (2012) *Entre Morros* [Photograph].



Fig. 3.3. Marcos Chaves (1997) *Eu só vendo a vista* [Print].

Duarte photographed in locations that many *Cariocas* do not frequent, such as mountain tops, rooftops of buildings, boats, and airplanes. He also photographed at unusual hours, for example at sunrise. Despite these tactics, however, the resulting images all feel very familiar. Nearly all photographs at the exhibition are taken in the Zona Sul, with the exception of one picture of the famous Maracanã football stadium and another of a colonial building in the city center. Moreover, the inequalities inscribed in Rio's landscape are not part of the series' focus. Seven of the nineteen pictures show favela neighborhoods, but never in the foreground or catching the light. Rather than a constantly changing city, I would therefore argue that the series reiterates a timeless, mysterious and polished imagery of Rio's natural and urban landscape seen from above and from the sea.⁴ Moreover, by naming the show 'Simply Rio,' such images once again come to represent the city in its entirety.

Two years before Duarte's show, another exhibition at FotoRio showed a series of photographs with striking similarities. Also at CCJF, Claudia Jaguaribe's *Paisagens Construídas: Entre Morros* (Constructed Landscapes: Between Hills) showed nineteen photographs of Rio, all of which are also published in her 2012 book *Entre Morros*

⁴ The historical background of this imagery is explored in the exhibition *Rio de Imagens*, held in 2013 at the Museu de Arte do Rio (see Herkenhoff, 2013).

(Jaguaribe, 2012). As the exhibition text reads, these photographs, at first sight, remind us of “the classical tradition of panoramic photography realized in the city of Rio de Janeiro” (*Paisagens Construídas: Entre Morros*, 2013). However, they are digitally constructed, combining impossible viewpoints (e.g. fig. 3.2). As such, they may be described as an “imaginary journey” to a “spectacular” and “seductive” landscape (Fernandes Junior, 2012). Once again, the ocean, the forest and the mountains take center stage. In contrast to *Simplesmente Rio*, however, *Entre Morros* has an explicit focus on favelas – showing the contrast between favela and *asfalto* in spectacular hillside settings.

According to one review, the artist here “wanted to consider how landscape photography could provide new insights in the questions of identity, sense of place and belonging” (Fernandes Junior, 2012). Yet while the digital manipulation of these photographs might be meant to reflect on the complex relation between Rio’s imaginaries and reality, Jaguaribe’s photographs do not seem at all critical of dominant imaginaries. By combining a documentary-like imagery with a spectacular imagination, her work reminds us of the scholar Beatriz Jaguaribe’s (2004; 2007) analysis of favela tourism: simulating the real through registers of well-known ‘realistic’ images in order to re-present a spectacular and constructed version of reality. A familiar trope the artist uses to do so are depictions of children, considered by several authors as a central part of the positive, touristic imagery of favelas (Rolfes, 2010; Freire-Medeiros, 2011). The same is true for the hillside setting and the favela-*asfalto* contrast, which shows that Jaguaribe’s imaginary favelas are very much the favelas of the Zona Sul, which receive many tourists (Freire-Medeiros, 2011; Freire-Medeiros et al., 2013, p. 155).

A final artist known for his depiction of Rio’s Zona Sul is Marcos Chaves, who frequently reflects on the imaginary of the city in his work. It is telling to compare one particular photograph from *Simplesmente Rio* to Chaves’ well-known work *Eu só vendo a vista* (1997, fig. 3.3). The works show almost the same panoramic view of Rio, namely that from the Santa Marta viewpoint, situated below the *Cristo Redentor* (Christ the Redeemer). Chaves’ work, however, has its title printed across the image.⁵ *Eu só vendo a vista* depends on a series of puns in Portuguese. The conjugation *vendo* can come from the verbs *ver* (to see, to look at) or *vender* (to sell), and the phrase can thus mean various things: (1) I’m only

⁵ The work exists as a video, with the text running repeatedly across the picture, as a print, and as a photograph. The photograph has also been displayed as an urban intervention, put in light boxes above clocks in the streets of Rio de Janeiro.

looking at the view, (2) I'm looking at the view by myself, (3) I only sell the view, and (4) I only sell for cash. Chaves here deliberately chooses the most cliché view of the city to comment on its function within the imaginary of Rio – in contrast to Duarte's claim of depicting Rio from 'unusual angles' in *Simplemente Rio*. Through this beautifully simple sentence, Chaves' work reflects on the complex relation between viewing, selling and consuming in his native city, which has its landscape as the main tourist attraction.

Duarte, Jaguaribe and Chaves each try to provide a 'new perspective' on Rio's iconic landscape. Yet whereas Duarte and Jaguaribe aim to produce an original image, Chaves comments on the difficulty of doing so in a part of the city that is so frequently depicted. This is a common theme to his work, as he uses a similar approach in works such as *Pontos de fuga* (Vanishing points, 2008), *Cópia/Collares* (Copy/Collars, 2010), and *Sugar Loafer* (2014), all of which investigate the famous *Pão de Açúcar* (Sugarloaf Mountain) as an icon of marvelous Rio. Importantly, this does not mean that Chaves denies the unique beauty of Rio's Zona Sul. As Lígia Canongia says regarding his work more generally, the engagement with a familiar and aesthetic iconography of the city makes Chaves' works attractive for *Cariocas* and foreigners alike, but the artist also highlights what Canongia calls the "B-side" of these popular images (*Conversa de Galeria Paisagens Não Vistas – Marcos Chaves*, 2015). In the words of Wakefield (2014, p. 1):

[T]he images he creates glance between cliché and understanding. Against the iconic backdrop of a landscape recognized by all yet known by few, he finds objects that split meanings and perforate the fabricated reality like the metal spikes that maintain the very real social divide.

In other words, Chaves shows what makes Rio beautiful and marvelous, but simultaneously addresses the complex social relations hidden by this beauty.

Regardless of this critical message, however, the view we see still remains predominantly located in the iconic and well-known Zona Sul. This has a lot to do with his working method, often associated with the figure of the *flâneur*. As Cocchiarale (2011, p. 3) writes, Chaves "takes long walks through Rio de Janeiro, with a gaze always alert to unexpected situations." What is not mentioned here are the inevitable limitations of this method in a city of over 6 million people with many real and imaginary problems of access

and safety. However, despite (or because of) his preference for this particular part of Rio, Chaves is often described by reviewers and critics as a ‘quintessentially *carioca*’ artist. In 2015, he had a large solo exhibition at the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), where director Paulo Herkenhoff said they explicitly chose to invite an artist that “deals with the city in a truly *carioca* manner, with elegance, grace, surprise and a consciousness of [artistic] language” (*Conversa de Galeria Paisagens Não Vistas – Marcos Chaves*, 2015). We thus see that once again images of the Zona Sul come to represent Rio as a whole, despite the fact that this area of the city developed relatively recently (Iwata and Del Rio, 2004; Carvalho, 2013).

The arguments presented in this section resonate with art historical and geographical literature that has questioned neutrality of artistic depictions of geographical landscapes (e.g. Cosgrove, 1998; Mitchell, 2002a; Mirzoeff, 2011). Clearly, registrations of landscapes are determined by numerous artistic decisions. In addition, as Mitchell (2002b) and others have argued, the artistic genre of landscape is by no means outside of social, economic and political contexts – something we clearly see in the examples discussed here. Following Lefebvre’s theory on the production of space, power relations have a central impact not only on physical (urban) landscapes, but also on the ways in which these can and are being depicted, which makes these representations intrinsically political. Artistic depictions like Chaves’ and, to a certain extent, Jaguaribe’s question concerning the supposed neutrality of Rio’s (urban) landscape by showing the inequalities inscribed in this landscape as well as the constructed nature of Rio’s landscape as it is commonly displayed. However, as my analysis of Jaguaribe’s work has shown, a general sensitivity to the constructed nature of urban landscapes does not necessarily lead to a critical examination of the specific imaginaries that construct the particular landscape of Rio.

Fortunately, the dominance of the Zona Sul in visual depictions of Rio de Janeiro has not gone uncontested. Returning to FotoRio 2015, for example, a series of exhibitions called *Ser Carioca* (To be *Carioca*) showed 204 photographs selected out of an open call to which over 200 photographers, with some 3000 pictures, responded (Junqueira, 2015). Almost 80% of these photographs were taken in the Zona Norte. This leads the director of FotoRio Milton Guran to argue that this is where we can find the true *carioquice* (*carioca* spirit):

In this project] we see the extent to which the Zona Sul is irrelevant; the Zona Sul only enters in images of the beach. [...] The Rio de Janeiro that wants to show itself is

the Rio de Janeiro of the periphery, the Rio de Janeiro of the B and C classes. It is the Rio de Janeiro that really *lives* its city, that interacts with it [...] (*FotoRio 2015 – Milton Guran, 2015*).

While these claims might be somewhat exaggerated, especially considering the other exhibitions on display at FotoRio, they do show a shift within the contemporary depiction of Rio de Janeiro. Especially in photography, we can observe a modest rise of artists from different areas of the city, notably the city's favelas and periphery. Important here are the many photography collectives and projects started in these areas (e.g. *Imagens do Povo, Favela em Foco, Olhares do Morro, Favelagrafia*). These initiatives often operate simultaneously in the fields of (photo)journalism, art, research and activism, and the images produced here are increasingly finding their way into exhibitions and museums, both in Rio de Janeiro and abroad.

A prominent name in this field is Ratão Diniz, a photographer from the Maré favela complex associated with *Imagens do Povo, Favela em Foco* en *Essencia Art Collective*. His work has been exhibited across Rio de Janeiro as well as in London and Paris. In his 2015 book *Em Foto* (In Photo), Diniz documents Rio de Janeiro's favelas, the work of graffiti artists, popular culture celebrations, and the interior of Brazil. A particularly interesting photograph in the book is another image of *Pão de Açúcar*, taken from Vila do Pinheiro, a neighborhood in the Maré favela complex (fig. 3.4). In this picture, Diniz clearly shows the physical distance between the city's famous landmark and one of its largest favela complexes in the Zona Norte. In the foreground, we see one of the city's main expressways, the *Linha Amarela*, which connects the north and the south zone. In this sense, the photograph shows us that the city's different zones are part of the same city, distant but also connected. This resonates with Bruno Carvalho's (2013) cultural history of Rio de Janeiro, in which he describes the city as porous, in which inequalities are stark and widespread, but nevertheless in constant contact. In my view, photographs like these can help us think of Rio in this manner, not denying the inequalities inscribed in the landscape, but not seeing them as impenetrable boundaries either.



Fig. 3.4. Ração Diniz (n.d.) *O Pão de Açúcar no horizonte da Vila do Pinheiro, na Maré* [Photograph]. Courtesy of the artist.

A final photo series I would like to discuss in this section on Rio's landscape is *Pescadores da Maré* (Fishermen of the Maré), by Elisângela Leite, which has a rather different engagement with Rio de Janeiro's landscape (e.g. fig. 3.5). The Maré favela complex borders the Guanabara Bay, to which it has had a close relation since its first inhabitants moved there in the 1940s (*maré* meaning tide in Portuguese). For many of its early residents, fishing was an important source of food and income. Today, fishing in the bay is becoming increasingly difficult due to pollution, but there is still a fishing community in the favela complex. Leite's series documents their activities, with the explicit goal of supporting the fishermen in their struggle to remain active (Imagens do Povo, 2011b). Despite the aesthetic nature of these photographs and the Guanabara Bay as the central topic, we are far removed here from the *cidade maravilhosa*-imagery. The beauty of the bay is not denied, but the focus lies on its use value for a vulnerable part of the city's population. Rio's landscape is shown to be more than its geographical beauty – emphasizing the landscape as lived space.



Fig. 3.5. Elisângela Leite (n.d.) *Pescadores da Maré* [Photograph].

Diniz and Leite offer us a perspective on Rio de Janeiro’s geographical landscape that departs from the dominant imagery of marvelous, panoramic views. Taken from a different social and spatial vantage point, these registrations help us to rethink common imaginaries in which the Zona Sul is seen as ‘simply Rio,’ whereas favelas and the periphery occupy the city’s ‘b-side’ (Gama, 2007; Tambke, 2016). To be clear, I am not arguing that non-elite voices provide us with a more ‘authentic’ view of the city of Rio, or that artists should only depict the areas in which they were born and raised. Some of the images in Diniz’ book, for example, correspond rather closely to the famous Zona Sul imagery. Rather, my aim is to present and contextualize images that show Rio’s favelas and periphery as integral parts of the city *and* to change the framing of the Zona Sul itself – exploring the multiple relations rather than the divisions between these different territories. The goal here would be to recognize not only that “there are many [different] ‘cities of Rio de Janeiro,’” but also that “every single one of them is a fragment of a mirror reflecting all the others” (Barbosa, 2012, p. 33, my translation).

Carvalho’s (2013) concept of porosity is useful here, as his account highlights the long history of cultural collaboration and intermingling across different spatial and social contexts in the city. Nevertheless, building on the previous section, I would caution against

presenting this as *the* new imaginary of Rio de Janeiro. The reason for this is that despite the many relations and exchanges across Rio's territory – some boundaries simply cannot be considered porous. For example, the vast majority of the city's main exhibition spaces continue to be located in the city center and the Zona Sul, which has an impact on the audiences that visit these exhibitions. At FotoRio 2015, all but one of the exhibition venues were located in the city center or the Zona Sul, which significantly complicates Guran's claim, presented in a tv interview, that "the Zona Sul is irrelevant" (*FotoRio 2015 – Milton Guran*, 2015). For this reason, I argue that offering a diversity of imagines combined with a nuanced aesthetic-conceptual content is not enough. Visibility easily becomes spectacle and presenting artists from different backgrounds together might gloss over the unequal opportunities they receive both in- and outside of the art world. To elaborate on this point, the next section will turn away from the geographical landscape to discuss the city's public spaces, where negotiations about inclusion and exclusion, as well as the city's marvels and divisions, are again a central concern.

Public Space

While Rio's public spaces are frequently imagined as marvelous, for many people they are also dominated by fear. This section discusses how artistic practices are engaging with debates about violence and safety in public spaces in different areas of Rio de Janeiro. As we will see, narratives of fear play a crucial role here, fed by media reports of violence and crime. Naturally, these imaginaries are by no means restricted to the city of Rio, as several authors have noted how elites across Latin America guard themselves from (supposed) danger behind fences, security guards or in gated communities (Caldeira, 2000; Rotker, 2002; García Canclini, 2008, p. 22-25; Amaral, 2010). Armando Silva (2014, p. 74, my translation) even notes that "Latin America has fear as its principal imaginary." Importantly, as Amaral (2010, p. 35, my translation) argues, discussions of fear and danger lead not only to "the formation of stereotypes about crime and the criminal, but to the stigmatization of entire groups" (see also Vaz et al., 2005). Moreover, they lie at the basis of the growing support for violent state action against these groups (Robb Larkins, 2015).

Crucial in this respect, as Teresa Caldeira (2000, p. 19) famously argued, is "talk of crime," the "everyday conversations, commentaries, discussions narratives, and jokes that have crime as their subject" (Caldeira, 2000, p. 19). As she writes about São Paulo:

[People] seem compelled to keep talking about crime, as if the endless analysis of cases could help them cope with their perplexing experiences or the arbitrary and unusual nature of violence. The repetition of histories, however, only serves to reinforce people's feelings of danger, insecurity, and turmoil. Thus the talk of crime feeds a circle in which fear is both dealt with and reproduced, and violence is both counteracted and magnified (Caldeira, 2000, p. 19).

While conducting my own research in Rio de Janeiro, the difficulty of escaping this vicious circle became evident. Well-meaning *Cariocas* of all social strata worried about my safety as a foreign woman navigating the city, which often resulted in contradictory advice about what I should and should not do, what to look out for, and how to behave. Accordingly, despite knowing the critiques of repetitive and simplified talk of crime, such personal experiences and frequent (media) stories of violence and crime also affected how I navigated the city. For locals and foreigners alike, it can be hard to distinguish which risks are real and how to best act in response, which generally leads to “everyday strategies of protection and reaction that restrict people's movements and shrink their universe of interactions” (Caldeira, 2000, pp. 19-20).

Considering the ubiquity of fear and talk of crime in Rio de Janeiro, it is not surprising that a variety of artists have addressed different kinds of violence and crime in their work. Anna Kahn's photo series *Bala Perdida* (Stray Bullet, 2007), for example, depicts physical spaces in Rio where people were killed by stray bullets (e.g. fig. 3.6). The images are published on the artist's website and have been exhibited at various institutions in Rio de Janeiro, including Instituto Moreira Salles, the Centro Cultural Justiça Federal, and the Museu de Arte do Rio. Considering the common locations of art institutions addressed in the previous section, it is worth highlighting that her work was also shown in 535 Gallery, located in the Maré favela complex in the Zona Norte. As an inspiration for this photo series, Kahn mentions “small, personal” experiences of violence while growing up in Rio, which are deemed “important [because they reflect] the enormous collective crisis that was already invading the city at that time” (Kahn, 2007). Each photograph shows a deserted place at night, accompanied by a short text with the name, age, and occupation of the person killed. On the artist's website, Zuenir Ventura (n.d.) – a journalist widely known for his 1994 book

Cidade Partida – praises Kahn’s series for challenging the sensationalist media depiction of violence in Rio, “[rejecting] clichés, stereotypes and morbid anecdotes.”



Fig. 3.6. Anna Kahn (2007) *Carla, 21 years old, student from Minas Gerais. In Copacabana, on vacation, after getting out of a taxi* [Photograph].

Kahn (2016) says she deliberately chose situations that could happen to anyone, aiming at identification on the part of her audience. The victims have different ages, occupations and were shot in different areas of the city. Nevertheless, comparing her series to official data on stray bullets in 2006 and 2007, when these photographs were taken, we do see a biased perspective (Instituto de Segurança Pública, 2007). In these two years, a government report states that stray bullets killed a total of 40 people. In 2007, there were no victims in the Zona Sul; in 2006 there was one victim in the Copacabana/Leme area (2,5% of all stray bullets). The vast majority of incidents happened in the west and north zones of the city. However, of the 19 photographs on Kahn's website, five were taken in affluent areas of the Zona Sul (26%), and seven in middle-class neighborhoods in Centro and the Zona Norte (36%). Women are also over-represented: they are the focus of 68% of the photographs, but only make up 27% of actual victims. These discrepancies might be related to Kahn's working method. As she writes: "After researching the facts published in the newspapers, I made a selection of the cases of fatalities which occurred in public places. I chose the circumstances and places through which any of us could have been passing" (Kahn, 2007). Considering Rio's newspapers usually pay more attention to well-to-do victims of violence than to fatalities in favelas (see Souza e Silva and Barbosa, 2005, p. 59), this working method seems to have an effect on the selection of spaces portrayed in Kahn's photo series.

To be clear, I do not want to suggest that the deaths depicted in Kahn's photographs do not matter. Nor am I saying that art should be fully representative of official data. However, as Amaral (2010, p. 39, my translation) writes about narratives of violence in general, in this series "the decontextualized form through which narratives about crime are displayed makes an understanding of the dynamics of violence impossible" (see also Caldeira, 2000). Kahn's presentation does not tell us who fired the bullets or what societal processes underlie this particular form of violence. Accordingly, despite the lack of sensationalist *images*, the underlying idea of this series corresponds neatly to fearful media narratives of the divided city, in which anyone traversing Rio's public spaces could become a victim of lethal violence. In this sense, we might link it to Caldeira's (2000, p. 19) talk of crime, which "only serves to reinforce people's feelings of danger, insecurity, and turmoil." In reality, of course, the risks of getting shot are significantly higher in some parts of the city and for some parts of the population (de Souza e Silva and Barbosa, 2005).

In Ratoão Diniz' book *Em foto*, victims of stray bullets are also a focus, albeit in a rather different manner. Instead of empty spaces, he shows us photographs filled with people mourning two young boys who died from stray police bullets in the Maré in 2006 and 2008. The pictures are dominated by pain, loss and solidarity, and accompanied by a quotation of the mother of one of the victims, mentioning how “the policemen passed through the street firing bullets” and that “here [in the favela] the police is a synonym of terror” (Diniz, 2015, p. 46). The role of the police is also emphasized in another picture on the same page of the book, which shows favela residents with protest signs addressing the police with slogans such as ‘do not kill our children.’ Other photographers of the *Imagens do Povo*-collective have produced similar images. Luiz Baltar, for example, shows the daily consequences of public policies in favelas and the periphery, focused especially on UPP violence and home evictions.⁶ Examples are protest signs such as “stop evictions: the city is not for sale,” and “we deserve to live without fear of dying,” as well as the more practical “please don’t knock down my door, ask at the bar next-door and I will open it.” Importantly, here we see how Rio de Janeiro’s public spaces become the space of political struggle, grassroots expression and “collective action and debate” (Iveson, 2007, p. 3).

Kahn, Diniz and Baltar each take on the themes of violence, fear, mourning and protest, aiming to give victims of urban violence a name or a face: to look beyond news items and statistics. Again, we might therefore argue that they serve a similar purpose to Caldeira’s (2000, p. 20) talk of crime: “Amid the chaotic feelings associated with the spread of random violence in city space, these narratives attempt to reestablish order and meaning.” However, whereas Kahn depicts the issues of violence and safety in rather general terms, as a citywide ‘collective crisis,’ Diniz and Baltar refer to injustices caused by concrete policies in specific territories. Both show innocent victims of stray bullets, but the *Imagens do Povo* photographers emphasize that the risk of being hit is directly related to where you live in the city. Finally, Diniz depicts people mourning relatives or neighbors, whereas Kahn mourns unknown victims that ‘could have been anyone.’ For Rotker (2002, p. 11), “[o]ne of the most urgent tasks facing writers and researchers is to produce and disseminate precise data, simply because most Latin American countries have deficient mechanisms for reporting violence.” Again, art cannot be considered ‘data,’ but I would nevertheless argue that specificity matters in this case, precisely because, as Caldeira (2000, p. 28) argues, “the neighborhood, the city,

⁶ Faulhaber and Azevedo (2015) provide an overview of home evictions in Rio de Janeiro for the Olympic Games.

the house, and the neighbors all acquire different meanings because of [repeated narratives of] crime, and their existence may be realigned according to the marks provided by crime.”

A final important question is how the audiences for these works are envisioned and addressed, for here too we see important differences. As members of the *Imagens do Povo* collective, which is aimed at “the resistance against stereotypes,” Diniz and Baltar position themselves as ‘spokespersons’ for certain areas of the city (Rosa qtd in Cangialosi, 2015, p. 50). As such, a distinction is implied here between those who know about the reality of favela territories – the photographer – and those who need their prejudiced views challenged – the ‘public’ (Jaguaribe, 2007, p. 81-82). We see this for example when Baltar (n.d.) writes that what he wants “most of all” is “to create empathy between the spectator and the residents of the threatened communities.” This will be further addressed in chapter five, but it is noteworthy here that while this includes some favela residents as artistic producers, the majority (i.e. those that are not artists) remain merely objects of representation. Importantly, this distinction is not inherent to the images we see – which might well serve as a point of recognition or pride for favela residents – but rather part of their discursive framing.

By contrast, Anna Kahn also aims for empathy, but does not make a qualitative distinction between herself and her audience. Her ‘any of us’ clearly refers to both herself and her public, and her photographs address both favela and *asfalto*. This is relevant especially considering the common distinction between those depicted in and those watching images of violence and suffering, identified in the introduction building on the work of Boltanski (1999), Chouliaraki (2003) and Sontag (2003). Nevertheless, a closer look revealed that she identifies more closely with a particular type of audience. Remembering Iveson’s (2007, p. 40) account of imaginaries of a ‘public,’ we might therefore say that she addresses her urban public as a “social totality,” thereby assuming that “[her] own particular interests and values are universal” (Iveson, 2007, p. 40).

In addition to photographic representations of public spaces, which can be displayed in art institutions, online, or in print media, art practices also intervene directly in Rio de Janeiro’s public sites. The second part of this section will consider some examples of this approach, focusing on Rio’s beaches as a site of intervention. The main event I would like to discuss took place on 30 November 2013 on the Arpoador beach in Ipanema. It was the initiative of one of Rio’s most successful art galleries, A Gentil Carioca, which regularly invites artists to do artistic interventions at Arpoador. This particular event aligned itself with

a larger protest movement around the disappearance of Amarildo de Souza, a resident of the favela Rocinha, using their slogan *Somos todos Amarildo* (We are all Amarildo). Ten artists presented work, of which I would like to highlight two: Laura Taves and Ronald Duarte.

Laura Taves created a work that referred explicitly to violence and divisions in the city. She placed several danger signs, similar to those normally used at the beach to warn swimmers, which showed the accumulated amount of people who had died in so-called *autos de resistência* (acts of resistance against the police) from 2003 until 2013. The signs also spell out what Taves regards as the most imminent ‘danger’ here: ignorance, passivity and indifference. In this sense, she addresses the complicity of Rio’s beach-goers to the violence happening elsewhere in the city. Rather than the disappearance of Amarildo, the direct motivation for her work was the death of ten people during the army’s invasion of the Maré, where Taves collaborates with a local NGO to create tile-panels with children. Much like Diniz and Baltar, Taves thus emphasizes the fact that violence in Rio concentrates in poor areas and is linked to specific government actions.

Ronald Duarte’s work *Mar de amor* (Sea of love) is a more poetic gesture, referring to the city as a whole rather than to specific territories. With the help of volunteers, Duarte threw 100 kilos of pigment into the ocean, painting the sea red (fig. 3.7). The symbolism of this color, related to love but also to violence, anger and blood, is important here. The work forms part of a series of works by the artist called *Guerra é guerra* (War is war). Like Kahn, Duarte links his use of this violent theme to personal experience:

I was introduced to guns before art. This direct contact with several tragedies in my own life, urban violence, because I suffer... I lost close people to urban violence. [So] it’s not by accident, for fun, or by aesthetic choice that I do my work. I do it out of necessity (*PIPA 2014 – Ronald Duarte, 2014*).

In this work in particular, Duarte says he wanted to symbolize the large amount of violence in the city. In addition, the title reveals it as a call for love and compassion: “I chose the title as a kind of provocation, and as a necessity. To show that in the middle of all this violence, we need some love please” (*Brasil Visual: Intervenção Urbana, 2016*).



Fig. 3.7. Ronald Duarte (2013) *Mar de Amor* [Performance]. Praia Arpoador, Rio de Janeiro (photo: Robin Resch).

It is interesting to compare these artworks to a rather different intervention at Ipanema's beach. In 2014 and 2015, the Papo Reto Collective, based in the favela Complexo do Alemão, organized an event called *Farofaço*. This event was not explicitly framed as an artistic action, but used a strategy similar to the *Somos todos Amarildo* event. The underlying idea, as expressed on the Facebook page of the event, was threefold: (1) publicly demanding the right to use the beach for all inhabitants of the city; (2) teaching "how to see inhabitants of the periphery without prejudice"; and (3) subverting the stereotype of the *farofeiro* (Coletivo Papo Reto, 2015, my translation). Importantly, they also encouraged residents of the Zona Sul to participate. During the event, participants carried slogans addressing the prejudices that ascribe criminality to particular characteristics or behaviors of people visiting the beach (e.g. not having money, living far away, walking around without a T-shirt). At the beach, the group also planted flags with the names of different favelas in the city, symbolically staging the right of their inhabitants to be there. The protest thus had clear political motives, but was also meant to enjoy a festive and relaxing day at the beach. The

Facebook page mentions their love of the beaches in “our beautiful city,” while also emphasizing that “the *cidade maravilhosa* is a media construct in which the bucolic beach justifies [the stereotype of the *farofeiro*]” (Coletivo Papo Reto, 2015, my translation).

We clearly see the imaginaries of the *cidade partida* and the *cidade maravilhosa* return in these different interventions at the beach. What makes these practices powerful is their juxtaposition of Rio’s beaches as spaces of leisure and enjoyment, and the violent realities pointed out. The goal here is to create awareness among Rio’s beach goers about the hardships experienced by those living in different parts of the city. Again, this tells us a lot about the imagined audience for these works, which can apparently be found on the beaches of the Zona Sul. Artists working in public spaces often hope to make art accessible to a larger audience by avoiding the mediation of art institutions. However, while these works possibly reach a different and perhaps a larger public than institutional displays, they too make choices that reveal their target audience. This becomes especially clear in Taves’ work, which accuses her audience of ignorance, passivity and indifference. As such, Taves effectively takes on the role of spokesperson for the Maré, to which she has a connection through her social work, addressing Rio’s middle- and upper-classes. In contrast, Duarte, like Anna Kahn, emphasizes how the experience of violence is shared by all *Cariocas*, addressing the city as a social totality. His is a broad and poetic approach to violence, which does not (nor aims to) make distinctions between how violence affects different people in the city in different ways.

Returning to the *Farofaço* intervention, an important distinction from the *Somos todos Amarildo* works is that the latter do not address the tensions and discriminatory practices that characterize the very beaches in which they are intervening, which is of course the very goal of Papo Reto’s event. In fact, a quote by artist collective Opavivará (2013), which also participated at Arpoador, shows how Rio’s beaches are once again idealized: “[The] power [of Rio’s beaches] to congregate people from all geographic areas, social classes and religions transforms this space in an enormous *agorá* of sand, salt and sun, capable of promoting encounters and generate conversations and discussions.” This fails to recognize the strong influence of prejudice and discrimination over these spaces, as well as the fact that different groups of people (are forced to) experience Rio de Janeiro’s public spaces in different ways (Freeman, 2008).

Both ‘traditional’ artworks in institutions and artistic interventions in public space are forms of public address, speaking to an envisioned audience. This section has argued that this

requires asking not only *how* artists imagine and address their audiences, but also *where* this happens, and what the “possible constraints as well as the possible affordances of that place” are (Iveson, 2007, p. 36). For works displayed in art institutions, we must for example think of the location in which works are exhibited, the entrance fee, but also – as chapter five will address – whether people of different social strata feel welcome in an institution. Turning to art in public spaces, we should not forget that these spaces are also fraught with inequalities, which means that a move ‘out of the museum’ does not automatically entail shifting the artwork from a restricted, unequal context to a free and accessible one (see also Deutsche, 1996; Miles, 1997). Especially in a city where prejudice, fear and inequality have such a strong impact on public spaces, it is of crucial importance to distinguish how and why the artists that work in these spaces “differentiate between the strangers on their horizon, and [make] pragmatic calculations of how they might address some strangers while ignoring, avoiding or excluding others” (Iveson, 2007, p. 221). The next section will elaborate on this observation, by considering how artworks depict and hope to interact with different (groups of) inhabitants in Rio de Janeiro.

People

As repeatedly emphasized in this chapter, Rio’s inequalities affect inhabitants of different parts of the city in different ways. With this in mind, this section will turn to the depiction of people within Rio’s urban landscape, keeping in mind these spatial inequalities. Janice Perlman (2010, p. 322) has argued that favela residents in Rio are not considered *gente* (people) in the city at large. While others have questioned the usage of this terminology (e.g. Angelini, 2012), it is certainly true that factors such as race, physical appearance, speech, and general behavior determine how *Cariocas* tend to be judged in terms of spatial and class inequality (as is of course the case in many other places). In this sense, Rio de Janeiro certainly is divided along racist and classist lines. At the same time, as the first section of this chapter has shown, *some favela residents can in some contexts* become part of the *cidade maravilhosa*-imagery. This section looks at how artists participate in this complex process of inclusion and exclusion.

To do so, I firstly consider the depiction of bodies, which is often linked to group identities, whereas the second part discusses the depiction of faces, usually employed to emphasize individuality. In both parts, the focus lies on so-called participatory art projects,

characterized by their “material engagement with concrete others” rather than a general, imagined audience (Meskimmon, 2011a, p. 50). As Meskimmon notes, however, such projects generally address different kinds of audiences in different spatial and temporal contexts – which should be taken into account. In an attempt to do so, I follow part of the “wandering route of meaning through circulation and reception” of the projects, which shows a contradictory reception that changes across different spatial and temporal contexts, in dialogue with broader imaginaries of the city (García Canclini, 2014, p. 178).

The previous chapter presented a brief look at the work *Devotionalia* (1994-1996), by Mauricio Dias and Walter Riedweg. In a more recent work, namely *Funk Staden* (2007), this Brazilian-Swiss duo takes on the theme of Rio de Janeiro’s impoverished inhabitants once again (fig. 3.8). The work was originally created for the Documenta 12 in Kassel, but also exhibited at their 2012 solo exhibition at the Centro Municipal de Arte Hélio Oiticica and the exhibition *Linguagens do Corpo Carioca [a Vertigem do Rio]* at the Museu de Arte do Rio in 2016. The video work *Funk Staden* juxtaposes the 1557 book *True History* by Hans Staden – a citizen of Kassel – with the contemporary *Baile Funk* scene in Rio, embodied by dancers on a rooftop in the favela Santa Marta. The video begins during the daytime, with the group dancing relatively calmly, but continues into the night as the party gets wilder with explicitly sexual dance moves. In an interview with Dias and Riedweg (2012, p. 181), Cuauhtémoc Medina describes the end of the video as a “necrophiliac orgy,” in which the Afro-Brazilian participants set fire to white display mannequins brought by the artists. Prints from Staden’s book on cannibalism in Brazil are shown in between the video images.

The goal of the work, as the catalog of the 2012 exhibition tells us, is “a critical rereading of (the) history (of perception), revealing mechanisms of cultural domination and the perpetuation of European (mis)conceptions of the tropics” (Dias and Riedweg, 2012, p. 71). Bodies of some form of ‘Other’ are important here, with the artists describing the work as a carnivalesque “celebration of the flesh” in a “theatrical, ironic space” (Dias and Riedweg, 2012, p. 185, p. 181). For example, the video juxtaposes cut-off body parts in Staden’s prints to meat on the barbecue. In this sense, the work plays with ideas of the exotic ‘Other’ as a source of danger, desire and disgust. We can link this to the contemporary position of favelas as seen from the formal city, which is similarly characterized by a combination of fascination, denunciation and fear (see chapter one). Naturally, it is important

to be critical towards these sentiments. As Mimi Sheller (2003, p. 141) notes regarding historical narratives of cannibalism in the Caribbean:

Was the Caribbean truly a place where Europeans were at risk of being eaten? Or were they in fact the ones who posed a threat to the bodies, health, and lives of the indigenous people of the region, and later to the enslaved and indentured workers who were consumed in the system of plantation slavery and colonial capitalism?

In a similar vein, as shown in the previous section, a focus on the fear of the middle- and upper-classes often overlooks the discrimination, violence and exploitation that favela residents suffer from.



Fig. 3.8. Mauricio Dias and Walter Riedweg (2008) *Funk Staden* [Video still].

Considering the reference to Staden, cannibalism and the playful treatment of the negative imagery of the tropics, *Funk Staden* might be related to Oswald de Andrade's notion of antropofagia, as discussed in chapter one. Like de Andrade's manifest, *Funk Staden* plays

with notions of civilization and savageness, oppression and resistance. However, we might argue that some of the critiques expressed towards de Andrade and other Brazilian Modernists also apply here. *Funk Staden* was created for a highly influential European art event, and subsequently exhibited in high-end art institutions across the world and in Rio de Janeiro. As such, the work addresses privileged audiences in art institutions, but explicitly tries to make them feel disgusted and uncomfortable within their white cube ‘comfort zone.’ In the words of Cuauhtémoc Medina: “In *Funk Staden* what you do is inhabit the nightmare of the upper classes, of Europeans, of the West and the police: to ask the inhabitants of favelas to reveal themselves in the most monstrous, phantasmal form possible” (Dias and Riedweg, 2012, p. 177). In response, the artists note that the film developed in dialogue with the *funkeiros* shown, emphasizing that they did not ask their participants to show “a group sex ritual,” a woman breast-feeding, and setting the mannequins on fire (Dias and Riedweg, 2012, p. 181). However, as the artists recognize, the edit and the juxtaposition with Staden’s book are of course “no longer a collaboration,” nor are the subsequent practices of display (Dias and Riedweg, 2012, p. 179).

In a sense, this framing maintains the opposition between the artists (who we do not see in the video) and the *funkeiros* they work with – even though Dias and Riedweg note that they themselves also go to funk parties. In addition, the work arguably equates the favela resident with the *funkeiro*, even though music styles (e.g. Funk, evangelical music, pagode) also “[play] an important part in the creation and maintenance of boundaries between groups” within the favela (Oosterbaan, 2009, p. 96). These distinctions became particularly clear to me when I visited *Linguagens do Corpo Carioca [a Vertigem do Rio]* at MAR with Angelo Campos, an artist from the favela Vila Cruzeiro, where we together viewed *Funk Staden*. The exhibition showcased a number of works depicting Rio de Janeiro’s favelas and periphery, including some works by artists from these areas. Campos firstly critiqued the small amount of artists from the lower classes, but also questioned the appropriation of favela images by middle- and upper-class artists in order to convey a critical and aesthetic message. Not referring to any work in particular, he noted: “If I display photographs like that on the Praça Mauá [outside of the museum], I will be arrested.” Returning to *Funk Staden*, this critique is particularly poignant considering the criminalization of Funk music and *bailes funk* in the Brazilian context (Facina, 2009). In other words, why is Dias and Riedweg’s work interpreted as a critical statement worthy of traveling the world, whereas the funk parties of favela

residents still “[bear] the status of low culture (or, I would argue, even ‘no culture’)” (Custódio, 2017, p. 51)? Of course, this might very well be the point that the artists want to convey, but the question remains whether the artistic strategy chosen might not reinforce rather than nuance these prejudiced viewpoints by taking them to their extreme.

In *Funk Staden*, the favela residents shown remain mostly bodies, representative of the archetype of the *funkeiro*. Other artists, however, have focused instead on the individuality of the people they work with, often by depicting their faces. The remainder of this section will discuss two examples of this by European artists in the favela Morro da Providência. The first is French street artist JR, who included Providência in his project *Women are Heroes* (2008). In this project, JR photographed women in Providência and, in collaboration with residents, pasted their images on local houses, resulting in a large, public display. To facilitate the project, he worked with local photographer Mauricio Hora, who is extremely well-known in the community and often works as a mediator for foreign artists. Such local mediation is necessary, Hora (2015a) assured me, due to the presence of armed drug traffickers in the community. *Women are Heroes* received ample media coverage in Brazil and internationally, in newspapers as well as in books and websites discussing (street) art. It also resulted in various exhibitions, a documentary film and a coffee-table book that is now up to its second edition.

Particularly the book, with its highly aesthetic images of favelas and other poor neighborhoods can be linked to the phenomenon of ‘favela chic.’ However, despite its obvious commercial success, the project has been well received locally.⁷ JR regularly returns to Providência, where he started the cultural center *Casa Amarela* with Mauricio Hora and other local collaborators. In this sense, the project succeeded in establishing a more long-term presence and impact in the community, the importance of which will be further discussed in chapter five. In addition, the photographs and the stories of the individual women in JR’s book challenge stereotypical views. The majority of the images depict older women, most of them mothers, grandmothers and even great-grandmothers. This group is not often shown in reference to either the positive or the negative stereotypes about favelas. The stories printed next to their pictures also provide nuance and diversity. Many women tell about their love for the favela as well as their experiences with violence, showing pain and mourning, but also

⁷ In fieldwork visits to Morro da Providência on 21 October 2015, 24 October 2015, and 15 November 2015, I spoke with several residents about JR’s project, most of whom expressed fond memories or general appreciation of the project.

pragmatism. Borrowing a term employed by Custódio (2017, p. 35-56), these stories highlight the *luta* (struggle) of living in a favela, without reducing the people or the place to these hardships. Finally, temporal changes and developments are repeatedly mentioned, for example the development of an electric network and fluctuations in police and drug-related violence, which challenges the idea of favelas as perpetually poor territories engaged in constant war.

Unfortunately, however, this nuanced perspective is lost in many secondary accounts of the project, even in those by the artist himself. This becomes especially clear when considering the lack of attention for local mediation and the complex power structures in Providência. Several articles about JR's project mention violence in the neighborhood. Just before JR arrived, three local teens were killed because the army dropped them in a favela ruled by another drug faction, because they were not able to present their papers. Logically, this had an impact on the framing on JR's project, but I argue that the way he positions himself in this regard is problematic. In his TEDTalk, he says:

When I arrived, I mean, I didn't have any contact with any NGO. There was none in place, no associations, no NGO's, nothing – no eyewitnesses. So we just walked around and we met a woman, and I showed her my book (JR, 2011).

There are several problems with this narrative. First of all, whether JR knew this or not, the fact that there were no organizations active in Providência in 2008 is misled. There was a residents association, Mauricio Hora already did photography courses for local children, and there had been a government initiative to promote the favela as an “open-air museum” (Freire-Medeiros, 2007b; Dimitrova Savova, 2009). In addition, Hora's website provides us with a rather different view on the start of JR's project, stating that the French artist already knew Hora's work from a 2006 photography exhibition in Paris by the Rio artist and contacted him for help (Torres, n.d.). We are dealing here, I would argue, with more than just a misunderstanding of how this project was put into practice or a failure to give credit where it is due. In this case, the image of favelas as dangerous and precarious neighborhoods is simultaneously reproduced *and* downplayed. On the one hand, there is a strong focus on violence, shootings and the lack of local organizing in Providência. On the other hand, JR supposedly just walks in with a camera and a smile and wins everybody over.

In 2012, another internationally recognized street artist did a project in Morro da Providência. Portuguese artist Vhils, or Alexandre Farto, also worked with Hora, to whom he had been introduced by JR. At that time, Rio's municipality was building a new cable car infrastructure in the community. According to the original plans of this construction, inhabitants of 800 of the 2000 houses in the neighborhood had to be evicted (Struck, 2013). Vhils reacted directly to this situation, carving faces of to be evicted residents in the walls of Providência's houses in his signature style (fig. 3.9). Compared to JR, Vhils has a more nuanced account of his arrival in the community:

When I arrived in Rio in 2012, I did not have a specific objective. I was introduced to a community leader in Providência and saw the enormous process of transformation that was going on there, and how it affected the lives of the residents (Farto, qtd. in Diniz, 2015, p. 19).

A video on Vhils' website has a prominent role for Hora, although he appears as a community activist rather than as a mediator for Vhils' practice (*Vhils // Providência // Brazil*, 2013). In this video, we hear activists, to be evicted residents, and government representatives rather than the artist himself. The project aimed to raise awareness about the political struggles faced by the residents of Providência, which is precisely what Hora (2015a) wants to achieve by mediating projects such as this one.

However, looking at the project's extensive media coverage, we see a different reality – as the political message gets lost here. Online articles in *Jornal do Brasil* (2012), *Folha do São Paulo* (EFE, 2012a) and *Globo.com* (EFE, 2012b) do not mention the evictions, nor the renovation process that caused them. The latter two articles – both taken from news agency EFE – only briefly mention the community in the following words: “The community of Providência, located in the neighborhood Gamboa, in the port area, is the oldest favela in Rio and was a stronghold of drug gangs for a long time. However, since April 2010, Morro da Providência has a Unit of Participatory Policing (UPP)” (EFE, 2012a; 2012b, my translation). While this is all technically true, it completely misses the critical points made by Vhils' project. The evictions, police killings, continuing power struggles, as well as the various forms of local activism, are conveniently left out of the story.

The previous sections called for the need to re-imagine Rio from different territorial vantage points and for artists to position themselves and their imagined audiences in relation to these territories. This section elaborated on this argument by showing how one project might address different audiences at different times and in different spatial contexts. This illustrates García Canclini's (2014, p. 178) claim that scholars must follow artworks around the different contexts in which they are shown, explained and interpreted (see also Ahmed, 2012). The different kinds of audiences addressed by artists are especially poignant in participatory projects, in which a distinction is frequently made between "first-hand participants" and a "secondary audience" or a "temporary community" versus an continuous "outside public" (Bishop, 2012, p. 19). As addressed in chapter one, authors in the debate on participatory art disagree on which of these should be the artist's priority, and – accordingly – where the artwork is envisioned to enact its true impact (i.e. in 'the art world' or 'the community'). In the end, however, most art projects turn into representations of the primary participants for a secondary audience. This raises important ethical questions around the politics of representation and appropriation, not least because artists do not always control or know in advance where their work will travel, and how others will describe it.

In other words, while a lot has been written about how artists approach communities, the communication with their 'secondary' audience is often taken for granted. As we have seen, the imaginary of this audience remains rather vague, even if one of the main aims of the project is to challenge *their* stereotypical views. In addition, little attention tends to be paid to the spatial and representational contexts in which images and narratives of the project are disseminated outside of 'art institutions' and 'the community.' Unfortunately, a closer look at these contexts for the selected case studies reveals that the nuance and complexity present in some forms of audience outreach can easily be lost in others, in which artists, journalists, curators and critics fall back into more rigid and stereotypical imaginaries of Rio de Janeiro's favelas. Crucial in this respect is that forms of local mediation between artists and participants are not often explicitly mentioned, while being crucial to the execution of most projects.⁸ This denies favela residents agency, and depicts favelas as devoid of social and political organization. In this narrative, favela residents become passive participants, which

⁸ Miwon Kwon (2004, p. 141) makes a similar argument about the ways in which art institutions and curators mediate between artists and 'community-based' participants. My point, however, concerns the differentiation between different people *within* the community, for which different communicative strategies and entree points are required (e.g. local artists, powerful groups, children).

could easily be replaced by others, whereas the artist, able to work in such a ‘destitute’ environment, comes across as exceptionally brave and socially capable.



Fig. 3.9. Vhils (2011) *Descascando a Superfície* [Street Art]. Morro da Providência, Rio de Janeiro (photo: João Pedro Moreira).

Conclusion

Rio de Janeiro is often described as a city of contrasts. At the same time, as Toledo (2015, my translation) writes, “perhaps in no other place in the world do the contrasting sides communicate as much as they do in Rio de Janeiro.” Both locally and internationally, narratives of Rio as both a marvelous and a divided city have been dominant for decades. Without a doubt, Rio is a beautiful city with strong socio-economic divisions, but I have argued that these narratives are often simplified and/or exaggerated in artistic depictions of the city and in local exhibition contexts. Moreover, they perform specific, exclusionary functions in the field of artistic favela representations. Artists, curators and journalists are impacted by these narratives, take active part in the aesthetic and emotional processes that constitute them in daily life, and can in turn reproduce and reinforce them. At the same time,

many artists hope to provide their audiences with newfound perspectives to the urban, to “make the invisible visible or to question the self-evidence of the visible” (Rancière, 2010, p. 149). Unfortunately, as we have seen, artworks often maintain certain aspects of dominant and stereotypical imaginaries in their representations while challenging others. In this sense, “works of fine art are capable of sustaining contradictions, performing oppositional or resistant functions while simultaneously serving mainstream interests” (Drucker, 2005, p. 17).

Keeping this in mind, I have also discussed several artworks that do provide new perspectives, contributing in nuanced and original ways to Rio’s urban imaginary. For example, we have seen how seeing the city from different vantage points leads to significant changes in the city’s imaginary as marvelous and/yet/or divided. As evidenced by photographs of the Zona Norte, these images do not deny Rio’s natural beauty, vibrant urban culture and socio-economic divisions, but they do provide a more inclusionary perspective. To elaborate on this, I will have a brief look at cultural theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff’s (2011, p. 2) theorization of the historical struggle between what he calls “visuality” versus “the right to look.” Visuality is defined as the constant “authorizing of authority” by visualizing and categorizing distinctions, which has developed from the plantation economy until contemporary times (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 2). For Mirzoeff, this visualizing of history is not only a way to exercise control, but also the way to make authority seem “self-evident” through aestheticizing, establishing “the aesthetics of the proper, of duty, of what is felt to be right and hence pleasing, ultimately even beautiful” (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 3; see also Freire-Medeiros, 2013, pp. 41-47). The “right to look,” in contrast, questions this self-evidence of authority; it is “the claim to a subjectivity that has the autonomy to arrange the relations of the visible and the sayable,” and can therefore also be framed as “a right to the real” (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 1).

The relations to Rancière’s distribution of the sensible, highly influential in the field of contemporary art, are evident. However, a key point in Mirzoeff’s (2011, p. 17) notion of visuality is the purposeful creation of physical and metaphorical distance and separation between “the place of visualization” and the “the subject being viewed.” Countervisuality, in contrast, questions the self-evidence of this separation, instead recognizing reality as an ever-changing process that changes depending on the place and position from which we look at it. Accordingly, “the right to look is never individual: My right to look depends on your

recognition of me, and vice versa” (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 25). In turn, I have read the work of these artists from the Zona Norte through a similar focus on questioning vantage and viewing points to study the imaginaries and realities of socio-spatial divisions in art. Ratoão Diniz’ representation of Pão de Açúcar in particular highlights a process in which different groups of people see each other in a mutual, but far from equal gaze. This gaze is perpetuated in everyday processes and interactions, because while the different parts of the city might be physically and symbolically distant, they are connected through real and imaginary links and thoroughfares.

Mirzoeff’s focus on a mutual gaze also highlights the importance of studying how both dominant and alternative perspectives of the city reach their audiences, as this process is not always as straightforward as artists make it out to be. Crucial to keep in mind here, as I have tried to show, is that the audience or ‘public’ for these works is also the result of a social imaginary, which is often closely linked to broader imaginaries of the city. As formulated by García Canclini (2014, p. 185), artistic practices “don’t take place in a vacuum, operating instead in the midst of unequal conditions under limitations that artists share with non-artists.” The imaginaries of Rio de Janeiro as marvelous and divided are not only a topic addressed by artists; they also have a significant impact on the spaces in which artists show their works and on which spectators they address, whether explicitly or implicitly. Two dominant approaches have been shown here. First, we have seen artists that imagine the city as a “social totality,” assuming that “their own particular interests and values are universal,” which glosses over the stark and varied impact by Rio’s social, spatial and economic inequality (Iveson, 2007, p. 40). Second, many artists formulate a distinction between art *for* and art *about* favelas, which may shift with the temporal and spatial contexts across which their project travels. I have shown that much-needed nuance and complexity are often lost when (documentations of) artworks travel after their initial production in favor of narratives of clear-cut societal relevance and uniqueness. Particularly the role of local mediators is frequently forgotten, which has an important impact on how favelas are imagined in terms of safety and accessibility – paradoxically both reinforcing and downplaying dominant imaginaries of a city ‘divided.’

In summary, the processes of artistic production, dissemination and reception for the selected case studies show that “the city is crossed by a conjunction of circulatory practices” across its central and peripheral, favela and *asfalto* territories, but they *also* reflect that the

majority of the city's artists is still from Rio's upper- and middle classes, and that the city's ideological boundaries and divisions continue to dominate contexts of display and audiences outreach (de Souza e Silva, 2012, p. 20). For Mirzoeff (2011, p. 1), "[the right to] look must be mutual, each person inventing the other, or it fails." In Rio de Janeiro, as we have seen, a truly mutual gaze is still hard to find, but cracks in the surface of Mirzoeff's visuality are appearing. Artists from different backgrounds are increasingly realizing "the double need to apprehend and counter a real that [does] exist but should not have, and one that should exist but [is] as yet becoming" (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 26). Especially in this city, where the poor are simultaneously hyper-visible and hidden, a true countervisuality must take the complexities and contradictions examined in this chapter into account, but is therefore all the more necessary.