

# Film, music and sensory experience: questions concerning a project to film participatory musical performances

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## Abstract

This text sets out to discuss questions arising from the work of filming Brazilian popular festivals, celebrations and rituals in which music-making involves a process of collective musical production, practices linked to what Turino (2008) has called ‘participatory music.’ By making music together, the participants take part in intense non-verbal social interactions that very often reach a collective climax or trace, an experience difficult to translate into words. How can film express and communicate this type of musical experience involving all the senses? Setting out from technical guidelines developed in a project to film participative musical performances for a documentary series, *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas*, the text aims to reflect on the potential of the audiovisual medium as an experiential mode that both apprehends the musical context and enables the spectator to access and discover the participatory performances depicted through the evoked experience and senses.

**Keywords:** film, music, participatory musical performance, sensory, ethnomusicology, visual anthropology.

# Filme, música e experiência sensória: questões em torno de um projeto de filmagem de performances musicais participativas

## Resumo

Este texto pretende discutir questões implicadas no trabalho de filmagem de festas, celebrações e rituais populares brasileiros em que o fazer musical se dá enquanto processo de produção de música de forma coletiva, práticas ligadas ao que Turino (2008) chamou de “música participativa”. Ao fazerem música juntos, os participantes tomam parte de intensas interações sociais não verbais que muitas vezes chegam a um clímax ou transe coletivo, experiência esta dificilmente traduzível em palavras. Como o filme pode expressar e comunicar este tipo de experiência musical que envolve todos os sentidos? A partir de diretrizes técnicas forjadas em um projeto de filmagem de performances musicais participativas para a série documental Taquaras, Tambores e Violas, pretende-se refletir sobre o potencial do audiovisual como um modo experiencial que tanto apreende o contexto musical como permite ao espectador acessar e conhecer as performances participativas retratadas pela via da experiência evocada e dos sentidos.

**Palavras-chave:** filme, música, performance musical participativa, sensório, etnomusicologia, antropologia visual.

# Film, music and sensory experience: questions concerning a project to film participatory musical performances

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## Opening: filmmaking in musical research

The interest in the audiovisual registering of Brazilian popular manifestations, rituals, festivals and celebrations with music dates back a long time.<sup>1</sup> Over the years, folklorists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, documentary makers, journalists, tourists and others have produced an extensive material that remains stored in diverse collections and circulates in a variety of circuits, networks and media. As a pioneering experience, we can mention the expeditions of the Folklore Research Mission coordinated by Mário de Andrade while he headed the Department of Culture of São Paulo City Hall, like the expedition organised in 1938 to various cities and localities in Brazil's Northeast with the objective of registering in audio recordings, photographs, films and notebooks the cultural manifestations hidden in diverse corners of Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

Today the popularization of mobile phone cameras means that anyone can film, document and/or publish material online, hugely expanding the possibilities available to masters and other participants of popular manifestations to produce their own records. Albeit diffusely, audiovisual records of diverse kinds show the existence in these materials of a significant distance between the lived experience of the performance and the audiovisual representation. Like filmed theatre plays, the scenic elements are there, so too the audience, musicians, costumes, context, narrative and music, but watching a filmed play is very different to attending a live show. The audiovisual result bears no proximity to the aesthetic and sensorial experiences of the people who watched the play or, in the case that interests us here, who experienced a musical performance.

This reflection explores the possibilities for using audiovisual media to capture and communicate experience in Brazilian popular festivals, celebrations and rituals in which music is made collectively, in practices linked to what Turino (2008) called 'participatory music,' in which no distinction exists between musicians and audience, just as no separation exists between the expressive domains (sonic, visual, corporeal, choreographic, musical, gestural). How can the audiovisual language be used to construct a narrative that communicates the musical experience in these participatory performances?<sup>3</sup> This was precisely the challenge taken up by the television documentary series *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas* in filming festivals, celebrations, dances and rituals in which diverse musical instruments were played, the project having also accompanied their fabrication.

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1 This article was written as part of my postdoctoral research activities at the Department of Anthropology of the University of São Paulo (USP). I wish to thank the São Paulo State Research Support Foundation (FAPESP) for the study grant (Process no. 2017/21063-1). I also thank Prof. Rose Satiko, the research supervisor, for her valuable comments and the group of supervisees among whom I was able to discuss a draft version of this text. I would also like to thank Hidalgo Romero for the creative partnership that generated this research and this article, and the film company Laboratório Cisco for making the film materials available.

2 The archive is found at the Oneyda Alvarenga Record Collection of the São Paulo Cultural Centre. Part of the filming can be seen in the documentary *Mário de Andrade e os Primeiros Filmes Etnográficos* (27min, 1997), edited by Cinemateca Brasileira, containing the records of the Folkloric Research Mission in the chronological order of the expedition. The bibliography on the mission is vast: see, for example, Toni 2008 and Sandroni 1999.

3 As the reader will see, in this article I use the term 'participatory musical performances' (see Turino 2008) to refer to what are commonly called popular manifestations or popular cultures. The reason is that I am more interested in the musical aspect of this type of performance, as so well described by the author, than discussing ideas concerning what Brazilian popular culture is, its relations to the concept of folklore and so on. For an introduction to the concept of popular culture, see, for example, Arantes 1998; for a critical discussion of anthropology and popular culture, see Segato 1991.

In total, 26 different popular manifestations were filmed, associated with 26 fabricated musical instruments, in 10 Brazilian states, representing a true immersion in participatory musical performances in Brazil.<sup>4</sup>

Accompanying the development and production of the series, this work presents an ethnography of the audiovisual production involved in documentaries produced by the film company Laboratório Cisco,<sup>5</sup> located in the city of Campinas, São Paulo, looking to reveal the methodology of capturing images and sounds and the conceptions behind the filming of participatory musical performances. The hypothesis explored here is that the concerns of the documentary project coincide with methodological questions concerning the use of the audiovisual in research on music-making, as far as its central challenge is to enable the passage between experience in musical performance and the experience that the audiovisual provides to the spectator.

It is important for the reader to know my own role as a researcher in the production of the series and the conditions under which the research was developed. Having initially been one of the researchers of the documentary project, I later brought my experience as part of the production team to the centre of a postdoctoral investigation. The ethnographic material analysed in this article comprises interviews with the team that produced the series, access to the raw material and the filmic analysis of the completed episodes, although accompanying the teams in the field during filming proved impossible. Hence, it is in this liminal zone that the research is situated, between academic investigation, audiovisual production and cinematographic critique.<sup>6</sup>

Thinking about the ability of film to communicate experience in a musical performance from an anthropological perspective is not exactly a new undertaking. Although it seems highly contemporary, discussion about the potential of the audiovisual to represent and express ethnographic contexts marked by emotional and musical intensity has taken place since the very first uses of film by anthropology. If we think of *Trance and Dance in Bali* by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, edited in 1952 but filmed between 1936 and 1939 in Bali,<sup>7</sup> we can make various observations on the relationship between ritual, musical experience and filmic experience.

The theme of the film is the *Tjalonarang* ceremony, which re-enacts the fight between Rangda, the sorceress, and Barong, the king's emissary (the dragon). Mead's narration explains the ritual plot and sets the tone for her scientific project, for which the camera in the field functioned as a recording device capable of illustrating her theses (Mead and Bateson, 1942: 49), in this case, concerning Balinese behaviour.

Although Mead argues for the use of a fixed camera without any variation in the framing or angle, Bateson subverts this guideline through the way in which he operates the equipment during the ritual,<sup>8</sup> especially at the moment of trance when we can observe a camera that moves about, completely engaged in what happens, expressing a degree of intimacy with the event. And what can we say about the music in the film? The music was probably recorded in a studio because Mead and Bateson made no sound recordings during the ritual; at that time, there was no equipment capable of synchronized recording of images and sound. However, as Henley (2013: 98) argues, the way in which the music was edited to the visual material of the ritual seems to provoke a distinct set of feelings in the spectator and thus contributes to the narrative arc of the film.

4 The series was directed by Hidalgo Romero and produced using resources from the Fundo Setorial do Audiovisual (FSA), a fund intended for the mutual development of the entire productive chain of audiovisual activity in Brazil, created by Law no. 11,437, Decree no. 6,299, 12 December 2007. The series is an authorial product and was shown on CINEBRASILTV, a channel dedicated to national independent audiovisual productions, available to subscribers across Brazil. The link <http://taquaras.laboratoriocisco.org/> provides more information on the series as well video clips from the films.

5 See: <https://www.laboratoriocisco.org/?lang=en>

6 I thank one of the ad hoc reviewers of this article for the suggestion to incorporate the idea of liminality to explain the research methodology.

7 The film forms part of the series *Character Formation in Different Cultures*, which explores the relations between children and their parents in different cultures. For an analysis of the films produced by Mead and Bateson, see Henley 2013.

8 Mead and Bateson disagreed over this use of the fixed camera. In a famous exchange with Mead, recorded in 1976, when the couple had already separated, Bateson defends a freer use of the camera, which in Mead's view makes the recording closer to artistic practice and more distant from its use as a scientific instrument. The debate is curious and amusing but, above all, makes us return our gaze to the images of trance found in *Trance and Dance in Bali*, in the camerawork of Bateson. See Mead and Bateson 1977.

Between the 1940s and 1950s, the American avantgarde filmmaker Maya Deren recorded footage of Vodou rituals in Haiti, later included in the film *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (1985), completed after her death. Displaying a special interest in the body, dance and ritual, Deren follows the Haitian bodies as they invite the gods to possess them. The camera accompanies bodies, trances and the flows of dance and music, the latter added to the footage later, in shots that were highly experimental for the period.

Another interesting experience in the history of the marriage between anthropology, the audiovisual and music, keeping in mind the relationship between ritual/musical context and cinematic construction, are the works of Gilbert Rouget made in partnership with Jean Rouch. Feld (2016 [1976]) in a seminal text on the use of film in ethnomusicological research, recognises Rouch's pioneering work with Rouget and the way in which technical innovations in synchronic cinema were used to produced films for the purposes of ethnomusicological analysis. This partnership gave rise to the film *Batteries Dogon. Éléments pour une étude des rythmes*, completed in 1964, which comprises a synchronic experiment in colour that also involved the collaboration of Germaine Dierterlen with the aim of providing support to the rhythmic analysis (Rouget, 1965).

In 1971, in another partnership, Rouch<sup>9</sup> and Rouget made the film *Danses des Reines à Porto Novo*, 35 minutes long, which is attributed to Rouget and accompanies the book by the same author, *Um roi africano et sa musique de cour*. In this production, which included Jean Rouch's work in both conceptualising the film and operating the camera, the central concern is once again the synchrony between music and movement. Enthused by the new technology that could record sound and image synchronically, Rouget proposed to conduct a technical experiment for analytic purposes in which he shows in slow motion part of a possession ritual at the Porto Novo Palace of the King in Dahomey (present-day Benin). The film presents the sequence of five dances, most of them performed by the King's wives. One of the dances is shown at normal speed and in slow motion, synchronized with the sound stretched to maintain them both synchronized.<sup>10</sup>

What is interesting here in these partnerships between Rouch and Rouget is the way in which the filmmakers convert a technical experiment in images and sounds undertaken for analytic purposes into experiments with a broader interest, as Feld (2016 [1976]: 303) observes: "audiences can also have access to seeing and hearing the fascinating decomposition and synthesis of Dogon polyrhythms, and the delicate and complex synchrony of the Porto Novo court dances."<sup>11</sup>

Rouch's pioneering work in partnership with Rouget, allying technical preoccupations to an analytic proposal expressing a concern with the form of constructing a filmic narrative, does not seem to have been the primary emphasis of ethnomusicological productions, at least until the mid-1970s when Feld published the first global study on the use of film by ethnomusicology in the journal *Ethnomusicology*, recently translated into Portuguese (see Feld 1976).

Feld argues that there is a conceptual question that needs to be addressed that involves a certain confusion in respect to what makes film interesting. Feld calls attention to the fact that many ethnomusicologists approach film as a possibility for the objective record of reality and use it to illustrate research or to assist in teaching activities, running the risk of taking the images as 'real,' ignoring the procedures of cinematographic language, such as the 'types of selection,' the aims of the filmmakers and so on. The researcher suggests to ethnomusicologists who intend to appropriate the use of film for investigation that they should take the opportunity to "tap directly into the foundation being built in the anthropology of visual communication" (1976: 316).

9 Diverse films by Jean Rouch thematize music and music-making. To cite just a few: *Yenendi de Gangel*, *Tourou et Bitti*, and the *Sigui* series (see Feld 2016 [1976]: 297).

10 For more details on the experiment, see "Une expérience de cinéma synchrone au ralenti," published by Rouget in 1971 in the journal *L'Homme*.

11 At the end of the 1970s, Claudine de France made an important contribution on the theme of filming rituals. In her book *Cinema e Antropologia* (1998), the author reflects on the use of audiovisual methods as instruments in the anthropological observation, transcription and interpretation of ritual processes and techniques, following the precepts of what she called 'filmic anthropology.'

In the intersection between visual anthropology and ethnomusicology, this fertile terrain is precisely where this reflection constructs its bases<sup>12</sup> by entering the universe of a small producer of authorial documentaries in order to capture the technical and aesthetic know-how concerning the filming of festivals, celebrations and rituals of so-called Brazilian popular culture. Based on an analysis of the methodology employed by the series in the filming of ‘participatory musical performances’ (see Turino 2008), the aim is to anthropologically problematize the use of the audiovisual in research on music and contribute to the debate on the appropriation of the cinematographic language by musical anthropology and by ethnomusicology in the construction of their audiovisual narratives.

## Film, music and the sensory

In visual anthropology, MacDougall is without doubt the main proponent of a sensory and bodily approach to ethnographic film. Taking as a key question the differential capacities of language and imagery to communicate anthropological knowledge, he sees visual anthropology as particularly suited to representing sensory and bodily approaches. MacDougall (1997) suggests that visual representation can offer pathways to the other senses and help resolve difficulties that anthropologists face when researching and communicating about emotions, time, the body, senses, gender and individual identity. We can include music on this list,<sup>13</sup> providing a language metaphorically and experimentally close to them. Because the visual has the capacity of metaphor and synaesthesia,<sup>14</sup> he proposes that “[m]uch that can be ‘said’ about these matters may best be said in the visual media” (1997: 287) in contrast to use of the written word because the former can facilitate ‘evocation.’

MacDougall suggests that the visual also offers a second path for this type of experience. Emphasizing the inseparability of the senses as interconnected perceptual fields, the author points to the particular interconnectivity of seeing and touching (see Taussig 1991), which, he argues, underlies the filmic communication of sensory experience (1998: 50). Observing studies of blind people who on recovering their vision are unable to recognize objects visually until they touch them, he argues that touch and vision share the same experiential field, each belonging to a more general faculty. Hence, I can touch with my eyes because my experience of surfaces includes both touching and seeing, each of which derives qualities from the other (1998: 51).

MacDougall describes how this can be achieved in practice through a discussion of his work at the Doon School (India), an educational world that, in his analysis, is lived through the creation of an aesthetic space possessing a singular structure of sensory impressions, social relations and ways of behaving physically (2000: 9-10). The question is how to film something so implicit and omnipresent as a social aesthetic – it is important to add that ‘aesthetic’ here is not related to notions of beauty or art but to a range of cultural patterns for sensory experience (ibid: 7). The author suggests that the social aesthetic “could only be approached obliquely, through the events and material objects in which it played a variety of roles” (ibid: 12). In so doing, he reinforces the importance of the audiovisual as a language closer to the multidimensionality of the subject itself; that is, a language that operates between the visual, the auditory, the verbal and the temporal and even between the tactile domain (ibid: 18).

12 My individual research trajectory also expresses this intersection of interests. After training in Visual Anthropology with a doctorate from Gravi (Grupo de Antropologia Visual) at the University of São Paulo, I joined the Thematic Project in Ethnomusicology: “Local musicking: new pathways for ethnomusicology” Proc. Fapesp. 2016/05318-7) coordinated by Professor Suzel Ana Reily (Unicamp) with a postdoctoral study of the relations between the audiovisual and music in the aforementioned documentary project.

13 Rouch himself had already observed this potential when he noted: “[...] at this level, film is an absolutely irreplaceable instrument; while in the domains of prehistory, social organisation and linguistics, cinema constitutes just one ‘extra’ tool, however valuable it may be, in ethnomusicology it amounts to a **capital instrument**” (Rouch 1968: 465, free translation, my emphasis).

14 For MacDougall, metaphor is almost always present in film: “in the sense that environments and images of objects are persistently associated with feelings, actions and states of mind” [...] “Metaphor in film (as in life) can be the concretising of the self and experience in other things, not as simile or analogy, but as bodily extension” (1997: 289).

The synaesthetic capacity to evoke sensory experience is again explored by the author in the book *The Corporeal Image* (2006). In the opening chapter of the book, MacDougall evokes the bodies implicated in film: the bodies of the filmmaker and spectator, the bodies depicted in the film and the body of the film itself (the connections of the camera as part of the body). Inspired by Alfred Gell's thinking of artworks in terms of agency and effect rather than meaning (Gell 1998), he proposes a reflection that sets out from the idea that film is made to capture us, fascinate us and even confuse us. With the development of cinema, he asserts, filmmakers discovered new ways of creating physical sensations, exploring the synaesthetic potential of the image through the work with the camera and narrative.

Like MacDougall, the social anthropologist Sarah Pink also considers the use of the audiovisual important to communicating the aesthetic dimension of human experience. An enthusiast of what she calls sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009), the author speaks of the importance of valorising the audiovisual register as a method of collecting and divulging information, and of the ability of ethnographic film to represent and evoke the sensory and bodily experience of *Others* audiovisually (Pink, 2006: 48).

Pink argues that a sensory ethnography through the audiovisual does not aim "to produce a view of objective or true reality but instead seeks to offer versions of ethnographers' experiences of reality that are as faithful as possible to the context, the bodily, sensory and affective experiences, and the negotiations and intersubjectivities through which knowledge is produced."<sup>15</sup> This type of approach in anthropology signifies a fragmentation of the investigation, seeking to absorb information through a plethora of sensory forms and attributing all of them with the same qualitative value.<sup>16</sup>

Moving this discussion to the field of interest to us here, the potential to use the audiovisual to produce an experiential and sensorial knowledge of contexts marked by musical experience is huge. Gubner (2018) proposes what she calls sensory filming in ethnomusicology as an experiential mode (visual, auditive, evocative) of producing knowledge to contest and diversify narratives and aesthetics.

Based on her research on the tango scene in Buenos Aires and the production of short films<sup>17</sup> that aim to capture the local economies of feelings surrounding the practices of this style of music in the districts and neighbourhoods of the Argentinean capital, Gubner speaks of a sensory training in ethnomusicology, which signifies not only the idea that cultural experiences with music are multi-sensorial but that the multi-sensorial experimental knowledge allows us to 'know' in different ways (Gubner, 2018: 183-184).

The work of the Swiss ethnomusicologist Charlotte Vignau is produced along the same lines. The author conducted an extensive study of an instrument from the Swiss tradition called the alphorn and produced a film on the subject.<sup>18</sup> In an article (Vignau, 2015) in which she compares the musical ethnography made through film and writing, the author cites passages from the work *Transcultural Cinema* by MacDougall (1998) to argue that film, as a performative and synaesthetic production, is closer to the sensory mediation of musical experience than text and, therefore, this experience can be better captured by visual ethnography than by ethnographic writing.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Except taken from the website of the Forum of the Real Festival/ 2016, which examined sensory cinema. Available at: <https://www.portopostdoc.com/home/noticias/view?id=106>

<sup>16</sup> Along these lines, see the work of the Sensory Ethnography Lab at Harvard University: <https://sel.fas.harvard.edu/> and Nakamura's article (2013) exploring the laboratory's output.

<sup>17</sup> The researcher's films can be accessed via her website: <http://www.jenniegubner.com/>

<sup>18</sup> See the website: <https://www.alphornworldwide.net/> for more information on the research project that resulted in the book and film.

<sup>19</sup> At LISA – Laboratory of Image and Sound in Anthropology, University of São Paulo (USP), other film-related works touch on the theme of musical experience and the sensory. For examples of this output, see Mihai Leaha's work (2019) on the independent electronic music scene in São Paulo from a multi-modal perspective; the film *Tribo Planetária* (2011) by Carolina Abreu on the experience of electronic music festivals in Brasil; various works by Priscila Ermel like *O Arco e a Lira* (2002) on the Ikolen-Gavião and *O Canto das Canoas* (2007) on the *ciranda* tradition in Parati (RJ); and the film *Acontecimentos* (2009) which I directed with Hidalgo Romero on the field experience in the shamanistic ritual of the Asuriní of the Xingu.



## Taquaras, Tambores e Violas

*Taquaras, Tambores e Violas* (in English: Flutes, Drums and Guitars) accompanied the fabrication of artisanal Brazilian musical instruments: the *alfaia* (a drum), *viola machete* (a small guitar), *atabaque* (an Afro-Brazilian hand drum), *pifano* (fife), *gonguê* (a type of cowbell), *xexerê* (shekere, an African-origin gourd instrument), *berimbau* (Afro-Brazilian musical bow), *caixas* (snare drums), fiddles, 7-string guitars, *candongueiro* (small hand drum), *violas* (various types of guitar/lute), Brazilian tambourines, *meião* (a hand drum), *pandeirão* (large tambourine), *maraca* (Amerindian gourd rattle), *tambu* (a large drum), *tamanco* (clogs), *gaita ponto* (a type of accordion), *carimbó* (an Amerindian hand drum), *agôgô de 4 bocas* (four-mouthed cowbell), *reco-reco* (a musical scraper), as well as dozens of masters and participatory musical performances in which the instruments are played. This extensive project compiled more than 300 hours of raw material between 2014 and 2019.

Figures 1-6. Photos from the series published on the Facebook page of the Laboratório Cisco film company



(<https://www.facebook.com/laboratorio.cisco/>)

The content of the episodes<sup>20</sup> shows the work of the artisan at each stage of making musical instruments, ranging from obtaining the raw material (wood, metal, bamboo, leather and so on) to the finishing touches and its use, when music is produced. Testimonies from the masters and practitioners of the musical performances include songs, chants, *loas* and *pontos*, as well as life stories and descriptions of their experience of these manifestations. There are no experts providing depositions or explanatory diagrams;<sup>21</sup> everything we know is provided by the images and words of the subjects possessing the knowhow associated with the specific universe being shown.

The team, composed of three professionals working as camera operator, sound engineer and director, accompanied the steps involved in the construction of the musical performances, including essays, the preparation of the space, making food for the festival, manufacturing the costumes, until reaching the musical performance properly speaking with all its nuances and intensities, from beginning to end.

<sup>20</sup> Although I had access to the completed films, only the 'promos' of the films are available to the public due to the contract with the CINEBRASILTV channel. For the purposes of the analysis in this article, these promos are sufficient for the reader to get an idea of the material in question since they always contain excerpts representative of the filming of the participatory performances.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the only additional information is a map of the location where the episode was filmed in the presentation of each film.



Additionally, images of the locality taken with a drone camera contextualize the narrative and are combined with close-up images of the spaces in which the actions unfold: workshops, *terreiros*, domestic interiors, associations, with the same function of describing the context.

The understanding of Hidalgo Romero,<sup>22</sup> director of the series, is that the processes involved in constructing the instruments are part of a 'productive chain' connecting persons, materials and places, culminating in the realization of the festivals, celebrations and rituals, a moment in which the finished instruments are prepared, tuned and played. In the narrative guiding the series, therefore, the focus is on the processual dimension, both in relation to the stages involved in making the instrument and to the construction of the musical performance. Following this double process, the spectator accompanies the narrative of the films.

At the end of each episode, the series invites the public to relate with the presented images and sounds through an immersion in the participatory performances. This exemplifies the strong authorial hallmark of the project, distancing it from the format usually imagined for TV documentary films with their shallow content and narratives filled with mediations to make the spectator's apprehension easier.

### The proposal to become immersed in the music

*Sambas de roda*, *batizados de bumba-meu-boi*, *rodas de tambor de crioula*, *saídas de maracatu* and *rodas de choro*, among many other celebrations that take as their guideline musical – but also choreographic, dramatic and plastic – forms of making are presented at the end of the films. The aesthetic proposal of making the spectator immerse in this sonic universe of colours, textures, smells and tastes was formulated by the series director based on his own lived experience in a popular manifestation, Angola capoeira, which, indeed, is one of the episodes from the first season, along with the construction of the berimbau.<sup>23</sup>

The immersion in rehearsals, *rodas*, classes, lectures and trips to Bahia – activities that formed part of the practice of Angolan capoeira in the city of Campinas, São Paulo state, at the beginning of the 2000s, in the lineage of the master Jogo de Dentro – enabled the director access to a singular bodily and musical aesthetic. The question that he asks himself in projecting a gaze that desires to become immersed in the universe of popular manifestations and understand them, in particular musical performances, is knowing what kind of experience this type of event provides to those involved in it.

The proposal, therefore, was to move away from the idea of a record, understood by the director as “an observation of a phenomenon in a distant way” and bring observation with the camera closer to the experience of someone who takes part in the musical performance and accompany it from inside. A major reference point for how the series *Taquaras, Tambores e Violas* filmed the festivals, rituals and celebrations, especially in relation to how the photography was conducted, is the work of Vincent Moon.

An independent filmmaker, Moon has a special interest in the music of the world and in a form of showing it in an accessible way outside the patterns set by the culture industry. He has undertaken diverse on-line projects of video shorts on music; one of the best known is *Coleção Petites Planètes*,<sup>24</sup> in which he accompanies artists and groups in different localities and continents. The camera is always hand-held and in movement; body and equipment are one, living the musical experience, dancing. His films dispense with interviews,

22 Hidalgo Romero graduated in architecture and urbanism from UNESP. In 2006, by now working in communications, undertook a Scriptwriting course at the International Film and TV School in Santo Antônio de Los Baños, Cuba, and, on his return to Brazil, joined the newly-founded Laboratório Cisco – Educação e Imagem collective. I codirected the films *Acontecências* (2009), previously mentioned, and *A Briga do Cachorro com a Onça* (2013).

23 See the promo for the first season episode *O berimbau na capoeira angola*. <http://taquaras.laboratoriocisco.org/>.

24 See the website of the project <https://petitesplanetes.earth/> and also <https://vimeo.com/vincentmoon>

speech, a more rationalized and explicative understanding of the filmed contexts, and try to apprehend the life of what he films in its environment and its inner structure. Making regular use of sequence shots with frequent close-ups, Moon invites the spectator to become immersed in the musical experience. Hidalgo Romero describes Moon's work as an exercise in translation from an aesthetic experience within a musical and sensory context to the audiovisual. An exercise that the director also posed as a challenge:

Here we come to a question that interest me a lot, which is the question of translation, the experience that you have as a *brincante* [practitioner of a determined musical performance] is exceedingly difficult to record. Setting the camera up there and switching it on does not guarantee that the person watching will have the experience you had there, whether as a *brincante* or a member of the audience, it doesn't matter, even if they are different places. So you have to develop a series of techniques to try to capture this experience that is lived, that is concrete, that is physical, that has a smell, a taste, a time, a distance, a lot of things, and propose an audiovisual experience that the person watches, obviously they are not there, but so that the person who watches can, in some form, understand what you felt with that. That for me is the audiovisual challenge.<sup>25</sup>

Experience is a key word in this type of audiovisual experiment and the idea of translation is introduced by the director to help establish the type of relation that the production of images and sounds will establish with the filmed event. The proposal here is closer to creating 'equivalences' between lived experience and the audiovisual than translating *ipsis literis* specific codes present in the participatory musical performances into film. Hence, the 'translation' evoked by the director can be read following Benjamin (2008 [1923]) as a "a search for resonances and reverberations between different codes and systems." For Benjamim, a good translation is not one that values fidelity through the literality of the words but one capable of apprehending the points of resonance, of making the intention of one language reverberate in another – and here we could widen this to include translating from one system of codes into another.<sup>26</sup>

### Music making in participatory performances: talking with Thomas Turino

When I began this research at the end of 2017, in one of the intense dialogues with the director of the series, I presented him with Thomas Turino's concept of participatory performance (Turino, 2008). The conceptual proposal matched the way in which Hidalgo Romero was thinking about his documentary project so productively that he appropriated this reference for himself as a guiding inspiration in the construction of the film methodology.

What do a *roda de tambor de crioula* at a *terreiro* in São Luís do Maranhão, a *toré* dance in an area of recovered lands among the Kariri-Xocó indigenous people in Alagoas, a *cururu* festival on a smallholding in the rural zone of Cuiabá, Mato Grosso, and a *cantoria em roda* with an accordion in a quilombola community, located in the south of Rio Grande do Sul state, all share in common? This was the question posed by the director before starting work on the second season of films on these and other manifestations in which the fabricated instruments participate and are played by local practitioners. The question is not intended to receive a historical answer, tracing the origins and familiarities of the instruments or the manifestations, but instead is interested in the nature of forms of music making capable of providing elements for the elaboration of a methodology adequate to filming musical performances.

<sup>25</sup> Interview given in August 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Hidalgo Romero and I reflected together on the form of filming the series in light of the idea of translation in a paper that we gave at II SIPA – Seminário Imagem, Pesquisa e Antropologia (Image, Research and Anthropology Seminar) held at Unicamp in April 2018. See Villela and Hidalgo (2019).

In this sense, the classification of the types of musical practice elaborated by Thomas Turino and described in *Music as Social Life* (2008) help precisely to understand what these practices have in common. The emphasis on the process of musical production (and not on the product) led Turino to make a classification based on the form of making music, dividing the music produced in real time into *participatory* and *presentational*, and recorded music as *high-fidelity recordings* and *studio art*. For him, music is not a unitary form of art, but distinct types of activities that meet different needs and ways of being human (Turino, 2008: 1).

The filmed musical performances resonate in what Thomas Turino (2008) calls participatory performances: “...a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles” (2008: 26). If there is something in common between all the filmed musical performances it is that in all of them the idea of participation, referring to the narrow sense of contributing actively to the sound and movement of a musical event through the mediation of dance, singing, clapping hands and playing musical instruments, is fundamental (ibid: 28). Neither is there any separation between expressive domains (sonic, visual, corporal, choreographic, musical, gestural) and this is extremely important since, although we may speak of ‘musical performances,’ referring to the role of music in articulating these contexts, different expressive domains are present.<sup>27</sup>

Although Turino does not explicitly refer to studies of performance, many similarities can be identified between what he understands as ‘participatory performances’ and the very idea of performance appearing in the works of Turner (1982, 1987), Schechner (1985) and Bauman (2014), to cite some of the main exponents in this field.<sup>28</sup> This begins with the idea of the event of performance as a ‘concrete experience’ and a ‘unit of observation’<sup>29</sup> with a limited time span, or at least a beginning and end, an organised program of activities, a set of actors, an audience and a venue in which the processual character of the performative action comes to the fore.

In Turino’s participatory performances we can observe the points of contact between theatre and anthropology elaborated by Schechner (1985), namely: the “intensity of performance”; “interactions between performers and spectators”; the “total sequence of the performance”; the “transmission of performative knowledge”; and the “evaluation of performances.” However, it seems that while for Schechner, and for Turner also, the rite-theatre relation and the idea of drama are ‘good to think about’ social action, for Turino this place is occupied by music. The latter author shows how acoustic characteristics such as short form, melodic repetition, harmony and rhythm, dense textures, a call-response structure, common to the diverse participatory performances that he analyses, possess the participatory ethos as a central desired aim – that is, music is constructed to inspire or support participation.

The idea of participation as a value and objective of this type of performance can be exemplified by an event that occurred during a period of filming for the documentary series in question. This happened during the realization of the *tambor de crioula* dance by Master Felipe’s group at a festival held by a *terreiro* linked to *tambor de mina* on the occasion of the birthday of one of the *terreiro*’s *encantados*.<sup>30</sup> The *tambor de crioula* dance is formed by dancers, called *coreiras*, and by three drums (*meião*, which marks the beat; *crivador*, a large and

27 Here I am inspired by Menezes Bastos’s work on Kamayurá music. In the Kamayurá case, the author establishes music as a pivot system that intermediates, in rite, the universes of verbal arts (poetry, myth) in relation to those of plastic-visual expressions (graphics, iconography, ornaments) and choreological expressions (dance, theatre) (2007: 297).

28 A future work might set in dialogue the ideas of Turino and his use of the notion of performance with notions from the anthropology (studies) of performance – a task that this article is obviously unable to undertake in depth.

29 The notion of a unit of experience as a unit of observation is from Dilthey. Turner turns to this analytic category in developing his approach to the Anthropology of Experience (1986).

30 This happening was recounted by the director in an interview given to me in September 2017. *Encantado* is a broad designation given to the spiritual entities that are incorporated during the *tambor de mina*, an Afro-Brazilian religion that emerged in the nineteenth century in the capital of Maranhão state. See Ferreti (2006) for a reflection on the present-day *Tambor de Mina* and the registers that the Folkloric Research Mission coordinated by Mário de Andrade made in 1938 of some *terreiros de tambor de mina* in São Luis.

high-pitched drum; and a soloist drum); one *coreira* enters the dance circle at a time, passing the invitation to dance to another via the *punga*, or navel. On this occasion, some *encantados* entered the circle along with the *coreiras* – or more precisely, people incorporated in *encantados*. For this reason, the group allowed the camera to enter the dance circle to film from inside: “if the *encantados* can enter, then the camera can too,” one of the group’s leaders remarked.<sup>31</sup>

Figures 7-9. Frames from the episode *O meio no tambor de crioula*



See the promo at <http://taquaras.laboratoriocisco.org/> (second season)

As well as the idea of participation, another aspect that pervades the different manifestations can be summarized as the singular intensity and involvement that the participatory performances provide to the participants. Turino argues that this type of performance deals with a very singular type of concentration: complete attention to the other with whom one is interacting through sound and movement is needed for the activity to unfold well. An important by-product of the high concentration on the activity of participatory music-dance is that it produces the state or experience of flow in which preoccupations, thoughts and distractions vanish and the actor lives fully in the present moment. Turino suggests that this experience is linked to a sensation of atemporality, a feeling of being outside normal time and transcending the self (ibid: 4).

Clearly for the performance to attain an intensity where the participants surrender to the state of flow, skills and training in music and dance are essential (Turino, 2008: 4). Musically speaking, Turino emphasizes the importance of synchrony and rhythm in this type of performance: the participants must pay close attention to the sounds and, especially, the movements of the others. Moving together creates a direct sense of “being together” and, when a performance is going well, many people stop reflecting symbolically: “we are really moving as one.” This is the feeling conjured during the performance and certainly what will be remembered afterwards (Turino, 2008: 43). In participatory performance, the emphasis is on the production of social relations and on the values and evaluation associated with the degree of participation of everyone involved, more than on the acoustic quality alone: “Participatory performance is like this [a game] – it is about the opportunity of connecting in special ways with others and experiencing flow” (2008: 35).

How to film this sensible aspect of the synchrony between music and movement and the intensity and flow involved in the construction of musical performances? The challenge posed to the film crew was fairly large since they filmed contexts very different to each other, compounded by what I would consider a hindrance: the brief period in the field for each episode, quite different to the time spent immersed in anthropological and ethnomusicological research. The team had three or four days to film the fabrication of the instrument, the locality, artisans, masters, and the preparation and realization of the participatory performances. To optimize the dive into each context and facilitate the team’s experience of immersion in the participatory performances, the series employed three different strategies.

<sup>31</sup> How could we not recall Jean Rouch and his *ciné-trance*? In a certain way, the invitation to enter the dance circle reinforces the proposal of the series director to become immersed in the filmed musical and sensory context. Jean Rouch formulated the expression *ciné-trance* to refer to the imagery of the film *Les Maîtres Fous*: filming as though in a trance is essential for the effect of the film to approximate the effect of the ritual (see Sztutman 2005).

The first involves the director's prior knowledge of each context: each film trip was preceded by ample research on the music making and trajectory of the filmed groups, as well as prior contact with the practitioners, masters and artisans undertaken by a specific professional: the researcher.<sup>32</sup> The second strategy involves the sensibility of the person filming to capturing "the experience that is lived," as the director put it, which relates to the professional's knowledge of his or her metier, the ability to use the equipment, the rapport among the team; in sum, to a set of factors that I would connect to the artistic and professional skills of the documentary production company.

The third strategy, the one that interests us here, is the set of technical tools conceived by the director for filming the participatory performances, which relate above all to how the photography and the sound recording are undertaken.<sup>33</sup> How to film? Which camera to use? How should the sound be recorded? The technical choices stem from the audiovisual concept and proposal that valorises the idea of proximity with what is filmed, the immersion in experience, and capturing the intensity and flow of the musical performance, which allows the spectator to obtain an experience proximate to the filmed contexts. It was especially in the second season of films that this mode of filming became consolidated.

## Guidelines for the photography

The production of images for the series was oriented by three aesthetic conceptions with regard to the photography: 1) framing and focal point, 2) sequence shots and dramatic triggers, and 3) the 'glorious face.' The team generally used a high-resolution digital camera to capture the musical performances; in some situations, the director used a second camera in these events.

The framing was conceived in a way similar to human perception, known as the subjective camera. A fixed, bright lens was chosen with a short focal distance, so that the spectator's attention was directed towards what the photography wanted to concentrate on. This means that only what is selected within the frame is in focus, the rest remaining blurred. There is a perception of things happening outside the range of focus, but it is impossible to distinguish what they are clearly. The lenses used (35 mm and 50 mm) function very well for close-ups, and most of the frame can be seen except when we move away from what is being filmed. The result is that the musical performances as whole only become visible occasionally.

The series opted to use sequence shots – that is, accompany the unfolding of a series of actions in the musical performances using long takes, without cuts. The choice does not privilege fixed and well-balanced framing, the outcome of a gaze concerned with image composition. Rather, the gaze tries to approximate the experience of the participant in the performances. Brusque movements, shaking and framing adjustments are absorbed into the same take. The director's conception is that the experience of the sequence shot provides a sensation similar to real experience and the presence of a subjective gaze, which effectively wanders through space, becomes enchanted with certain things, approaches, moves away, looks from other angles, giving the impression of a lived and – for this very reason – imperfect experience.

The choice of sequence shots approximates the conception informing the documentary series to the work of some visual anthropologists; it is worth remembering the extensive use of this kind of shot in the films of Jean Rouch and the celebrated *Tourou et bitti, les tambours d'avant* (1971), which features a possession ritual in Niger, recorded in one single nine-minute take. MacDougall describes the virtues of sequence shots:

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<sup>32</sup> It should perhaps be made clear that this is research aimed towards film production and, objectively speaking, should inform a series of practical decisions: what will be filmed, where, who the characters will be (artisans and masters), which festivals the instruments are related to, what the festival calendar is, and so on.

<sup>33</sup> Editing is an extremely important element in this cinematic construction; however, the director did not establish such definitive guidelines for this stage, which is why I shall not approach the topic in this article. I focus solely on the technical methodology created for the filming stage.

Sequence-shots restore to the audience something of the continuity of perception of an individual observer. They are also probably the key feature of a camera style which seeks to sever itself from the imagery of fiction and tie itself to the specific historical act of filming. [...] It attempts to narrow the distance between the person who makes a film and the person who views it. There is no longer a compulsion to occupy an advantageous camera position at any cost; a 'bad' shot which nevertheless contains useful information, and which would once have been removed as 'unprofessional,' is now preserved. (MacDougall, 1982: 10)

In the documentary series, what triggers movement in the sequence shots are the 'dramatic triggers.' In participatory performance, there is an intense dialogue between the diverse participants. Frequently, within the internal logic of a participatory musical performance, a certain action triggers a new process, as in the call-response of the singer and choir. Depending on the intensity of the collective music making, the internal and external elements involved and the diverse interferences, the actors alternate, the protagonism changes, the focus is switched. Thus, the camera tries to follow this path.

Setting out from the singer's face, the camera searches for someone in the audience who is fully in a trance, responding to the chorus. The camera then tracks a drunk man as he staggers towards one of the musicians playing his instrument in virtuoso style, before, seconds later, passing calmly among the legs and feet of the dancers as they move around in the middle of the *terreiro*. Then the camera, prompted by the beauty of an item of clothing, rises from foot to head of one of these dancers, before then searching for another object to capture its gaze and finding the master of the *brincadeira*, who begins a new song. The camera never tires: it is constantly called to dive into the performance in search of textures, colours, movements and sounds.<sup>34</sup>

The third and final photographic guideline can be described as the search for the 'glorious face,' a reference to the book *Anthropology of the Glorious Face* by Arthur Omar (1997). The work of a contemporary Brazilian artist, trained in anthropology, the "anthropology of the glorious face is a project of exhaustive exploration of the human face in its carnivalesque trance. [...] These are faces that live transient attitudes, corresponding to feelings that are above the normal, evocations of mythic and savage periods." The book contains 161 enlargements of faces in black and white, photographed during the Brazilian carnival from 1973 to 1996.

In the case of the filming for the documentary series, the aim is for the camera and audience to be swept up by the intensity of the performances. The camera seeks out the face of someone singing at the top of their lungs with eyes half-closed, unconcerned with being seen. The teeth exposed, the muscles of the face contorted, the gaze fixed, glazed, distant. The photography seeks in the audience and the performances an overflowing of musical intensity, the transfiguration of the face in trance.

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<sup>34</sup> A contradiction inherent to this proposal to use sequence shots in the documentary series is that, as the films have a duration of 26-minutes predefined by the contact with the TV channel, the final edit of the musical performance in each episode is very short and the sequence shots could not be explored in the same depth as they were at the moment of recording.

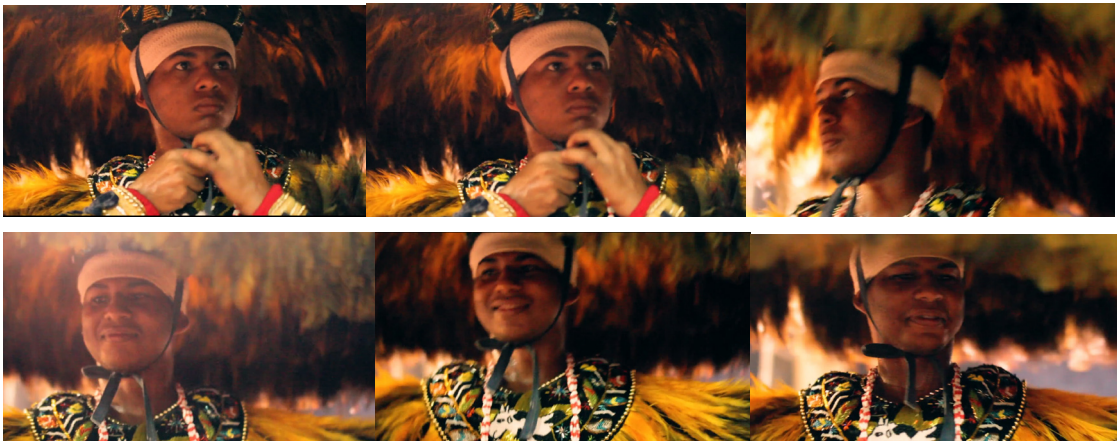


Figures 10-12: Images from the book *Anthropology of the Glorious Face*. Omar (1997).

Left: photo on the book cover. Centre: “The dragon disconnecting his own shadow.” Right: “Torturers and aesthetes unite.”



Figures 13-18: Frames from the episode *O pandeirão no bumba-meu-boi. Caboclo de pena* in the *Boi de Maracanã*, São Luis, MA



See the promo film <http://taquaras.laboratoriocisco.org/> (second season)

Figures 19-24: Frames from the episode *O pandeirão no bumba-meu-boi. Matraca player*





## Sound recording

The sound recording was a major challenge given the different variables to be considered in each context: outdoor location, indoor location, spatial disposition of the participants, number of instruments, movement of the performers, and such like. The general guideline was to capture the collective production of the music. Special attention was therefore given to recording the chorus and the ambient sound, as well as the synchrony between music and movement. Technically, the director based the recording strategies on two elements: (1) the spatial disposition of the performers/instruments, and (2) sound sources. The team's kit included 8 microphones: 2 directional, 3 surround (uniformly recording all the surrounding sounds) and 3 lapel microphones.

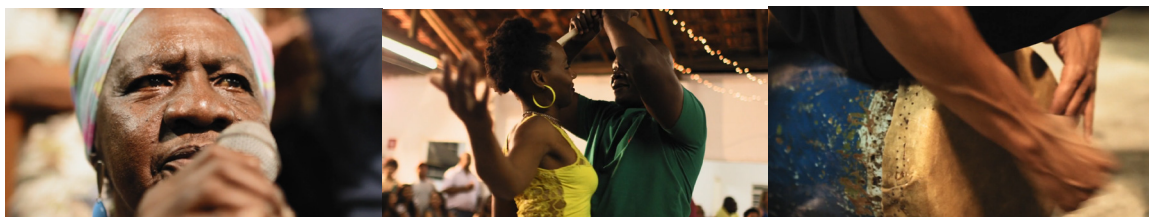
In terms of spatial disposition, most of the musical performances occur within a circumscribed space containing defined locations where the participants remain playing and dancing, and the audience joins in to varying degrees. One common form of spatial organization is the form of a circle, as in the *tambor de crioula*, the *toré* of the Kariri-Xocó and in *samba de roda*, or in the space of a hall as in a ball, in *batuque de umbigada* and in *carimbó*. But the performance can also take the form of a parade in which the participants (dancing group, instrumentalist and singers) travel from one place to another, as in the case of the emergence of the *Boi de Maracanã*, which travelled through the streets of São Luís's city centre, and the route taken by the *Folia de Reis* group from Fidalgos in Minas Gerais, moving between the houses and the church.

With respect to the sound sources in these types of performances, the director divided them into: 1. instruments, 2. main singer, 3. choir, and 4. ambient sound. Below I present in systemized fashion the guidelines for sound recording in each case.

1. Instruments: For percussion instruments, the team usually sets up a directional microphone at a short distance from this sound source and, in the majority of cases, manages to record everything. On other occasions, the best strategy is one microphone for each drum, as in the case of *batuque de umbigada* (Figures 25-27).

If recording with fixed microphones in front of the percussion instruments proves impossible owing to the risk of disrupting the performance, the team's alternative option was to ask someone to hold the microphone close to the drums and other percussion instruments. In the case of string instruments – fiddles, guitars, *cavacos* and *violas* – the musicians themselves usually miked the sound with leads plugged into the mixing console. In these instances, the team could record the sound source directly from the mixing console. Otherwise someone from the team would record these instruments using a directional microphone.

Figures 25-27: Frames from the episode *O tambu no batuque de umbigada*



See the promo film <http://taquaras.laboratoriocisco.org/> (second season)

2. Main singer: In the majority of cases, the musicians themselves miked the voice of the main singer; the team could then record this sound source directly from the mixing console. Alternatively, the team recorded the main singer with a lapel microphone or, if this too proved impossible, with a directional microphone.

3. Choir: The recording of the choir followed a number of guidelines. If the choir was small, meaning roughly ten people at most, the team used a directional microphone. When the choir contained a lot of people, the ideal was always to have more than one microphone recording this collective singing. The form in which this was done varied considerably, depending on the spatial disposition and movements of the performers.

If the performance took place in an enclosed space, the team always tried to set up a surround microphone, hanging from above, in collective agreement with the practitioners of the groups. Another alternative was to distribute various directional microphones in the corners of the hall or the *terreiro*, supported on pedestals. In the case of *bumba-meu-boi*, which takes a parade form, the team asked people from the community and the musical group already known to them to hold microphones to record the choir, moving along with the parade as they did so.

4. Ambient sound: Recording the ambient sound was especially important to transmit the acoustic environment of the musical performances. Generally, the festive ambient was strongly present in the recording of all the directional and surround microphones; thus the team was not especially concerned about recording this sound source in isolation.

The most tricky situations for sound recording occurred when the group – percussion, main singer and choir – moved about together. In the case of one of the *torés* filmed among the Kariri-Xocó people, recording the main singer proved extremely difficult, as he led the song moving around in a circle (Figures 28-30). The most obvious solution in this case would have been to use a lapel microphone, but since the indigenous leader danced bare-chested, there was nowhere to attach it. This led the team to record with a directional microphone and get the sound engineer to dance at a certain distance, tracking the singer but not so close as to enter into the frame captured by the camera.

Another demanding situation was recording the *cururu* of Mato Grosso. This was because the *viola de cocho*, an instrument with an entire episode dedicated to it, has a very low sound and, during the *desafios* (musical duels) of the *cururu*, in the filmed festival, the *violas* (lutes) were not amplified by the players, while the sound of the instrument and the songs was swamped by the metal *reco-reco* (scraper), which in fact forced the team to lower the recording volume to avoid sound distortion. In this case there was no solution and the recording of the *viola de cocho* came out poorly (Figures 31-33).

Figures 28-30: Frames from the episode *A maraca no toré Kariri-Xocó*. The recording of the choir came out well in this performance



See the promo film <http://taquaras.laboratoriocisco.org/> (second season)

Figures 31-33: Frames from the episode *A viola de cocho no cururu*



See the promo film <http://taquaras.laboratoriocisco.org/> (second season)

## (Dis)entangling: from technique to experience

Having described the technical guidelines employed by the series to record the participatory performances, one key question that arises is how far the use of this technical device, conceived by the director and put into practice during the filming, results in an experience for the spectator. The question is not simple and here, rather than provide a reply, I wish to problematize it. Instead of a disentanglement to tie up these reflections, I present the entanglement of new questions from the point at which we have arrived.

There is no doubt that the experience in the musical performance lived by the practitioners from the local contexts differs from the experience of the film crew and will differ too from the experience of someone watching the films. Far from intending to substitute for musical experience *in loco* – something indeed impossible – the series seeks to create bridges, equivalences with the experience of the team, guided by the filter of the director, during the participatory performances. In fact, the director conceives this work of passing from one to the other as a translation and an artistic creation, since it translates that which arouses empathy and sympathy in us as a primary quality of meaning, in the sense defined by Plaza (2013).

Here the field in which audiovisual production moves makes all the difference: it comprises a product conceived as artistic rather than an outcome of academic research context. Hence, the intended translation assumes an authorial character and adheres to a certain sensibility of the filmmaker, rather than a theoretical framework or a methodological concern, even though the series is also the outcome of the theoretical-methodological dialogue with this research, as I have sought to demonstrate in the conversations with Thomas Turino's work.

On the other hand, subjectivity is not something that bypasses the work of anthropology, and this observation is far from being a novelty. However well informed by theoretical and methodological questions the research may be, experience in the field is always individual and subjective, and can only apprehend the experience of the *Other* if it is re-lived and made one's own. In the case of use of the audiovisual, in a sensory proposal, this is clearly assumed, as Pink (2006) has ably shown.

For the resonances and reverberations of the musical performance to be constructed audiovisually, I emphasise how productive the partnership between anthropology and the field of the arts can be, especially the visual arts and cinema, in terms of potentializing the audiovisual. As an expressive form, film approximates ritual, festivals and participatory performances in a more effective – or we could say more affective – way than ethnographic writing since its meaning is propositional and performative (MacDougall, 1998). Additionally, it allows us to explore sensory experience through images and sounds, or in other words, make the passage from experience in participatory performance to an experience with the audiovisual.

However, as in all manifestations of participatory music, the intensity of the performance is not given from the outset of the musical practice but is constructed little by little. This intensity needs to be built audiovisually. More to the point, if we are to go beyond aestheticized images of bodies in motion and music being sung and played, the performance must be contextualized in order for the spectator to be guided in the proposed experience.

For a determined performance to reach the spectator, the latter needs other information about the context, people and locality. This entire construction revolves around the narrative form of the film as a whole, which is born, in fact, at the editing stage. For an adequate evaluation or reflection concerning the efficacy of the audiovisual experience, it would be necessary to analyse the editing process and the content of the episode as a whole – an undertaking that this article has not set out to do. The focus here has been on the filming stage, involving the capture of image and sound, as well, of course, as the conception of the project that guided the recording in the field.

In any event, there are certain limits to this proposal. Rigorously speaking, the spectator's involvement must be individual, yet there is something culturally ordered that acts as a limit so that the comprehension of the film can be shared. I recall the Asuriní do Xingu watching the film that I directed with Hidalgo Romero, *Acontecências* (2009), how much the final editing with a song by Don Cherry and Naná Vasconcelos with excerpts from the indigenous shamanic ritual made no sense to them. They wanted to see the raw footage with the complete sequences of song and dance in the rituals, which, for a non-indigenous spectator, even if interested, would seem extremely repetitive; ultimately, the comprehension of the film is always localized (and also contextual).

Let us return to the series. The entire production was conceived for a specialized public: scholars and musicians, but also for an average television audience; in truth, the audience of a very specific channel interested in authorial contents made by small producers that depict diverse dimensions of Brazil.<sup>35</sup> The option of the series was to bring the spectator, whether a specialist or an average viewer of the channel, close to the filmed object through the sensory experience with images and sounds. Here we inevitably approximate a subjective testimony of the experience lived in the performances; the project of the documentary series thus assumes its artistic and authorial force.

Feld and Williams (1975), in a fundamental article for ethnomusicology, suggest that researchers-filmmakers should elaborate a specific cinematographic language for the research and adapt the filming strategy to the social and scientific context, as well as to the unfolding of the event to be filmed. They reject the scientific pretension of an immobile camera filming a fixed shot and a conventional cinematographic language.

Transposing the challenge set by the authors for the documentary project in question, we can speak of a cinematographic language that connects to the filmed social context, the participatory and artistic musical performances, the director's proposal to approach musical experience in all its intensity, the flow and synchrony between music and movement and between the participants of the music making. Concerning the specific audiovisual language and the filming strategies, both of which I have looked to reflect on, the series did not seek an ideal form in which the participatory musical performances should be seen, but instead offered the spectator a way of seeing them through film, whose value resides in shedding light on the intensity and quality of these performances.

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<sup>35</sup> The production company that made the series defines itself as a producer of documentaries and the partnership with the TV channel aims to ensure the authorial content of the producer. On the channel's website we can read: "CINEBRASILTV brings to the general public a refined cinematographic language. Here it is the gaze of the author, aware of the image's communicative force, that leads the critical spectator to reflect on Brazilian cultural transformations." The channel presents "investigative authorial documentaries that give the spectator what the mass media shies away from making. Innovative fictional series that reflect on behaviours, conflicts and human relations. Documentary series that recuperate traditions from the meandering depths of Brazil."

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## Filmography

- Acontecimentos*. Direction: Alice Villela and Hidalgo Romero. Campinas: Unicamp e Laboratório Cisco, 2009. (23 min.), colour, DV.
- A briga do cachorro com a onça*. Direction: Alice Villela and Hidalgo Romero. Campinas: Laboratório Cisco, 2013. (58 min.), colour, HDV.
- Batteries Dogon*. Direction: Gilbert Rouget, Jean Rouch and Germaine Dieterlen. Comité du Film Ethnographique, 1964. (26 min.), colour, 16 mm.
- Dances des Reines à Porto Novo*. Direction: Gilbert Rouget. Comité du Film Ethnographique, 1971 (35 min.). colour.
- Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti*. Direction: Maya Deren, Cherel Ito, Teiji Ito. 1985 (52 min.).
- Mário de Andrade e os Primeiros Filmes Etnográficos*. Cinemateca Brasileira, 1997 (27min).
- O Arco e a Lira*. Direction: Priscila Ermel. São Paulo: LISA, 2002. (18 min), colour.
- O Canto das Canoas*. Direction: Priscila Ermel. São Paulo: LISA, 2007. (25 min), colour.
- Petites Planètes*. Direction: Vincent Moon. 2010-present.
- Sigui* (series of 7 films). Direction: Jean Rouch and Germaine Dieterlen. Comité du Film Ethnographique, 1968-1974. colour, 16 mm.
- Taquaras, Tambores e Violas* (first and second seasons). Direction: Hidalgo Romero. Campinas: Laboratório Cisco, Fundo Setorial do Audiovisual and CINEBRASILTV, 2015. (23 episodes of 26 min.), colour, HDV.

*Tourou et Bitti*. Direction: Jean Rouch. Comité du Film Ethnographique, 1972. (10 min.), colour, 16 mm.  
*Trance and dance in Bali*. Direction: Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, 21 min, 1952.  
*Tribo Planetária*. Direction: Carolina Abreu. São Paulo: LISA, 2011. (37min), NTSC, colour.  
*Yenendi de Gangel*. Direction: Jean Rouch. Comité du Film Ethnographique, 1973. (40 min.), colour, 16 mm.

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