

Letícia Parente: Embodying New Media Art Strategies in 1970s Brazil

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2020

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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University of Pittsburgh, 2020

This dissertation examines the *oeuvre* of Brazilian artist Letícia Parente (1930–1991) as a lens into artistic networks in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo that opened space for discourses of dissent against Brazil’s military dictatorship (1964–1985). Parente was a tenured chemistry professor in northeastern Brazil who, supported by artistic collective efforts, seized on new image reproduction technologies between 1974 and 1982 to emerge and establish herself as a contemporary artist at a time of social and political oppression. This dissertation tells the story of Parente’s intellectual journey, tracing her transition from the chemistry laboratories of the Universidade Federal do Ceará in Fortaleza in the 1960s, to the experimental curatorial program of the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro in 1976, to the cosmopolitan art galleries of the 1981 São Paulo Biennial. An analysis of Parente’s practice offers insights into the networks of artists, critics, and curators who composed Brazil’s 1970s art world, contributing to a historiography of exhibitions and criticism in Brazil.

This dissertation, the first sustained study of Parente’s works in any language, demonstrates how the specifics of 1970s Brazil’s political and artistic context provoked Parente to position her work at the intersection of advocacy for women’s rights, scientific paradigms, and new technologies. Each chapter examines the strategies Parente developed in video, Xerox, installation, and mail art, respectively, and addresses how she incorporated her body in each of them as an effective (and affective) way to express her multi-layered concerns about the restrictions of social and political life in dictatorial Brazil. The progression follows how, in the wake of Brazil’s *anos*

de chumbo (leaden years, 1969–74), Parente entered the Rio de Janeiro art world via her use of video; experimented with Xerox and collage as a way to express and participate in feminist global tendencies; achieved national recognition with her most complex work, *Medida* (Measurement, 1976); and, finally, positioned herself within international currents of contemporary art through her participation in the São Paulo Biennial during the periods of relaxation and opening that anticipated Brazil's return to democracy.

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Preface

I first encountered Letícia Parente sewing the word ‘Brasil’ onto the sole of her foot in an art history course while completing my B.A. in Literature at Universidad de los Andes, in Bogotá. Years later, after writing an M.A. thesis on experimental films at Stony Brook University, the black and white images of Parente’s video *Marca registrada* (Trademark, 1975) would offer me with an entry point into the complex history—rich, diverse, contradictory—of modern and contemporary art of the Americas, a region that has provided me with several homes. Once I started the Ph.D. program at Pitt, my interest in Parente’s work served as a great motivation to learn Portuguese at the Cathedral of Learning, at the core of Pitt campus and far from any Brazilian territory. During my first research trip to Brazil in 2015 and without previous experience in Lusophone America, I found fertile ground in archives and museum collections and a warm welcoming among Parente’s family and colleagues. For the next four years, I spent most of my summers in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Fortaleza. Parente’s work not only offered me access to these places, people, and their histories, but also to a network of collaborators—mentors, friends and colleagues—that surpasses national boundaries and that has informed me as an art historian. For that, I will always be grateful.

Following Parente’s journey across Brazil, I met her children, all of whom generously opened the doors of their homes and patiently revived personal memories to answer all my questions. André, Angela, Lia, Cristiana, and Pedro went above and beyond in describing blurry photographs, pulling books from their personal libraries, inviting me to share their Sunday family lunch, and taking me to and from the airport. Letícia’s generosity, as glimpsed from her letters and described by her children, certainly runs in her family and extends to her close friends and

colleagues in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. As a result, my research project has substantially benefitted from sustained conversations with Sonia Andrade, Fernando Cocchiarale, Anna Bella Geiger, Jom Tob Azulay, Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, and Gabriel Borba Filho. These research trips have been possible with the generous support of the History of Art and Architecture (HAA) department at Pitt.

The relationships that I cultivated in Brazil, the support of all members of HAA department, and the structure of HAA Constellation model allowed me to curate a research-based recreation of Parente's installation *Medida* (Measurement, 1976). On view in 2016 at Pitt's University Art Gallery (UAG), this exhibition recreated Parente's work as it was originally installed at the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro. This curatorial methodology, which my HAA dissertation committee, Jennifer Josten, Barbara McCloskey and Terry Smith, professors Alison Langmead and Josh Ellenbogen, and UAG curator at the time Isabelle Chartier helped me navigate, has been central to my analysis of Parente's work and to my understanding of contemporary art more broadly.

I am very grateful to the dedicated mentorship of my dissertation committee members who listened attentively when I first mentioned my interest in Parente's work and after some initial skepticism offered sustained guidance. Very early on, Barbara alerted me to the intense relationships forged by writing a monograph on a single artist, advice that has motivated me to think creatively about the multiple projects such an endeavor can produce; her questions about Parente's interdisciplinary practice have encouraged me to trust my instincts and interpretations. Terry's scholarship on global currents of contemporary art—foregrounded during graduate seminars, our preparation for undergraduate lectures and art labs, and exhibition planning—has been a road map for my training as an art historian. Since our conversations on how to best recreate

Parente's *Medida*, he taught me not to dwell on methodological problems but rather to design appropriate solutions while considering historical and artistic global patterns. Elena Shtromberg provided insightful comments and perspectives at key moments and set rigorous and fascinating models for the development of my project. The archival research Elena offered in her book *Art Systems: Brazil and the 1970s*, which was published when my monograph on Parente was taking form, showed me how to weave together historical documents and artworks, and her curatorial project *Video Art in Latin America* forcefully reminded me of the potential of this medium and its study in the midst of writing this dissertation.

Jennifer's mentorship is all that I aspire to practice as an educator. Her level of attention and generosity has never ceased to surprise me: our discussions surrounding my comprehensive exam preparation were reinforced by the lessons in her undergraduate courses in which I participated as teaching assistant; her guidance in organizing the museum studies exhibition *Paradoxes of Play: Concrete and Conceptualist Proposals from Brazil and Beyond* prepared me to undertake future curatorial and research projects; her commitment to the accurate usage of language has certainly made me a better writer and, hopefully, a better citizen. I deeply thank my 'orientadora' for sharing so much of her time with me, from conversations in her office, to multiple exhibition visits in California, to visiting downtown Mexico City on a Thursday that also happened to be Thanksgiving, to an extraordinary 24-hour tour of Brasília. The collective support of Jennifer, Barbara, Terry, and Elena has been instrumental in driving my approach to Parente's practice, accessing available resources, and framing my professional response to future projects.

A 2018 Andrew W. Mellon Pre-doctoral Fellowship, granted by the University of Pittsburgh, allowed me to serve as Researcher in Residence at the Archive and Documentation Department at Associação Cultural Videobrasil, in São Paulo. Many thanks to Solange Farkas, its

founder and director, and to the entire staff for reserving for me one of Videobrasil's *videoteca* stations and for greeting me everyday during the five months I was there.

Thank you to my colleagues for their friendship and camaraderie, in Pittsburgh and beyond. I have been fortunate to share long library hours and all sorts of doctoral joys and concerns with Rae Di Cicco, Annika Johnson, Clarisse Fava-Piz, Nicole Scalissi, Krystle Stricklin, and Marina Tyquiengco. Maria Castro, Rebecca Giordano, Paula Kupfer, Adriana Miramontes, and Marisol Villela have made exciting exhibition field trips all the more enjoyable, and I look forward to all the other Americanistas projects to come. Thank you to Tie Jojima and her family for their generous hospitality in São Paulo and New York.

The unconditional support of my family, Marcela Gaviria, Mariana Pardo, and Enrique Pardo, has always been invaluable and the most exquisite model of how to joyfully inhabit this world, together. Mamá y Mariana, gracias por ir conmigo hasta el fin del mundo y volver. Finally, thank you to Blake Jordan, with whom I am very lucky to share all of this, and so much more.

1.0 Introduction: Parente's Life within the History of Brazil

In fall 2016, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, became an unlikely hub for contemporary art from Brazil. Two curatorial recreations allowed visitors to experience participatory artworks designed by two Brazilian artists during the 1970s, while Brazil was under a military dictatorship (1964–85). Hélio Oiticica (Rio de Janeiro, 1937–1980) was the subject of the retrospective *Hélio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium* at Carnegie Museum of Art (CMOA). This exhibition recreated several of the immersive installations that Oiticica created in the 1960s and 1970s, of which the best known is *Tropicália* (Tropicalia, 1967).¹ Meanwhile, across the street from CMOA at the University of Pittsburgh Art Gallery (UAG), the work of Brazilian artist Letícia Parente (Salvador, 1930–Rio de Janeiro, 1991) was introduced in the United States, in the form of a recreation of Parente's major interactive installation *Medida* (Measurement, 1976). Prior to this, *Medida* had only been seen in its original installation at the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro (Museum of Modern Art, MAM–RJ) forty years earlier, and none of Parente's work had been publicly exhibited in a gallery space in the U.S.² I designed and produced this curatorial recreation of *Medida* as part of my

¹ Lynn Zelevansky, et al., *Hélio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium*, exh. cat. (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 2016). The exhibition was on view at Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, October 1, 2016–January 2, 2017; the Art Institute of Chicago, February 19–May 7, 2017; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, July 14–October 1, 2017.

² Previous to the exhibition of *Medida* in the UAG, Parente's 1975 videos *Marca registrada* (Trademark, 10 min.), *Preparação I* (Preparation I, 3 min.), and *In* (1 min.) were included in the film series *Shorts by Anna Bella Geiger, Ivens Machado, Letícia Parente, and Sonia Andrade*, presented by the Museum of Modern Art in New York in June 2014 as programming accompanying the exhibitions *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art, 1948–1988* and *On the Edge: Brazilian Film Experiments of the 1960s and Early 1970s*. Despite this artistic contextualization of Parente's works, their presentation as films, as opposed to video (evident for example in the chosen venue of a theater, rather than in an in-gallery television set) deprived the works of their medium-specific qualities.

academic research methodology, seeking to provide a nuanced perspective on social and political life under military rule in 1970s Brazil.

Whereas the Oiticica exhibition embodied experiences of different textures, colors, and sounds within three-dimensional artistic environments and labyrinths, Parente's room-sized installation offered a darkened space in which to engage with a variety of techniques for measuring the body.³ By collecting data about visitors' individual bodies, Parente's installation operates as a commentary on the political restrictions implemented by Brazil's authoritarian State to control its individual citizens. *Medida* highlighted the creative strategies Parente developed to produce new experiences. Presented in Pittsburgh four decades after its initial exhibition, the recreation also aimed to provoke critical approaches to current social conditions by calling attention to the controlled participation of physical bodies in the public sphere.

Presenting Parente's installation in Pittsburgh in the pedagogical space of the UAG and in dialogue with Oiticica's environments offered both an art historical context and a curatorial methodology that identified her work as a profoundly experimental, political, and conceptual enterprise. My curatorial recreation of *Medida* was installed as part of the co-curated exhibition *Data (after)Lives: The Persistence of Encoded Identity*, which explored how data collection has shaped individual identity since the nineteenth century. Recreating Parente's installation in the context of *Data (after)Lives* offered comparable historical instances in which regulatory

³ Parente defined *Medida* as an 'environment' ('ambiente,' in Portuguese). For the purpose of this dissertation, *Medida* is identified as a work of installation art. For extended discussions about the history of the terms 'environment' and 'installation art,' see Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Julie H. Reiss, *From Margin to Center: The Spaces of Installation Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999). For Parente's description of *Medida*, see Letícia Parente, "Proposta de arte experimental," in André Parente and Katia Maciel, eds., *Letícia Parente: Arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso* (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro, 2011), 189–91.

institutions have controlled particular populations by measuring the bodies of selected individuals, such as Bertillonage and contemporary DNA tests. Visiting *Medida* in Pittsburgh in geographical proximity to Oiticica's installations allowed visitors to consider Parente's artistic practices in direct relation to the work of her peer from Brazil. These simultaneous recreations embodied radical proposals by Brazilian artists, thus expanding our references of global contemporary art.

Medida, both in its original installation and in its recreation, invited visitors to enter a gallery room with black walls and laboratory instruments—measuring tapes, calipers, mirrors, petri dishes, pH strips, etc.—organized in eight distinct stations. [Fig. 1] The displayed tools were to be used by the audience to measure their own bodies. Towards the entrance, participants were instructed to take and carry with them an “individual form” in which to record their body measurements. These measurements—of visual acuity, breathing capacity, pain resistance, blood type and price, etc.—resulted from following detailed instructions provided at each station. Together, these measuring stations created an environment designed as a space for reflection on the political control of the social body as exerted, for instance, through military regulations of individuals' circulation. As presented by Parente, the collective measurement of bodies also brought to the fore mechanisms of social control over diverse populations, as they have historically been used to regulate women's sexual desires, rate intellectual capacities of those with diverse facial features, and deem as exotic those with extraordinary body measurements. Originally on view in the wake of the most repressive period of Brazil's military dictatorship—a period coinciding with the administration of General Emílio Garrastazu Médici (1969–1974) and usually identified as the *anos de chumbo* (leaden years)—*Medida* denounced, in its darkened space, the contemporaneously implemented torture practices and gendered oppressions of a patriarchal society.

Because *Medida*'s critique of these and other tactics of social and political repression practiced in 1970s Brazil was indirect, the installation was on view as scheduled between June 10 and July 11, 1976. As evidenced by Brazilian newspapers that gave account of *Medida*'s experimental artistic strategies, Parente's work was publicized and does not seem to have attracted the interest of state censors. Developed exclusively during a time of authoritarian and repressive military administration—expressed in the constriction of civil rights through the oppressive control of political participation and physical torture—the artistic practice of Parente, a female chemist and artist from northeastern Brazil, inquires about the contemporary condition of Brazilian citizens. As this dissertation demonstrates, Parente's oeuvre offers an unparalleled lens to analyze how the artistic strategies and cultural networks created to bypass dictatorial restrictions effectively facilitated the emergence of a new era of openness and criticality in the history of art from Brazil.

Motivated by the poignant content and visual concision of her work, and by the commitment of Parente, a professional chemist, to her artistic practice at a particular place and time, this dissertation engages in a sustained analysis of Parente's artworks. Thoroughly navigating her personal archive and her milieu, it brings to light Parente's intellectual journey and artistic networks by tracing her transition from the chemistry university laboratories in the northeastern city of Fortaleza, to the experimental spaces of MAM–RJ, to the cosmopolitan galleries of the São Paulo Biennial, to her more recent incorporation into the history of modern and contemporary art of the Americas. Based on extensive archival research, the five chapters of this dissertation demonstrate how the specifics of her political and artistic context provoked Parente to position her work at the intersection of advocacy for women's rights, scientific paradigms, and new technologies. Approaching Parente as a node within an international network of artists, critics, and

curators also reveals the global dialogues carried out through artworks and exhibitions produced in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo during the 1970s.

Parente's artistic production, which developed between 1974 and 1982, offers a unique example of how visual representations can produce humanistic knowledge of the public life of women and other non-hegemonic subjects in extreme political situations. Throughout her work, Parente denounced the systematic mechanisms of an unequal society and a physically restrictive State. To understand the stakes of her practice, it is fundamental to examine why she was compelled to express her humanity by manipulating her own body and engaging new image reproduction technologies at this particular place and time.

1.1 Letícia T. S. Parente, Chemist

Whereas her artistic career was relatively brief, Parente, born Letícia Tarquínio de Souza in 1930, began pursuing the study of chemistry at a young age and practiced it continuously until the end of her life. Born into an upper-middle-class family in Salvador, in the northeastern state of Bahia, she graduated from Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA) with a degree in chemistry in 1952, at the age of twenty-two, and embarked on her life-long career as a science educator. Three years later and without leaving her profession, Parente married João José de Sá Parente, a professional engineer. In addition to taking her husband's name (afterwards she typically signed her name Letícia T.S. Parente), she adopted the traditional feminine roles of giving birth and raising children (five, in her case) while running a household with the constant aid of one or two maids—a marker of the family's social and economic status. For the next sixteen years Parente and her family lived in Fortaleza, João José's city of origin, where she developed her career as university

professor and researcher in the department of Organic and Inorganic Chemistry at Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC). In 1969, seeking to advance her career as chemist, Parente moved to Rio de Janeiro with her two oldest children. There, she earned an M.A. degree in inorganic chemistry sponsored by UFC, her home institution, at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), from where she transferred to the Pontifícia Universidade Católica (PUC Rio), one of Brazil's leading private universities. In 1974, Parente returned to Rio to pursue a Ph.D. in the same subfield and to join the Chemistry department at PUC Rio as a faculty member.⁴ Following the completion of her graduate degrees, Parente led the implementation of the M.A. program in chemistry at UFC. In 1978, after divorcing her husband, Parente moved permanently to Rio de Janeiro as tenured faculty in the department of Chemistry at PUC Rio. Between 1979 and 1980, she spent three months as visiting researcher at the Laboratoire d'Énergétique Électrochimique at the Institut National Polytechnique de Grenoble, France, and as collaborator at Università di Palermo in Italy. Years later, in 1985 Parente earned a second M.A. in Education from Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) in Rio, before culminating her scientific career as director of the Centro de Ciências do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (State of Rio de Janeiro Center for Sciences, CECIERJ; 1987–1991). In 1991, Parente died of cancer at her home in Rio de Janeiro at the age of sixty-one.⁵

⁴ In August 1973, PUC offered Parente the opportunity to pursue her Ph.D. there as a condition of her appointment as faculty member. To avoid a simultaneous, double affiliation as both graduate student and professor in the same department, Parente opted to complete a “Concurso de Livre Docência” (equivalent to a Ph.D. program according to Brazilian legislation) at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) at the same time that she joined PUC first on a temporary and then on a permanent basis. See Erich Minzl to Letícia Parente, August 31, 1973, and Letícia Parente to Padre Leopoldo Hainberger, January 20, 1974, in Letícia Parente private archive.

⁵ Biographical data on Parente has been culled from sustained personal conversations with four of her five children; from personal documentation and correspondence filed in Letícia Parente private archive; and from the “Biography Chronology” section of *Letícia Parente: arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso*, ed. André Parente and Katia Maciel, trans. Renato Rezende (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro; +2 Produções, 2011), 213–23.

In the Brazilian context, Parente's life-span was marked by a series of military governments, industrial modernization, and the growth of the higher education sector that were punctuated by the dictatorial Estado Novo (New State, 1937–45) under president Getúlio Vargas; the rapid modernization that saw the creation of Brasília, a new capital city, under the leadership of democratically-elected president Juscelino Kubitschek (1956–1961); and the return to a repressive military State between 1964–1985, as established by a succession of militarily-elected presidents. While the 1930s saw the establishment of universities, the 1950s and '60s witnessed unprecedented governmental support for the expansion of public universities and structural educational reforms.⁶ These relatively rapid developments in the history of public higher education in Brazil positively defined Parente's scientific profession and political views.

Higher education reforms implemented in the 1960s carried the most significant historical implications for Parente's professional development as chemist. They also grounded the long-term effects of national modernization policies initiated by Kubitschek and continued by military administrations.⁷ These structural reforms allowed for the implementation of graduate programs

⁶ The foundation of Brazilian universities in the 1930s presents a significant historical discrepancy with similar endeavors in other Latin American countries, reflecting Brazil's unique history within Iberian colonies in the Americas. In contrast to the Portuguese regulations reserving the name 'university' only for the medieval institutions located in Portugal, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM), for instance, was first created in 1551 as the Real y Pontificia Universidad de México (Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico). In Brazil, the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) was created in 1934 on the pillars of unrelated schools previously founded in São Paulo. The creation of USP probably responded to international discussions about the institutional structure of universities across the Americas, especially regarding their financial dependence from the State and their intellectual autonomy. See "A Universidade de São Paulo," Universidade de São Paulo, accessed March 13, 2019, <https://www5.usp.br/institucional/a-usp/>.

⁷ "From the departmental structure to entrance exams to the graduate system, the base of the university structure in place today was built by the dictatorship. Even better, it was forcefully imposed, even though its essence was designed by leadership faculty, and the pressure of the student movement—or the fear that this produced in the military—served as counterbalance and prevented the application of certain measurements intended by the State." ["Da estrutura departamental ao sistema de pós-graduação, passando pelos exames vestibulares, a base da estrutura universitária em vigor foi construída pela ditadura; ou melhor, foi imposta à força, embora a essência desse desenho tenha sido elaborada por líderes docentes, e a pressão do movimento estudantil – ou o temor que ela despertava nos militares – tenha servido de contrapeso e evitado a aplicação de certas medidas pretendidas pelo Estado."] Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, *As universidades e o regime militar* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2014), 8. Unless otherwise noted, all

designed to advance specialized knowledge acquired through concatenated levels of academic training (B.A., M.A., and Ph.D., known in Brazil as *bachelarado*, *maestrado*, and *doutorado*). This restructuring of higher education and formation of graduate programs also resulted in the inauguration in only four years of ten public universities throughout Brazil and, in the long term, in internationally competent Brazilian scholars, as demonstrated in Parente's case by her residency in French laboratories and collaborations with Italian colleagues.⁸ However, only a small section of the population had access to quality elementary and secondary education and could benefit from these programs. Since at the time secondary education was not available to all Brazilians, access to universities was reserved for a privileged sector defined by class (and by race, reflecting an entrenched history of slavery) yet not by gender. Growing up in a white, middle-upper-class family, Parente received a secondary education and was able to complete her professional degree in chemistry at UFBA, one of Brazil's seven federal universities at the time. Once Parente became tenured faculty at UFC, these structural university reforms allowed her to earn M.A. and Ph.D. degrees and to create, in turn, UFC's Master's program in chemistry.⁹

Although Parente's scientific training exemplifies the educational and scientific developments implemented by successive military administrations between 1964 and 1985, during these same years Parente developed a prominent artistic practice created in the privacy of her domestic space and in reaction to the national dictatorial regime. As analyzed in the following

translations are mine. See also Motta, chapter 2, *As universidades e o regime militar*.

⁸ According to Thomas Kong, in 1956 Brazil had only seven federal universities, a number that increased to seventeen by 1960. This steep increase reflects governmental policies and the enlarged budget for education implemented under Kubitschek. Thomas H. Kong, "Educação para as elites, financiamento e ensino primário no Brasil, 1930–1964" in *Latin American Research Review* 52, 1 (2017), 44.

⁹ In recognition of Parente's pedagogical commitment and her leadership role in the creation of UFC's chemistry M.A. program, one of the lecture rooms in the Organic and Inorganic Chemistry department building in the School of Sciences at UFC is today named "Sala Professora Leticia Parente."

chapters, her work was exhibited in plain sight, despite its critiques of contemporary social, political, and economic realities, and publicly recognized in museums of modern and contemporary art as a valuable contribution to Brazilian artistic production. By embodying conceptual artistic strategies and deploying newly-available technological media, between 1974 and 1982 Parente created sophisticated works that today continue to offer a critical perspective on a socio-political context informed by a military dictatorship. Against this historical background, I propose that Parente's profound familiarity with Brazil's public educational system, in combination with her own commitments to artmaking and to feminist social and political movements that developed around the world, made her uniquely positioned to respond to her immediate historical context by means of a creative, artistic production.¹⁰

1.2 Letícia T.S. Parente, Artist

The shifting subjects of personal notebooks that Parente maintained throughout her life offer a glance into the multifaceted life of this extraordinary woman, a scientist and artist highly aware of the social and political forces informing her feminine identity and contemporary existence. Although primarily motivated by the advancement of her career as a chemist, Parente's first sojourn to Rio de Janeiro was not only formative for her profession as scientist, but decisive for her artistic vocation. In Rio, Parente began to explore artmaking at the short-lived institute

¹⁰ Parente did not openly articulate her political position in her private records. However, I infer her opposition to the military regime by analyzing her works of art and from anecdotes recalled by Parente's daughter Cristiana. For instance, during the years of the military regime, Parente occasionally protected UFC students by privately hosting them in her home; Cristiana Parente, interview with the author, May 29, 2017, Fortaleza.

Núcleo de Arte e Criatividade (Nucleus of Art and Creativity), starting in 1971. As detailed in her personal notebooks, Parente initially developed her interest in artmaking by learning the technical aspects of printmaking.¹¹ Sketches for her prints are interspersed throughout her notebooks. Sometimes originating in the form of doodles, these sketches cover the margins of her notebooks and yearly planners that otherwise give account, in equal amounts, of Parente's chemistry experiments, calculations, class planning annotations, bibliographical entries for chemistry and artistic references, children's clothing needs and expenses, and personal philosophical reflections. [Fig. 2]

On her return to Fortaleza between 1972–73, Parente disseminated her monotypes among friends and exhibited them in university galleries.¹² One of the first times that Parente exhibited her work was in the 1973 solo exhibition *Letícia* at the Museu de Arte at Universidade Federal do Ceará (MAUC) in Fortaleza—a natural venue given her affiliation as tenured faculty. Parente's solo exhibition was comprised of twenty monotypes (hand-made drawings realized with single-copy printing techniques) that were created over the previous two years both in Rio and in Fortaleza. According to the exhibition catalogue, the exhibited monotypes bore descriptive titles—*Cavalo de brinquedo* (Wood horse), *Mulher pensando* (Thinking woman), *Sereia* (Mermaid), *Composição violeta* (Purple composition), etc.—and measure approximately 30 by 20 inches.¹³ Delineated over brown, green, and blue backgrounds, Parente's semi-figurative forms conveyed

¹¹ An undated notebook in Parente's private archive provides detailed instructions on printing techniques. Letícia Parente private archive.

¹² According to the exhibition catalog *Letícia*, Parente had been invited as special guest to the *Exposição Universitária de Artes Plásticas* in 1972. As listed in the same catalogue, in 1973 she won the Prêmio de Aquisição (Acquisition prize) at *Salão de Abril*, and participated in the collective exhibitions *Unifor 70* and *Círculo Militar de Fortaleza*. *Letícia* (Fortaleza: Museu de Arte da Universidade Federal do Ceará, 1973, exhibition catalog), n.p.

¹³ See *Letícia*, n.p.

through organic lines loosely recall the paintings of modernist European artists such as Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee.¹⁴ [Fig. 3–5] She quickly moved away from this mode in the year following the exhibition.

In 1974, Parente returned to Rio, where she deepened her artistic interests by attending weekly meetings with a group of independent artists she had befriended. Most of them worked regularly at the studios of MAM–RJ, one of the city’s prime locations for the production and exhibition of modern and contemporary art at the time. Constant intellectual exchanges with Anna Bella Geiger (b. 1933), Sonia Andrade (b. 1935), Paulo Herkenhoff (b. 1949), Fernando Cocchiarale (b. 1951), Ivens Machado (1942–2015), Miriam Danowski (b. 1950), and Ana Vitória Mussi (b. 1943), and the networks created through their weekly meetings would define Parente’s artistic practice as it is known today.

As a participant in this group led by Geiger, Parente began to experiment in her artistic practice with new, electronic technologies while creating an oeuvre marked by radical aesthetics performed on the body. In approaching Parente’s work, I distinguish between her formal experimentation, as characterized by the prints included in the 1973 exhibition *Leticia*, and her contemporary art production, which I understand as the creation of artworks in non-traditional media that critically responded to their historical context.¹⁵ Parente’s experimentation with new media art strategies starting in 1974 reflects an artistic interest in expressing her political views vis-à-vis her immediate, contemporary historical context. Parente was only able to achieve this

¹⁴ Parente’s peers, artists Anna Bella Geiger and Fernando Cocchiarale, repeatedly mentioned the work of Paul Klee as a key reference for their circle. Anna Bella Geiger, interview with the author, June 6, 2017, Rio de Janeiro; and Fernando Cocchiarale, interview with the author, June 10, 2017, Rio de Janeiro.

¹⁵ My understanding of contemporary art heavily relies in Terry Smith’s definition, summarized as a “critical art alert to art’s history within history, and responsive to the shaping powers of historical forces.” Terry Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 243–44.

goal by manipulating, capturing, and reproducing her body in the non-traditional media of video, installation, mail, and Xerox.

Artistic and curatorial strategies for the production and display of contemporary artworks proved essential in expanding Parente's artistic practices and socio-political critique. In 1975, Parente solidified her professional network of Rio de Janeiro-based artists, established personal relations with curators, and produced an initial body of work in new media by abandoning traditional artistic media in favor of new image reproduction technologies. During this year—indeed, in a matter of days—Parente created a series of videos that stand as the pillars of her artistic achievements. Recorded in black and white and lasting only a few minutes each, these videos display apparently simple tasks such as sewing, applying makeup, and storing clothing to address the violent repressions of a patriarchal society governed by a military dictatorship. The same year Parente created them, these videos were exhibited in venues for experimental artistic creation that constituted viable escape routes from political and social regulations that conditioned individual bodies, and specifically those of feminine identities.

Through her videos, Parente soon came to be recognized by her contemporaries as a visual artist. *Marca registrada* (Trademark, 1975), her best-known work which records the artist painstakingly writing “Made in Brasil” [sic] on the sole of her foot with a needle and thread, was exhibited during the late 1970s both in Brazil's largest cities and abroad. [Fig. 6] Her participation in the group meetings led by Geiger and conducted in participants' homes paved the way for Parente's inclusion in landmark exhibitions of contemporary art from Brazil both in Rio and São Paulo—such as *8 Jovem Arte Contemporânea* (1974) and *Poéticas Visuais* (1977) at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea at Universidade de São Paulo (MAC USP), and “Área Experimental” at

MAM–RJ.¹⁶ Parente’s participation in these exhibitions consolidated her artistic identity and led to the inclusion of her work in exhibitions of international relevance, including several *International Open Encounters* organized world-wide by Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC, 1974–78) as well as the 1981 São Paulo Biennial.

The experimental nature of Parente’s oeuvre, as presented in these exhibitions, evidenced her profound interest in interdisciplinary methodologies. As analyzed in this dissertation, she developed a unique artistic practice while advancing her career as chemist and under a military regime marked by successive periods historically identified as *anos de chumbo* (lead years, 1969–1974); *distensão* (relaxation, 1974–1979); and *abertura* (opening, 1979–1985). ‘Relaxation’ refers to the easing of the authoritarian regime initiated under president General Ernesto Geisel (1974–79) following the lift of the decade-long Ato Institucional no. 5 (Institutional Act no. 5, hereafter AI-5) in 1978.¹⁷ ‘Opening’ indicates the move towards democratic dynamics implemented under president General João Baptista Figueiredo (1979–85) starting with the Amnesty Law in 1979 and concluding in 1985 with the first presidential elections since 1960.¹⁸ By denouncing authoritarian control of individuals and systematic gender inequalities in this

¹⁶ *Marca registrada* was exhibited for the first time in the exhibition *Mostra de Arte Experimental de Filmes Super 8, Audio-Visual e Video-Tapes* at Galerie de la Maison de France, Rio de Janeiro, November 4–7, 1975. In São Paulo, *Marca registrada* was presented in the exhibition *7 Artistas de Video no MAC*, which took place on May 21, 1977, 3.30–5.30pm, at MAC USP’s “Espaço B.” In Buenos Aires, it was presented at the Centro de arte y comunicación (CAYC) as part of the *4th International Open Encounter*, October 31–November 14, 1975.

¹⁷ From December 13, 1968 to December 13, 1978, the AI-5 suspended the National Congress and limited suffrage, *habeas corpus*, and rights to conduct political activities and manifestations, as well as other constitutional rights. “Ato Institucional Nº 5, de 13 de dezembro de 1968,” *Presidência da República, Casa Civil, Subchefia para Assuntos Jurídicos*, accessed February 11, 2018, http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/ait/ait-05-68.htm.

¹⁸ The Lei de Anistia (Amnesty Law, no. 6683, 28 august, 1979) pardoned all political crimes and benefitted civilians condemned to exile under the military government as well as military officers vulnerable to accusations of human rights violations under future democratic governments. The celebration of presidential elections in 1985 was highly influenced by a two-year, popular civic protest campaign broadly identified with the slogan “Diretas já” (direct [elections] now). Scholarly and popular sources also date the end of the opening period in 1988, when Brazil’s constitution was thoroughly revised according to democratic parameters.

national historical context, Parente's contemporary artistic practice reveals an affective and sophisticated response to systematic oppressions that went beyond—yet were exacerbated by—the specifics of Brazil's military dictatorship. Yet Parente's work also allows for interpretations that surpass her immediate, national concerns to encompass the structural inequalities that have defined the contemporary condition of women. When Parente was developing her artistic practice, feminist movements were forming around the world and, although political participation was highly restricted during Brazil's dictatorship, the structural disadvantage of women started to be discussed at the time in the circles of which Parente was part.

1.3 A Brief History of Feminism in Brazil

The history of feminism in Brazil, although parallel to world-wide developments and reflecting socio-economic conditions that extend to many, if not all Latin American countries, is rooted in Brazil's historical socio-economic distribution. Women's right to vote was partially achieved in Brazil in 1933, and by 1946 the popular vote was consolidated for the entire female population.¹⁹ Following this first wave, a second wave of feminism made a subtle appearance in the 1970s in direct relation to the dictatorial state, when the vote was no longer a gendered demand, given that civil rights (including the right to vote) were suspended for all civilians.

¹⁹ Beginning in 1933, married women and property owners were able to vote. In 1946, suffrage became mandatory for the entire Brazilian adult population, a right that ceased in 1964 and was reimplemented in 1985. "Breve cronologia do movimento feminista no Brasil," in *50 anos de feminismo: Argentina, Brasil e Chile: A construção das mulheres como atores políticos e democráticos* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2017), 330–31.

As the texts compiled in the 2019 anthology *Pensamento feminista brasileiro: formação e contexto* make clear, most Brazilians advocating for women's rights did not openly identify with a feminist agenda.²⁰ This is the case, for example, of one of the most prominent figures in this context, Heleieth Saffioti (São Paulo, 1934–2010), whose scholarship was presented as a sociological study of class, with a focus on women. Today, Saffioti's 1967 doctoral dissertation is widely recognized as one of the earliest feminism publications in Brazil.²¹ Another major figure in Brazilian feminism, Rose Marie Muraro (Rio de Janeiro, 1930–2014) was widely recognized (and criticized) for bringing U.S. writer and activist Betty Friedan (1921–2006) to Rio de Janeiro in 1971.²² Saffioti's own late recognition of her contributions to feminist thinking, along with Muraro's efforts to create a dialogue between Brazilian and international movements and the press rejections she received, exemplify the slow-to-build progress of feminism in Brazil. Individual efforts such as Saffioti's and Muraro's were not immediately recognized for their specific contribution to feminist thinking during the 1970s. Rather, these efforts were highlighted through widely distributed publications following the return to democracy, when feminists began advocating for the active recognition of gender, class, and race equity.²³

Parente did not directly engage with contributors to Brazil's nascent feminist movements. However, her intellectual and cultural interest in collective social movements informed her artistic denunciation of the structural inequalities and gendered expectations of a patriarchal society. To

²⁰ Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, ed., *Pensamento feminista brasileiro: formação e contexto* (Rio de Janeiro: Bazar do tempo, 2019).

²¹ Heleieth I. B. Saffioti, *Women in Class Society*, trans. Michael Vale (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

²² See Natalia Prieta Méndez, *Intelectuais feministas no Brasil dos anos 1960: Carmen da Silva, Heleieth Saffioti, Rose Marie Muraro* (Jundiaí, SP: Paco Editorial, 2017).

²³ Flavia Rios, "A cidadania imaginada pelas mulheres afro-brasileiras: da ditadura à democracia," in *50 anos de feminismo: Argentina, Brasil e Chile*, 227–253.

simultaneously manage her professional commitments as a researcher and tenured professor and her active engagement in artmaking, Parente's daily domestic labor was supported by other women hired to clean the family home and cook for all family members, as is typical in urban middle-class households across Latin America. That this gendered, remunerated help opened room in Parente's schedule to develop intellectual and creative enterprises sheds light on her socio-economic status within Brazil, identifying hers as a statistically privileged situation.

1.4 Experimentation as Concept and Methodology

While feminist approaches informed Parente's artistic practice, comprehensive experimental methodologies defined her work both as scientist and as artist. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, before her emergence as artist, Parente was constantly experimenting. As a professor of inorganic chemistry and in the academic context of scientific laboratories at UFC, UFF, and PUC Rio, Parente designed, produced, and revised specific and precise scientific experiments while honing her pedagogical approaches. Experimentation informed her chemistry research projects (primarily on electronegativity and on lithium batteries), her teaching methodologies and philosophy, and her scientific publications on the pedagogy and epistemology of basic sciences.

When recalling Parente's emphasis on the relevance of experimentation as a fundamental aspect of scientific knowledge, Judith Pessoa de Andrade Feitosa, one of Parente's undergraduate students at UFC and currently a professor of Chemistry at UFC herself, pointed to *Chemical Systems: Chemical Bond Approach Project*, the textbook used in Parente's chemistry introductory

course.²⁴ This U.S. publication presents the stakes of experimentation along with its fundamental phases—design, production (observation and recording), evaluation, and reformulation—while emphasizing the importance of “theoretical considerations” given to an experiment.²⁵ Experimentation was likewise at the core of Parente’s *Química: um estudo sobre a profissão do químico* (Chemistry: A Study on the Chemist’s Profession, 1968).²⁶ This textbook dedicated to “this country’s youth” presents Parente’s own take on chemistry as a science based on experimental methodologies, and offers practical considerations for the professional application of chemistry in 1960s–1970s Brazil.²⁷ As such, *Química* offers both an intellectual lens into Parente’s long-life career and into her understanding of the practical paths available to Brazilian professional chemists. Like the U.S. textbook, it emphasizes the relevance of experimentation as a specialized procedure for making observations.²⁸

In her classroom, Parente used to visually represent for her students the concept of experimentation. According to Feitosa, for an undergraduate class Parente introduced the discipline of chemistry (the science of matter) by reenacting the black box exercise described in

²⁴ Chemical Bond Approach Project, ed., *Chemical Systems* (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill, 1964). Judith Pessoa de Andrade Feitosa in conversation with the author, May 25, 2017, Fortaleza.

²⁵ *Chemical Systems* was collectively researched and written between 1959 and 1964 by members of the Chemical Bond Approach (CBA) Project, a group of nine high school and nine college chemistry professors affiliated, for instance, with Brown University and Reeds College, that benefited from the revision of experts from MIT, Oxford University and the University of New South Wales, among other institutions, and the financial support of the National Science Foundation.

²⁶ For a complete account on Parente’s publications in chemistry and in pedagogy, see this dissertation’s bibliography.

²⁷ The first, and to the best of my knowledge only edition of this book is dedicated “To my children: André, Ângela, Lia, Cristiana e Pedro; and to this country’s youths, who are our reserves of hope.” [“A meus filhos: André, Ângela, Lia, Cristiana e Pedro; e a todos os jovens deste país, que são nossas reservas de esperança.”] Parente, *Química*, 7.

²⁸ According to *Chemical Systems*, “Scientific observations are made to obtain information. With the information, the scientist attempts to answer questions raised by ideas. In most cases the questions require special procedures to get the most appropriate information.” 5.

Chemical Systems as the blind examination of a loose object inside a sealed box.²⁹ By making precise observations both before and after opening the box, this experiment foregrounds how intellectual engagement can offer answers to previously composed questions, while underlining the relevance of both factual and interpretative questions for advancing scientific knowledge. This example of Parente's active learning pedagogical strategies illustrates how her work on chemistry heavily relied on experimentation, a theoretical basis that she incorporated in artworks like *Medida*.

More broadly, experimentation was a fundamental characteristic of advanced artistic practice in 1960s and '70s Brazil. In the 1960s, art critic and public intellectual Mário Pedrosa (1900–1981) famously coined the expression “exercício experimental de liberdade” (experimental exercise of freedom) to describe the production of contemporary art.³⁰ Reflecting on his own expression in 1967, Pedrosa specifically emphasized freedom as a decisive feature of the artistic behavior of contemporary artists. While Pedrosa's term remained popular, in reality the oppressive socio-political climate of Brazil's military dictatorship (which forced Pedrosa into exile from 1970–77) limited the experimental potential of contemporary artistic production.³¹ The general retraction from experimentation can be attributed to the 1968 implementation of AI-5, which for ten years modified the Brazilian constitution and restricted civil rights including suffrage and *habeas corpus*. And yet, institutions such as MAM-RJ and MAC USP incorporated

²⁹ On the black box experiment, see *Chemical Systems*, 8. In *Química*, Parente states “Chemistry is the science of matter.” [“A química é a ciência da matéria.”] 13.

³⁰ Mário Pedrosa “Especulaciones estéticas,” in *Mário Pedrosa: de la naturaleza afectiva de la forma*, ed., Mercedes Pineda and Mafalda Rodríguez, trad. Marta Pino (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2017), 253. On the application of Pedrosa's term, see Beverly Adams, “Interview with Antonio Manuel” in *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* 44, 2 (2011): 292–296.

³¹ “Mário Pedrosa y los años setenta: Aracy Amaral conversa con Sérgio B. Martins” in *Mário Pedrosa: de la naturaleza afectiva de la forma*, 103.

experimental practices into their programming during the 1970s. This shift would have a significant impact on Parente's artistic development.

1.5 State of the Field

Some art historians have claimed that, as a side effect of the dictatorship, the 1970s was a relatively weak period in the history of art in Brazil, given reduced international contact for Brazilian artists, with the exception of Oiticica and Lygia Clark (Belo Horizonte, 1920–Rio de Janeiro, 1988), both of whom lived in exile at the time.³² This, however, is a perception based on the history of the São Paulo Biennial that does not correspond with the activities of resourceful Brazilian artists who built collegial networks and created artworks in non-traditional media in the same years. For many living in Brazil, innovative possibilities for artmaking and the use of precarious materials of everyday life were an ideal vehicle to render visible Brazil's social structures in private and public spheres.³³ Artists and artworks representative of this period include, among many others, Lygia Pape's performance *O ovo* and collective proposal *O divisor* (The egg and Divider, both 1967); Artur Barrio's *Trouxas ensanguentadas* (Bloody bundles, 1969–1970), conceived and exhibited as public art; Cildo Meireles's series of interventions *Inserção em circuitos ideológicos* (Insertions into ideological circuits, 1970–1975); and Anna Maria Maiolino's *Fotopoemação* (Photo-poem-action, 1973–2017) series of photographs. Institutional support of

³² See Isobel Whitelegg, "The Bienal de São Paulo: Unseen/Undone (1969–1981)," *Afterall* 22 (2009), 106–113; and Margaret Garlake, *Britain and the São Paulo Bienal, 1951–1991* (London: British Council, 1991), 25–26.

³³ See Elena Shtromberg, *Art Systems: Brazil and the 1970s* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016); and Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

museum directors, exhibition organizers, and art critics was a key element for fostering these and other artistic practices, including Parente's, which together constituted a new artistic generation.

In recent years, scholars have delved into the nuances of artistic production in Brazil, bringing considerably increased attention to its contemporary art. This interest has resulted in scholarly articles, theses, and books; anthologies and translations of historical texts; and major exhibitions on the subject. In their scholarly monographs, U.S.-based art historians Claudia Calirman, Elena Shtromberg, and Irene Small unpack the complexities of contemporary art in Brazil by focusing on artists of Parente's generation.³⁴ They analyze how these artists advanced their production beyond the tenets of the Neo-Concrete movement (mostly developed during the 1950s and early 1960s) and under Brazil's military dictatorship. While Calirman presents the aesthetic reactions of Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles to governmental political repression, Shtromberg examines the strategies that artists including Parente developed, mainly in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, to avoid censorship and insert their art into institutionalized circuits and modes of production. Meanwhile, Small considers the advancement of art by Oiticica. The varying emphases of these books on the production and reception of art amid a precarious political situation provide a rich framework for understanding Parente's context and production.³⁵

³⁴ Calirman, *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship*; Shtromberg, *Art Systems*; and Irene Small, *Hélio Oiticica: Folding the Frame* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

³⁵ The literature is further bolstered by rich scholarship on artists active in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s. The most salient publications mapping the consolidation of Brazilian modern art and the transition to contemporary production include Kaira M. Cabañas, *Learning from Madness: Brazilian Modernism and Global Contemporary Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018); Esther Gabara, ed., *Pop América: 1965–1975* (Durham N.C.: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, 2018); Aleca Le Blanc, ed., *Making Art Concrete: Works from Argentina and Brazil in the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2017); Lygia Pape et al., *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017); Zelevansky, et al., *Hélio Oiticica*; Aleca Le Blanc, "Under Construction: Rio de Janeiro in 1959," in *Transatlantic Encounters: Avant-Garde Discourses in Spain and Latin America 1920–1970*, ed. Paula Barreiro López (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2015); Mário Pedrosa, Glória Ferreira, and Paulo Herkenhoff, *Mário Pedrosa: Primary Documents* (New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art, 2015); Cornelia H. Butler et al., *Lygia*

Most of the artists discussed by Calirman, Shtromberg, and Small, including Parente, developed radical artistic practices—recently included in monographic exhibitions—while living in Rio de Janeiro during the late 1960s and early 1970s. By the time Parente began making art, usage of non-traditional materials was already a common practice in Rio. Beyond individual practices, non-traditional materials were at the core of collective proposals like *Domingos da Criação* (Sundays of creation, 1970), an initiative carried out on the ground floor and surrounding gardens of MAM–RJ in which the general public was invited to partake in unstructured collective artmaking exercises.³⁶ Arriving in a major city where Oiticica’s *Parangolés* (Parangolés, 1964), Clark’s *Bichos* (Critters, 1962), and Pape’s *Roda dos prazeres* (Wheel of pleasures, 1967) were among the interactive works with which a Rio de Janeiro audience would have been familiar at the time, Parente found fertile ground to explore her creative interests beyond her training in chemistry.

Some of the works in non-traditional media that might have constituted artistic references for Parente have recently been on view in retrospective exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe that masterfully presented the breadth of work of Oiticica, Clark, Anna Maria Maiolino (b. 1942), Lygia Pape (1927–2004), and Mira Schendel (1919–1988).³⁷ Because they displayed exhibition copies

Clark: *The Abandonment of Art, 1948-1988* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2014); Adele Nelson, “Sensitive and Nondiscursive Things: Lygia Pape and the Reconception of Printmaking,” *Art Journal* 71:3 (2012): 26-45; María Amalia García, *El arte abstracto: Intercambios culturales entre Argentina y Brasil* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno: MALBA, Fundación Costantini, 2011); and Adele Nelson, “Monumental and Ephemeral: The Early São Paulo Bienais,” in Mary Kate O’Hare and Karen A. Bearor, *Constructive Spirit: Abstract Art in South and North America, 1920s-50s* (Newark, N.J. : San Francisco: Newark Museum ; Pomegranate, 2010).

³⁶ See Jessica Gogan and Frederico Moraes, *Domingos da criação: uma coleção poética do experimental em arte e educação* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto MESA: Automática, 2017).

³⁷ See Helen Molesworth, ed. *Anna Maria Maiolino* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art 2017); Iria Candela, ed., *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2017); Lynn Zelevansky, ed., *Hélio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 2016); Cornelia H. Butler, ed., *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art, 1948–1988* (New York: Museum of Modern Art: 2014); and Tanya Barson and Taisa Palhares, eds., *Mira Schendel* (London: Tate Modern, with Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2013).

of participatory artworks, these exhibitions can be considered in dialogue with the recreation of Parente's *Medida* that I realized as part of *Data (after) Lives* at the UAG in 2016, which preceded by a year the partial reproduction of the same installation at Parente's retrospective *Eu armário de mim* at Galeria Jacqueline Martins in São Paulo.³⁸ Prior to this curatorial emphasis on *Medida*, Parente was primarily recognized for her black and white videos.

Since the early 1990s, Parente has been identified as a central figure within the first generation of Brazilian video artists; *Marca registrada*, in which she stitches into her foot, is a required reference in publications about video art from Brazil.³⁹ Her work has been addressed mostly in conjunction with the work of her colleagues in Rio who worked in the same medium, including Andrade, Geiger, and Machado. This group was contemporaneously identified by Italian artist and curator Mirella Bentivoglio as "conceptualists from Rio."⁴⁰ However, they have more frequently been recognized as the "pioneer generation of video artists," by Brazilian artist Lucila Meirelles in 1985 and by communications scholar Arlindo Machado in 1996.⁴¹ The 1985

³⁸ The recreation of artworks and exhibitions (as exhibition copies, reconstructed installations, restaged displays, reenacted actions and events, etc.) constitutes a major trend in international curatorial practice, as evidenced by myriad art exhibitions including *Lea Lublin* (Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, 2020), *Menesunda Reloaded* (New Museum, 2019), *The Illusive Eye* (El Museo del Barrio, 2016), *Other Primary Structures* (The Jewish Museum, 2014), *The Artist Is Present* (MoMA, 2014), *When Attitudes Become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013* (Fondazione Prada, 2013), and *Marina Abramovic: Seven Easy Pieces* (Guggenheim Museum, 2005). This practice has been the subject of academic inquiry as published in the last issue of the *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, special topic *Restaging Exhibitions* (8, 2, 2019), and in Natasha Adamou's and Michaela Giebelhausen's research project "Reconstructing Exhibitions" and edited volume of the same name (New York: Routledge, 2020).

³⁹ Significantly, a still frame of *Marca registrada* appears on the cover of Arlindo Machado, ed., *Made in Brasil: três décadas do vídeo brasileiro* (São Paulo: Iluminuras: Itaú Cultural, 2007), which also borrows its name from Parente's work, and also Christine Mello, *Extremidades do vídeo* (São Paulo: Editora SENAC São Paulo, 2008).

⁴⁰ See Sonia Andrade, Anna Bella Geiger, and Fernando Cocchiarale, individual interviews with the author, June 6–13, 2017, Rio de Janeiro; and Cristina Freire, *Poéticas do processo: arte conceitual no Museu* (São Paulo, SP: MAC, Universidade de São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1999).

⁴¹ The use of the word "pioneers" as a generational categorization in the history of video art is not used exclusively in relation to Brazilian artists. Beyond national art histories, the origins of video art are typically traced to single figures recognized as pioneers, most prominently Nam June Paik (South Korea, 1932–U.S., 2006) and Joan Jonas (New York, b.1936). See Malin Hedlin Hayden, *Video Art Historicized: Traditions and Negotiations* (Farnham Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015); and Cecilia Dougherty, "Stories from a Generation: Video Art at

exhibition *Os pioneiros* (The Pioneers), curated by Meirelles as part of the third *Videobrasil* festival in São Paulo, focused on videos produced by Brazilian artists of Parente's generation.⁴² Years later, Machado built a historiography of Brazilian video art based on three distinguishable generations: the pioneers generation (1970s), the independent video generation (1980s), and the third generation (1990s).⁴³

Machado's historiography provided a clear chronological basis for tracing different uses of video in Brazil and the consolidation of the medium around the first *Festival de Video Brasil* in 1983.⁴⁴ Although this chronological historicization has been adopted by scholars including Cristina Freire and Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, it has failed to address the complexities of the early works on video or to expand on the aesthetic strategies of specific artworks from the pioneers generation.⁴⁵ This approach has also left unexamined multimedia and intergenerational overlaps, as well as international exchanges that ultimately coalesced in the early 1980s but began in the previous decade with video as one among many new image reproduction technologies.⁴⁶ Countering this isolationist tendency, scholars Nick Fitch and Anne-Sophie Dinant have reinforced

The Woman's Building," in *From Site to Vision: The Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2011), 303–25.

⁴² "Os Pioneiros," Lucila Meirelles, *III Festival Fotoptica Videobrasil*, October 25, 1985, <http://site.videobrasil.org.br/festival/arquivo/festival/21090> accessed March 11, 2018.

⁴³ See Arlindo Machado, "Video Art: The Brazilian Adventure," *Leonardo* 29:3 (1996): 225–231; and Machado, *Made in Brasil*, 277–80.

⁴⁴ Throughout the years and reflecting different sponsors and foci, the festival of video organized by Associação Cultural Videobrasil has change its name multiple times. Hereafter, I refer to it as *Festival Videobrasil*.

⁴⁵ See Cristina Freire, "Alternative Nets," in *Subversive Practices: Art Under Conditions of Political Repression, 60's - 80's, South America, Europe*, ed. Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler (Stuttgart: Württembergischer Kunstverein, 2009); Mello, *Extremidades do vídeo*; and Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, *Arte no Brasil 1950-2000: movimentos e meios* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2004).

⁴⁶ On the large variety of newly available image reproduction technologies used in Brazil at the time, see Daisy V.M. Peccini de Alvarado, ed., *Arte novos meios multimeios: Brasil '70/80*, exh. cat. [1985] (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Brasileira, Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado, 2010).

the international nature of video art, arguing that the 1975 exhibition *Video Art*, organized at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, catalyzed the practice in Brazil.⁴⁷ More recently, and delving into the complexities of configuring a more robust national context, Luise Malmaceda has analyzed the emergence of experimental film and video during the 1970s in Brazil's southern region, one of the few studies on the subject to surpass the limited scope of the Rio de Janeiro–São Paulo axis.⁴⁸ In-depth analyses of specific videos nonetheless remain scarce. A prominent exception is the scholarship of Shtromberg, which offers detailed analyses of works by Letícia Parente, Sonia Andrade, Paulo Herkenhoff, and Geraldo Anhaia Mello.⁴⁹ Outside Brazil, Parente has recently been featured in thematic exhibitions in the U.S., Brazil, and Europe that situate her work within constellations that move beyond the origins of video in Brazil. Her videos and works on paper were prominently featured in three of the many exhibitions sponsored by the Getty in its 2017 Pacific Standard Time: Los Angeles/Latin America (PST:LA/LA) initiative. The most prominent of these, *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985*, which opened at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles and traveled to the Brooklyn Museum in New York and the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, gave prominent placement to two of Parente's videos (*Marca registrada* and *Preparação I* [Preparation I], both 1975) among a network of women artists working in neighboring countries and under comparable political circumstances.⁵⁰ *Video Art in Latin America*,

⁴⁷ Nick Fitch and Anne-Sophie Dinant, “‘Situações-Limites’: the emergence of video art in Brazil in the 1970s,” *Moving Image Review & Art Journal* 1, 1 (2012): 59–67.

⁴⁸ Luise Boeno Malmaceda, “O eixo sul experimental: conceitualismos e contracultura nos cenários artísticos de Curitiba e Porto Alegre, anos 1970,” M.A. thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2018.

⁴⁹ Shtromberg, *Art Systems* and “Bodies in Peril: Enacting Censorship in Early Brazilian Video Art (1974–1978),” in *The Aesthetics of Risk: Volume 3 of the SoCCAS [Southern California Consortium of Art Schools] Symposia*, ed. John C. Welchman (Zürich: JRP/Ringier; New York: D.A.P./ Distributed Art Publishers, 2008).

⁵⁰ Andrea Giunta and Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, ed., *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985* (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum and DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2017). The exhibition was on view at the Hammer Museum (September 15–December 31, 2017); the Brooklyn Museum (April 13–July 22, 2018); and Pinacoteca de São Paulo (August 18–November 19, 2018). Recent exhibitions featuring Parente's work include: *Histórias da sexualidade*

co-curated by Shtromberg and Glenn Phillips, and *Xerografia: Copy Art in Brazil, 1970–1990*, the third PST:LA/LA exhibitions that included Parente’s work, exhibited *Marca registrada* and a selection of her works on paper that were on view for the first time outside Brazil. Additional exhibitions, including *Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s* and *Women House: La Maison selon elles*, located Parente’s oeuvre within themes larger than regional developments and in so doing contributed to a broader contextualization of her artistic production. The thematic and feminist frames of these exhibitions reveal the layered significance of Parente’s artistic practice, situating it within and beyond the varied constellations suggested by other prominent international exhibitions of contemporary art.⁵¹

During Parente’s lifetime, critics Walter Zanini (1925–2013) and Roberto Pontual (1939–1992) played direct and important roles in the exhibition and reception of Parente’s work.⁵² Zanini, a key figure in the story told in this dissertation, brought the work of Parente and her peers to

(Museu de Arte de São Paulo, 2018); *Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s* (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, and Stavanger Art Museum, 2017–2018); *Women House: La Maison selon elles* (Musée de la Monnaie de Paris and National Museum of Women in the Arts, 2017–2018); *Video Art in Latin America* (LaxArt, 2017); *Xerografia: Copy Art in Brazil, 1970–1990* (University Galleries, University of San Diego, 2017).

⁵¹ Exhibitions including Parente’s work such as *Radical Women*, *Video Art in Latin America*, and *Xerografia* put Parente in dialogue with the artists that were included, for instance, in M. Catherine de Zegher and Institute of Contemporary Art, eds., *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1996). Cornelia H. Butler, Lisa Gabrielle Mark, and Museum of Contemporary Art, eds., *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: Cambridge, Mass: Museum of Contemporary Art; MIT Press, 2007). Deborah Cullen and Museo del Barrio, *Arte [No Es] Vida: Actions by Artists of the Americas, 1960–2000* (New York: El Museo del Barrio, 2008). Roberto Amigo Cerisola et al., eds., *Perder la forma humana: una imagen símica de los años ochenta en América Latina* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2012).

⁵² Historical texts by key art critics and curators in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, including Pedrosa and Frederico Morais (b. 1936), have recently been anthologized. While Pedrosa did not write specifically on Parente’s work, new editions of his collected writings offer insightful perspectives into the art world in which Parente participated. Pedrosa’s direct influence extended beyond Brazil, reaching Mexico and Chile. Military dictatorships in Brazil and Chile forced Pedrosa to move from one country to another, thus reflecting in his work the general political situation of the region. See Mário Pedrosa, *Mário Pedrosa: Primary Documents*; and Mercedes Pineda and Mafalda Rodríguez, ed., *Mário Pedrosa: de la naturaleza afectiva de la forma* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2017). On Morais, see Gogan and Morais, *Domingos da criação*.

greater visibility through his curatorial projects at MAC USP and the São Paulo Biennial. The exhibitions he organized offered a democratic platform for emerging artists and challenged existing exhibition models.⁵³ Zanini's criticism on video art highlights Parente's work as a unique example of the aesthetic possibilities of the medium and the critical perspectives that can be expressed through it. Pontual, acting as director of exhibitions for MAM–RJ between 1975–1978, approved Parente's proposal to participate in MAM–RJ's "Área Experimental" curatorial project with her installation *Medida*—which, as this dissertation makes evident, represents the pinnacle of Parente's artistic production. Beyond his role at MAM–RJ, Pontual published weekly art criticism in Rio de Janeiro newspapers between 1959 and 1989 and featured Parente's works on several occasions.⁵⁴

Aspects of Parente's artistic practice are examined in three Ph.D. dissertations that were recently completed in U.S. and Brazilian institutions.⁵⁵ Additionally, two recent M.A. theses in Brazil focus exclusively on Parente's video production.⁵⁶ This scholarship on Parente relies to a large extent on the exhibition catalogue *Letícia Parente: Arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso*,

⁵³ See Cristina Freire and Walter Zanini, *Walter Zanini: escrituras críticas* (São Paulo: Annablume, MAC USP, 2013).

⁵⁴ See Roberto Pontual, Izabela Pucu, and Jacqueline Medeiros, *Roberto Pontual: obra crítica* (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue Editorial, 2013).

⁵⁵ Sonia de Laforcade, "Áudio-Visual: The Slide as Medium in Brazilian Art," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2020; Gillian Sneed, "Gendered Subjectivity and Resistance: Brazilian Women's Performance-for-Camera, 1973–1982," Ph.D. diss., Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2019; and Talita Trizoli, "Atravessamentos feministas: um panorama de mulheres artistas no Brasil dos anos 60/70," Ph.D. diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2018.

⁵⁶ Manoel Alexandre Silvestre Friques de Sousa, "Por uma arqueologia do tempo presente: as videoperformances e outros trabalhos de Letícia Parente" (M.A. thesis, Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2009); and Kathleen Raelle de Paiva Silveira, "O corpo inscrito na criação poética de Letícia Parente," M.A. thesis, Universidade Federal do Ceará, 2016.

a 2011 travelling retrospective of Parente's work organized by André Parente (Letícia's son) and Katia Maciel.⁵⁷

Drawing on published scholarship while also bringing to light original archival research, this dissertation constitutes the most comprehensive study to date of Parente's work in any language. Through close visual analysis and archival research, I propose a holistic approach to Parente's oeuvre that emphasizes its political relevance and the social forces that informed her practice. For this dissertation, I delved into Parente's personal archive, as preserved by her family in Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza, to analyze how the specifics of her political and artistic context provoked Parente to position her work in critical relation to feminist currents and scientific imagery and methodologies using new image reproduction technologies. My analysis has equally benefited from personal interviews and conversations with four of Parente's five sons and daughters; her artist colleagues, including Anna Bella Geiger, Sonia Andrade, and Fernando Cocchiareale; her collaborators in artistic projects, including Cacilda Teixeira da Costa and Jom Tob Azulay; and her chemist student and mentee, Judith Pessoa de Andrade Feitosa. These conversations usually took place in the living rooms, classrooms, laboratories, and galleries where they had interacted with Parente.

⁵⁷ André Parente and Katia Maciel, eds., *Letícia Parente: Arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso* (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro, 2011). The exhibition with the same title travelled to Rio de Janeiro (Oi Futuro Flamengo), Salvador (Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia), and Fortaleza (Museu de Arte Contemporânea), the three Brazilian cities where Parente established residency throughout her life.

1.6 Overview of the Dissertation

My analysis of Parente's work, based on original archival research, offers insights into the networks of artists, critics, and curators that composed Brazil's 1970s art world, thus contributing to a historiography of exhibitions and criticism in Brazil. By engaging mainly with two sets of primary sources—the artworks Parente produced in Rio between 1974 and 1982, and her personal papers—this dissertation proposes a chronological approach that respects and highlights distinctions in media. Each chapter focuses on a different medium: video, Xerox, installation, and mail art. Through this structure, I examine the specific strategies Parente developed with each medium and ask how she incorporated her body in each of them as an effective (and affective) way to express her multi-layered concerns about the restrictions of social and political life in dictatorial Brazil.

Delving into Parente's first videos, "Video-Recorded Gestures," the first chapter of this dissertation, addresses her interest in and command of this new medium as seen in her first three videos, *Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *In* (all 1975). Chapter two, "Cut and Copied Paper Women," focuses on the Xerox and collage series *Casa* (House, ca. 1974) and *Mulheres* (Women, ca. 1974–75) to discuss larger thematic considerations that traversed Parente's practices: the experience of inhabiting the world as a woman, and the practical and political applications of science. Chapter three, "Measured and Unmeasured Bodies," explores how the 1976 installation *Medida*, which I consider the apex of Parente's artistic production, functioned at the intersection of science and art. Chapter four, "Applied Experiments," lends itself as a transition between the early and late years of Parente's artistic journey. Focusing on two of the videos Parente created as an established artist, *Preparação II* (Preparation II, 1976) and *Tarefa I* (Task I, 1982), this chapter

turns to video as an experimental medium through which Parente questioned disciplinary boundaries and political transitions during the last periods of the dictatorship, *distenção* (relaxation) and *abertura* (opening). “Posted Bodies,” the last chapter, discusses the mail artworks *Carimbo* (Stamp, 1981) and *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* (Sky of Rio/Sky of Fortaleza, 1981) through which Parente gave testimony of authoritarian restrictions implemented through bureaucratic conduits and for which she thoroughly engaged with the postal system. Parente concluded her artistic career with these mail artworks exhibited at the 16th São Paulo Biennial in 1981.

The progression of these five chapters demonstrates how in the wake of Brazil’s *anos de chumbo* (leaden years), Parente entered into the art world of Rio de Janeiro via her use of video; experimented with Xerox and collage as a way to express and participate in feminist global tendencies spearheaded by the 1975 U.N.-declared International Women’s Year; achieved national recognition with her most complex work *Medida*; and positioned herself within international currents of contemporary art through her participation in the São Paulo Biennial during the periods of relaxation and opening that anticipated Brazil’s return to democracy. From experimenting in scientific laboratories in Fortaleza to exhibiting in cosmopolitan art galleries in São Paulo, Parente’s artistic career thoroughly traversed the historical development of contemporary art in Brazil.

2.0 Chapter One: Video-Recorded Gestures

This chapter focuses on the first three videos that Parente created and examines the context in which they were made in Rio de Janeiro. It demonstrates how Parente entered Rio's art world using a recording video camera and played a critical role in the configuration of networks of artists, critics, and curators that consolidated her artistic practice starting in 1974. Participating in a group of Rio-based artists, Parente deployed the medium of video to embody through specific gestures—here understood as “symbolic movements” that have an affective reaction on spectators, according to philosopher Vilém Flusser—the political and social experience of being female in Brazil at a time of strong governmental regulations that left citizens little room for autonomous social behaviors.⁵⁸ Through a critical art historical examination of her videos, this chapter offers interpretations of why Parente turned to the production of video as an artistic endeavor. At the core of this chapter, I analyze *Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *In* (Trademark, Preparation I, and In), the three works Parente recorded during the span of a week between May and June 1975. The medium of video, contrary to the other media she employed, has retrospectively come to define her practice: in addition to experimenting initially with this technology, it is the only medium she used continuously throughout her artistic career. Of all her other videos, the three works analyzed in this chapter represent her best-known works to date.

⁵⁸ See Vilém Flusser, “Gestures and Affect: The Practice of a Phenomenology of Gestures” and “The Gesture of Video,” in *Gestures*, trans. Nancy Ann Roth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014): 1–9 and 142–46. Of Czech origin, Flusser was familiar with Parente's context since he lived in Brazil, first in Rio and then in São Paulo, between 1940 and 1971, and was arguably the promoter of the inclusion of video art in the 1973 São Paulo Biennial, as analyzed in chapter five of this dissertation.

Parente's initial introduction to artmaking and her subsequent emergence as artist through her works on video were marked by the collective construction of knowledge that emerged from the activities of loosely defined groups. These collectives were often described as nuclei (*núcleos*) and served as support networks for artists. First in informal classes at the Núcleo de Arte e Criatividade (Nucleus of Art and Creativity, NAC) institute, and then with the artists that coalesced around Anna Bella Geiger (Rio de Janeiro, b. 1933) to experiment with video, Parente's involvement with art was indelibly marked by constant meetings with practicing artists that required a shared space and allocated time. The recurrent participation in the meetings organized by Geiger opened room for the creation and exhibition of Parente's works: their members actively supported her artistic practice by lending materials and equipment, and provided a springboard to discuss her videos. This chapter delves into Parente's video production and analyzes how she used the medium of video to express intellectual interests fostered in group discussions that could neither be fulfilled through a single disciplinary angle, nor expressed through any other artistic medium.

Although artists in Rio met to discuss artmaking strategies, artistic techniques and materials were not the only topics of conversation during their gatherings. Given the social nature of group meetings and the collective cultural spirit that permeates social interactions in Brazil, quotidian experiences and concerns were also traded during these meetings, thus turning affinity groups into an ideal mechanism for building community and empowering individuals at a time of national political repression. This collective way of working was characteristic of an era during which feminist movements structured around community organizations, and affinity groups flourished

around the world.⁵⁹ While some groups were explicitly created to support women regardless of the specifics of their artistic practice, other collectives gathered around specific media. Such is the case of video art, as produced and promoted in the U.S., Italy, and France.⁶⁰ The development of these video art organizations often responded to the elevated cost of this novel equipment and the requirements of its technical manipulation. Scholar Stéphanie Jeanjean notes, however, that “collectives also represented for women in France a new societal behavior that perpetuated some of the ideals and ethics that had been envisioned and experimented with during May 68, particularly those concerning better relations between genders and classes.”⁶¹ Latin American examples of similar collectives include, for instance, a transnational encounter organized in 1980 by Mexican artist Mónica Mayer, also featured in the exhibition *Radical Women*, that brought US artists affiliated with the Woman’s Building to Mexico to discuss and experience the artistic,

⁵⁹ Prominent examples include “Where We At”: Black Women Artists, a collective of African American artists that functioned independently in New York in 1971, and the Woman’s Building in California, founded in 1973 with the purpose of fostering activities conducted by women and developing artmaking skills in parallel with “other activities of the burgeoning women’s community.” See Connie H. Choi, “Spiral, the Black Art Movement, and ‘Where We At’: Black Women Artists,” in *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women 1965–85 / A Sourcebook* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 2017), 26–32. One of the main anchors of the Woman’s Building was the Feminist Studio Workshop, an independent school for woman artists founded by Judy Chicago, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, and Arlene Raven, based on their experience with *Womanhouse* in 1972. See “A Brief History,” *The Woman’s Building*, accessed February 1, 2020, <https://thewomansbuilding.org/history.html>.

⁶⁰ In New York, see Steina and Woody Vasulka’s non-profit The Kitchen (1971–ongoing); in Florence, Maria Gloria Bicocchi’s workshop Art/Tapes/22 (1973–1976). In France, video was typically created by feminist collectives like Vidéo 00 (1971), Vidéa (1974), and Les Insoumuses (1975). See Stéphanie Jeanjean, “Disobedient Video in the 1970s: Video Production by Women’s Collectives” in *Feminist–Art–Theory: An Anthology, 1968–2014*, ed. Hilary Robinson (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 279–287.

⁶¹ “The collective was the organisational [sic] mode most commonly associated with early video production in France. The cost of purchasing new technology—video was cheaper than film, but still relatively expensive—encouraged the tendency to work in couples, groups or collectives. However, beyond the sharing equipment, technical skills, common interests and ideas, collectives also represented for women in France a new societal behavior that perpetuated some of the ideals and ethics that had been envisioned and experimented with during May 68, particularly those concerning better relations between genders and classes. Thus, collectives developed as flexible and anti-authoritarian structures that opposed sexism and exclusion—forms of oppression women had experienced on other audiovisual media, such as television and cinema, as well as more generally in the workplace.” Jeanjean, “Disobedient Video in the 1970s,” 280.

political, and sociological conditions of Mexican women.⁶² In South America, these types of associations were restricted and even interrupted by the several coups d'état that punctuated the contemporary history of the region well until the 1980s. In Brazil, both before and during the 1964–1985 dictatorship, groups of artists were rarely, if ever, defined along gender lines or feminist movement principles even when sharing their professional and political characteristics with feminist contemporaries based around the globe. This was consistent with the nuclei in which Parente participated, which were never exclusively composed of women, and never intended as local nor informal components of a feminist movement. However, the emphasis on mutual support and collective approach to artistic practices mimicked the structures of close-knit professional and political circles that adopted this working methodology as a feminist strategy.

2.1 Parente: A Node within Artistic Nuclei

In 1971, towards the end of her M.A. program in chemistry and while living in Rio de Janeiro with her eldest son (André) and daughter (Angela), Parente enrolled as a student at the Núcleo de Arte e Criatividade (NAC).⁶³ Enrolling in an art class for the first time at the age of forty-one, Parente incorporated into her schedule a weekly commitment to learn and practice printmaking techniques. Beyond the specifics of the activities facilitated at NAC and her practice

⁶² Documentation of this encounter was subsequently exhibited at the Woman's Building in Los Angeles. See Andrea Giunta, "Feminist Disruptions in Mexican Art, 1975–1987," *Artelogie* 5 (2013), accessed February 1, 2020, <http://cral.in2p3.fr/artelogie/spip.php?article27> ; Maria Laura Rosa, "Questions of Identity: Photographic Series by Alicia D'Amico, 1983–86," *Art Journal* 78, 1 (2019): 66–87.

⁶³ See Letícia Parente private archive. The selection of NAC would have most like corresponded to its location in the neighborhood of Botafogo, close to Parente's apartment of these years and a convenient choice for a full-time student and mother.

manipulating the available tools and equipment, the community she cultivated there bolstered Parente's confidence to rigorously practice printmaking both in Rio and upon her return to Fortaleza in 1972. Far from being conceived in gendered terms as minor, amateur endeavors, Parente's artworks were seen by other intellectuals—mostly UFC's male professors—as remarkable achievements that only added complexity to her professional profile.⁶⁴

After moving to Rio de Janeiro a second time in 1974 to obtain her Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry, Parente further engaged in social activities that fostered artistic collegiality and companionship in order to pursue sustained artistic practices beyond the technical limitations of printmaking. In the words of curator Helen Molesworth, referring to Rio de Janeiro-based artist Anna Maria Maiolino, the shift from printmaking and drawings to performance, installation, and film and video experiments was “‘typical’ of an artist at work in Rio de Janeiro under the Brazilian dictatorship.”⁶⁵ Indeed, comparing the artistic practices of Parente and her peers reveals similarities not only in their transition from one medium to another, but in their multifaceted

⁶⁴ “Open weekdays, morning and afternoon; Saturdays and Sundays from 3pm to 6pm, close on Monday, *Letícia* is the year's revolution.” [“Aberta durante a semana de manhã e da tarde; os sábados e domingos de 15,00 às 18,00 hrs, fechado nas segundas-feiras, *Letícia* é a revolução do ano.”] José Julião, “Artes” in *O Povo*, August 17, 1973, n.p. “Letícia. A name that will last. It appears today, by itself and for the first time, in an art exhibition. Letícia. Well-known in scientific activities at UFC. Professor. Dr. But today's Letícia is a different one, without “Dr.” or “Prof.” The artist does not need a title. It is ‘artist’.” [“Letícia. Um nome que vai ficar. Aparece hoje, pela primeira vez, sozinho numa exposição de arte. Letícia. Bem conhecida nas atividades científicas da UFC. Professora. Dra. Mas Letícia de hoje é outra Sem aqui “dra” nem “prof”. Artista não precisa de título. É artista só.”] José Julião, “Artes” in *O Povo*, August 10, 1973. In contrast to Parente's recognition as an artist, Maria Auxiliadora da Silva, an Afro-Brazilian São Paulo-based domestic worker turned artist, was identified in newspapers articles by her working-class background before her artistic contributions. This is illustrated, for instance, in the title of Paolo Maranca's article “Empregada doméstica trocou o aspirador pelos pincéis” (Domestic worker exchanged vacuum for paint brushes), published in the newspaper *Dia e noite*, n.d. This newspaper clipping was included in the exhibition *Maria Auxiliadora* at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (2018).

⁶⁵ Helen Molesworth, “Mother Knowledge” in *Anna Maria Maiolino* (Los Angeles: MOCA, 2017, exhibition catalogue), 165.

lifestyles.⁶⁶ In 1971, Maiolino divorced Brazilian artist Rubens Gerchman, with whom she had two children. During the 1970s and as a single mother, Maiolino worked full-time at a textile factory designing patterns to provide for her children.⁶⁷ Sonia Andrade (Rio de Janeiro, b. 1935), who also participated in Geiger's group and became close friends with Parente, developed an artistic practice as a single mother and, like Parente and Maiolino, did so at a mature age without the pressure of turning her artmaking into a lucrative career.⁶⁸ Beyond the specific media used by artists like Maiolino, Andrade, Parente, and Lygia Pape, and the female identities they embodied, the relevance of close-knit circles comes to the fore when emphasizing the complex dynamics that result from developing artistic practices amidst the interstices of daily life.

The discussions and personal connections fostered in the group meetings led by Geiger—which in addition to Andrade and Parente also included Fernando Cocchiarella (b. 1951), Miriam Danowski (b. 1950), Paulo Herkenhoff (b. 1949), Ivens Machado (1942–2015), and Ana Vitoria Mussi (b. 1943)—catalyzed Parente's interests in contemporary art and introduced her into networks of critics and curators. The people to whom Parente was introduced, such as filmmaker and camera-owner Jom Tob Azulay (Rio de Janeiro, b. 1941), offered her access to newly-available equipment for image reproduction technologies, including a video camera and, in a different instance that same year, a Xerox machine. The group's close contact with critics and curators—including Walter Zanini, Frederico Morais, and Roberto Pontual—helped Parente's work to be featured in newspapers, museums, and other exhibition venues. In short, the group facilitated

⁶⁶ These parallels are also suggested in Maria Angélica Melendi, "To Construct New Houses and Deconstruct Old Metaphors of Foundation," in *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985*, ed. Cecilia Fajardo-Hill and Andrea Giunta (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum and DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2017, exhibition catalogue), 229–237.

⁶⁷ Molesworth, "Mother Knowledge," 167n7.

⁶⁸ See untitled introductory text by Sonia Andrade in *Sonia Andrade, vídeos 2005–1974*, ed. Luciano Figueredo (Rio de Janeiro: O Banco, 2005, exhibition catalogue), n.p.

Parente's emergence as a contemporary Brazilian artist within an extended network of art professionals.

Parente's collaboration with like-minded artists and curators in this group is articulated in the correspondence that she maintained with Zanini between June and July 1975, when acting as MAC USP director Zanini invited Parente to serve as the museum's technical advisor of video.⁶⁹ Specifically, he sought Parente's advice regarding the museum's purchase of portable video-recording equipment that would be available to artists for their use. The purchase of a Sony video camera, like the one internationally used by artists including Martha Rosler, Shigeko Kubota, Juan Downey, and Allan Sekula, constituted the backbone of MAC USP's gallery and curatorial project "Espaço B," directed by Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, and reflected Zanini's reliance on artists' for structuring the institutional development of the museum in line with contemporary, global currents.⁷⁰

Parente exchanged information with Zanini about the technical specificities and cost of a Sony Portapak camera, and the advantages this resource could offer artists. [Fig. 7] Beyond these details, the letters Parente exchanged with Zanini reference her artistic practice and reveal the social and artistic context from which her works emerged.⁷¹ In one letter, Parente identifies herself

⁶⁹ Parente's advisory role is recorded in personal letters exchanged with Zanini that followed a personal conversation. Parente did not sign a consulting agreement with MAC USP. See correspondence between Letícia Parente and Walter Zanini at Arquivo MAC USP, São Paulo.

⁷⁰ A total of six exhibitions of video art were programmed in "Espaço B" between its launching in 1977 and Zanini's demise from the museum in 1978. For a detailed, first-hand recount of "Espaço B," see Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, "Testemunho sobre a video-arte no MAC USP," June 15, 2003, in the author's possession. During the early 1980s, Cacilda Teixeira da Costa would collaborate with Parente for the creation of her videos recorded in color, as analyzed in chapter four.

⁷¹ Although Parente's letter is undated, she mentions an upcoming trip to São Paulo for "late June early July" ["fim de junho começo de julho."] A following response from Walter Zanini from July 11, 1975, indicates that Parente's earlier correspondence could have been from June of that same year. See Letícia Parente to Walter Zanini, n.d., and Zanini to Parente, July 11, 1975.

as a video artist by using the third person article ‘our’ (‘nossas’) when referring to artists familiar with the medium. She further indicates her means of production (“VT,” an acronym for ‘videotape’) and the collaborative nature of her work. In Parente’s words, “This week I prepared three VT[s] with Azulay. We are ‘digging’ for support to acquire equipment.”⁷² These short sentences provide an account of the production rhythm that allowed for the creation of three works that defined Parente’s career as artist—*Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *In*—in a single week. At the same time, they emphasize the constraints (mostly financial, due to tariffs and regulations on imports) on obtaining video-recording equipment during 1970s Brazil.⁷³ In sum, Parente and Zanini’s correspondence exposes the interwoven social relations between camera owners and operators, artists, curators, and technical advisors that I reconstruct in this chapter, which demonstrates how, in 1975, video served as a tool for Parente to construct her artistic identity.

Marca registrada, *Preparação I*, and *In*, the three videos Parente produced in 1975, were crucial for launching her artistic career in Rio de Janeiro and fueling Brazil’s contemporary artistic production. I propose that these three videos represent a unity within Parente’s oeuvre, rooted not only in chronology but in their cohesive thematic, which encompasses gender roles, bodily actions, and the situation of an individual within the complex social structures experienced internationally during the second half of the twentieth century and exacerbated in Brazil by the authoritarian military regime. The following sections of this chapter examine the complexities of the specific

⁷² “Nesta semana preparei três VT com o Azulay. Estamos ‘cavando’ ajuda para adquirir uma aparelhagem.” Parente to Zanini, n.d. Brazilian lawyer and diplomat Jom Tob Azulay was the owner of the only Sony Portapak camera available at the time for artists in Rio de Janeiro, and his name usually follows Parente’s in the opening frame of her videos. As Parente’s letter confirms, in the mid-1970s they collaborated on the recording of several videos.

⁷³ Parente’s letter does not include the names of the three videos. I identify them as *Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *In* as these three works are also listed as Parente’s contribution to the 4th *International Open Encounter* in Buenos Aires that same year. *Fourth International Open Encounter* (Buenos Aires: Centro de arte y comunicación, 1975, exhibition catalog), n.p.

gestures—sewing, taping, and hanging—that Parente recorded in apparently simple, black and white images. These sections provide detailed visual analyses of images created with video and reproduced as low-definition images on a TV monitor. Parente used this newly-available reproduction technology as a tool for transmitting information about her contemporary experiences, and distributed it through art venues and social circles. *Marca registrada*, the first of the three videos here analyzed in depth, addresses the social and political context in which Parente created it from her apartment in Rio de Janeiro. It marks the start of Parente’s artistic career and stands today in Brazil and beyond as a pillar of her artistic practice.

2.2 Marca registrada

In *Marca registrada*, arguably Parente’s first video, a feminine body (unidentified, but known to be Parente herself) is recorded while taking a seat, threading a needle, and sewing into the sole of her left foot the inscription “MADE IN BRASIL” [sic]. Over the ten minutes and seventeen seconds of *Marca registrada*, Parente identifies her work and herself with the name of her country and the location of its production. From beginning to end, every element of the video leads to the completion of inscribing ‘Brasil’ on her body. Through this form of labeling—the metonymic reference to the language of mass-produced goods, “made in ...,” and the effects of its tweaked, bilingual spelling—Parente calls attention to her Brazilian context. Produced in 1975, during a period of political transition, uncertainty, national oppression, industrialization, and international trade, *Marca registrada* offers Parente’s critical perspective on Brazil during the military presidency of General Ernesto Geisel, who initiated a long, slow process of national

redemocratization.⁷⁴ This period of Brazil's dictatorship, when Parente emerged as artist, is often identified as *distensão* (relaxation), in relation to the *anos de chumbo* (leaden years) that preceded it, and the subsequent *abertura* (opening) that concluded with the democratic elections that in 1985 ended twenty-one years of authoritarian, military rule. In a 1985 interview about her artistic practice, Parente described her body as presented in her videos as "a witness body, a body that witnesses cultural situations, political situations, social situations," and concluded by saying that *Marca registrada* is "the synthesis of an entire phase."⁷⁵ Beginning with *Marca registrada*, deploying new image reproduction technologies to offer critical personal, embodied accounts on contemporary conditions would characterize Parente's oeuvre.

Histories of early video art often emphasize the effects of mirroring and confrontations with the camera, as typified in the U.S. by Vito Acconci's *Undertone* (1972) or Peter Campus's *Three Transitions* (1973), and in Brazil by Sonia Andrade's *Untitled* series (1974–77) or Rafael França's *Reencontro* (Reunion, 1984).⁷⁶ *Marca registrada* is not such a work. Rather, Parente uses the medium of video as a vehicle to make public her intimate actions of sewing and writing, visually emphasizing them with the camera's zoom-in feature. [Fig. 8] Through the video-

⁷⁴ The redemocratization project led by Geisel (1974–1979) included, among others, the end of governmental censorship for newspapers as it was implemented between 1968 and 1978 through the AI-5.

⁷⁵ "É o corpo testemunha, o corpo testemunha de situações culturais, situações políticas, situações sociais. (...) Esse é o trabalho de vídeo que eu acho que é a síntese dessa face toda aí." Letícia Parente, interview for the exhibition *Arte: Novos meios/multimeios: Brasil '70/80*, June 13, 1985, compact disc, Museu de Arte Brasileira, Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado, São Paulo.

⁷⁶ Machado, "Video Art: The Brazilian Adventure"; Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October* 1 (1976): 50–64. Krauss's article has been taken by Brazilian scholars as a theoretical basis for the interpretation of video art. See "Programas públicos," Associação Cultural Videobrasil, accessed June 7, 2020, http://site.videobrasil.org.br/canalvb/canal/1607093/programas_publicos; and Eduardo de Jesus, "Tempo, imagem: Performance," in *Videobrasil: três décadas de vídeo, arte, encontros e transformações*, 142–151.

recording of *Marca registrada* we follow Parente as she unfolds her private gestures on the sole of her foot and the interior of her home.

The meticulous needlework of sewing and writing is the focus of *Marca registrada*, both in terms of length and screen surface. The black and white video starts with a barefoot figure walking from right to left on the screen, reaching what, though only half visible, can be taken as a chair. Once this woman—as indicated by shaved legs and delicate hands and nails—is seated facing toward the right of the screen, the camera closes in for about a minute on her unadorned hands that thread a needle. While the camera readjusts, the left foot is brought to the right knee, setting the scene for the remainder of the piece: a close-up view of the sole of the left foot as she marks herself with the industrial inscription “MADE IN BRASIL.” In the intimate actions of sewing and writing, Parente temporarily alters her body by pinching her skin.

From the first stitch until the middle of the writing process displayed in *Marca registrada*, no evident sensations are seen on the foot and the perforated skin appears not to be disturbed. Starting with the bottom left of the letter M, the woman stitches each corner of each capital letter until she has formed the word ‘MADE’ on the top portion of the foot, just below the toes. The constant, rhythmical pace with which this first word is stitched makes it seem as if sewn into any object, as if the stitched surface lacked any sensitivity and the only living body shown on screen was the pair of practiced hands. Upon reaching the lower corner of the E at the end of the word and knotting the thread, she cuts it with a pair of small sewing scissors—evoking feminine associations related to this art—in order to start again towards the external edge of the midsection of the sole and write the word ‘IN.’ On the last stitch of the letter N, at minute 4.48, the unaltered rhythm of writing on the skin reveals for the first time the fragility of the full body and the juxtaposition of delicacy and strength required for this task of stitching. Upon needling the final

point of the word 'IN' and straightening the string, the stitched skin breaks and loses the thread, revealing the vulnerability of human skin and requiring the woman to repeat this last point of her writing. Upon the last stitch of 'IN,' the tension resulting from visceral reactions to the embroidery on skin becomes the main focus on the screen.

Sewing 'BRASIL' towards the bottom of the sole, the rhythmical pace of writing maintained while imprinting the first two words appears disturbed. The thick, hard skin of the heel resists the needle and several stitchings need to be made twice. Passing the needle through and pulling up the thread, the skin's resistance becomes evident and reminds us that writing and stitching on the skin is an act perpetrated against the body—against a living body, against, in this case, the living body of the self. The woman accelerates her pace of sewing, as if desiring to finish, to complete the word, to bring her piece to an end and release her body from the self-imposed violence of her embroidery. Rather than tying the thread systematically upon completing each letter, the right-hand fingers delicately put the thread in place and accommodate the continued sewing. Foot and hand are identified as part of the same body, one immediately reacting to the sensibility of the other.

Stitching the S to spell 'BRASIL' produces a discomfort that surpasses the woman's own body and makes the viewer aware of the double surface of *Marca registrada*: in addition to the sole, the piece is composed on a TV monitor. [Fig. 9] This work is more acutely recognized as a recorded image—as opposed to a still photograph—when the woman's pain (palpable but physically distanced) is brought to the forefront and the sensitivity of the living body emerges as a central element of this ten minute-long work. The complexly curved stitch of the S, following the Portuguese spelling of Brazil ('Brasil'), provokes the viewer's empathy for this woman's self-inflicted hurt. In line with the Greek meaning of 'empathy,' derived from 'empathes,' meaning

both ‘feeling’ and ‘emotion,’ the viewer is now able to feel with her. Watching a needle going through another person’s skin makes one crumple their feet even if they are well-protected by shoes, at a distance from the video’s screen and even further from the recorded scene. The specificities of the medium of video demand the viewer’s concentration on an unfolding action that takes place in front of their eyes and that, because it cannot be accessed by any means other than its constant development in time, directly translates into their own sensibility while watching the video.

The empathy for the woman is reinforced when the letters I and L are stitched and re-stitched. Upon stitching the end of the I and the middle section of the L, the hands are placed between the sole and the camera, thus bringing attention to their labor rather than to the elaborated product, and replacing the visible sensibility of the body with an appreciation of the working hands. Despite the confidence of the sewing hands in continuing their labor, the thread tangles two and almost three times—a detail visible only thanks to the camera’s close-up feature. [Fig. 10] This additional obstacle requires a pause. Far from giving a break, this tangling tests the woman’s ability to manipulate tools associated with feminine labor within the household, and thus to comply with the gender paradigms in place in Brazil. While the tension of sewing the skin is released upon completing the L at 9 minutes 59 seconds, the recorded performance is not finished.

Although “MADE IN BRASIL” is fully written, the woman goes back over the letter S that renders ‘BRASIL’ a Portuguese spelling. [Fig. 11] This time, she confidently stitches the curves of this letter, underscoring her native language, her nationality, and her location. The inclusion of two languages in a three-word sentence alters the standard enunciation of “Made in Brazil,” trademark for mass-produced objects for export. The first part, written in English on the upper and middle sections of the sole, reproduces a common, commercial label—“made in...”—that focuses on the

geographic location of the maker yet disregards any cultural association for the fabricated product. As imprinted in shoes, clothing, and comparable industrial manufacture, “made in...” denotes a homogenized manufacture that aims for a standardized final product. Indicating a systematized process in which the maker has no creative agency, “made in...” declares the product’s belonging to a global market system. In an economy born of global trade and industrialization, a cultural identity forged in specific territories is not expressed beyond the name of a country, either through the laboring hands or on the final product.⁷⁷ Parente’s subtle insertion of Portuguese—a language that does not dominate modern trade—calls attention to the origin of this manufacture, to the identity of the sewing hands, and to the social context of this work. By forcing the viewer to see the physical and unique origin of a commercial label, Parente’s work reflects on the detachment between worker, product, and consumer. Skillfully crafted in *Marca registrada*, the English base of the internationally recognized “made in...” points to the Anglophone consumption of this piece. However, the insertion of the Portuguese spelling of Brazil redirects it to a Lusophone audience able to identify the foreign (and most likely Anglophone) influence in their country and to recognize its role in transnational transactions.

Despite its industrial resonances, Parente’s label bears the mark of a unique copy. In her book chapter “Television,” Shtromberg convincingly argues that *Marca registrada*, created against a background of modernization achieved through industrialization, defies a governmentally crafted national identity delivered through TV, and “stands for the impossibility of creating model

⁷⁷ In this respect, sociologist Beverly J. Silver, echoing feminist critiques of mainstream labor studies, points to the fact that scholars often overlook the collective identities of working class actors that extend beyond class, such as gender and race. Beverly J. Silver, *Forces of Labor: Workers Movements and Globalization since 1870* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.

(uniform) Brazilian citizens.”⁷⁸ As a commercial slogan handsewn onto the body, Parente’s sentence resist standardization. In *Marca registrada*, Parente proposes an alternative to institutional discourses by employing bodily gestures that surpass the apparent homogenization that the language of slogans might convey. Building upon Shtromberg’s interpretation, I propose to read Parente’s gestures as those that, mimicking the language used by an authoritarian government to reinforce the identification of citizenship, call for empathy among people with shared identities.

The nature of the recorded gestures—symbolic movements, in Flusser’s terms—in *Marca registrada* reveals the empathy of recognizing another person as a fellow citizen at a time when some co-nationals were put under extreme physical and psychological circumstances due to divergent political views. As declared in the final report of Brazil’s National Truth Commission (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, CNV) in 2014, the military forces “turned the systematic violation of human rights into state policy.”⁷⁹ Parente’s impression of the name of her country onto her skin reveals Brazil’s national context of restricted civil rights and strict institutional structures. Painfully piercing the sole of her foot, Parente’s gestures represent a series of politically relevant dichotomies: she is both the laboring worker and the manufactured product, the tortured body and its own torturer.

Embedded in structures of power that restricted the expression of political opinions, Parente’s torturous sewing exposes the sanctions applied to political dissidents that became

⁷⁸ Shtromberg, *Art Systems*, 110.

⁷⁹ Brazil’s National Truth Commission (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, CNV, 2011–2014) investigated governmental violations of human rights occurred in Brazil between 1946–1988, including the 1964–1985 military dictatorship. “Relatório Final,” Volume III – Mortos e Desaparecidos Políticos, Comissão Nacional da Verdade, last modified 10 December, 2014, <http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br/index.php/outros-destaques/574-conheca-e-acesse-o-relatorio-final-da-cnv>.

widespread and particularly extreme from 1969 to 1974. The application of the AI-5 on December 1968 suspended civil rights for Brazilians for ten consecutive years, giving way to systematic political persecutions, detentions, and disappearances. In discussing the correlations between Parente's videos and torture procedures committed by the Brazilian State, Myriam Gurba states that "these videos are experiments in moral theater" due to Parente's conflation of victim and victimizer.⁸⁰ Gurba goes on to identify each of Parente's actions with specific torture techniques utilized in Brazil. Nonetheless, I argue that well beyond a theatrically staged, aestheticized representation of torture, *Marca registrada* is an accusation both of the violence inflicted on Brazilian citizens, and of the public silence surrounding these violations and engulfing Brazilian social structures.

Reworking the S in *Marca registrada* is not only a matter of proficiency in sewing but a denunciation of the current situation in Brazil. During the leaden years, officials sought political control by generating a fear of physical repression in Brazilian citizens and systematically torturing individual bodies through devices "used to instill fear and physical discomfort."⁸¹ A recently declassified intelligence cable from April 18, 1973, from the U.S. consul general in Rio de Janeiro states that arrests of suspects "increased dramatically during the past several weeks in the Rio area," and describes the physical and psychological methods used to "extract information" from detainees. Relevant to understanding Parente's gestures within this context of institutional control

⁸⁰ Myriam Gurba, "Images of Torture in Videos by Leticia Parente in *Radical Women*," last modified 21 November, 2017, <https://hammer.ucla.edu/blog/2017/11/images-of-torture-in-videos-by-leticia-parente-in-radical-women/>.

⁸¹ U.S. Consul General in Rio de Janeiro to U.S. Department of State, April 18, 1973, Holding Indicator A-90, in "Brazil: Torture Techniques Revealed in Declassified U.S. Documents," The National Security Archives, last modified 8 July, 2014, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB478/>. Although filed as confidential, the cable was declassified in 2014 by the U.S. government and offered to Brazil's CNV in a diplomatic effort to contribute disclosing the violations of human rights occurred during the dictatorship.

is the fifth step described in the methods section of the cable: “The standard pattern of treatment, according to persons who have either undergone the series or have talked with persons who have, is as follows: (...) He [the detainee] is placed nude in a small dark room with a metal floor through which electrical current is pulsed. The shock felt by the individual, though reportedly light in intensity, is constant and eventually becomes almost impossible to withstand.”⁸² Although no specific references to the feet are included in this otherwise detailed cable, it can be deduced that electrical pulsations were sustained by detainees first and foremost on the sole of their feet. While this information was publicly available only in 2014, it can be concluded that at the time Parente knew about it by word of mouth, as did the author of the cable himself. The cable’s categorization of detainees identifies them as “mostly university students,” making this torture particularly relevant to Parente given her active engagement in several Brazilian universities.

Marca registrada hinges on a trademark imprinted on skin. ‘BRASIL’ indicates that the work itself, the artist and the video, were made in the largest Portuguese-speaking country in the world, south of the Equator in the American continent. ‘BRASIL’ on Parente’s foot also echoes the national and industrial provenance of Brazilian television content that, from its origins in the late 1950s, was exclusively produced and distributed by four companies (*TV Bandeirantes*, *TV Globo*, *TV Manchete*, and *Sistema Brasileiro de Televisão*, *SBT*) which comprised an oligopoly closely

⁸² The entire fifth step reads: “5) At this point, if the suspect does not confess, and if it is believed that he is withholding valuable information, he is subjected to increasingly painful physical and mental duress until he confesses. He is placed nude in a small dark room with a metal floor through which electrical current is pulsed. The shock felt by the individual, though reportedly light in intensity, is constant and eventually becomes almost impossible to withstand. The suspect is usually kept in this room for several hours. He may then be transferred to several other ‘special effects’ rooms in which devices are used to instill fear and physical discomfort. Extreme mental and physical fatigue sometimes results, especially if the person undergoes such treatment for two or three days. All during this time, he is not allowed food or water.” U.S. Consul General in Rio de Janeiro to Department of State, April 18, 1973.

linked to the government well into the late 1980s.⁸³ In addition to an image on a television monitor created in Brazil, this stitched foot reflects the bodies of citizens similarly imprinted through deliberately stressful and coercive methods. Furthermore, the labeled foot in *Marca registrada* is simultaneously a product for export, a work of video art, a living body, a laborer, and a female artist. Parente is also a professional chemist who knows how to perform the limits of her body (both in terms of threshold for pain and public scrutiny), as well as how to thread a needle and carry out the chores stereotypically required of women in domestic spaces, which were inculcated in sewing classes in all-girls high schools in Brazil.⁸⁴

Simultaneously the worker and the labeled product, the imprinted body in *Marca registrada* evinces distinct sides of a single process. As stated by Beverly J. Silver, the complexities of laboring bodies lie at the core of the commodification of labor.⁸⁵ Labor (and its subsequent struggles) is physically embodied by individuals—identified among others by gender and race, in addition to class—not unlike the seamstress that Parente portrays in her black and white video. Given the unification presented in *Marca registrada* between the working body and the support of the manufactured inscription, this video foregrounds mass production, presenting it as a multi-

⁸³ The Associação Brasileira de Emissoras de Rádio e Televisão (Brazilian Association of Radio and Television Stations, ABERT), created to defend the private interests of media companies, successfully opposed the federal law 4117/62 of August 27, 1962, that sought public and periodical accountability for private media companies. The endurance of ABERT's influence in restricting public accountability of media companies in Brazil was largely discussed in several iterations of the *Festival Videobrasil* during the 1980s, both in the years leading to democratic elections and after the civil government took place in 1985. See "História da ABERT," ABERT, accessed March 11, 2018, <http://www.abert.org.br/web/index.php/quemsomos/historiaabert>; and the round-tables "Legislação" (1983), "Os caminhos da TV e do vídeo no Brasil" (1984), "Antena Livre" (1985), and "Televisão: consseção e legislação" (1986) in "Programas públicos," Canal VB, Associação Cultural Videobrasil, accessed September 13, 2018, http://site.videobrasil.org.br/canalvb/canal/1607093/programas_publicos.

⁸⁴ These classes were brought to my attention in relationship to *Marca registrada* by Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, head of MAC USP's "Espaço B" (1977–78) and Leticia Parente's collaborator for her 1982, color version of *Marca registrada*. Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, interview with the author, April 18, 2018, São Paulo.

⁸⁵ Silver, *Forces of Labor*, 17.

level structure composed of individuals whose identity is systematically denied. With her stitching and writing gestures, Parente points to some of the identity questions raised by the bilingual component of her statement through the violent infliction of an affirmative inscription on her own body. The geographical focus of her inscription calls attention to the national provenance of the piece and to the identity of the female artist, of whom neither the face nor the entire body is visible, but whose cultural identity can be discerned.

Like Acconci's video *Trademark* (1970), whose title it shares, *Marca registrada* transfers to the body the imprint of its location. Acconci temporarily imprints his own body by biting into his arms and legs as far as his mouth can reach, applying printer's ink into each bite mark, and stamping the marks onto different surfaces including "paper, a stone, a possession, another body."⁸⁶ [Fig. 13] Meanwhile, the only surface that Parente marks is her skin. The round curves of the S inserted in the English sentence imprint on her skin distinctive cultural and territorial characteristics. If Acconci transfers his personal identity (his teeth's marks) to the space he inhabits by stamping it into different surfaces, 'Brasil' becomes entangled in Parente's skin, as she incorporates her geopolitical location onto her body.

In addition to Acconci's *Trademark*, comparing *Marca registrada* with Antonio Caro's *Colombia Coca-Cola* (1976) and with Cildo Meireles's *Inserções em Circuitos Ideológicos: Projeto Coca-Cola* (Insertion into Ideological Circuits: Coca-Cola Project, 1970) brings to the fore critical perspectives on the globalization of a national product. Both *Marca registrada* and *Colombia Coca-Cola* appeal to the import and export capitalist transactions through the

⁸⁶ Vito Acconci, *Trademark*, 1970. Photolithography with artist's handwritten descriptions of an event. 20 1/8 x 10 3/16 in. Collection of Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN.

manipulation of the name of a South American country.⁸⁷ In the silkscreen *Colombia Coca-Cola*, the saturated red of the background and the white delineation of the font advertise the name of the country in the fashion of an export product immediately available for consumption. [Fig. 14] In the case of Parente's video, the alteration of the slogan "Made in Brazil," as Shtromberg argues, results in this same effect of identifying a country with an export product. Despite their different media and visual characteristics, the spelling and calligraphy of 'Brasil' and 'Colombia' expose the capitalist effects in these two countries that have blended a collective, local identity with a commercial brand and with a mass-produced sign easily identifiable around the world. Yet, Parente's contains the additional labor connotations and human rights implications of inflicting this identification on a living body. Contrasting Caro's silkscreen, Parente's video embodies a country's economic system dependent on national industrialization while simultaneously denouncing governmental regulations that coerced Brazilian citizens and allowed little room for their autonomous social behaviors.

The global industrialization processes that Caro reproduces in *Colombia Coca-Cola* are also represented in Meireles's *Projeto Coca-Cola*, a work in which the circulating Coca-Cola bottles intervene in ideological, economic, and political systems through the alteration of their printed labels.⁸⁸ [Fig. 15] The dynamics of ideological systems are effectively revealed in Meireles's intervened bottles. However, *Projeto Coca-Cola* falls short of addressing the individual labor that sustains these systems, a representation achieved by Parente through her embodiment of economic and ideological systems. Alluding with her gestures to distressing, systematic

⁸⁷ On Caro's *Colombia Coca-Cola* and its several versions, see Gina McDaniel Tarver, *The New Iconoclasts: From Art of a New Reality to Conceptual Art in Colombia, 1961-1975* (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2016), 302–07.

⁸⁸ On Meireles's *Inserções em Circuitos Ideológicos: Projeto Coca-Cola*, see Calirman, "Cildo Meireles: Clandestine Art," in *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship*, 114–46; and Shtromberg, "Currency," in *Art Systems*, 12–41.

impositions of control, Parente stitches together the enunciation of her national identity with the industrial slogan of goods produced for exportation under strictly regulated conditions.

In relation to Parente's working tools and inhabited spaces, Fitch and Dinant affirm that Parente and her colleagues "experimented with the new medium in their studios, and the recorded performances are the result of the one-to-one exploration they undertook with the camera."⁸⁹ While this is a pertinent interpretation for the U.S. video production of Jonas, Acconci, and Bruce Nauman, for instance, Parente and most of her contemporaries did not work in the specific space of a studio.⁹⁰ Instead, Parente's recorded performances takes place in the domestic interior of the home (prominently displayed in her videos *Preparação I*, *In*, and *Tarefa I*) and reveal Parente's intentional presentation for an anonymous, global audience of her visceral actions as taking place in the privacy of her house.

Beyond Parente's inhabited space, the domestic space is visible in *Marca registrada* through the feminine hands; the home stands both for the country and for the women's social situation within it. As mentioned on multiple occasions by her son André, the video was shot at Parente's apartment in *Edifício Brasil*, in the neighborhood of Ipanema.⁹¹ This symbolic detail that echoes Parente's stitched statement can refer literally to "Made in Brasil," thus bringing another

⁸⁹ Fitch and Dinant, "'Situações-Limites'," 64.

⁹⁰ As explained by Anna Katherine Brodbeck, "post-studio" practices refer to the "increased mobility afforded by text-, photography-, and film-based works, (...) [an] equalizing potential of portable works, which allowed artists who stayed in their home countries to enter into transnational dialogues through their art." Anna Katherine Brodbeck, "Parallel Situations: Artur Barrio, Brazilian Art, and International Exchange in the Post-Studio Era (1964–1974)" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2014), 4.

⁹¹ Katia Maciel, "The Body is the Measure of the House," in *Letícia Parente: Arqueologia do cotidiano*, André Parente and Katia Maciel ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro, 2011), 48. The interior setting of the home largely contrasts with what has been usually described as the first artistic use of video: Paik's video recording the Pope's visit to New York city in April 4, 1965. Throughout her study, Hayden examines the art historical implications of what she calls video art's "original events that circulate as origins." Hayden, *Video Art Historicized*, 19–25.

linguistic layer to her geographical situation and declaring that this video is produced at home. In a similar vein, when addressing her artistic practices, Parente related her sewing to a children's game played in her native Bahia in which a thread is attached with a sewing needle to the outermost layer of skin.⁹² Parente's collaborator Cacilda Teixeira da Costa has also associated this game with high-school sewing lessons, in which bored female students opted for stitching their skin as a distraction from tediously long classes.⁹³ The metonymic resonances of the home in *Marca registrada*'s domestic setting thus refer to specific geographic locations—Brazil, Bahia, and Ipanema—as well as to the traditional patriarchal society that operated at the time under a military regime.

Encoding her sewing action in a magnetic videotape and making it available at exhibitions of contemporary art—in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and internationally—Parente's writing of "MADE IN BRASIL" claimed specific uses for video. She recorded her bodily gestures in a country that lacked broad access to recording equipment but was familiar with industrialization processes, import and export transactions, and surreptitious, violent actions performed against the body of anonymous citizens. The inscribed image in *Marca registrada* alludes to the significance of this woman's gestures, as well as to the context that she criticizes from the bottom of her foot. *Marca registrada* demonstrates Parente's masterly use of conceptual art strategies by provoking experiences rooted in the circumstances of their conceptions and centered on exchanges of information. Sole and screen are connected through the voyeuristic viewer, who engages with a close-up of the intimate actions of a female artist to realize that a social reality known to all is

⁹² Letícia Parente, interview for the exhibition *Arte: Novos meios/multimeios: Brasil'70/80*.

⁹³ Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, interview with the author, April 18, 2018, São Paulo.

hidden between the feet and the floor, and can only be commented upon at the ground level, in the interior of the home, in capital letters not meant to be read but rather to be sewed into skin.

2.3 What is Video?

Parente's recorded sewing gestures in *Marca registrada* are the radical application of stitching, a centuries-old task traditionally assigned to women in domestic spaces and a medical practice when applied on skin. In contrast, the medium of video, recorded with a portable camera, was for Parente and her contemporaries a newly-available technology that required access to specialized equipment both for its recording and its exhibition. Given the historical circumstances in which Parente's videos were conceived—namely the consolidation of a new contemporary art medium under an authoritarian national military government, developed simultaneously with international movements that advanced the rights of women—video needs to be examined as a particularly advantageous artistic strategy at a time of social and political oppression. Most prominently, the materiality of videotape allowed for the quiet transportation and reproduction of information while expressing the complexities of the public life of a woman living under restricted political circumstances as determined by Brazil's constitution and multiple amendments, among other social and political regulations. Technological developments (including portable equipment, the reproduction of images, and their material characteristics) played an important role in the production of Parente's works in video.

Attention to video art technology has been foregrounded within the relatively short history of the medium and its situation within the larger umbrella of contemporary art. However, as art historian Malin Hedlin Hayden argues in *Video Art Historicized: Traditions and Negotiations*,

technological considerations have limited the discussion of video technology to its chronological development, a characteristic reflected in the art historical recognition of Parente's group based solely on their pioneer status.⁹⁴ Hayden states that historiographical studies on video art fall short in addressing the material composition of video and the significance of this medium's technology, even when discussing the preservation of reproduction equipment and the conservation of magnetic videotapes.⁹⁵

Following Hayden's invitation to tackle questions of video technology by "scrutinizing video art history from an ontological perspective," I propose that the technical operation and material structure of the medium of video bears a conceptual analogy with artworks that, through systematic artistic recordings on photographs, paper, etc., fundamentally rely on the transmission and exchange of information.⁹⁶ In its electronic operation, a video recording camera encodes series of electronic impulses on the magnetic surface of a videotape, which are decoded every time the tape is played. This information is decoded on a TV monitor as series of horizontal electronic lines of *information* that run vertically throughout the monitor and move from the screen's top to bottom.⁹⁷ These series of horizontal lines (525 lines on a TV monitor for the Pal-M system used in

⁹⁴ According to Hayden, the most prominent studies that trace technology as a characteristic defining the history of video art are Chris Meigh-Andrews's *A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and Function* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), Yvonne Spielmann's *Video: The Reflexive Medium*, trans. Anja Welle and Stan Jones (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2008), Catherine Elwes's *Video Art: A Guide Tour* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2005), and Max Liljefors's *Videokonsten: en introduktion* (Lund: Studentlitterature, 2005). Malin Hedlin Hayden, *Video Art Historicized: Traditions and Negotiations* (Farnham Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 176.

⁹⁵ Hayden, *Video Art Historicized*, 175. In "No Exit: Video and the Readymade," David Joselit offers an exception in the case of Korean artist Nam June Paik's description of his use of video as a response to Marcel Duchamp's Dada readymades. David Joselit, "No Exit: Video and the Readymade," *October* 119 (Winter 2007), 38.

⁹⁶ Symptomatic of the relevance of the transmission of information for conceptual artworks, the groundbreaking 1970 exhibition of global conceptual art at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York was titled *Information*. For additional notes on the relevance of this show for the Brazilian context, see footnote 105 of this chapter.

⁹⁷ To further reveal the electronic configuration of analog video, Arlindo Machado presents Jonas's *Vertical Roll* (1972), Geiger's *Passage I* (1974), and Artur Matuk's *Explicit Graffiti* (1987) as examples that evidence, through

Brazil during the 1970s) are in turn composed of points of light with varying chromatic values. When the successive, constant recomposition of points of light in these horizontal lines are seen simultaneously during a given span of time, their light information is projected on the screen of a cathodic (analog) television, finally composing a recognizable image. Thus, an image on video is composed of the succession of lines that create a sequence of electronically encoded information made visible through a series of dots of light with different intensities. To consider the resulting product of the electronic dynamics of video as a contemporary work of art, the transmission of information intrinsic to analog television should be thus examined in relation to art histories that regard the transmission of information in its conceptual nature.

During the 1960s and 1970s, artists across the globe shifted their focus away from formal elements of artworks. They relied on artistic strategies to provoke experiences centered on exchanges of information, creating what came to be denominated conceptual art. As presented at the time by Lucy R. Lippard and theorized in recent years by art historians including David Joselit and Terry Smith, works of conceptual art do not depend on the visual aspect of an object but rather on the conditions of their conception, thus expanding the formal definition of art and interrogating the context of its own production.⁹⁸ Reinforcing the transmission of information contained in an artwork, the material characteristics of works of conceptual art take secondary importance in contrast to their content. According to Lippard and Chandler in their watershed article “The

their visual composition of horizontal lines, the horizontality of lines embedded in the technology of video. See Arlindo Machado, “As linhas de força do vídeo brasileiro,” in *Made in Brasil: três décadas do vídeo brasileiro*, ed. Arlindo Machado (São Paulo: Iluminuras: Itaú Cultural, 2007), 15–48.

⁹⁸ David Joselit, “Art as Information: Systems, Sites, Media,” in *American Art Since 1945* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 129–160; Catherine Morris and Vincent Bonin, ed., *Materializing Six Years: Lucy R. Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012); Lucy R. Lippard and John Chandler, “The Dematerialization of Art,” in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 46–50; and Terry Smith, *One and Five Ideas: On Conceptual Art and Conceptualism*, ed. and intro. Robert Bailey (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

Dematerialization of Art,” “When works of art, like words, are signs that convey ideas, they are not things in themselves but symbols or representatives of things.”⁹⁹ As a sign for something else, the electronic information delivered in the reproduction of Parente’s videos is decoded and recomposed, revealing a woman’s relations with her surroundings and her critical expression of behaviors that, responding to dichotomous gender and civil oppressions, she archived in her own body. Parente’s gestures embody a woman’s experience of Brazil’s military dictatorship; she presents them through the electric mechanism of a magnetic tape on a reel stored in a plastic container, an object that conceals the information embedded in its content.

The exchange of information in conceptual art is closely tied to the emergence of television and video.¹⁰⁰ Carrying a sign, in Lippard and Chandler’s term, televised images and by extension video production provoked what Joselit defines as feedback, a visual expression that responds to socio-political situations in popular culture using similar strategies and networks of communication. Joselit argues that “feedback—in the dual sense of electronic ‘noise’ and meaningful response—is precisely what artists produced with video during the 1960s and ’70s.”¹⁰¹ Understood through this lens, a meaningful visual response to Parente’s historical context is offered every time her videos are played, as she presents her situation as woman, housewife, and citizen with constricted civil rights, among many other aspects comprising her identity. Beyond single images, the repeated national and international exhibition of Parente’s 1975 videos—most

⁹⁹ Lippard and Chandler, “The Dematerialization of Art,” 49.

¹⁰⁰ “The advent of ‘information’ economy, based on emerging computer technologies combined with the ubiquitous spread of electronic media like television, made information into a substance as ‘real’ and as subject to exchange in financial markets as any solid commodity.” Joselit, “Art as Information: Systems, Sites, Media,” 129.

¹⁰¹ Joselit, “Art as Information: Systems, Sites, Media,” 151. David Joselit, *Feedback: Television against Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007).

recently in *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985*—contributed to opening space for exchanging information about the lives of female citizens.

2.4 Forces that Shaped Rio’s Art World during the 1970s

Far from published theories on video and conceptual art developed at the time in the U.S. (like Krauss’s and Lippard’s), during the 1970s the modern and contemporary art practices in Rio de Janeiro into which Parente inserted herself were shaped by three main forces: the urban location of exhibition venues for modern and contemporary art; a general lack of formal institutions for artistic training; and established art criticism sections in local and national newspapers. Throughout the 1960s and ’70s, the main venue for modern and contemporary art in the city was the Museu de Arte Moderna (Museum of Modern Art, MAM–RJ). Designed by Brazilian architect Affonso Eduardo Reidy in 1954, MAM–RJ’s iconic building is a two-story volume suspended on pilotis, offering an open street level visually integrated with the surrounding Baía de Guanabara (Guanabara Bay), Roberto Burle Marx-designed Parque do Flamengo (Flamengo Park), and Santos Dumont Airport.¹⁰² [Fig. 16] MAM–RJ faces Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, Rio de Janeiro’s main avenue, which connects the political center of the colonial downtown with the upscale, residential neighborhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema in Rio’s Zona Sul (South Zone). [Fig. 17] At the time of its construction, this physical location positioned MAM–RJ at the urban intersection of modernity and tradition, at a moment when the nation was experiencing a period of

¹⁰² Parque do Flamengo is located on the Aterro do Flamengo, an artificial extension of earth and was constructed between 1962 and 1965.

rapid modernization under president Juscelino Kubitschek. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, MAM–RJ’s dynamic educational and curatorial programming, led by art critic, curator, and educator Frederico Morais (Belo Horizonte, b.1936), positioned it at the center of contemporary art in Rio de Janeiro.¹⁰³ It did so during a two-decade period between the 1958 inauguration of the studio and gallery spaces (located in today’s MAM–RJ Bloco Escola [School Block]), and the devastating fire of 1978 that burned ninety percent of the museum’s collection to ashes.¹⁰⁴ Of great significance for MAM–RJ’s position within Rio’s art world was its educational emphasis, of which most of Parente’s colleagues benefitted. Along with studio art courses, it provided infrastructure for creative production and constituted a meeting point for artists, curators, educators, critics, and all those in Rio de Janeiro interested in the production of contemporary art.

While MAM–RJ was the visible core of Rio’s art world at the time, exhibitions and other artistic programming also took place in independent galleries—most of them located in Copacabana—and in cultural centers affiliated with European embassies in downtown Rio. These

¹⁰³ Although Morais can certainly be considered a major actor in establishing MAM–RJ as the main venue for modern and contemporary art since his arrival to Rio in 1966 and a reference for art institutions in Brazil at the time, he did not work in a vacuum. Niomar Moniz Sodré, acting as executive director of MAM–RJ between 1951 and the early 1960s, established the museum as a place of encounter for Rio de Janeiro artists, not least following the inauguration of MAM–RJ’s educational programming in 1952 and the museum’s permanent Bloco Escola (School Block) in 1958, eight years before Morais joined the institution. Aleca Le Blanc, “‘Democratic Education for the Masses’: Pedagogical Programming at the Museu de Arte Moderna,” in “Tropical Modernism: Art and Architecture in Rio de Janeiro in the 1950s” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Southern California, 2011), 180–221; Le Blanc, “*Palmeiras and Pilotis*: Promoting Brazil with Modern Architecture,” *Third Text* 26, no. 1 (January 2012): 106–12; Adele Nelson, “The Bauhaus in Brazil: Pedagogy and Practice,” *ARTMargins* 5, 2 (June, 2016): 27–49; and Sabrina Parracho Sant’Anna, “O Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro: Frederico Morais, os anos 1960 e a vitória do projeto de vanguarda,” in *Arte e vida social: pesquisas recentes no Brasil e na França*, ed. Alain Quemin and Gláucia Villas Bôas (Marseille: Open Edition Press, 2016).

¹⁰⁴ For a detailed account of MAM–RJ fire, see Aleca Le Blanc, “Incendiary Objects: An Episodic History in the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro,” in *Art Museums of Latin America: Structuring Representation*, eds. Michele Greet and Gina McDaniel Tarver (New York: Routledge Press, 2018); Fernanda Lopes, *Área Experimental: lugar, espaço e dimensão do experimental na arte brasileira dos anos 1970* (Rio de Janeiro: Prestígio Editorial, 2013); and Giselle Ruiz, “1978: o incêndio,” in *Arte/cultura em trânsito: o MAM/RJ na década de 1970* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, Faperj, 2013).

included Galeria Bonino, Galeria Relevô, Petite Galerie, and Galeria Ipanema, to name a few, where artists such as Geiger, Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark, and Regina Vater (Rio de Janeiro, b. 1943), presented their work for an audience attuned to the cultural and social events taking place in the city.¹⁰⁵ Parente entered Rio de Janeiro's art world at such an event in 1974, during the opening of a solo exhibition of works by Geiger at Galeria Bonino, where Parente approached Geiger for the first time and introduced herself.¹⁰⁶ One of the most prominent of these Copacabana galleries thus set the stage for Parente's introduction to *carioca* (Rio de Janeiro) artists, laying the foundation for her identity as a contemporary artist.

Cultural branches of European embassies also offered spaces for artistic display by intermittently opening their venues for exhibitions of non-traditional or experimental art. The Galerie de la Maison de France, affiliated to the French embassy, the Goethe Institut, cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, Istituto Italiano de Cultura, affiliated with the Italian government, and the Instituto Brasil Estados Unidos (IBEU) are some examples of international cultural venues that operated in downtown Rio throughout the decade, despite the movement of the capital from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília in 1960, and the 1964 coup d'état that was mainly felt

¹⁰⁵ One of the two Latin American branches of Bonino Gallery in New York, Galeria Bonino, opening in 1960 at Rua Barata Ribeiro, 578 in Copacabana, was the first gallery in Rio de Janeiro to focus exclusively on art, followed by Galeria Relevô and Petite Galerie. Illustrating the relevance of these galleries, in October 1967, Galeria Bonino presented *Artistas brasileiros na bienal de Paris*, a temporary exhibition that two years later were to open at MAM-RJ only to be censored by the government, sparking the famous boycott to the São Paulo Biennial, an international protest of artists and cultural committees that lasted for over a decade. As another example, in 1970 the Petite Galerie in Copacabana included in the exhibition *Agnus Dei* Cildo Meireles's *Insertions into Ideological Circuits*, presented internationally for the first time in *Information*, the groundbreaking exhibition on conceptual art curated by Kynaston McShine at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that same year. See the gallery brochure "Galeria Bonino: 1960-1993" (Rio de Janeiro: Galeria Bonino, 1997); and Agustín Díez Fischer et al., *Espigas muestra Bonino* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Espigas, 2019). On the censorship of MAM-RJ's exhibition that anticipated the Biennial boycott see Claudia Calirman, "Non à la Biennale de São Paulo," in *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 10–36. On the consolidation of art galleries in Brazil, see George Kornis and Fábio Sá-Earp, "Origens e desenvolvimento," in *Arte e mercado no Brasil*, ed. Cesar Cunha Campos (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 2016).

¹⁰⁶ Anna Bella Geiger, interview with the author, June 6, 2017, Rio de Janeiro.

in Rio as an imminent military action.¹⁰⁷ More importantly in tracing Parente's use of video, these European-affiliated venues presented video art for the first time in Rio; the Galerie de la Maison de France was the first carioca venue to open its doors to video artists. The historical relevance of art programming at these institutions is tied to their advocacy for art in new media despite its limited audiences, as well as to their active support for intercultural relations.

While downtown Rio and Copacabana, two neighborhoods connected by MAM–RJ, witnessed a burgeoning art scene, neither was rooted in an art educational institution. Rather, a lack of formal training for emerging artists was another characteristic of the art produced in Rio during the 1970s. Though based in Rio, the central national institution for artistic training, the Escola de Belas Artes (School of Fine Arts), did not enjoy popularity at the time, in part due to its conservative approach to art.¹⁰⁸ Instead, close-knit networks of artists worked and exhibited in the city beyond the walls of any school, workshop, or museum. Consequently, the vast majority of emerging artists in Rio de Janeiro acquired skills from established artists through both formal and informal mentorship systems like the one that Parente enjoyed.

¹⁰⁷ On the history of IBEU, see *Instituto Brasil-Estados Unidos, 1937-2012 - Uma instituição e suas histórias de dedicação às artes* (Rio de Janeiro: IBEU, 2013), accessed on August 28, 2019, <https://issuu.com/rebecaraseldesign/docs/livroibe-75anos>.

¹⁰⁸ Originally established in 1826 as the Academia Imperial de Belas Artes (Imperial Academy of Fine Arts), the Escola de Belas Artes was an independent educational institution called Escola Nacional de Belas Artes (National School of Fine Arts, 1890–1971). In 1971, it was integrated to the Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) as Escola de Belas Artes. For a recount of the establishment of Academia Imperial de Belas Artes during the early nineteenth century, see Le Blanc, “Tropical Modernism,” 186n12. In comparison to the Escola Nacional de Belas Artes, art historian Adele Nelson describes the art school of MAM–RJ established in 1952 as “offer[ing] instruction grounded in nonobjective abstraction and immersing students in modern art history, alternatives to the training oriented by naturalism, Expressionism, and Cubism at Rio’s Escola Nacional de Belas Artes.” Nelson, “The Bauhaus in Brazil,” 31–32. Notably, until 1975 the Escola de Belas Artes shared the building with the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, whose collection focuses on nineteenth-century art from Brazil and is rooted in the history of the Portuguese empire. Parallel to MAM–RJ’s efforts, in 1953 Ivan Serpa created the Instituto Municipal de Belas Artes (Municipal Institute of Fine Arts), renamed by Rubens Gerchman as the Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage (Parque Lage School of Visual Arts) in 1975. Joanna Fatorelli and Tania Queiroz org., “Carlos Zilio,” in *Cadernos EAV Encontros com Artistas 2009* (Rio de Janeiro: EAV, 2012), 36.

While institutions such as MAM–RJ offered classes in the form of low-cost lectures and workshops, informal mentorships also formed around the city.¹⁰⁹ Arguably, the most prolific and recognized artist who built a sustained teaching career at MAM–RJ was Ivan Serpa (Rio de Janeiro, 1923–1973), who in the late 1950s counted as students figures such as Maiolino, Oiticica, Waltercio Caldas (Rio de Janeiro, b.1946), and Wanda Pimentel (Rio de Janeiro, 1943–2019).¹¹⁰ It was also common for artists to meet regularly in small groups, if not one-on-one, with younger students to mentor them in developing artistic skills. Vater, for instance, studied with painter and printmaker Ibêre Camargo (Rio Grande do Sul, 1914–1994), and Oiticica served as teacher of the carioca brothers Andreas and Thomas Valentin [b. 19.. and b. 19...], before the three became close friends and collaborators.¹¹¹ Within this mentorship model, Geiger studied drawing, print making, and art history from a young age with Polish-born printmaker Fayga Ostrower (Lodz, 1920–Rio de Janeiro, 2001), who simultaneously taught Lygia Pape. In turn, between 1970 and 1973 Geiger taught printing at MAM–RJ, before informally mentoring the group of artists of which Parente was part and who met weekly in their private homes for a period of two years, between 1974 and 1976.

¹⁰⁹ MAM–RJ’s Bloco Escola (School Block), comprised of a combination of gallery and workshop spaces, was the first section of the permanent building to open to the public in 1958. The Bloco de Exposições (Exhibitions Block), exclusively comprising exhibition spaces, was not inaugurated until 1967. See Anna Corina Gonçalves da Silva, “Notas sobre experimentação e fruição: MAM-Rio enquanto ‘laboratório experimental’,” *XXVII Simpósio Nacional de História: Conhecimento e diálogo social*, 22–26 July, 2013, <http://www.snh2013.anpuh.org/site/anaiscomplementares>. For a historical compilation of the nature of MAM–RJ’s courses, see Elizabeth Catoia Varela, *Trajetória: cursos e eventos* (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna, 2016); for an illustration of how these courses were structured and publicized, see MAM–RJ’s informative brochure “Programação de cursos 1969,” Roberto Pontual Papers, Centro de Documentação e Informação, Funarte, Rio de Janeiro. On their curricula relation with the Bauhaus school, see Nelson, “The Bauhaus in Brazil.”

¹¹⁰ See Fabiana Werneck Barcinski, Hélio Márcio Dias Ferreira, and Vera Beatriz Siqueira, *Ivan Serpa* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Cultural the Axis: S. Roesler Edições de Arte, 2003), and Lynn Zelevansky et al., *Hélio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 2016, exhibition catalog).

¹¹¹ Sabeth Buchman and Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz, *Hélio Oiticica and Neville D’Almeida: Block-Experiments in Cosmococa - Program in Progress* (London: Afterall, 2013), 98n6.

The third force that shaped the Rio art world throughout the 1970s was the art criticism sections in local and national newspapers. Weekly contributions by Moraes, Mário Pedrosa, Roberto Pontual, Francisco Bittencourt (1933–1997), Walmir Ayala (1933–1991), and Mário Barata (1921–2007), among others, provided a critical and insightful lens into the process of art production, exhibitions taking place around the city, and the presence of Rio de Janeiro-based artists in national and international contexts. Moraes’s articles in *Diário de notícias* (1966–73) and *O Globo* (1975–87); Pedrosa’s in *Correio da Manhã* [1947?–69?] and *Jornal do Brasil* [19..–78?]; Pontual’s in *Correio da Manhã* (1967–74) and *Jornal do Brasil* (1974–80); Ayala’s in *Jornal do Brasil* (1968–74); and Bittencourt’s in *Jornal do Brasil* [1970–...], *Tribuna da Imprensa* (1974–79), and *Correio do Povo* (1975–79) had a significant impact in delimiting the contours of contemporary art developments in Rio, as recent anthologies demonstrate.¹¹² The fact that these were solid, regular publications in the main Brazilian newspapers throughout a time of social and political constriction indicates the role played by writers in securing a discursive space for the visual arts in the public sphere; most likely, Parente read these publications years before trying her hand at artmaking.¹¹³ Together, these three forces particular to the development of contemporary art in 1970s Rio directly informed Parente’s artistic practice: she acquired her artistic education on

¹¹² See Jacqueline Medeiros and Izabela Pucu, ed. *Roberto Pontual: Obra crítica* (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2013); Fernanda Lopes and Aristóteles A. Predebon, ed. *Francisco Bittencourt: Arte Dinamite* (Rio de Janeiro: Tamandua Arte, 2016); Glória Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff, ed. *Mário Pedrosa: Primary Documents* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2015); Mercedes Pineda and Mafalda Rodríguez, ed. *Mário Pedrosa: De la naturaleza afectiva de la forma* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2017); and Jessica Gogan and Frederico Moraes, ed. *Domingos da Criação: Uma coleção poética do experimental em arte e educação* (Rio de Janeiro: Mesa, 2017).

¹¹³ In relation to the discursive space for visual arts, Calirman quotes Brazilian literary scholar Roberto Schwarz’s seminal essay “Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964–96”: “In spite of the dictatorship from the right, there was a relative cultural hegemony of the left in the country.” Calirman proceeds to note that “According to Schwarz, the people who were in contact with the workers, peasants, mariners, and soldiers were the ones tortured and imprisoned by the regime. After the ties between the cultural movements and the masses were cut, the government of Gen. Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco (1964–67) did not forbid the circulation of the ideas of the left, which continued to flourish under the dictatorship.” Calirman, *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship*, 4 and 164n5.

contemporary art through the dynamics of informal artistic nuclei; exhibited her work on video, including *Marca registrada*, at cultural centers affiliated with European embassies; and further circulated her artistic contributions in new media through newspaper critiques soon after her arrival to Rio.

2.5 A “Pioneer” Group of Video Artists

Over a period of two years, Parente attended the weekly meetings led by Geiger, which were driven by the members’ need to discuss pressing questions related to international contemporary art practices and distribution channels. These group meetings were usually scheduled for weekday evenings and the meeting location rotated from one participant’s house to another. Although these meetings were informal, rigorous minutes were constantly taken by Parente. According to Geiger, they also tended to have an element of secrecy, given the political tension experienced in Brazil following the coup d’état in 1964 and the implementation of the AI-5 in 1968.¹¹⁴ At the core of these meetings, however, was neither politics nor artistic production. Instead, participants discussed specific readings on art and theory, commented on specialized periodicals and recent exhibitions, proposed artmaking exercises as a basis for discussion, and exchanged and debated reflections on the nature of contemporary art—specifically the *raison d’être* and visual outcomes of conceptual art.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Geiger, interview with the author, June 8, 2017, Rio de Janeiro.

¹¹⁵ Geiger, interview with the author, June 8, 2017, Rio de Janeiro; Sonia Andrade, interview with the author, June 9, 2017, Rio de Janeiro; and Fernando Cocchiarale, interview with the author, June 17, 2017, Rio de Janeiro. International institutions and curators were most prominently discussed by the group. *L’Art Press*, *Flash Art*, and *Radical Software* were among the periodicals referenced in the meetings. The detailed discussed exhibitions

Arguably the most important aspect of these group meetings is that they served as brainstorming sessions for all participants, who shared information about national and international venues for the exhibition of video and about open calls for artists, and discussed possible distribution avenues for their works. Through their weekly exchanges, these artists became aware of international centers for the production and exhibition of video art, and formed relationships with curators, such as Zanini and Jorge Glusberg (Buenos Aires, 1932–2012), critics like Pontual, and other key cultural actors, including Azulay, owner of the only Sony Portapak camera available for artists in the early 1970s in Rio.¹¹⁶ These meetings were based on collective discussion and mutual support, and constituted an ideal milieu to feed Parente's intellectual curiosity while elaborating her critical perspective on women in civic life in 1970s Brazil.

Participating in this group without the pressure of professional expectations, Parente neither built her identity exclusively around her artistic practice nor depended financially on her artistic skills and creative visual production. Her approach to artmaking was neither informed by the production of long-lasting objects that could easily be displayed and marketed, nor by public exhibitions of her work aimed at consolidating her professional persona. Rather, Parente was motivated by her desire to express herself through art and by her interest in contemporary artistic developments. It was this intellectual activity around contemporary art that brought Parente to the center of Rio de Janeiro's art world; it allowed her to try her hand at experimental art, new media

included Antonio Dias's, at MAM–RJ, and Mira Schendel's (unclear location). Meeting minutes, Letícia Parente private archive.

¹¹⁶ Among the video art institutions listed in the minutes with their full contact information are The Kitchen, The Video Distribution Inc., and Anthology Film Archives, in New York; Miami Art Center, in Coral Gables; Art in Progress, in Munich; and Tape Art 22, in Florence. Meeting minutes, Letícia Parente private archive.

technologies, and non-medium-specific artworks that bear philosophical concerns in their aesthetic qualities.

This is not to say that group members did not promote their works. Calls for participation in exhibitions and art contests were widely shared among and pursued by the group from their very first meeting on January 23, 1975.¹¹⁷ Thus, it is not surprising to find the names of most, if not all, the group participants (Andrade, Cocchiarale, Danowski, Geiger, Herkenhoff, Machado, Mussi and Parente) in collective, non-medium-specific exhibitions, such as those by MAM in Rio de Janeiro and MAC USP in São Paulo, as well as by CAYC, based in Buenos Aires, Argentina.¹¹⁸

In fact, it has been argued that the group's first exhibition was the contribution of four of their members to the 1975 exhibition *Video Art*, curated by Suzanne Delehanty at the Institute of Contemporary Art of the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia.¹¹⁹ The participation of Andrade, Cocchiarale, Geiger, and Machado in this exhibition has often been described as the event that catalyzed the production of video art in Brazil.¹²⁰ Yet this event does not constitute the

¹¹⁷ Minutes for the first group meeting in January 23, 1975, state that "Sonia Andrade and Fernando Cocchiarale propose to write to Miami Art Center II Biennial Graphics –Patricia Larimore P.O. Box 34 3502, Coral Gables, Florida, 33134, U.S.A. Letícia will write letter asking for guidelines and 6 inscription forms." ["Sonia Andrade and Fernando Cocchiarale propoe [sic] escrever carta para Miami Art Center II Biennial Graphics –Patricia Larimore P.O. Box 34 3502, Coral Gables, Florida, 33134, U.S.A. Letícia se encarregará da carta pedindo regulamento e 6 fichas de inscrição."] Meeting minutes, Letícia Parente private archive. My emphasis.

¹¹⁸ The first reference to CAYC and its director Jorge Glusberg in the group's minutes is dated April 24, 1975. This date could also mark the first time that Parente had direct access to video recording equipment, despite discussing the budget required for a video camera on several occasions during the previous month. Following the date and names of attendees, Parente's minutes open with the statement "Video equipment brought by Ana Bela [sic]." ["Equipo de VT trazido por Ana Bela [sic]."] Meeting minutes, Letícia Parente private archive.

¹¹⁹ See Nick Fitch and Anne-Sophie Dinant, "'Situações-Limites': the emergence of video art in Brazil in the 1970s," *Moving Image Review & Art Journal* 1, 1 (2012): 59–67. *Video Art*, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, January 17–February 28, 1975; The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH, March 22–May 30, 1975; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, June 28–August 31, 1975; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CN, September 17–November 2, 1975.

¹²⁰ See Walter Zanini, "Video Art: An Open Poetics," in *I Encontro Internacional de Vídeo Arte de São Paulo*, trans. Gabriela S. Wilder (São Paulo: Museu da Imagem e do Som, 1978. Exhibition catalog), n.p.; and Fernando Cocchiarale, "Primórdios da videoarte no Brasil," in *Made in Brasil: três décadas do vídeo brasileiro*, ed. Arlindo

initial point of departure for video art in Brazil, since isolated video recordings were made previously in the country. However, according to Shtromberg, “the medium became a more constant presence in artistic circles” once this group began working in the medium.¹²¹ Their international exposure in the *Video Art* exhibition was definitive for their subsequent affiliation with the national development of this new medium.

Video Art, an itinerant exhibition composed of works by international artists, showcased video’s recent world-wide popularity. All the Latin America-based artists included in *Video Art* came from Geiger’s group—Andrade, Cocchiarale, Machado, and Geiger herself.¹²² Although the invitation to participate was originally extended to Zanini, their lack of access to appropriate equipment made it impossible for São Paulo-based artists to participate.¹²³ Looking nonetheless for Brazilian artists for this international show, Zanini contacted Geiger, a long-time instructor at MAM–RJ art studios who in 1973 had presented at MAC USP the solo exhibition *Circunambulatio*, which included Super 8 films.¹²⁴ Among Geiger’s personal network was Azulay, a Brazilian diplomat deeply interested in cinema who had recently returned from Los Angeles,

Machado (São Paulo: Itaú Cultural, 2003).

¹²¹ Shtromberg, “Television,” in *Art Systems*, 104–5.

¹²² See Walter Zanini to Suzanne Delehanty, December 13, 1974, Institute of Contemporary Art records, Ms. Coll 777, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania Library.

¹²³ Although a couple of cameras were individually owned around São Paulo, the unfamiliarity of artistic circles with video as an artistic medium is evidenced in a round-table accompanying the exhibition *Expoprojeção 73* (Grupo de Realizadores Independientes de Filmes Experimentais [Grife], 1973; CAYC, 1974) curated by Aracy Amaral, and comprising works in film (Super 8, 16 mm, and 35 mm), ‘audiovisual’ (slideshow with sound), and audio (long playing record). During the question-and-answer session, an unidentified man explains technical and conceptual advantages of the ‘new’ medium of videotape, and is interrupted by an unidentified woman who asks “What is it called? Video? What is it?” [“Como chama? Vídeo? Como é que é?”]. *Expoprojeção 73*, Round-table, Grupo de Realizadores Independientes de Filmes Experimentais, São Paulo, 1973, 55:00, Cassette, in Aracy Abreu Amaral Papers, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, Universidade de São Paulo.

¹²⁴ While Super 8, a film-based portable recording equipment, was already popularized at the time (as Geiger’s work and the exhibition *Expo-projeção 73* demonstrate), video-recording equipment based on magnetic tapes was only used on an industrial scale to produce television content.

bringing with him a Sony Portapak camera. With Azulay's Portapak, which he operated himself, as credited in the opening frames, Andrade, Cocchiarale, Geiger, and Machado produced black and white videos that, through Zanini's intermediation, were exhibited in São Paulo and sent to Philadelphia immediately after to be included in *Video Art*.¹²⁵

The participation of her friends and colleagues in *Video Art* sparked Parente's experimentation with new media and her engagement in national and international dialogues through exhibitions. While she did not participate in *Video Art*, Parente's first conceptual artwork—an untitled work on paper identified as *S/Título* (U/titled) discussed in chapter two—was sent along with Andrade's, Cocchiarale's, Geiger's, and Machado's videos to the exhibition *8 Jovem Arte Contemporânea* (8th Young Contemporary Art [Exhibition], December 5–22, 1974) at MAC USP, where their videos were shown before mailing them to Philadelphia. More broadly, *Video Art* left a strong imprint on Parente's work, as it later served as a curatorial model for the public presentation of this group's collectivity and for Parente's public identification as artist.

When *Video Art* opened in Philadelphia in January 1975, the artists in Geiger's group were meeting regularly in Rio de Janeiro, yet never openly declaring themselves as a collective. Wrestling with the concept and implications of an artistic collective, in the group meeting on September 18, Andrade proposed to collectively produce a work on video to be exhibited at the *International Open Encounter* series organized by CAYC.¹²⁶ This suggestion probably resulted in *Telefone sem fio* (Wireless phone, Andrade, Cocchiarale, Danowski, Geiger, Herkenhoff,

¹²⁵ These four videos from 1974 were *Você é tempo* (You Are Time, Cocchiarale), *Passagens* (Passages, Geiger), *Versus* (Machado), and an untitled work by Andrade, identified as *Documentação de ação em condição limite* (Documentation of Action in a Limit Condition) in Zanini's "Video Art: An Open Poetics," n.p.

¹²⁶ See meeting minutes, Letícia Parente private archive.

Machado, Mussi, and Parente, 1976), a thirteen-minute video sent to the 5th *International Open Encounter*, in Antwerp, and the only collective work produced by this group. Before the exhibition of this collective work, their first group exhibition was *Mostra de Arte Experimental de Filmes Super 8, Audio-Visual e Video-Tape*, presented from November 4–7, 1975, at Galerie de la Maison de France, the cultural attachment of the French embassy in Rio de Janeiro. While this exhibition presented works by twenty-one artists, including Andrade, Cocchiarale, Danowski, Geiger, Herkenhoff, Machado, Mussi and Parente, the appearance of all seven members in the exhibition catalog publicly portrayed them as a consolidated group.¹²⁷

The catalog of *Mostra de Arte Experimental* reflects the imprint left by *Video Art* on Parente's group. As reflected in the catalog design, *Video Art* not only offered an opportunity for artists in Brazil to produce and exhibit works on video; it also offered a curatorial model for exhibiting time-based work. For the members of the group led by Geiger, it specifically served as a model for the visual reproduction of their video works in a printed catalog. Echoing *Video Art* in its horizontal format, the thirty-four-page booklet that accompanied *Mostra de Arte Experimental* features a double-page spread for each artist. [Fig. 18 and 19] Organized alphabetically, the content of *Mostra de Arte Experimental* does not follow an otherwise standard format; the design of each page (number of images, content, and font) varies from one artist to the other. However, the pages dedicated to all members of Geiger's group specifically imitate the catalog of *Video Art*: They each present a still image of a video on a black background along with the artist's name and a short

¹²⁷ My analysis of these artists' participation in *Mostra de Arte Experimental* is largely based on the exhibition catalog and the groups' internal documentation. In addition to Geiger and Parente's group, the artists included in *Mostra de Arte Experimental* were, as listed in the catalog, Anna Maria Maiolino, Antonio Manuel, Bruno Tausz, Carlos Borba and Ana Maria Filgueiras, Carlos Vergara, Celina Richers and Regina Braga, Denise Munro, Frederico Moraes, João Ricardo Moderno, Lygia Pape, Maria do Carmo Secco, and Roberta Oiticica. Efforts to locate institutional exhibition records have yet to prove successful. See *Mostra de Arte Experimental de Filmes Super 8, Audio-Visual e Video-Tape* (Rio de Janeiro: Maison de France, 1975, exhibition catalog), n.p.

biography or a sentence-long artist statement. Besides this information, the catalog of *Mostra de Arte Experimental* does not offer insights into the exhibition installation nor its schedule, a key component of early video exhibitions in which works were not presented in loops but rather scheduled to play during specific time-slots of a maximum total of two hours.¹²⁸

The visual unity of the catalog presentation of these artists serves as an entry point into their collective identity and their artistic interests. Their distinctive characterization flags them as members of a group and indicates the formal unity of their works—they all participated in *Mostra de Arte Experimental* with works on video (“video-tape”) that were recorded by Azulay, who is credited for each still image (“Video-camera: Tom Azulay”). Internal discussions about constituting a cohesive group, intertwined with their thoughts about participating in *Mostra de Arte Experimental*, can be traced in the meeting minutes taken by Parente from the first meeting until October 1, 1975, a month before the exhibition opened.¹²⁹ Throughout June and July—simultaneously with Parente and Zanini’s correspondence about video art at MAC USP—the group had an ongoing debate about where to show their work on video and under which conditions. The group’s discussions about their collective identity and about the public presentation of their

¹²⁸ This scheduled exhibition is exemplified by *7 artistas do video no MAC*. As presented in the MAC USP’s *boletim* from May 18, 1977, “On May 21, from 3:30pm to 5:30pm, artists Anna Bella Geiger, Fernando Cocchiarale, Ivens Olinto Machado, Letícia Parente, Mirim Donowsky [sic], Paulo Herkenhoff and Sonia Andrade will simultaneously present their most recent works on video at MAC’s ‘Espaço B’.” [“Dia 21 de maio das 15,30 às 17,30 horas, os artistas: Anna Bella Geiger, Fernando Cocchiarale, Ivens Olinto Machado, Letícia Parente, Mirim Donowsky [sic], Paulo Herkenhoff e Sonia Andrade, farão uma apresentação simultânea de seus mais recentes trabalhos em vídeo, no ‘Espaço B’ do MAC.”]

¹²⁹ During the first group meeting on January 23, 1975, all participants were asked to write about the group (its goals, actions, etc.) and bring their reflections to the following meetings. This task was re-assigned a week later, on January 30, yet conclusions and responses were not recorded. On July 2 and 16, the group discussed whether to participate or not in the exhibition at Galerie de la Maison de France and whether to do so individually or collectively. See meeting minutes, Letícia Parente private archive.

work also indicate their interest in articulating through print material their artistic contributions in the medium of video and their individual contemporary art production.

Their participation in *Mostra de Arte Experimental*, an exhibition of new media accompanied by a book catalog, seems to respond to the group's interest in fixing on the printed page works that, otherwise, cannot be fully apprehended in a single image.¹³⁰ Ultimately, one of their most careful considerations was whether the Galerie de la Maison de France would publish a catalog, a concern that seemed to have been a decisive factor in determining the value of this exhibition for the group.¹³¹ By emphasizing the relevance of a printed record that could circulate hand-to-hand and be distributed by mail, their participation reinforced the need to facilitate public channels of communication between local and international contemporary art circuits.¹³²

In addition to representing a collective watershed for the group led by Geiger, *Mostra de Arte Experimental* was also a turning point for the development of Parente's conceptual art production. *Mostra de Arte Experimental* presented Parente as a full-time artist working in new media, without external references to other artistic practices (such as the prints exhibited in Fortaleza in 1973) or to her scientific achievements, her primary reason for living in Rio at the

¹³⁰ Meeting minutes, Letícia Parente private archive.

¹³¹ The group members considered showing their videos at the Museu Nacional de Belas Arte (National Museum of Fine Arts, MNBA) and briefly discussed doing so at MAM-RJ. They also questioned the benefits and disadvantages of exhibiting within a larger group of artists. Once the exhibition at Galerie de la Maison de France seemed to be their best option given their accompanying catalog publication, Sonia Andrade and Ivens Machado inquired how to maintain a space—physical or metaphorical—that would feature the group within the larger exhibition. Andrade advocated for a collective identity and proposed to differentiate their works from those of other artists by occupying a distinctive space, i.e., a separate gallery room. Beyond their unified appearance in the catalog, no other specific actions seem to have been taken in this respect. See meeting minutes, Letícia Parente private archive.

¹³² In this regard, the correspondence between Anna Bella Geiger and Suzanne Delehanty bears significance. In her letters, Geiger requests additional copies of the *Video Art* catalog and explains that the attached catalog corresponds to the group's exhibition of works on video at *Mostra de Arte Experimental*. See Anna Bella Geiger to Suzanne Delehanty, September–October, 1975, Institute of Contemporary Art records, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania Library.

time. Through her participation in this exhibition with *Marca registrada* and *Preparação I*, Parente introduced herself as a contemporary artist within a Rio de Janeiro network.

2.6 *Preparação I*

In her video *Preparação I* (Preparation I), presented in conjunction with *Marca registrada* at *Mostra de Arte Experimental* in 1975, Parente represents the restricted agency of women participating in a patriarchal society and in relation to their physical appearance.¹³³ In *Preparação I*, a woman is recorded while applying makeup in front of a bathroom mirror, deliberately manipulating the appearance of her face. *Preparação I* opens midway into the actions of a woman (Parente herself) brushing her hair in front of a domestic bathroom mirror, as she prepares for a regular beauty routine. Her actions take a distinctive approach, however, when seconds after the video starts she measures a surgical tape the length of her lips and covers her mouth with it. [Fig. 20] Although visibly confused by this situation (once her mouth is covered it takes her few seconds to focus and realize her next movement), Parente continues with her routine. The camera zooms in her face as she takes a lipstick (presumably red, yet shown in black and white footage) and confidently draws the contour of her lips over the tape, depicting them as a stereotypical attractive image. While her oral expression is constricted, her feminine lips are emphasized and embellished, thus announcing that her feminine physical appearance takes primacy over her use of words. Her eyes receive similar treatment. The woman applies a strip of surgical tape onto her right eye and

¹³³ Originally titled *Preparação*, this video was referred to as *Preparação I* (Preparation I) after Parente's creation of *Preparação II* (Preparation II) in 1976.

draws with an eyeliner her upper and lower eyelids, pupil, and lower eyelashes. She similarly conceals her left eye from view with a strip of tape, depriving herself of the sense of vision. [Fig. 21] Parente confidently reaches over for her eyeliner and draws her left eye on the tape, even though at this point she has made herself completely blind. Towards the end of the video, after Parente conceals her mouth and eyes, the camera zooms in on Parente's reflection on the mirror. [Fig. 22] By excluding everything else from the image, this seconds-long portrait allows us to see that this woman has been transformed into a motionless face divorced from individual gestures and personal identity, strictly complying with patriarchal, social expectations for a woman's appearance. Once Parente completes her set of feminine facial features and primps her hair and her turtleneck sweater, she leaves the bathroom. Closing the door behind her, she brings her crafted physical appearance to the social realm, thus culminating her actions of masking her personal appearance.

Analyzing *Preparação I* from the viewpoint of feminist art history reveals the historical significance of a woman applying makeup over surgical tape in the interior of a home as if preparing herself for a rehearsed, public performance. The composition of this video bears similarities with Eleanor Antin's *Representational Painting* (1971), in which the artist applies makeup in front of a mirror and the recording camera. Comparing Parente's and Antin's actions brings the fusion between artist and model (only possible in a woman's body) to the center of a feminist reading of *Preparação I*, following Linda Nochlin's seminal 1971 article "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," in which Nochlin argues against the historical role of women only as models or muses, artistic actors deprived of agency. However, given the noticeable Euro-American discourse lying at the basis of Nochlin's text, and Parente's origin and location of production, I find it particularly relevant to attend to Brazilian writers and scholars, in order to

widen the scope of feminist theoretical discourses applicable to Parente's production and in an effort to overcome center-periphery relations present in art historical discourses.

A series of two newspaper articles that presents contemporary discussions about feminist art internationally and in Brazil, and that was read by Parente at the time, illustrates both the general appeal of and hesitancy about a feminist art history.¹³⁴ In these articles, São Paulo-based art critic Sheila Leirner discusses the relevance of feminism for the Brazilian context. Explicitly basing her argumentation on Nochlin's and Lippard's accounts, Leirner presents the expression of women's cultural and political oppressions as a characteristic intrinsic to contemporary art, and introduces feminist concerns as a fundamental basis for (all) forms of art made by her contemporaries.¹³⁵ Moreover, she reiterates several times throughout her articles that this is a concern present in the production of female artists intending to overcome social, political, and gender disparities. For her second article, Leirner interviews male and female Brazilian artists and critics about the incorporation of feminist concerns in the works of Brazilian female artists.¹³⁶ While most of the answers relate the characterization of feminist art to biological differences between men and women, art historian Aracy Amaral (São Paulo, b. 1930) points to a more nuanced difference by relating it to the sensibility of some women, and illustrates it with the work of Brazilian modernist painters Tarsila do Amaral (1886–1973) and Anita Malfatti (1889–1964). Leirner writes, “for Amaral there is not a feminine art but rather a feminine element in art: ‘there

¹³⁴ Sheila Leirner, “A arte feminina e o Feminismo,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, February 13, 1977, 30; and Sheila Leirner, “Feminismo na arte brasileira, opinião da crítica,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, February 27, 1977, 23. Parente kept a clipping from the latter in her personal archive.

¹³⁵ “[Feminism] first gesture based on the belief that cultural and political oppression against women is a constitutive factor for contemporary art.” “[Feminismo] é o primeiro gesto baseado na crença de que a opressão cultural e política da mulher é um fator constitutivo da arte contemporânea.” Leirner, “A arte feminina e o Feminismo.”

¹³⁶ Leirner, “Feminismo na arte brasileira, opinião da crítica.”

are woman artists who show that character, others do not’.”¹³⁷ Amaral, however, does not elaborate on what this character is or how it could be visually perceived, and rather concludes her intervention by stating that a committed artistic practice cannot be fundamentally related to the artist’s sex. While artists working in Brazil and contemporary to Parente have constantly distanced themselves from overtly feminist manifestations as illustrated in Amaral’s response, I propose to read Parente’s manipulation of her gendered body as a feminist proposal, as it questions what Peggy Phelan has defined as fundamental organizing principles of the structural inequality for women.¹³⁸

Leirner’s broad, yet radical approach to defining feminist concerns as a fundamental basis for contemporary art can be pinned down by analyzing how women’s oppressions are expressed and articulated in Parente’s *Preparação I*. Using dark lipstick and eyeliner to emphasize her facial features, the woman in *Preparação I* beautifies her face according to feminine images that disregard individual characters. Following a feminine appearance presented and distributed through popular visual culture, Parente dismisses any individual choice to visually express her personal identity through her body or to produce with it any knowledge about her own identity. Instead, she displays in this video the manipulation of one’s own physical appearance with the sole purpose of adhering to culturally established gender parameters. Through the completion of a makeup routine, *Preparação I* displays quotidian gestures that surpass specific personal

¹³⁷ “Para Amaral não existe uma arte feminina e sim o elemento feminino em arte: ‘há artistas mulheres que deixam transparecer esse caráter, outras não’.” Aracy Amaral quoted in Leirner’s “Feminismo na arte brasileira, opinião da crítica.”

¹³⁸ This definition of feminist art heavily relies on Peggy Phelan’s “The Returns of Touch: Feminist Performances, 1960-1980,” in *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, org. Cornelia Butler (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007, exhibition catalog): 346–61. For its application to works produced in Brazil, I rely on Roberta Barros, *Elogio ao toque ou como falar da arte feminista à brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Relacionarte Marketing e Produções Culturais, 2016), especially the first chapter, which discusses feminist art and women’s movements within the political context of Brazil in the 1960s–1970s.

preferences and that, due to their social normalization, have lost visibility. As a result, Parente's gestures in *Preparação I* offer a reflection on the relationship between the private and public life of women.

By alluding to a certain feminine identity that requires covering a woman's eyes and mouth, Parente responds with her gestures to specific political circumstances. In Parente's own words in the 1985 interview, covering her eyes in *Preparação I* stands for "the idea of blindness imposed by the dictatorship situation."¹³⁹ In addition to a political commentary, Parente's recorded gestures announce the idea of blindness as particularly sustained by women: the actions she performs in the privacy of her domestic space are determined by the image she carries in the gendered political realm of the public space.

In the Brazilian context, Parente's gestures—her symbolic movements—echo Maiolino's photographs *É o que sobra* (What is left over, 1974) from the series *Fotopoemação* (Photo-poem-action, 1973–2017) in which the artist tries, in vain, to conceal her facial gestures by threatening to slice off her own nose and tongue with a pair of scissors, depicting violent acts inflicted towards the self. This gesture not only threatens to undercut an organ from this woman's body, but doing so would also restrict her possibilities of speech. Whereas Maiolino addresses the violence restricting Brazil's social body by voluntarily offering to cut her nose and tongue, Parente covers her mouth and applies makeup on the tape as a silencing gesture while presenting, through her elaborated movements, an artificially crafted feminine public face.

¹³⁹ "Essa também é toda uma referencia a essa ideia de essa cegueira aqui que essa situação de ditadura imponha." Parente, interview for the exhibition *Arte: Novos meios/multimeios: Brasil '70/80*.

Although she deliberately manipulates her image to restrict herself from individual expressions, Parente's final action of leaving the bathroom indicates that her physical transformations respond to social control exerted over individuals in the public sphere. Parente's traditionally gender-specific beauty routine points to female bodies as those whose actions, or lack thereof, are restricted within social structures subject, in her case, to governmental control. Denying herself the faculties of speech and sight, Parente's gestures derive from the experience of embodying an identity simplified by the understanding of woman as socially classified individual representing a sexually desirable and unresponsive, impassive being.

2.7 Gestures with One's Own Body

Parente's artistic motivations and the needs of expressing herself through visual compositions produced with her body were presented for the first time in the catalog of *Mostra de Arte Experimental*. On the two-page spread featuring her work, Parente's name is printed in capital letters on the top left of the page. A brief line indicates her place of birth and residency ("Born in Salvador [1930] lives in Rio de Janeiro"), and is followed by the titles and still images of *Marca registrada* and *Preparação I*, her two works included in the show.¹⁴⁰ A short artist's statement reflects on Parente's use of video; in her words, "The Video Tape option seems to me a priority when it becomes a necessity to find a resource that minimally intervenes in the passage from the internal image to the external image, at the level of an action with one's own body."¹⁴¹ From

¹⁴⁰ "Nasceu em Salvador (1930) reside no Rio de Janeiro." *Mostra de Arte Experimental*, n.p.

¹⁴¹ "Quando se torna necessário encontrar um recurso que se interponha ao mínimo, na passagem da imagem interna para a imagem externa, ao nível de ação com o próprio corpo, a opção pelo VT parece-me prioritária." *Mostra de*

Parente's intricate language, it is evident that video was for her a medium deliberately chosen to artistically express herself through the possibilities of embodiment.

Parente's use of metaphors—internal and external images to describe, for example, her individual persona, her personal will, her social milieu and her historical context—sheds light on the interpretation of *Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *In*, the first three videos she produced in the span of a week. In this short statement, Parente exposes her necessity to connect interior and exterior spaces by visually representing them through the manipulation of her body. Although these interior spaces appear as the domestic rooms seen in her videos, Parente's "internal image" also indicates the interior life of a human being, her individual experience of inhabiting the world at a specific time and place. Similarly, Parente's "external image[s]" refer to the social, political, and economic factors, such as women's movements and political coercion, that determined her life under a military dictatorship to various degrees during the 1970s in Brazil. By referring to the medium of video as a "resource" that facilitates her "passage from the internal image to the external image," Parente points to the transition between personal struggles and collective experiences and manifestations. The relationship between internal and external images articulated in this artist statement would come to define Parente's videos for the rest of her artistic practice. The solitary actions that inform her videos, on the one hand, and the environmental forces that condition them, on the other, illustrate Parente's constant movement between private and public realms.

Literal and metaphorical interior and exterior spaces are constant references in Parente's videos created in 1975. The interior physical space where her gestures take place is echoed in the intimacy of the recorded actions—writing, sewing, and applying makeup—and the sealed nature

of a magnetic videotape. Meanwhile the external, public nature of her actions' repercussions—referencing Brazil's political and economic situation, and the social expectations of women's public appearances—is reiterated through the public exhibition of these images. No less important is the combination of the technological medium of video with Parente's artistic embodiments: Throughout her video production Parente temporarily alters her body in very tangible ways. Parente's "action with one's own body" is evident as she records herself while puncturing her skin, taping her eyes and mouth, hanging her body in a closet as recorded in *In*, injecting her arms and legs in *Preparação II* (Preparation II, 1976), and subjecting herself to the ironing board in *Tarefa I* (Task I, 1982).

2.8 *In*

If *Marca registrada* references the historical context of Brazil as it was experienced in the mid-1970s, and *Preparação I* offers a political comment on the social experience of women, *In* reflects individual constrictions and presents Parente's creative solutions for what appears to be the situation of a middle-class woman.¹⁴² *In*, a one-minute video, focuses on Parente's single action of storing herself in a closet. [Fig. 23] This black and white video depicts a woman (Parente herself) approaching and opening a pair of white closet doors, entering and climbing the closet's shelves, and passing a hanger through the sweater's neck without removing it from her body. Keeping

¹⁴² While the three videos do not bear the date of their creation, extensive annotations in Parente's private records suggests that *In* is the third video mentioned in the artist's letter to Zanini. See Parente to Zanini, n.d. *In* was exhibited for the first time in the *4th International Open Encounter of Video* organized by CAYC in Buenos Aires in 1975. This exhibition took place simultaneously to *Mostra de Arte Experimental*. Centro de Arte y Comunicación, *Fourth International Open Encounter of Video* (Buenos Aires: CAYC, 1975, exhibition catalogue), n.p.

herself within the closet, the final image on the screen echoes the initial image of the video, showing a white pair of closed doors that are hardly distinguishable from the white wall. Knowing that there is a woman inside, hanging from her sweater, we are left with myriad questions. Why is this woman enclosing herself in the dark, confined space of a closet, with limited possibilities of movement once inside? What significance should be assigned to the artistic choices made by this female Brazilian artist for this staged action? To what extent is it important to explicitly recognize her gender and her nationality, and to identify the woman in the video as the artist herself?

In depicts a single woman who is highly aware of the staged nature of her action and of her role as the author of her piece. In this video, Parente embodies incipient contemporary fashion trends like wearing pants and a short, natural haircut that do not conform with stereotypical female appearances. The deliberate nature of her actions can be seen in the single hanger occupying the closet. They can also be seen in her choice of a long-sleeve turtleneck to pass the hanger through, as if disregarding the perpetually warm weather of Rio de Janeiro (where the piece was recorded) and making it harder for her to perform this action. [Figs. 24 and 25] During the video, this level of difficulty is visible in the alterations on her body as produced by the stretched sweater: After a difficult manipulation, the back of her shoulder might correspond both with the shoulder of the sweater and the extreme angle of the hanger; the turtleneck must be readjusted so as not to compromise the throat of the artist; and her wrists become uncovered when the sleeves are lifted up and pulled all the way from the shoulders, preventing strong movements in the armpit. Parente's voluntary actions are perfectly controlled, with only slight signs of discomfort on her face, no wrong movements, and a clear script to follow—enter a closet, hang her sweater with her body included, close the door behind her.

In hanging herself in a closet, Parente demonstrates that exercising full authorship over the treatment of her own body and fully presenting her personal identity can only be developed in the interior of a domestic space in which she can execute at will and by her own means her preference to closet herself. This is, nonetheless, the statement of a woman artist that, deploying her own body as the medium of her work, records her actions for the world to see. In *In*, a closet of one's own is publicly exhibited through video-recording. By choosing an English word for this video's title, Parente explicitly targets an international audience, as she did with the English writing in *Marca registrada* and would do the following year with the French inscriptions in *Preparação II*. 'In' expresses the enclosed situation of a woman by underscoring the limitations of her movements and her secluded and contained space.

In *In*, the video-recorded gestures of a woman voluntarily walking into a closet and hanging her clothes and herself result in publicly displaying the effects of structural gender inequalities. *In* frames the orchestrated, "symbolic movements" (the gestures, in Flusser's terms) that a woman requires to lock herself away in order to renounce, if only temporarily, her simultaneous roles as wife, mother, professional, housewife, and citizen.¹⁴³ Over the course of a minute and ten seconds, Parente opts for only being accountable for her own person, even if this also implies symbolically to terminate her life and to hang her body in the interior of a closet.

Detailed annotations by Parente provide definitive information about the creation of *In*. Although they refer specifically to Parente's *Auto-retrato* (Self-Portrait, 1975)—an 'audiovisual' (slide show) in which a succession of objects and people are deliberately arranged in a closet and displayed in discrete succession—visual parallels between *Auto-retrato* and *In* point to the

¹⁴³ Flusser, "Gestures and Affect," 3.

audiovisual origin of this video and its subsequent production. The ‘audiovisual’ was a medium popular among Brazilian artists during the early 1970s, combining a Kodak carousel slide show with sound from a cassette recorder.¹⁴⁴ Along with Super 8 film, the ‘audiovisual’ has been seen as a predecessor to video art, as Morais noted in 1975, and as has often been noted in relation to Oiticica’s “quasi-cinema” installations.¹⁴⁵ Despite the formal differences between this slide show and *In*, a comparison between these two works brings light to the several realms that a woman—mother and wife—is made responsible for, and the series of people and objects that could be affected by severing her life.

Auto-retrato was composed of twenty-eight slides projected for five seconds each and combined with eight different recorded sounds for a total duration of 210 seconds, or three and a half minutes.¹⁴⁶ The depicted objects and people varied—roughly in this order—from a selection of white clothes, to food, to musical instruments, to Parente’s own children, to Parente herself, to cleaning products. Along with the opening credits, an observation stated in capital letters that “All objects displayed in this work are property of the author or her relatives and were in use when the action was registered: February 28 and 29, 1975.”¹⁴⁷ While this composition has not been

¹⁴⁴ For the use of ‘audiovisual’ by Parente’s contemporaries in Brazil, see Sonia De Laforcade, “Click, Pulse: Frederico Morais and the Comparative Slide Lecture,” *Grey Room* 73 (2018), 96–115; and Roberto Moreira S. Cruz, “Projeções de imagens: pioneiros do audiovisual experimental no contexto da arte brasileira,” in *Filmes e vídeos de artistas, Coleção Itaú* (Porto Alegre: Fundação Iberê Camargo, 2016, exhibition catalog), 84.

¹⁴⁵ Frederico Morais, “Audio-visual: nova etapa” in *Diário de Notícias*, August 22, 1975. For the relation between ‘audiovisual,’ Super 8 film, and video as traced through Helio Oiticica’s “quasi-cinema” in his *Cosmococas*, see Anna Katherine Brodbeck, “Hélio Oiticica and the Development of New Media: In Between Brazil and New York,” in *Hélio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art; Munich: DelMonico Books-Prestel, 2016, exhibition catalog), 148–62; Roberto Moreira S. Cruz, “Projeções de imagens: pioneiros do audiovisual experimental no contexto da arte brasileira,” 55–67 and 84–89; Irene V. Small, *Hélio Oiticica: Folding the Frame* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2016); and Sabeth Buchman and Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz, *Hélio Oiticica and Neville D’Almeida*.

¹⁴⁶ Leticia Parente’s handwritten annotations, Leticia Parente personal archive.

¹⁴⁷ “Todos os objetos contidos neste trabalho (~~era de uso doméstico e~~) pertencem a autora ou a seus familiares e estavam em pleno uso na data em que foi registrado [sic] a ação: 28 e 29 de fevereiro de 1975.” Parente’s

preserved in a slide presentation format, some of the photographs used in the slides nonetheless exist today as individual images.¹⁴⁸ [Fig. 1.27] Based on these surviving photographs and Parente's personal accounts, I propose to read *In* as a video-recorded outcome of *Auto-retrato* given their mirroring basic structure and visual composition.

Writing from Rio de Janeiro, Pontual and Morais publicly commented on *Auto-retrato* in their criticism, before and after its projection took place in the *Eucatexpo* gallery's auditorium in Copacabana. In his contribution for *Jornal do Brasil*'s Sunday supplement *Caderno B*, Pontual announced that this was a single presentation taking place at 8:30 pm on August 20, 1975 and that the program included three 'audiovisuais' (plural for audio-visual) authored by Parente. Pontual introduces Parente's work to Rio de Janeiro's newspaper readers by saying, "Letícia's [audiovisuais], of whom the last *Salão de Verão* [Summer Salon] showed one work on the same technique, inquire about the relation between space and time (documentation of an experienced time) and the concepts of in and out (the closet as a self-portrait, 'eu armario de mim' [Me closet of myself])."¹⁴⁹ From this short introduction, Pontual's appeal to "concepts of in and out" recalls the artist's statement published in the catalog *Mostra de Arte Experimental*, in which Parente

handwritten annotations, Letícia Parente personal archive.

¹⁴⁸ For photographs used by Letícia Parente in *Auto-Retrato*, see André Parente's digital recreation *Eu armario de mim*, last modified 23 April 2014, <https://vimeo.com/92756529>.

¹⁴⁹ "Os [audiovisuais] de Letícia, de quem o último Salão de Verão mostrou um trabalho na mesma técnica, investigam relações entre espaço e tempo (documentação de um tempo vivido), e dentro e fora (o armario como um auto-retrato, "eu armario de mim")." Roberto Pontual, "Artes plásticas," *Caderno B, Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, Sunday, August 17, 1975), 6. "Eu armario de mim" ("Me closet of myself") is one of the sounds of *Auto-retrato*, as this sentence is pronounced aloud by a woman's voice. In recent years, *Eu armario de mim* has substituted *Auto-retrato* as this work's title, following the name given to it in the exhibition catalog *Letícia Parente: Arqueologia do cotidiano*, and the name of a video by André Parente made for this exhibition in 2011 and based on *Auto-retrato*'s individual photographs and a separate text by Letícia Parente also titled *Eu armario de mim*. This same phrase was adopted as the name of Letícia Parente's 2017 retrospective at Galeria Jaqueline Martins where André Parente's digitized version of *Auto-retrato*'s photographs was presented on a TV monitor towards the entrance of the exhibition.

alludes to the passage from an internal to an external image as a main impetus to turn to artistic production as a necessary means of expression.

Echoing *Auto-retrato*, the relationship between internal and external images in *In* is represented by the differentiation of internal and external spaces delimited by the closet's doors. According to Pontual's preparation notes for his article, moreover, the visual representation of internal and external spaces stands as the "documentation of a lived experience," thus suggesting that this audiovisual stands as a self-portrait of Parente.¹⁵⁰ In the published article, Pontual's use of parenthesis—"the closet as a self-portrait, 'eu armario de mim'"—offers further information about the interconnection between internal situations and their external representation, a characteristic that I would argue extends to the three videos analyzed in this chapter. Approaching *In* from the lens of *Auto-retrato* reveals that *In* is Parente's definitive realization of what Pontual called "the closet as a self-portrait."

In his column "Audio-visual: nova etapa," Morais offered a holistic critique of the exhibition at *Eucatexpo*.¹⁵¹ In broadly pointing to possible future developments of the new medium of audiovisual, Morais underlines the currently early stages of the medium by declaring that the 'audiovisuais' presented at *Eucatexpo* focus exclusively on "thematic elements directly linked to their author."¹⁵² He then criticizes that this theme is brought to its limits in Parente's *Auto-retrato*

¹⁵⁰ The passage in Pontual's handwritten note, titled "Audiovisuais" reads: "Letícia: dimension (relation space-time), closet is a self-portrait ('eu armario de mim') –space in and out. Documentation of a lived experience / still relation internal/external." ["Letícia: dimensão (relação espaço-tempo), armario é um auto-retrato (eu armario de mim) –o espaço dentro e fora. documentação de um tempo vivido / ainda relação interno/externo."] Roberto Pontual Papers, Centro de Documentação e Informação, Funarte, Rio de Janeiro.

¹⁵¹ Frederico Morais, "Audio-visual: nova etapa."

¹⁵² "(...) aspectos temáticos ligados ao próprio autor." Morais, "Audio-visual: nova etapa."

in which the artist herself is the subject of physical and spatial confinement, especially as it relates to the framing characteristics of photography and to the limitations of the still image.

Per Morais's summary of this work, *Auto-retrato* presents the complexities of a singular persona as the preserved content of an archive. In his words, *Auto-retrato* offers "The closet as a miniaturized portrait of the house, archive of tensions and pressures experienced by humans, today."¹⁵³ Referring to the closet as a metonym for the house—in a similar vein as other works by Parente lead to read the house as a metonym for the country—the succession of slides and photographs documenting what Morais calls an 'archive' stands for a storage of individual and collective bodily experiences. Describing this closet and its content as an archive of contemporary human experiences explains Parente's decision to incarnate three months later this closeting action through the medium of video as a unique medium to reproduce and transmit the knowledge embedded in such experiences. Mirroring *Auto-retrato*'s composition, *In* is the representation of a developing action—the moving in time of the body—in which a woman is stored and locked away by her own will and for her own enjoyment as a preserved testimony—an archive, in Morais's words—that can only be accessed through public contemplation.¹⁵⁴

In addition to the comparison between *In*'s and *Auto-retrato*'s visual composition, the technological characteristics specific to the medium of video (its black plastic case) and the historical context of its making cannot be disregarded when approaching *In*.¹⁵⁵ The physical

¹⁵³ "O armário como retrato miniaturizado da casa, arquivo das tensões e pressões que vive o ser humano, hoje." Morais, "Audio-visual: nova etapa."

¹⁵⁴ In combination with its archival characteristic, *In* can also be seen as a repertoire of knowledge, following performance scholar Diana Taylor's concept of 'repertoire.' See Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), xvii and 36.

¹⁵⁵ The Sony Portapak camera used by Parente in 1975 utilized an open-reel system, in which videotapes were semi-exposed and contained in a plastic case, rather than using cassette devices in which the tape is protected by a sealed case. Aiming for the tapes' preservation, subsequent cameras, as the one used by Parente in the early 1980s, used

appearance of analog video is particularly relevant when considering the parallels between Parente's act of self-enclosure in *In* and the electronic encoding of its recording in a magnetic tape.¹⁵⁶ As a videotape, the analog manifestation of *In*—an encoded tape stored in a cassette—is a declaration of its content: The recorded images are themselves locked in a black, magnetic strip secured on a plastic reel that can only be reached when intentionally looked for and disclosed for public viewing. While the woman hanging her clothes and herself from a closet rod can only be seen when played on a TV monitor, the object of the videotape containing Parente's work presents itself as a black, plastic case that serves as storage for a magnetic tape that does not reveal its content when approached with the naked eye. As if conducting an experiment with a sealed black box, *In*—as all of Parente's videos—had to be played on a TV monitor in order to disclose the images stored in this tape and allow for observations about its content.

2.9 Experimenting with New Media

The novel aesthetic possibilities of the medium of video, well beyond those of the slide-show, allowed Parente to develop a radical approach to artmaking that relied on the manipulation of her own body, on the collective support of nuclei of artists, and on experimental methodologies. *Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *In*, the three videos she produced in June 1975, stand both as

sealed videocassettes.

¹⁵⁶ It is crucial to differentiate at this point between analog technology (the original, electronic nature of the medium of video as used by Parente) and its later digital iteration. Although the analog system records images through an electronic process rather than as a digital succession of information, the plastic devices used by both systems prevent the visual display of their encoded images until it is played on a monitor. However, the storage of recorded images takes place in the physical magnetic strip of a videotape, while a digital video file is virtually stored in multitude of objects such as a compact disc and a computer's hard drive.

her first video-artworks and the pillars of her artistic career. Parente's artistic strategies of recording her bodily gestures in the interior of the home give account of her active engagement with Brazil's contemporary social and political context. Beyond Parente's own artistic achievements, these videos also reveal her efforts to contribute to expanding networks of artists, critics, and curators who sought to open room for artistic expressions of political dissent.

Shortly after the creation of *Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *In* and while serving as MAC USP's technical advisor, Parente turned to her scientific practice to put forth the idea of an art studio as a laboratory.¹⁵⁷ Underlining the advantages of portable video equipment, Parente wrote to Zanini "I propose to acquire: one video camera on tripod with screen for recording control able to move on wheels to document 'performances' taking place in the museum; or even to serve as a working tool for artists wishing to make videos indoors using the museum as space or *laboratory*."¹⁵⁸ Joining Zanini's efforts to promote artistic practices attuned with global contemporary currents, Parente lent her familiarity not only with the technical specificities of video and its artistic use, but also with navigating the administrative bureaucracy encountered in a public university's purchase of expensive equipment at a time of tight importation restrictions. Parente's advisory to MAC USP, carried out simultaneously with her initial video production and stemming from her participation in a group of working artists, reinforced her commitment to the support of artistic production as a way to sustain extended, interdisciplinary networks based on democratic principles. Parente's argument for the institutional acquisition of a video camera presented, at its

¹⁵⁷ This idea of a laboratory as an ideal space for artmaking anticipates the merging of a laboratory and an art gallery that sits at the core of Parente's installation *Medida* (Measurement, 1976), as analyzed in chapter three.

¹⁵⁸ "Proponho para vc adquirir: 1 camera de VT sobre tripé, com visor para controle de tomadas que pode se deslocar sobre rodízios para documentar "performances" ocorridas dentro do museu; ou mesmo para servir de instrumento de trabalho a artistas que queiram preparar VT em interiores usando o museu como espaço ou *laboratório*." Parente to Zanini, n.d. My emphasis.

core, her perception of contemporary art as a global communication network in which video artworks created in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were of interest to many within and beyond Brazil, and viceversa.

Parallel to developing her best-known works on video in 1975, Parente also deployed other non-traditional media to experiment with the artistic strategies of embodying and recording. Inserting herself in Rio de Janeiro's art world, she approached collage and Xerox art through unique experimentation methods. However, her use of video and the repeated exhibition of her three 1975 videos (*Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *In*) sets up a contrast with her works on paper created the same year with collage and Xerox techniques, which have hardly been studied or exhibited. The next chapter analyzes how Parente produced these series of collages and Xerox artworks not for immediate exhibition, but rather as techniques for developing her ideas about artmaking and the socially disadvantaged position of women. These works on paper, which were created concurrently to the 1975 videos, played important roles in Parente's artistic practice in relation to her approach to the representation of women in mass culture.

3.0 Chapter Two: Cut and Copied Paper Women

In 1974–75, parallel to creating her first works on video in the dynamic context of Rio de Janeiro’s art world (as examined in the previous chapter), Parente made a number of collages and Xerox works that extend her visual analysis of issues of domesticity and femininity in the context of Brazil under dictatorship. While Parente’s works on paper offer rich points of intersection with her videos and her installation *Medida*, they have not been considered either in relationship to those works, or to Parente’s political views more broadly. This chapter analyzes twelve examples of Parente’s use of collage and Xerox art in which she articulates a feminist perspective on the social situation of contemporary women. Parente first expressed her responses to global women’s political experiences in her personal documents. The specific development of these subjects in works on paper was motivated, in large part, by her access, via Anna Bella Geiger’s artist group in Rio, to the newly-available technology of the photocopier, and by groundbreaking exhibitions of conceptual art in Brazil, including *8 Jovem Arte Contemporânea (8 JAC)*, *Prospectiva 74*, and *Poéticas Visuais*. These exhibitions, stemming from the robust network of artists, critics, and curators that Parente joined after moving to Rio, also made use of the Xerox technology and promoted public dialogues about international contemporary art currents, bringing attention to Brazil’s social and political context.

The works on Xerox discussed in this chapter attest both to Parente’s privileged access to a photocopy machine and to her specific interest in new media technologies for visual reproduction. In 1965, Xerox do Brasil (a South American branch of the U.S. Xerox Corporation) established its headquarters in Rio de Janeiro; Parente and her colleagues would directly approach the company in search of artistic resources. The direct manipulation of a photocopy machine was

a rare advantage and a resourceful means of art making since, as Erin Aldana notes, only a trained photocopy clerk could operate the machines in Brazil.¹⁵⁹ However, Parente and her colleagues from Rio, including Sonia Andrade and Geiger, gained access to a Xerox machine through a personal contact of Andrade's who was working at Xerox do Brasil around 1974.¹⁶⁰

Despite broad restrictions on access to photocopy machines, the introduction of Xerox in Brazil stimulated a vast range of artistic uses for this reproduction technology, mostly in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. Contrary to the proliferation of Xerox art, in 1970s Brazil the technique of collage lacked the popularity it had gained since the early twentieth century in other countries; only a few examples of collages, like Geiger's, can be found among Parente's peers. In fact, the few, scattered examples produced by Brazilian artists in this medium are fundamentally linked to Xerox and mail art practices popularized in the early 1980s that, coined as "arte Xerox," responded to non-binary sexual and political liberation.¹⁶¹ Years before this queer turn in Brazilian Xerox collages and before photocopy machines were widely accessible, Parente deployed the reproduction of images of middle-class women as distributed in popular periodicals to critique social and political restrictions imposed on women.

¹⁵⁹ Aldana asserts that this practice, along with the decades-long lack of availability of color photocopiers, was set in place to avoid money counterfeit. Aldana, "The Artists Who Copied," 19.

¹⁶⁰ Sonia Andrade, interview with the author, June 9, 2017, Rio de Janeiro. *S/Título*, arguably *Mulheres'* inaugural work, was one of only two Xerox works created in Brazil that were on view in the exhibition *8 JAC*, demonstrating the limited access to this medium. The other exhibited work made in Brazil was an untitled Xerox created in 1974 by Noni Geiger, daughter of Anna Bella Geiger and whom, like Parente, was at the time based in Rio de Janeiro. Other Xerox artworks on view were by New York-based Brazilian Antonio Muntadas (*Confrontation*, 1974), Italian Luciano Bartolini (*Operazione 13 luglio*, 1974), and Paris-based Brazilian Regina Vater (*Postalixo*, 1974). Additionally, the exhibition included an offset print by U.S. Alexandra Eldridge (*News from Golgonooza*, n.d.). *8 JAC- Jovem Arte Contemporânea '74* (São Paulo: MAC USP, 1974, exhibition catalogue), n.p.

¹⁶¹ On "arte Xerox" (Xerox art), coined in the U.S. as "Copy Art," see Aldana, "The Artists Who Copied"; and Tie Jojima, "X-Rated: Hudinilson Jr. and Eduardo Kac's Arte Xerox and the Brazilian Porn Art Movement," *Vistas: Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art 2* (2020): 47–62. On copy art as developed in the U.S., see Kate Eichhorn, *Adjusted Margin: Xerography, Art, and Activism in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The MIT Press, 2016).

3.1 Structural Analysis of Women's Pages

Well before she began her artistic experiments, Parente recorded her perceptions on the structural inequality towards women as displayed in popular culture. In an annual planner for 1962 that she used at some point between 1961 and 1963 as a personal notebook, Parente offered her reflections about gender as they relate to social constructions of female identity. Reading the pages of this notebook in conjunction with Parente's Xerox and collages reveals Parente's sustained critical interest in popular portrayals of gender identification, possibly going back to the early 1960s.

Parente's notes open with the analysis of a standard "página feminina" (women's page), a mass audience periodical that circulated either as a stand-alone publication, such as *Nova Cosmopolitan*, or as a supplement of newspapers and magazines including *Veja*, *Mais*, and *Folha de São Paulo*. [Fig. 27] In her notes, Parente lists the different parts of women's pages and the possible topics of main articles —professionalization, family caregiving, and spiritual and social life.¹⁶² By laying out the structure of feminine publications, Parente methodologically identifies the perceived limited range of women's interests, as presented in popular magazines. By designating such interests as "feminine," these publications assigned women with gender-specific roles, like family caregiving and the creation and maintenance of social relations. As if assembling

¹⁶² The entirety of Parente's structure of a "página feminina" reads: "I. Sections: 1. Main article; 2. Correspondence section; 3. Variety section; 4. [Illegible] culture and education; 5. Literature section; II. Main article, some suggestions: Woman's profession; Woman and today's family; Woman and personal opinion; Is there a feminine spirituality?; [Pope] John 23 [1958–63] and women; Feminine friendship; A different unity (Troja's marriage); Woman and the [illegible]; Eldership; Childhood; What to it mean to live one's own life?" ["Seções: 1. Artigo de fundo; 2. Seção de correspondência; 3. Seção de variedades; 4. Seção de [illegible] cultura x educação; 5. Seção de literatura; II. Artigo de fundo, algumas sugestões: A mulher e a profissão; A mulher na família atual; A mulher e a opinião pessoal; Haveria uma espiritualidade feminina?; João XXIII e a mulher; Amizade feminina; Uma unidade diferente (o casamento de [Troja]); A mulher e a [illegible]; A velhice; A infância; Em que consiste viver a própria vida?"] Letícia Parente, Agenda 1962 in Letícia Parente private archive.

the different components of a dissected animal, Parente's layout structure evidences these mass media publications' approach to women: They portrayed women as differentiated and homogeneous beings that (in the second half of the twentieth century!) still needed to be fully classified. Parente's layout is followed in her planner by personal reflections that read like a stream of consciousness rather than an edited text. In them, Parente suggests that this imitates a colonial, ethnographic approach to female readers. In describing what she defines as "men's way" and their established parameters for discussion, Parente identifies mass media and educational institutions as different components of a universal social structure, thus recognizing that the society in which she interacts is comprehensively patriarchal and exclusively regulated by men.¹⁶³ It is against this realization that Parente directs her professional life and artistic creativity.

Parente also emphasizes in her personal notes that a dichotomous gender division can be addressed at its roots by allowing each person (each woman, in particular) to express themselves, rather than designating pre-established gender-based rights and responsibilities. In line with subsequent feminist advocacy efforts initiated by Brazilian scholar Heleieth Saffioti and writer and activist Rose Marie Muraro, Parente wrote,

Altogether, there are specific problems within our feminine frontiers and the current situation requires that we seek some clarity. It is mandatory that we continuously exchange perspectives and points of view for an exact comprehension of reality. / Then I could finally understand the feminine sections and publications only for women. / In life, we are all

¹⁶³ In her article "Anthropofagic Subjectivities: Gender and Identity in Anna Maria Maiolino's *In-Out* (*Antropofagia*), 1973–1974," Gillian Sneed emphasizes that patriarchal and heteronormative ideologies were at the center of the values embraced by Brazil's military dictatorship. Gillian Sneed, "Anthropofagic Subjectivities: Gender and Identity in Anna Maria Maiolino's *In-Out* (*Antropofagia*), 1973–1974," *Vistas: Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art* 2 (2020): 29–46.

mixed in common waters. But with regards to modes of living, to what needs to be done, what can be felt, one's own way to be alive, there is a difference of two poles and two extremes. / The problem of the modern world it is not to make men and women equals — rather, it is to better recognize their authenticity so we can live better. / To distinguish each other's voices, their anxieties, their abilities, their mission, their firmament, their ground. I repudiate any debate in terms of rights and responsibilities.¹⁶⁴

By addressing dichotomous relations, Parente reinforces the importance of a dialogue based on individual points of view that articulate and break through subaltern positions. To conclude her reflections, Parente emphatically opposes the patronizing perspective of periodicals explicitly targeted to women by asserting that “When women fight for emancipation, they misunderstand women's destiny—only the enslaved can be emancipated, and to accept [one's own] slavery is to falsely begin to resolve the problem.”¹⁶⁵ She emphasizes women's efforts to attain what Parente recognizes as “distinguishable, individual voices.”

¹⁶⁴ In its original Portuguese, pages 4–6 read: “Será que as mulheres buscam uma consciência de ‘dame’ [sic] ou um chão comum para estabelecer o dialogo e a clarividência? / Dos homens e a maneira deles são os rádios, a imprensa, a universidade, as estruturas. Neste ambiente é claro que estamos, mas não se entende que a eles imprimamos um sentido e um endereço, eles quando muito são universais buscando atingir a humanidade tal qual é na dicotomia dos sexos. / Contudo há problemas específicos dentro de nossas fronteiras femininas e o tempo exige que para elas busquemos ao menos claridade. Para esta compreensão exata da realidade necessário é que façamos uma continua [illegible] a troca de pontos de vista e de perspectiva. / Só porem entendo as páginas femininas e revistas só para mulheres. / No que toca a vida estamos todos mergulhados, homens e mulheres em suas aguas comuns. Mas no que toca ao modo de viver, ao que toca fazer, ao que se pode sentir, a própria maneira de ser vivo em fim há uma diferença como que de 2 polos e de 2 extremos. / O problema de mundo moderno não consiste em igualar homens e mulheres —mas em *distinguir para viver* melhor uma base de maior autenticidade. / Distinguir a enuncia própria de cada um, as suas ânsias, suas capacidades, sua missão, seu firmamento, seu chão. Repudio qualquer colocação em termos de direitos e deveres. Enquanto a mulher batalha em torno de emancipação cobriram de equivoco o seu destino —só se emancipa quem é escravo, e aceitar a escravidão é começar falsamente a resolver o problema.” Letícia Parente, Agenda 1962 in Letícia Parente private archive.

¹⁶⁵ Parente, Agenda 1962 in Letícia Parente private archive.

When read in conjunction with works on paper like her series *Mulheres* (Women, ca. 1974–75), Parente’s private notes reiterate that women’s emancipation must respond to the concerns that have been ignited by a generalized, subtle and violent marginalization of women—an idea that also runs through her work on video and installation. Parente’s feminism, as articulated in her artworks, denounces the obliteration of women’s individual identities in favor of structural conventions. The collage and Xerox *S/Título* and *Don’t Touch*, for instance, critically present how the simplification of women’s faces leads to the homogenization of their characters. If, during the 1960s, she recorded personal reflections in her notebooks while living in Fortaleza, after moving to Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1970s Parente translated these reflections into visual compositions on Xeroxed collages on paper.

Working simultaneously in the series *Mulheres* and *Casa* (House, ca. 1975), Parente deployed the media of collage and Xerox art to identify her place of enunciation, both socially and geographically. Symbolically, the title of the series *Casa* points to the confined space of the house that has traditionally represented a private, feminine space, a topic to which Parente constantly returned in her artworks. While the series *Mulheres* allowed Parente to visualize gender struggles and contribute to global advocacy for women’s rights, *Casa* provided the space to reconfigure the map of her life in Brazil according to her personal experiences. Analyzing the artistic strategies and techniques that Parente developed for the creation of the collages and photocopies comprising *Casa* and *Mulheres* reveals the journeys of a highly educated Brazilian woman who did not take Brazil’s social and geopolitical configurations at face value, but rather repurposed them as a personal act of defiance.

Parente’s works on paper bridge the personal and public sphere she inhabited. During the 1970s, Brazilian artists working within close-knit networks were attracted to the medium of the

photocopy due to its easy circulation, as well as the economic and commercial challenges presented by Xerox artworks. As described by art historian Erin Aldana, “artists did not treat these works, often printed on office paper, as objects to be treasured and valued for a long time, but rather as gifts to be exchanged for free, glanced at, and, in many cases, thrown away.”¹⁶⁶ Parente’s archives, which include Xerox artworks sent as gifts by artists Sonia Andrade, Ivens Machado, and Bené Fonteles as well as her own series *Mulheres* and *Casa*, support the idea that the value of the medium of Xerox art lies in its circulatory and disposable nature in as much as its experimentalism. Parente created the series *Mulheres* in the span of two years and exhibited the works individually, in separate occasions, as opposed to presenting them as a cohesive, fully structured series. Meanwhile, the series *Casa* was apparently not created for anyone other than Parente herself and perhaps her friends; to my knowledge, only one work of *Casa* was publicly exhibited during her lifetime.¹⁶⁷ As demonstrated in this chapter through the analysis of *Casa* and *Mulheres*, Parente deployed the medium of Xerox as a physical space for experimentation, a sandbox where she expressed the particularities (social, geographical, and gendered) of her place of enunciation. In other words, Parente deployed the media of Xerox and collage to articulate at will and reconfigure her ideas about experiencing the world as a woman.

¹⁶⁶ Erin Aldana, “The Artists Who Copied: Xerography and Brazilian Culture” in *Xerografia: Copy art in Brazil, 1970-1990* (San Diego: University of San Diego, 2017, exhibition catalogue), 40. Aldana’s exhibition *Xerografia: Copy art in Brazil, 1970-1990* and its accompanying catalogue represent one of the most comprehensive studies of “arte Xerox.” While several exhibitions and critical texts produced in Brazil have covered this subject since its early stages, they tend to follow a limited historical focus. For some of these examples, see *Caderno de Xerox: Xerografia nos anos 1970 em São Paulo* (Centro Cultural São Paulo, January-April, 2018), and *Arte Xerox Brasil* (São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado, 1984).

¹⁶⁷ *Idas e vindas* (Coming and going, ca. 1975) from the series *Casa* was published untitled two years after its creation in the monthly periodical *GAM* [Galeria de Arte Moderna], *Jornal Mensal de Artes* 38 (April–May 1977), 8.

3.2 *Casa*: Home as a Representation of the Self

Composed of four Xeroxes intervened with collaged paper and handwritten annotations, the 1975 series *Casa* calls attention to the concepts of home and identity as developed in relation to familiar spaces, whether the size of a house or a city. Two untitled works from the series, hereby referred to as *Idas e vindas* (Coming and going) and *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* (House project, situation plan), exemplify how Parente used this medium as a springboard to visually represent developing ideas about her specific geographic and social situation.

In *Idas e vindas*, Parente reflects on personal journeys undertaken in the interior of the home. [Fig. 28] This work is composed of a floorplan of a one-story house composed of a main entry point and six interconnected rooms, each filled with different sets of symbols and accompanied by handwritten inscriptions. Parente describes the journeys undertaken in each room with short phrases: coming and going, turns and revolts; a place for finding direction; seven alternatives to solitude; purification rituals tested against pollution; and desired dialogues.¹⁶⁸ In addition to bearing a label, each room is also filled with distinctive icons, such as repeated cardinal-point arrows that are identified with the letter ‘N’ (north) yet seemingly point south. The central room, for instance, includes both the label “desired dialogues,” which references the potentials of communication, and a set of icons for a sign language alphabet. This room also serves as a transitional space. Located at the core of *Idas e vindas*, it mediates between the front rooms filled with arrows instructing movement and the rooms in the rear of the house, which are dedicated to

¹⁶⁸ In the original Portuguese, the inscriptions read: “idas e vindas, voltas e revoltas”; “lugar de buscar rumo”; “sete alternativas contra solidão”; “rituais de purificação à prova de poluição”; “diálogos desejados”; and “sol sempre disponível.”

bodily hygiene and physical companionship. The viewer of *Idas e vindas* visually travels through a floorplan that offers insights into the inhabitants of a home—indicated by seven bed symbols placed in the middle of one room that might represent the seven members of Parente’s family—and the privacy of this space, made visible in the symbols of bathroom fixtures entirely filling another room.

Far from a figurative representation of a house, this *Casa* is presented as a site in which one’s own identity is formed by transiting physical spaces, sharing dialogues, and performing individual and collective rituals and routines. Whereas one of the front rooms points to the south—which in Brazil indicates the cultural and economic centers of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro where Parente emerged as contemporary artist—the last room on the far left is filled with the predominant presence of Brazil’s northeastern sun. Its accompanying inscription—“sun always available”—recalls the tropical situation of Parente’s places of origin, Salvador and Fortaleza, two coastal cities filled with sunlight year-round.¹⁶⁹ *Idas e vindas*’s labels and icons mark the transits taken both alone and with others in a space in which repetition and uncertainty demarcate a familiar territory and present this as a home in which to forge one’s own path.

In *Projeto de casa, planta de situação*, also from the same series and depicting a geographical map, the outermost delineation of *Idas e vindas* is reproduced as a negative, blank space, suggesting that this territory also stands for the familiar space of the home. [Fig. 29] Overall, *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* presents an urban map occupying almost the entirety of the image, with the floorplan of the house appearing as a void towards the center left. A key box on

¹⁶⁹ Left unlabeled in the copy of *Idas e vindas* kept in Parente’s archive and published in the 38 issue of *GAM*, this room is labeled in the copy reproduced in *Letícia Parente: Arqueologia do cotidiano*, ed. André Parente and Katia Maciel (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro, 2011), 175.

the top left identifies this city as Salvador, a designation reinforced by the coast line and the inscriptions “Baía de Todos os Santos” (Bay of all saints) towards the far left, and “Oceano Atlântico” (Atlantic Ocean) towards the bottom. However, upon further attention, two additional key boxes indicate that this map also stands for the cities of Fortaleza, in Brazil’s northeast, and Rio de Janeiro, in the southern region. The urban composition presented here as a single place is in fact Parente’s collaged and Xeroxed recombination of maps of Salvador, Fortaleza, and Rio de Janeiro, the three cities where Parente lived throughout her life and where she became a professional chemist, a mother, and an established artist.

The Xerox *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* constitutes a linear journey in Parente’s life: Reading it as a timeline traversing physical locations, it gives account of the specifics of Parente’s successive cities of residence. Decoded from left to right, *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* narrates her passages from one cultural and geographic location to another. It depicts Parente’s journeys from her origins in Salvador, a hub for Afro-Brazilian culture where Parente was born and raised; to her northeastern family settlement in Fortaleza, where she developed her professional career as chemist; to her choice of the cosmopolitan Rio de Janeiro as her place of residency and as an ideal location to emerge as a contemporary artist. The white silhouette of *Idas e vindas* that traverses this urban amalgamation reiterates that the sum of these three cities is her home and that together they represent Parente’s most familiar spaces. Its specific placement within the map of *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* confirms that the transits from one city to another correspond to specific passages in Parente’s life, as the plan sits at the intersection of the three cities with specific overlaps of rooms and neighborhoods.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ In *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* the sections of *Idas e vindas*’s “alternatives against solitude” and “rituals for purification” correspond to Salvador, while the room labeled “coming and going, turns and revolts” entirely

The sections of *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* bear different scales, according to these cities' relevance in Parente's life.¹⁷¹ Whereas for Salvador most of the peninsula is visible (thus including different sections of the city as well as the Atlantic Ocean and the Bay of All Saints), Fortaleza, in the middle section of the work, is limited by the shoreline and merely composed of a fraction of the downtown area where individual blocks and streets are identifiable. Meanwhile, Rio de Janeiro, in the far right, is represented by the neighborhoods of the city's Zona Sul (South Zone) and more prominently by the shoreline that identifies this southern part of the city, from Botafogo beach, to Praia Vermelha, to Leme, Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leblon beaches. In Parente's recombined map of Rio, individual city-blocks are identifiable only in the Ipanema neighborhood (visible toward the center, immediately below downtown Fortaleza). This was the specific neighborhood where Parente resided, and where this Xerox work was most likely conceptualized in Parente's apartment in *Edifício Brasil* on Barão da Torre street. Amalgamated here into a single map, *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* represents the geographical spaces she occupied throughout her lifetime. As a metonymic representation of Parente's home, it designates the geographical sites from which Parente articulated the social and political conditions of contemporary Brazilian women.

overlaps with Fortaleza, which contains the largest part of *Idas e vindas*'s section of the sun. Rio de Janeiro, in contrast, can be designated as the "place for finding direction," along with some of the "alternatives against solitude." Locking the relationships between these three cities, the corners of all three maps meet in the room for "desired dialogues."

¹⁷¹ According to the provided map keys, what accounts for one kilometer (1,000 meters) in the map of Salvador, in the map of Fortaleza represents 400 meters, and in Rio's 600 meters.

3.3 Parente's "Arte Xerox" Strategy: A Single Duplicate

One of the most evident technical characteristics of Xerox art, and certainly one frequently used by artists in Brazil—namely the exact reproducibility of an image into infinite copies—set Parente's Xerox art practices apart from those of her peers, who reinforced the experimental and reproducible characteristics of Xerox.¹⁷² And yet, despite the uncommon access she gained to Xerox offices and the financial support for paper supplies that Xerox do Brasil might have offered, Parente only made a handful of reproductions of her work. The unique or limited number of copies of Parente's works on Xerox contradicts the ease of the photocopy reproduction technique and reveals Parente's specific working methods and artistic goals.

Semantically, specific actions designating movement can be found at the core of the words 'collage' and 'Xerox.' The medium of collage, a cohesive agglomeration of different pieces of paper and other similar material, is the noun form of the verb 'coller' (to paste) in French; a collage only comes into being by bringing together discrete fragments. 'Xerox,' a word only created in 1958 as a trademark upon the industrial production of photocopy machines, has been transformed—over time and across different languages—into a noun and a verb. The noun 'Xerox' refers both to the 'photocopy' object and the process of making that copy, and English speakers have used it (mostly between 1980s–2000s) as a verb (lower case 'x') referring to the action required to create that copy.¹⁷³ In Brazilian Portuguese, 'xerox' bears the same meanings as in English (both the

¹⁷² Aldana pointedly suggests political implications for the popular consolidation of Xerox do Brasil by asserting that "the founding of Xerox do Brasil [in 1965] fit within other cultural trends, including the military regime's interest in development, technocracy, and foreign corporate investment." Aldana, "The Artists Who Copied," 19.

¹⁷³ In English, the use of the word 'xerox' as a verb gained top popularity in 1988, according to Google Books statistics. "Xerox," Google Books Ngram Viewer, accessed May 26, 2019, https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?year_start=1800&year_end=2008&corpus=15&smoothing=7&case_insensitive=on&content=xerox&direct_url=t4%3B%2Cxerox%3B%2Cc0%3B%2Cs0%3B%3BXerox%3B%2Cc0%3B%3

process of photocopying and the resulting copy), yet its use has been popularized to the point of creating and introducing into the dictionary the verb form *xerocar* (to xerox).¹⁷⁴ I propose that, when analyzing Parente's works on paper, the word 'xerox' used as a verb connotes the movement implied in the action of bringing together images from different sources (including in one instance her own, living body) and thus creating collages directly on the surface of the photocopy glass.

The visual compositions of Parente's Xerox artworks bring attention to their medium and reveal these as photocopies made of previously composed collages of paper-on-paper and pins-on-paper. Erin Sullivan Maynes's distinction between *duplicates* (endless reproductions without an original) and *copies* (endless reproductions with one, singular original) helps clarify the nature of the art objects created by Parente.¹⁷⁵ The limited reproductions of works like *S/Título* (of which I have identified a total of two duplicates), *Alfinetes de segurança*, *Don't Touch*, *Projeto 158-1 (A)*, and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* (all of which exist to date as single copies) presents an intricate relationship between collage and photocopy. Their existence as series of two and as singular copies defies the idea of possible infinite reproductions, thus calling attention to Parente's medium of choice. The singularity of these works that could have been infinitely reproduced suggests that, on the one hand, the sole purpose of photocopying the images used in collages like *Alfinetes de segurança* was to freely manipulate them in the resulting collage compositions. On the other hand, I propose that the collages photocopied in *S/Título* and *Don't Touch*, in which Parente xeroxes her own face, were composed directly on the glass surface of the Xerox machine and never existed as a cohesive

[Bxerox%3B%2Cc0%3B%3BXEROX%3B%2Cc0.](#)

¹⁷⁴ The popularization of the term 'xerox' in Brazil has also visual repercussions throughout the country, as establishments offering photocopy services announce it by publicly by exhibiting the word 'Xerox' on wall signs addressing passersby.

¹⁷⁵ Erin Sullivan-Maynes, "The Machine as Co-Author: Xerography and 'Art Without an Original'," in *Xerografia: Copy art in Brazil, 1970-1990* (San Diego: University of San Diego, 2017, exhibition catalogue), 104.

work beyond their photocopied (duplicate) version. In these two scenarios, the combination of collage and Xerox as an ideal medium for the creation of single duplicates discloses Parente's performative actions imbedded in these still images created on paper. These Xerox and collages are the result of putting into action and recording the manipulation of her own body, and of exercising her freedom of movement (physical, geographical, between disciplines, etc.).

3.4 *S/Título*: Xeroxed Body Fragments

Whereas physical, urban areas are mapped and xeroxed in the series *Casa*, the social spaces that Parente occupied inform her series *Mulheres*, composed of ten works on paper. For *Mulheres*, Parente carefully cut, sewed, pinned, stapled, collaged, xeroxed, and recombined selected representations of women. Created in the mid-1970s, the works in this series are predominantly composed of repurposed images appropriated from mass media publications, thus revealing Parente's social references of how to inhabit and perform her female identity in a specific place—Brazilian urban centers—and time: the 1964–85 military dictatorship that consolidated national modernization. Parente's *Mulheres* series offers staged appearances of female-identified bodies, typically as body fragments. Pointing to mass media representations of women, it presents stereotypical constructions of physical appearance as determining factors for the social consolidation of womanhood.

Beyond her immediate Brazilian context, Parente's collages (a technique she used both in artworks and personal notebooks) align her work with strategies used by artists in Europe, the U.S., and other Latin American countries in the mid-twentieth century to respond to the social construction of a female identity in domestic spaces. For instance, Parente's personal cookbook is

filled with collages of transcribed recipes, cut-outs of different products, and clippings from periodicals in both Portuguese and English. [Fig. 30] These colorful collages with their delicate cut-outs are reminiscent of Richard Hamilton's *Just What Makes Today's Home so Different so Appealing* (1956) and Martha Rosler's series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (ca. 1967–72), which likewise appropriate and re-contextualize found images from popular visual culture to make satirical and critical political statements.¹⁷⁶ Both for her personal cookbook and for the series *Mulheres*, for which she usually combined collage with Xerox techniques, Parente approached collage from a particularly feminist vantage point.

The untitled Xerox that inaugurates the series *Mulheres*, identified as *S/Título* (U/Titled, 1974), offers immediate comparisons between women's appearances and commercial, mundane objects in order to evidence the arbitrary standards of beauty and value that are derived from institutionalized structures of power. [Fig. 31] Produced a year prior to her three best-known videos analyzed in the previous chapter, *S/Título* also constitutes Parente's first contribution to global art currents. This black and white collage is composed of Xeroxes of images originally printed in magazines, like *Nova Cosmopolitan*, with popular circulation in Brazil and targeted to a feminine audience. Divided into three columns and four rows, the first two columns are filled with almost-identical figures of women's faces, while the last column displays advertisements for four different types of eyeglasses. Whereas each pair of glasses is differentiated from the rest based on specific design characteristics (reading or sunglasses, thick or thin frames, rounded or squared frames, for men or women) and more notably differentiated by their assigned price, the distinctions between

¹⁷⁶ On Martha Rosler's *House Beautiful* series see Darsie Alexander ed., *Martha Rosler: Irrespective* (New York: The Jewish Museum; New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2018). On Richard Hamilton see Hal Foster and Alex Bacon, eds., *Richard Hamilton: October Files* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010).

the eight sketched portraits of women are almost imperceptible at a first glance. Upon sustained looking and careful consideration of the labels accompanying each portrait in the first row, however, slight variations (and their accentuated shadows) become unique marks for each of these eight women's faces. In consonance with the accompanying labels, they present small eyes ("olhos pequenos"), big nose ("nariz grande"), broad nose ("nariz chato"), and retracted jawbone ("queixo para dentro"). The shadows vividly distinguishing the images in the first and second columns schematically accentuate these characteristics. Moreover, by following the horizontal and vertical vectors of the rigorous grid composition, all the images included in *S/Título* are immediately comparable with one another, disregarding their object or human nature.

The suggested comparisons are further achieved through the visual homogenization of formal elements produced and reinforced by the image manipulation that Xerox copy technology allows. Parente is explicit in her use of the homogenizing effects of photocopying, stating in a typed description of *S/Título* that "The medium employed (Xerox) produces the intentional unification of images from diverse origins."¹⁷⁷ The unification achieved through black and white coloration is reinforced by the regular sizes of the women's heads and the eyeglasses advertisements. As a result, the pictorial spaces inhabited by each woman in Parente's Xerox occupy the same amount of space as each of the advertisements for glasses. The symmetrical

¹⁷⁷ Parente's full description of *S/Título* reads, "Several types of relation are suggested. Some are predictable: looking to inquire, others looking to organize, others looking for the functionality of things by fully committing to engage with each other. A critical sense interrogates each and all of them, predictable or not. The medium employed (Xerox) produces the intentional unification of images from diverse origins." ["São colocadas varios tipos de relação. Algumas previsíveis: na ordem de indagar, outras na do [sic] ordenar, outras na da funcionalidade das coisas sem isenção de compromissos delas entre si. O sentido crítico questiona cada uma e todas elas, previsíveis ou não. O meio utilizado (xerox) provoca intencionalmente a unificação de imagens de origens diferentes."] Typed note "Letícia Tarquinio de Souza Parente, Rio/1974," in Acervo MAC USP. Parente's statement is reproduced in *8 JAC*'s catalogue; see *8 Jovem Arte Contemporânea* (São Paulo: MAC USP, 1974), n.p. This artwork was included in the exhibition *8 Jovem Arte Contemporânea* (commonly known as *8 JAC*, 1974).

homogenization of images in *S/Título* emphasizes the objectification of the portrayed women's figures.

The eminently commercial presentation of glasses—and women—is expressed through the concise labels pointing to apparent differences rather than substantial characteristics. The glasses, like the women in the first column, are identified with precise labels describing them as progressive glasses, sport glasses, rounded frames, and bifocal glasses. The other descriptions accompanying each of these products indicate their foreign origin and payment options—imported, and single payment or installments (“importado; à vista ou a prazo”). Yet, an inscription repeated three times poignantly reiterates how these appear to be unique commercial opportunities. Their monetary value is advertised as “only nostalgia price” (“preço nostalgia só”), a sales mechanism that appeals to the affect of potential buyers. The monetary value of these products invokes positive and individual feelings towards past commercial offers by associating the price of the eyeglasses with the feeling of nostalgia. Through the artificial juxtaposition of slight variations of women's faces and commercially promoted goods embodying a desired past, women and eyeglasses acquire a comparable economic value in relation to the viewer. This comparison between people and objects suggests that the advertised “nostalgia price” payable in monthly installments corresponds interchangeably to a pair of reading or sunglasses and to the feminine facial gestures that contribute to a woman's physical individual identity. In other words, the comparison between objects and women relegates the latter to an object lacking intrinsic value.

One salient comparison with Parente's collage strategies is Geiger's photo-collage series *Diário de um artista brasileiro* (Diary of a Brazilian artist, 1975), one of few examples of collage produced during the 1970s in Brazil. In the six images that comprise this series, Geiger presents herself in the company of Euro-American male artists by photocopying her photograph into

already existing photographs of Henri Matisse, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Marcel Duchamp, Barnett Newman, and Claes Oldenburg. [Fig. 32] For each work in this series, Geiger presents herself in a specific fashion, matching the style of the featured artists with her clothes and body posture. Her insertion into photographs of renowned white male artists has been interpreted by Aldana and others as Geiger's astute and comical way to insert herself into the network of these canonical artists.¹⁷⁸ However, her postures in the photographs of Matisse, where Geiger's portrait is the subject of one of Matisse's canvas; Lichtenstein, where he seems to be painting the hair of a quiet, smiling Geiger; and Duchamp, where Geiger appears as "the bride," according to the accompanying inscription, do not portray her as these artists' peer. Instead, she situates herself as part of their work, a component of their production, thus reinforcing the traditional artistic role of women as the model or muse of male creators.

Both Parente and Geiger use the medium of photocopy as an artistic strategy based on comparison and reproduction. The title of Geiger's series, *Diary of a Brazilian Artist*, suggests recurrent encounters between Geiger and selected Euro-American contemporary artists. However, the title's original Portuguese designates this diary as pertaining to a Brazilian male artist through the masculine, singular article 'um' and the masculine adjective 'brasileiro.' If the central character of this series is a Brazilian man, we must ask who is embodying him—are Euro-American artists coopted as Brazilian representatives? Or rather should Geiger be seen as both feminine muse and masculine creator? The direct and uneven comparison created between Geiger and Matisse,

¹⁷⁸ See Aldana, "The Artist Who Copied"; Tatiana Flores, "Solo Show: Anna Bella Geiger," in *ArtNexus*, 55 (2005), accessed August 19, 2019, http://artnexus.com/Notice_View.aspx?DocumentID=14522&lan=en&x=1 ; Adolfo Montejo Navas, ed. *Anna Bella Geiger: Territórios, passagens, situações* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, Anima Produções Culturais, 2007) and Arshy Azizi, "PST: Sound, Video, and Copy Art," in *Rhizome*, published January 23, 2018, <https://rhizome.org/editorial/2018/jan/23/pst-sound-video-and-copy-art/> . Some scholars have misidentified Barnett Newman as Joseph Beuys in Geiger's *Diário de um artista brasileiro*.

Warhol, Lichtenstein, Duchamp, Newman, and Oldenburg brings forth the marginalization of a Brazilian woman artist who must present as male ('um artista') to be considered an artist. Contrary to the comparisons that form the basis of Parente's *S/Título*, the gender reversal in *Diário de um artista brasileiro* is presented as a unique, almost privileged situation. Given Parente's broader claim of image manipulation and gender disparity, along with her early use of Xeroxed collages, *S/Título* contributed to international discussions about the social perception of women by comparing anonymous female bodies with Brazilian commercial advertisements.

3.5 Portable Events of Ideas

Conceptual art exhibitions on view in Brazil in 1974 and again in 1977 provided a new platform for the kind of structural analysis of mass media sources Parente had begun in the 1960s, and informed the aesthetic and political characteristics of her work on collage and Xerox. Conceptual art, which emerged across the globe in the 1960s and 1970s, is rooted in artworks that provoke experiences centered on exchanges of information and reveal the conditions of their conception. *8 JAC* (1974), arguably the first exhibition in which Parente's experimental work was included, incorporated ephemeral artworks not created with traditional supports and techniques. Zanini described the content of *8 JAC*, in which Parente participated with *S/Título*, as "works and proposals of a predominantly conceptual tendency, resulting in an event of somewhat fragmented ideas."¹⁷⁹ By using the word 'conceptual', Zanini foregrounded the artists' intellectual autonomy

¹⁷⁹ "Dentre o material enviado, decidimos programar trabalhos e propostas de prevalente endereçamento para o conceitual, resultando um evento de idéias que é evidentemente um pouco fragmentário." Walter Zanini, *8 JAC-Jovem Arte Contemporânea '74* (São Paulo: MAC USP, 1974, exhibition catalogue), n.p.

and reinforced that the creation of communication channels was an artistic endeavor. Through the analysis of mass media and the appropriation of periodical clippings into *S/Título*, Parente questions both the depicted image of women and the economic system of which the image is a part. The open dialogue among individuals and institutions that *8 JAC* actively promoted continued that same year through the exhibition *Prospectiva 74* and three years later through *Poéticas visuais*.¹⁸⁰

Prospectiva 74 and *Poéticas visuais* articulated the display of contemporary art as a site—a specific time and place—for transnational communication and presented this circulation of information as conceptual art.¹⁸¹ These exhibitions emphasized the circulation of information by featuring Xerox artworks that could be easily reproduced and become disposable, and by including works on mail art. Adopting Xerox and mail art as media worth of museum display and of medium-specific considerations, these two exhibitions serve as local landmarks for the “conceptual turn,” in the terms of art historian Mari Rodríguez Binnie.¹⁸² Along with introducing conceptual art, the active communication promoted by these exhibitions, the latter in which Parente’s *Projeto 158–1*

¹⁸⁰ This series of conceptual art exhibitions also include *Multimedia internacional*, a 1979 exhibition focused on mail art and on view at the Escola de Arte e Comunicação (School of Art and Communication) at USP. Under the advisory of Walter Zanini, *Multimedia internacional* was organized by artists Tadeu Jungle and Walter Silveira, then students at ECA USP and future members of the collective TVDO, a major actor during the 1980s in Brazil’s history of video art. The catalogues for *Prospectiva 74*, *Poéticas visuais*, and *Multimedia internacional* follow a similar design: they are printed in black-and-white, paperback, measure 17 x 22 in (43.2 x 55.8 cm), and open with a text authored by Zanini. *Poéticas visuais* and *Multimedia internacional* include Parente among the exhibition’s participant artists, but their catalogues do not provide information about Parente’s work.

¹⁸¹ The invitations for *Prospectiva 74* and *Poéticas visuais* were mailed by Zanini and Julio Plaza to artists in their personal networks and included two additional invitations to be further distributed in each artist’s circle. As described by Plaza, this exhibition exalted contemporary artistic perspectives and modes of working defined by “continuities” as opposed to “categories.” As a result of the continuous distribution of invitations, *Prospectiva 74* gathered 150 works from artists working in the Americas and Western and Eastern Europe.

¹⁸² Mari Rodríguez Binnie, “*Prospectiva 74* and *Poéticas visuais*: The International Horizon of ‘Anartistic’ Print Experimentation,” *Caiana* 11 (2017): 117–122. According to art historian Cristina Freire, the works included in *Poéticas visuais* form the core of today MAC USP’s collection of conceptual art. Cristina Freire, “Pesquisa, processos e exposições: notas sobre algumas experiências curatoriais” in *Sobre exposições: conceitualismos em mostras no MAC USP (2000-2015)*, org. Cristina Freire (São Paulo: MAC USP, 2019), 9–26.

(A) and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* were exhibited, positioned *Prospectiva 74* and *Poéticas visuais* in political opposition to established power structures, such as Brazil's military administration.

Privileging different modes of contact and communication, these exhibitions also challenged traditional displays of art objects: ephemeral works were unframed and available on browsing tables. [Fig. 33] *Poéticas visuais*, moreover, augmented the public manipulation and circulation of the works on display by providing a Xerox machine. Clarifying that most of the exhibited works could be photocopied for the public, Zanini announced *Poéticas visuais* as a “portable exhibition.”¹⁸³ Extending *Poéticas visuais* beyond the museum walls by photocopying the exhibited works reinforced the social and political implications of this medium conceived to be reproduced and circulated without restrictions. Beyond providing public platforms for her works, I propose that *8 JAC* and the 1977 exhibition *Poéticas visuais* offered Parente innovative frames of reference about conceptual art strategies. They also foregrounded Parente's approach to art as a practice that encompasses critical analysis of mass media sources.¹⁸⁴ Exhibiting her collages and Xerox artworks along mail art produced both locally and internationally further reinforced Parente's use of new media and conceptual art practices, thus anticipating her participation, years later, in the mail art section of the São Paulo Biennial, as discussed in chapter five of this dissertation.

¹⁸³ “The public will be able to obtain Xerox copies of the majority of the documents exhibited, thereby also making it a portable exhibition.” Walter Zanini, “The New Possibilities,” in *Poéticas Visuais*, trad. Michael Paul Potter, (São Paulo: MAC USP, 1977, exhibition catalogue), n.p.

¹⁸⁴ *S/Título* was included in *8 JAC*. A handwritten note in Parente's file at MAC USP's archive lists *Projeto 158-1 (A)*, *Projeto 158-2 (B)*, and the videos *Pontos* (Dots, 6:8 minutes) and *A chamada* (The call, 6:3 minutes, both undated) as Parente's four works in *Poéticas visuais*'s checklists. In an attached, undated letter from Parente to Zanini, the artist provides the identification information for these two videos along with reproduction instructions that indicate where to locate the works within the videotape. The *Poéticas visuais* exhibition catalogue only mentions *Projeto 158-1 transformação (A)*. See Acervo MAC USP, artist file, and *Poéticas visuais* (São Paulo: MAC USP, 1977), n.p. To date, copies of *Pontos* and *A chamada* have not been accessible due to the misplace of the tapes and limited access to compatible reproduction technologies.

3.6 1975: “Women are the biggest revolutionary reserve of the world”

With her Xerox series *Mulheres*, inaugurated with *S/Título* and exhibited at 8 JAC, Parente also joined global movements advocating for women’s rights and calling for the recognition of the autonomous agency of women. Although on a global scale Euro-American cities served as epicenters of the feminist revolution, in 1975 (the year of Parente’s watershed video, collage, and Xerox artworks) attention was brought to Latin America with the celebration in Mexico City of the First World Conference on Women (June 19–July 2), organized by the United Nations (U.N.) as part of their declaration of 1975 as the International Year of Women.¹⁸⁵ The relevance of feminist movements was certainly not overlooked by Parente, a scholar acutely aware of the construction of gender as innate in and distributed by printed mass media. The First World Conference on Women was copiously covered for the Brazilian audience by the weekly magazine *Manchete* (mainly circulating in Rio de Janeiro) in their July 5 issue, while the U.N. initiative was addressed in the periodical *Nova Cosmopolitan* in December 1975, in a four-page article titled “O dia-a-dia internacional da mulher” (The international day-to-day of women).¹⁸⁶ In *Manchete*’s coverage, an impressive two-page photograph of the U.N.-led conference accompanies the main article, which foregrounds the conference’s opening statement: “Women are the biggest revolutionary reserve of the world.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ The conference report is available online in the United Nations Digital Library. See “Report of the World Conference of the International Women’s Year, Mexico City, 19 June–2 July 1975,” United Nations Digital Library, accessed October 3, 2017, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/586225>.

¹⁸⁶ Marina Colasanti, “O dia-a-dia internacional da mulher,” *Nova Cosmopolitan*, December 1975, 99–110.

¹⁸⁷ The statement “A mulher é a grande reserva revolucionária do mundo” is the opening line of “O mundo é das mulheres,” *Manchete* 1211 (July 5, 1975), 10b. In this same issue of *Manchete*, immediately following the quoted article, are the political article “Para onde va a abertura” (Where is ‘abertura’ going?) and the scientific report “Independência nuclear: 25 anos de luta pelo átomo” (Nuclear independence: 15 years fighting for the atom) both

Selected forums in Brazil concurrently echoed the U.N.-declared International Year of Women. The national situation of professional women scientists was analyzed by Carmen Lúcia de Melo Barroso (affiliated with the Fundação Carlos Chagas) in the monthly journal *Ciência e cultura*, published by the Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência (Brazilian Association for the Progress of Science, SBPC).¹⁸⁸ A month later, in July 1975, the SBPC included in its annual conference the panel “Sobre a condição feminina” (On the feminine condition), proposed by the Fundação Carlos Chagas, a private, non-profit institution offering educational assessment services, and chaired by Universidade de São Paulo (USP) scholars.¹⁸⁹ The situation of professional women in Brazil was further discussed in October 1975 at the annual conference of the Sociedade Interamericana da Imprensa (Inter-American Press Association) in São Paulo, while in Rio the Associação Brasileira de Imprensa (Brazilian Press Association, ABI) hosted a week-long conference sponsored by the U.N.¹⁹⁰ Although these amount to only scattered events when compared to the activities that took place in other locales, such as the Mexico City conference with a reported attendance of 5,000 women from 150 countries, there is no doubt that Parente was aware

falling within Parente’s personal and professional interests. See *Manchete* 1211 (July 5, 1975): 12–15 and 16–19.

¹⁸⁸ According to Barroso, in 1970 in Brazil only 11% of chemist were women and, in 1973, of the total Ph.D. graduates in Brazil only 20% were women, two statistics that underscore Parente’s privileged position. Carmen Lúcia de Melo Barroso, “A participação da mulher no desenvolvimento científico brasileiro,” *Ciência e cultura* 27, no. 6 (June 1975), 613.

¹⁸⁹ The papers included in this panel were titled “Women and the Patriarchal Family,” “Women and Work,” “Women, Development, and Technology,” and “Women in Latin America.” Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência, *27th Reunião Annual da Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência, 9-16 julho, 1975, Belo Horizonte* (Belo Horizonte: SBPC, 1975), xxxii.

¹⁹⁰ According to a note published in *Nova*, this panel’s participants were Argentina Hills, director of the Puerto Rican newspaper *El mundo*; Lygia Fagundes Telles, writer; Valnice Nogueira Galvão, professor of literary theory at USP; Renata Pallotini, theater writer and director of Escola de Arte Dramática at USP; Luzia Galvão, attorney general at São Paulo Court of Justice; and Fatima Ali, director of *Nova Cosmopolitan*. “Nosso novo mundo” in *Nova* (December 1975), 4. See also “Breve cronologia do movimento feminista no Brasil,” in *50 anos de feminismo: Argentina, Brasil e Chile*, ed. Eva Alterman Blay and Lúcia Avelar (São Paulo: Editorial da Universidade de São Paulo, 2017), 332; and Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, ed. *Pensamento feminista brasileiro. Formação e contexto* (Rio de Janeiro: Bazar do Tempo, 2019).

of most, if not all, of the Brazilian conferences and publications, sometimes participating as an audience member. The specifics of the discussed topics were part of her life experience as professional scientist, a regular participant of SBPC annual conference, and an engaged member of a patriarchal family. She was also a regular reader of the aforementioned scientific and popular publications. As evidenced in her collages *Mulheres*, publications like *Ciência e cultura* and *Nova* left a profound imprint on the way that Parente, inhabiting a female body and identity, experienced the world by participating in twentieth-century Brazil's upper-middle class.

Parente's *S/Título*, specifically, engages in conversation with the most critical discussions on the condition of women that took place in Brazil in 1975. "O dia-a-dia internacional da mulher," *Nova*'s coverage of the U.N. initiative, directly confronts the theoretical homogenization of women, and does so by adopting the U.N.'s global reach. Marina Colasanti, author of the article, cites an analysis conducted across five continents only to conclude, ironically—a tone she had already set in her article's title—that "the woman that emerges in diametrically opposed countries, different in culture and religion, appears strangely to be the same woman, the same second-class being, sometimes resigned, sometimes revolted, always carrying her destiny of contempt."¹⁹¹ *S/Título*'s Xeroxed portraits illustrate this woman. If the condition of women is recognized on a global magnitude, thus provoking world-wide mobilization and discussion, as portrayed in 1975 and reflected in Colasanti's article, the universalization of women's situations also came at a high price. A single model, devoid of collective particularities and individual characteristics, seems to represent all women, thus concealing any specificities of their varied socio-political conditions.

¹⁹¹ "E a mulher que emerge de países tão diametralmente opostos, tão diferentes em cultura e religião, parece estranhamente ser a mesma mulher, o mesmo ser de segunda classe, mais conformado às vezes, mais revoltado outras, sempre carregando seu fado de desprezo." The study cited by Colasanti was conducted by French Press. Marina Colasanti, "O dia-a-dia internacional da mulher" in *Nova* (December 1975), 99.

Aware of her unique site of enunciation, in *S/Título* Parente deploys the medium of Xerox—its homogenizing and potentially infinitely reproducible qualities—to respond to this simplistic homogenization of an imagined female figure. Her use of magazines as the sources for this work is a prominent example of her unique approach to addressing concerns about gender identity.

While 1975 coincides both with an organized discursive engagement with the condition of women in the Americas, and with the creation of Parente's *Mulheres* and Geiger's *Diário de un artista brasileiro*, Parente and her peers did not explicitly articulate any commitment to feminist currents. As noticed by many, and exemplified by Andrade as quoted in Shtromberg's *Art Systems*, their works were not intended to align with feminist politics in Brazil or abroad.¹⁹² Other scholars and artists, including Saffioti and Roberta Barros (Rio de Janeiro, b. 1979), have explained this historical disassociation as a consequence of Brazil's exceptional dictatorial state, in which the priority to advocate for democratic values surpassed any gendered considerations and demands.¹⁹³ Yet, the refusal of Parente and her peers to be directly associated with global feminist currents accurately illustrates *Manchete*'s opening line describing women as a passive revolutionary force still in reserve.

¹⁹² Shtromberg, *Art Systems*, 111–112.

¹⁹³ See Roberta Barros, *Elogio ao toque: ou como falar de arte feminista a brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Relacionarte Marketing e Produções Culturais Ltda, 2016), 129; and Gillian Sneed, "Anthropofagic Subjectivities."

3.7 *Mulheres*: Collaged Body Fragments

Although Parente evaded an activist position, through her works on paper she denounced the limitations imposed on female identities as a response to a social classification of gender, a highly consumerist society, and a politically repressed citizenship. By recombining human bodies in the experimental, untitled collages from her series *Mulheres*, Parente reiterates that women inhabit the world in gender-specific, yet not homogenous ways. In five of these collages—which I refer to hereafter as *Perucas* (Wigs), *Cirurgia* (Surgery), *Saia* (Skirt), and *Olhos, nariz e bouca I* and *II* (Eyes, nose, and mouth I and II), all ca. 1975—Parente folds her (feminist) political critique into her manipulation of apparently banal images reproduced in popular magazines, thus adopting a pop art strategy. [Fig. 34–38] At their core, pop artworks appropriate images originally produced for mass media circulation and critically re-contextualize them in order to question the viewer’s everyday relation to the images on display.¹⁹⁴ In her collages, Parente presents modified versions of found images of women as individually distinguishable human beings and offers vital information absent from the appropriated popular imagery. *Perucas*, *Cirurgia*, *Saia*, and *Olhos, nariz e boca I* and *II* illustrate Parente’s perspective on the construction of gender in popular magazines. Through the collage-specific strategies of cutting selected images and producing new combinations of reconfigured details, Parente demonstrates how women are portrayed in printed advertisements that give objects and subjects the same treatment.

¹⁹⁴ For analysis of pop art as a global phenomenon, see *International Pop*, ed. Darsie Alexander and Bartholomew Ryan (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2015); *The World Goes Pop*, ed. Jessica Morgan and Flavia Frigeri (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); and *Pop América, 1965-1975*, ed. Esther Gabara (Durham N.C.: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, 2018). The latter offers in-depth considerations of the regional emergence of pop across Latin America. The relations between conceptual and pop art have been recently examined in *Pop América, 1965–1975*, and in John J. Curley, *Global Art of the Cold War* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2019).

In *Perucas*, Parente juxtaposes four examples each of two approaches to advertising wigs, on either side of the caption “perucas de KANEKALON,” a popular synthetic fiber. On top, four mannequins wear wigs with different hair styles, while the figures on the bottom correspond to human (women’s) heads presumably wearing wigs. [Fig. 34] In *Perucas*, every head is accompanied by an assigned economic value. Each image—either human or mannequin—carries an alphabetical or numerical label and a fixed price: a classified, limited set of possibilities. Just like the advertised wigs, the women in *Perucas* come in a variety of models within the parameters of white skin phenotypes, artificial makeup, and smiling faces. As is also the case with Andy Warhol’s *Wigs* (1961–62), Parente’s *Perucas* participate in the Cold War logic of appropriating mass media-distributed imagery as a political strategy to reveal the ideological configuration of periodical advertisements.¹⁹⁵ In *Perucas*, the comparison between women’s heads and mannequins reveals the manufactured representation of femininity as displayed in advertisements, pointing further to its artificiality by labeling them with the industrial name of a synthetic fiber.

The images Parente appropriates in *Cirurgia* blatantly present female bodies as objects for visible manipulation, further reinforcing her critique of commercial and political representations of women. In this collage, black and white diagrams of two right-side breasts and a female head in profile and frontal views are accompanied by succinct descriptions of the location of scars resulting from breast and facial plastic surgery. [Fig. 35] In all four diagrams, the scars are

¹⁹⁵ According to art historian John J. Curley, during the Cold War, political control was exerted over the social body by constricting the bodies of women and non-gender-conforming individuals into preestablished social behaviors and beauty patterns disseminated through mass-circulation images of fashionable products (like advertisements for shoes and wigs). See John J. Curley, “Chapter 2: The Development of Andy Warhol’s Pop Eye,” *A Conspiracy of Images: Andy Warhol, Gerhard Richter, and the Art of the Cold War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 53–82. On Warhol’s *Wigs*, see Jessica Beck, “Warhol’s Confession: Love, Faith, and AIDS” in *Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again*, ed. Donna De Salvo (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2018), 93; and Jessica Beck, ed., *Andy Warhol: My Perfect Body* (Pittsburgh: The Andy Warhol Museum, 2016).

illustrated, but Parente also reproduces the stitches by sewing three zig-zag lines onto the paper towards the lower section of the work. By re-creating the diagramed stitches with a sewing machine and a black thread, Parente compares a woman's skin with an unremarkable sheet of paper. The crude nature of these stitches recalls Parente's sewing onto her own body as captured in her video *Marca registrada*. Whereas in *Marca registrada* the sewing of stitches unfolds over time and physically punctures Parente's skin, the thread in *Cirurgia* is potentially reproducible in any and all women's breasts and heads. By combining the descriptions of scar locations with the plastic surgery diagrams and actual stitches, in *Cirurgia* Parente points to the normalized industrial manipulation of bodies through simplified, misleading images that treat them as a mere set of drawn lines, as women only existing on paper.

The three color collages of this series—*Saia* and *Olhos, nariz e bouca I* and *II*—repurpose feminine facial features into new objects or people. In each of these instances, the resulting reconfiguration emphasizes the adherence of two pieces of paper through violent yet methodical punctures. In *Saia*, fragments of a woman's face compose the unified surface of a triangular shape. [Fig. 36] The accompanying inscriptions clarify that this is a skirt and label it with a price that, as indicated, should be paid in a single installment (“à vista”), a commercial jargon usually implying a bargain. The handwritten word ‘saia’ (skirt) assigns a representational meaning to the constructed triangular shape. Sewn with a sewing machine—a technique revealed in the regularity of the stitches and on the visible wholes left by the perpendicular punctures of the needle—the rectangular seam on the skirt's waistband contributes to the configuration of a representational object while conclusively disrupting the smooth red lips of the original feminine portrait. The alteration in this image's direction (placing the fragmented face upside-down in relation to the constructed skirt, the inscription, and the overall configuration of the work) reinforces the public

objectification of an anonymous woman. The reversed directionality and selected fragmentation result in preeminently featuring the woman's open right eye, thus underlining the relevance of the commercial bargain "à vista": a reference to payment in a single installment, which literally translates to "at sight." By underlining that the skirt is available for a reduced price pending its payment in a lump sum from whomever sees it, Parente critically presents its reconfigured parts as pertaining to a human being visible to the naked eye and highly aware of her situation. Despite keeping her eyes wide open, this woman, as physically and culturally constructed in mass media and reconstructed as a piece of clothing, is shown here as an apparently disposable item that, in plain sight, becomes subject to purposeful manipulation.

Through a similarly violent collage process, in *Olhos, nariz e bouca I* and *II* Parente appropriates printed and popularly circulated portraits of women to artificially reconstruct them. As opposed to *Saia*, in *Olhos, nariz e bouca I* and *II* Parente reconfigures the images into new female portraits that, incorporating nails and metallic staples, determine where the facial features should be affixed and what gestures (or lack thereof) are allowed to these women. The four nails of *Olhos, nariz e bouca I* are carefully located so as to only puncture the edges of the eyes, the nose, and the closed lips. [Fig. 37] Contrary to the actions undertaken in her video *Preparação I* created that same year and in which Parente covers her eyes and mouth in a gesture to conceal individual features and spontaneous movements, the facial features in *Olhos, nariz e bouca I* are purposefully displayed to forcibly reconstruct a woman's face with the use of nails. If the features of this portrait clearly pertain to different individuals, the aggressiveness of recombining them and holding them together with sharp pieces of metal seems to be expressed by the facial expression of the newly-created woman who stares directly at the spectator. Her gestures, empathic and

cognizant of another person beyond the printed page to whom her gaze is directed, connote a disturbance: she lacks agency in recognizing and presenting her own identity.

In addition to making explicit women's lack of agency, *Olhos, nariz e bouca II* also reinforces the violence of external impositions. [Fig. 38] In this collage, Parente attached the facial features onto a delineated face with steel staples that underline the artificiality of this facial configuration while limiting the symbolic possibilities of sight or speech allowed to the portrayed woman. With an abundant number of staples (twenty in total), this woman's eyes are punctured so as to perforate her ocular globes and thereby fix the movement of her upper and lower eyelids. Steel wires also pierce the woman's lips, thus canceling any ability to speak, yell, or laugh, not unlike the tape that restricts the lips in *Preparação I*. By adding more staples than those needed to attach two pieces of paper, Parente denounces the limitations imposed on women to freely exert their right of expression—including physical and social communication, and individual and political preferences and opinions.

The silent violence against women forcefully represented in these five works of *Mulheres* culminates in a sixth, referred to hereafter as *Alfinetes de segurança* (Safety pins). Here, Parente alters a close-up photographic portrait of a woman—that can be equally identifiable as a mannequin, a doll, or a human being—by attaching safety pins vertically across her open eyes and horizontally across her mouth. [Fig. 39] The strategic locations of the puncturing tip of the safety pins, piercing her upper and lower eyelids and crossing her mouth, present these sharp objects as complementary additions to makeup procedures. Different from other of her works on paper, the woman in *Alfinetes de segurança* appears to be a fully formed individual otherwise able to participate in a public, social life. The safety pins in *Alfinetes de segurança*, however, as the tape in *Preparação I*, lock a woman's eyes and mouth in a still position. By altering the body through

violent actions and visually restricting it, Parente draws attention once again to the limits imposed on individual identities. In this work, however, the woman's portrait is neither fragmented nor reconfigured but rather Xeroxed: industrially copied in a black and white reproduction of the original image. The woman's delicately traversed eyelids call attention to her wide-open eyes and reinforce both her subjection to an external gaze and her capacity to see. In Aldana's words, this "woman fearlessly returns the viewer's gaze, but her assertiveness is kept in check by the real safety pins piercing her eyes and mouth."¹⁹⁶ With metal and paper, Parente underscores again the conflict between women's autonomous possibilities of speech and sight, and the barriers imposed through feminine identities constructed and delivered in popular visual media. Whereas in *Olhos, nariz e bouca I* and *II* the sharp metal pieces are static components, the safety pins attached to *Alfinetes de segurança* are flexible, as indicated by oxidation marks on the lower lip and the left eye. The reproduced portrait and perforated Xerox reinforces the seemingly undisturbed physical appearance of this anonymous woman.

Parente, who was more interested in the visual and conceptual expression of her ideas than in their widespread distribution, deployed the media of Xerox and collage as channels for circulating visual information about her gender condition. The sources of Parente's found images, however, reveal a limitation of her critique: it focused exclusively on middle-class white women. This is particularly noteworthy when considering Parente's 1960s–70s Brazilian milieu, in which white and Afro-Brazilian women (one of the largest demographic groups in Brazil) bore radically

¹⁹⁶ "Letícia Parente," exhibition label in *Xerografia: Copy art in Brazil, 1970-1990*, curated by Erin Aldana, Robin and Karen Hoehn Family Galleries, University of San Diego (September 15–December 16, 2017).

different social archetypes.¹⁹⁷ In her works on paper, Parente focused on the readers of periodicals for women (usually understood as white-skinned housewives) and does not discuss, for instance, the social condition of Afro-Brazilians, usually profiled as poor, illiterate domestic workers. From a feminist perspective, these limitations of Parente's critique are comparable with the shortcomings of first wave feminism as articulated in the U.S.¹⁹⁸ By exclusively appropriating images of white, middle-class women, however, Parente's collages do not reference Brazil's rich history of intersectional feminism and do not engage with the discourses of race that Parente would later portray in her 1982 video *Tarefa I* (Task I, analyzed in chapter four) and that would take general preeminence immediately after the end of the military dictatorship.

3.8 *Don't Touch: One's Own Female Body*

If Parente's photocopied collages translate a set of images of perceived stereotypical women from the context of a women's magazine to a work of art, the Xerox *Don't Touch* captures Parente's bodily movement (and lack thereof) at the exact moment of its creation. [Fig. 40] This unique work in Parente's oeuvre is a black and white photocopy of Parente's face pressed against the photocopier glass. The artist's closed eyes, nose, lips, and chin are flattened across the right-hand section of the work, while her curly hair traces thin lines throughout the middle section of

¹⁹⁷ See *Pensamento feminista brasileiro. Formação e contexto*, ed. Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda (Rio de Janeiro: Bazar do tempo, 2019) and *50 anos de feminismo: Argentina, Brasil e Chile*, org. Eva Alterman Blay and Lúcia Avelar (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, Fapesp, 2017).

¹⁹⁸ In a Brazilian context, these shortcomings have been surpassed in recent years through social movements' diverse configurations and advocacy efforts, as epitomized by the work of Rio de Janeiro councillor Marielle Franco (1979–2018).

the work. A fragment of paper taped to the copy with yellowing masking tape alerts, “DON’T TOUCH!” By pressing herself against the surface, Parente indicates the invisible barrier between her and her audience. Combining her pressed body with a verbal command written in English, Parente asserts that this transparent glass barrier, only recognizable on the flattened sections of her face, moves beyond the indications of space and into the realm of social interactions. As an act of decolonizing a woman’s body, the distance between her body and her audience needs to be maintained under Parente’s own conditions.¹⁹⁹

Parente’s *Don’t Touch* is contemporaneous with works by U.S. artist Adrian Piper (b. 1948), such as *Catalysis I* and *III*, 1970, as well as Cuban-U.S. artist Ana Mendieta (1948–1985)’s *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints)*, 1972). [Fig. 41–43] In these works, the artists altered their physical appearance (either through their smell, in the case of Piper’s *Catalysis I*, or by using glass to distort the body’s voluptuousness, in the case of Mendieta and Parente) as a strategy to simultaneously conceal and reveal female presence. By soaking her clothes in putrid substances and wearing them in the New York subway or by wearing a “wet paint” shirt, Piper achieved an invisibility that resulted from ambiguously bringing general attention to her presence, yet using the rotting smell as a mechanism to maintain physical distance between the viewers and herself, a young woman of color.²⁰⁰ Performing not on the street but for the camera, in *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints)* Mendieta concealed and revealed herself by pressing a clear glass onto her nude

¹⁹⁹ This distance between Parente and the public is further reinforced by the fact that *Don’t Touch* was not publicly exhibited during Parente’s lifetime. *Don’t Touch* (recently retitled *Don’t Touch Me*) was included in the 2011 traveling retrospective organized in Brazil by André Parente, and in 2017 in *Armario de mim* at Galeria Jaqueline Martins in São Paulo and in *Xerografia* at the University of California San Diego.

²⁰⁰ On Adrian Piper’s “invisible presence” in her *Catalyst* series, see Nizan Shaked, “Propositions to Politics: Adrian Piper’s Conceptual Paradigms” in *Adrian Piper: A Reader* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2018), 68–101.

body and selectively distorting her face, breast, pubis, and buttock.²⁰¹ Mendieta's performance and photographic documentation evidences how a woman's body (however she chooses to present it) can, through her own will, become amorphous and release itself from a visibly distinguishable feminine identity. By featuring the artist as a body that is simultaneously exposed and removed from the audience's reach, with *Don't Touch* Parente joins Piper and Mendieta in reflecting, with their intentionally flattened and grotesque bodies and instructive labels ("wet paint," "don't touch!"), on the traditional social constrictions that limit a women's agency.

Parente's chosen language, moreover, recalls the strategic enunciations embedded in her work in video, like the bilingual sentence in *Marca registrada* and the English title of *In*. Her use of English for the command sentence in *Don't Touch* points both to the intended international audience of this work and to Parente's scientific work, a disciplinary realm where—as Parente discusses in her book *Química*—English is the technical *lingua franca* even in northeastern Brazil. Parente might have often seen the sentence "do not touch" in the context of a scientific laboratory equipped with imported devices and serving as a repository for instructions written in English. For *Don't Touch*, Parente appropriated imported technical language and image reproduction technologies, applying them to feminist demands originating simultaneously around the world, including the hegemonic margins of the Global South.

Within the history of art of Brazil, Parente's gesture of pressing her face against the photocopying machine is not unique, as other (male) artists have interacted with the photocopy machine in order to visually articulate their own identity while producing easily distributed images.

²⁰¹ See Kelly Baum, "Shapely Shapelessness: Ana Mendieta's *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints: Face)*, 1972," *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University*, 67 (2008): 80–93.

Brazilian artists Paulo Bruscky (Recife, b. 1949) and Hudinilson Jr. (São Paulo, 1957–2013) are two prolific artists who imprinted their bodies onto the glass surface of Xerox machines to create figurative portraits and abstract images that navigate between the mundane and the fantastic. In the late 1970s, Bruscky photocopied different sections of his head for his series *Xeroperformances*. The performance of this action, according to Bruscky, “registers the mo(ve)ment”: While accounting for the bodily movement taking place in conjunction with the Xerox machine, a *Xeroperformance* keeps record of a single moment. Bruscky incorporated the resulting Xerox images into his mail artworks as a resourceful methodology for building an international network of collaborators by working from his hometown of Recife in the northeastern state of Pernambuco.²⁰² As lucidly analyzed by art historian Zanna Gilbert, Bruscky’s *Xeroperformance* embodies the presence of the artist in locales distant to their place of origin or residence.²⁰³ [Fig. 44] Combining Xerox and mail as artistic media, artists like Bruscky could effectively and affordably reproduce a work of art and send it through the postal mail system to one or more addressees, a fundamental considerations for working under Brazil’s oppressive, regulatory dictatorship.²⁰⁴ In contrast to Parente’s gesture in *Don’t Touch* and evidencing an alternate gendered approach to the display of the body, Bruscky presses his face against the photocopier

²⁰² Bruscky’s artistry is recognized both in its aesthetic qualities in as much as in its political position of working from the geographical margins of the city of Recife in relation to the São Paulo–Rio de Janeiro economic and cultural axis. See Zanna Gilbert “Networking Regionalism: Long-Distance Performativity in the International Mail Art Network,” *TAREA* 4, 4 (2017): 84–96; Zanna Gilbert, “Mail Art Exchange of Paulo Bruscky and Robert Rehfeldt” *Art in print* 5, 3 (September–October 2015): 28–37; and Vanessa Katherine Davidson, chapters four and five, “Paulo Bruscky and Edgardo Antonio Vigo: Pioneers in Alternative Communication Networks, Conceptualism, and Performance (1960s–1980s)” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2011), 138–74.

²⁰³ Zanna Gilbert, “The Human Letter: Mail Art Exchanges between East Berlin and Northeast Brazil, in the 1970s,” *Art in Print* 5, 3 (September–October 2015): 29–37.

²⁰⁴ As discussed in chapter five of this dissertation, the close relation between mail and Xerox art was further evidenced in the section “Núcleo I–Arte Postal” of the 16th São Paulo Biennial (1981). This section of the Biennial, along with the exhibitions *Xerografia* (1980), *Arte Xerox Brasil* (1984), and *Arte novos meios/multimeios* (1985) cemented the popularity of Xerox art in São Paulo during the last year of the dictatorship.

machine as part of a strategy to reproduce the presence of his body in multiple places and make himself available to other people's manipulation.

Developing a prolific career on “arte Xerox” in São Paulo few years after Parente produced Xerox artworks in Rio, Hudinilson Jr. thoroughly explored the visual possibilities of Xerox art through the bodily exposures featured in his series *Exercício de me ver* (Exercise in seeing myself, 1979). [Fig. 45] When describing his Xerox works, Hudinilson Jr. declared that his fascination with the Xerox machine—the characteristics of which led directly to his prolific production—came from the speed afforded by the Xerox process of producing ten copies in a single minute.²⁰⁵ However, as Hudinilson Jr. recalled, his unparalleled means of production (nude interactions with the Xerox machine) were only possible after gaining reliable access to a photocopying machine. [Fig. 46] Hudinilson Jr. initially used the Xerox machine available at USP's School of Arts and Communication (Escola de Comunicações e Artes, ECA USP), while working with the art collective 3NÓS3.²⁰⁶ However, based on the time restrictions and bureaucratic mediation that the use of this machine implied (especially his restricted physical contact with the machine), Hudinilson Jr. sought the informal sponsorship of Xerox do Brasil by becoming a certified photocopier operator and technician.²⁰⁷ For *Exercício de me ver*, Hudinilson Jr. took advantage of Xerox's features for his photocopies, varying the scale and contrast of his Xerox artworks.²⁰⁸ By

²⁰⁵ “Hudinilson Jr.,” in *Arte novos meios multimeios: Brasil '70/80*, ed. Daisy V.M. Peccini de Alvarado (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Brasileira, Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado, 2010), 245–248.

²⁰⁶ All members of the art collective 3Nós3 (Hudinilson Jr., Rafael França, and Mário Ramiro) were affiliate to ECA USP and studied with artists Regina Silveira (b. 1939) and Julio Plaza. On Hudinilson Jr.'s work, see Ricardo Resende, *Posição amorosa=Loving Position, Hudinilson Jr.* (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2016); on the collective 3Nós3, see Mario Ramiro, *3Nós3: intervenções urbanas 1979-1982* (São Paulo: Ubu Editora, 2017).

²⁰⁷ Hudinilson Jr. was director of the photocopy workshop at Pinacoteca de São Paulo, using the Xerox for his own creative practices and evidencing the institutionalization of Xerox art. Aldana, “The Artists Who Copied,” 62.

²⁰⁸ A similarly provocative image manipulation can be find in the large-scale photograph *Epidermic Scapes* (1977), by Vera Chaves Barcellos and most recently exhibited in *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985*, in which the artist creates photographic imprints of selected parts of her body and conflates them by manipulating and

amplifying recognizable and unrecognizable sections of his body (most prominently of his penis), Hudinilson Jr. created infinite copies of abstract images that, when shown side by side, produce an expanded vision of the exposures he intimately performed on the machine.²⁰⁹ In comparison to *Don't Touch*, whereas Parente explicitly declares through a single duplicate that hers is a body not to be touched, Hudinilson Jr. and Bruscky use the Xerox glass as the ideal surface from which to publicly exhibit enlarged images of their bodies for further distribution and manipulation.

If an initial visual comparison between *Xeroperformance*, *Exercício de me ver*, and *Don't Touch* demonstrates the artistic possibilities of the medium of Xerox, the differences between private and public exposures foreground a display of gender disparities. Parente subjects herself to producing a duplicate of her face in order to assert, with her eyes closed and her mouth shut, that nobody can touch her. Meanwhile, the circular reproduction of Bruscky's face and body and the images of Hudinilson Jr.'s inner thighs offer visual access to their overtly exposed bodies. Hudinilson Jr. declared that his artistic affiliation to "arte Xerox" corresponds to his long-term—and utopian—goal to democratize art, in terms of both making everybody a potential artist and popularly distributing works of art. In contrast, I assert that Parente sought to imprint her agency by controlling the distribution of her work and with respect to her own body, while visually keeping at bay the acts of others that could interrupt her persona. Anticipating the eventual popularity of

amplifying their scale. See Maria Angélica Melendi, "To Construct New Houses and Deconstruct Old Metaphors of Foundation," in *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985*, ed. Cecilia Fajardo-Hill and Andrea Giunta (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum, 2017), 229–237. While these are photographs rather than Xerox, Chaves Barcellos was familiar with "arte Xerox" at the very least by means of the 1979–1980 Xerox art exhibition *Gerox*, organized by León Ferrari and Julio Plaza and exhibited in São Paulo and Porto Alegre at Espaço N.O., a collective art gallery founded by a group of artists that included Chaves Barcellos.

²⁰⁹ Without any reference to gender, in his essay "Imprints" Jodi Roberts compares Hudinilson Jr.'s *Exercício de me ver* with Mendieta's *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints)* series on the basis of "[their] indexical veracity, and [their] seemingly infinite reproducibility." Jodi Roberts, "Imprints," in *Matter of Photography in the Americas*, ed. Natalia Brizuela and Jodi Roberts (Stanford, CA: Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University and Stanford University Press, 2018), 102.

this medium in 1980s Brazil, Parente's unique and early use of "arte Xerox" as a democratic force reveals hers as an unparalleled Xerox production foregrounding a gendered experience of the world.

3.9 *Projeto 158-1 (A) and Projeto 158-2 (B): Correct Proportions*

In addition to feminist discussions, the experimental nature of Parente's works on paper also brought together the scientific and popular imagery that defines her mature work. *Projeto 158-1 transformação (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 transformação (B)* (Project 158-1 transformation [A] and Project 158-2 transformation [B], both 1975), from the series *Mulheres*, evidence this interdisciplinary convergence.²¹⁰ [Fig. 47 and 48] These two works on Xerox and collage, hereafter *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)*, reproduce in black and white the appropriated portrait of a woman and classify it into different personality traits according to modified facial characteristics. Parente deployed the appropriation and re-signification of the representation of women in mass-distributed printed media as strategies to imitate seemingly scientific processes of classification and identification of human types. *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* introduce Parente's familiarity with the public articulation and distribution of scientific knowledge, as well as her critique of its methodologies and applications. Parente would further develop the artistic

²¹⁰ The complete titles of these two works are *Projeto 158-1 transformação: pécnico-astênico (Kretschmer) (A)* (Project 158-1 transformation: pyknic-asthenic [Kretschmer] [A]) and *Projeto 158-2 transformação: pécnico-astênico (Kretschmer) (B)* (Project 158-2 transformation: pyknic-asthenic [Kretschmer] [B]). Informal conversations with Cristiana Parente have suggested the existence of a third work of this series (probably titled *Projeto 158-3 transformação: pécnico-astênico [C]*, in line with Kretschmer tri-partite classification) currently located in a private collection and yet to be identified.

application of scientific methodologies that she originally put forth in *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* to her installation *Medida*, exhibited a year later at MAM-RJ.

Projeto 158-1 (A) and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* feature three variations each of a woman's face on a white background. These two works on paper further elaborate on the ideas of variation and comparison developed in *S/Título*. Yet, the comparisons are here formulated from a scientific rather than commercial perspective. Handwritten inscriptions title the works and describe the intended characters depicted in each of the six images—"calm vegetative behavior," "restless behavior, perceptive," "cerebral type mental force," "instinctive type physical force," etc. Whereas the inscriptions are on thick, black ink, subtler lines overlap each image creating three- by five-cell grids. The measurement's central images read "Proporção correta 5:3" (Correct proportion 5:3), thus indicating this as the source image for the variations of this woman's portrait. *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* compare female faces through the transformations displayed in each of these works, as well as in the relations suggested between the two works.

The triangular composition of *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)*, in combination with the works' shared subtitle *pécnico-astênico (Kretschmer)* (pyknic-asthenic [Kretschmer]), provides a key to access the scientific critique contained in these works. The subtitle 'Kretschmer' references German psychiatrist Ernest Kretschmer (1888–1964), who in the 1920s developed a personality classification system based on psychopathological types.²¹¹ Kretschmer's tri-partite system proposes a classification of personalities based on facial features. Although Kretschmer

²¹¹ See Ernst Kretschmer, *A Text-Book of Medical Psychology*, trans. and intro. E. B. Strauss (London: Oxford University Press, 1934). In 1956, twenty years prior to Parente's creation of *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)*, the Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry awarded Kretschmer with the Kraepelin Medal in recognition for his psychiatric work. Francisco Pedrosa Gil, Matthias M. Weber and Wolfgang Burgmair, "Images in Psychiatry: Ernst Kretschmer (1888–1964)," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 159, 7 (July 2002): 1111.

was praised in the mid-twentieth century for his medical research about the relationship between body and mind (external and internal images), Parente uses the artistic representation of his classification system to critique the reductive identifications found both in scientific research and in popular visual media. By reproducing women's physical representations as a limited number of classified types of psychiatric-specific traits, for *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* Parente effectively adopts contemporary art strategies derived from pop and conceptual currents as a mechanism to embed her critique in a visually simplified format that subverts popular advertisements for beauty products. In imitating this visual language, however, Parente also appropriates for her artistic endeavors the global communication channels used for the distribution of scientific information like anatomy charts.

The grids and guiding ratios of *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* disclose the technical procedures that Parente undertook and reveal the scientific nature of the comparisons. Using different features of a Xerox machine, Parente photocopied the original image several times as a strategy to conceal her paper manipulation and collage techniques. In *Projeto 158-1 (A)*, Parente reduced the cheekbone area of the woman's portrait on the lower-left, thus presenting her with a shorter nose and giving the impression of larger eyes and wider nostrils and cheeks. [Fig. 47] For the woman on the lower-right, Parente creates the opposite alteration by vertically enlarging the length of the nose and elongating this woman's face. The woman portrayed in *Projeto 158-2 (B)* follows a similar alteration pattern as her forehead is shortened and elongated. [Fig. 48] The grids evidence the exact points where the alterations take place and allow for a direct comparison between the three faces. Each face is meant to contain physical traits of the type it represents, thus standing for one of the personalities scientifically proposed by Kretschmer. In

result, the visual charts and transformations designed by Parente made impossible to dissociate the typified woman from the organizational and classificatory system that she comes to represent.

While the inclusion of correct proportions acts as a disclaimer of Parente's scientific approach, clippings in Parente's archive indicate that popular magazines were the ongoing source of her appropriations. Two page-size clippings of the magazine *Mais* provide two images like the ones used in *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)*.²¹² [Fig. 49] *Mais* published these as the base schemas for makeup tutorials; they indicate where and what specific makeup products should be applied to create a "romantic" and, alternatively, an "extravagant woman."²¹³ *Mais*, and other magazines including *Nova* and *Veja*, published these images as ideal means for expressing popular character types—either romantic or extravagant—reflecting the femininity of their female audience through structured beauty routines. Beyond individual experiments, the appropriation of popular and scientific images in the Xerox collages *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)*, both included in the 1977 conceptual art exhibition *Poéticas visuais*, form the basis for understanding the multiple layers (artistic, political and scientific) that compose the whole of Parente's contemporary artistic practice.

In cutting, clipping, pasting, sewing, comparing, and xeroxing found and created images, with *Casa*, *Mulheres*, and related works on paper Parente conducted artistic experiments to express and sometimes exhibit her responses and contributions to the gendered struggle of conquering and making visible the individual agency of women. While *Mulheres* as a whole focuses on women's bodies, *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* introduce Parente's scientific approach to image-

²¹² The specific sources for the images in *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)* have yet to be identified.

²¹³ As analyzed in chapter three, for *Medida* Parente also uses similar clippings as a tool to critically measure gender-specific behavior and identification.

making. These two Xerox collages specifically anticipate the use of the scientific principles of fragmentation and classification that Parente developed in her Xeroxed collage *Recrutamento de pessoal* (Staff recruitment) and her installation *Medida* (Measurement), both from 1976 and the subject of the next chapter.

4.0 Chapter Three: Measured and Unmeasured Bodies

Parente applied an experimental methodological approach based on fragmentation and classification to both her scientific and artistic professional practices. These parallel approaches, which Parente began merging in the visual charts of her works on Xerox, converged definitively in her room-size installation *Medida* (Measurement, 1976).²¹⁴ *Medida*, a science-based installation, exhibited some of the social parameters that determined the everyday lives of Brazil's national population. Opening on June 10, 1976, it was displayed as the only work in a black-walled gallery on the third and top floor of MAM–RJ, where it was on view for a month. Across the eight interactive stations that composed the installation, Parente asked the spectators to identify themselves by measuring their own bodies, and to compare their measurements with others. A year after declaring her own identity by sewing “Brasil” onto her body in *Marca registrada*, *Medida* inquired about the identity of others by requiring the active participation of visitors. By highlighting the identity of its visitors, Parente reflected in *Medida* about her immediate social and political context (a military state, national economic struggles, the mass media distribution of popular culture, etc.), as well as the installation's situation within Brazil.

Tracing the concept and application of experimentation in *Medida*, this chapter analyzes how Parente's artistic production was informed by her profound familiarity with scientific methodologies. In taking into consideration the context of military dictatorship in which Parente

²¹⁴ *Medida* is the only documented installation of this artist. In personal conversations, Cristiana Parente, Leticia's daughter, has mentioned a couple of other installations created by Parente and emphasized particularly an installation titled *Rá*, in which the combination of chemical elements produce different colored substances. Documentation of Parente's installations other than *Medida* are yet to be found. Cristiana Parente, interview with the author, June 1, 2017, Fortaleza.

became an established chemist and artist, this chapter scrutinizes the college education and scientific research infrastructure that bloomed in Brazil under the support of military governments and that set the stage for the successful development of academic careers like Parente's. Delineating the historical context and the intellectual structure in which Parente operated as professional woman chemist illuminates the ways in which she approached experimentation as a scientific methodology. It demonstrates how Parente drew from this scientific methodology to produce knowledge as an effective way to create works of art, and how these science-based strategies allowed Parente to aesthetically express everyday restrictions imposed on citizens by the military government. This chapter seeks to answer how Parente's professional knowledge and practice of chemistry informed her artistic strategies in new media, and how and to what extent these interdisciplinary approaches to artmaking contributed to formulating aesthetic problems relevant for a global approach to contemporary art.

The ambitious installation *Medida* carefully weaves in the geopolitical situation in which Parente's artistic practice unfolds. In it, she fully developed an interdisciplinary approach to art making that granted her national recognition and characterized Parente as an established artist. A recorded conversation from 1985—one of Parente's most comprehensive discussions about her own artistic production and, to the best of my knowledge, the only existing audio recording of Parente's approach to art—opened space to discuss the preeminence of *Medida* in Parente's oeuvre, her approach to artmaking, and the reception of her work. In this interview, Parente defined *Medida* as the climax of her artistic practice.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ This interview with Célia A. de Faria Torres, Lúcia Madruga Müller, and Claudia Neverovskijs was conducted in preparation to the 1985 exhibiton *Arte novos meios/multimeios* at the Museu de Arte Brasileira at Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado (MAB FAAP) in São Paulo. The full recreation of *Medida* at the University of

The sequential procedures of experimental methodologies that Parente articulated in her chemistry projects and publications can be traced in her installation *Medida*. Parente deploys in her science-based artwork an experimental methodology as an artistic strategy to pointedly intertwine information and ideas. The layout that structured this installation and that made visible the summation of information contained therein demonstrate Parente's commitment to offering interpretative ideas through the aesthetic presentation of factual information. In *Medida*, through the artistic reproduction of situations that critically mirrored her contemporary context—and that specifically examined the limits of individual liberty by measuring and delineating them—Parente sought to instigate in others a critical interpretation of their contemporary condition.

The contemporary nature of her artistic production, like her knowledge of her historical context as displayed in Parente's book *Química* and her installation *Medida*, was derived from a profound awareness of the social, economic, and political situation of 1960s–1970s Brazil. This awareness was specifically attuned to the situation of women living under the constricted conditions of a patriarchal society ruled by a military dictatorship. In *Química*, the first of her three published books, Parente demonstrates a contemporary awareness for her historical context, by presenting a practical manual for emerging chemists based on factual information and interpretative ideas about the profession of the chemist. [Fig. 50] Through three distinct sections, *Química* analyzes this object of study, its scientific application in a particular place and time, and delineates the persona of the professional scientist in the Brazilian context.²¹⁶ Parente's

Pittsburgh, in 2016, and as part of Parente's retrospective *Eu armário de mim* at Galeria Jacqueline Martins, in 2017, has subsequently reinforced the preeminence of *Medida* in Parente's artistic career.

²¹⁶ For instance, the section "Chemistry" considers budgetary items (including bibliography resources) for experimentation among other research elements. "The Chemist" section presents the Brazilian job market for chemists focusing on different industries that value their knowledge and skills. It also discusses the *tasks* most commonly required from emerging professionals working as part of a larger industrial or scientific structure. Letícia Parente, *Química: um estudo sobre a profissão do químico* (Petropolis: Editora Vozes, 1968). My translation of

experimental methodologies and awareness of her immediate context as laid out in this book would become fundamental for her engagement with and development of innovative artistic practices as presented in *Medida*.

4.1 Scientific Education under Military-Ruled Brazil

Considering Parente's career as chemist within Brazil's political and economic situation and taking it as a lens into her artistic production demonstrates that her creative motivations stemmed from her critical perspective on her geopolitical situation. Continuing modernization processes initiated in the 1950s, the 1964–1985 military regime improved the infrastructure for higher education in scientific fields to reinforce the State's presence across Brazil and to solidify national industrialization. For historians like Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, the educational reforms of the military regime represent a “conservative modernization” stemming from the governmental modernization project carried by Juscelino Kubitschek's previous administration and tinted by the anti-communist U.S. influence in Latin America.²¹⁷ In other words, Brazil's dictatorial regime deployed scientific education as an effective path towards progress and control.

While there is no doubt that political interests can be found at the core of these educational reforms, the rapid expansion of the Brazilian public university system was also motivated by economic aims. The promotion of scientific knowledge for the development of national

‘task’ is taken from the Portuguese ‘tarefa’ used by Parente, the same word she used to title her 1982 color video *Tarefa I*, analyzed in the next chapter of this dissertation. *Tarefa I* (Task I) has been translated as “Chore I” and “Assignment I,” in this dissertation I follow the translation used in *Radical Women*.

²¹⁷ Motta, *As universidades e o regime militar*, 15.

industrialization was implemented through financial support for educational infrastructure (in the form of grants and laboratory spaces and supplies) and through educational reform policies.²¹⁸ Starting in 1966, these structural reforms focused on scientific teaching and research as delineated in several National Development Plans (Planos Nacionais de Desenvolvimento, PND), of which Parente was a direct beneficiary.²¹⁹ PNDs with a strong focus on higher education were largely implemented under the administrations of General Humberto Castelo Branco (1964–1967), General Artur da Costa e Silva (1967–1969), and General Médici (1969–1974). Scientific improvement and sophisticated industrial production allowed for a national increase of technological infrastructure. They gave way, in turn, to large-scale engineering projects that, from a political point of view, would guarantee the State’s presence across the entire territory.²²⁰ Among these projects was the national distribution of television programming, which included a basic education curriculum (in which Parente took part) and that ultimately shaped Brazil’s contemporary national identity.²²¹ Given her disciplinary expertise, Parente experienced the influx of resources directed at educational and industrial public policies during several stages of her career.

²¹⁸ Grants were initially supported by the federal Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico (National Bank for Economic Development). Motta, *As universidades e o regime militar*, 81–85.

²¹⁹ See Decreto-Lei n.53, from November 18, 1966, as interpreted in Motta, *As universidades*, 79. This PND allowed for the type of grant that Parente received through UFC to pursue her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Rio de Janeiro.

²²⁰ These projects also included the Trans-Amazon highway that would traverse the northern territories, and the Itaipú Dam, the largest hydroelectric power plant in the world and located on the southern border with Paraguay. According to Parente, other fields requiring specialized scientific knowledge were the pharmaceutical, pesticide, and metallurgic and oil extraction industries, all of which point to the industrialized national substitution of imports. See Parente, “Chapter 2: A química no Brasil,” in Parente, *Química*, 90–120.

²²¹ According to Cristiana Parente, Letícia participated in remote education programs by designing and teaching chemistry lessons for educative television programming. Parente’s scripts for a video on a chemistry lesson can be found in Letícia Parente personal archive, yet it is not clear if this lesson was distributed through public television channels. Documentation of Parente’s involvement with public television is yet to be located.

Parente also deployed her familiarity with experimental methodologies as a strategy to visually present her critical position towards contemporary political and social regulations. Having been professionally formed as an exemplary Brazilian citizen by a public educational system reaching medium- and small-size cities like Fortaleza that were removed from traditional centers of power, Parente turned to artistic production in those centers as a way to express her dissident perspective. *Medida* was the most fully developed example of her innovative artistic practice based on scientific principles and techniques.

4.2 *Medida*: Parente's Definitive Solo Exhibition

Presented as a solo exhibition at MAM–RJ in 1976, *Medida* is arguably Parente's most complex work. Parente's participatory installation occupied a large room and was organized around eight discrete stations located along the walls and labeled in alphabetical order, thus directing visitors through the blackened environment of the gallery. [Fig. 51–52] Instilling an experimental controlled ambiance, each station in *Medida* offered precise instructions and scientific tools that were set up to provide quantifiable outcomes delineating the bodies of participants. While determining one's facial shape, respiratory capacity, the price of one's blood, or ability to taste flavor, among other tasks, all resulting numbers—spectators were told—had to be recorded on individual as well as collective paper databases. *Medida* brought spectators into a (literal) black box and invited them to actively use the object on display with the seemingly apparent goal of showing how a set of defined categories effectively determine individual and collective identity.

At the entrance of the gallery, *Medida*'s visitors were directed to pick up an individual form ("ficha individual"), a chart in which to record different types of measurements of their own bodies, and record their results in similar yet collective databases provided in each station.²²² However, Parente did not seek to gather precise information about visitors; as described at the top of the individual forms, these measurements were for the participants' "knowledge of themselves."²²³ Rather, the measurement results in *Medida* were designed to provide information about the immediate historical context of the installation and instill in spectators a critical perspective about their contemporary political, economic, and social circumstances.

The first two stations, "Station A–Physical Type" and "Station B–Breathing Capacity," asked participants to measure their physical bodies by measuring their height and weight, their facial shape according to a given, limited pattern of possibilities, and their lung capacity. "Station C–Resistance" asked spectators to measure their resistance to pain, while "Station D–Blood Group" provided the laboratory tools to determine Rh types and, in return, asked visitors to determine the economic price of their total blood weight. "Station E–Visual Acuity," "Station F–Attention," and "Extra Station–Taste" were a continuation of the first two stations, asking visitors to measure their physical bodies by determining their visual acuity and attention, and by testing their taste buds. The last station, "Station G–Secret Measurements," provided tools to determine

²²² The original individual form and all station instructions, available in Portuguese, have been kept to date in Letícia Parente personal archive and are published, in its original format, in *Arqueologia do quotidiano*, 192–207. English translations of the station instructions are available online as part of the recreation of *Medida* in the online exhibition *Data (after)Lives: The Persistence of Encoded Identity*, University of Pittsburgh, University Art Gallery, accessed April 1, 2019, https://uag.pitt.edu/index.php/Gallery/81/theme_id/376.

²²³ "While taking the tests and measurements of each *station* record the results in this form for your own knowledge." ["A medida em que você for efetuando os testes e medições de cada *estação* anote os resultados nesta ficha para seu auto conhecimento."] See Parente's *Medida*'s "Ficha individual" in Letícia Parente personal archive and reproduced in *Arqueologia do quotidiano*, 207. Emphasis in original.

the participants' personalities while offering a space for visitors to choose what to measure—their bodies, personalities, or otherwise.

These stations, displayed in the main gallery room where a female voice timed the passage of every five seconds, were complemented by the projection of Parente's audiovisual *O livro dos records* (The Book of Records, 1976) in an adjacent viewing room. *O livro dos records* was composed of selected images from the 1975 U.S. issue of *The Guinness Book of World Records* (as indicated in the audiovisual title), and of comparable images distributed through Brazilian publications.²²⁴ It was accompanied by the sounds of an applauding crowd. [Fig. 53–55] By projecting the images of bodies whose physical measurements and abilities do not conform with norms, *O livro dos records*'s content clearly contrasted with the interactions that participants had undertaken in *Medida*'s main gallery room. *Medida* invited its participants to critically reflect on the idea of bodily measurements as a definition of identity.

By displaying scientific procedures in combination with economic facts, and by asking visitors to qualify themselves against scales chosen by Parente and deprived of measuring units, *Medida* offered critical information about life in contemporary Brazil and articulated critical perspectives on the relationships between individuals and Brazilian institutions. By reflecting on their own identities based on a set of unrelated results, participants were exposed to strategies of social control devised and exerted by mass media channels and by the Brazilian military state. Given its dark look, the continuous audio that filled the space of *Medida*, its impersonal instructions to follow and its forms to complete, I propose that this installation was, above all, an

²²⁴ To the best of my knowledge, *O livro dos records* has only been shown once, in 1976 in the context of *Medida* and currently does not exist in its original slide-show format. The individual images and clippings that composed the audiovisual have been kept to date in Letícia Parente personal archive.

experimental artwork that reconfigured the nature of the art object while mimicking contemporary modes of living in Rio de Janeiro.

In *Medida*, Parente's unique transformation of scientific paraphernalia into artistic objects critiques a uniform identification of individuals. "Station A–Physical Type," for instance, exemplified this transformation by asking participants to determine their facial shape with the use of a caliper, a set of six reference figures, and a mirror. [Fig. 56] The caliper, a mathematical tool used to measure the distance between two opposite sides of an object, followed methodological precision, as did the height rod and the bathroom scale used in the same station to measure height and weight. Meanwhile, the reference images used to determine distinct facial shapes only appeared to be scientific, thus inviting visitors to question the caliper's precision and utility. Five of the six reference images displayed in this station were obtained from *A Psicognomia: Carateriologia* (1943), a book on phrenology authored by Paul Bouts and Camille Bouts and found in Parente's personal library.²²⁵ When *Medida* opened to the public, the scientific accuracy of phrenology was already questioned and its ideological application was thoroughly challenged; in Parente's words, phrenology was "an old tendency in psychology."²²⁶ The sixth image displayed on this station, far from any scientific source, was taken from *Nova Cosmopolitan*, the Brazilian edition of the fashion magazine *Cosmopolitan*; it classified female personalities based on their personal preferences for a range of body types' silhouettes. The scientific obsolescence and

²²⁵ Paul Bouts and Camille Bouts, *La Psychognomie: lecture méthodique et pratique du caractère et des aptitudes* (Paris: Dupuis, 1931). *A Psicognomia* was translated and published in Brazil in 1943.

²²⁶ "Então a estação número um, que era esta mais ou menos de, não me lembro, essa questão não interessa, mais aí em relação ao peso, depois a forma do rosto e aquelas tendências daquela psicologia antiga de decifrar a pessoa pela fisionomia, depois tinha uma que, essa daqui por exemplo, era resistência a dor, eram velas que a gente tinha que apagar com a mão num determinado tempo." Letícia Parente, interview for the exhibition *Arte: Novos meios/multimeios*. My emphasis. The content of these discussions on phrenology is reflected in panel presentations in the annual congress of the SBPC, an association of which Parente was a life-long and active member.

imprecision of all six figures (ranging from phrenology to *Nova Cosmopolitan*) transformed the displayed tools—the caliper, for example—into aesthetic objects that, by systematically measuring an aleatory collection of bodies and recording the results, evidenced the arbitrary components of both authoritarian instructions and cultural references.

Since the data collected in *Medida* did not have any further use, the futility of this collection evidenced *Medida*'s critique of a militarily disciplined State. Pointing to the twenty-one-year military dictatorship that ruled Brazil between 1964 and 1985, Roberto Pontual noted at the time, and Brazilian writer Rogério Luz argued in retrospect, that *Medida* offered a critique of bureaucracy.²²⁷ I argue, moreover, that *Medida* forms part of a series of watershed participatory exhibitions aiming to safeguard the free movement of people and ideas, of which important precedents in Rio—also hosted by MAM–RJ—include Hélio Oiticica's *Parangolés* and Frederico Morais's *Domingos de Criação*.²²⁸ Analyzing how the scientific practices displayed in *Medida* were deployed by Parente demonstrates how this participatory installation reconfigured the characteristics of the art object, and advanced the social and political relevance of artistic exhibitions in Brazil under the different phases of the dictatorship.

²²⁷ See Roberto Pontual, "Medidas [sic] por fora e por dentro," *Jornal do Brasil*, June 24, 1976; and Rogério Luz, "The Videoart of Leticia Parente," *Arqueologia do cotidiano*, 59.

²²⁸ Oiticica's *Parangolés* were originally included in MAM–RJ's exhibition *Opinião 65*. See Small, *Hélio Oiticica: Folding the Frame*; and Gogan and Morais, *Domingos da criação*.

4.3 Measuring the Violence of Contemporary Politics

As articulated throughout the stations, *Medida* offered a reflection on one of the last phases of the dictatorship, when General Ernesto Geisel took power in 1974 and ushered in the period of *distensão*, a relaxation of authoritarian control that made possible the sustained existence of projects like MAM–RJ’s.²²⁹ Through an artificial space of control, Parente imitated the strict directions on physical conduct and perceptions that were subtly applied by the governing military regime and by mass media. For instance, in “Station B–Breathing” participants were instructed to measure their inner bodies by quantifying their lung capacity according to the strength of their breath output. Using a machine designed by Parente for this unique purpose resulted in an assigned number that ranged from one to fifty and without a specified unit of measurement. Because it provided an apparently objective account of a vital organ, the perception of one’s natural respiratory capacity was translated into a quantifiable, rationalized number, detached from a living container of pumped air. On the contrary, “Station C–Resistance” touched on the subjective sensitivity of the skin. This station instructed participants to test their pain resistance by putting out a series of candles with their fingers. [Fig. 57] While “Station B” revealed the objectification of bodies and body fragments, “Station C” recreated some of the violent techniques employed by the government on the bodies of citizens. The uncensored exposure of such perceptions and techniques in an artistic venue evidenced the emergence of a new era of openness and criticality.

Following Parente’s strategy of recreating the official use of violent techniques, “Station C” recorded individual identities by delimiting the sensitivity of the body, as *Marca registrada* did

²²⁹ For a detailed account of different periods of the Brazilian dictatorship and their effect on cultural censorship, see Shtromberg, “Introduction,” *Art Systems*.

a year earlier. This station directed participants to measure their resistance to pain by testing the sensitivity of their skin with a seven-armed chandelier and provided matches. They were instructed to first light all seven candles, keep track of the passing time with the aid of the installation audio that announced every five seconds, and start extinguishing candle after candle with two fingers. Once they could not resist the pain on their fingers, they were asked to record the number of extinguished candles, multiply it by ten, and divide this number by the seconds passed. The resulting number (3.75 according to the example on the instructions sheet) determined one's resistance to pain. However, how does this number relate to an individual person, or what does it reveal about one's identity? Moreover, why would one need to know, with a precise number, the resistance of pain of one's body?

Measuring one's own pain in "Station C" through successive burns produced with a set of candles became a representation of underlying violent acts resisted by Brazilian citizens, those suffering torture techniques applied by the State. If *Marca registrada* is the private record of a woman sewing her skin and bringing attention to her location, her nationality, and her own body, "Station C" set the stage for the individual yet public recording of the limits of one's own body. In so doing, it reflected on experiences that, under controlled ambiances, brought individuals' physical resistance to unimaginable states. Although barely discussed in the public sphere at the time, the exercise of physical torture at the hands of the State was a common practice during the dictatorship in Brazil and was perpetrated under the AI-5.²³⁰ Torture practices were well known to many in the country but only commented upon in the private realm; only in 2014 were official documents attesting to their broad application publicly disclosed.²³¹ Presenting this station as part

²³⁰ Brazil's Ato Institucional N.5 is discussed in chapter one of this dissertation.

²³¹ The official account of human rights violation occurred between 1964–1985 in Brazil were compiled by the

of an experimental work of art that mixed aesthetic appearances and scientific procedures, “Station C” displayed domestic items (a chandelier, candles, and a matchbox) as a strategy to address a contemporary political situation directly affecting the civil rights of people violently restrained by the AI-5. However, rather than considering these individual bodies— persons with a specific and unique pain resistance, sensibility, origin, character, opinion, or will—Brazilians were invited to partake in an art installation that, apparently detached from a specific historical context, projected quantifiable results about individual physical bodies and capacities measured in a specific place and time: 1976 Brazil.

4.4 National Economics and the Public Health System

Overcoming their politically charged environment, Brazilian artists contemporary to Parente addressed not only politics but, as Shtromberg stresses in *Art Systems*, also engaged with situations of economic instability and scientific and technological developments.²³² *Medida*, and specifically “Station D–Blood Type,” contributed to this discussion by commenting on the political, economic, and public health systems as experienced in the city of Rio. Located midway through the installation, “Station D” combined scientifically accurate tests and methodologies with a critical perspective on Brazil’s military dictatorship. This station was equipped with a clinically-

Comissão Nacional da Verdade (National Truth Commission, CNV), was one of the most significant events of the presidential administration of Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016), herself subject to such tortures from 1970 to 1973. All the documents compiled by the CNV between May 2012 and December 2014 are available online; Comissão Nacional da Verdade, accessed April 1, 2019, <http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br/institucional-acesso-informacao/a-cnv.html>.

²³² Shtromberg, *Art Systems*, 6.

produced set of serums that, in combination with a drop of blood provided by the museum visitors, revealed the participants' different blood types: A+, A-, B+, B-, O, etc. [Fig. 58–59] In addition to classifying and identifying visitors according to the Rh type of their blood, the ultimate purpose of this station was to determine “your blood price, according to your weight.”²³³ These words in this station's instructions lead us to ask what was actually displayed in *Medida*'s “Station D,” and how and why blood had assigned economic values.

Although photographic documentation of the installation shows the participants' active interaction with blood testing instruments, the significance of this station was clarified only in interviews with Cristiana Parente, Parente's daughter.²³⁴ A reference table displayed along the wall reflected fluctuating market prices for different blood types and provided the price of total blood for different body weights. Shortages of blood supplies throughout the 1970s in Brazil, in combination with the simultaneous existence of public and private blood banks, precipitated a financial situation in which blood types were assigned different economic values according to market supply and demand. Newspaper headlines such as “Venda de sangue é crime social que ninguém pune” (Blood Sale: A Social Crime that Nobody Condemns) denounced this situation and described the public policies—or lack thereof—regulating the market prices for different blood types.²³⁵ According to *Correio da Manhã*, in 1972 a blood bank paid no more than approximately \$5 dollars at the time (or \$20 *cruzeiros*) for half a liter and, depending on the type

²³³ See Station D instructions (“Estação D–Grupo sanguíneo [determinação em lâmina]”) in Leticia Parente personal archive and reproduced in *Arqueologia do cotidiano*, 199.

²³⁴ Cristiana Parente, interview with the author, May 28, 2017.

²³⁵ See “Venda de sangue é crime social que ninguém pune” (Blood sale: A social crime that nobody condemns) in *Correio da Manhã*, May 24, 1972; and “Nova lei vai proibir venda de sangue por ‘doador’” (New law will prohibit blood sale for ‘donors’) in *Jornal do Brasil*, September 5, 1976. Blood donation was regularized in Brazil as part of the national public health system in the early 1980, at least four years after Parente presented *Medida* at MAM–RJ.

of blood, sold it for approximately four times the buying price: between \$17.25 and \$24.50 dollars (equivalent to \$68.95 and \$98.50 cruzeiros). These buying and selling blood prices evidenced the monetary differences assigned to people, and the demand that turned human blood into a transactional good. Based on chemical Rh-identification procedures, this station invited participants to perform as mere elements of a neoliberal system in which all components are subject to interconnected economic relations.

Displaying scientific tools and methodologies to denounce economic regulations for blood supplies, “Station D” demonstrated the political nature of blood transfusion, a physical transaction defining collective identities and resulting in complex relations of power. In her book *Blood Cultures: Medicine, Media, and Militarism*, Cathy Hannabach argues that a country’s national identity (the U.S. in her case study) can be traced through the history of blood circulation, both in its materiality and as a metaphor. According to Hannabach, the techniques and political relevance of blood donation and its banking system is marked by “conflicting interests between donors who give blood, recipients who need blood, and professionals who broker the transactions—including physicians, corporations, the military, and the government.”²³⁶ By extrapolating Hannabach’s study on blood circulation and national identity from the U.S. to Brazil, it is possible to trace the relationships between the need for blood donation and the concept of citizenship as an imagined community, in Benedict Anderson’s terms.²³⁷

²³⁶ Cathy Hannabach, *Blood Cultures: Medicine, Media, and Militarism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 7. The particular conditions of blood donation in Brazil at the time allow to extrapolate to the Brazilian context the relationship demonstrated by Hannabach between the U.S. national identity and the circulation of blood.

²³⁷ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1991).

In 1970s Brazil, blood donation became an intrinsic component of citizenship. Brazilian newspapers publicized advertisements for voluntary blood drives and followed them with news of their success as a strategy to confront the black market of blood donation. However, beyond economic and public health regulation issues, the State deployed blood donations as a mechanism of control. For instance, the agenda of orientation day for first-year students of public universities included blood donation as a scholarship eligibility requirement, as evidenced in newspaper headlines like “Blood Donation for Free Tuition.”²³⁸ “Station D” evokes the sustained promotion of blood drives by inviting the participants of *Medida* to perform as blood donors. The disposition of *Medida*’s participants to extract blood from their bodies and make it available for public scrutiny echoes the response of thousands of Brazilians to national campaigns for blood donation.²³⁹

Through explicit laboratory practices, *Medida* reproduced in the form of an art installation the national blood shortage and a coerced application of the concept of citizenship. Since blood drives were also strongly promoted during the official celebrations of national holidays, efforts to alleviate the national shortage of blood supposed the reinforcement of a governmentally promoted national unity.²⁴⁰ Presented as national celebrations, blood drives served as a constant reminder of

²³⁸ See “Matrícula por sangue” (Blood donation, free tuition [at Antonio Pedro University Hospital]) in *Correio da Manhã*, January 22, 1970; “Coleta nas penitenciárias é rotina para evitar escassez de sangue” (Routinary drives in prisons avoid blood shortage) in *Correio da Manhã*, January 24, 1970; and “Os calouros acabaram não doando seu sangue” (Freshmen ended up not donating their blood) in *Correio da Manhã*, March 21, 1970.

²³⁹ The following are examples of the national blood drives in Brazil that were constantly documented and promoted in newspaper headlines: “Comerciários fazem festa e doam sangue” (Merchants throw a party and donate blood, *Correio da Manhã*, October 17, 1970), “Campanha pede sangue” (Campaign asking for blood, *Correio da Manhã*, January 21, 1971), “Campanha de doação de sangue nas escolas” (Blood drive campaign in schools, *Correio da Manhã*, March 18, 1971), “Començou ontem semana da doação de sangue” (Blood donation week started yesterday, *Correio da Manhã*, November 20, 1971), “Seu sangue vale uma vida” (Your blood is worth a life, *Correio da Manhã*, January 12, 1972), “Multinacionais tiram o sangue dos subdesenvolvidos” (Multinationals take blood from the underdeveloped, *Tribuna da Imprensa*, January 16, 1973), “Projeto obrigará a doação de sangue” (Project will make blood donation mandatory, *Tribuna da Imprensa*, October 24, 1974), “Compra de sangue será proibida” (Blood sale will be prohibited, *Jornal do Brasil*, September 17, 1977). All articles were accessed on August 27, 2016, <http://bndigital.bn.gov.br/hemeroteca-digital/>.

²⁴⁰ The commemoration of national holidays and the observance of official ceremonies usually included a military

the nationality of Brazilian citizens. By participating in a performative blood donation in *Medida*, museum-goers behaved as modeled civilians familiar with the normalized blood drives continuously carried out in Brazil.

4.5 Unmeasured Social Constructions of Gender

Beyond the constructed, collective identity of citizenship, the public construction of individual identities was addressed towards the end of *Medida* in a cubicle containing the last station, which visitors were invited to enter before exiting the installation. [Fig. 60–61] “Station G–Secret measurements” (“Medidas Secretas”) offered a compilation of personality tests largely targeted to women and published in popular periodicals like *Nova Cosmopolitan*, and offered a measuring tape and the privacy of an enclosed space. This station, the only one not containing precise instructions, invited participants to critically assess their own identity. The provided personality tests claimed to measure degrees of sexual appeal, for instance, and to have answers for questions like “how much do you like your body?” and “does your husband have a wife or a slave?,” as declared in one displayed headline.²⁴¹ Well beyond calculating multiple answer

parade, a religious ceremony, and a blood drive for public hospitals and in benefit of Brazilian fellows. See Celso C. Guerra, “Fim da doação remunerada de sangue no Brasil faz 25 anos,” *Revista Brasileira de Hematologia e Hemoterapia* 27, 1 (2005): 1–3.

²⁴¹ The selection of tests included the articles: “Você é sensual?” (Are you sensual?, 1, October 1973: 63–65); “Você gosta mesmo de você?” (Do you actually like yourself?, 2, November 1973: 56–57); “Você está realmente apaixonada?” (Are you actually in love?, 3, December 1973: 44–45); “Qué tipo de homem você atrai?” (What type of man do you appeal?, 4, January 1974: 45–47); “Você é perseguida pela culpa?” (Are you followed by guilt?, 5, February 1974: 56–57); “Até que ponto você é independente?” (How independent are you?, 6, March 1974: 33–34); “Você é bastante feminina?” (Are you feminine enough?, 7, April 1974: 43–44); “Você é capaz de amar?” (Can you love?, 8, May 1974: 60–61, 112); “Qual é a sua idade emocional?” (What is your emotional age?, 11, August 1974: 40–41); “Qual a imagen que você faz de seu corpo?” (What is the image that you have of your body?, 12, September 1974: 37–38); “Ele é o homem certo para você?” (Is he the right man for you?, 15, December 1974: 57–59, 113); “Você vive tentando mudar seu homem?” (Are you still trying to change your man?, 26, November 1975: 40–41),

questionnaires, this station measured the stark dichotomy of traditional gender roles. Furthermore, “Station G” offered an image of what a woman is expected to look like and how she is expected to feel, know, and act in her relationships to male partners and in relation to herself—one of the provided tests goes so far as to ask “What is your emotional age?,” implying a general age minority among women.²⁴² Through a selection of popularly distributed personality tests, *Medida*’s “Secret Measurements” provided an experimental site to critically examine how binary gender roles are created and socially reinforced and, specifically, the standards for measuring women’s femininity—a secret measurement hiding in plain view.

However, the actual “secret measurements” explicitly recorded in this last station were the participants’ affective reception of the installation. This last station, like all the other sections, was equipped with a collective database (a notebook) and a pen for participants to register their measurements results. Differing from the rest of the notebooks, “Station G”’s collective database served to register the installation’s affective reactions.²⁴³ [Fig. 62] A few participants referred in their comments to the politics woven into the gender constructions implied in the personality tests, and many more volunteered measurements regarding their sexual organs and desires through

from *Nova Cosmopolitan*; “Tempestades assustam? Ou excitam? Isso tem explicações” (Scared by storms? Or excited? That has an explanation, 3, I, October 1973: 74–76); “Trabalho é bom, quando não é tudo” (Work is good when it is not everything, 12, July 1974: 64); “Você é escrava ou mulher de seu marido? / Seu marido tem uma mulher ou uma escrava?” (Are you a slave or a wife? / Does your husband has a slave or a wife?, 23, II, June 1975: 36–37); “Você é contra ou a favor de seu sexo?” (Are you against or for your sex?, 25, II, August 1975: np), from *Mais*; “Você ainda tem bom ouvido?” (Do you still have a good hearing?, September 1975: 75–76), from *Realidade*; and “Seu amado é fiel? Tem certeza?” (Is your loved-one loyal? Are you sure?, 399: 41), from *Capricho*.

²⁴² “Qual é a sua idade emocional?,” *Nova Cosmopolitan*, 11, August 1974: 40–41.

²⁴³ The only affective reaction to this installation as recorded in a collective database in a different section of *Medida* is one of the last entries recorded in Station D-Blood Groups’ notebook. Authored with an illegible signature, on July 10, 1976, at 8:30pm, a participant added the blood prices registered until that point (Cr\$ 9,877.30) and noted: “Partial analysis: it is not yet enough to cover the exhibition installation expenses, not even paying with the visitors’ blood.” (“Análise parcial: não está dando até agora para cobrir as despesas da montagem da exposição – nem mesmo com o sangue dos visitantes”). See *Medida* notebook “Estação D-Fichas” in Letícia Parente personal archive.

numbers, sketches, and text.²⁴⁴ Despite the overtly sexual content of their comments, some visitors expressed divisive reactions towards *Medida* as an object of contemporary art, hinting at artistic freedom and political censorship.²⁴⁵

In the collective database of “Station G,” participants also registered their perception of Brazil’s political situation. The most striking “measurement” registered here openly invokes violence as an effective way to end the “oppression of the Brazilian people.” In the words of this anonymous participant,

This measuring tape is not enough to measure the oppression of the Brazilian people. Even if all the national production of thread was brought to be measured, such tape would not be enough. Measuring intelligence, I find it reasonable to get a dozen machine guns and get

²⁴⁴ Examples regarding a critical take on the personality tests read: “Loved it, very fun. If somebody wants to get something about themselves, that’s also allowed” [“Adorei, achei divertidíssimo. Se alguém tiver a fim de sacar alguma coisa sobre se proprio, também pode”]; “I don’t know what the goal is, but I have no intention of taking tests published by *Nova* or any other magazine. I already participated enough. Margarita, São Paulo” [“Não sei o que pretende mas não tenho intenção de fazer testes que são editados na *Nova* ou qualquer outra revista. Espero que já colaborei o suficiente. Margarita, São Paulo.”] Some comments on the participants’ sexuality and on their expressions of it read: “This is the best proof of the sexual repression of the Brazilian people. From all that is written here, I conclude that these people still need to get in a bathroom for a good wank” [“Aqui está a melhor demonstração da repressão sexual do povo brasileiro. Por tudo isso que aqui está escrito, concluo que esse povo ainda precisa se encerrar no banheiro para bater uma boa bronha”]; “Go take your self by the pussy. You don’t have to measure it, no? Go measure your dick” [“Vai tomar na boceta. Vocês não tem o que medir não é? vai medir o caralho”]; “What a shitty pseudo-intellectual. Ah! Cock 30cm” [“Vá ser pseudo-intelectual na merda, tá? Ah! 30cm de pica.”] See *Medida* notebook “Estação G–Fichas” in Leticia Parente personal archive.

²⁴⁵ Entries that blur the line between reactions to the artistic nature of the installation and commentaries on other participants’ sexual comments include: “This museum needs a “maecenas” [patron] to vigil over its collection” [“Este museu precisa de um “mecenas” que zele por seu acervo”]; “No doubt, we live in a society ‘without measurement.’ Paulo” [“Sem dúvida, vivemos numa sociedade “sem medida” Paulo”]; “I tied the tape so no one can waste their time with this monstrosity. [Illegible signature]” [“Amarrei a fita para que ninguém mais perça tempo (15 segundos) com essa besteira. [Illegible signature]”]; “Many moralists are looking for censorship. I think it’s a valid experience. Already did that at school. High receptivity” [“Muitos moralistas estão querendo censura. Acho que a experiencia é válida. Já fiz a mesma coisa na escola. Altas receptividades.”] See *Medida*’s notebook “Estação G–Fichas” in Leticia Parente personal archive.

rid of the gang of oppressors. Today is Easter, the mass took place by the monument. If I had the [illegible] I could have contributed by eliminating the gang. Rio, 30/6/76.²⁴⁶

While political violence and oppression, as mentioned by this participant, was not an explicit component of the installation, *Medida* welcomed visitors to reflect on their contemporary dictatorial situation and its subsequent power relations.

As demonstrated by another visitor's comment, this installation deployed scientific processes as mechanisms of awareness vis-à-vis the participants' social, political, and economic contexts. Offering one of the most heartening entries in the database, he reflected on *Medida* as a site that counterbalanced the experience of oppression outside the museum, demonstrating an intellectual engagement with the installation. Fully identifying himself and using a conversational tone, the author of this comment wrote:

Paulo Antonio Szasz (18-6-76 E.C.) São Paulo, SP —Didn't complete the test because of time constraints. Letícia, I didn't fully understand your objectives, but I liked this! Congratulations! Following what I read here, Brazilians are quite vulgar and macho, aren't they? People wrote here what they usually write on public bathroom stalls. It works as a way to deal with traumas and sexual neuroses, among others.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ "Medidas secretas—com esta fita não dá para medir a opressão do povo brasileiro. E mesmo que toda produção nacional de fios fosse levada para se tabular tal fita não daria. Por medida de inteligência acho que seria mais razoável arranjar 1 dúzia de metralhadoras e acabar com a corja de opressores. Hoje é dia de páscoa de Borja, a missa foi celebrada no monumento. Se eu tivesse as [illegible] poderia ter contribuído com a eliminação da corja. Rio, 30/6/76." See *Medida* notebook "Estação G—Fichas" in Letícia Parente personal archive.

²⁴⁷ "Paulo Antonio Szasz (18-6-76 E.C.) São Paulo, SP —não fiz o teste por falta de tempo. Letícia, não compreendi bem seus objetivos, mas gostei daqui! Parabéns! Pelas anotações que observei aqui, achei que o brasileiro é bastante vulgar e "machão", não é? O pessoal escreveu aqui o que normalmente escreve em banheiros públicos. Serve como desabafo para os traumas e neuroses sexuais, entre outros". See *Medida* notebook "Estação G—Fichas" in Letícia Parente personal archive.

After addressing Parente directly, this visitor summarized *Medida* as an artwork that channeled individual and collective repressions. The effectiveness of this artwork, as demonstrated by this visitor, relied on Parente's articulation of a patriarchal and authoritarian environment critically reproduced in *Medida* in the format of a scientific experiment that was aligned with the boost of scientific infrastructure taking place across Brazil.

4.6 Convergences of Science and Art in Brazilian History

If scientific development took preeminence during Brazil's last military dictatorship as a way to secure an industrially efficient economy, scientific practices also defined—directly and indirectly—the development of modern and contemporary art from Brazil. Some of the instances in which relations between science and art have punctuated the history of art from Brazil include an incipient “art therapy” practice starting in the 1920s and giving way to the Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente (Museum of Images of the Unconsciousness) in 1952; the mathematically-derived compositions of Concretismo in the 1950s; the rigorous serial classification of Oiticica's works in the 1960s; and the intertwining between art and psychology in the artworks of Lygia Clark in the 1970s. It was Parente, however, who applied specific scientific knowledge to her artistic production as a strategy to provide critical insights into her contemporary existence.

The aesthetic value of works created within medical contexts altered the conception and institutionalization of national and international art historical narratives in Brazil.²⁴⁸ At the mental

²⁴⁸ See Kaira M. Cabañas, *Learning from Madness: Brazilian Modernism and Global Contemporary Art* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).

health institutions where they were appointed psychiatrists, doctors Osório César (1895–1979) in the 1920s and Nilse da Silveira (1905–1999) since 1946 implemented the medical treatment of patients through creative art production activities in specifically designated spaces. The artworks produced in the mental health institutions directed by César and Silveira were seriously considered by artists and art critics and were exhibited in recognized artistic venues including, among others, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (São Paulo Museum of Art, MASP).²⁴⁹ Organized by César and supported by the Departamento de Cultura da Associação Paulista de Medicina (Cultural Section of the Medicine Society of the State of São Paulo), the first of these exhibitions’ programming included the course Ciências Médicas e Arte (Medical Sciences and Art), a pedagogical space for discussion that reinforced the interdisciplinary approach proposed in the exhibition. While doctors like César and Silveira opened spaces for the production of art in hospitals and within scientific discourses, the circulation in Brazilian venues of the works created in mental health institutions had a profound effect on the exhibition and theorization of the history of modern and contemporary art.²⁵⁰ In her book *Learning from Madness: Brazilian Modernism and Global Contemporary Art*, Kaira M. Cabañas details how artistic production as a form of psychiatric therapy constituted one of the most significant instances in which scientific practices have been visually expressed in Brazilian artistic circles. By incorporating the work of non-trained artists into the art system, critics in Brazil rejected theoretical models of linear development identified through successions of well-

²⁴⁹ Some exhibitions dedicated to artist-patients in Brazil include *Mês das crianças e dos loucos* (Club dos Artistas Modernos, 1933); *9 artistas de Engenho do Dentro do Rio de Janeiro* (Museum of Modern Art, MAM SP, 1949); *Histórias da locura: Desenhos do Juquery* (MASP, 2015). Cabañas, chapter one, “Clinical-Artistic Tableaux,” in *Learning from Madness*, 19–44.

²⁵⁰ Cabaña offers detailed points of comparison between the contemporary discussion and exhibition of artist-patients’ works in Brazil and in several European countries. She emphasizes how in Brazil this type of work was taken on its own terms, rather than as an underdeveloped and unconscious practice valued exclusively in comparison with avant-garde ideas. Cabañas notices as well that the Brazilian case is unparalleled throughout the Americas. See Cabañas, chapter 2, “Common Creativities,” in *Learning from Madness*.

defined artistic movements. This model also illustrates an understanding of contemporary art according to which art is simultaneously produced on a global scale by artists that may or may not experience the same temporality but who express in their work their contemporary socio-political condition.²⁵¹

In contrast to the artist-patients who created all their work in the context of mental health institutions, the most prominent movements of modern art from Brazil relied on scientific approaches for developing new artistic strategies. São Paulo-based Concrete artists, including Waldemar Cordeiro (1925–1973), Geraldo de Barros (1923–1998), and Judith Lauand (b. 1922), to name a few, often based their painting compositions on scientific (mathematical) principles and equations, and relied on the use of mathematical tools. In applying scientific formulas to the composition of paintings like *Função diagonal* (Diagonal function, de Barros, 1952), *Concreto 36* (Concrete 36, Lauand, 1956), and *Cromática 6* (Cromatic 6, Aluísio Carvão, 1960), yet infusing them with creative ideas exemplified in their spatial orientation and in the graphic manipulation of their signature, Concrete artists sought to remove any figurative reference from their works while concealing their individual identity.²⁵² [Fig. 63] However, recent scholarship has argued that this

²⁵¹ It can be safely assumed that Parente knew about the artistic interests that artist-patients works received in Brazil given three instances in which Parente might have encountered it. Mário Pedrosa's texts on the painting studio led by psychiatrist Nilse da Silveira at the Engenho do Dentro circulated in local and national newspapers, most prominently his texts "Os artistas do Engenho do Dentro" (*Correio da Manhã*, December 18, 1949) and "Pintores de arte virgem" (*Correio da Manhã*, March 19, 1950). The 16th São Paulo Biennial in 1981, in which Parente participated in the section "Núcleo I–Arte Postal" (Nucleus I–Mail Art), also included artist-patients' works in the "Núcleo II–Arte Incomum" (Nucleus II– Uncommon Art). Finally, the 1989 *Registros de minha passagem pela Terra*, a prominent retrospective on artist-patient Arthur Bispo do Rosário and curated by Frederico Moraes, was exhibited at Parque Lage School of Visual Arts in the Rio neighborhood of Jardim Botânico, an urban area only few blocks away from Parente's apartment.

²⁵² Other works by Lauand, one of the very few Concrete female artists, that support this argument are *Concreto 37* (Concrete 37, 1956), *Concreto 61* (Concrete 61, 1957), and *Quatro grupos de elementos* (Four groups of elements, 1959), all included in the exhibition *Making Art Concrete: Works from Argentina and Brazil in the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2017–2018).

approach corresponded to an idea of modernity implemented through a generalized industrialization, and to a high esteem for technical education, rather than an application of scientific knowledge as an artistic strategy.²⁵³ Their interest in mathematical principles was based primarily in the relationship between the technical production of images and objects, and was nonetheless foreign to the use of artistic strategies as a way to critically reflect on scientific knowledge.

While the titles of Concrete artworks usually reproduce a numerical series to evoke the sequence of different versions of the same composition, the nomenclature of the work of Oiticica, a member of the Rio de Janeiro Neo-Concretism movement, has profound roots in scientific denominations. The serial numbers of his works went beyond the chronology of the works' production. According to Irene Small, Oiticica applied a morphological categorization to his work's series after learning it from his father, the entomologist José Oiticica Filho, in the context of Rio de Janeiro's Museu Nacional.²⁵⁴ By tracing the scientific bases of his morphological denomination system, Small demonstrates the complexity of Oiticica's denomination of series of works, illustrated with his *Parangolés* (wearable capes that were introduced in 1964). [Fig. 64] This classification methodology proper to science—a "taxonomy," in Small's words and evidenced in Oiticica's alphanumerical titles—did not inform Oiticica's artistic strategies for the creation of a singular, individual work.²⁵⁵ On the contrary, it profoundly shaped Oiticica's

²⁵³ To illustrate this point, Aleca Le Blanc carefully traces the artistic labor involved in the seemingly industrial production of concrete bi-dimensional and tri-dimensional paintings. See Aleca Le Blanc, ed., *Making Art Concrete: Works from Argentina and Brazil in the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2017, exhibition catalog).

²⁵⁴ Irene Small, "Morphology in the Studio: Hélio Oiticica at the Museu Nacional," *Getty Research Journal*, 1 (2009): 107–126.

²⁵⁵ Small, "Morphology in the Studio," 109.

conception of his body of work as a cohesive creation in which multiple ramifications developed over time could be traced in their relationship to previous iterations of similar objects.

The relationship between science and art in the Brazilian context is perhaps most famously mentioned in relation to the therapeutical practices developed in the 1970s by Clark. Also a member of the Neo-Concretism group in Rio, Clark moved beyond the limits of static objects. Clark pursued her interest for a generative production, as explained by Cornelia Buttler, by integrating into her artistic proposals healing practices rooted in psychology that she conducted as group and individual therapies.²⁵⁶ While the specifics of Clark's use of psychology or other scientific disciplines remain unclear, she conceived series like *Objetos relacionais* (Relational objects, 1976) and *Estruturação do self* (Structuring of the self, 1977) as a transdisciplinary practice between art and psychology. [Fig. 65] Not fully rooted in psychology, the props used in her group and individual therapies were not always accepted in museums and galleries as artistic objects, yet their convergence of science and art was already a point of debate in the 1970s–80s.²⁵⁷ Only in recent years have art critics and curators fully endorsed Clark's therapeutic practices as artistic proposals and participatory art installations.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Cornelia Buttler, "Lygia Clark: A Space Open to Time" in *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2014, exhibition catalog), 14.

²⁵⁷ In 1997, documentation of Clark's psychological propositions was presented as global contemporary art for the first time in Documenta X and in her retrospective at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies. It was only until 2005 that Clark's interdisciplinary practices were fully incorporated into art exhibitions with the retrospective *Lygia Clark, de l'oeuvre à l'événement*, curated by Suely Rolnik and presented at the Musée de Beaux-Arts in Nantes and the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo. See "Suely Rolnik on Lygia Clark –Interview by Lars Bang Larsen" in *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry* 15, 15, (2007): 24–34.

²⁵⁸ A recent example is MoMA's 2014 Clark's retrospective in which *Objetos relacionais* and *Estruturação do self* were presented as the culmination of Clark's oeuvre following a continuous dematerialization of the art object. See *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art*.

Parente's work thus contributes to the constant and varied intertwining between science and art in the history of modern and contemporary art in Brazil; yet, it also demonstrates a unique use of specifically scientific knowledge for the creation of innovative artistic strategies that reveal a political undertone. This is not to say that scientific and artistic disciplines were easily perceived as seamlessly merged fields. In fact, the apparent distance between these two disciplines, and specifically their different political stances, provoked Parente to disregard the rich cross-pollination between science and art that has taken place in the history of art from Brazil and that, most likely, traversed the same circuits that Parente navigated.

In fact, Parente rarely presented herself simultaneously as chemist and artist, instead choosing one affiliation over the other depending on the specific context and surrounding circumstances. In scientific publications and conferences, Parente was exclusively identified by her professional affiliation as chemistry professor and researcher, primarily at UFC—and based in Fortaleza—and at PUC, in Rio de Janeiro, towards the last years of her life. In artistic contexts, however, Parente limited her identification to her city of origin (Salvador, Bahia, where she was born) and her place of residency (Rio, where she emerged as artist), and to list her participation in artistic exhibitions.²⁵⁹ It is possible that this choice of strictly differentiated self-identification between chemist and artist responded, on the one hand, to the recognition that she had achieved as a prominent female scientist and, on the other hand, to her desired projection as an emerging artist. Parente's dual identification also reflects the different political situations that these two

²⁵⁹ It is worth remembering the geopolitical difference between being a scientist in the Brazilian northeastern region and an artist in cosmopolitan Rio de Janeiro, a consideration of primal relevance in explaining Parente's dual career. This geopolitical distance is also key for analyzing Parente's motivations in moving to Rio, as well as her disciplinary interests in science and in art that allowed Parente to be simultaneously (but not publically presented as) a practicing chemist and artists.

affiliations—scientist and artist—carried in 1960s–1970s Brazil: while scientific higher education was propelled by the military regime, a reactionary attitude was largely recognized in the counterculture promoted from the studios and galleries of MAM–RJ and advocated beyond Rio in nation-wide networks of artists, critics, and curators.

Despite her discrete affiliations, Parente’s practice evidences that she moved with ease between the two disciplines. While Parente apparently kept her interests in science and art separate, her artistic knowledge informed her pedagogical and research projects in chemistry. For instance, her knowledge about new media and artists’ means of working gave way to her use of video in her pedagogical approaches. Parente presented a conference paper on this topic at the SBPC and seemed to have collaborated with the television channel TV Cultura in the creation of chemistry courses designed for remote education transmitted by television.²⁶⁰ Parente’s interdisciplinary approach to science and art also enabled her contributions to the study of painting as an imported chemical product.²⁶¹ More significantly, as I demonstrate in this chapter, Parente purposefully used methodologies developed in scientific laboratories to create the artistic strategies deployed in her non-medium-specific works, and more specifically in her installation *Medida*.

²⁶⁰ In 1983, Parente presented the paper “Uso da televisão como recurso complementar no ensino de química: pesquisa de linguagem que desenvolva a reflexão” (Use of television as a complementary resource for teaching chemistry: Research of a language that derives in thoughtful reflection; co-authored with her son André) at the annual conference of the SBPC. The content of this paper and the specifics of her TV programs are yet to be identified.

²⁶¹ Parente delineates the main aspects of her project “Melhoria dos materiais de pintura no Brasil” (Improvement of Materials for Painting in Brazil) in an article published by Herkenhoff and Cocchiarale, artists, curators, and Parente’s peers. See Letícia Parente, “Continuidade e expansão do Projeto Melhoria dos Materiais de Pintura no Brasil” (Continuity and expansion of the Project Improvement of Materials for Painting in Brazil) in *Materias de arte no Brasil: Análise das tintas a óleo*, ed. Paulo Herkenhoff and Fernando Cocchiarale (Rio de Janeiro: FUNARTE, Instituto Nacional de Artes Plásticas, 1985), 77–78.

4.7 *Recrutamento de pessoal*: Popular Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge

The complexity of Parente's interdisciplinary artmaking is synthesized in a small-scale, untitled Xerox collage that was partially included in *Medida*. This collage, referred here as *Recrutamento de pessoal* (Staff recruitment), was also distributed in the specialized magazine *Galeria de Arte Moderna* (GAM, June 1976) as a one-page spread.²⁶² [Fig. 66] The simultaneous exhibition of this collage in two different media and contexts perfectly echoed Parente's critique of both scientific classification of human types and the social constructions informing them. *Recrutamento de pessoal*'s upper register is composed of a comparative table designed by Parente to identify individual physiognomies. This table includes mug-shot photographs of Parente's fellow artists from the Rio de Janeiro group.²⁶³ It demarcates their facial proportions and identifies them according to the shape of their mouth and their constitutional body type. Each person exemplifies a specific set of personality characteristics, including, among others, "sweet and balanced," "romantic and melancholic," and "jovial and generous." In the text accompanying this work, Parente describes these pairs of complementary adjectives—all in their singular, feminine form—as "patterns, measurements, and classifications" taken from the scientific publications *Psychognomie* and *Manual of Physical Anthropology* (Juan Comas, 1957) and the popular

²⁶² GAM also published Parente's Xerox *Idas e vindas* discussed in chapter two. *Recrutamento de pessoal* was published alongside articles featuring Julio Plaza and Augusto de Campos's collaborative *Caixa preta* (1975) and Lygia Clark's psychological experiments, among other discussion of contemporary art from Brazil and beyond.

²⁶³ In her essay "What's the Matter with Photography?," Natalia Brizuela states that these mug shots in Parente's *Recrutamento de pessoal*, as well as her *Projeto 158-1 (A)* and *Projeto 158-2 (B)*, "mock official identification photographs." *The Matter of Photography in the Americas*, ed. Natalia Brizuela and Jodi Roberts (Stanford, CA: Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University and Stanford University Press, 2018), 29. Brizuela's statement opens an interesting avenue by suggesting that Parente's practice is inscribed in a current of critique and subversion against authoritarian censorship. Reading these mug shots as mocking official identification photographs also allows direct comparison between Parente's work and Claudia Andujar's series *Marcados* (Marked, 1981) and Eugenio Dittborn's *Pinturas aeropostales* (Airmail paintings, 1983–present), among others.

magazine *Mais*.²⁶⁴ In *Recrutamento de pessoal*, the eugenic content of these publications appears as a scientific classification of individuals. Yet, the psychological types are identified according to the labels published in *Mais* as popular references for the application of specialized knowledge. [Fig. 68]

The apparent purpose of this personality classification system and its artistic significance are revealed by a job announcement originally published in an unidentified newspaper and reproduced in the bottom register of *Recrutamento de pessoal*. Presented in combination with the table of personality types, this announcement offers a real-life application for the identification of single individuals' physical and psychological characteristics. The job announcement, otherwise generic in the recruiting company and position responsibilities, specifies candidates' eligibility as based on "good level of instruction" and "good looking." As displayed in *Medida*, the job announcement included in *Recrutamento de pessoal* was exhibited on the wall alongside a selection of similar clippings. [Fig. 67] For its inclusion in *Recrutamento de pessoal*, Parente underlined "good looking" as a strategy to reinforce the artificial yet naturalized relations between working skills and the candidate's personality and bodily appearance.

An artist statement signed by Parente following the job announcement declares that this work shares its thematic with *Medida*. They both question scientific and commercial methods by comparing specialized with popular publications and offering a critique of the impact of these methods for anonymous citizens. In this statement Parente also makes explicit, as she had never done before, the political subtext of her artistic and scientific motivations. In Parente's words, "I

²⁶⁴ The clippings of *Mais* in which personality characteristics are assigned to different shapes of lips have since been reproduced in *Arqueologia do quotidiano* as part of the series *Mulheres* without discussion their inclusion in *Recrutamento de pessoal*. *Arqueologia do quotidiano*, 165.

try to detect new elements of resistance, new energy for the consciousness: the continuous, constant search.”²⁶⁵ Here, Parente reveals that the search for innovative, permanent resistance (against mainstream communication channels, mass media identity constructions, uncritical distribution of scientific knowledge, etc.) is at the core of her oeuvre.

4.8 National Recognition as an Established Artist

In participating in MAM–RJ with her installation *Medida*, Parente established her artistic identity through a solo exhibition that sparked her national recognition as artist while defining the entirety of her artistic career. At MAM–RJ, *Medida* was part of the rotating curatorial programming “Área Experimental” (Experimental Area, 1975–1978), an initiative devoted to formal and curatorial experimentation that gave free rein to emerging and established artists to present a new large-scale work.²⁶⁶ Área Experimental was envisaged by a group of curators, artists, and educators directly involved with the museum who were seeking to expand the physical and conceptual limits of art making, distribution, and exhibition.²⁶⁷ Its implementation was led by the museum’s director of exhibition, a position that Pontual occupied in 1976. Among the artists included in this programming were Sonia Andrade, Fernando Cocchiareale, Anna Bella Geiger,

²⁶⁵ “Enfim, [pretendo detectar] novas faces de luta, novo impulso para a consciência: a contínua indagação sem tréguas.” Inscription in Parente’s *Recrutamento de pessoal* (Staff recruitment, 1976).

²⁶⁶ MAM–RJ’s Área Experimental was projected in 1971 but the first exhibition, by Brazilian artist Emil Forman (1954–1983), opened in 1975. Its popularity among artists guaranteed a continuous programming that, renewing itself every couple of month, was to be extended for years, despite much discussion of its curatorial format within the museum organization. “Área Experimental” abruptly came to an end with MAM–RJ’s fire in the early hours of July 8, 1978. See Fernanda Lopes, “Chapter Two,” *Área Experimental: lugar, espaço e dimensão do experimental na arte brasileira dos anos 1970* (Rio de Janeiro: Prestígio Editorial, 2013).

²⁶⁷ Lopes, *Área Experimental*, 39–40.

Paulo Herkenhoff, and Ivens Machado (members of Parente's artistic circle in Rio de Janeiro), as well as Cildo Meireles, Tunga (1952–2016), and Regina Vater, to name a few.²⁶⁸ This curatorial experiment opened space for emerging artists and promoted the creation of works that moved beyond the white-cube gallery format. It also provided an ideal venue for Parent's interdisciplinary practice: The creation and exhibition of *Medida* as a critical experimental art installation was only possible within the physical and discursive space opened by Área Experimental.

Parente's solo exhibition benefitted from a privileged location and carried artistic national recognition. Considering *Medida* within MAM–RJ and the city of Rio reveals Parente's installation's strategic location within concentric spheres of influence—the museum, the city, and the country—and uncovers its overarching relations to its historical context. The consolidation of Parente's artistic career took place at a prominent modernist architectural venue integrated with the Parque do Flamengo and in close proximity to Rio's international airport, on the pathway between downtown Rio de Janeiro and the city's Zona Sul. Moreover, the prominence of Rio within Brazil's economy and politics, and its further metonymic representation of Brazil at an international level, propelled Parente to the national stage.

Following Parente's participation in MAM–RJ's Área Experimental, newspaper coverage of her work demonstrates how *Medida* catalyzed the national artistic recognition she received. Parente's participation the previous year in collective exhibitions (including *Mostra de arte experimental* and *Audiovisuais*, both in 1975 in Rio) was also covered in local newspapers, but they limited her artistic contributions to a single medium. In contrast, extended articles featuring *Medida* and portraying Parente as a contemporary artist established her prominence within a

²⁶⁸ Between 1975 and 1978, Área Experimental included 38 exhibitions by 40 artists. Lopes, *Área Experimental*, 48.

broader circle of influence connecting Fortaleza, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, where she participated years later in the São Paulo Biennial.

In addition to informative blurbs publicized by MAM–RJ and reproduced in multiple newspapers, two articles published in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador were particularly favorable to Parente. “*Medidas* [sic], por fora e por dentro” (Medidas, inside out) by Pontual and “Uma Letícia de peso e medidas” (A Letícia of weight and measurements) by Bené Fonteles marked a watershed in Parente’s career.²⁶⁹ In a thoughtful interpretation of Parente’s installation, Pontual’s article examines *Medida* as a commentary on bureaucratic practices that, while recording the existence of each citizen, fails to recognize them in their singularity. Pontual asserts that Parente’s strategies effectively reveal for *Medida*’s visitors the individual characteristics of each person. In quoting Parente, Pontual brings her ultimate artistic motivation to light: Parente’s work aims to make viewers consider and question aspects of contemporary life that usually go unexamined.

Providing complementary information, Fonteles presents Parente’s career as an innovative—and profoundly contemporary—practice, intellectually engaging and grounded in experimentation. In Fonteles’s words, “In Rio, contact with Anna Bella Geiger and others gave [Parente’s] work the precise dimension to achieve a new awareness only reachable through the development of new means of experimentation.”²⁷⁰ Fonteles’s article attests to Parente’s artistic trajectory as the thoughtfully developed process typical of an established artist and rooted in sustained research. Articulating the artistic stakes of Parente’s oeuvre and specifically addressing

²⁶⁹ Roberto Pontual, “*Medidas* [sic], por fora e por dentro” in *Jornal do Brasil* (June 24, 1976) and Bené Fonteles, “Uma Letícia de peso e medidas” in *Tribuna da Bahia* (n.d., 1976).

²⁷⁰ “No Rio, o contato com Ana [sic] Bella Geiger e outras fontes, deram ao trabalho da artista a vivência e dimensão precisa para uma nova consciencia a ser desenvolvida com os novos meios da experimentação.” Fonteles, “Uma Letícia de peso e medidas.”

Medida, Fonteles points to the effects that this work produced on visitors as “physical, cognitive, and reflexive actions” and inducing “emotional attitudes.” The impact of *Medida* in its participants also informed Parente’s work in the years to come, as they defined her art proposals and insertion into a larger artistic network.

Parente’s experimental proposal that articulates scientific procedures as artistic strategies (by turning museum visitors into art participants) defined her recognition as an established artist. Retrospectively, Parente highlighted the affective reactions and direct dialogue between visitors and artist that *Medida* produced.²⁷¹ Recalling that MAM–RJ’s experimental curatorial program required the artist to be physically present during exhibition hours, Parente explains the toll of being the recipient of visitors’ compliments and attacks—“I was left shuddering in the sense of an interaction with the public being like that, violent, and a questioning of what it is, what did it provoke in me, in others.”²⁷² These events, as she indicates, also impacted her subsequent production that prominently featured experimental methodologies and human interactions. In her interview, Parente specifically refers to an installation proposal she developed in coordination with Zanini.²⁷³ While this proposal was never realized, Parente’s sustained collegiality with Zanini opened the way to her participation in the São Paulo Biennial a few years later and reinforced her national recognition.

²⁷¹ Letícia Parente, interview for the exhibition *Arte: Novos meios/multimeios*.

²⁷² “Eu fiquei fortemente abalada num sentido de uma interação com público assim violenta e esse questionamento de que que é, que o que provocou em mim nos, outros.” Parente, interview for the exhibition *Arte: Novos meios/multimeios*.

²⁷³ “I articulated a proposal on ‘house,’ a work based on the idea of ‘house.’ It was my proposal, but it very much depended on the visitors’ transit within the space. I articulated it in Fortaleza and with Zanini at MAC. But then came a turn of events, Zanini left MAC and then I could not produce it anymore.” [“Eu cheguei a articular uma proposta da casa, um trabalho sobre o assunto da casa, e cheguei a articular mais dependia muito do trânsito dentro do espaço. E cheguei a articular em Fortaleza e lá com Zanini no MAC. Mais aí vem outro reviravolta, o Zanini saio do MAC e aí eu não pude fazer mais.”] Parente, interview for the exhibition *Arte: Novos meios/multimeios*.

Following *Medida*, Parente explicitly sought to address collective experiences in an effort to move beyond an individual perception of the world. Immediately after the MAM–RJ exhibition and before concluding her artistic career five years later at the 16th São Paulo Biennial in 1981, Parente returned to video to cement the incorporation of science into her artistic production as a strategy to express a critical, political position. The next chapter analyzes two videos that Parente created after *Medida* and towards the end of her artistic career. It examines how, after deploying her scientific knowledge in a prominent museum gallery, Parente incorporated into her work the political transition during the last periods of the dictatorship by applying an inoculation experiment to her own body in *Preparação II* (Preparation II, 1976), and ironing her clothes while wearing them in *Tarefa I* (Task I, 1982).

5.0 Chapter Four: Applied Experiments

The years following the exhibition of *Medida* were transformative for Parente. This was a period of slow political transition that anticipated the return to a democratic and civil government. In 1974, president General Geisel announced a period of *distensão* (relaxation). The ease of the authoritarian regime, however, only came into effect in the late 1970s. Although the physical and psychological torture of political prisoners continued, some of the measures of repression previously applied to the general population were eased and the political transition produced by the lifting of the AI-5 decree in 1978 and the pardoning of political exiles in 1979 had a decompressing effect.

Parallel to this political transition, Parente transformed her work during these years. In the video *Preparação II* (Preparation II, 1976) she merged her visceral denunciation of authoritarian forms of control applied to Brazilian citizens with her scientific practices in order to represent specific instances of the government's soft control of individual bodies. During this period, Parente also expanded her interest in the situation of women and women-identified bodies to address race relations from a feminist standpoint, as presented in her video *Tarefa I* (Task I, 1982). Her approach to feminism changed as governmental repression receded and social movements started gaining traction. In order to demonstrate the effect of these unfolding social and political events in Parente's work and her reaction to contemporary situations, this chapter analyzes these two works on video that bridge Parente's artistic trajectory from the mid-1970s, when she established herself as a nationally recognized artist, to the early 1980s, when she ended her career as a practicing artist.

5.1 *Preparação II*: Applying Governmental Strategies

In 1975, as discussed in chapter one, Parente made *Preparação I*, in which a woman (Parente) conceals her eyes and mouth with tape while conducting a beauty routine in the privacy of a domestic bathroom, preparing herself to perform in public. The following year, she made another video, *Preparação II*, in which she prepared her body with scientific procedures as an artistic strategy to reflect on governmental control of individual bodies. This black and white video, created in 1976, the same year that *Medida* was on view at MAM-RJ, features Parente's familiarity with laboratory spaces and techniques while maintaining a critical response to Brazil's sociopolitical environment.

Preparação II shows a performer (Parente herself) in partial view in a laboratory. [Fig. 69] Over seven minutes and thirty-nine seconds, she methodically fills a medical syringe with a serum, applies the vaccine to a muscular section of her front arms and thighs, and rhythmically records the application of each vaccine on a certificate card. These actions were recorded with a Portapak video camera used by photographer Ana Vitoria Mussi, one of Parente's colleagues in Geiger's group, and were carefully staged in a laboratory setting, probably at the university laboratories where Parente conducted chemistry experiments.

While echoing the punctured skin of *Marca registrada* despite their different settings, Parente's actions in *Preparação II* take a radical approach to the use of needles as she recreates a permanent, rather than temporary, alteration of the body using the site and techniques of biological manipulation. The opening frame of *Preparação II* shows a set of instruments that, displayed on a laboratory table, anticipate Parente's actions. Throughout the video, the camera emphasizes Parente's hands carefully manipulating a set of laboratory instruments as well as her body and her

identity. The video recording and the vaccine registration form attest that the medical needle is piercing Parente's skin, altering her body and keeping a register for the world to see. Parente applies the first vaccine onto her left arm and visually fragments her body through specific shooting frames focused on her punctured skin. Immediately following the application of this vaccine, Parente records her injection on a national vaccine certificate. Then, she proceeds to inject her other forearm and her thighs and to record each vaccine on this national certificate. However, instead of smallpox, yellow fever, poliomyelitis, or any other scientifically-identified disease, the vaccine labels are written in French: "anti-raciste" (anti-racist), "anti-colonialism culturel" (anti-cultural colonialism), "anti-mystification politique" (anti-political mystification), and "anti-mystification de l'art" (anti-art mystification).²⁷⁴ The punctures on this woman's skin are invisible once the vaccination has concluded, and the identification of her body does not take place on the surface of her body but on paper and in a foreign language: Parente has written the labels in French on an official paper form.

During this process, recorded as a sequence-shot video, Parente avails of time between one vaccine and the next to appreciate and question the unfolding manipulation of the displayed body. The needles, serums, and visually fragmented body sections are all present in the laboratory with their only purpose to be deployed by a pair of commanding hands. [Fig. 70] In manipulating her own body like a utilitarian object, Parente turns a series of scientific laboratory procedures into an artistic strategy.

²⁷⁴ In the video, the four vaccine labels read, in French, "anti-raciste," "anti-colonialism culturel," "anti-mystification politique," "anti-mythification de el art" [sic].

To carry out this series of four injections in the enclosed space of a laboratory setting, Parente carefully eliminates any external variables that might disrupt the procedure. In deliberately situating her actions in the neutral space of a laboratory and conducting them in accordance with technical standards, Parente deploys her discipline-specific preparation in scientific experimentation as a method of attaining knowledge from the study of matter. Parente uses the aesthetic possibilities of a portable video-camera in a laboratory space as a strategy to weave together the production of knowledge through art and science with international advocacy for individual liberties within the historical context of Brazil's twenty-one-year military dictatorship. Manipulating and permanently altering her own body, Parente created *Preparação II* as an experimental representation of a fragmented, yet regulated individual.

By injecting herself, Parente offers in *Preparação II* a critique of the limitations imposed on Brazilian citizens. This video emphasizes the structural fragmentation institutionally applied to citizens' bodies through a vaccination sequence focused on the prophylactic goals of public health policies. Beyond recording a single individual as discrete body parts, *Preparação II* represents the fragile status of human rights in Brazil and the limited agency of Brazilian citizens, controlled by a military regime that restricted the circulation of its population and enforced specific social values. During the early years of the military administration, the free circulation of hundreds of selected Brazilians was directly controlled by the State, holding them prisoners and regulating their physical bodies and their fears.²⁷⁵ During the years the video was made, the entirety of the

²⁷⁵ For an example of the specific uses of torture between 1968 and 1974, during Brazil's *milagre econômico* (economic miracle) and *leaded years*, see the testimony of Ubirajá Bezerra da Costa in "Depoimentos de agentes do estado," Comissão Nacional da Verdade, accessed April 1, 2019, http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br/images/pdf/depoimentos/agentes_publicos/Ubirajara_Bezerra_da_Costa_21.10.2014_-_ct_rp.pdf. For an example of the military State control over the mobility of bodies and ideas of Brazilian citizens, see the testimony of Maria Isabel Camargo Régis published as part of the CNV report in "Depoimentos de vítimas civis," Comissão Nacional da Verdade, accessed April 1, 2019,

population was vaccinated and their immune system was controlled by a federal government that enforced nation-wide vaccination by regulating governmental financial aid and international travel permits.

Preparação II responded specifically to public health legislation implemented in Brazil through the Programa Nacional de Imunizações (National Immunization Program, PNI), created in September 1973.²⁷⁶ Responding in large part to international efforts led by the World Health Organization, the PNI sought to control and eradicate contagious diseases through public health campaigns like the federally organized National Vaccination Day. As articulated in two regulations from October 1975 and August 1976, all inhabitants of Brazil (nationals and foreigners) were required to officially declare all vaccines received in order to be able to work, receive any governmental financial aid, and travel to and from Brazil. As an example of the State's enforcement measures, low income citizens who did not register and declare all vaccines received were unable to receive *salário-família*, a financial aid legally available to all Brazilians workers representing a percentage of a worker's monthly minimal wage.²⁷⁷ Because the PNI's centralized vaccination campaign reinforced the authoritarian profile of the military government, its enforced implementation aroused discomfort among health professionals and intellectuals. Most relevant to Parente's video, the PNI oversaw the registry of all vaccine doses freely distributed across the country. While this undoubtedly had positive, long-lasting impacts on all Brazilians in terms of

http://cnv.memoriasreveladas.gov.br/images/pdf/depoimentos/vitimas_civis/Maria_Isabel_Camargo_Regis_06.09.2013.pdf.

²⁷⁶ See *Programa Nacional de Imunizações: 30 anos* (Brasília: Ministério da Saúde, 2003).

²⁷⁷ On immunization regulations, see Brazilian regulation 6.259 from October 30, 1975, accessed June 29, 2020 http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/L6259.htm ; and on *salário-família*, see regulation 4.266 from October 3, 1963, accessed June 29, 2020, http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/LEIS/L4266.htm

public health and quality of life, these vaccination campaigns were at times punitively applied, reflecting the program's mission of *vigilância epidemiológica* (epidemiological surveillance).²⁷⁸

5.2 Inoculating Brazilians Against Epidemiological Surveillance

The authoritarian enforcement of a vaccine certificate is foregrounded in *Preparação II* through the insertion of a language other than Portuguese. The inclusion of French labels, like the English inscription “Made in Brasil” in Parente’s video from the previous year, reveals Brazil’s situation within a globalized world defined by a growing, capitalist circulation of bodies, artworks, and ideas.²⁷⁹ However, echoing both *Marca Registrada* and *In* in its use of a foreign language, these French inscriptions further emphasize Parente’s intervention into an international artistic network that is not limited by the use of a single language. More specifically, the language of these artistic inscriptions suggests that validating national production depends on its compliance with European parameters.

The use of French interpreted as a colonial relationship is enhanced by what appears to be a preparatory sketch listing the four vaccine labels featured in *Preparação II* and including two additional entries: “Anti-anthropophage” (anti-anthropophagist) and “anti-domination

²⁷⁸ See Brazilian regulation 78.231 from August 1976 (“Decreto No. 78.231, de 12 de agosto de 1976,” Câmara dos Deputados, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/decret/1970-1979/decreto-78231-12-agosto-1976-427054-publicacaooriginal-1-pe.html>); Silvia Gerschman, *A democracia inconclusa: um estudo da Reforma Sanitária Brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 1995); Carlos Henrique Assunção Paiva and Luiz Antonio Teixeira, “Reforma sanitária e a criação do Sistema Único de Saúde: notas sobre contextos e autores,” *História, Ciências, Saúde* 21, 1 (January-March, 2014): 15–35.

²⁷⁹ French-speaking Brazilians typically represent elite sections of the population that, like Parente herself, receive a bilingual education and constitute an intellectual class.

culturel” (anti-cultural domination).²⁸⁰ [Fig. 71] While the latter seems to be in consonance with the four injection labels included in the video, anti-anthropophagist is a direct reference to Brazilian modernist movement Antropofagia, as developed by Brazilian writer Oswald de Andrade in his *Manifesto antropofago* (Cannibalist manifesto, 1928) and in the contemporaneous paintings of Tarsila do Amaral, *Abaporu* (Abaporu, 1928) and *Antropofagia* (Anthropophagy, 1929). Antropofagia embodies profoundly anti-colonialist ideas: it advocates for the consumption and digestion of foreign cultures with the goal of subsequently regurgitating a uniquely Brazilian culture. Brazilian modernism, described by Andrade as a cannibalistic process, declares itself as an autochthonous (indigenous) cultural product that does not derive exclusively from European avant-garde movements and is rather influenced, in equal measure, by local traditions.

In including “anti-anthropophagique” in her preparatory sketch, Parente evinces her knowledge of the history of modern and contemporary art from Brazil and presents an interesting rejection of it. In the 1960s, Parente’s contemporaries, including Clark and Maiolino, adopted the cannibalist identification of Brazilian culture in their artworks and brought renewed attention to the modernist idea of anthropophagy.²⁸¹ While Parente left this inscription out of the video, the sketch suggests her antagonistic approach to the Brazilian modernist movement, compared to her fellow Brazilians (both modern and contemporary). With the label “anti-anthropophagique” Parente not only rejects the imperial and colonialist enforcement of a foreign culture as a strategy to advocate for the regurgitation of a uniquely Brazilian culture, as proposed in the *Cannibalist*

²⁸⁰ “Anti-anthropophagique” and “anti-domination culturel.” This note is reproduced in *Arqueologia do quotidiano*, 124.

²⁸¹ See, for instance, Molesworth, ed. *Anna Maria Maiolino*; Butler, ed., *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art*; Sneed, “Anthropofagic Subjectivities: Gender and Identity in Anna Maria Maiolino’s *In-Out* (*Antropofagia*), 1973–1974”; and *Lygia Clark, de l’oeuvre à l’événement*, curated by Suely Rolnik.

Manifesto. By writing this label in French and declaring it a vaccine *against* anthropophagists, and thus against those advocating for anthropophagy as a cultural practice, Parente also suppresses the possibility of a complex autochthonous identity based in avant-garde ideas of primitivism. If applied as an injection that mimics nation-wide immunization policies, an “anti-anthropophagique” vaccine would prevent the popular adoption of an unequivocal Brazilian identity as put forth through modernist ideals. Yet, by leaving this vaccine outside her video, Parente avoided delving into historiographical discussions of Brazilian avant-garde legacies and rather emphasized current events like the PNI campaigns that were taking place in Brazil.

If Parente’s inclusion of the French language points to compliance, by appropriation, with European parameters, her application of vaccination procedures imitates the methods employed by the government to enforce their authority as she prepares her body against cultural hegemonic power relations (against racism, cultural colonialism, etc.). Although Parente only sketches the vaccine label “anti-anthropophagique” and does not include in her video a direct reference to a cannibalist practice as an artistic strategy, the parallels between her actions against her own body and the public health methods for governmental control suggest that in vaccinating herself and officially recording this procedure, Parente devours, synthesizes, and regurgitates the techniques of the military administration, a patriarchal structure that colonizes Brazilian marginal populations in the name of modernity. Without naming it in her vaccination form, by preparing her female body against institutional control and creating *Preparação II* Parente had already embodied the figure of the anthropophagist.

Immunizing herself against non-equitable practices such as racism and cultural colonialism, Parente labels the four injections in *Preparação II* with political statements that reflect broken social relations imposed on marginalized populations. In her laboratory—turned the

site of her artistic creative expression—Parente’s vaccine labels call attention to the cultural implications of national centralized policies that disregarded the particularities of individual citizens, targeted peripheral populations, and opposed popular political engagement. Parente’s labels also highlight how maintaining an aura of secrecy around politics and art serves as a mechanism to restrict popular participation. In contrast, the vaccines applied in Parente’s experiment are delivered via video for whomever wants to see. However, contrary to the dissemination of her 1975 videos, during Parente’s lifetime *Preparação II* was not exhibited in public venues for contemporary art.²⁸²

5.3 External and Internal Preparations of a Body

Preparing her body in a laboratory space, as suggested by the title of this video, calls attention to previous preparations that Parente undertook by manipulating her body, and specifically her eyes and mouth, in *Preparação I*. However, beyond visually preparing her body for others to see, in *Preparação II* Parente prepares her body in an institutional laboratory to comply with institutional requirements and effectively navigate public spaces. When exhibiting *Preparação I* at *Mostra de Arte Experimental de Filmes Super 8, Audio-Visual e Video-Tape* in 1975 in Rio de Janeiro, Parente stated that the medium of video was for her an ideal tool to embody the passage from “the internal image to the external image.”²⁸³ While *Preparação I* records the

²⁸² To the best of my knowledge, *Preparação II* has only been exhibited in the 2011 and 2017 retrospective exhibitions of Parente in Brazil. It is now in the collection of Tate, in London.

²⁸³ “Quando se torna necessário encontrar um recurso que se interponha ao mínimo, na passagem da imagem interna para a imagem externa, ao nível de ação com o próprio corpo, a opção pelo VT parece-me prioritária.” *Mostra de Arte Experimental*, n.p.

preparation of Parente's external body (her face) in the private setting of a domestic bathroom, *Preparação II* complements the symbolic movements—the gestures—embedded in these actions by recording Parente's preparation of her internal body in the public space of an industrial laboratory. Although Parente's internal and external preparations of her body take place in isolation—either conducted at home or in a scientific laboratory, two spaces familiar to Parente—she manipulates and records her body with the ultimate goal to actively participate in the public sphere of a patriarchal, authoritarian society. Nonetheless, by video-recording meticulous laboratory procedures, Parente displays her autonomous feminine body and foregrounds the relevance of her gestures, her gender, and self-determination beyond her immediate national context.

Preparação II is not an isolated example of representations of body parts in contemporary art from Brazil, yet Parente's videos like *Marca registrada*, *Preparação I*, and *Preparação II* are unique in appealing to an epidermic sensitivity (understood as the tactility of human skin) through the presentation of discrete body parts and in relation to political and economic concerns. The same year that Parente prepared her internal body and recorded *Preparação II*, Lygia Pape presented her multi-media work *Eat me—A gula ou a luxuria?* (Eat me—gluttony or luxury?, 1976) at MAM-RJ. Pape's installation was composed of a film projected on the external wall of the museum and featuring close-ups of men's and women's mouths opening and closing. It was accompanied by an installation of objects popularly related to women's sex appeal, such as red lipstick batons and card-size calendars with photos of semi-nude women.²⁸⁴ Displayed in one of

²⁸⁴ Pape's *Eat me—A gula ou a luxuria?* was presented at MAM-RJ as part of the 1975–1978 curatorial programing “Área Experimental” (Experimental Area) that also included Parente's installation *Medida* (see chapter three of this dissertation).

the museum's galleries, these objects echoed the projected images of the accompanying film featuring provocative lips and tongues that sucked, licked, and offered different objects seized by active mouths.²⁸⁵ [Fig. 72] In the exhibition brochure, Pape states that in *Eat me—A gula ou a luxuria?* “I unfold the project at the level of an epidermization of an idea; the sensorial as a form of knowledge and consciousness.”²⁸⁶ Pape's choice of words calls attention to the display of the body, and particularly to the display of selected fragments of skin—both publicly projected onto the façade of the museum and intimately presented in the interior gallery. For Pape, his representation of the fragmented body is a mechanism to foreground our physical sensibility as a place of shared knowledge, regardless of the specifics of the immediate historical contexts that the represented feminine bodies inhabit.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ For a comprehensive description and analysis of *Eat me—A gula ou a luxuria?*, see Claudia Calirman, “Epidermic and Visceral Works: Lygia Pape and Anna Maria Maiolino,” in *Women's Art Journal* fall-winter (2014): 19–27; and *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum, 2017, exhibition catalog).

²⁸⁶ “Desdobro o projeto ao nível de uma epidermização de uma idéia; o sensorio como forma de conhecimento e de consciência.” Lygia Pape, “Eat me—A gula ou a luxuria?” Claudia Calirman, translation in Calirman, “Epidermic and Visceral Works,” 23. The text in the exhibition brochure was reproduced that same year in the cultural magazine *Malasartes* in an article sharing its title with the work in reference. *Malasartes* 2 (December–February 1976), 23. A copy of this same number of *Malasartes* was kept by Parente in her personal archive. Evidencing Parente's knowledge of Brazilian art history, the article “A querela do Brasil,” by Carlos Zilio and reproduced in this number of *Malasartes*, is heavily annotated with Parente's handwriting. The first issue of *Malasartes*, published two month prior and most likely read by Parente, includes Terry Smith's article “O problema do provincianismo” (*Malasartes* 1, 1975) 30–33.

²⁸⁷ The recognition and presentation of the body as a place of conscious realizations derived from personal awareness and capable of autonomous actions was recently echoed by Lenora de Barros (b. 1953), a Brazilian artist based in São Paulo, who also started her artistic practice in the 1970s. In her performance *Há mulheres* (There are women, 2005, from the series *Não quero nem ver* [I do not even want to see]), Barros stands still on a stage and, filling the space with her voice and those of other women, declares through a series of repeated short monologues that women arrive to knowledge by thinking *through*, *for*, and *from* their female bodies. While hers is an audible rather than a visual representation of the body, it reinforces the recognition of the (female) body as site where acute apprehension of the world takes place. Like Pape and Parente, de Barros presents this apprehension by fragmenting her body and expressing it exclusively through her voice. The organic body as a repository of knowledge in Pape's *Eat me—A gula ou a luxuria* and de Barros's *Há mulheres* offer a rich comparison from which to examine the ways in which *Preparação II* presents Parente's body as a political site for the representation of individual and collective identities. *Há mulheres* was performed by the artist and Luiza Baldan on April 28, 2018, at Galeria Anita Schwartz in Rio de Janeiro.

In relation to the work of Pape and Maiolino, whose artworks contain both figurative representations of the body and informal sculptures invoking organic shapes, Claudia Calirman employs the term ‘viscerality’ as a definition for organic forms that encompass, among other things, representations of body parts and “dilacerated flesh.”²⁸⁸ Borrowing Calirman’s vocabulary to examine Parente’s work, I propose to apply the term ‘visceral’ as relating to the *visual* fragmentation of the body, rather than implying the physicality of representing body sections as if they were torn apart. In *Preparação II*, Parente presents the body parts and fragments of a single individual by displaying her human skin primarily as a sensitive organ. In doing so, she invites us to see her video as the ‘visceral epidermis’ that holds together a living person as a single, complexity. In other words, it is the video-recording of Parente’s skin—as she had done the year before in *Marca registrada* and in contrast to her works on paper—what makes her a human being. [Fig. 73]

By visually fragmenting her body as a strategy to showcase how her skin is punctured by technical regulations, Parente exposes her ‘visceral epidermis’ to give testimony of the human capacity to produce and transmit knowledge about its own identity, even when visually fractured. While in this video Parente appears to be enclosed in a laboratory space and her image restricted to the field of a TV screen, in *Preparação II* she demonstrates through her self-inflicted actions—culminated with the clear inscription of her name—that she is first and foremost an autonomous woman fully able of displaying different aspects of her identity, scientist and artist being among them. [Fig. 74] As seen through the camera lens in *Preparação II*, Parente’s needles infuse the

²⁸⁸ Calirman, “Epidermic and Visceral Works,” 23.

body with politically-labeled serums that, upon playing a videotape, remind spectators both of their contemporary political circumstances and of the strength of anonymous citizens.

By skillfully puncturing a female body only partially seen in *Preparação II*, as reinforced by recording another skilled woman in *Tarefa I* few years later, Parente also points to routine regulatory measures that have controlled women's public image and behaviors in Brazil and abroad, and which were internationally denounced at the time. The previous year, the U.N.-sponsored conference "O papel e o comportamento da mulher na realidade brasileira" (The role and behavior of women in Brazilian reality) was held in Rio de Janeiro, and throughout 1975 and 1976 multiple forums were formed to discuss and call attention to the disadvantaged and precarious situation of women.²⁸⁹ Beyond bringing special attention to the condition of women, the Brazilian reception of these events also catalyzed a surge of social movements like Movimento Feminino pela Anistia (Feminine movement for amnesty, MFPA).²⁹⁰ These social movements were composed mostly, if not exclusively by women, yet their agendas were not limited to the well-being of women: they advocated for human rights and helped advance the return to democracy. In addressing political debates through the manipulation of a woman's body, *Preparação II* echoed the nascent feminist movements and contributed to the discussion from Parente's science-based perspective. An Afro-Brazilian woman's manipulation of Parente's body,

²⁸⁹ See "Breve cronologia do movimento feminista no Brasil" in *50 anos de feminismo: Argentina, Brasil e Chile*, ed. Eva Alterman Blay and Lúcia Avelar (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2017), 332.

²⁹⁰ See Cynthia Andersen Sarti, "O feminismo brasileiro desde os anos 1970: revisitando uma trajetória" in *Revista de Estudos Feministas* 12, 2 (2004): 35–50; Rosalina de Santa Cruz Leite, "Brasil Mulher e Nós Mulheres: origens da imprensa feminista brasileira," in *Revista de Estudos Feminista* 11, 1 (2003): 234–41; "Movimento Feminino pela Anistia," in Memorial da Anistia, accessed April 19, 2020, <http://memorialanistia.org.br/movimento-feminino-pela-anistia/>.

as displayed in her later video *Tarefa I*, would further echo the development of feminist movements in Brazil.

5.4 *Tarefa I*: Blackening Feminism

The history of feminist discourses in Brazil directly responded to governmental systems and paralleled national reconfigurations of demographics in political and educational systems. Brazil's military dictatorship offered a restricted (and highly gendered) access to positions of power, yet the socio-economic disparities between women and men were altered by educational reforms.²⁹¹ Reflecting these differences, gender disparities were evidenced by an unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work that further varied among women depending primarily on class and education. In addition to the unequal performance and recognition of domestic labor within the household, in higher economic tiers of Brazilian society domestic labor traditionally translates into an economic expenditure rather than a time-consuming task.²⁹² In response to this structural inequality that systematically left women in a disadvantaged position in relation to their masculine peers, Brazil's women's movements ("movimentos das mulheres," of which the MFPA

²⁹¹ The 1961 national educational reform drastically increasing Brazilian women's participation in education: in 1970 women accounted for only 25% of university students, but by 1991 they constituted the 40% of this population. The political participation of women also increased during this time; it accounted to 1% of governmental positions under the military administration, a percentage that grew to 6% after 1985 with the return to democracy. See José Eustáquio Diniz Alves, Suzana Marta Cavenaghi, Angelita Alves de Carvalho, and Maira Cover Sussai Soares, "Meio século de feminismo e o empoderamento das mulheres no contexto das transformações sociodemográficas do Brasil," in *50 anos de feminismo: Argentina, Brasil e Chile: A construção das mulheres como atores políticos e democráticos* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2017), 29 and 48.

²⁹² See Eva Alterman Blay, "Como as mulheres se contruíram como agentes políticas e democráticas: o caso brasileiro," in *50 anos de feminismo: Argentina, Brasil e Chile*, 65–98; and Nadiesa Dimambro, "Mulheres no Brasil dos anos 70: militância, mídia e padrão de beleza," *Extraprensa* 12, 2 (2019): 157–78.

is the most salient example) during the dictatorship period, which were not affiliated with a political party, usually relied on the figure of the mother—intrinsic to the perceived social role of women—to advocate for the civil rights of young political prisoners and tended to synthesize their cause as a fight against authoritarianism.²⁹³

The overall social and political oppression of the dictatorship justified the prioritization of a democratic agenda over openly feminist engagements. Within this generalized oppression, this political system tended to privilege, among women, the situation of educated, middle-class women like Parente, who mostly engaged in conversations about gender disparity only as they concerned a white, middle-class female audience. In her book *Elogio ao toque: ou como falar da arte feminista a brasileira*, Roberta Barros describes feminist activist movements in the 1970s as a “second wave” of Brazilian feminism strongly informed by political and religious affiliations. During this wave, which emerged amid the dictatorship, feminist discourses backed up by leftist groups and the Catholic church (under the liberation theology movement) were centered on the “social body,” rather than on the “female body.”²⁹⁴ Barros briefly defines it as a justified necessity given the extreme political circumstances of the military administration; the advocacy for women’s rights was limited to theoretical approaches, while the advocacy for the human rights of political prisoners had a strong, practical effect on the ease of authoritarian restrictions. However, as Nadiesda Dimambro demonstrates in her article “Mulheres no Brasil dos anos 1970s: militância, mídia e padrão de beleza,” the secular and religious groups allied with feminist associations and

²⁹³ Blay, “Como as mulheres se contruíram como agentes políticas e democráticas,” 76–77.

²⁹⁴ Roberta Barros, *Elogio ao toque: ou como falar de arte feminista a brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Relacionarte Marketing e Produções Culturais Ltda, 2016), 129.

liberation theology reproduced a structural power imbalance, since the few women participating in them were subject to patriarchal social behaviors determined by men.²⁹⁵

Going back to Parente's work, changes in her feminist thinking—moving out of patriarchal structures—can be traced, as analyzed below, in *Tarefa I*, one of her last videos, in which a black woman irons Parente's clothes while the artist wears them and which was filmed in color. Beyond the openly political MFPA and some other leftist social movements established in the late 1970s, feminist groups emerged in Brazilian universities in the early 1980s during the political period known as *abertura* (opening). Before the return to democracy with the 1985 popular presidential elections, academic affiliated feminist groups appeared throughout the country.²⁹⁶ Given the incipient popularization of higher education among women, the academic affiliation of these groups reinforced the elitist character of Brazilian feminism. Parente delves into this class division in her video *Tarefa I* and associates it with racial disparities.

Toward the end of her artistic career, Parente returned to a domestic space as the stage for her videos showcasing the home as a metonym of the different social conditions of Brazilian women. Among the videos Parente recorded between 1980 and 1982—*Nordeste* (Northeast), *Carimbo* (Stamp), *Tarefa I*, and a color recreation of *Marca registrada*—*Tarefa I* both maps Parente's social situation and brings to light Brazil's changing political situation. In this two-minute video (of which a sequel does not exist, contrary to what its name suggests), a black woman irons the clothes of a second woman who lies fully clothed on the ironing board. In the mid-1970s,

²⁹⁵ Dimambro, "Mulheres no Brasil dos anos 1970s: militância, mídia e padrão de beleza," 157–78.

²⁹⁶ These included the Nuclei Interdisciplinar de Estudos da Mulher na Literatura (Nielm) at UFRJ, the Núcleo de Estudo sobre a Mulher (NEM) at PUC–Rio, and the Núcleo de Estudos, Documentação e Informação sobre a Mulher (Nedim) at UFC.

Parente's introduction to video and contemporary art more broadly was nurtured by her active participation in a collective of Rio de Janeiro-based artists that mimicked the structure of international feminist collectives by exchanging ideas and techniques and constructing a solid, if informal, network. *Tarefa I*—the last known work of Parente's artistic production, produced with her own portable camera in collaboration with Cacilda Teixeira da Costa, director of MAC USP's "Espaço B" (1977–78)—brings to the center of the action a depiction of contemporary womanhood in Brazil that, through a discussion of labor, highlights class and race differences.

Tarefa I starts when a white woman (Parente herself) enters the picture plane wearing light-colored, short-sleeve overalls, and lies facing down on the ironing board. This first woman enters the recorded space determined to submissively lie on the ironing board, an action she confidently completes in few seconds and maintains for the remainder of the video. [Fig. 75] As soon as she lies down, a dark-skinned woman—whose face is never featured—enters the recorded space. She is carrying an iron in her right hand and starts ironing Parente's clothes while they are still on her body, moving from the top of her back, to her lower back, to her buttocks, to the back of her legs. The lying woman slightly re-accommodates her body and turns her head away from the camera, thus concealing her facial identity. Her abundant black hair and the image's composition, in which her head is towards the left margin, contribute to focusing the attention on her body. We can identify, however, her white skin, a characteristic that is mostly visible on her bare arms and ankles and reinforced by the light clothes and white shoes she wears. In contrast to this woman's passivity, the second woman purposefully uses the iron for the entirety of the video. [Fig. 76] Her movements mark her relationship to the prostrate woman and reveal the social structure they both inhabit. Although at first glance the ironing of a woman's overalls seems to be the core action of *Tarefa I*, the central tension of this two-minute video emerges from the identities of the featured women.

Their identity-based relations are enhanced when interacting within the social structure of a household that reproduces traditional family compositions and values. Neither of the two women's faces are visible and they do not look at each other despite their close physical contact. Instead, their identities are disclosed through their learned actions and relations.

From the moment the second woman enters, she irons the clothes on the woman lying on the board in a disciplined and complacent fashion that reveals her as a domestic worker. Wearing a black dress-uniform, this woman stands behind the ironing board facing the camera. Her short sleeves show the dark skin of her bare arms and legs. Her skilled ironing techniques—passing over the entire extent of the fabric and pulling it with one hand while ironing specific sections with the other—demonstrate her familiarity with this household task. As an Afro-Brazilian woman, she represents a working class largely defined by racial identities: In this video she stands for a social group who has routinely inhabited another's person's home to conduct on their behalf domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, carrying for children, etc.) historically assigned to women and marginalized populations. In a Brazilian context, the presence and actions of this black woman render visible the indelible legacy of the country's long and convoluted history of slavery.²⁹⁷

Scholars have compared *Tarefa I* with *Olympia* (1863), Édouard Manet's iconic painting, given their shared visual composition and the social differences suggested by the women's races and positions—a white figure lying on the foreground accompanied by a black maid standing on the background behind the bed.²⁹⁸ While this is a useful comparison for considering art historical

²⁹⁷ See, for instance, Helena Carnieri, "Com raízes na escravidão, faxineira durará décadas," in *Gazeta do povo*, June 22, 2012, <https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/caderno-g/com-raizes-na-escravidao-faxineira-durara-decadas-3dq78oc4xnvk3mrzkrw6fuslq/>. After having received the largest population of enslaved Africans, Brazil was the last country of the Americas to abolish slavery in 1888.

²⁹⁸ See André Parente, "Hello, is It Letícia?" in *Arqueologia do cotidiano*; and Talita Trizoli, "Atravessamentos feministas," 345.

references in contemporary art, the social and race relations portrayed in *Tarefa I* must be taken on their own terms, considering Brazil's history of race. In addition to their different historical contexts, the black woman's confident actions in *Tarefa I* point to gender relations as developed within Latin American households and, specifically, to race relations as nourished in Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro, and in Parente's neighborhood of Ipanema.²⁹⁹

In *Tarefa I*, the black woman seems familiar with the breathing body lying in front of her, and the white woman appears at ease lying and being ironed because, to a large extent, their social roles and daily routines are mutually conditioned. Their movements and body language suggest that one woman hired the other to conduct, on her behalf, the domestic chores and caring tasks historically relegated to female-identified individuals. The intimate relationship that develops between two women who are not related by blood yet who care for the same family—one as mother and wife and the other as an employee—reflect both the colonial economic inequalities that have been constantly reproduced in the region, and the fundamentally tender dynamics cultivated among women based on mutual trust and shared spaces and concerns.³⁰⁰

In *Tarefa I*, these social differences and gender-based relations are largely defined along racial lines and, consequently, regional origin. Given the large demographic percentage of Afro-Brazilians that historically entered Brazil through the northeastern port of Salvador (Parente's city of origin), and the extent and persistence of their marginalized situation within Brazil's society,

²⁹⁹ For a compelling analysis on contemporary relations between domestic workers (usually of northeastern origin, a region well-known to Parente) in the Rio de Janeiro neighborhood of Ipanema, see Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, "'Sovereign Parenting' in Affluent Latin American Neighborhoods: Race and the Politics of Childcare in Ipanema (Brazil) and El Condado (Puerto Rico)," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 51 (2019): 639–663.

³⁰⁰ "At the time of my fieldwork [2012–2017], the relationship between domestic workers and employer was still characterized by the exchange of services not stipulated in work contracts; the exigencies of complicity and even affective dispositions between worker and employers; and emotional investments between a worker and her charges." Ana Ramos-Zayas, "Sovereign Parenting," 645.

most domestic workers popularly employed by middle-class families during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been Afro-Brazilian women. The domestic responsibilities historically assigned to Afro-Brazilian women maintained alive, even through the second half of the twentieth century, the colonial concept of the *mãe preta* (wet nurse, literally ‘black mother’), a black woman that provides fundamental care for newborns usually of a different class and race.³⁰¹

Parente’s video evidences the commonplaceness of these unequal social and economic relations between those identified as black and white women in Brazilian households. The presence of the black woman in *Tarefa I* is presumably familiar to spectators in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, although there is no indication that *Tarefa I* was exhibited during Parente’s lifetime, as it is the case with most of her videos created after 1975.³⁰² Even years later, when *Tarefa I* was included in the 2017 exhibition *Radical Women* on view in Los Angeles, New York, and São Paulo, spectators in Brazil would recognize Parente’s scene as a synthesis of the economic, social, and political relations structuring the daily life of Brazil’s female citizens, either white and *dona de casa* (housewife) or Afro-Brazilian and *empregada* (domestic worker). In *Tarefa I*, the active ironing performed by the Afro-Brazilian woman, contrasting the passivity of the prostrate woman, suggests that her presence is valid in that household based only on her efficiency in completing domestic tasks and not on who she is or why she is there.

Nonetheless, *Tarefa I* demonstrates the development of feminist nuances in the social and political relationship of women. Given the socio-economic disparities between Brazilian men and

³⁰¹ In direct relation to Parente, it is most likely that a *mãe preta* looked after her in Salvador following the passing of her mother and during Parente’s first years in the care of her aunt and uncle. On the changing figure of the *mãe preta* during twentieth-century Brazil, see Paulina Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

³⁰² Following their inclusion in *Radical Women*, *Tarefa I* was acquired for international museum collections, including Pinacoteca de São Paulo and MoMA, and *Preparação I* and *Preparação II* were acquired by Tate.

women and among women with different regional and economic backgrounds, it does not come as a surprise that the most active movements for women's rights flourished after the return to democracy in 1985. Whereas gender disparities lacked priority compared to pressing political situations during the Brazilian feminist second wave, the most active feminist groups that came later were led by marginalized groups of self-identified Afro-Brazilian women. They advocated for intersectional feminisms taking into consideration gender, race, and social disadvantages, ultimately coining the term *enegrecendo o feminismo* (blackening feminism), applied specifically to an intersectional feminism originally informed by the advocacy of democracy and human rights of Afro-Brazilian women.

Comparing *Tarefa I* with Parente's 1975 video *In* brings to light the distinct agency of two women, and their limitations, conditioned by their hegemonic racial and social relations. In both videos a woman handles her own or another woman's body as if a piece of clothing—ironing her on a table and hanging her from a closet rod—and does so in the privacy of a domestic room. Both actions are the result of carrying out, day after day, the responsibilities of caring for a family in addition to, or instead of, caring for oneself. In these two videos, the responsibilities of routinely carrying out household chores are assigned to individuals with less recognized power, mainly based on gender, race and class, following colonial practices of domination. Yet, whereas the woman in *In* completes the domestic chore of storing clothes in a closet and hanging herself in the process, and voluntarily renounces her assigned domestic responsibilities, in *Tarefa I* the ironing of clothes on a body by a second, black-skinned woman offers the possibility of a reverse in power relations. The setting where *Tarefa I* unfolds and the alteration in the ironing task (that of ironing a woman's body and not only her overalls) gives reclaimed agency to the Afro-Brazilian woman. These actions take place in the innermost room of the house, a laundry room identified by the basin

towards the right of the screen and traditionally inhabited primarily, in Latin American households, by a domestic worker. Parente, who could have been raised in the company of a *mãe preta* and who raised her five children with the help of one or two maids, must have been familiar with these spatial, social divisions, yet foreign, in her adult life, to this section of the house. Prostrating herself on the ironing table, Parente recognizes the agency of the Afro-Brazilian woman, whose individual identity we do not know but who controls—and can display through this video—the skillful completion of a task for which she, and only she, bears responsibility. The reclamation of her agency, and her public display of it, is nonetheless restricted to the domestic confines of the home and to a two-minute video exhibited for public view almost forty years after its creation in Parente's apartment in *Edifício Brasil*.

Seen through this lens, Parente's last, two-minute video makes a feminist statement about different ways of inhabiting the world as a woman with multiple individual, collective, and historical identities, and the complex—and sometimes contradictory—forms of female social interactions. These relations are expressed here through the otherwise unremarkable gesture of ironing overalls in the back room of a house not intended to be publicly seen but to be used daily by a skilled pair of black, female hands. At the time of recording *Tarefa I*, the full recognition of the two female-identified individuals, along with their unique social situations and racial conditions, was slowly entering the public debate under a governmental administration that started opening room for a diversity of political social movements but that was not yet ready to recognize the individual agency (political, social, and otherwise) of all Brazilian citizens.

5.5 Intersectional Feminisms in Brazil

Across her oeuvre, Parente's work acutely responds to the changing dynamics in Brazil's political situation during the *distensão* and *abertura* periods. In *Preparação II* and *Tarefa I*, she deployed both her scientific methodologies and the artistic strategies she had developed by using a video camera in interior spaces to bring special attention to the precarious situation of women. Beyond the realm of contemporary art, it was not until the 1990s that intersectional approaches began characterizing the most recent iterations of Brazilian feminism. Continuing into the twenty-first century, feminist movements in Brazil have comprehensively advocated for the recognition and respect of the human rights of non-binary-identified individuals, thoroughly considering the diversity of gender, race, class, and sexual identity disparities. Reflecting these changes, the term *enegrecendo o feminismo* (blackening feminism) describes the configurations of feminist movements and the transformations in their multiple advocacies. More importantly, blackening feminism also describes the incorporation of decolonial theories to the application of feminist models developed in diverse societies across the Global South. Today, feminism in Brazil is utilized in the plural form of the term—*feminismos* (feminisms)—linguistically implying the diversity of perspectives it encompasses, whose inclusive principles largely permeate the artistic production of contemporary Brazilian artists.

Parente's videos created between the late 1970s and the early 1980s give account of the awareness of social inequalities that would come to light following Brazil's dictatorship. *Preparação II* and *Tarefa I* point to the specifics of these transformations as they relate to the application of public health policies and the recognition and advocacy of women's rights. More importantly, these videos also represent a consolidation of Parente's new media art strategies—

evidenced both by her use of video and her artistic application of scientific methodologies—and the development of her approach to feminism. In filling out vaccination forms and recording two women's interactions, these videos address human relations as informed by an authoritarian regime and historical social structures. This same theme is further developed in Parente's works on mail art included in the 16th São Paulo Biennial. For this 1981 iteration of the Biennial, Parente tried to send herself (that is, her living body) through the postal system, thus making a statement, on an international stage, about the bureaucratic political system encompassing all aspects of life in Brazil. As analyzed in the next and final chapter of this dissertation, through the creation of mail artworks, Parente elaborated on her embodiment of new media art strategies as her final contribution to the history of art from Brazil.

6.0 Chapter Five: Posted Bodies

Following her return to video during the last phase of her artistic career, in 1981 Parente experimented with the new medium of mail art for inserting her work into the international artistic network that spread out of the São Paulo Biennial. Parente's participation in the 16th Biennial marked the culmination of her artistic career. Her participation represented the last major exhibition of her work, given the size and international prominence of this venue as well as the singular importance of this iteration of the Biennial. It also allowed Parente to create a work that synthesized several of the strategies that she developed throughout her career with the use of new image reproduction technologies. The key example of this synthesis is *Carimbo* (Stamp, 1981), the main work of mail art that Parente created for this exhibition, in which she video-recorded her manipulation of her own body in an effort to reproduce both her image in a distant locale and the bureaucratic journey that made this reproduction possible. This chapter examines *Carimbo* and *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* (Sky of Rio/Sky of Fortaleza, 1981) and analyzes Parente's artistic reflections on the impact of cultural institutions for the consolidation of contemporary art in Brazil at a time of a national return to democracy.

6.1 Mail Art at the 16th São Paulo Biennial

Mail art, an artistic medium developed internationally during the twentieth century and characterized by the use of the postal system as an intrinsic component for the creation of an artwork, had specific ramifications as it developed during Brazil's military dictatorship. Most

popular between the 1960s and the 1980s, the circulation of mail art reflected the political, social, and cultural world divisions of the Cold War.³⁰³ Artists deployed bureaucratic communication channels to circulate artistic content and circumvent social dynamics imposed by national regimes aligned with dichotomous political orders.³⁰⁴ As Zanna Gilbert notes, “These artists [in the international mail art network] aimed to disseminate their work beyond the strictures of juried exhibitions, salons, galleries, and institutions, without the censoring presence of curators and critics and in a long-distance exchange with like-minded artists.”³⁰⁵ In Latin American countries like Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, and Brazil, among others, mail art practices emerged as a direct response to local political situations of governmental censorship and repression. As noted by Mexican artist Ulises Carrión in his seminal essay “Mail Art and the Big Monster” (1978), and recently articulated by Gilbert, in the context of artmaking the postal service can be defined as “a vehicle of the State constricted by bureaucratic control and, in some contexts, direct censorship.”³⁰⁶ The bureaucratic control referred to by Carrión and mentioned by Gilbert as an abstract force sits at the core of Parente’s work on mail art exhibited at the Biennial.

³⁰³ See “Special Section: Artists’ Networks in Latin America and Eastern Europe,” *Art Margins* 1, 2–3 (June–October, 2012); Gilbert, “Art in Contact: The Mail Art Exchange of Paulo Bruscky and Robert Rehfeldt”; Klara Kemp-Welch and Cristina Freire, “Artists Networks in Latin America and Eastern Europe,” *Artmargins* (2012); and Christ, Hans D. and Iris Dressler, eds. *Subversive Practices: Art under Conditions of Political Repression, 60’s–80’s, South America, Europe* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2010. Exhibition catalog).

³⁰⁴ Walter Zanini points to the Futurism and Dada roots of mail art, Fluxus’s common practice with this medium, and its role in the “dematerialization” of the art object. Vanessa Davidson specifically mentions U.S. artist Ray Johnson as an early, major figures of mail art; in 1962 he created the “New York Correspondence School,” an artistic movement of correspondence artist. See Obrist, “Zanini,” 155; and Davidson, “Paulo Bruscky and Edgardo Antonio Vigo,” 33–37.

³⁰⁵ Zanna Gilbert, “Some Notes on Ulises Carrión’s Mail Art Systems,” *Ulises Carrión: The Big Monster* (New York: Institute for Studies in Latin American Art, 2019, exhibition catalogue), 18.

³⁰⁶ Gilbert, “Some Notes on Ulises Carrión’s Mail Art Systems,” 18.

Under the leadership of its general curator, Walter Zanini, the 16th São Paulo Biennial was neither structured by country nor was each national participation curated by the guest country, as had been done since its inception in 1951. Instead, it was organized thematically, and artists of all nationalities, Parente among them, were directly invited to participate by Zanini on behalf of the curatorial team.³⁰⁷ The exhibition was divided into three thematically organized nuclei (*núcleos*). Parente participated in “Núcleo I–Arte Postal,” comprised solely of works sent through the postal system by contemporary artists from around the world. This first and largest nucleus was subdivided by media and organized around the works’ aesthetic characteristics or, in Zanini’s terms, “analogias de linguagem” (language analogies).³⁰⁸

The invitation to participate in the 16th São Paulo Biennial brought the *abertura* (opening), the last political period of Brazil’s dictatorship, into the galleries of the Pavilhão da Bienal (the Biennial Pavilion). This curatorial strategy imitated democratic channels by fostering relations among artists and promoting open communication—primarily facilitated by mail as an artistic medium—between the Biennial and the participating artists; Zanini synthesized this curatorial concept by referring to it as “museum as a forum versus museum as temple.”³⁰⁹ This Biennial was one of the first exhibition in Brazil to openly promote democratic processes. In aligning international artistic and political currents with curatorial strategies newly implemented in Brazil specifically for the display of mail art, Zanini structured a decisively political agenda that

³⁰⁷ The curatorial team is fully listed in *XVI Bienal de São Paulo, Catálogo Geral* (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1981), 9.

³⁰⁸ *XVI Bienal de São Paulo, Outubro-Dezembro 1981: Volume II Catálogo de Arte Postal* (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1981), n.p.

³⁰⁹ See Walter Zanini, “Novo comportamento do museu de arte contemporânea” in *Colóquio*, 20, 2, 16 (1974): 70–71; and Hans Ulrich Obrist, “Walter Zanini,” *A Brief History of Curating*, ed. Lionel Bovier, (Zurich: JRP/Ringier; Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2008), 148–66.

physically opened spaces for expressions of dissent. Prioritizing the medium of mail art, Zanini presented the Biennial as a site of encounter to promote the convergence of networks of artworks, people, and ideas, and the effective connection of artists who were physically dispersed around the globe.

Acting from São Paulo and addressing hundreds of international artists as his direct correspondents, Zanini sought to reverse the private—and usually clandestine—developments of mail art by facilitating the Biennial as addressee and the Pavilhão da Bienal as its exhibition space. The invitation to the “Núcleo I–Arte Postal” publicly reinforced the networking potential of this medium by emphasizing the constant mobility and exchange of information that defines it.³¹⁰ The multi-directional relations fostered by this iteration of the Biennial, based on the political concept of democracy, were explicitly put forward in “Núcleo I–Arte Postal” and visualized in the two works with which Parente participated in it, *Carimbo* and *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza*.

Parente brought her artistic career to a conclusion in this public sphere, synecdochally representing her artistic practice with two newly created artworks and three photographs that had previously appeared in the MAM–RJ’s brochure for *Medida*. She did so in response to the Biennial’s invitation asking her and other 130 artists within and outside Brazil to “send works (graphic production, recorded music, videotapes, photographs, etc.). Enclose your own photograph in your work environment or your archive.”³¹¹ The photographs are reproduced in the nucleus

³¹⁰ “It cannot be denied the relevance to publicly promote this new art system created for the intercommunication of artists.” [“É inegável a importância de se dar melhor a conhecer ao público esse novo sistema de arte criado para a intercomunicação dos artistas.”] Zanini, “Arte Postal, Convite,” 19.

³¹¹ “Envie trabalho (produção gráfica, registros musicais, video-K7, fotografias, etc.). Anexe foto sua junto ao seu ambiente de trabalho, ou de seus arquivos.” Walter Zanini, “Arte Postal, Convite,” April 8, 1981, reproduced in *Catálogo de Arte Postal*, 19. Zanini’s invitation may refer specifically to mail art archives, famously built by artists at the time. By translating ‘ambiente de trabalho’ as ‘workspace,’ I deliberately take distance of the traditional use of the word ‘studio’ (ateliê, in Portuguese) as the natural environment for artist. The original terms of the call for artists and my translation reflect the rejection of studios by Brazilian contemporary artists working in the 1970s. For a

catalog and printed in black and white on one quarter of a page. [Fig. 77] As requested in the invitation, they show Parente's laboring hands actively creating her work in a staged laboratory—her “work environment.”³¹² However, here *Medida* was presented as decontextualized documentation of Parente's oeuvre, turning it into an easily overlooked enigma.³¹³

The two works that Parente produced for the Biennial, *Carimbo* and *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza*, thoroughly engage with the postal system and serve as artistic testimonies of the bureaucratic restrictions and the geopolitical situation of Brazil. Her artistic deployment of the mail system allowed Parente to reveal the authoritarian structures of power resulting from the specifics of Brazil's dictatorial state. At a time when the political landscape anticipated a return to democracy, Parente used this public system as an artistic strategy to evidence the possibilities and limitations for the exercise of individual agency in regimented social structures.

Parente's adoption of specific mail art practices during a period of political transition and with the intention to include her work in the international, forward-thinking venue of the 16th São Paulo Biennial has remained historically overlooked. Her entry in the “Núcleo I–Arte Postal” exhibition catalogue does not reference Parente's mail art practices, leaving unpublished her work in this medium. *Carimbo* and *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* have gone unnoticed beyond the exhibition space of the Biennial and the confines of the archival storage where these works are currently filed. Thoroughly considering them within Parente's oeuvre reveals the purposeful

deeper discussion on this subject, see Brodbeck, “Parallel Situations: Artur Barrio, Brazilian Art, and International Exchange in the Post-Studio Era (1964-1974).”

³¹² The composition of these pages of the catalogue recalls the graphic design of publications accompanying the mail art exhibitions discussed in chapter two, *Prospectiva 74* and *Poéticas Visuais* at MAC USP, and *Multimedia Internacional* (International Multimedia, 1979), at the Escola de Comunicações e Artes (School of Arts and Communications, ECA) at Universidade de São Paulo.

³¹³ *XVI Bienal de São Paulo, Outubro-Dezembro 1981: Volume II Catálogo de Arte Postal* (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1981), n.p.

culmination of her artistic career and the command she had over her personal commitments and public persona and over the engagement of her artworks with public discourses.

6.2 *Carimbo*: The Body as a Communication Vehicle

Carimbo is a work of mail art from 1981, composed of a video recording delivered through the postal system in which Parente subjects her body to bureaucratic mandates and physical restrictions applied by military administrators: for it, Parente intended to ship her body to the Biennial using the national postal system. This work is a plea for the implementation of democratic relations in a country politically committed to transitioning from a military to a civil state, yet firmly coercing its citizens through the constant implementation of apparently innocuous bureaucratic procedures. *Carimbo* reveals how the state—embodied by the mail system—acted as a constricting organ against anonymous citizens. In *Carimbo*, Parente deliberately cultivated her artistic insertion into the Biennial’s “Núcleo I–Arte Postal” by seeking to establish in her work a dialogue between herself (a middle-class white woman from northeastern Brazil) and hegemonic social structures publicly represented by institutions and anonymous individuals.

Carimbo was originally conceived to be created in its passage through the postal system and as Parente’s contribution to a site of critical engagement, as the 16th Biennial was conceived. However, the content of the mailed package was not originally envisioned as a flat envelope. For this mail artwork, Parente intended to physically subject herself to the standard procedures for the transit of mail as a strategy that would emphasize the physical presence of individuals participating in a communication exchange. It would also make visible the institutional regulations of those

communications. In addition to employing the mail system, her shipping would also be recorded on video.

However, the bureaucratic regulations of the postal system prevented Parente's body from being shipped. The resulting *Carimbo*, a mailed videotape rather than a mailed living body, records Parente's accounts of the various actions required to deliver the body of the artist to the Biennial. [Fig. 78–80] Merging video recorded gestures and mail art as a strategy to evidence artistic and administrative structures, the five-minute, color video *Carimbo* is a palimpsest of Parente's original idea, her creative process, and the arrival of this mail artwork to the Biennial.

Carimbo was recorded in the privacy of Parente's home, and again in the offices of the Biennial.³¹⁴ The preserved copy of *Carimbo* shows the reproduction of a videotape featuring the manipulation of the artist's body. While in her videos from the 1970s Parente's body was at the center of the compositions, in *Carimbo* her body is removed from the recorded space and only seen on a recorded TV monitor. The content of *Carimbo*, a video about a video, is framed by the actions of an anonymous young man in the Biennial's office in Parque Ibirapuera. During the first thirty seconds, we see the young man entering a room with a videotape in his hand. Resolutely, he approaches a TV and video-player set on a table; above the monitor attached to the wall is the "16 Bienal de São Paulo" poster. [Fig. 81] He unboxes and plays the cassette. Presumably a Biennial employee, his actions give way to Parente's: The camera zooms in and brings into focus Parente's voice and frontal profile. The entire duration of the video features different zoom-lengths of the

³¹⁴ Because of the visual composition of this work, two videocassettes should have been recorded, one in Parente's domestic space and one at the Biennial. Only the latter, recently digitized, has been recovered to date.

TV monitor and Parente's recorded and mailed gestures. Parente's unfolding actions combine an oral narrative, the display and manipulation of her face, and the mailing process of this work.

Throughout this video, the artist describes the creation of *Carimbo* while her actions differentiate the past and present stages of her creative process. In the first half of the video, Parente faces the camera while an anonymous hand writes on her cheeks the postal address of the Biennial. [Fig. 78–80] While her face is being labeled, she describes how she intended to stamp and send her body through the mail system but the postal bureaucracy prevented the completion of her artistic actions. Without interrupting her narrative, in the second part of the video Parente addresses an envelope with her printed portrait to the Biennial's "Núcleo I–Arte Postal." Now heard as a voice-over, she continues describing the alternative and definitive solution of mailing this video recording to the Biennial in lieu of her own body. [Fig. 82–83] The camera then zooms out, bringing us back to the Biennial's office where the young man returns to stop the video and eject the videotape from the player before leaving the scene. Beyond the obvious barriers that prevented Parente from completing her otherwise humorous intention to mail her living body through the national postal system, *Carimbo* evidences the restrictions imposed on and possibilities offered by the mail system for artmaking processes.

Although the general traits of Parente's story are clear in her speech, details are lost in the quality of the audio recording of this video within a video. The specifics of the process (and obstacles for) the creation of *Carimbo* can nonetheless be traced in a handwritten, undated script penned by Parente and kept in her personal archive.³¹⁵ As Parente recounts, she originally

³¹⁵ See Letícia Parente, "Esta ação de endereçamento devia ter sido feita numa agencia de correio," Letícia Parente personal archive, n.p.

approached a post office in São Paulo looking to be stamped on her body and shipped within the city. Because of the extravagance of her request, clerks in the post office refused to stamp her body and to treat her as a shipping package, and called in the general director. Contacted by phone, General Director Colonel Oiana [no first name] refused any authorization. Then, Parente approached a second post office, identified in her notes as “Diretor de Correio, Jaguaré,” where Colonel Oiana might have had his office. In this second location, clerks initially refused Parente’s request for stamping her body and recording her actions, and even refused to call in the general director, despite being close to his office. Upon insisting, Parente was finally able to speak with an assistant to the director, presumably also a member of the military, who eventually relayed Parente’s request. It was only upon direct contact with this assistant and through a lively conversation about the importance of the mail system as a communication channel and its direct contribution to the São Paulo Biennial that the assistant agreed to intervene on her behalf. After waiting for the message to be delivered, Parente finally received the director’s authorization to be officially stamped on her body (yet not shipped) and to video-record the clerk stamping her in the premises of the postal office. Parente was required specifically to conduct her actions at the Central Post Office on Avenida São João in downtown São Paulo with the designated collaboration of Sr. Alúcio [no last name], the only post office employee authorized for this task.

As noted by Parente, contact with Colonel Oiana was possible only upon demonstrating the official character of Parente’s actions: his permit was issued by presenting the invitation to the Biennial’s “Núcleo I–Arte Postal” and upon discussing the potential contribution of the postal service to an international venue. Colonel Oiana’s permit was contingent on the official character of the invitation that triggered Parente’s work and framed it within a larger, institutional cultural sphere. His decision, however, contrasted with the overpowering censorship that the same military

structure widely applied to communication media outlets, most prominently during Brazil's *anos de chumbo* (leaden years).³¹⁶ When compared with artworks created the same year under neighboring South American dictatorial regimes, Colonel Oiana's collaboration recalls instances, like CADA's *¡Ay Sudamérica!* (Ay, South America!, 1981), in which official approval has been interpreted as a lack of comprehension by military authorities of the images and actions presented.³¹⁷ Oiana's comprehension of Parente's proposal, however, cannot be taken lightly. Ultimately, his permission did not precipitate the completion of *Carimbo*, but further evolved into an arduous navigation of a bureaucratic system that constantly reaffirmed the full control of governmental actors over the actions of individual citizens.

As recounted by Parente, after arriving to the Central Post Office on the date and time agreed by Oiana, Sr. Aluísio was not on duty and no other clerk had been informed of the permission granted to Parente. The service of stamping her while recording their actions was thus denied. Additional efforts to contact General Director Colonel Oiana from the Central Post Office were futile. His assistant, Parente's point person, could not be reached either because, according to his secretary, he was on leave for the day and nobody else could confirm the previous authorization to Parente's request.

Colonel Oiana's authorization opened the door to substitute, using creative and experimental actions, the regulated processes intended to track the public transit of all written communications within the country. In sum, what Parente obtained from the military postal director, which could not have been provided by any front-desk clerk, was permission for the post

³¹⁶ For a detailed analysis of the media censorship implemented by the AI-5, see Shtromberg, Chapter two "Newspapers," *Art Systems*, 42–90; and Carlman, *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship*.

³¹⁷ Molly Moog, "CADA: A Revolutionary Practice," in *ICAA Documents Project Working Papers* 3 (2013), 17.

office employees to perform an inventive and collaborative action liberated from any pre-established assignments and sequential commands. To authorize the creation of *Carimbo* was to allow an anonymous civilian (and a woman) to interfere in the hegemonic administration of a national institution. Furthermore, the resulting disrupted routines of public employees were not only to be witnessed by those in the postal office but also recorded for future exhibition on the international stage that the Biennial represented. Due to the limitations imposed by the clerks and authorities of the postal office, *Carimbo* resulted in a documentation of its own production outside of the postal infrastructure.

In response to bureaucratic restrictions, Parente turned to video and to more standardized mail art procedures to give account of the arbitrary obstacles that informed her production of *Carimbo*. The audiovisual record of Parente stamping herself and recounting *Carimbo*'s journey situates this work in dialogue with the work of artists in and outside Brazil who reflected not only on their artmaking process—like Robert Morris's *Box with the Sound of its Own Making* (1961)—but who also used their own bodies as a vehicle to express these reflections including, among others, Antonio Manuel, Paulo Bruscky, Anna Maria Maiolino, Adrian Piper, and Joan Jonas. *Carimbo*, a reflection on social systems imposed and maintained over all Brazil, reveals the bureaucratic structures that informed it and that, in larger proportions, were used as a governmental strategy to condition the slow pace of Brazil's political transition to a democratic government.

Through the combination of the artist's narrative and the autonomous manipulation of the body, this video of a video demonstrates how the creative process of an artwork is situated in a specific political context: *Carimbo* evidences the political value of mail art practices in the Brazilian context of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Surpassing the postal service's institutional limitations, the multiple journeys that *Carimbo* displays—its creation in Parente's home, its

shipment through the postal system, and its completion in the Biennial's office—reveal the contradictory social and political experiences of a country transitioning from a highly repressive regime to a free, democratic state.

6.3 Embodying the Postal System

In *Carimbo*, Parente embodies the subtle yet constant presence of the state in the life of its citizens both in her living body and in a still rendition of her face. A pixelated, computer-generated frontal portrait of Parente with the Biennial's address written on her face, printed on the envelope used for this mail artwork, announces the content of *Carimbo*. [Fig. 84] This image frames a minimum portion of her shoulders, her neck and abundant hair, and prominently features her face: forehead, eyes, cheeks, nose, mouth, and chin. Parente's portrait—the standardized visual identification of an individual—is imprinted onto a white sheet of paper, intervened by the marks of its public circulation and ultimate delivery to the Biennial. These include the Biennial's address, written by Parente over her own face, and stamps and seals posted in Rio de Janeiro and dated August 1, 1981, which call attention to her eyebrows, temple, and left cheek.

A comparison between *Carimbo* and *Don't Touch*, Parente's two portraits generated by new image reproduction technologies, reveals how the treatment of her body unfolded throughout her oeuvre. The different media of these two portraits created five years apart produced diverging presentations of Parente's body and work. By directly pressing her face onto the glass surface of the photocopy machine and producing the single image of *Don't Touch*, Parente reaffirmed her agency by maintaining control of her immediate physical space. For *Carimbo*, in contrast, her portrait offers the enlarged, digital rendition of a passport-size photograph, an image purposefully

created for individual identification and to be officially circulated internationally for bureaucratic processes. While *Don't Touch* is a visual statement about a gendered desire to remain at a certain distance from her audience and to be physically removed from the contact and manipulation of others, *Carimbo*'s envelope is a digital reproduction of Parente's body explicitly created to traverse public information channels invested with the power to either restrict or stimulate democratic communications.

The artmaking process and technological reproduction of Parente's image in *Carimbo*'s envelope contrasts with *Don't Touch*, in that *Carimbo*'s envelope does not stand as a synecdoche of Parente's body, but only as an image for her public identification. In other words, when Parente wrote the Biennial's address on the envelope with her portrait and recorded herself doing so, the printed image of her body had already been removed from her living body. It had been turned into an object that would traverse the convoluted paths of an arbitrary bureaucratic system, bringing a public sample of Parente's body into a network of communication channels. While the representation of a person in a distant location is put forward by Gilbert in relation to Bruscky's mail artwork, *Carimbo*'s envelope does not re-present Parente at the Biennial but rather stands for the journey of a fragmented image of her body through the postal system.³¹⁸

The video-recorded inscription on Parente's body, along with her pixelated frontal image accompanying the shipment of the video cassette, stands for Parente's embodiment of the mail and the art systems alike. By creating *Carimbo* specifically for its exhibition at the São Paulo Biennial—an event that since its inception has sought to build bridges between Brazilian and international artistic currents—Parente articulated her purposeful participation in a global, contemporary art

³¹⁸ Gilbert, "The Human Letter: Mail Art Exchanges between East Berlin and Northeast Brazil, in the 1970s."

world circuit. Addressing an image of herself to the 16th São Paulo Biennial, Parente actively addressed this international-reaching institution as her mail art correspondent, and indicated with her gesture how a global artistic insertion, like a political transformation, can only emerge from the local enunciation that individual citizens choose to embody.

6.4 Mail Art in Brazil's 'Opening'

The significance of the 1981 Biennial has been attributed to the re-awakening it brought to the Brazilian art scene. Art historian Isobel Whitelegg states that from an international perspective, 1970s Brazil represented a “hole in knowledge” that had resulted from a perceived “cultural void” in which artists living and working in Brazil constituted an “intimate circle.”³¹⁹ The definition of “cultural void” was originally provided by Brazilian journalist Zuenir Ventura who, in 1971, denounced the rapid decline of Brazil’s cultural engagement and promotion as a direct consequence of the recent application of AI-5.³²⁰ Retrospectively, Whitelegg attributed this situation to the obscuring effects of the decade-long boycott of the Biennial, to the exile of artists and critics (prominently Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark, and Mário Pedrosa), and to a lack of systematic documentation of ephemeral artworks.³²¹ However, significant contemporary artistic production took place during these years, as is the case of Parente and the generation of artists that

³¹⁹ Whitelegg, “The Bienal de São Paulo: Unseen/Undone (1969-1981),” 108. Whitelegg proceeds to offer individual examples of Brazilian artists who developed complex artworks under the auspices of MAC USP and the Biennial.

³²⁰ See Zuenir Ventura, “O vazio cultural” [*Visão* 1971] reprinted in Elio Gaspari, Zuenir Ventura, and Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda, *70/80 cultura em trânsito: da repressão à abertura* (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano Editora, 2000).

³²¹ Isobel Whitelegg, “The Bienal Internacional de São Paulo: A Concise History, 1951–2014,” *Perspective: Actualité en Histoire de l'Art* 2 (2013): 380–386.

Claudia Calirman and Elena Shtromberg address in their books *Art Under Dictatorship* and *Art Systems*, respectively. For Shtromberg, the artistic production of 1970s Brazil represents “one of the most important epistemological shifts in art, the transition of the artwork from its object status to a set of experiences shaped by everyday social systems.”³²² Contributing to the analysis of these experiences, I approach Parente’s mail artworks and the 16th São Paulo Biennial’s “Núcleo I–Arte Postal,” the major exhibition of mail art in Brazil, as prime evidence of artistic strategies that sought both to revive public international networks and to accelerate the return to a democratic state.

In addition to bypassing censorship regulations, mail art practices in Brazil effectively succeeded in connecting small cities with international centers of artmaking, thus defying hegemonic notions of center and periphery. This practice was comprised of two main geographical poles—Recife, in the northeast, and São Paulo, in the south—with a variety of political implications. In Recife, artists like Bruscky and Daniel Santiago collaborated with international artists via postal correspondence.³²³ In São Paulo, mail art networks were actively created by artists Julio Plaza (Madrid, Spain, 1938–2003) and Brazilian Regina Silveira (Porto Alegre, b. 1939), who popularized this medium among artists based in southern Brazil.³²⁴ Plaza and Silveira were faculty members at USP and their professional proximity with Zanini allowed for recurrent collaborations with MAC USP. These collaborations opened room for the institutional exhibition

³²² Shtromberg, *Art Systems*, 5.

³²³ As a prominent example, the practice developed by Paulo Bruscky and Daniel Santiago brought to the art map the northeaster city of Recife by notoriously extending their artistic networks of correspondence to Poland and beyond. See Paulo Bruscky, Antonio Sergio Best, and Vanessa Davidson, *Art is our Last Hope: Paulo Bruscky* (New York: Bronx Museum; Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 2014. Exhibition catalogue).

³²⁴ Plaza and Silveira created a large, intergenerational network of collaborators and initiated a local network of mail art through their collective series *On/Off* (1973–74). See *Arte novos memos/multimeios*, 307–310 and 319–323; and Aldana, “The Artists Who Copied,” 48.

of mail art starting in 1974, specifically in the exhibitions *Prospectiva 74* (1974) and *Poéticas visuais* (1977), two instances that anticipated the Biennial's exhibition of mail art.

These curatorial projects paved the way to conceive the “Núcleo I–Arte Postal” as a site of encounter. Mail art, popularly adopted during the slow-paced political transition, imitated equal social relations through the unrestricted use of a public communications channel. It promoted open dialogues, contested hegemonic structures and defied institutional regulations, while arguing for the need to experiment with and actively participate in an international public sphere. The institutional exhibition of these otherwise private correspondences (a phenomenon almost exclusive to Brazil) publicly displayed works that overcame governmental restrictions and promoted public participation. The institutionalization of mail art in Brazil thus challenged authoritarian relations of power and reflected the *distensão* and *abertura* phases of the dictatorship. The 16th São Paulo Biennial adopted mail art as a contemporary artistic medium that transformed this exhibition venue into a global contact zone. Beyond a curatorial strategy, the dialogues carried out through the postal delivery of artworks, like the two works and three photographs sent by Parente, reclaimed open communicational channels as an artistic practice and constituted a push for democracy.

6.5 Curating Contemporary Art at the São Paulo Biennial

The changing political climate of *distensão* and *abertura* was reflected in the 16th São Paulo Biennial's adoption of a curatorial model deemed innovative for biennial structures. Since its inauguration in 1951 and until 1981, the Biennial reunited every other year the most representative production of modern and contemporary art from invited countries. Occasionally,

the Biennial named an artistic director to oversee its artistic organization.³²⁵ In 1981, however, the São Paulo Biennial dismantled for the first time the diplomatic (and hence governmentally aligned) processes surrounding this artistic event, a paradigmatic change that detached singular artworks from the artists' national identifications.³²⁶

This representational shift made it possible to bring together large selections of individual artworks under thematically structured networks, moving away from the synthetic display of the art produced during short timeframes in specific geographical regions. Instead, it accentuated art's capacity to produce new knowledge about a globalized world, and promoted Brazil's active participation in this mutually enriching dialogue.³²⁷ These structural changes, solidified by the nascent figure of the curator embodied by Zanini, also brought to the center of curatorial considerations the display of experimental media, as evidenced in Parente's artistic journey.

³²⁵ This was the case of critic Mário Pedrosa, who took this position in 1953 and then again in 1961 when he aimed to present through specific curatorial selections a global history of modern art. See Adele Nelson, "Radical and Inclusive: Mário Pedrosa's Modernism," in *Mário Pedrosa: Primary Documents*, ed. Glória Ferreria and Paulo Herkenhoff (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2015), 35–42.

³²⁶ The relations between Brazil's government and the Biennial were determined by the public funding the exhibition received. See Calirman, *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship*; and Whitelegg, "The Bienal de São Paulo: Unseen/Undone (1969–1981)."

³²⁷ The intellectual, rather than diplomatic labor that this organization entailed set in motion the recognition of the figure of the curator within the Brazilian art world. See Francisco Alambert and Polyana Canhête, *Bienais de São Paulo: da era do Museu à era dos curadores* (São Paulo: Boitempo Editorial, 2004); Cristiana Tejo, "On Limits and Experimentations: Walter Zanini and the Invention of the Curatorial Field in Brazil," in *Terremoto* 4, (2015), <https://terremoto.mx/article/walter-zanini/>, accessed January 18, 2020; and Isis Baldini et al., "Walter Zanini e a formação de um sistema de arte no Brasil," in *Estudos Avançados* 32, 93 (2018): 307–29. Beyond Brazil, the quinquennial exhibition *Documenta*, in Kassel, Germany, has played a prominent role for the consolidation of the figure of curator. See Hans-Joachim Müller, *Harald Szeemann: Exhibition Maker* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz; Maidstone: Amalgamated Book Services, 2006); and Okwui Enwezor, ed., *Democracy Unrealized: Documenta 11* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002). For historiographic considerations on the figure of the curator, see Terry Smith, "Abstraction and Ideology: Contestation in Cold War Art Criticism" in *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, ed. Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes (Munich and New York: Haus der Kunst, Prestel, 2016, exhibition catalogue), 238–244; and Hans Ulrich Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating*, ed. Lionel Bovier, (Zurich: JRP/Ringier; Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2008).

To a large extent, the radical changes in the Biennial's structure—with historical repercussions for the local art world and for a comprehensive, global understanding of contemporary art—can be explained as an institutional response to the deteriorated popularity of the Biennial. Starting in 1969, national and international artists refused to participate in the São Paulo Biennial by forming a boycott that would last over ten years.³²⁸ These artists alleged that Biennial organizers leaned towards the military administration with the shameful result of internationally presenting this venue as a façade for the constant human rights violations committed in the country. Since the boycott made evident the implied diplomatic powers of the Biennial organizers and their closeness with the government, administrative reforms would provide a solution for improving the Biennial's image and popularity. It took more than a decade, however, for a structural change to see the light: Following the boycott, an incipient diversion from the Biennial's national organization was initially discussed in the early 1970s, yet it was only concretized in the 1981 Biennial.

In 1973, the Biennial implemented an incipient reform as a countermeasure against the boycott and its subsequent detrimental perception. For that year's 12th São Paulo Biennial, a thematic section titled “Arte e comunicação” (Art and communication) was created as a space where the ideas of international artists took preeminence over national symbolic representations. This thematic section was originally designed to promote a fluid communication between different actors (artists, critics, audience, etc.) that otherwise would not take place in an exhibition space. An early description of the “Arte e comunicação” section asserts that “The São Paulo Biennial

³²⁸ On the 1969 boycott and its long-lasting effects, see Calirman, “Non à la Biennale de São Paulo” and “Appendix 1. Dossier ‘Non à la Biennale de São Paulo’,” in *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship*, 10–36; Whitelegg, “The Bienal Internacional de São Paulo: A Concise History, 1951–2014”; and Whitelegg, “The Bienal de São Paulo: Unseen/Undone (1969–1981).”

would not be a mere receptacle (...) it will work as a big laboratory.”³²⁹ Its description as a laboratory was not equivalent to Parente’s scientifically applied methodology, but rather emerged from the curatorial experimentation behind its design and reflected the experimental nature of the featured communication channels like audiovisual, music, and video. This section’s curatorial conception anticipated for eight years what has been historically understood as a new phase of the Biennial, when the stigma imprinted by the 1969 boycott was finally lifted.

In addition to the appointment of a one-time curator, its thematic configuration and the exhibition of art in new media were remarkable aspects of “Arte e comunicação” that anticipated the 1981 curatorial model. Vilém Flusser (1920–1991), who was based in São Paulo between 1940–1972 and was active amongst the city’s intelligentsia, acted as the de facto curator of “Arte e comunicação.”³³⁰ For this section of the Biennial, ‘communications’ were understood as a fabric of global networks best manifested through technological devices as articulated by Canadian media scholar Marshall McLuhan; the aesthetic application of McLuhan’s ideas was the conceptual backbone of “Arte e comunicação.”³³¹ Specifically, Flusser envisaged the inclusion of

³²⁹ “A Bial de São Paulo não seria um mero receptáculo (...) a Bial funcionará como um gran laboratorio.” “XII Bial de São Paulo terá uma nova imagen,” n.d. File E-12, Box 502-1, Acervo Wanda Svevo, Fundação Bial de São Paulo.

³³⁰ At the time of its opening, however, the Biennial and Flusser had already severed ties. Whereas in 1972 Flusser led, by appointment, the board that envisaged, promoted, and implemented the curated section “Arte e comunicação,” the responsibilities he undertook in the months leading to the 12th São Paulo Biennial exceeded the Biennial’s vision for Flusser’s position. In result, the Biennial dismissed Flusser from the artistic and otherwise organization of “Arte e comunicação.” See Vilem Flusser to Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho, Geneva, August 7; Geneva, September 7 and 22; Merano, November 4 and 8; Lausanne, November 6, 1972; Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho to Vilem Flusser, São Paulo, October 26 and December 26, 1972; and [illegible] to Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho, Paris, September 9 and 26, 1972, File E-12-11-10, Boxes 505-4 and 511-1, Acervo Wanda Svevo, Fundação Bial de São Paulo.

³³¹ The internal document “Temas da XII Bial de São Paulo” (Themes of the 12th São Paulo Biennial) explicitly references this theoretical base; under the rubric “Comunicação e happenings,” the first description reads “experiencias comunicológicas tendo como base o laboratório de McLuhan” (“communication experiences based on McLuhan’s laboratory”). File E-12, Box 502-5, Acervo Wanda Svevo, Fundação Bial de São Paulo. More broadly, the relation between art and communication was simultaneously being developed in the U.S. as “art systems” and in Argentina as “arte de sistemas.”

artworks produced by a range of international artists relying on media communication systems and new media supports, and integrating the audience as an active participant in the exhibition.³³² This curatorial vision profoundly affected contemporary art in Brazil since works on video were presented for the first time as part of the Biennial's special section under Flusser's conceptual guidance, thus integrating new media into an institutionalized history of art from Brazil.³³³ The 1973 promotion of multiple dialogues carried out through the creation of artworks in new media was echoed in the 1981 iteration of the Biennial. By envisaging the exhibition space as a place for the promotion of multiple dialogues and ultimately a site of encounter (the museum as forum, in Zanini's terms), the curatorial design for the 16th Biennial followed Flusser's footsteps.³³⁴ Reinforcing the creation of networks of artists, critics, and curators formed in 1970s Brazil as a strategy to overcome an authoritarian regime, and closing the circle of Parente's artistic practices, it should not come as a surprise that Flusser's advocacy for this medium at the São Paulo Biennial indirectly resulted in the exhibition in Rio of Parente's 1975 videos—which I analyze here through

³³² On Flusser's impact on the Biennial, see Vinícius Spricigo, "A exposição como médium: as bienais a partir das perspectivas teóricas abertas por Vilém Flusser," *Periódico Permanente* 2, 1 (2013), accessed June 5, 2019, <http://www.forumpermanente.org/revista/numero-1/discussao-bissexta/vinicius-spricigo/contribuicoes-para-uma-reflexao-critica-sobre-a-bienal-de-sao-paulo-no-contexto-da-globalizacao-cultural>; and Verena Carla Pereira and José Eduardo Ribeiro de Paiva, "As tentativas de reformulação das Bienais de São Paulo e a participação de Vilém Flusser," presented at the *XX Congresso de Ciências da Comunicação na Região Sudeste*, Uberlândia, MG, on June 19–21, 2015, <http://www.portalintercom.org.br/anais/sudeste2015/resumos/R48-0494-1.pdf>.

³³³ Recent articles on the early exhibition of video art at the São Paulo Biennial include Cássia Hosni, "O audiovisual na Bienal de São Paulo: reflexões sobre a 13ª edição," *Curaduria, cinema e outros modos de dar a ver*, org. Gabriel Menotti (Vitória: Edufes, 2018): 165–176; and Luise Boeno Malmaceda, "A videoarte na XII Bienal de São Paulo: institucionalização de um novo meio," *Escrita da história e (re)construção das memórias: arte e arquivo em debate*, org. Cristina Freire (São Paulo: MAC USP, 2016): 183–188. For an overview on the historiography of Brazilian video art, see Paulina Pardo Gaviria, "Lost Video Cassettes and Reused Magnetic Tapes: An Early History of Brazilian Video Art," presented at the University of Pittsburgh History of Art and Architecture colloquium on October 3, 2018, and as part of the panel "Omissions, Voids, and Absences: Art Historical Examination of Things Unseen," at the annual Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC) on October 19, 2018.

³³⁴ Three years before his appointment at the Biennial, Zanini publicly acknowledged Flusser's influence thought on his curatorial practice. See Carolina Amaral de Aguiar, "Videoarte no MAC USP: o suporte de ideias nos anos 1970" (M.A. Thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2007), 136.

Flusser's definition of gesture—and that, years later, Parente brought her artistic career to a conclusion in the São Paulo venue, this time under Zanini's curatorship.

6.6 *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza*

In response to Zanini's invitation to participate in the Biennial as a forum to create artistic networks divorced from authoritarian relations of power, Parente created a second, long-forgotten work of mail art that likewise gives testimony of the bureaucratic postal system with which it thoroughly engages. For *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* (Sky of Rio/Sky of Fortaleza, 1982), created in the transit between Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza, Parente sought to partake in the artistic circuits that have articulated the history of contemporary art in Brazil by exposing her personal relations with her daughter Lia. [Fig. 85] Titled in Parente's handwriting, this work on paper depicts color samples of the skies of Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza as they were registered during the 1981 southern winter, between May 28 and July 10. Comprising one side of the paper, the work is composed of two columns—titled “Céu do Rio” (Sky of Rio) and “Céu de Fortaleza” (Sky of Fortaleza)—of six rectangles each, for a total of twelve cells. The top eight, chronologically dated from top left to bottom right, are filled with different hues of painting ranging from gray to white to intense blue. [Fig. 86] In addition to the color of the sky in two Brazilian cities, this sheet of color samples also accounts for the distance between mother and daughter separated by thousands of kilometers and linked by the shared sky and a work of art repetitively mailed for over a month.³³⁵

³³⁵ The existence of *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* has only been recorded in this dissertation and in the archives of the Centro Cultural da Cidade de São Paulo (Cultural Center of the City of São Paulo, CCSP) where documentation of the forum envisaged by Zanini for the 16th Biennial is available today in CCSP's “XVI Bienal de São Paulo” collection. In addition to *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza*, this archival collection includes, among many others, works

By emphasizing Parente's and Lia's locations (Rio and Fortaleza, respectively) and the role played by the postal service, the recorded hues emerge as witness of daily life in opposite corners of Brazil as experienced by mother and daughter.

Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza evidences Parente's emphasis on their sites of enunciation: Rio, the country's cultural capital, and Fortaleza, the northeastern home to Parente's family and a peripheral city in the *sertão*, a region usually romanticized in Brazilian's imaginary. In a letter to the Biennial, Parente states that this work attests to the process of its creation and the pace with which Letícia and Lia Parente completed it before finally mailing it to the Biennial.³³⁶ Along with disclosing their geographic locations, the specifics of the medium of mail art reveals the social structures and institutions in which the artist, and by extension her daughter, are inscribed—family, citizenship, academia, and the art world, to name a few. While pointing to their interconnectedness, *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* juxtaposes specific geographic locations with social family relations and the global art world as a strategy to indicate the vastness of Brazil and its cultural diversity. This juxtaposition and the journey of people, artworks, and ideas that it implies, recalls the series *Casa*, and specifically the Xeroxed collage *Projeto de casa, planta de situação*, a previous instance in which Parente manipulated a sheet of paper in order to bring into the same image her familiar hometowns across Brazil (and the transits between one and the other, along with the separation of her family) and, in doing so, announce her unique place of enunciation. Simultaneously

by Mexicans Felipe Ehrenberg (1943–2017) and Lourdes Grobet (b. 1940); Colombian Jonier Marín (b. 1946–?); Uruguayan Clemente Padín (b. 1939); Argentinian León Ferrari (1920–2013); Brazilians Paulo Bruscky, Rafael França (1957–1991), and Hudinilson Jr.; Italian Mirella Bentivoglio (1922–2017); and French Fred Foster (b. 1933).

³³⁶ “The letter-content could not be fully filled as originally planned due to the delay of the carrier (postal service) given that we constantly used the mail-box at the end of the block and every time we did so it took some days for its arrival. / The colors of “skies” were painted the same day of sending the letter.” [“A carta conteúdo não pôde ser preenchida na totalidade prevista, pela própria demora do veículo portador (correio) desde que se utilizava a caixa da esquina da rua e retardava a chegada de alguns dias. / As cores dos “ceus” eram pintadas no dia da partida da carta.”] Parente to Núcleo I-Arte Postal, July 15, 1981.

addressing local situations and employing internationally used communication systems, *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* articulates the artistic identity that Parente developed over the previous years and that I have reconstructed in the previous chapters of this dissertation.

By creating a visual dialogue between mother and daughter, *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* directly responds to the extended dialogues promoted by the Biennial. *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza*'s recorded and mailed color samples give account of Parente's and Lia's exchange of recurrent visual perceptions and their dependence on a public system of circulation. Focusing on the local colors of a shared landscape, they obviated the contrasting geopolitical differences between Fortaleza, Rio de Janeiro, and the cosmopolitanism of São Paulo, yet systematically depended on a national communication system for bringing them onto the same page.

This mail artwork, created on a standard letter-size sheet, combines some of Parente's artistic obsessions: the symbolic representation of her immediate historical context; her geopolitical situation within Brazil's cultural and economic centers; and the deployment of precise, scientific observations as an artistic strategy. *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* is also an artistic representation of the innumerable personal letters exchanged between Parente and her sons and daughters.³³⁷ The geographical distance and loving closeness between her and her daughter, articulated as an artistic strategy, demonstrate Parente's multifaceted life and the specifics of her contribution to a robust national network of artists, critics, and curators that propelled her to conclude her artistic career on an international stage.

³³⁷ Usually, these letters open or close by declaring to each other "tenho saudade," which roughly translates as "I am melancholic," "I miss you," "I am nostalgic of being with you." Correspondencia Filhos 71/81 in Letícia Parente private archive.

One of Parente's main motivations for presenting both her registers of perceived natural daily changes and an embodied mail artwork at the Biennial was to actively participate in the conversations promoted by the institutionalized mail art circuit. In creating and mailing *Carimbo* and *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* for their exhibition at the Biennial, Parente demonstrated the control applied to individuals to regulate the mobility and exchange of their bodies and creative ideas, while explicitly inserting herself in national and international networks of contemporary art. Specifically informed by curatorial strategies implemented in São Paulo, Parente's mail art practice also reflects the slow processes of *abertura* that contextualized the conclusion of her artistic career and represent the structural, political inconformities that Parente sought to embody beginning with her first works on video, created over the span of a week within a nucleus of Rio-based artists.

7.0 Conclusion

For a period of seven years, between 1974 and 1982, in the wake of Brazil's dictatorial *anos de chumbo* and during the periods of *distensão* and *abertura*, Parente seized on new image reproduction technologies to develop an artistic practice that, based on the manipulation of her body, addressed multi-layered concerns about the public life of women in Brazil. Employing the newly-available media of video and Xerox, and through installation art, collage, and mail art, Parente embodied scientific methodologies as experimental artistic strategies to effectively express a woman's experience of Brazil's dictatorial regime (1964–1985). Through her artistic practice, developed while advancing a prominent career as a chemist and an educator, Parente critically inquired about patriarchal social structures and expressed her personal reflections about women's navigation of these structures in 1970s Brazil.

Parente's visceral reactions to this context suggest that the expression of governmentally imposed institutional and bureaucratic constrictions could only be expressed by embodying—that is, incorporating into and making visible with and on the body—violent and systematic methodologies as applied to apparently mundane actions. As evidenced in her works on video, collage, Xerox, installations, and mail art, the specifics of Brazil's military dictatorship exacerbated the social and political situations that conditioned the contemporary life of women. In sewing, taping, storing, cutting, copying, reproducing, measuring, imprinting, and shipping fragments of her body and recording herself doing so, Parente gives physical form to the effects that a patriarchal military administration has on the daily life of a woman.

The artistic strategies that Parente methodologically developed in new media unfold as a feminist challenge to the modernist concept of *antropofagia* (anthropophagy or cannibalism), according to which Brazilian artistic avant-gardes result from digesting (synthesizing through the body) both autochthonous and foreign cultures. The *Manifesto antropofago*, published in the 1920s, declared that antropofagia was a response to Brazil's colonial relations to European traditions and avant-garde proposals; in and after the 1960s, artists contemporary to Parente, including Anna Maria Maiolino, Hélio Oiticica, and Lygia Pape, among others, took a renewed interest in antropofagia, usually incorporating into singular works like *Glu, glu, glu* (Glu glu glu, 1966) and *O ovo* (The egg, 1967) manifestations of physical ingestion and re-birth.³³⁸ Recorded fifty years after the *Manifesto antropofago* was published, Parente's embodied art strategies do not devour a foreign culture, but rather incorporate—bring into the body—the authoritarian and generally violent forms of control applied by a military, dictatorial regime onto the individual bodies of Brazil's citizens and, more forcefully, onto its female citizens. By using her body as a communication vehicle, Parente records in her artworks the experiences of women in 1970s Brazil.

To date, and despite the recognition in Brazil of Parente's 1975 video *Marca registrada* and the incipient international incorporation of her work into narratives of contemporary art from the Americas—most prominently in three exhibitions of the Getty's 2017 Pacific Standard Time: Los Angeles/Latin America (PST: LA/LA) initiative—this dissertation is the first sustained analysis of Parente's oeuvre. As demonstrated through five thematically and chronologically

³³⁸ Antropofagia has been broadly adopted as a characteristic of art from Brazil since Paulo Herkenhoff, Parente's colleague in Geiger's group in Rio, curated the 24th São Paulo Biennial in 1998 (popularly known as the "anthropophagy Biennial") under the theme of contamination and historical and contemporary dialogues. See Paulo Herkenhoff and Adriano Pedrosa, ed., *XXIV Bienal de São Paulo: núcleo histórico: antropofagia e histórias de canibalismo*, exh. cat. (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1998).

organized chapters based on the media Parente used during her relatively short artistic career, her experimental artistic strategies propose an aesthetic application of her scientific knowledge and stem from her profound familiarity with Brazilian social, educational, and political systems. If Parente's professional engagement with inorganic chemistry brought her from the northeastern city of Fortaleza to metropolitan Rio de Janeiro, it was her personal commitment to artmaking processes that motivated her to relocate from the scientific laboratories of UFC to the MAM-RJ's Área Experimental, a landmark for modern and contemporary art in Brazil. Finally, it was Parente's intellectual interest in contributing to discourses of political dissent beyond the Rio de Janeiro context that propelled her to the international stage of the São Paulo Biennial. Tracing the development of Parente's artistic practice against the backdrop of Brazil's twenty-one-year military dictatorship demonstrates that the specifics of this social and political context provoked Parente, a chemist with little artistic training, to create an oeuvre that, in its comprehensive analysis, allows us to identify the robust networks of artists, critics, and curators that, amidst the slow transition towards a democratic state, facilitated a new era of openness and criticality.

Appendix A List of Images

Images have been redacted for copyright purposes.

Figure 1. Installation view of Letícia Parente, *Medida* (Measurement, 1976), in *Data (after)Lives: The Persistence of Encoded Identity*, reconstruction at the University of Pittsburgh, University Art Gallery, Pittsburgh, 2016. Courtesy of André Parente. Photo by Paulina Pardo Gaviria.

Figure 2. Two consecutive pages of Letícia Parente undated notebook. Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.

Figure 3. Letícia Parente, *Untitled*, 1971–73, monotype, 34 x 44 in. Collection of Lia Parente. Photo by Paulina Pardo Gaviria.

Figure 4. Letícia Parente, *Untitled*, 1971–73, monotype, 22 x 17 in. Letícia Parente private archive. Photo by Paulina Pardo Gaviria.

Figure 5. Letícia Parente, *Untitled*, 1971–73, monotype, 17 x 22 in. Letícia Parente private archive. Photo by Paulina Pardo Gaviria.

Figure 6. Letícia Parente, *Marca registrada* (Trademark), 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 10:56 minutes. Still image (9:57). “Letícia Parente—Marca Registrada (1975),” Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106529888>.

Figure 7. Sony, “Owner’s Instruction Manual: Videorecorder AV–3400” featuring open-reel tape. Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo.

Figure 8. Letícia Parente, *Marca registrada* (Trademark), 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 10:56 minutes. Still image (4:06). “Letícia Parente – Marca Registrada (1975),” Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106529888>.

Figure 9. Letícia Parente, *Marca registrada* (Trademark), 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 10:56 minutes. Still image (8:06). “Letícia Parente – Marca Registrada (1975),” Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106529888>.

Figure 10. Letícia Parente, *Marca registrada* (Trademark), 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 10:56 minutes. Still image (8:55). “Letícia Parente – Marca Registrada (1975),” Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106529888>.

Figure 11. Letícia Parente, *Marca registrada* (Trademark), 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 10:56 minutes. Still image (10:07). “Letícia Parente – Marca Registrada (1975),” Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106529888>.

- Figure 13. Vito Acconci, *Trademark*, 1970, photolithography with artist's handwritten descriptions of an event, 20 1/8 x 10 3/16 in. Collection of Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN.
- Figure 14. Antonio Caro, *Colombia Coca-Cola*, 1976, serigraphy, 23.5 x 34.4 cm. Collection of Banco de la República, Bogotá, Colombia.
- Figure 15. Cildo Meireles, *Interções em Circuitos Ideológicos: Projeto Coca-Cola* (Insertions into Ideological Circuits: Coca-Cola Project), 1970, three glass bottles, three metal caps, liquid and adhesive labels with text, 25 x 6 x 6 cm. Collection of Tate Gallery, London, UK.
- Figure 16. Affonso Eduardo Reidy, *Museu de Arte Moderna* (MAM RJ), 1967, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Exterior view from the pergola. Photo: Avery/GSAPP Architectural Plan and Sections Collection, Columbia University, New York. Image retrieved from http://library.artstor.org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/#/asset/AWSS35953_35953_34649492.
- Figure 17. Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM RJ) location in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. General view of downtown Rio (Centro and Santa Teresa neighborhoods) and the city's Zona Sul (South Zone, Botafogo, Flamengo, Copacabana, Ipanema, Lagoa, and Leblon neighborhoods). Detail of MAM RJ's location surrounded by Parque do Flamengo, Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, and Santos Dumont Airport. Source: Google Maps.
- Figure 18. *Video Art* featuring Vito Acconci and Sonia Andrade. *Video Art* exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1975), 8.
- Figure 19. Double-page spread of *Mostra de Arte Experimental de Filmes Super 8, Audio-Visual e Video-Tape* featuring Letícia Parente. *Mostra de Arte Experimental de Filmes Super 8, Audio-Visual e Video-Tape*, exh. cat. (Rio de Janeiro: Maison de France, 1975), n.p.
- Figure 20. Letícia Parente, *Preparação I* (Preparation I), 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 3:30 minutes. Still image (0:41). "Letícia Parente – Preparação I (1975)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2015, <https://vimeo.com/119148500>.
- Figure 21. Letícia Parente, *Preparação I* (Preparation I), 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 3:30 minutes. Still image (2:52). "Letícia Parente – Preparação I (1975)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2015, <https://vimeo.com/119148500>.
- Figure 22. Letícia Parente, *Preparação I* (Preparation I), 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 3:30 minutes. Still image (3:06). "Letícia Parente – Preparação I (1975)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2015, <https://vimeo.com/119148500>.
- Figures 23. Letícia Parente, *In*, 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 1:18 minutes. Still image (0:31). "Letícia Parente – In (1975)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2015, <https://vimeo.com/120480939>.

- Figure 24. Letícia Parente, *In*, 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 1:18 minutes. Still image (0:38). “Letícia Parente –In (1975),” Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2015, <https://vimeo.com/120480939>.
- Figure 25. Letícia Parente, *In*, 1975, Sony Portapak open-reel ½ in., b/w, 1:18 minutes. Still image (1:02). “Letícia Parente –In (1975),” Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2015, <https://vimeo.com/120480939>.
- Figure 26. Letícia Parente, *Auto-retrato* (Self-Portrait), 1975, slide presentation, 3:30 minutes. Three individual photographs that composed the ‘audiovisual.’ Photo: André Parente, *Eu armario de mim*, 2011, digital version of *Auto-retrato*.
- Figure 27. Two pages of Letícia Parente 1962 yearly planner handwritten by the artist and titled “Página feminina” (women’s page). Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.
- Figure 28. Letícia Parente, untitled (*Idas e vindas, voltas e revoltas* [Coming and going, turns and revolts/returning and flipping]), serie *Casa*, ca. 1975, Xerox and collage on paper. 11 x 8.5 in (27,9 x 21,5 cm.) Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.
- Figure 29. Letícia Parente, *Projeto de casa, planta de situação* (House project, situation plan), serie *Casa*, ca. 1975, Xerox and collage on paper. 11 x 8.5 in (27,9 x 21,5 cm.) Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.
- Figure 30. Letícia Parente, two double-page spread of personal cookbook notebook, n.d., collage on paper, A4 (approx.). Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.
- Figure 31. Letícia Parente, *S/Título* (U/Titled), serie *Mulheres*, 1974, Xerox and collage on paper, 13 x 8 ¼ in (33 x 21 cm.). Collection Museu de Arte Contemporânea Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo. Image courtesy of the artist estate and Galeria Jaqueline Martins.
- Figure 32. Anna Bella Geiger, *Diário de um artista brasileiro* (Diary of a Brazilian artist), 1975, Xerox on paper, [13 x 8 ¼ in (33 x 21 cm.)]. Photo: Fundação Vera Chavez Barcellos website, accessed August 31, 2019, http://fvcb.com.br/?attachment_id=5225.
- Figure 33. Installation view of *Poéticas visuais* (1977) featuring browsing table with works manipulated by the audience and television set for the scheduled exhibition of video art. Photo: Studio Um Produções Fotográficas, photographer, courtesy of Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Universidade de São Paulo.
- Figure 34. Letícia Parente, untitled (*Perucas* [Wigs]), serie *Mulheres*, ca. 1975, collage on paper, 12,4 x 8.5 in (31,5 x 21,5 cm.) Private Collection, São Paulo. Image courtesy of the artist estate and Galeria Jaqueline Martins.
- Figure 35. Letícia Parente, untitled (*Cirurgia* [Surgery]), serie *Mulheres*, ca. 1975, collage and thread on paper, 13 x 8,5 in (approx.). Private Collection, São Paulo. Image reproduced in

Letícia Parente: arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso, ed. André Parente and Katia Maciel, trans. Renato Rezende (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro; +2 Produções, 2011), 165.

Figure 36. Letícia Parente, untitled (*Saia* [Skirt]), serie *Mulheres*, ca. 1975, collage on paper, 13 x 8,5 in (approx.). Private Collection, São Paulo. Image reproduced in *Letícia Parente: arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso*, ed. André Parente and Katia Maciel, trans. Renato Rezende (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro; +2 Produções, 2011), 165.

Figure 37. Letícia Parente, untitled (*Olhos, nariz e bouca I* [Eyes, nose, and mouth I]), serie *Mulheres*, ca. 1975, collage on paper, 13 x 8,5 in (approx.). Private Collection, São Paulo. Image reproduced in *Letícia Parente: arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso*, ed. André Parente and Katia Maciel, trans. Renato Rezende (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro; +2 Produções, 2011), 165.

Figure 38. Letícia Parente, untitled (*Olhos, nariz e bouca II* [Eyes, nose, and mouth II]), serie *Mulheres*, ca. 1975, collage on paper, 13 x 8,5 in (approx.). Private Collection, São Paulo. Image reproduced in *Letícia Parente: arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso*, ed. André Parente and Katia Maciel, trans. Renato Rezende (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro; +2 Produções, 2011), 165.

Figure 39. Letícia Parente, untitled (*Alfinetes de segurança* [Safety pins]), serie *Mulheres*, ca. 1975, Xerox and collage on paper, 12,4 x 8.5 in (31,5 x 21,5 cm.) Private Collection, São Paulo. Image courtesy of the artist estate and Galeria Jaqueline Martins.

Figure 40. Letícia Parente, untitled (*Don't Touch*), serie *Mulheres*, ca. 1975, Xerox and collage on paper, 8.5 x 13,38 in (21,5 x 34 cm). Private Collection, São Paulo. Image courtesy of the artist estate and Galeria Jaqueline Martins.

Figure 41. Adrian Piper, *Catalysis III*, series *Catalysis*, 1970, Photography, 8.5 x 13,38 in (21,5 x 34 cm). Image reproduced in *Adrian Piper: A Synthesis of Intuitions, 1965-2016*, org. Cornelia H. Butler, Christophe Cherix, and David Platzker (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2018).

Figure 42. Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints–Face)*, detail, 1972, Photography, 10 x 8 in (25,4 x 20,3 cm). Image reproduced in Kelly Baum, “Shapely Shapelessness: Ana Mendieta's *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints: Face)*, 1972,” *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 67, (2008): 80-93.

Figure 43. Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints–Breast)*, detail, 1972, Photography, 10 x 8 in (25,4 x 20,3 cm). Image reproduced in Kelly Baum, “Shapely Shapelessness: Ana Mendieta's *Untitled (Glass on Body Imprints: Face)*, 1972,” *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 67, (2008): 80-93.

Figure 44. Paulo Bruscky, *Xeroperformance-Art Without an Original (Arte sem original)*, 1982, xerography and stamp on paper, 8 ¼ x 11 ¾ in (21 x 29,7 cm). Image reproduced in

Xerografia: Copy art in Brazil, 1970-1990 (San Diego: University of San Diego, 2017, exhibition catalogue), 102.

Figure 45. Hudnilson Jr., *Exercício de me ver I*, from the series *Exercício de me ver*, 1979, Xerox, 25.1 x 38 in (64 x 97 cm). Image reproduced in *Arte: novos meios multimeios: Brasil '70/80*, ed. Daisy V.M. Peccini de Alvarado (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Brasileira, Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado, 2010), 246.

Figure 46. Hudnilson Jr., *Xerox Action*, 1981, twenty photograph on paper, each 8.5 x 7 in (21.6 x 17.9 cm). Photographer: Afonso Rupperto. Image reproduced in *Xerografia: Copy art in Brazil, 1970-1990* (San Diego: University of San Diego, 2017, exhibition catalogue), 63.

Figure 47. Letícia Parente, *Projeto 158-1 transformação: pécnico-astênico (Kretschmer) (A)*, serie *Mulheres*, 1975, Xerox and collage on paper, 33 x 22 in (approx.). Collection Museu de Arte Contemporânea Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo. Image courtesy of Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Universidade de São Paulo.

Figure 48. Letícia Parente, *Projeto 158-2 transformação: pécnico-astênico (Kretschmer) (B)*, serie *Mulheres*, 1975, Xerox and collage on paper, 33 x 22 in (approx.). Collection Museu de Arte Contemporânea Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo. Photo by Paulina Pardo Gaviria.

Figure 49. “O romantismo do rosa suave” and “A extravagância do vermelho.” Makeup tutorials published in the Brazilian magazine *Mais*, n.d.: pp. 29 and 31. 11 x 8.5 in (27,9 x 21,5 cm.) Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.

Figure 50. Letícia Parente, *Química: um estudo sobre a profissão do químico* [Chemistry: A Study on the Chemist Profession] (Petropolis: Editora Vozes, 1968).

Figure 51. Letícia Parente, signed sketch for the installation *Medida* (Measurement), 1976. This layout includes detailed indications about the museum’s gallery space, the distribution of stations in the installation, the color of walls, location of windows and power outlets, and the location of projectors, screens, chairs, pedestals, and tables. Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.

Figure 52. Letícia Parente, *Medida* (Measurement), 1976, installation. Installation view; from left to right are stations D, C (to the right of the photographed visitor), B (behind short panel), and A. Letícia Parente private archive. Image reproduced in *Letícia Parente: arqueologia do cotidiano: objetos de uso*, ed. André Parente and Katia Maciel, trans. Renato Rezende (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro; +2 Produções, 2011), 187. Photographer unknown.

Figure 53. Letícia Parente, *O livro dos recordes* (The book of records) in the installation *Medida* (Measurement), 1976, installation view. Photographer unknown.

Figure 54. Letícia Parente, sketch for the installation of the audiovisual *O livro dos recordes* (The book of records) in the installation *Medida* (Measurement), 1976. Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.

- Figure 55. “Greatest Height Difference Meeting,” *O livro dos recordes* (The book of records). Originally published in *Guinness Book of World Records* (New York: Sterling Pub. Co., 1975). Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.
- Figure 56. Leticia Parente, “Estação A-Tipo físico” (Station A-physical type), *Medida* (Measurement), 1976, installation. Installation view with participant measuring her face with a caliper. Photographer unknown.
- Figure 57. Leticia Parente, “Estação C-Resistência” (Station C-resistance), *Medida* (Measurement), 1976, installation. Installation view portraying Leticia Parente’s interaction with her work. Photographer unknown.
- Figure 58. Leticia Parente, “Estação D-Grupo sanguíneo” (Station D-blood type), *Medida* (Measurement), 1976, installation. Installation view with participant (left) determining his Rh and the station assistant, Cristiana Parente (right). Photographer unknown.
- Figure 59. Leticia Parente, “Estação D-Grupo sanguíneo” (Station D-blood type), *Medida* (Measurement), 1976, installation. Installation view of this station’s displayed laboratory tools. Photographer unknown.
- Figures 60 and 61. Leticia Parente, “Estação G-Medidas secretas” (Station G-secret measurements), *Medida* (Measurement), 1976, installation. Installation views of the exterior and interior of the station. Photographer unknown.
- Figures 62. Leticia Parente, “Estação G-Medidas secretas” (Station G-secret measurements), *Medida* (Measurement), 1976, collective database notebook. Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.
- Figure 63. Geraldo de Barros, *Função diagonal* (Diagonal Function), 1952, lacquer on wood, $24 \frac{3}{4} \times 24 \frac{3}{4} \times \frac{1}{2}$ in. ($62.9 \times 62.9 \times 1.3$ cm). Collection of Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY. Gift of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros through the Latin American and Caribbean Fund. Object number 804.2016.
- Figure 64. Hélio Oiticica, *P 15 Parangolé capa 11 “Incorporo a revolta,”* 1967, variable dimensions. Wore here by Nildo de Mangueira at Engenheiro Alfredo Duarte Street. Collection of Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Image reproduced in *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, ed. Mari Carmen Ramírez (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2007, exhibition catalog), 112.
- Figure 65. Lygia Clark, *Estruturação do Self*, 1976, variable dimensions. Image reproduced in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego Mathias Goeritz, Hélio Oiticica* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), 93.
- Figure 66. Leticia Parente, *Recrutamento de pessoal* (Staff recruitment), 1976. 17 x 11 in (43,18 x 54,61 cm.) Image published in *GAM, Galeria de Arte Moderna, Journal Mensal de Arte Visuais* 28 (June 1976), 8.

- Figure 67. Installation view of Letícia Parente's *Recrutamento de pessoal* (Staff recruitment, 1976) as partially exhibited in *Medida* (Measurement, 1976) at the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro. Photographer unknown.
- Figure 68. Three clippings from the magazine *Mais* filed in Letícia Parente private archive. Photo: Paulina Pardo Gaviria, by permission of the artist estate.
- Figure 69. Letícia Parente, *Preparação II* (Preparation II), 1976, Sony Portapak open-reel 1/2 in., b/w, 7:39 minutes. Still image (2:39). "Letícia Parente – Preparação II (1976)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106547188>.
- Figure 70. Letícia Parente, *Preparação II* (Preparation II), 1976, Sony Portapak open-reel 1/2 in., b/w, 7:39 minutes. Still image (6:50). "Letícia Parente – Preparação II (1976)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106547188>.
- Figure 71. Letícia Parente hand-written annotation for *Preparação II*. Image reproduced in *Arqueologia do cotidiano*, 2, (December-February, 1976), 22-23.
- Figure 72. Lygia Pape, *Eat Me—A gula ou a luxuria?* (Eat me—gluttony or luxury?), 1976, variable dimensions. Image reproduced in *Malasartes*, 2, (December-February, 1976), 22-23. Photographer unknown.
- Figure 73. Letícia Parente, *Preparação II* (Preparation II), 1976, Sony Portapak open-reel 1/2 in., b/w, 7:39 minutes. Still image (4:53). "Letícia Parente – Preparação II (1976)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106547188>.
- Figure 74. Letícia Parente, *Preparação II* (Preparation II), 1976, Sony Portapak open-reel 1/2 in., b/w, 7:39 minutes. Still image (7:28). "Letícia Parente – Preparação II (1976)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106547188>.
- Figure 75. Letícia Parente, *Tarefa I* (Chore I), 1982, Betamax, color, 1:56 minutes. Still image (0:12). "Letícia Parente – Tarefa I (1982)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106539010>.
- Figure 76. Letícia Parente, *Tarefa I* (Chore I), 1982, Betamax, color, 1:56 minutes. Still image (0:49). Photo: "Letícia Parente – Tarefa I (1982)," Galeria Jaqueline Martins, last modified 2014, <https://vimeo.com/106539010>.
- Figure 77. "Letícia Parente, Brazil" (top right) cited along three images of her installation *Medida* (Measurement, 1976). Image reproduced in *XVI Bienal de São Paulo, Arte Postal* (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1981, exhibition catalogue), n.p.
- Figures 78–80. Letícia Parente, *Carimbo* (Stamp), 1981, 3:28 minutes. Still images (1:50, 2:05, and 2:22). Letícia Parente private archive.
- Figure 81. Letícia Parente, *Carimbo* (Stamp), 1981, 3:28 minutes. Still images (0:48). Letícia Parente private archive.

Figures 82–83. Letícia Parente, *Carimbo* (Stamp), 1981, 3:28 minutes. Still images (3:56 and 4:40). Letícia Parente private archive.

Figure 84. Letícia Parente, untitled (envelope *Carimbo* [Stamp]), 1981, unidentified print and pen on paper. Acervo XVI Bienal de São Paulo, Coleção de Arte da Cidade, Centro Cultural da Cidade de São Paulo, São Paulo. Object number 01.1387. Image courtesy of Coleção de Arte da Cidade, Centro Cultural da Cidade de São Paulo.

Figure 85. Letícia Parente, *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* (Sky of Rio/Sky of Fortaleza), 1981, ink, pen, and pencil on paper, 8 ½ × 11 in. (21.6 × 27.9 cm). Acervo XVI Bienal de São Paulo, Coleção de Arte da Cidade, Centro Cultural da Cidade de São Paulo, São Paulo. Object number 01.1388. Image courtesy of Coleção de Arte da Cidade, Centro Cultural da Cidade de São Paulo.

Figure 86. Detail of Letícia Parente, *Céu do Rio/Céu de Fortaleza* (Sky of Rio/Sky of Fortaleza), 1981, ink, pen, and pencil on paper, 8 ½ × 11 in. (21.6 × 27.9 cm). Acervo XVI Bienal de São Paulo, Coleção de Arte da Cidade, Centro Cultural da Cidade de São Paulo, São Paulo. Object number 01.1388. Image courtesy of Coleção de Arte da Cidade, Centro Cultural da Cidade de São Paulo.

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Acervo Wanda Svevo, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo

Aracy Abreu Amaral Papers, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo

Associação Cultural Videobrasil, São Paulo

Cacilda Teixeira da Costa private archive

Coleção de Arta da Cidade, Centro Cultural da Cidade de São Paulo, São Paulo

Institute of Contemporary Art Records, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia

Letícia Parente private archive

Museu de Arte Brasileira, Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado, São Paulo

Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo

Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro

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