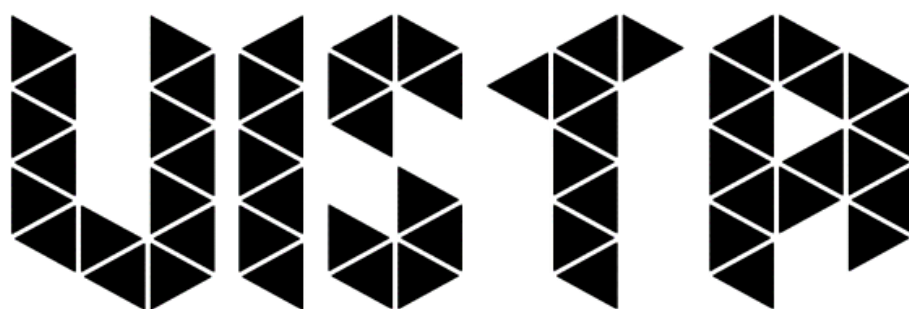




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The Body Becomes Restless, the Image Appears: Choreography and Political Visuality in Dance

O Corpo Se Inquieta, a Imagem Aparece: Coreografia e
Visualidade Política na Dança

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THE BODY BECOMES RESTLESS, THE IMAGE APPEARS: CHOREOGRAPHY AND POLITICAL VISUALITY IN DANCE

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a qualitative comparative study of how choreographic images are produced in Brazilian dance, understanding the image not as a formal illustration but as a perceptual event produced by the body in movement. The analysis focuses on two works created in distinct historical contexts, yet both shaped by right-wing authoritarian regimes: *Kuarup* (1977), by Ballet Stagium, conceived during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship, and *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* (Wandering Abject Object; 2018), by Coletivo Corpos Falantes, created in the context of the rise of the far right in contemporary Brazil. The study examines how these works produce images organised between two perceptual regimes: the continuous flow of movement and the suspension of gesture, understood as aesthetic and political strategies for critically elaborating historical time. Methodologically, the research combines analysis of audiovisual records, stage photographs, interviews, and publicly circulated materials, treating choreography as a device for producing the sensible. In *Kuarup*, the choreographic images operate through allegory, myth, and collectivity, producing perceptual experiences that circumvent State censorship without directly naming political violence. In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, by contrast, the image emerges from the explicit exposure of the peripheral collective body, which articulates historical memory, territorial experiences and the direct enunciation of violence in the present. The comparison shows that choreographic images are inseparable from the historical, institutional, and sensory regimes that produce them, revealing dance as a critical practice that can reorganise ways of seeing and sharing politics through choreographic experience.

KEYWORDS

art, dance, choreography, image, politics

O CORPO SE INQUIETA, A IMAGEM APARECE: COREOGRAFIA E VISUALIDADE POLÍTICA NA DANÇA

RESUMO

Este artigo apresenta um estudo comparativo qualitativo sobre a produção de imagens coreográficas na dança brasileira, compreendendo a imagem não como ilustração formal, mas como acontecimento perceptivo fabricado pelo corpo em movimento. A análise concentra-se em duas obras criadas em contextos históricos distintos, porém atravessados por regimes autoritários de direita: *Kuarup* (1977), do Ballet Stagium, concebida durante a ditadura civil-militar brasileira, e *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* (2018), do Coletivo Corpos Falantes, criada no contexto do avanço da extrema direita no Brasil contemporâneo. O estudo investiga como essas obras produzem imagens que se organizam entre dois regimes perceptivos: o fluxo contínuo do movimento e a suspensão do gesto, compreendidos como estratégias estéticas e políticas de elaboração crítica do tempo histórico. Metodologicamente, a pesquisa articula a análise de registros audiovisuais, fotografias

de cena, entrevistas e materiais de circulação pública, tratando a coreografia como um dispositivo de fabricação do sensível. Em *Kuarup*, as imagens coreográficas operam por meio da alegoria, do mito e da coralidade, produzindo experiências perceptivas capazes de atravessar a censura estatal sem recorrer à nomeação direta da violência política. Já em *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, a imagem emerge da exposição explícita do corpo coletivo periférico, que articula memória histórica, vivências territoriais e enunciação direta da violência no tempo presente. A comparação evidencia que as imagens coreográficas são inseparáveis dos regimes históricos, institucionais e sensíveis que as produzem, revelando a dança como prática crítica capaz de reorganizar modos de ver e partilhar a política por meio da experiência coreográfica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

arte, dança, coreografia, imagem, política

INTRODUCTION

We begin with a simple yet profound observation: in dance, choreography begins as soon as the body becomes restless. A historical event matters not only because it occurred, but because it affects us. When this process takes place in choreography, it transforms into movement, gesture, space, light, rhythm, soundtrack, and encounter; that is, it becomes dance in its various layers.

Against this backdrop, the present article analyses two works of Brazilian dance: *Kuarup* (1977), created by Décio Otero for Ballet Stagium, a company founded in 1971 by Marika Gidali and Décio Otero; and *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* (Wandering Abject Object; 2018), created by Coletivo Corpos Falantes, an independent collective that emerged on the outskirts of the eastern zone of São Paulo in 2016, with the support of the Programa VAI (Programme for the Promotion of Cultural Initiatives). Although separated by more than four decades and produced in distinct historical, institutional and territorial contexts, both address the Brazilian military dictatorship and its consequences as a social and political theme for choreographic creation.

We chose this focus because the two works investigate the dictatorship not only as a historical event, but as an experience that continues to leave its mark on bodies and ways of perceiving the world. We are interested in understanding how each work critically mobilises the memory of this period through images that develop different forms of engagement with its persistence in the present. From this perspective, choreography is understood not merely as a representational practice, but as a process of producing the sensible, capable of shifting perceptions and contesting meanings surrounding historical experience.

To consider this choreographic process of image production, we draw on the concept of “aisthesis”, proposed by Walter Mignolo (2008), understanding sensibility as a situated experience, inscribed in bodies, memories and the power relations that organise seeing and feeling. Accordingly, the images produced by dance are not neutral representations, but ways of giving sensible form to historical experience.

This understanding approaches the notion of the “distribution of the sensible”, understood as the set of conditions that defines what can be seen, felt and recognised in a given context. We are interested in observing how different choreographies produce distinct forms of visibility for experiences marked by violence, memory and resistance.

In bringing together works produced in distinct historical periods, we also engage with the notion of “ch’ixi”, formulated by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2010/2021), which allows us to consider the coexistence of differences without reducing them to conciliatory syntheses. Rather than seeking linear continuities between *Kuarup* and *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, we are interested in understanding how both address a common theme from specific historical, political and aesthetic conditions. This perspective resonates with Gloria Anzaldúa’s (2012) reflections on border experiences and hybrid forms of cultural production, as well as with the notion of “spiral temporalities” proposed by Leda Martins (2002), for whom the body actualises memories through non-linear relationships between past and present. These contributions make it possible to understand the choreographic images analysed not merely as representations of historical events, but as modes of reactivating and reworking memories in the present.

Methodologically, the article constitutes a qualitative comparative study that combines audiovisual records, stage photographs, interviews, and archival and publicly circulated materials related to the two works analysed. The comparison seeks to understand how different historical contexts and conditions of creation produce distinct strategies for the visual and sensory elaboration of political critique.

The selection of the images analysed followed two complementary criteria. The first concerns how the choreographic visual composition is constituted. For each work, a moment of suspension and a moment of flow were selected. We understand “images of suspension” as those in which movement slows down or is temporarily interrupted, configuring bodily compositions that invite contemplation. Images of flow, by contrast, correspond to situations in which visibility emerges from the continuous movement of the bodies themselves, producing meaning through repetition, transformation and the duration of the gesture.

The second criterion concerns the dramaturgical and political relevance of the scenes within each work. In *Kuarup*, two central choreographic situations are analysed: a sequence marked by gestural repetition in which the performers strike the floor with their hands, configuring a visual composition of flow associated with collective manifestation, and the final composition of the bodies lying on stage, taken as an image of suspension, in which they emerged as significant nuclei in the choreographic elaboration of the critique of authoritarianism (Veloso, 2020).

In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, the analysis focuses on the moment when one of the performers suspends the action to sustain a direct and prolonged gaze towards the audience, configuring an image of suspension; and on another moment concerning the final choreography, constructed around the song “Construção” (Construction), by Chico Buarque, understood as an image of flow because it develops its visibility through the continuous movement of the bodies. In this case, the analysis also draws on the author’s

position as the work's artist and choreographer, combining observation of the documentary materials with direct experience of the creative processes.

Rather than selecting scenes representative of each performance's narrative, we sought moments in which the production of visual compositions becomes an explicit strategy for the sensory elaboration of critique, making it possible to observe how different choreographies organise ways of reflecting on historical experience.

The comparison between *Kuarup* and *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* does not seek to establish linear continuities or to identify a historical evolution of forms of critique in Brazilian dance. We are interested in understanding how different contexts of creation, distinct positions of enunciation and specific modes of choreographic organisation produce images capable of mobilising the memory of the military dictatorship and its consequences in the present.

Rather than observing what each work says about violence and authoritarianism, we seek to analyse how these issues become visible and perceptible through dance. We therefore ask: what critical images become possible when a body becomes restless enough to dance its time?

To address this question, the article first analyses the images of suspension and flow present in *Kuarup*, observing how the work constructs its critique through allegory, ritual and bodily metaphor. It then turns to *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, investigating how contemporary peripheral experience mobilises archives, memories and collective experiences to produce other forms of critical visibility. By bringing these works into relation, we seek to understand how choreography operates as a space for producing images, sensibilities, and struggles over memory.

KUARUP: CHOREOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF RESISTANCE IN TIMES OF CENSORSHIP

BALLET STAGIUM BETWEEN STAGE, CIRCULATION AND CENSORSHIP

The Brazilian civil-military dictatorship, established in 1964 and in power until 1985, developed a complex apparatus of surveillance and symbolic control that regulated what could be seen, said and experienced in the public sphere. While fields such as theatre, cinema and music were directly monitored by official censorship bodies such as the Public Entertainment Censorship Service¹, dance occupied an ambiguous position within this system: often perceived as an abstract and depoliticised language, it was considered less “dangerous”, although it was not outside the State's field of observation. As Décio Otero (personal communication, August 7, 2015) reports, there was at the time a

¹ The Public Entertainment Censorship Service (Serviço de Censura de Diversões Públicas) was established in 1945 to control public entertainment, but during the military dictatorship it took on an even stricter character and expanded throughout Brazil through the creation of the Public Entertainment Censorship Units (Turmas de Censura de Diversões Públicas), institutions distributed across several states. In 1972, it became a Public Entertainment Censorship Division (Divisão de Censura de Diversões Públicas), while the Public Entertainment Censorship Units became the Public Entertainment Censorship Service. On the Entertainment Censorship Service, see Garcia (2008).

prevailing prejudiced view that dance dealt only with ethereal themes, “something to do with swans and butterflies”, which ultimately opened up sensitive spaces for the elaboration of critical discourses that could not be openly articulated.

The formation of Ballet Stagium emerged precisely from these openings and from an encounter marked by both chance and artistic affinities. Marika Gidali and Décio Otero, former professional colleagues, met again in 1970 during dance courses: she teaching body expression and he teaching classical ballet. This reunion gave rise to a creative partnership that initially took shape on television, when they began producing the series *Convite à Dança* (Invitation to Dance), broadcast by TV Cultura. According to Marika Gidali (personal communication, August 7, 2015), the television experience was decisive not only for the visibility of their work, but also for understanding that dance could be conceived as a means of communication with broader audiences, beyond specialised circuits.

At the end of the series, uncertain about the partnership’s next steps, the duo received decisive advice from Paulo Autran: to create a dance group and travel throughout Brazil, following the model already adopted by theatre groups. This suggestion inaugurated a distinctive trajectory within the Brazilian dance scene, marked by constant circulation and direct contact with different realities across the country, a trajectory which, as Décio Otero (personal communication, August 7, 2015) points out, would distinguish Stagium from other companies of the period, which were more concentrated in the major urban centres.

Although officially established in 1971, it was from 1972 onwards that the company underwent an experience that proved decisive for the construction of its aesthetic and political identity: a 22-day bus journey to São Luís do Maranhão, funded by the group’s own directors, who at the time also ran a dance school as a means of financially sustaining the company. During this journey, the dancers came into contact with popular cultural expressions, folkloric manifestations, ways of life and social inequalities that had previously been distant from their experiences and from the repertoire developed on the main stages of São Paulo. According to Marika Gidali (personal communication, August 7, 2015), this experience profoundly shifted the group’s view of Brazil, leading dance to cease being merely a formal practice and to become a field for listening, observation and the critical elaboration of social reality.

The work *Kuarup* is one of the most significant examples of this aesthetic and sensory transformation of Stagium. Décio Otero created this performance in 1977, in a political environment further strained by repression and censorship. The work appropriates the *kuarup*, an Indigenous ritual of death and rebirth, as a matrix of visibility that transforms myth and ritual into an aesthetic and political strategy. This symbolic layer does not directly depict the dictatorship; instead, it situates it within the stage’s sensory dimension, operating through metaphor and allegory. Décio Otero (personal communication, August 7, 2015) emphasises that the choice of the Indigenous ritual was not intended as an ethnographic representation, but as the creation of a powerful visibility of resistance and persistence, capable of engaging with the historical violence suffered by Indigenous peoples and, simultaneously, with the political oppression experienced by workers in the 1970s.

This symbolic operation is articulated on stage through the visibility of the industrial worker, with overalls designed by Clodovil Hernandez² combined with Indigenous adornments arranged at the sides of the stage. The juxtaposition of these references produces a dual image of bodies subjected to State violence both in the colonial and in the industrial and authoritarian contexts. Thus, rather than merely illustrating a denunciation, *Kuarup* made visible a country structured by historical hierarchies that authorise some bodies to decide and others to obey, across different temporalities of domination.

Combined with the gestural vocabulary, improvisational procedures and movements inspired by the rhythms and dances of Indigenous peoples, the work mobilises procedures that can be seen as anticipating strategies later present in different strands of contemporary Brazilian dance. By articulating politics, sensibility, and multiple stage languages inseparably, *Kuarup* constructs a poetics that does not separate form from content, but makes the body the site where social tensions are inscribed.

The circulation of the performance was equally decisive for its political force. *Kuarup* occupied major stages, festivals and press outlets, expanding its visual power through dialogue with institutional cultural policies, cultural departments and specialised criticism. The recurring presence of Ballet Stagium in newspapers such as *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo* situated the work within a formalised circuit that, in dialogue with the period's artistic-intellectual circles, constructed a public vocabulary of resistance. As Décio Otero (personal communication, August 7, 2015) observes, this institutional recognition was fundamental to enabling the work to circulate widely without being directly banned, allowing its choreographic images to operate as a sensory narrative of dissent, even without explicitly naming the prohibited terms.

Based on this understanding, we are interested in observing how *Kuarup* organises choreographic images capable of producing specific sensory experiences in the spectator, alternating between moments of continuous flow and moments of suspended movement. From this perspective, the work can be perceived both as a continuous field of images in motion and as images in suspension, in which movement is interrupted to establish sensory, almost static tableaux, even as the dancers' breathing, sweat, and vital organs continue to move.

CHOREOGRAPHIC IMAGES IN *KUARUP*

The analysis presented here draws primarily on the 2008 recording of the *Kuarup*, restaged by SescTV, which forms part of the Ballet Stagium/Sesc archive. Although the work originally premiered in 1977, the absence of contemporaneous recordings in technically adequate condition makes this version the principal source for consultation. It is, however, more than a belated record: the recording preserves the choreographic structure

² According to Vagner Carvalheiro (2014), the costume created by Clodovil for the performance in 1977 "can be characterised as overalls of different models that were fashionable at the time, also constituting workwear for workers in different occupations and roles (mechanics, metalworkers, petrol station attendants, etc.)" (p. 200).

the company's directors recognise as part of the group's aesthetic heritage, making it possible to observe the persistence of its formal and political principles over time.

For the analysis of the images, we selected frames extracted from this recording, which make it possible to examine two distinct modes of meaning-making in the work: moments of continuous movement, in which the image emerges from the bodies' own displacement; and moments of suspension, in which the interruption of movement establishes sensible tableaux with a strong perceptual impact. Throughout the approximately 42-minute performance, marked by the uninterrupted presence of the performers on stage, these regimes of images alternate and come into tension.

It is important to note that the reading of the choreographic images of *Kuarup* and, subsequently, of the work *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* is grounded in the understanding that the politics of art is not organised solely within the field of representation, but also through the way regimes of the visible and the sensible are distributed and experienced. In this sense, the analyses engage with perspectives that understand *aisthesis* as situated and embodied perception, as proposed by Walter D. Mignolo (2008), and the stage as a space for the reconfiguration of the sensible, as proposed by Jacques Rancière (2000/2009), understanding choreography as a device for the production of political images.

In this analysis of *Kuarup*, the materialities of the stage — costumes, soundtrack, and lighting — are not treated as accessory elements but as fundamental technical components in producing political and sensible images at a time when spaces for protest were being sought. The overalls designed by Clodovil Hernandez, the Indigenous adornments by Cláudio Tapeceiro, and the soundtrack recorded by the Villas-Bôas brothers in the Upper and Lower Xingu are articulated with lighting characterised by intense frontal lights and backlighting, configuring a visual and sonic field that shifts the boundaries of what can be seen and heard on stage. By bringing Indigenous sounds, rhythms and references to the centre of the stage, the work reorganises the spectator's perceptual space and places historically naturalised cultural hierarchies under tension.

An exemplary moment of this operation occurs in the stamping sequence (Scene 9)³. Aligned in a diagonal formation, the performers strike the floor through rhythmic, cumulative actions composed of short steps, repeated impulses, and accelerating gestures. Insistent repetition organises the group as a pulsating collective body, in which rhythm functions not merely as a formal structure, but as a force that mobilises the attention and body of those watching. The stamping's vibration generates tension and anticipation, establishing a shared state of alertness. We do not know what is approaching, or whom they are looking at; there is only the impulse for survival. As an audience, we want only for the stamping to be enough to drive away whatever it may be.

In this context, stamping on the floor operates simultaneously on different levels: as a minimal, continuous gesture; as a simulation of the constant pressure imposed by authoritarian contexts, where the threat is present even when it is not named. At the same time, the visual association with the overalls, a direct reference to the working-class body, links the rhythm to the discipline of industrial labour, converting sonic impact into a form

³ Available at https://www.youtube.com/live/_fyPibOZzRE?si=cWY8azN2neNjN2Up (00:22:33).

of control, surveillance and exhaustion. The choreography does not utter the word “dictatorship”, but makes the regime of tension that sustains it felt, shifting the critique from the discursive field to the field of perception.

This scene demonstrates how *Kuarup* transforms historical unease into a sensible sign. An apparently simple collective action, stamping on the floor, becomes a political image because it produces a sensation of alertness. The gesture becomes a form of choreographic voice: it speaks through the body when direct speech is prohibited.

This political and aesthetic trajectory culminates in the performance’s final tableau, characterised by the suspended image of the fallen group (Scene 12)⁴. Following a frontal walk of powerful visual impact, the dancers collapse and remain motionless beneath a dense reddish light. The abrupt interruption of movement transforms the scene into an image-tableau, prolonging the spectator’s perceptual time and imposing an uncomfortable coexistence with the prostrate bodies.

The collective immobility is not organised as an illustrative representation of violence, but as an insistent presence. The scene’s dilated time prevents the gaze from resolving quickly and transforms the fallen body into a sensible archive of historical processes of silencing, erasure, and repression. By keeping the performers fallen and motionless until the final blackout, the choreography destabilises the habitual organisation of stage time and social space, demanding continuous attention and refusing any form of perceptual relief. The audience is prompted not to disengage when the performance ends, since the ending seems not to occur: the bodies do not return to thank the audience or celebrate the performance.

Between the continuous movement of the stamping and the radical suspension of the fallen body, *Kuarup* constructs a regime of images that shifts politics into the field of the sensible. The work’s choreographic images do not operate through explicit denunciation, but through perceptual experiences that make visible what could not be said. This strategy allowed the performance to circulate widely through the period’s institutional circuits without being directly banned, precisely because its critique presented itself as a shared bodily experience rather than a nameable discourse.

By articulating gesture, materiality, and perception, *Kuarup* asserts choreography as a device for producing political images in a context of censorship and surveillance. Rather than proposing a form of resistance through the art of dance, the work consolidates and radicalises procedures through which political critique shifts from the word to the body’s sensible experience, contributing to the development of a poetics that would significantly shape part of Brazilian dance production in the following decades.

The images analysed in *Kuarup* reveal a mode of elaborating political critique marked by metaphor, allegory and the need to produce meanings in a context of censorship. The image emerges as a strategy of displacement, making visible and sensible what could not be explicitly named. While in Ballet Stagium the politics of visual composition

⁴ Available at https://www.youtube.com/live/_fyPibOZ2RE?si=cWY8azN2neNjN2Up (00:39:50).

is organised through suggestion and symbolic condensation, in *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* we observe a different configuration: produced in a distinct historical context and arising from a contemporary peripheral experience, the work shifts the critique towards the direct exposure of the bodies, memories and forms of violence that run through them.

OBJETO ABJETO AMBULANTE: INSURGENT IMAGES IN THE PRESENT

COLETIVO CORPOS FALANTES AND THE PRODUCTION OF THE SENSIBLE FROM THE MARGINS

Coletivo Corpos Falantes emerged in the eastern zone of São Paulo in 2016, in the Parque Savoy City neighbourhood, in response to the scarcity of spaces where dance artists from peripheral areas could sustain processes of creation, professionalisation, and circulation. Its formation was directly linked to artistic director Carlos Veloso's desire to create conditions in which young dancers, many of them from sociocultural projects, could deepen their bodily research and access artistic creation beyond occasional training initiatives.

Carlos Veloso's training trajectory helps illuminate some of the issues underlying the collective's formation. From the eastern zone of São Paulo, his experience was marked by the need to travel daily to the city's central areas to find training and professional opportunities, highlighting historical inequalities in the distribution of resources, cultural facilities, and opportunities for artistic participation. His involvement in public training policies, such as the Programa Vocacional, and later in funding programmes such as Programa VAI, helped consolidate an understanding of culture as a field of political struggle and rights assertion.

In this context, Corpos Falantes emerges at the intersection of artistic experience, territory and cultural policy. More than a space for creation, the collective attempts to create conditions for peripheral artists to remain in the field and to elaborate, through dance, questions related to memory, social inequality, and the forms of violence that affect their bodies and territories. These are the issues that would later materialise in *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, a work that investigates the relationships between dictatorship, memory and contemporary experiences of exclusion, violence and resistance.

During the reading of the cultural project *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, submitted by Coletivo Corpos Falantes to the Programa VAI in 2018 and made available by the group for the preparation of this article, it became apparent that, from its formation onwards, the collective organised itself as a territory of collaboration, in which creative laboratories, improvisations, theatrical games, the sharing of personal accounts and the collective construction of bodily imaginaries were never separated from the members' life experiences. In this context, the production of presence was not guided by hierarchical models of authorship, but by relational processes in which the body is constructed through constant dialogue with others, with the territory, and with the material conditions of

existence. Creation did not begin from a previously imposed theme, but from concerns that affected the bodies and were collectively elaborated throughout the creative process.

Unlike a merely bureaucratic understanding of the call for applications, the project text itself already operated as a creative and political gesture, explicitly addressing the theme of the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship and its reverberations in the present. Nevertheless, the unease that permeated the work did not begin with writing or rehearsal: it emerged from lived experience, from the everyday constraints faced by the members of the collective, most of whom live in peripheral territories marked by structural inequalities.

Writing, in this sense, did not initiate the creation, but translated it, making public an urgency already inscribed in the bodies. Cultural funding, in turn, was not merely a financial condition; it asserted itself as a political condition of possibility, enabling the collective to produce critical images on stage, with free admission, decentralised circulation and direct address to audiences historically distanced from cultural facilities.

In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, the creative trigger was twofold: on the one hand, the encounter with historical accounts and archives of repression during the dictatorship; on the other, the confrontation with the performers-creators' own stories, shaped by markers of race, class, gender and territory. Whereas in the 1970s Stagium had to resort to allegory to escape censorable literalness, in the second decade of the 2000s the strategy shifts: protest is explicitly inscribed in the project and synopsis of the work, assuming the risk of direct naming.

In this performance, the body does not express itself in isolation, but always with and through the other, producing a choreography that is not limited to recalling an authoritarian past, but establishes direct analogies with a saturated, disoriented present marked by the rise of the right in Brazil, intensified during the period of Jair Bolsonaro's candidacy and presidency. In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, the image is not organised as a distanced symbolic representation, but as the consequence of a collective body which, by investigating the dictatorship, recognises continuities of violence in the present and is affected alongside others.

This mode of organisation demonstrates that, in *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, choreographic production cannot be separated from the social, territorial and affective experiences of its performers. The images constructed on stage emerge from shared memories, life trajectories and collective concerns that permeate the creative process. In this sense, the work produces forms of perception rooted in the concrete experiences of the artists involved, without seeking neutrality or abstract universality. On the contrary, it takes as a creative force precisely the marks and tensions present in the bodies that compose it. The images resulting from this process not only make certain experiences visible, but also affirm specific ways of feeling, remembering and critically elaborating the present. This perspective aligns with the reflections of Walter Mignolo (2008), Suely Rolnik (2018) and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2010/2021), who understand artistic production as a situated experience shaped by memory, territory and relations of power.

By circulating through district theatres, Unified Educational Centres, cultural centres and other public facilities, the work expands spaces of visibility for bodies, narratives and experiences frequently marginalised within traditional artistic circuits. In this context, the images produced by the work not only reorganise what is seen, but also place under tension who can occupy the position of producer and recipient of these visualities.

From this field of forces — territorial, political and affective — *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* produces its choreographic images. The questions that permeate the collective do not remain external to the stage as context, but condense into choices of gesture, composition, and address to the audience. It is therefore important now to observe how this situated production of the sensible materialises on stage, by analysing the imagistic compositions that structure the work.

CHOREOGRAPHIC IMAGES IN *OBJETO ABJETO AMBULANTE*

The images selected for analysis in *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* are thus organised, as in *Kuarup*, around two distinct and complementary perceptual regimes: continuous movement, in which meaning emerges from the persistence of collective displacement; and suspension, established by the radical interruption of the action and the prolonged presence of an immobile body in space. Analysing these images shows how the work transforms historical and political concerns into a direct sensible experience, operating on the spectator's perception without resorting to allegorical mediation.

For this second stage of the analysis, we selected two images photographed by Dayana Andrade in 2018, alongside observations of the audiovisual material from the first version of the performance, which lasted approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. More than illustrations of the work's discourse, these images constitute choreographic devices that condense choices of gesture, composition, materiality and address to the audience.

Before reading the images, it is important to emphasise that, in *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, the materialities of the stage intensify the presence and urgency of the action. The everyday clothing, devoid of any specific symbolic characterisation, contributes to the erasure of the notion of character and reinforces the stage as a space of testimony. The lighting privileges frontality and the direct exposure of the bodies, avoiding atmospheres that distance the spectator from the action. The soundtrack — particularly the song “Construção” by Chico Buarque — drives the movement, making the sung word a physical impulse that passes through the bodies. The stage space, frequently open and devoid of rigid boundaries, accentuates the direct relationship with the audience, bringing the choreography closer to a gesture of direct address. These elements do not function as secondary supports for the choreography; they actively help construct the images analysed below, reinforcing their effects of presence and urgency.

The first image (Figure 1) is situated at the end of the performance and presents the group in continuous frontal movement, advancing towards the audience. The bodies walk with dynamism and determination, organised in a horizontal composition that occupies the space with an assertive presence. This is not a choreographed march in the strict sense, but a tense walk in which the everyday gesture is invested with political density.



Figure 1. *Final scene — choreographic composition, Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*

Credits. Dayana Andrade, 2018

This passage forms part of a sequence constructed around “Construção”. The performers do not assume defined characters; they are on stage as present bodies, shouting and crying out each phrase of the song. The word does not operate as an illustrative soundtrack, but as an impulse that runs through their bodies and sustains the movement. The forward movement, without pauses or brakes, produces the image-based composition of a collective in a state of confrontation. The gesture does not point towards a clear destination, but asserts the decision to move forward, even in the face of imminent threat.

Within this regime of continuous movement, meaning emerges from duration and accumulation. The spectator is not invited to detached contemplation, but to share a state of pressure and acceleration. The choreography produces an image of a saturated present, in which collective advance takes shape as a strategy of resistance and affirmation. The moving body thus becomes a body on alert, ready for confrontation, whose politics manifests itself as a shared sensible experience.

In contrast to the intensity of the collective flow, the second image is organised around the radical interruption of movement. After a scene ends, a member of the group enters the stage carrying a placard bearing the phrase “we lost another one” (Figure 2). At a certain point, he says: “this morning, we lost another one. That is why I ask for one minute of silence”. From this utterance onwards, the action is suspended.

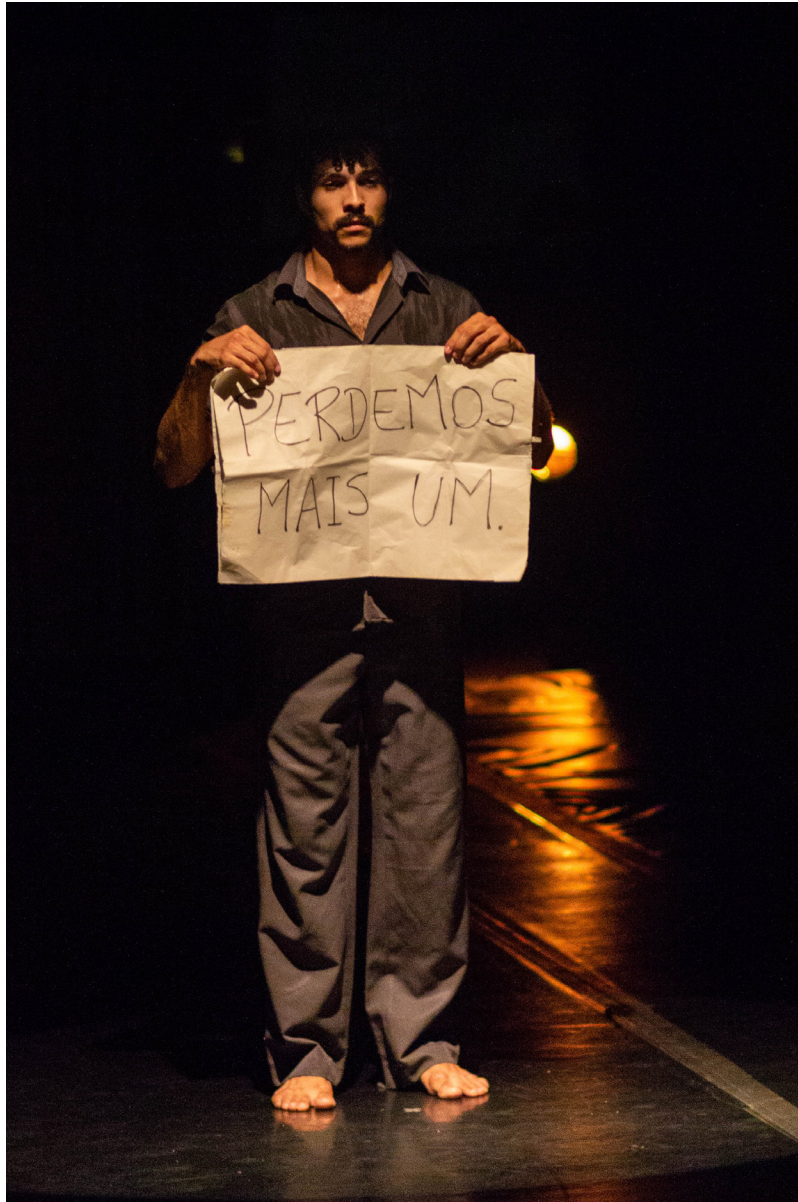


Figure 2. *Opening scene* — choreographic composition, Objeto Abjeto Ambulante
Credits. Dayana Andrade, 2018

The performer remains motionless, holding the placard, while the scene remains frozen for exactly one minute. Immobility turns the body into an image-tableau and dilates the performance's perceptual time. There is no gesture, displacement or expressive variation: there is permanence. Suspension does not function as a neutral pause, but as an imposition of coexistence.

The clarity of the written phrase eliminates any symbolic mediation. The image neither suggests nor metaphorises; it asserts. "We lost another one" immediately activates the field of collective mourning and reinscribes violence as a recurring experience in the present. The body holding the placard becomes the support for an insistent memory, functioning as a sensible archive of repeated, accumulated losses.

Far from producing soothing recollection, the minute of silence generates perceptual discomfort. The spectator is forced to remain before the visual composition, with no way to turn away or find relief. Suspension reorganises the scene's time and shifts the gaze toward a regime of forced attention, in which choreography operates as an ethical gesture of direct address.

Between the continuous advance of the collective body and the radical interruption of the immobile body, the *work* constructs a regime of images organised not through symbolic representation, but through experience. The work's choreographic images do not illustrate historical violence, but actualise it as a sensible presence here and now. By placing time, gesture, and space under tension, *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* asserts choreography as a field for producing critical images of the present, in which the body becomes a site of memory, confrontation, and accountability.

COMPARATIVE NOTES ON THE PRODUCTION OF THE SENSIBLE ACROSS TWO PERIODS OF DANCE

The comparison between *Kuarup* (1977) and *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* (2018) shows that choreographic images cannot be understood merely as the result of formal or thematic choices. The images analysed emerge from distinct historical contexts, modes of artistic organisation, and bodily experiences that directly shape how each work elaborates political critique through dance.

Although both works mobilise the Brazilian military dictatorship as creative material, the paths each group follows reveal significant differences. In *Kuarup*, the critique is constructed within a context marked by censorship and surveillance, where the image operates through symbolic displacement, allegory, and metaphor. In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, created more than four decades later, the critique emerges in a context in which violence can be named directly, allowing the image to be organised through exposure, testimony, and the explicit affirmation of particular experiences.

These differences concern not only the visual outcome of the works, but also how each group developed its creative processes. In Ballet Stagium, the images analysed emerge from choreographic elaboration linked to the institutionalised circuit of Brazilian dance in the 1970s and to the limitations imposed by the period's political context. In Coletivo Corpos Falantes, by contrast, the images arise from collaborative processes shaped by territorial experiences, public cultural funding policies, personal memories and accounts shared by the performers themselves. In this sense, the forms of creation directly shape how they produce critique and organise the relationship between body, image, and politics.

At the same time, the comparison reveals important similarities between the two works. Despite their historical and aesthetic differences, both organise their images around two similar perceptual regimes: flow and suspension. In *Kuarup*, the insistent repetition of the stamping on the floor produces an image constructed through the duration of movement, while the final composition of the fallen bodies establishes an image of suspension. In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, the collective walk performed to the song "Construção" likewise produces meaning through the persistence and insistence of the

gesture; however, the minute of silence before the placard reading “we lost another one” radically interrupts the flow of the action to establish another temporality.

In both works, images of flow require continuity, repetition and bodily exertion. Images of suspension, by contrast, depend on the bodies’ permanence in a particular visual configuration, inviting the spectator to remain before what is presented. What changes is not the existence of these procedures, but the political meanings produced through them. In one case, the image shifts the critique into the field of metaphor; in the other, it brings it closer to direct experience and the explicit naming of violence.

The comparison also makes it possible to observe different forms of engagement with the spectator. In *Kuarup*, the image calls for interpretation, requiring the audience to connect the gestures presented with the historical reality the work evokes. In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, the image operates more directly, calling on the spectator to confront situations and experiences explicitly presented on stage. Nevertheless, in both cases, the power of the image-based composition depends on the spectator’s sensible participation. The critique is fully realised in the encounter between the image produced by the performers and the experience of the person receiving it.

Another aspect that brings the works together is how the military dictatorship appears less as an event confined to the past than as an experience whose effects continue to reverberate in the present. In *Kuarup*, this elaboration occurs through the immediate experience of repression and its restrictions. In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, it emerges through the continuities of violence, inequalities and contemporary forms of exclusion that run through the performers’ bodies and the territories to which they belong. In both cases, memory does not appear as historical reconstruction, but as living material that continues to produce unease and demand sensible elaboration.

More than identifying differences and similarities between two works of Brazilian dance, this comparison helps us understand how historically situated bodies produce choreographic images through specific modes of collective creation. The images analysed do not merely represent political events; they shape how we perceive, experience, and share them. Through this movement, choreography asserts itself as a space to elaborate historical experience and contest how memory becomes visible in the present.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article began with the following question: what critical images become possible when a body becomes restless enough to dance its time? The comparative analysis of *Kuarup* (1977) and *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* (2018) shows that choreographic images are produced not only through aesthetic or compositional choices, but also through the historical, institutional, and political conditions that shape creative processes. Although both works address the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship, they produce distinct images because they also emerge from distinct contexts.

In *Kuarup*, censorship and the authoritarian context led to allegorical and metaphorical imagery. In *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante*, the critique is constructed through direct exposure, the naming of violence and the incorporation of the lived experiences of the

performers themselves. The research therefore indicates that modes of creation and context directly shape how political critique becomes visible on stage.

The comparison also revealed that, despite their historical and aesthetic differences, both works could be analysed through two recurring perceptual regimes: flow and suspension. In both choreographies, images of flow are constructed through repetition, duration and the persistence of movement, while images of suspension depend on the bodies' permanence in particular visual configurations. This parallel suggests that different contexts can produce similar image-based solutions, even when the political meanings attributed to them are distinct.

One of this study's contributions to the field of dance lies in proposing an analytical perspective centred on the images produced by choreography. Dance analysis often privileges technical, stylistic, dramaturgical or compositional aspects. By treating the choreographic image as a possible unit of analysis, this research suggests that particular moments in a work can condense relationships between movement, space, costume, lighting, sound and the presence of the performers in particularly meaningful ways.

Observing these images makes it possible to access dimensions of the experience of dance that do not always become visible when attention remains focused solely on movement or on dramaturgy in a broader sense. In this regard, images are not secondary elements of creation, but structuring components in the production of meaning in dance.

The research also contributes to image studies by shifting the discussion towards a field in which images do not present themselves as fixed and permanent objects. Unlike a photograph or a painting, the choreographic image emerges in a performance through the encounter of bodies in movement. Its materiality is ephemeral, relational and temporal. Nevertheless, the analyses show that these images can elaborate historical experiences and produce memory even when they do not leave behind a permanent visual object.

Finally, the study showed that the choreographic images analysed do not operate merely as representations of political events. They constitute ways of organising perception and producing specific relationships between artists, spectators and historical experiences. Comparing *Kuarup* and *Objeto Abjeto Ambulante* made it possible to see that different historical periods produce different strategies of image construction. More than representing political events, choreographic images organise specific ways of perceiving, remembering and sharing historical experiences. In this sense, analysing images made it possible to understand choreography not merely as the organisation of movement, but as a practice of producing visualities, memories, and ways of relating to the world.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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