

Multifaceted Art: The Cultural and Political Dynamics of the City of Rio de Janeiro

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This contribution aims to present a brief summary of a long research based on the events of the last decades in the city of Rio de Janeiro. This article follows a path that seeks primarily to understand the use of cultural and artistic devices as tools for a complex process of changes and perspectives in the city. These changes are driven by the fact that the city of Rio has hosted two mega-events, the FIFA World Cup (2014) and the Olympics (2016), with a strong impact on the central and/or tourist areas of the city. The port area stands out as the main field of this research, from the idea of an abandoned area to the center of a cultural hub, with drastic visual, structural, and symbolic changes, with the building of Museu de Arte do Rio (Rio Museum of Art), and Museu do Amanhã (Museum of Tomorrow), as the main examples. A retrospective of the political life of the city, including the one of its municipal administrations, builds the idea that the instrumentalization of art and its use as a tool to "revitalize" areas of the city is part of an old project which was waiting for the right moment to be put into practice: the hosting of mega events. On the other hand, small autonomous cultural collectives have emerged in the region during this process and inserted new concepts and meanings for the use of art into the discussion, which resulted in a more complex discussion around the port area and its agents. Finally, by analyzing the recent political scenario of the city, it was possible to perceive the offensive posture toward cultural institutions resulting from conservative political perspectives, which again redefines the use of art and culture in the city.

Keywords: art, politics, sociology of art, musealization

A Arte Multifacetada: Dinâmicas Culturais e Políticas da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro

Esta contribuição busca apresentar o breve resumo de uma longa pesquisa baseada nos acontecimentos das últimas décadas na cidade do Rio de Janeiro. Este artigo percorre um trajeto que busca prioritariamente compreender o uso de aparelhos culturais e artísticos como ferramentas para um complexo processo de mudanças e perspectivas na cidade. Mudanças estas impulsionadas pelo fato da cidade do Rio ter sediado dois megaeventos, a Copa do Mundo FIFA (2014) e as Olimpíadas (2016), com forte impacto nas áreas centrais e/ou turísticas da cidade. A

zona portuária figura como o principal campo desta pesquisa, desde a ideia de área abandonada a centro de um polo cultural, com drásticas mudanças visuais, estruturais e simbólicas, tendo como principais exemplos a construção do Museu de Arte do Rio e do Museu do Amanhã. Uma retrospectiva da vida política da cidade assim como suas gestões municipais constroem a ideia de que a instrumentalização da arte e seu uso como ferramenta para “revitalizar” áreas da cidade parte de um projeto antigo que encontrou na vinda dos grandes eventos o momento exato para ser posto em prática. Em contrapartida, pequenos coletivos culturais autônomos surgiram na região durante esse processo, inserindo na discussão novos conceitos e significados para o uso da arte, tornando a discussão em torno da zona portuária e seus agentes ainda mais complexa. Por fim, ao analisarmos o cenário político recente da cidade, foi possível perceber a ofensiva a instituições culturais decorrente de perspectivas políticas conservadoras, o que novamente redefine o uso da arte e da cultura na cidade.

Palavras-chave: arte, política, sociologia da arte, musealização

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Introduction

This article results from a long-term research project developed since 2011 that investigates the impact of culture policies on the port area of Rio de Janeiro. The article seeks to understand the relationship between the emergence of urbanistic projects, new institutional arrangements for culture and the processes of emergence of activist movements and politicization of culture. In times of COVID-19, from the perspective of social isolation, it also seeks to understand the unfolding of new processes at a time of economic crisis and a process of unprecedented suspension of circulation.

The process of urban restructuring based on the qualification of heritage buildings and their use for cultural purposes has occupied Rio de Janeiro's municipal agenda at least since the mid-1980s. In the early 2000s, the city's port area was the subject of public debates and became the new frontier of what was called "the city's cultural corridor". Nonetheless, it was from the 2010s, and in the wake of mega-event projects such as the World Cup (2014) and the Olympics (2016), that debates intensified, resulting in projects for the creation of a creative hub, following the Barcelona model (Sant'Anna, 2019). In this period, the understanding that culture has positive effects on the municipal gross domestic product (GDP) gained prominence and attracted what Richard Florida (2011) called the "creative class", which enabled urban land appreciation. The expected effects of land rent extraction from real estate speculation (Harvey, 2005), however, also generated criticism, placing gentrification processes among the main concerns of political actors, social movements and non-governmental organizations.

The founding of two new museums for the area, Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR, Rio Museum of Art; 2013) and Museu do Amanhã (Museum of Tomorrow; 2015), was based on extensive investments from the public and private sectors, with concrete effects on the proliferation of new artists' studios in the region and new institutional arrangements for culture. From the activities developed by existing museum institutions, projects linked to the visual arts have been hosted in these urban spaces giving rise to alternative institutional arrangements and promoting new exhibition spaces centered on guerrilla art and do it yourself (DIY; Guerra & Menezes, 2019). Ateliê Dissidências Criativas, Instituto Mesa, Lanchonete Lanchonete and Casa Amarela, all founded in the last 10 years, are some of the new spaces worth mentioning here. Founded in the wake of the protests of June 2013, which were mass movements thematizing the right to the city, these new artistic equipments focused on institutional critique, and eventually energized the museums' surroundings, simultaneously criticizing and playing the role of protagonists of gentrification processes.

The effects on MAR were clear. The dynamics of incorporation of political debates and criticism by

the institutions has been widely discussed on other occasions (Sant'Anna, 2013, 2019; Sant'Anna et al., 2017). Built as an anchor of the creative hub in the port area, this museum was, since the day of its foundation, the target of protests that opposed intense real estate speculation and claimed the right to the city. However, the criticism from the organized civil society and from the surrounding young artists shaped MAR as a museum permeable to decolonial discourses and identity agendas. As an agglutinating hub of critical discourses, MAR incorporated new movements that brought to the world of contemporary art activist practices and counter-discourses. In an interview to the project (interview reported by researcher and author Sabrina Sant'Anna on November 25, 2019), Clarissa Diniz, young curator of the institution between 2013 and 2018, reports the early years of the museum:

it was very important to always know this [the criticism] because I believe that when you are in an institution, you are mediating forces all the time. So, this counterforce that comes from the outside and that criticizes the institution is often what supports, in the institution, a firmer position for certain negotiations. So, you have not to lower your head to certain censures, or to bargain certain budgets for certain things, or to talk about the importance of carrying out something or another project, not exactly due to the dynamics intrinsic to the institution, but because there is another pressure on you holding you back. Physically speaking, personally speaking, subjectively speaking. So many times, I accomplished things in the institution not because I went in search of an inner strength to keep me negotiating until the end, it's not something heroic. It's because you have a lot of counter forces that are there every single day telling you, sending you messages, sending you e-mails: "Come on, man, this shit can't be like this". They are your friends, it's a very complex, subjective, emotional dynamics that is absolutely fundamental to make possible the kind of emotional forces that you must have to keep insisting on things. Because certain things that MAR did were unnatural. They wouldn't happen naturally in an institutional life. They were cutting processes, counterflow processes, processes in which you had to insist a lot for them to happen, finding ways to do things, spinning around, working miracles, making extra money on the side, paying out of your own pocket, a thousand things. And for all this to happen, you must have this counterforce. So, for me it was very important to keep up with the debates, as much as possible.

Open to negotiations, the museum that was the target of gentrification criticism became permeable to an environment of activist groups and new institutional arrangements that emerged in the region with an extremely political discourse. By commissioning works by local artists and seeing its staff increasingly involved in the nascent institutional arrangements that occupied the region, MAR became an important space of reference and support for the networks emerging in the port area. From 2016 on, however, the museum, permeable to criticism and founded on negotiations, would have to face new challenges. Evandro Salles' period at the head of the cultural direction of the museum would be marked by the economic and political crisis that was ravaging the country. Target of ruptures in the municipal cultural policy, MAR would be threatened with closure in 2019, and at the height of the pandemic, the doors would be closed for the entire year of 2020.

In late 2021, more than 1 year after the first cases of community contamination by COVID-19 in Brazil, the country begins to count the effects, still unpredictable, of the pandemic that devastated the world. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, n.d.-a, n.d.-b) data point out that besides the lives lost in 2020, the impact on the national economy was devastating. The 4.1% drop in GDP, although lower than the most pessimistic projections, hides a deeper variation, intensified by the devaluation of the Brazilian currency. From the point of view of family income, dramatic effects can also be computed in numbers. In 2020, unemployment rates reached the unprecedented average of 13.5%. The unemployment rate in the last quarter of 2020 reached 13.9%. In December of that year, in addition to the 13,900,000 unemployed people, 5,500,000 people were discouraged and 31,200,000 were underemployed. Even informality rates dropped from 41.1% in 2019 to 38.7% in 2020. In annual averages, the level

of occupation stood at 49.4% in 2020, which is less than 50% of the economically active population.

Also, according to Fundação Getúlio Vargas (Neri, 2020), in the first quarter of 2021, the per capita household income dropped by 11.3%, compared to the previous year, reaching R\$995.00 (Passarelli, 2021), in a year in which inflation measured by the extended national consumer price index despite the successive impacts on demand, rose 6.1%. The portrayal of the crisis is devastating. Besides the balance of more than 600,000 deaths, caused by the vacillating measures of social distancing and serious incentive to desinformation, the economy also agonizes. From the cultural point of view, the impact is still being measured, but the data are not very encouraging. The results of an extensive survey coordinated by Amaral et al. (2020) show worrying data:

participants responded on the impacts of social isolation on their income during the months from March to July 2020 (...). Between the months of March and April, 41% of respondents lost all of their income, and between May and July, this proportion increased to 48.88%. In second place come those who lost more than half of their income (23.72% between March and April, and 21.34% between May and July). Only 17.8% had no change in revenue during March and April, decreasing to 10% during the months of May through July. (p. 10)

In this sense, this article intends to understand the impacts of public policies for the port area and processes of politicization of DIY collectives and institutional arrangements emerging in the region, but also intends to assess the limits of the plan designed to create creative hubs in a scenario where the extraction of income from land, as already pointed out by David Harvey (2005), is impacted by the impossibility of its location. New forms of circulation of culture through digital media and alternative forms of income circulation are necessary and put in check utopian urban projects (Jameson, 2006), revealing, over dystopias and ruins (Huysen, 2003/2014), new forms of articulation between art and politics. This article intends, therefore, to understand the impact of the pandemic on the creative hub of Rio de Janeiro's port area, discussing the broader effects on the economy of culture.

Thus, this article is based on the hypothesis that the instrumentalization of culture by public policies has effects on art producers who, when they see themselves as protagonists of processes — sometimes violent — of urban intervention, formulate critical responses and react to the processes of gentrification and segregation of the city space. In other words, the criticism of the valorization of culture as a commodity in the foundation of creative hubs could be seen here as one of the factors that explain, in Brazil, the protagonism of the world of art in the spaces of debate and political argumentation for the opening of the public sphere to the new social movements.

This article results from a long-term project with a wide range of analytical perspectives used to conduct the research. In a first step, data from the policies adopted by the Municipal Secretariat of Culture and by Instituto Pereira Passos, between 2000 and 2020, were collected and resulted in the analysis of the main policies for the formation of creative hubs in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Besides the documentation gathered by the Secretariat of Culture, interviews with important technicians from different municipal administrations and curators of the city's cultural equipment were also conducted. Through data survey in newspapers, this analysis was compared to the performance of social movements and political actors who played a leading role in the main debates in the public sphere, forming a mapping of the discourses and contradictions, consensus and controversies that resulted in policies for the port area.

In a second moment, to the observation of the public debates and the analysis of the policy makers' decision was added a mapping of the new DIY equipment emerging in the region. In this mapping, carried out based on ethnography and field research, a social network analysis was included. With this, it was possible to fill the gaps observed in face-to-face visits, mainly because such visits, an essential requirement of field research, were banned in the COVID-19 pandemic. This article also dedicates special attention to two case studies of these new institutional arrangements emerging in

the port area: Lanchonete Lanchonete and Atelier Sanitário.

City and Urban Policies for Culture

In just over a decade, the city of Rio experienced diverse moments in which it was possible to observe its peak and its decline. The period from 2008 to 2013, which preceded the agenda of major events in the city, brought optimism and a sense of progress in various social spheres, including culture. The idea of prosperity, job creation, economic improvement, and the Olympic legacy that would be left to the city were stamped in newspaper articles, which helped to build a collective sense of the city's growth. However, in a short time it was possible to note that the feeling of progress and good times gave way to the decline of a city in debt and with an unemployed population. Currently, the unemployment rate of 19.4% for the first quarter of 2021 is significantly higher than the national rate. According to Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (n.d.-a) data from the same year, the state of Rio de Janeiro occupies the fifth worst position in the country, being the only state outside the north and northeast of Brazil with less than half of its population employed, which is a historical record for the state. Obviously, these numbers have also suffered from the impact of the pandemic, but it is possible to see that the problem in the state of Rio, as well as in the capital, predates 2020. In 2019, the city of Rio had the largest loss of jobs with registered employees in the country, in a growing crisis (Marchesan, 2020), and that is currently worsened by the pandemic. Not coincidentally, the campaign slogan of Eduardo Paes, then candidate for mayor of the city in 2020, assured "Rio will be right again", promising the electorate the return of the optimism experienced in the pre-major events period. Eduardo Paes, who was also mayor of the city from 2009 to 2016, was one of the central figures in the optimism phase described above.

The understanding of the social and political paths taken by the city of Rio de Janeiro up to the current moment would need several and complex analyses whose entirety would not be covered here. This research seeks to evaluate this process through art and culture and the use attributed to them in this period. For this, understanding and analyzing the events from the previous administrations of Rio's City Hall is extremely relevant.

The Eduardo Paes administration (2009–2016) was widely recognized for carrying out projects, using culture and its equipment as central elements; however, it should be observed that this period retains a line of continuity from Cesar Maia's administration, mayor of the city from 1993 to 1997 and from 2001 to 2008. Marked by the presence of Augusto Ivan at the head of urban planning, Cesar Maia's mandates had projects similar to those performed by Paes. It is remarkable, for example, the attempt to bring to the city a branch of the Guggenheim Museum in the early 2000s. The construction site would be the Mauá Pier, a prominent space in the port area, the same address where, years after the failure of the proposal, the Museum of Tomorrow was built, already under the management of Eduardo Paes.

On November 20th, 2001, the front page of *Jornal do Brasil* announced the coming of the Guggenheim to Rio de Janeiro. The city had won the dispute. Between Recife and Curitiba, the American Foundation had chosen Praça Mauá to build the headquarters of its next branch. Aiming at the "revitalization" of the Port Area, Cesar Maia's City Hall sought, at the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century, the construction of a Guggenheim headquarters to consolidate the city as a tourist and cultural center. In the official discourse, the construction of the museum would confer symbolic value to the city, attracting public and investments to the region and giving Rio the status of the cultural capital of the country. (Sant'Anna, 2013, p. 32)

The disputes within the artistic class and Cesar Maia's political isolation, however, would lead to the apparent failure of the project in the early 2000s. However, it is worth highlighting that the

continuity of the process was due to the efforts of Alfredo Sirkis, councilor for the Green Party, and Augusto Ivan, urbanism secretary of that administration and a pioneer in the conception of the cultural corridor, which years later would develop and result in the concept of a creative hub for the port area.

Thus, the project to create the Guggenheim branch was not successful. However, both the patrimonialization proposal of heritage buildings and a new classification that would allow them to be used for cultural purposes had a long duration. The change through musealization took shape and materialized, with the central area of the city as its main stage. "Revitalization", the watchword of Cesar Maia's *Rio Cidade* project, was resignified by Mayor Eduardo Paes to define what was happening in the port area/downtown area. The project, previously restricted to the planning of the Secretariat of Urbanism, seemed to have found the right moment to materialize: the FIFA Soccer World Cup, held in Brazil, with Rio de Janeiro as one of the host cities, and the Olympics, held exclusively in the city, brought resources and several other projects and works in different areas of urbanization. All these movements happening in a short period of time, in general, brought a sense of progress and optimism, as already mentioned. Nonetheless, a city does not exist without conflicts (Suzano, 2021), and what was mediatically represented as "revitalization", for some residents of the downtown area was translated into gentrification. The existing conflicts between progress and abandonment were obviously not restricted only to the downtown area. Not surprisingly, the main focus of the city administration was to build and renovate tourist attractions, mostly in already valued areas. The idea of "cleaning up the house" for the major events apparently did not include the whole city and its residents, leaving aside the suburbs and especially the west zone, accentuating already existing inequalities. In the cultural area it was no different: Paes' "revitalization" policies were marked by this "urban cleanup" project, in which the mayor is still betting on his third term starting in 2021. Paes shows in his social networks projects for the city's port area in a new attempt to reach Rio's upper middle class, with buildings and residential condominiums (*Retomada da Zona Portuária: Primeiro Residencial da Região Vende 360 Unidades em 4 dias*, 2021).

Paes put into practice, therefore, the previously projected plans for intervention in the port area, moving major works, relying on federal, state and private partnerships. Obviously, with the change of management and the passing of the years, the project had some changes, but the main point of convergence was maintained: art as the flagship of this whole process. The following excerpt briefly elucidates how this idea was built.

Looking at the directions taken by the revitalization project of the Port Area after the collapse of the Guggenheim's Rio de Janeiro branch and analyzing the projects that, to its detriment, have been winning, it might be possible to understand the place that art and memory occupy in Rio de Janeiro. At a first glance, the failure of the Guggenheim in Rio de Janeiro seems to impose itself as a resistance to the supposedly necessary processes of *musealization* and commodification of art. The case of the Port Area of Rio de Janeiro calls into question the linearity of processes so often diagnosed. However, when we look at the projects that have actually taken place in the region, the impression persists that the spectacle and the simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1981), as instruments of public attraction and new life for the region, have simply taken on a new form. Since 2009, the city's press has been increasingly publicizing the construction of new museums for the Port Area. In press releases and official speeches, new narratives about culture, museums, and creativity have been emerging. However, when looking carefully, categories and agents, concepts and characters seem to repeat themselves. (Sant'Anna, 2013, p. 34)

The attempt has shown significant results, as expected in its original project. The port area became a tourist site, especially during the Olympics. Having hosted the Olympic Boulevard, it attracted national and international audiences. The two museums that were protagonists in this process also met expectations, significantly increasing the numbers related to culture in the city. Some data in

graphical form can illustrate the dynamics that occurred in this scenario (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The data were extracted from reports produced by the Municipal Secretariat of Culture of Rio de Janeiro.

AVERAGE INVESTMENT PER CULTURAL EQUIPMENT 2013-2016

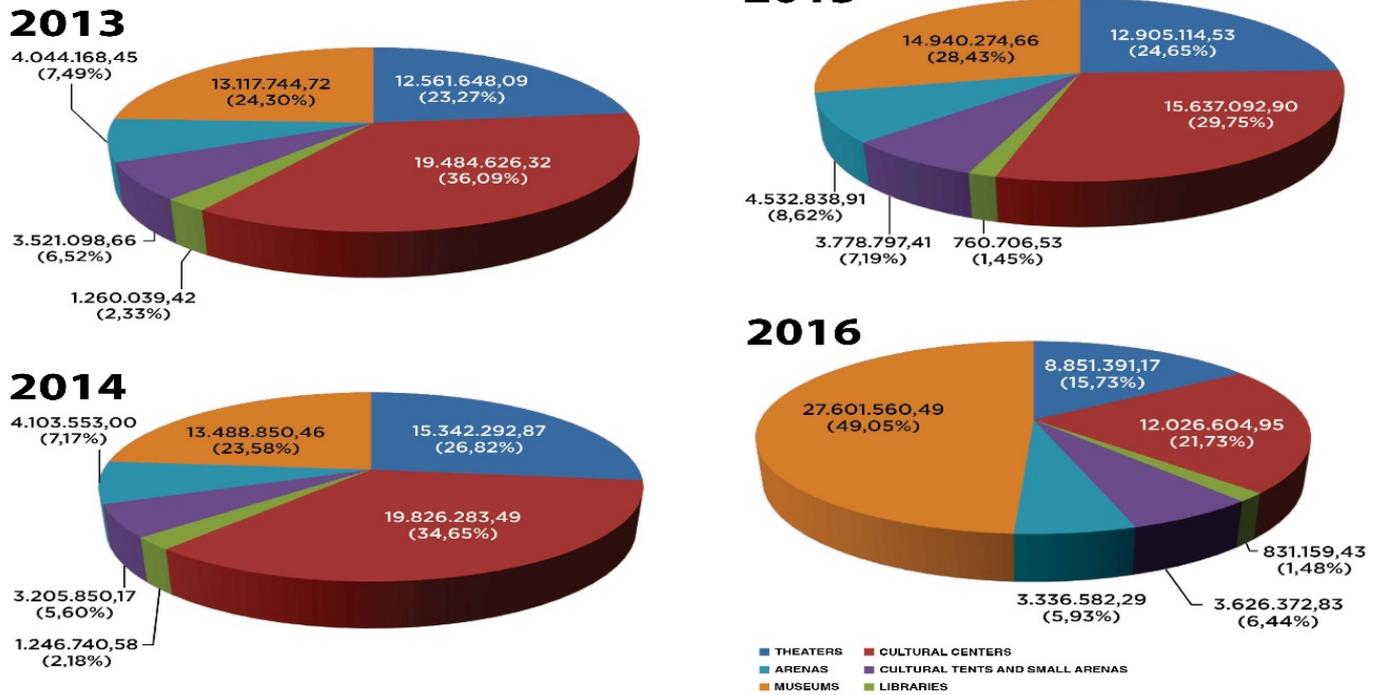


Figure 1. Average investment per cultural equipment 2013-2016 Source. Adapted from *A Gestão da Cultura Carioca 2013/2016* (p. 35), by Secretaria Municipal de Cultura do Rio de Janeiro, 2016.

Average attendance per cultural equipment 2013-2016

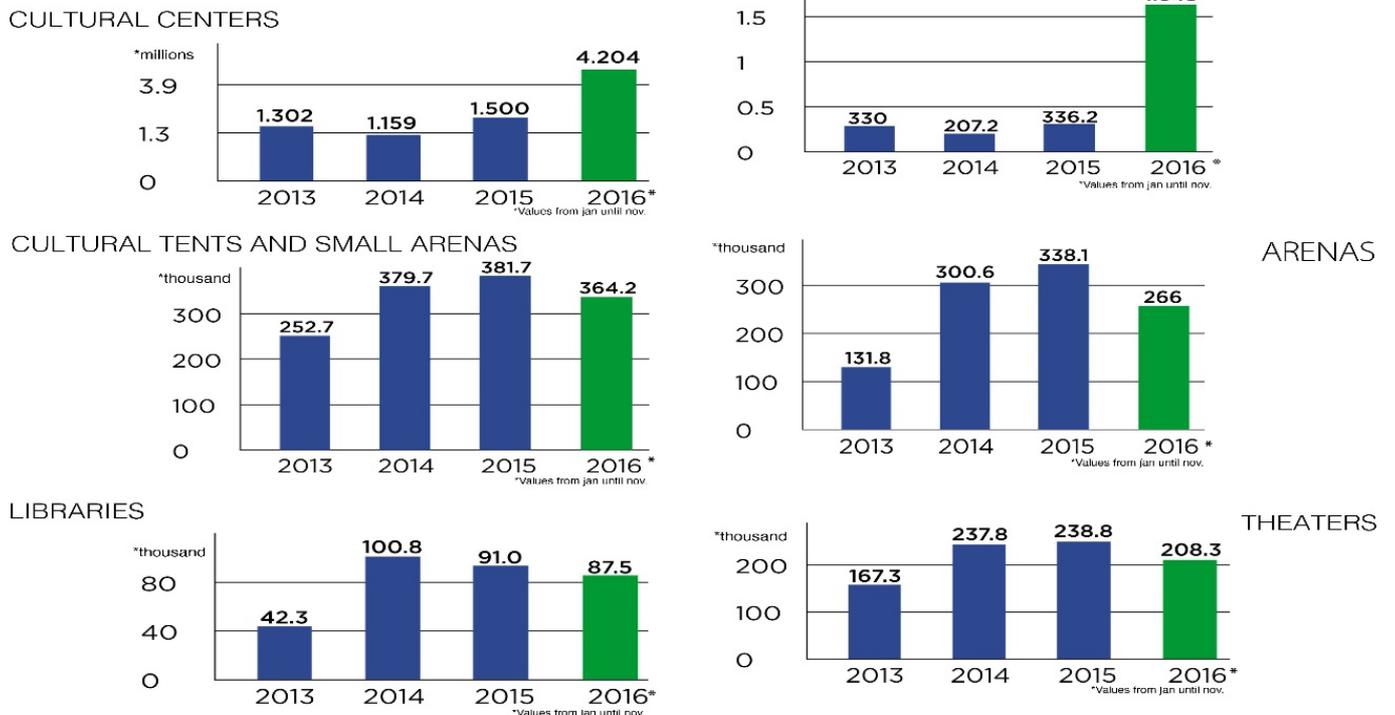


Figure 2. Average attendance per cultural equipment 2013-2016 Source. Adapted from *A Gestão da Cultura Carioca 2013/2016* (p. 36), by Secretaria Municipal de Cultura do Rio de Janeiro, 2016.

As it can be seen from the data above, the increase in resources allocated to municipal museums corresponds to the investment in the two new cultural facilities, MAR and Museum of Tomorrow, and has concrete effects on attracting audiences to the region. According to the city's report (Secretaria Municipal de Cultura do Rio de Janeiro, 2016), the MAR would receive 350,000 visitors in its first year of operation. The Museum of Tomorrow, on the other hand, would attract 25,000 visitors in the weekend of its inauguration. The resignification process of the port area, in fact, would have an impact on the region's real estate, giving rise to new centers of culture. Centered on private initiatives of young artists and cultural producers, the following centers emerged: Casa Porto, Galeria Saracura, Casa Amarela, Lanchonete Lanchonete, and Atelier Sanitário, among others. Some were short-lived, others counted on changes in the business profile to survive in a context of scarcity, and still others kept fighting to remain as autonomous spaces of production and/or diffusion of culture in the city. All had in common the constitution of a network of social actors of mutual cooperation, DIY arrangements for financial funding, and an activist discourse very critical to the commodification of the city.

However, after the major events and the end of Eduardo Paes' second term, Rio de Janeiro inaugurated, in 2017, a new municipal government under Marcelo Crivella, a conservative candidate with an evangelical Pentecostal background and bishop of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. Since the election, Crivella has been embittered by conflicts with various social sectors, culture being one of his main targets. The continuity of this historical cultural process is also present in Marcelo Crivella's administration, but this time with new elements. Unlike Paes, who uses culture as an element of positive emphasis in his government, Crivella showed disdain not only for the achievements of his predecessor, but also for the diversity of cultural production in Rio de Janeiro in general, for political and ideological reasons. The then mayor clashed several times with sectors of cultural production. The public justification was always nodding to his more conservative electorate, with moral speeches (Rocha, 2020). However, there was also another dispute involved: Crivella and the Universal Church are directly linked to the Record TV, competitor and adversary of Rede Globo TV, and the Roberto Marinho Foundation, companies that finance MAR and Museum of Tomorrow in a public-private partnership. As a consequence, Crivella disliked the two large museums built in the port area. In an interview in February 2021, the former chief of staff of the Municipal Secretariat of Culture of the Crivella administration, Vagner Fernandes, talks about the controversies involving Crivella and the city's new museums:

Crivella's issue with Rio Museum of Art and the Museum of Tomorrow involves another logic of understanding those spaces, which is not related to the activities they carry out from the cultural point of view, but from the administrative point of view. Both Rio Museum of Art and the Museum of Tomorrow are enterprises that have the support of the Roberto Marinho Foundation, so Crivella had an implication that those museums would receive a significant amount of money from SMC [the Municipal Secretariat of Culture], due to the fact that they are linked to a foundation of a broadcaster that he abhors, of an organization of which he actually became an enemy, so MAR undergoes this and so does the Museum of Tomorrow. Recently, I don't know if you know, but there was a contractual renegotiation between these two museums and the City Council, so the Museum of Tomorrow will not receive any more contributions from the City Council and the Rio Museum of Art is going the same way. I think they have already hit the hammer, they have already sealed the occupation agreement of the space without transferring funds. So, both of them will no longer receive public contributions.

In fact, the discontinuity in policies to promote culture as a tool for urban intervention that had been consolidating since the 1980s had a profound impact on the region. In 2019, the financial crisis that crossed the country particularly hit the city and expressed itself politically in deep cuts to previous projects. Instabilities in the contribution of funds from the city government delayed the payroll of MAR employees and the museum was on the verge of closing its activities. Threatened with closure, the museum witnessed an intense campaign in its defense. It is symptomatic that in

late 2019 a demonstration in defense of the museum, with a collective hug of the MAR, was attended by many of those who had criticized the institution at the time of its founding. Even so, both its director, Evandro Salles, and Izabela Pucu, director of Escola do Olhar, stepped away from the museum, leaving the institution in charge of its advisory board. In 2020, even after Eduardo Paes' return as elected mayor, the economic crisis is reinforced by the social isolation promoted by the COVID-19 pandemic containment. In times of social isolation, the model of building cultural clusters seems threatened, and negotiated utopias seem to give way to dystopian scenarios. At the same time, however, the new institutional arrangements struggle for survival and constitute new relations with the political discourses that were part of their formation, as we will try to discuss in the following two case studies.

In the following points, we will therefore seek to discuss specifically two of the spaces that have been created in the wake of urban policies for the region in recent years. On the one hand, Atelier Sanitário, created in 2016 on Pedro Ernesto Street. On the other, Lanchonete Lanchonete, maintained as an occupation in Bar Delas, on the same street.

Atelier Sanitário

Meeting point of artists Daniel Murgel and Leandro Barboza, Atelier Sanitário was created following the DIY model of other institutional arrangements that emerged in the region. At the same time atelier for the production of the artists' works, space for exhibitions and free courses, the property is placed as a node of the intricate network of autonomous spaces in the port area, but also as a meeting point for the extensive social circle of young artists of contemporary art in Rio de Janeiro. In an informal interview conducted for the project (interview reported by researcher and author Vitória Barenco on July 2, 2021), it was possible to apprehend that Daniel and Leandro have known each other for a long time, and they seem to be the main people responsible for the Atelier Sanitário. However, several people orbit the space, contributing sporadically to its activities or even frequenting it. Besides Gustavo Speridião, who initially also shared the space, Cleverson Salvaro, Marcone Moreira, Samuel Dickow, Ivar Rocha and Herbert da Paz have temporarily occupied the atelier.

On the site there is the workshop where Daniel and Leandro do their work. They use large materials and tools used in construction: Daniel dialogues a lot with architecture, using materials such as wood, concrete, grids and tools like electric drills and saws. Up a side staircase you come to the Oficina do Prelo, a print shop where partners produce publications, bookbinding and graphic arts. On the second floor, materials are stored and it is also used for the production of the works, and has a balcony with an oven and a view to the street.

Recognizing themselves as a private space focused on artistic production and on the sale and promotion of art to an already formed public, Leandro Barboza and Daniel Murgel are part of a more consolidated contemporary art circuit in Rio de Janeiro. They have participated in solo and group exhibitions, and Daniel Murgel was even nominated for the Pipa Award in 2011. Thus, from the point of view of their maintenance, the artists were inserted in the art market, with all the difficulties that this represents for young artists (Marcondes, 2018).

Before the pandemic, they received, for example, sporadic visits from ArtRio representatives to evaluate the works and possible partnerships. These visits took place when the curators were interested in works that dialogued with ongoing projects. The specific relationship between Atelier Sanitário and the MAR followed the same line. They were sought out for a commissioned work for the exhibition "Casa Carioca", for which Daniel Murgel built *Máquina de Chover no Molhado nº 2 - Telhado Borboleta* (Wet Rain Machine nº 2 - Butterfly Roof) and *Banco dos Egoístas* (The Bank of the Selfish). However, according to the artists, their relationship with the Museum is purely professional and, as said before, punctual. They do not maintain any kind of partnership, but it is remarkable that the museum seeks to integrate artists from the port area to the exhibitions.

What is noteworthy, however, is the atelier's participation in a network of institutional arrangements that constitute a kind of collaborative economy in the region. In 2017, the atelier participated in the exhibition "Tudo Fora de Ordem" (Everything Is out of Order), at the Saracura gallery, a short-lived autonomous space also located in the port area. In the same year, Daniel Murgel participated in the international meeting "Cuidado como Método" (Care as Method), organized by Jessica Gogan and Izabela Pucu, at Instituto Mesa, in Morro da Conceição, also in the same region. Although they mark a clear distinction in relation to other spaces, which according to them would have an intention more directed to social actions in the communities of the port area, they participate in a system of reciprocity capable of adding symbolic capital to the region, also spinning a network of mutual support for young artists and curators of contemporary art in the city. In 2019, they created the *1º Salão Vermelho de Artes Degeneradas* (1st Red Salon of Degenerate Arts), whose prize was a residency at the studio. In the same year, they organized the free course "Intervenção urbana: laboratório de pesquisa e experimentações artísticas em espaços públicos" (Urban Intervention: laboratory of research and artistic experimentations in public spaces), taught by Thiago Fernandes. Those are specific actions that contribute to the circulation of a very peculiar creative economy.

Thus, it should be noted that the atelier always held various events, in which they received friends and visitors. However, with the pandemic and its imposition of social distancing, only the activities of the artists themselves in the workshop and the maintenance of the Clube do Atelier Sanitário were maintained. Those interested in the Club can join the plan of their choice, collaborating directly with the activities of the atelier. According to the plan, they can receive six, 12, 18, or 24 bottles of Água Sanitária beer per month, accumulating 12, 24, 36, or 48 points, respectively. The Água Sanitária beer is produced in an artisanal way at the Atelier by the residents Daniel Murgel and Leandro Barboza and, according to them, the brewery is the activity that most supports the daily existence of the space.

The points can be converted for the purchase of original works (A3 size drawings, small format sculptures, and small format objects); furniture (author chairs and benches); multiples (serigraphs and numbered prints of original drawings); and utilitarian kits and snacks (two personalized glasses, one handmade bottle opener, one Nodosotros pepper glass, and one wooden shelf). In addition, members have access to the Ação Coringa (Joker Action), which consists in a surprise raffle of some of the atelier's products; have access to the workshop and discounts on services such as carpentry, restoration, consulting, and artistic assistance; and access to the brewery, with unrestricted access to information and the possibility of ordering specific styles, within production capacity.

In addition to these benefits, other works, from the artists' personal collections, can also be made available to club members. The works produced exclusively for the club are activators of the whole mechanism of the atelier, starting from the drawing board, going through screen printing and ending in the workshop, with the brewery as a lubricant for this mechanism. The club is, then, a way to collaborate with Atelier Sanitário, which, more than a studio, is an autonomous cultural institution that serves as an experimental platform for artistic exchanges, clearly centered on eminently political discourses. In fact, the association of the atelier with the region and the critical discourses that have been emerging in these spaces is noteworthy. The very name of the space is linked to the construction of this image. When Daniel found the building that now houses the atelier, Gamboa and its surroundings were undergoing renovations for the *Porto Maravilha* project and a lot of construction material, such as construction debris and scraps, were piled up in the streets. The artists collected these objects and took them to the studio, a procedure that resulted led an acquaintance of the artists to ask whether the place was a studio or a landfill. Hence the name "Atelier Sanitário" (Sanitary Atelier). The artists commented that as the Porto Maravilha construction work progressed, the people who lived and worked in Pedro Ernesto street were leaving the area and moving to other places as the cost of living became more expensive.

From the region's debris, for example, came the *Mobiliário Maravilha* series (Wonderful Furniture),

a set of works built from the aesthetics of gambiarra, the Brazilian practice of makeshifts, with leftovers from urban reforms in the region and in clear reference to the perverse effects of the gentrification process. The work composed the 2017 exhibition at the Saracura gallery and goes on to mark the consolidation of the activist discourse of the atelier members.

The first meeting of the researchers with Leandro Barboza took place on June 19, 2021, during a demonstration against president Jair Bolsonaro and in favor of the COVID-19 vaccine, on Presidente Vargas avenue, in downtown Rio de Janeiro. There, we spotted the *Faixa Protesta*¹ (*Banner Protests*) and recognized Leandro Barboza, with whom we had already been dialoguing on Instagram. If, after 2013, the process of occupation of the port area and the criticism of the gentrification process was an important trigger of politicization processes of art from the claim of the right to the city, in recent times, the *Faixa Protesta* is one of the effects of a process of increasing politicization of art, at a time when culture becomes the target of attacks in times of authoritarian governments. In fact, if the COVID-19 pandemic marked a process of radicalization of criticism of the current government in the arts (Suzano, 2021), in the alternative spaces of the port area the emergence of forms of collaborative financing goes hand in hand with this process.

Lancheonete Lancheonete

Lancheonete Lancheonete is a cultural association that emerged in 2017 as a proposition of the artist Thelma Vilas Boas, in order to resist the gentrification processes occurring in the surroundings of the port area of Rio de Janeiro. It is located in the Gamboa neighborhood, welcoming children and family members residing in occupations in the area. Initially created in the garage of Galeria Saracura as a kitchen-school-community, the artist's work consisted of offering "the children of the region and their families' workshops on healthy preparation of food in natura, arts, graphic prints, literacy and studies of 'non-white narratives'" (Alzugaray, 2019, para. 5). As of 2018, Thelma Vilas Boas has moved to Bar Delas, a *botequim* (bar) located on the corner of Pedro Ernesto and Sacadura Cabral streets, run by Kriss Coiffeur, on the first floor of one of the region's numerous occupations. Beyond solidary cooking, the collective sought to ensure mental health, education, food security, housing, peace and joy, especially for the children who were harmed by this reality. From this, several action plans are developed to promote greater well-being and social justice, broadening the discussion about the field of art in the face of the imponderable and resignifying potentials historically subjected to the violence of racism and poverty.

An artist who came from the fashion photography field, Thelma Vilas Boas converted her aesthetic research interests from 2011 on, starting to develop works with performances, projections, writings on paper, objects, photography. In her narrative, the rupture in a consolidated professional career would happen as academic reflection, but also as a reflection on her own social origin. Coming across privileges and inequalities would cause Thelma Vilas Boas to start thinking that her production, as an artist, if there is an object, it is the social fabric (Vergara et al., 2019). The narrative of the "biographical turnaround" experience was recorded in an article published in *Poiesis*:

then I wonder how I, a white woman, who bet on a territory because I come from academic research and who gets a "slap in the face" when I realize that my artistic production constrained me, as you say... How can we think about artistic production in the year two thousand and something? I started this in 2011, more or less, I decided to come closer to Guanabara Bay to understand this disgrace, this social difference, this malaise in civilization, and I realized that it could not be academic research. It was a great turnaround in my biographical formation. How was I really going to feel affected by it? (Vergara et al., 2019, p. 253)

Through the Escola por Vir (School to Come), which gets its name because it aspires to be an

organic school that adapts to the contexts and subjectivities, the educational principle of autonomy and emancipation is rescued through activities developed with the local community, inspired by political-philosophical ideals of equality among subjects and the right of all to education, decolonizing thought and recognizing art as a means of reflection and transformation of the world. Within this, there is Sextou (*It's Friday*), a program aimed at teenagers, relying on artistic devices for the investigation of their sensibilities.

After a while the children in foster care started to bring their guardians to get to know the environment, and, due to the cornerstone of collective construction according to the needs of the community, other movements emerged, such as the Programa de Formação em Panificação (Bakery Program), Letramento Literário (Literacy), and Programa de Saúde Mental (Mental Health Program) in 2020, the Cozinha das Guerreiras da Gambo (Gamboa Warriors' Kitchen) in 2021, creating groups of women multipliers of care for themselves, their family, and their community to produce healthy territories. All this thanks to the support of local leaders, groups, and partnerships for inputs and food, which make it possible to create circumstances such as the Cozinha EcoAfroAfetiva (Kitchen), which counts on the participation of the so-called "Guerreiras da Gamboa", mothers who cook and participate in the project that distributes 400 weekly "quentinhas" (hot meals) to the community. The kitchen also intends to reproduce a domestic space where it is possible to share experiences. Another very important resistance tactic is the recognition by the *Habitação* (Housing) project of the right to decent housing as the first premise for the development of learning. This project consists of a common dwelling that accommodates solo mothers who live in situations of extreme vulnerability, compelled by their reproductive responsibilities and without a safety net and support.

On the one hand, the work of Thelma Vilas Boas was not interrupted in the context of social isolation due to the economic crisis that devastated the city, on the other, her work gained visibility in the social networks. Fundraising procedures through collective funding platforms gained protagonism and made it possible to continue the space. The recognition for the artist's work was attested by the city hall which, since 2020 again managed by Eduardo Paes, who awarded Lanchonete Lanchonete with the Commendation of the Order of Cultural Merit of Rio (*Homenagem: Quem São os 18 Premiados com a Ordem do Mérito Cultural do Rio*, 2021). If, on the one hand, Thelma Vilas Boas' project emerges in the clash with urban policies and in the critique of gentrification, the public sphere, still democratic, incorporates these movements.

Final Considerations

The article presented here sought to discuss the relationship between urban policies for the creation of a creative hub in Rio de Janeiro and the tensions produced by the incorporation of young artists to the process. Increasingly inserted in universities (Bueno, 2016) and imbued with extremely critical discourses, these artists have been leading new interpretations of artistic making and of their role in the city. As we have argued on other occasions (Sant'Anna, 2019), the valorization of culture producers as producers of economic capital and agents of urban restructuring, based on the paradigm of creative economy, has generated contradictory effects. If, on the one hand, the entrance of new actors into new city spaces engenders gentrification processes, the fact is that this process does not occur without reflexiveness.

Prompted by the debates on the right to the city that have taken over Rio de Janeiro since 2013, young artists have appropriated the port area with a deep reflection on the role they have been playing there. DIY spaces, based on collective funding and on an extensive network of mutual cooperation, without the support of culture policies, have begun to incorporate practices that have been increasingly bringing art and politics together (Sant'Anna et al., 2017).

If the fusion of art and life, so debated by the historical avant-garde, caused the blurring of boundaries and the incorporation of outsider art to the art world (Zolberg, 2005/2009), the process

of commodification of culture has contributed to deepen the process. If the last boundary separating the art sphere as an autonomous system was its separation from the public sphere, the widening of the political criticism within the art system makes it almost impossible to perceive the limits that keep them apart. The *Faixa Protesta* of the Atelier Sanitário merged with the multitude of other images in the demonstrations and Thelma Vilas Boas' actions merged with other actions to dissipate the perverse effects of the pandemic.

The process that Rio's port area is going through is far from being concluded, considering the return of Eduardo Paes to the city hall, his new intervention measures for the region, and the dynamics of local agents, such as residents and autonomous artists, as well as the current impacts and the impacts the pandemic will leave. Therefore, it is possible to affirm that what is observed today is part of a trajectory that still does not have final contours, but that has already produced significant social changes. Hence, the hypothesis that led to the present work is confirmed, that is, material alterations in the city from policies addressing the economy of culture have concrete effects on the artistic form, thus contributing to the agency of new social actors who, from a new artistic vocabulary, claim protagonism within the public sphere.

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Notes

1. *Faixa Protesta* (Banner Protests) is an initiative that uses the Atelier Sanitário space to make protest banners against President Bolsonaro and against denialist and anti-science policies.

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