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ARTICLE

PHOTOGRAPHY, MONTAGE AND ARCHIVE AN ATLAS OF A DICTATORSHIP AND ITS LANDSCAPES

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Abstract

The far-right turn in Brazilian politics led to the re-emergence of a ghost that has been hindering our political agency since the dawn of the republic but that had been hidden for a few decades: the Army and its violent political agency. This essay will frame the archive as an important instance within the artistic practice I have developed as a response to the apparition of this military monster during the Bolsonaro years. In a body of work called "Concrete Witnesses Inquiry," I have combined images and texts (collected mainly from the press) with an urban landscape photographic work that presents overpasses built in my hometown, Porto Alegre, during the 1964 military dictatorship. Following authors such as Georges Didi-Huberman and Allan Sekula, I suggest that the archive can be seen as a central axis in this process, allowing me to connect otherwise unimportant elements from the urban landscape with violent historical processes, often considered distant and abstract.

Keywords: Dictatorship, Brazil, Overpasses, News, History

The current astonishment with the fact that things we are experiencing are 'still' possible in the twentieth century is not philosophical. This astonishment is not the beginning of knowledge – unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable.¹

We are in danger of being surprised by events as we were in [the] 1964 [military coup]. For lack of political will, competence, anticipation, virtù, as Machiavelli said, we may again be run over by fortuna's wheels.²

I

his paper will reflect on the artistic practice and theoretical research that led me to develop a body of work called *Concrete Witnesses Inquiry*: an artistic investigation that seeks to give visibility to a long-lasting (but largely ignored) military and authoritarian tradition in Brazilian politics by articulating history and landscape through photography and archival work. This body of work looks at overpasses and tunnels built in my hometown, Porto Alegre, during Brazil's civil-military dictatorship (1964-1988). Throughout the *Inquiry*, I sought to associate those road structures (generally taken as ordinary and insignificant) to the violent regime that produced them (often seen as a distant immaterial abstraction, when not erased by their apologists, even though it tortured, censured and murdered hundreds of Brazilians).⁴

While photography and everyday urban spaces were already the centre of my previous practice, the development of the *Inquiry* led me to explore new methods, such as collecting a variety of media (from newspaper articles to paintings and decrees). Such items were organised in a digital archive and then arranged and presented as an installation, where archived material coexists with photographic images from the overpasses. The unfolding of public and private life events – such as the crisis in Brazil's politics, the COVID-19 pandemic and my experience as a master's student – significantly shaped my practice and its outcomes throughout this process.

Thus, it will be relevant, in the scope of this paper, to articulate the *Concrete Witnesses Inquiry* not only with scholarly and artistic references which affected the work – such as Georges Didi-Huberman, Allan Sekula, Carlo Ginzburg and Aby Warburg – but also with a broader context that affected me in that period. We will start by reviewing Brazil's political context by the late 2010s and by looking at a previous response I developed to it, through my earlier photographic work. Then, we will look at archival procedures I developed in 2020, but that were abandoned after a while. Finally, we will observe how the archive returned to my work, now articulating it with my photographic practice, leading me to develop that atlas-like installation that makes the *Inquiry*'s core: a surface where appropriated images and texts are presented alongside my overpasses' images.

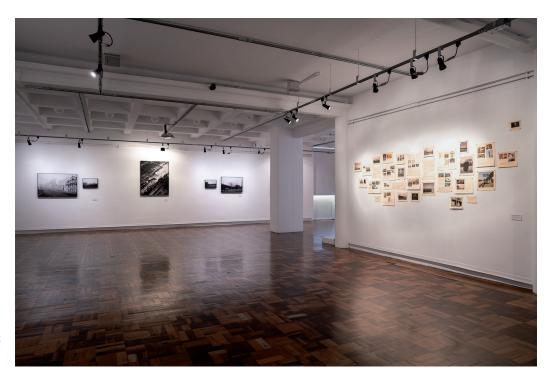


Figure 1
Concrete Witnesses Inquiry exhibition at the UFRGS' Arts Institute Gallery, 2022.
Courtesy of the artist.

II

I did not use to pay close attention to politics before 2018. While I attended a progressive community high school and many of my closest friends were actively engaged with left-wing parties, I grew up in a conservative catholic family. It took the election of Jair Bolsonaro and the rise of neo-fascism in Brazil for me to pick a side. At that point, I was 21 years old and had already taken my first steps into being an artist. Facing politics in such a violent way, thus, changed the way I approached my work, too.

In 2019, I started to develop "Letters to Ultramarine" (2019), a body of work that investigated how images from the Global North affected the spaces I inhabited. Only through this process did I realise that, as an upper-middle-class young Brazilian, the landscape around me and my expectations towards it were usually shaped by the image of the North American suburb. The development of this work allowed me to perceive how historically determined those expectations were. Moreover, the fact that I could see them materialised in the spaces I inhabited was a symptom not only of my race and class position within Brazilian society but also a symptom of Brazil's position within the global system.

I now recognise that such practice already reflected the intention to produce visibility to something abstract by carefully arranging elements that initially may seem ordinary and unimportant. That is: a US-styled post-box could get lost amidst the residential neighbourhood where I first found it. However, if placed alongside similar images, that montage procedure could make visible a more elusive but no less real presence.



Figure 2
Concrete Witnesses Inquiry exhibition
Untitled, from the Letters to Ultramarine
series, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.

Such a method, I understand, also reflected an underlying diagnostic about the historical moment we lived in just as Bolsonaro promised to bring the American way of life to the Brazilian middle class. In his effort to realise in Brazil the ideal of 'progress' defined by North American standards, our own 'Tropical Trump' would bend on his knee to the 'Real Trump', getting nothing in return but mass shootings⁵ and these Statue of Liberty replicas.⁶

Just as the upper-middle-class gated communities I portray in "Letters to Ultramarine" and the American suburbs, Bolsonaro and Trump have differences that might be as hard to precisely identify as they are easy to generally feel. Brazil's long tradition of military authoritarian interventions in civil politics, combined with Bolsonaro's close ties with the army, for example, make him a particular type of 'wannabe dictator'. Possibly a far more dangerous type than Trump, according to philosopher and political scientist Marcos Nobre.⁷

Bolsonaro was admitted into the Brazilian Army Officials Prep School in 1973, at the height of our latest military dictatorship (which lasted from 1964 to 1988). He was promoted to captain just as he was forced to leave the institution after he was caught planning a terrorist attack to demand better wages for the officials. Despite his crime (or maybe because of it), he would be continuously elected to legislative positions from 1989 to 2019, when he became president.

Throughout that period, Bolsonaro always defended the interests of the military and security agents, often attacking the newly borne 6th Republic democratic regime. He was first elected as one of Rio de Janeiro's City Councillors in the first elections under the 1988 democratic constitution. Since then, he echoed the voices

of those who never wanted the end of dictatorship in the first place. Later on, as a Federal Representative, he would publicly side with army officials accused of crimes against humanity, defend torture, and, at one point, even suggest that the president at the time should be shot.

As a grotesque spokesperson for military interests within civil politics, Bolsonaro managed not to be excluded from the military circles he was a part of before he was expelled from the army. Thus, when his popularity began to grow by the late 2010s, many high officials in the armed forces publicly supported his candidacy. A former captain, Bolsonaro was elected president with a former general as his vice-president. They would go on to form a *military government elected by vote*, as journalist Leandro Demori puts it. Bolsonaro's election, thus, was just the latest example of the Brazilian Army acting as if they were the Republic's patron, feeling entitled to take back control whenever civilians made a move they disapproved of. As the Brazilian human rights activist, jurist and journalist Sobral Pinto famously summarised: "The military, having proclaimed the Republic [in 1889], thought they owned the Republic and never accepted not being the Republic owners."

That background will allow us to recognise how meaningful it was that, at the first signs of an organised opposition since Bolsonaro took office, he called his supporters to a demonstration in front of the army headquarters. His followers shouted for a 'new Al-5', referring to the 1968 5th Institutional Act, the decree that marked the escalation of violence during the military dictatorship, which effectively closed down the Congress, suspended constitutional guarantees, and formalised state-led censorship.

Such chants and violent ideas had not been a common sight in public life since the 1990s and were usually seen as an idiosyncrasy restricted to a small, white, elder, urban elite (generally speaking, those that felt represented by the 1964 military coup). Thus, the images showing hundreds of supporters calling for a dictatorship in front of the Army's headquarters were something I had never seen before. At the same time, however, that was the image of an old, recurring ghost. It was clear that the (symbolical and, sometimes, literal) heirs of the army that tortured and killed their own people in the 70s wanted revenge. They could no longer tolerate civilians pretending to have the nation's helm in their hands.

It already looked like Bolsonaro was setting the stage for a decades-long tenure not as president but as dictator at the Planalto Palace when the COVID pandemic hit Brazil. His government's response was to deny the crisis, calling Brazilians to go to work usually, as the disease was nothing but a *little flu*, as Bolsonaro infamously said. When the conservative Congress and the oligarchic Supreme Court surprisingly attempted to keep Bolsonaro from force-contaminating Brazilians by the thousands, his government quickly reacted by intensifying those threats against the democratic regime, making their intentions even more explicit.

On March 31st – the date when the Army celebrates their 1964 military coup¹¹ against an elected government – he and his defence minister, General Fernando Azevedo, flew in a military helicopter over a demonstration. They waved at

his supporters on the ground through the helicopter's opened door, signalling that the army had Bolsonaro's back as he attacked the Congress and the Supreme Court. ¹² As historian Caroline Bauer points out, an idealised utopian dictatorial past was actively mobilised by Bolsonaro in a *symbolic battle for memory*. ¹³ Thus, Bolsonaro oriented his followers, but that symbolic battle made me feel adrift in time. The Military Dictatorship I used to read about in history classes came back to haunt us, and I felt that I did not have the tools to make sense of such a chronological mess.

Ш

To me, COVID's fear and shock came along with those caused by the now constant attacks on Brazil's (fragile and only somewhat effective) democratic institutions. I felt the need to think about that threat through my work, but, at first, the methodology I had developed in "Letters to Ultramarine" for investigating the urban space did not seem to fit this new kind of problem. Social distancing was, in Brazil, a privilege for the few, in which I was included. Thus, luckily locked inside my room, the city receded into the distance. As the world seemed to be silently falling apart, I feverishly read all the newspapers I had in my hands — to paraphrase Didi-Huberman's depiction of Bertolt Brecht during his exile¹⁴ — trying to keep up with what was going on in hospitals nearby and the palaces, headquarters and ministries farther away.

That was when I started clipping photographs and headlines from newspapers. I would archive them in an accordion folder, dividing them into categories and assembling them over a white background. I would photograph my compositions and store the clippings in the folder. If the world did not seem to fit within the boundaries of logic – I may have thought – maybe neither should a work that attempted to react to it. Kept away from the urban landscape and absorbed in an endless stream of chaotic events, headlines and press images became operative devices for me to conceive those seemingly inconceivable times. Having never felt like I was manually skilled, making collages was to me an experience as alien as wearing N95 respirators or cleaning every piece of grocery with alcohol before putting them in the pantry. However, in all those cases, those seemed to be necessary responses at that time.

I would keep developing that practice for a few months. *Curitiba, PR* and *Manaus, AM*, two 1,6m wide panels shown at Eric Lawton's exhibition, "A Forged and Delicate Future," at the Robert Capa Centre in Budapest, were probably its most interesting results. Such panels, completed in 2021, already showed some differences from the initial collages I had made in early 2020. Then, in addition to newspaper clippings, I would sometimes add other elements (such as a torn cover from Brazil's constitution) or a reproduction of technical advice from Brazil's *Federal Council of Medicine* defending the use of chloroquine for COVID-19.

At that point, I sometimes looked online for specific images I felt were needed for my compositions, downloading them and printing them with my ink-

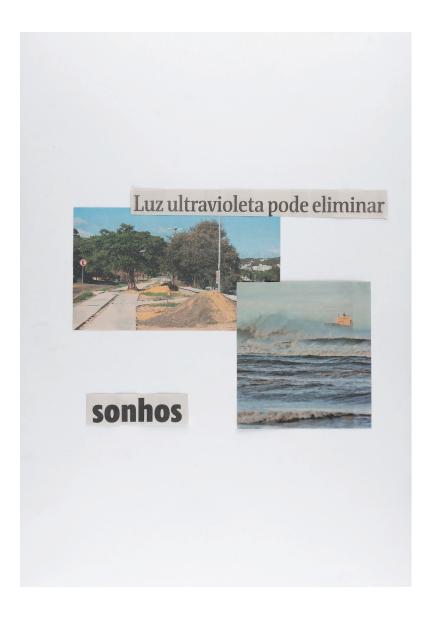


Figure 3 Ultraviolet light might eliminate dreams, collage, 2020. Courtesy of the artist.

jet printer. But that was a shy movement: I would print the downloaded images on newsprint paper, hiding their digital origin and integrating them into the file I had already built. While I was happy with the pieces I had shown at Capa Centre, I believe that process was much more important for the doors it opened (as we will see) than for the primary results it produced.

IV

Over time, as I slowly began to inhabit the city again, I eventually became aware of the connection between the 1964 dictatorship, repeatedly invoked by Bolsonaro, and the overpasses, which would become a theme in the Concrete Witnesses Inquiry. When I began photographing them, however, I thought I was starting a new body of work and that that brief period collecting headlines and making collages was just another pandemic habit that would eventually fade away as soon as we all had vaccines.



It was just when I started to think about how I would present those images that I realised I had a problem on my hands. I was sure that those overpasses were operative spaces that could offer an opportunity to articulate a violent past and a recurring present in a way that resisted the far-right's nostalgic call for another dictatorship. Those were meaningful yet forgotten landscapes that could be turned into a tangible portal, a *privileged* point – to quote Gilbert Simondon¹⁷ – from where to access an apparition that otherwise could not be *seen*.

I soon realised, however, that while those photographs worked well to highlight those spaces as notable features in the city, those images were not enough to project a new meaning on them. So, influenced by Alan Sekula's and Robert Smithson's work, I had written some essay-works that could be presented with the images, hoping to build some context around the photographs. But even with these texts, I felt that my images could not connect the world, how I felt and what I knew about it.

For those photographs to work as I intended – I then realised – I needed to provide the viewer with a completely different set of instances so that other connections could be established around (and within) my images. I needed to set up a "micro arena of information exchange," 18 to quote Sekula. It was while I faced that problem that my previous work with newspaper clippings re-emerged. At that point, I was almost two years removed from the first newspaper collages, a period

Figure 4

Conceição Overpass, Installation view from the Concrete Witnesses Inquiry exhibition, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.

marked by the experience of academic life through my first year as a master's student, when I decided to collect images from the news again, I was equipped with new tools.

Firstly, since my previous work with newspaper clippings, I had read Georges Didi-Huberman's book on Bertolt Brecht's *Kriegsfibel*, a fascinating work with newspaper images and poems by the notorious playwright. Through Didi-Huberman's eyes, Brecht's book becomes a means to think about history, war, dialectics and politics. Reading that book made me realise that a bit like Brecht, my emphasis while clipping newspaper had always been in the heuristics of the montage rather than in their graphical arrangement as a collage.

Secondly, the demands of academic writing (as well as the contact with a writing style rich in footnotes employed by authors such as Didi-Huberman, Aby Warburg and Carlo Ginzburg) made me develop a taste for referencing and commenting on what was being assembled. Not only was I interested in the juxtaposition of the elements more than in their graphical interaction, but I also noted that showing where those elements were coming from could be generative within the work.¹⁹

Finally, during those early months as a master's student, I had the opportunity to attend a workshop in which fellow Brazilian researcher Italo Alves taught me how to use *Zotero*, a research assistant software that organises documents and automates quotations. I soon realised that that could also be useful to my artistic practice. So, I set up a Zotero library dedicated exclusively to organising, not books and papers I would cite on my dissertation, but newspaper articles and blog posts (and their images) I thought could help me to think through my overpasses and their connection to Brazil's authoritarian past.

Moving my appropriated images archive from an accordion folder to Zotero not only allowed me to automatically keep track of the origins of the pieces I was assembling but also brought my collection practice far closer to my everyday experience with the news, which took place mostly on twitter and on newspaper websites, rather than through printed newspapers. On top of this, I now accepted that that was not an archive of newspaper images but rather an archive of anything I could find online.

While downloading images from the internet was never a technical limitation in its own right, Zotero was a missing piece that allowed me to organise that process. With such a tool, searching the web for meaningful images became a gesture as well integrated into my practice as searching the city for photographs. Soon, historical paintings, maps, and images from recent and old news started to feature on my studio wall, side by side with my photographs of the overpasses. Later on, I would link the Zotero library with an Adobe Lightroom catalogue where I could visually search through my archive, too, setting up sequences of images just as I had always done with my own images. Combined with Lightroom, Zotero became a site for collection and montage, where I could bring together actions and places vastly scattered through space and time.

The formal problem I had outlined before, however, remained: How should I show these images? How could I arrange this growing archive in a way that would not only help me project new meanings into my hometown's overpasses but also help me critically orient myself in time? How could the items I had archived help me build a micro-arena of information exchange, one that could help me imagine the survival of Brazil's authoritarian tradition *through* Porto Alegre's road infrastructure?

V

I faced a practical problem, which was an epistemological problem, too. Namely, how can that "non-philosophical astonishment" – to invoke Benjamin's quote in the epigraph – be turned into a "philosophical kind of astonishment" in the face of sustained and surviving violence? What kind of approach could allow me to articulate the past so that those overpasses could be *felt* as being part not only of the military dictatorship that built them but also as part of a centuries-old tradition of an army ruling over its own people? How could I offer the viewers a way to establish connections, even if fragile ones, between the urban landscape and those supposedly *past* events that, nevertheless, insistingly kept unfolding in front of our eyes? How could we avoid being run over by the "wheels of fortuna," to which echo José Murilo de Carvalho already called our attention twelve years before Bolsonaro's election but that we still could not even see?

Answering these questions would mean reacting to a past that, at one point, was presumed to have been overcome but that seemed to tragically re-emerge in the present like a ghost, producing the experience of chronological hunting. Things seemed to be out of their time, but that apparent anachronism did not keep them from affecting the present. Reacting effectively to those times, I now suggest, meant to offer to the spectator a structure capable of making sense of history beyond causality or chronology, thus offering an image for those shape-shifting "wheels of fortuna" – or, rather, to the steel tracks under "fortuna's" tanks' – as they, once again, threatened to smash our political power.

My attempt to do so – admittedly limited but, I would argue, significant nevertheless – would come after my contact with yet another book from Didi-Huberman: his *Atlas, or the Gay Anxious Science*, a work in which he explores Aby Warburg's famous *Atlas Mnemosyne*. Didi-Huberman's second²⁰ major work on the German art historian's work motivated me to take a step back from my practice, one that allowed me to realise that the archival and photographic methods could work together as part of a single, broader endeavour. If Didi-Huberman's work on Brecht's *Kriegsfibel* was important for me to reframe my collecting methods and even my reasons for collecting at all, his work on Warburg's Atlas was fundamental for me to rearrange what was collected and, more importantly, how to rearrange it *vis a vis* what I, then, considered "the work itself" (that is, the overpasses' photographs).

Amidst the dialogues Didi-Huberman establishes while thinking through Warburg's *Atlas* – dialogues with Nietzsche, Goethe, Goya and Benjamin, to mention a few – one specific passage of the book was particularly important for me to conceive that articulation. That is when the author establishes a polarity between the 'tableau' (painting, board) and the 'table' (table, working surface). If a *tableau* is usually taken as a 'definitive instance in the eyes of positivistic history,' a 'table' is a dynamic space where "we alternately place and get rid of everything that its 'work plane' greets without any hierarchy."²¹

Didi-Huberman was commentating on art history, highlighting that the core of Warburg's method was to look at the tableaux only after placing them on a table: a broader instance where multiple 'tableaux' interact with each other, such as the panels of his *Atlas Mnemosyne*. To me, however, that passage opened the door for something else entirely: the possibility of a polarity to be worked within the *Concrete Witnesses Inquiry*. I immediately thought of my black and white photographs as *tableaux*: printed in fairly large formats and framed, they would stand still and imposing on the gallery wall, categorically highlighting those landscapes as meaningful samples from the city space and displacing them to the exhibition room. But I could also balance and oppose the 'tableaux,' offering a more dynamic space where my texts and items in my archive would be greeted alongside my own photographs in a levelled plane. A 'table' could do just that: projecting new meanings over the overpasses' photographs while challenging that 'definitive' and 'grandeur' character I had just attempted to build around them.

Organising my work between those two poles was the turning point in my attempt to insert the overpasses in a broader visual system, one whose building blocks were the images archived in my Zotero Library. Just when I got to see the *Mnemosyne* working – through Didi-Huberman's thought – I realised that an atlas of images and texts could answer my problem. In such a system, an *Atlantic practice* would be the means to "reread the world: to *differently link the disparate pieces* [...] in a way to orienting and interpreting it, no doubt, but also of respecting it, of going over it again or reediting and piecing it together again without thinking we are summarising or exhausting it."²²

The atlas, thus, became a meeting point (and working surface) to confront (and signify) phantoms that had been haunting me. That dynamic composition of elements became the practical and theoretical image of a syntax *capable* of making heterogeneous orders of reality meet:

It is a "table" on which one decides to *place certain disparate things with a view* to establishing multiple "intimate and secret relations," an area possessing its own rules of arrangement and of transformation for relinking certain things whose *links* are not at all obvious. And for making these links, once they are brought to light, the paradigms of a rereading of the world.²³



That was how, not only did images from my digital archive find a place alongside my overpass photographs, but also how images from the "Letters to ultramarine" body of work were found to be operative within the *Inquiry* too. That was how a reproduction of a map from the 1700s found its way alongside a calendar and a photograph from the Congress with confetti flying as the 1988 constitution was being approved. That was how a photograph of a Statue of Liberty replica found its way alongside Victor Meirelles' "The First Mass in Brazil" painting from 1861, just above a quote from a bolsonarist Supreme Court judge's injunction that kept churches from being closed for a few days during the pandemic.²⁴

By combining the photographs framed on the wall with the *disparate elements* placed in an arrangement that does not strive for chronology, I hope to have offered the spectator a position from where the ghosts of the past may become more than a haunting symptom of temporal displacement. In this system of images and texts, the overpasses become privileged points for coming to terms with this ghost as it is: as an anachronical intrusion, but one that can critically inform the present. Thus, through that dialectic balance between the table and the 'tableaux,' I believe to have been able to put into practice the *anxious and restless knowledge*²⁵ one must accept in order to "see time," as Didi-Huberman puts it.²⁶

In this way, I expect the *Inquiry* to perform a double reframing in the eyes of the spectator: On the one hand, a reframing of the collected images and texts

Figure 5
Detail from the Correspondence Panel,
Concrete Witnesses Inquiry exhibition,
2022. Courtesy of the artist.

that, through the archive, find themselves in the atlas within new and unexpected companies. On the other hand, a reframing of the overpass's photographs (as well as the structures themselves) that are now entangled to a continuum of violence that extends itself much closer to the present and far further into the past. Thus, those concrete structures, usually taken as meaningless and tautological beyond their use-value, were contextualised in a network of critical meanings and images.

This article has shown how the atlas and the archive were fundamental tools in my attempt to establish a *micro arena of information exchange*. Adopting a specific kind of archive was the link between the collection of diverse elements and their rearrangement, thus potentially making it possible to access historical processes from everyday spaces. Complementarily, through the display of that archive in the form of an atlas, I hope to have been able to invite the spectator to see the city, its past and its present through a dynamic mode of remembering: one that makes sense of the emergence of ghosts of past violence as well as their contemporary survivals. Such a mode of remembering urges us not to negate the agency of such ghosts on the basis of their inherent anachronism but rather to recognise the anachronic presence of a violent, oligarchic, militaristic, colonial and racist past. "A long past that" as famously put by writer and cartoonist Milor Fernandes, "Brazil still has ahead of itself."²⁷

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- 1 Walter Benjamin, "Teses sobre o conceito de história," in *Magia e técnica, arte e política: Ensaios sobre literatura e história da cultura* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1994), 224.
- José Murilo de Carvalho, *Forças Armadas e Política No Brasil*, (São Paulo: Todavia, 2019), 248. Political scientist and historian José Murilo de Carvalho was one of Brazil's leading experts on the complex interaction between our military and civil politics. He passed away in August victim of COVID-19 (Brasil 2023).
- 3 This paper reframes and expands on reflections first presented in my master's dissertation, A Noise in the Landscape and the Gaze-Function: history fragments collected from space, available in Portuguese only (Balbela de Azambuja, 2022).
- I investigate the connection between those overpasses and the 1964-1985 period in my paper "Illegitimate Landscapes: Minimalism, Authoritarianism and the Conceição Overpass," available for free in Portuguese (Balbela 2022).
- Recurrent mass shootings in schools are recurrent phenomena in Brazil, but their occurrence spiked after Bolsonaro's turn in ahead of the federal government (Lo Re 2022). Prosecutors point to his policies that encouraged the use of firearms and made them more accessible, as well as to the growing hate speech culture in Brazil, of which he is a symbol, as critical factors to this process (Teodoro 2023).
- These statues, such as the one that I had photographed, sit in the parking lots of a growing department store chain, whose owner is, incidentally, a fanatic Bolsonaro supporter. In addition to being convicted of tax evasion (Batista 2020), he financed COVID-related disinformation campaigns during the pandemic (Regueira et al. 2021) and shared coup messages after Bolsonaro's 2022 electoral defeat (Bittencourt 2023)
- 7 Marcos Nobre, *Ponto-final: A guerra de Bolsonaro contra a democracia* (São Paulo: Todavia, 2020).
- 8 Leandro Demori, "A Tragédia Indígena é Militar," *A Grande Guerra*, 18 June 2022. https://www.agrandeguerra.com.br/p/a-tragedia-indigena-e-militar.
- 9 PINTO, Sobral. 1984. Apud FARIA, Glauco. 2024. 'O que significa o Sem Anistia'. Outras Palavras. 9 February 2024. https://outraspalavras.net/crise-brasileira/o-que-significa-o-sem-anistia/...
- Nick Paton Walsh, Jo Shelley, Eduardo Duwe, and William Bonnett, "Bolsonaro Calls Coronavirus a 'little Flu.' Inside Brazil's Hospitals, Doctors Know the Horrifying Reality," CNN. 25 May 2020. https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/23/americas/brazil-coronavirus-hospitals-intl/index.html.
- 11 In fact, the cue happened on April 1st, but the official date was changed so that it wouldn't coincide with Fool's Day.
- Thiago Resende, Talita Fernandes, and Igor Gielow, "Bolsonaro usa helicóptero e anda a cavalo para prestigiar ato na Esplanada contra STF e Congresso," Folha de S. Paulo, 31 May 2020, sec. Poder. https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2020/05/bolsonaro-usa-helicoptero-para-sobrevoar-manifestacao-na-esplanada-contra-stf-e-congresso.shtml.
- Caroline Silveira Bauer, "La dictadura cívico-militar brasileña en los discursos de Jair Bolsonaro: usos del pasado y negacionismo," *Relaciones Internacionales* 28, 57 (2019): 48.
- 14 Georges Didi-Huberman *Quando as Imagens Tomam Posição: o Olho da História I*, trans. Cleonice Paes Barreto Mourão, (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2017), 18. My position was never even remotely close to that from where Brecht stood during WWII. I was never personally threatened or exiled, I have not been subjected to ethnic persecution or military conflict. Like Bracht, however, I also found myself feverishly reading the news countless times, trying to keep up with that play of pain, greatness and political violence.

- Gustavo Balbela, Elsa Gregersdotter, Andrej Lamut, Ida Nissen, and André Viking, A Forged and Delicate Future, ed. Eric Lawton, (Budapest: Robert Capa Centre for Contemporary Photography, 2021).
- CartaCapital. "Presidente do CFM escreveu parecer que pede liberação de uso da cloroquina," CartaCapital. 18 October 2021. https://www.cartacapital.com.br/politica/presidente-do-cfm-escreveu-parecer-que-pede-liberacao-de-uso-da-cloroquina/; Conselho Federal de Medicina. "PROCESSO-CONSULTA CFM No 2." 2020. https://sistemas.cfm.org.br/normas/visualizar/pareceres/BR/2020/4. Brazil's Federal Council of Medicine role, supporting the use of that medicine against COVID-19 (despite the lack of evidence supporting that practice) was key for Bolsonaro's push into denying the pandemic. He would argue that, since there was an effective medicine against the disease, measures such as the use of masks and social distancing were unnecessary and that those who defended them were enemies of the people and were trying to attack his government. (Della Coletta 2020; Uol 2020a; 2020b).
- 17 Gilbert, Simondon, *Do Modo de Existência Dos Objetos Técnico*, trans. by Vera Ribeiro, (Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto Editora, 2020), 247.
- Allan Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," in *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works, 1973-1983,* 3–22, (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984), 3.
- A political-humoristic podcast could be mentioned here as an important reference too. *Medo e Delírio em Brasília*, by Pedro Daltro and Cristiano Botafogo (n.d.), features a long list of bibliography at the end of each episode, when they mention the authors of each one of the dozens of voices used to compose their work. A bit like the bibliography of a good book, I realised that such a section had produced an interest in its own right by making visible the diversity of elements and actors that were brought together to compose any given piece.
- The first one is *The Surviving Image: Phantoms of Time and Time of Phantoms: Aby Warburg's History of Art* (Didi-Huberman [2002] 2013), a more bibliographical take on Warburg's work as a whole, rather than a deep dive on the *Atlas Mnemosyne*, his final work and arguably his most epistemologically ambitious project
- 21 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Atlas ou o Gaio Saber Inquieto: o Olho da História III*, trans. Márcia Arbex and Vera Casa Nova, (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2018), 24–25; emphasis mine.
- 22 Ibid., 27; emphasis mine.
- 23 Ibid., 59-60; emphasis mine.
- 24 Unfortunately, a detailed commentary on the signifying relationships between the elements in the atlas is not yet available in English. However, it can be found in Portuguese in the last chapter of my master's dissertation (BALBELA DE AZAMBUJA, 2022): "Um passeio pelo painel de correspondências."
- In the Brazilian Portuguese translation by Márcia Arbex and Vera Casa Nova, *Le gai savouir inquiet* is translated as *O gaio saber inquieto*, or, literally in English, *The gay unquiet knowledge*.
- 26 Didi-Huberman, Atlas ou a Gaio Saber Inquieto, 304.
- 27 FERNANDES, Milor. Unknown date. Apud NASCIMENTO, Paulo Henrique Albuquerque do. 2023, p. 15. "O Brasil tem um enorme passado pela frente": uma arqueogenealogia do ataque/defesa à educação no Brasil contemporâneo (2018-2020)'. PhD thesis, Fortaleza: Universidade Federal do Ceará. http://repositorio.ufc.br/handle/riufc/71989.