Cafecito with Talita Trizoli (2025)

Venue: University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus

Moderator: Ali Petru Gerena

Portuguese into Spanish translation: Cláudia De Souza

Translation from Spanish into English: Alejandro Álvarez Nieves

Introduction

RAMARIS:

(in Spanish)

Let's get started, then. Good morning to all of you. Welcome to this Cafecito. This is the third activity we have this week. In this case, we will be featuring art historian Talita Trizoli. I wanted to mention and give a special welcome to the current students of the Women and Gender Studies Program courses. In this case, we will be holding a conversation in which we hope you will have questions and comments for our guest. This activity is possible thanks to a collaboration between UPR Caribe Digital and the University of Texas at Austin, through the Mellon Fellowship for High Impact Scholars, Artists and Journalists. I am Dr. Ramaris Albert Trinidad, and, in this case, I would like to welcome Talita Trizoli and our moderator Ali Petru, whom many of you will already know. She will be moderating this activity this morning, and before we move on to this conversation, I would like to comment a little on her most significant biographical data. Ali Petru Gerena is a learner, a teacher, and a dissident researcher. She is interested in the history of medicine and gender relations and racialization, bionecropolitics, and resistance from decolonial feminism. She is passionate about visual arts and oral history. Among her works, she is co-author of the "Artwork for Mar de Islas: Caribbean performance summit]; the documentation of *Cerezas por papeles* [Cherries for documents], a photo-essay by artist Helen Ceballos; the photo of the song "Memoria de Congo Chimbita" [Memoirs of Combo Chimbita]; and the work *Ojos que decretan: Género y medicina colonial* [Decreeing eyes: gender and colonial medicine]. She is currently working with her grandmother on a transmedia piece. She is collaborating in the coordination of institutions of the University Studies for Inmates program and offers courses in Women and Gender Studies at the Cayey and Río Piedras campuses of the University of Puerto Rico. Welcome, Ali.

ALI:

(in Spanish)

First of all, we thank the UPR [Caribe] Digital project, Dr. Ramaris Albert Trinidad, Dr. Nadjah Ríos Villarini, and the entire team for making this possible, for weaving this fabric. Also, to the Women and Gender Studies major, to the students, to Dr. Alexandra Pagán Vélez for inviting me to this conversation. At this point, I am going to read part of the biography of our guest, Dr. Talita Trizoli.

ALI:

(in Portuguese)

At this time, I will read part of the biography of our guest, Dr. Talita Trizoli. Welcome to Puerto Rico.

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Thank you.

ALI:

(in Portuguese)

Welcome to the College of General Studies at the University of Puerto Rico.

ALI:

(in Spanish)

Talita Trizoli is a leading Brazilian curator and theorist. She specializes in feminist art and contemporary art from Brazil. She obtained her bachelor's degree at the Federal University of Uberlândia, specializing in painting, contemporary art, feminist art, and education. At the University of São Paulo, she earned a master's degree in Aesthetics and Art History, a doctorate in Education and a postdoctoral degree in Brazilian Studies. Since 2016, she has curated exhibitions with a feminist slant that focus on the works of women artists, whether emerging or long-established. Trizoli has also worked as a professor at institutions such as the University of

São Paulo, teaching courses related to art history and painting. Her work as an educator of art and feminism transcends the university field. It extends to museums and cultural associations such as the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art. Trizoli has also published journal articles and book chapters such as "Arte y feminismo en la dictadura militar de Brasil" [Art and Feminism in Brazil's Military Dictatorship], published in 2014; and "A través de un espejo: Subjetividades femeninas en el arte brasileño de los años 70" [Trough a mirror: feminine subjectivities in 70s Brazilian Art], published in 2021. She has curated projects related to feminism, gender, politics, and ethics in the arts. Trizoli's commendable professional career has earned her grants and scholarships from organizations such as the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development, the São Paulo Research Support Foundation, and the Brazilian Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel. Currently, as Dr. Ramaris mentioned, she is a scholar of the Mellon Fellowship for High Impact Scholars, Artists and Journalists, the project that makes this Cafecitos initiative possible... and with this introduction, we welcome Dr. Talita Trizoli.

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Well, good morning to all, everyone, *todes*, *todes* in neutral gender, right? Acknowledgements are much more than necessary. I would like to thank Ali for being here making this intervention, this dialogue. To all the UPR team, who has greeted us in a very warm and professional manner—Ramaris, Nadjah, the Mellon Fellowship, because, right, people, they are paying everything around here for us. Keep it that way, funding research, right? And also, to Sérgio, who is doing the translation; I have already apologized in advance if I start talking too fast or swearing a lot, because it is part of the Brazilian culture to swear a lot.

Well, this presentation, I don't know if you attended the other two presentations of my colleagues Lester and Luz, two dear ones here with me, but this presentation is a little bit different. Instead of making a more personal digression on my research trajectory, I think it would be more interesting to introduce you to what the heck I have been doing in academia for the last 20 years. Because I realized, last night, reviewing the presentation, that yes, I've been working for 20 years with this great problem that is art and feminism in Brazil. I'm old, but that's okay.

Well, what I am going to show you today is a compilation of some classes that I present in introductory courses on the subject, but it is also a book project, which I plan to deliver as the final product of this Mellon Fellowship funding ....and this book project is precisely a bibliographic compilation of several Brazilian research colleagues who have investigated this theme, this convergence between art and feminism in Brazil. Because we have a considerable theoretical production, but all in Portuguese, and the academic world reads in English.

We can discuss geopolitical issues later, because it's being recorded, but that's okay, let's continue.

Well, about today's presentation: Feminisms in the History of Brazilian Art.

Art Has No Gender, but the Artist Does

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

I'd like to begin my presentations on this topic by using this phrase from Lucy Lippard, that perhaps you, who are there, victims of the research area, were co-opted, seduced by the feminist academic research field. She is an art critic, curator, theorist, quite relevant for us to understand this constitution of the idea of art-feminism taking the United States as a reference. Because, after all, the United States has a scary epistemological machine.

And when she was very young, she was just starting to do that militant curatorial work in the feminist field, she went to participate in a talk at the A.I.R. Gallery, which still exists today in New York, and during the conference, a figure, a straight white male, who will ask those impertinent questions. Ok, all good.

And they asked her, "But why are you there presenting these feminist issues? When you look at a work of art, it doesn't matter who made it; the work itself matters. That moment when you take a deep breath, you do your anger management towards something very objective." And she responds, "Look, of course art, the artistic phenomenon, the artistic object, it has no gender, because it is not an individual. But the artist does, the producing agent does."

And I think this is a phrase that summarizes very well what is the methodological approach that is worked, not only with feminism, but in that great umbrella that is political art. You are going to consider the social markers, the agents that participate in the artistic system, the economic system, the social system.

Waves of Feminism

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

I am using the most common, the most canonical historical cutout of feminism itself, which is the division by waves. We know that this methodology of separation by waves is problematic, it has its limitations, but it has a didactic aspect, so that at least one begins to navigate in this aspect, in this historical cutout. So, I use here this division of four waves of the feminist movement in the West to try to verify the links of Brazilian artistic production to these topics. So, what is usually said is that the first wave was suffrage, universal suffrage mainly, and that it had as its main characteristic the struggle for the right to political representation, but also for literacy, women's education. This is an aspect that will be important in the next slide.

The second wave, which is when feminism is effectively named as a political movement, which occurs from the end of the 50s, beginning of the 60s, and which goes until the mid 70s and 80s, because, from that moment on, we have what is called the third wave, which would be the politics of difference. I am going to get to those aspects, but I may be repeating something you already know, but it is important to make these points.

And then the fourth wave, which I, particularly with some Brazilian colleagues, place as a framework at the beginning of the 2000s, which is when you begin to have a more widespread, more widespread access to the Internet, to social platforms; and that allows a more agile connection of a new generation of feminists to try to defend their rights of existence, basically ..... But, moving on. In the Brazilian case, suffrage... These Brazilian suffragettes that I have selected for you are the best known, and yet it is only in the last five years that a movement of biographical, academic and theoretical research on them has begun.

Leolinda de Figueiredo Daltro, who is the first figure here, a serious photograph, but, anyway, she was a very serious person, but Leolinda was a woman belonging to the Brazilian upper class, an oligarchic class, landowners, but, anyway, she made good use of those resources. She was a woman very committed to the implementation of schools for girls, for young people, and not only that, but she was also a great advocate of education, of literacy in Portuguese for indigenous children. Therefore, this places her in a place of defense of those subjects who are in a condition of social fragility.

It's clear that you are going to see, you are going to read actually, her texts at the time, and it's a bit complicated, because she has a very paternalistic discourse with those children... but, that's the 19th century, right, people? Sometimes that's the only thing what you can work with.

Bertha Lutz, perhaps the best known; if you search the internet, Google will bring up many biographies about her. She was the head, the leader of what we call institutionalized feminism, because she was the daughter of scientists, she became the first university professor at the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro, as a biologist, and because she belonged to a family with ties to the United States, if memory serves me correctly, she had a very constant transit with the suffragette groups in the United States and also in England. It is a very institutionalized feminism. She was one of the people who negotiated with the Brazilian government the right to vote for women in 1932.

We also have Nísia Floresta and Gilka de Costa. Nísia is also a teacher, also a militant in this process of female education and in the struggle for the vote. And Gilka, actually, she is a poet. She is also an educator, a journalist, but, above all, a poet. In case anyone is interested, Gilka is the author of what to this day is understood to be the first production of female erotic poetry in Brazil. Along with this, writing about soccer, about politics, in short, she is a very interesting author.

Racial Whitening of Brazilian Feminists

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

I bring this compendium of images of these authors also to point out a very pertinent aspect in the context of Brazilian society. In these photographs, it is possible to see that these women are misunderstood because they are white. They are understood and read in the Brazilian context as white. However, what actually happens is that these women undergo a whitewashing process. This is an extremely violent State project of racial whitewashing, which even becomes a process of image production.

In the case of Gilka, for example, in this photograph, she is depicted with white features. But this is a photographic game because, in reality, she was a mixed-race woman, a *mulata*; but this happens with several figures in Brazil. And I want to point this out because what you are going to see here in the presentation, up to a certain point, is a considerable volume of predominantly white feminist, political, and artistic agents. And this says a lot about the Brazilian context, even though it is a mixed-raced country, where 70% of the population nowadays calls itself Black. Historically, we have a social division in the political participation of these agents. Anyway, I continue because now I'm worried about the schedule and I have a huge volume of things to say.

As I had commented, let's give it a try. Voting in Brazil was instituted in 1932, in the case of women. Prior to that, there were some specific conditions for voting. You had to be a male, white, and a landowner. You had to prove that you could read. This means that a considerable, gigantic part of the population was excluded, especially in a country with a slave-owning economy. Brazil was the last Latin American country to abolish the slave system. And even after abolition, there was still the smuggling of kidnapped Black body subjects to work on the plantation side. I forgot the word now.

So, in 1932, during the Getúlio Vargas government, which at that time was a democratic government, Bertha Lutz, of whom I showed the photograph in the previous slide, she was the main negotiator to institute women's suffrage in Brazil. Well, everything was fine until Getúlio Vargas staged a coup d'état in 1936 and then everyone lost the right to vote, but we had women's suffrage in 1932. At least we had that, right? We laugh to keep from crying.

The New Woman

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

The fact is that this constitution of the vote in 1932 corresponds to the constitution of a collective feminine subjectivity based on the idea of the new woman, which is that figure of the woman in the 20s and 30s, the interwar period, in which she is politicized, wants to participate in public activities, is literate, works mainly in the journalistic written media. So, we have the construction of a public feminine archetype linked to this idea of a supposed feminine freedom. And then, along with this, going finally into the artistic field, which is what interests us here, we have a situation of gender emergence in Brazil, because our artistic modernity is marked by two women artists: Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral. And it is very interesting to observe in these two artists how they are two opposite views of these feminine archetypes.

Anita Malfatti: Modern Artist and Heroine

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

In the case of Anita Malfatti, for example, here are some pictures of her, pretty, all pretty. Well, Anitta comes from a social class that today we can understand as middle class, that is, she needs to work to pay her bills, she is not an heiress, she does not live on resources. She is a white woman, with an Italian surname, but with family connections in the United States and Germany. Despite certain financial limitations, she manages to obtain money to study in Germany and the United States, and then returns to Brazil, on these round trips with scholarships, to present her work. I don't know to what extent you are familiar with Brazilian art, because it is a very specific niche, we Brazilians do not suppose any cultural domination outside our context. But Anitta Malfatti is pointed out by several theorists and her contemporary colleagues as the first modern female artist, as a heroine.

Why a heroine? When she returns from her study trip to the United States, she presents this type of work: *La Ventania* [the windstorm] and *La Estudante Rosa* [the pink student]; *La Ventania* is one of my favorites of hers. And they are works that are guided by an expressionist language, with a very strong brushstroke marking, of movement, and a considerable pictorial contrast. And when

he shows this in a solo exhibition in São Paulo, in 1917, if my memory serves me correctly, at the beginning of the exhibition people are very enthusiastic, but then a critical article by Monteiro Lobato, an art critic and writer of the time, trashes the exhibition. And that's a scandal, people. It is chaos. It's chaos, it's chaos. People who had bought her works returned them. She looks very bad, very upset. And then it becomes a circus situation, really, because from that article a public conflict is established between what is understood as a modern artistic language and a language of academic character. If anyone has an interest in this topic, I recommend the research of my former postdoctoral supervisor, Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni. Kisses, Simioni.

Because she has a book in which she discusses precisely this conflict between Lobato and Malfatti, and how this is subsequently constructed as a founding moment of Brazilian modern art. So, from this event, Anita Malfatti begins to be publicly portrayed as the poor artist, woman, victim of a terrible art critic. Although, if you read the article, Monteiro Lobato praises her as an artist and criticizes the aesthetic choice. This is important. But the fact is that Anita —just taking up this figure again— ends up becoming the archetype of the poor victimized artist. And she always hated that image, but it was stronger than she was.

And this is reinforced by the fact that she is born with a small deformity in her hand, something that took her out of that marriage market scenario, which we know existed and exists to this day, unfortunately, and that made her be forced to professionalize as an artist. Anita was fully aware of her career; she was a teacher. And this profile of Anita —here only showing some images of how her production varies over time— we have it with Tarsila do Amaral, the diva.

Tasila do Amaral

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Tarsila, the little princess of coffee. That was her nickname. Heiress of a large estate, very, very rich, until the market crash in 1929. After that, life became difficult. The fact is that Tarsila is part of this highly privileged camp of the Brazilian class. She goes to study in France, goes first to the Julian Academy, doesn't like it, leaves school and then studies with Leger. And Tarsila then becomes this public diva figure. Take on this modern diva look. This portrait of her, for example,

that you are looking at, reproduced on book covers, is one of her most famous self-portraits, in which she really shows herself as that new diva woman par excellence. Okay, cute, but anyway.

And here are some of her best-known works, as, for example, in the anthropophagy phase, in which she makes that appropriation —today very controversial— of the indigenous and African signs and figures of the Brazilian context, to build these more racist iconic paintings. It's racist, people, there's no other way that should be considered. It is an epochal context, but it is so, we cannot leave it out.

Well, she starts a relationship with Osório César, who is a Brazilian psychoanalyst, quite important in the establishment of artistic treatment workshops for hospitalized people, and they travel to Russia. After this trip to Russia, Tarsila enters this phase of painting workers, urban scenes, a more political production of hers. But my favorite is this one in the MASP.

Art in Brazil in the 60s and 70s

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

1960s and 1970s in Brazil, making a great leap. Here you can see a synthesis of what this Brazilian art scene was like. Also, you can see some names of important authors, linked to each of these artistic movements: Tropicalism: Celso Favaretto; Conceptualism: Luis Camnitzer, Cristina Freire, Andrea Giunta.

And this artistic production of conceptual, pop character, somehow, using some more canonical references, has as a social background the civil-military dictatorship in Brazil. I recommend the film *Ainda Estou Aquí [I'm Still Here]*, for those who have not seen it yet, which won the Oscar for Best Foreign Film, to understand a little of this context. It is important to note that, for both male and female artists, the main feature of the work methodology is negotiation.

You need to be constantly negotiating the type of language, the type of subject matter produced to get the artwork circulating. It is the issue of self-censorship, which was discussed in the other

Cafecitos. So, there is an aspect of self-censorship, but also of negotiation, of moving around the margins to make things work.

(Non)feminist artists of the 60s and 70s

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Here we have some feminist authors of the time, and I am showing you some images of Brazilian artists who, it is important to note, not all of them called themselves feminists. In fact, most of them addressed feminist themes in their works, but they did not self-identify as such, because the word "feminist," the feminist label, was seen as something very pejorative and they were afraid of losing space in the work circuits and being restricted to that perspective. So, it is a very curious thing to observe. For example, you see a work by Regina Vater, but also by Lygia Pape, which is one of my favorites, which clearly has a feminist character —I'm going to explain quickly what it is about— and she says, "No, I'm not a feminist, I don't suffer any problems because I'm a woman." Okay, dear, that's fine. I believe you.

This work by Lygia Pape is called *"Eat me - a gula ou a luxúria?* [gluttony or lust?] and is a multimedia installation with various objects that she creates thinking about the condition of women as objects of consumption. It is also a work that suffered censorship at the opening of its exhibition in São Paulo and later at the MAM [Museum of Modern Art] in Rio de Janeiro. If you are interested, there is a paper of mine in Spanish on this subject in an Argentine publication. I can try to find that text later and send it to the group, which is much easier. But it is a job that requires interaction. This video fragment that you are watching was an advertising piece that circulated on open television, promoting the exhibition. And it's a close up, a video with close up of her mouth with two male colleagues, in which there is an erotic progression in the movement, that you really think about: "My God, it's conceptual pornography on Brazilian open television in the 1970s," and then has a sharp cut to an advertisement for crockery, for cooking. Because she is precisely playing with those signs.... and it was precisely this piece that led to the closing of her exhibition the next day, because it was very explicit.

I like to give this example also precisely because censorship in Brazil works in a moralistic way, mainly in the field of visual arts. It is a moral aspect. They would get stressed, they would get nervous when the symbol of the Brazilian flag or the names of the presidents were misused, but above all the cases of censorship occurred when there were very explicit sexual aspects, mainly done by a woman, because a man can do anything, even stay naked in a museum, and there'd be no problem.

Brazilian Art in the 80s

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Well, and now I want to go quickly into the decade of the 80s, which is the political opening in Brazil with the end of the military dictatorship. This is the moment when the institutionalized feminist movement was consolidated. In the 1960s and 1970s, the feminist movement was active through publications, but very quietly, precisely because of the constitution of a violent state. And also, because the Brazilian left of the time considered feminism to be a bourgeois question. Simply put. So, no, not that thing called feminism. When we have the socialist revolution, we will all be equal. And then women were still serving coffee, literally, at Communist Party meetings. All is well.

We jump to the decade of the 80s, we are going to have, then, the institution, the restitution of Brazilian democracy and the elaboration of a new Constitution. And in the elaboration of this new Constitution, a committee of women senators and deputies called *lobby do batom* [lipstick lobby], which was a pejorative name applied, but which they assume as a strategy, precisely because it is a group of women from different parties—eft, right, center, top, bottom, yes-—is going to be elaborated. All of them sat at the table to try to negotiate the establishment of basic women's rights in the new Constitution of 1988.

Here you can see a picture of some of these members. Notice that there is only one Black woman in it, Benedita da Silva, wonderful, one of our representatives. And it was also in the 1980s that a paradigm shift occurred in the position of Brazilian artists with respect to feminism. They are

artists who have already gone through the political opening, who begin to have access to information more easily and begin to incorporate this in a more present way in their production.

One of them is Cristina Salgado. Márcia X, my favorite, because she is super ironic, full of double metaphors. Maria Lídia Magliani, despite her name, is one of the few Black Brazilian artists participating in the exhibition circuit.

Rosana Paulino, wonderful, contemporary, she starts in the 80s, 90s, and today she is one of the most outstanding and important artistic figures as well, with a social conscience of the role she occupies as a black woman artist. She opens the way for a whole generation. Beth Moysés.

Fourth Feminist Wave

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

And there we come to the fourth wave, in which we are still in, in which we had several feminist uprisings in the decade of the 10s and in the aughts and, shortly thereafter, a setback. In the Brazilian context, we identify this feminist uprising from this systematic presence of women's public marches, the so-called "March of the Whores" or "Marcha das Galdérias," in which even some figures who later went to the extreme right participated; that is, feminism is not exempt from fascist insertion, quite the contrary. And we will indeed have a generation of artists who place themselves at the forefront of the feminist struggle, such as, for example, Santa Rosa Barreto, Aleta Valente—which is a complicated case, I can discuss it later, but Aleta is quite controversial—Fabiana Faleiros, who is dear to me; Élle de Bernardini, a super politicized trans woman; and this, dear Charlene Bicalho, who is a doctoral research colleague at the University of Texas, and has a very interesting work of institutional critique as well.

And the fact that also, in the fourth wave, we finally started to have some male artists who are effectively allies of the feminist agenda, which is a bit difficult considering the socialization. But Francisco Hurtz is a white, gay artist, fully aware of that place, a devourer of feminist theory, and he does a whole work of feminist critical reading on the use, on the sexualization of the gay body. So, it is very interesting to see how he manages to bring all that theoretical baggage of more

than 50 years to address precisely the issue of masculinization, of toxic masculinity present in his production.

And I end, effectively, with this phrase of Simone de Beauvoir—which is a slap in the face—so that every time we think we are taking a step forward, moving towards a more libertarian, more tolerant social structure, effectively with epistemological exchanges, we blink two seconds and elect improper people. We have setbacks again. And well, I'll end here, people. Sorry for the rush, but, anyway, if you have any questions, we'll be around later.

ALI:

(in Spanish)

Many thanks to Talita Trizoli for this historical tour. We know that it is complex to talk about so many aspects in a short period of time. Also, I would like, at the beginning, not to leave it to the end, to thank again the simultaneous interpretation team and the UPR Caribe Digital for the fairness in language. It is a political act to be able to express oneself from the mother tongue, and there's also plenty to talk about here. At this point, we will move on to a round, perhaps, of comments and questions.

ALI:

(in Portuguese)

Talita, you work mainly with feminist aspects of gender politics. You quote Lucy Lippard with the following sentence: "It is clear that art has no gender, but artists do." Why is it relevant for you to research feminist art? What moves you? What goes through your body and heart in that context?

Race Privilege and Gender Oppressions

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Look, in my experience, there is no researcher or militant agent that randomly gets involved with this type of subject matter. This generally arises from an experience, an experience in which one perceives that one is in a condition of vulnerability. Although in the Brazilian context I come from a privileged context, because, people, the color of the person, white, obviously white, in Brazil

that makes a huge difference. No one stops me in the street like this; I don't suffer threats of physical violence like my Black friends.

When there's a party at home, I'm the one who, at two in the morning, takes them in an Uber or helps them take the subway, because no one stops me. Nobody stops me, simply. And I also come from a context in which, well, I am from a middle-class family, I had access to free education, thank God, in Brazil, it's 100% free. I have had research funding since undergraduate school, so I have been working on this topic for 20 years; I have received research funding since mid-undergraduate school. So, I come from a privileged context in that sense. Even if I come from this privileged context, this does not mean that I am not at the mercy of macho, gender-based violence.

I come from a family with a fairly traditional upbringing, from the interior of São Paulo, from the state of São Paulo, Brazil. Family of Italian origin, a family that understands that women are the property of the family, that women serve men. So, growing up, I felt all that, that imposed social constraint. And I was lucky enough, from a very young age, to get into a library very early in the morning and watch movies like crazy. My parents didn't interfere in this sense, thank God (laughs).... And that opened up perspectives for me, even confrontational ones. And of course, this also comes with the perspective that, for example, my mother was a housewife. My grandfather forbade her from getting a college education, from taking the entrance exam, from applying to college.

She was a woman who spent her whole life devoting herself to the family, and once the children left home, empty nest syndrome. So, I had that example very clear, and also in the environment of other families, colleagues. To me, that was very evident: that there is something wrong.

And then, at the university, in the college of arts—because in this way, I have a degree in painting, another life, another life—my work already brought those elements that are identified with feminist language. And when I went to research, so as not to remain doing only narcissistic work, only about me, about my experience, it was when I saw that the bibliography was predominantly in English, not even in Spanish, and I understood that this was my battlefield. More than as an artist, living from art, a thousand questions about the possibility and difficulty of an artistic career,

I found in the field of research a place where I could effectively contribute. Or, as I often tell my students, a place where I could organize my rage. Because anger is a super genuine feeling; well applied. We can't set fire, otherwise we go to jail. So, what do we do? Research. We put it in writing. Did I answer? Okay?

ALI:

(in Portuguese)

The category "woman," according to some feminist currents, such as Black, lesbian and decolonial feminists, is a colonial and limiting category. Does your curatorial and theoretical work take into account a breadth in the construction of women?

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Yes, it is essential. It is a welcoming effort, I would say, whether in research or in curatorship. Because there is a generation of women who identify as cis women, right? They are anchored in a series of values and languages connected to this more traditional perspective. So, there is a generation in which gender is fluid, which is trans women, trans men, in which you need to deal with those manifestations of subjectivity that break down barriers, right? Therefore, there is an effort, on the one hand, to respect these specificities without cancelling out the others. Because that is where fascism is inserted into the libertarian movements. We begin to generate a division based on the difference, instead of understanding that, in the difference, we are all screwed. Mainly with this conservative wave that has occurred in recent years.

So, whether in the curatorial work, in the presentation of artists who have diverse understandings of their gender subjectivity—which are not only static, but fluid—in which they understand themselves through these possibilities of language, it is a matter of presenting dissent. You know? Dissent from a place of epistemological production (inaudible). Does it make sense?

ALI:

(in Spanish)

Thank you. I am going to switch to Spanish now. Thank you, Talita, for making a connection, too, between the curatorial experience and work and the research work. During your doctorate, you worked with aspects about art and women in Brazil in the 60s and 70s of the last century, in a context that we also saw, which commented on the military dictatorship or the process of the military dictatorship. I remember that, in my graduate studies, I worked with some aspects of the dictatorship in Chile, especially with the political and medical discourse, from some of the magazines, and there were some very marked incidences there regarding the binarity between women and men, but also, within the category of women, there are some implications of political, gender, geopolitical, racial aspects... I would like to know what was the approach by the dictatorship in Brazil, stressing that each process has what would be known then as situated history. In the particular context of Brazil, what caught your attention at a conceptual level? What were you looking at for that, shall we say research fabric?

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

From what I understood, you are asking me what was my point of attraction to focus on the artistic production of the 60s and 70s, right? Initially, it was because, taking as a reference the American feminism, this was a moment of women's uprising in that context and that expanded to several countries, to several other communities. And then, when you looked at Brazilian historiography, not only artistic historiography, but also social and economic historiography, it appeared in a very cloudy way. There was almost no mention of women's issues in that period. It was a little strange to notice how, in that place that had such economic and cultural power, which is the case of the United States, a place to which Brazilian culture looked to as a reference, also because of the... My God! I forgot the name...

ALI:

(in Spanish)

Operation Condor.

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Exactly. Mainly because of Operation Condor. *How is it that this aspect of soft power is not manifesting itself in the Brazilian context?* And then came the great idea, talking with theorists, even with theorists who lived it at the time. Annateresa Fabris, for example, who is dear to me. In a conversation over coffee we were having, she is a retired professor from the University of São Paulo, Annateresa. She said to me, "Talita, these artists, they were consuming a very commercial feminism." There were two aspects. There was a commercial feminism, which could be identified in women's magazines, such as Revista Cláudia, which was very diluted, it talked a lot about middle-class, white women, in a binary, very traditional love relationship. And, on the other hand, there were the Brazilian militants, who were exiled in France. And there, dealing with feminist issues, but still in a very discreet way, let's say, because, as they were inserted in the struggle for democracy, allied to leftist movements, the leftist movement is super binary, it is super traditional.

So, every time they tried to put that question on the table, they would say: "No, but wait! What about women? And the question of domestic work? Who is going to take care of the children if we are going to give birth? Do we also want to participate in the same meeting tables?" That was like: "No, that's a bourgeois question, it's not relevant, leave it for later." The same applies to the racial issue, "Ah, because when the revolution happens, there will be no more color." We know that this is not the case. And with gender dissidence issues then, well, in short... it's as conservative as possible.

So, I was interested to see how this contradiction occurred in that context. And this is an aspect that only began to change, this social dynamic, starting in the 2000s in Brazil. And yet, on the basis of much shouting and much discussion. That's why I end with Beauvoir's phrase: you will have to be vigilant all the time to protect your rights, you know? Because in two seconds they take them away.

ALI:

(in Spanish)

They are telling me to, then, open the conversation to the students as well. I have some comments and other questions, but what we can do is make an exchange. Who would like to comment? Any questions? And then we come back here. Does anyone have a comment... question?

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

There is no wrong question, okay, people? All is well.

ALEXANDRA:

(in Spanish)

Greetings. Thank you very much. I was fascinated, and I wanted to keep looking at the images. Well, I have a question regarding indigenous women, in terms of representation as a subject in art pieces, but also as artists. No, how what: where are they? I was curious about the intersectionality of race.

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Well, until the third wave, let's say, until the early aughts, the question of indigenous women's representation was merely representative. They were an object. It's a topic, you know? There was no such insertion of them as creative agents. And that began to change in the 2000s, when there also began to be a greater circulation of some figures within the university environment. That is, it is when they receive institutional and intellectual endorsement. Yes, exactly. It's that face itself. And then we started to see a few more figures present on the circuit. Now, a curious thing. Like many Black women artists, they have a very ambivalent relationship with the feminist discourse, because the feminist discourse is very white, it is middle class. It is a conflict that, in the end, is difficult. And there is also an internal issue in them. I, talking with some researchers, outside the arts field, but who are in the social sciences working with this new generation of indigenous girls, that when they had access to the feminist agenda, to the possibility of living a feminist experience, this came into direct conflict with some communities, such as the caciques and *pagés*, who did not want women to be caciques and *pagés*. So, it is interesting to see how some of these young women, these women, take the feminist discourse and use it as a device, as a weapon to negotiate, even within the community, their place as a subject. So, it is always a very delicate field of negotiation.

Now, we have some figures that are participating in the artistic circuit, but they are very aware that the place where they are is a place of fragility. They are not under the illusion that, "Wow, I'm the equivalent version of a great white artist," No. They understand that they have a very unique place of negotiation with collectors and curators. But that is very recent. This is very recent. I think they are more concerned with securing a more collective place, of identity, than with the "I," Indigenous woman, our I, Indigenous subject.

ALI:
(in Spanish)
Any other person, comment, question?

TALITA:
(in Portuguese)
Gossip?

ALI:
(in Spanish)
Come closer, come closer.

TALITA:
(in Portuguese)
Come on, come on.

STUDENT:
(in Spanish)
Thank you for the conference, thank you very much. Today, precisely, today we had, Coral and I, a class on Hispanic colonial art and we read the essay by (inaudible) and the professor asked us to extend it to Hispanic colonial art. What can you tell us about the gender experience in art, the history of Brazilian art? I presume you specialize in contemporary art, but if you could give us pointers to artists from the colonial or early republican period....

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Artists of the 19th century who are interesting objects of study—Julieta de França.

Julieta de França was the object of research of my former boss Simioni, whom I have already mentioned here, during her postdoc in São Paulo. She was a Brazilian sculptor, of mixed race, from the Amazon region, but she moved to Rio de Janeiro to receive an academic education in sculpture, which is a medium, for example, that, until today, is generalized as masculine, isn't it? And she gets a scholarship to France. In France she studies at the academy, manages to develop her work very well, but, when she returns to Rio de Janeiro, she is disqualified by the professors. She faces evaluation, and that put her in a huge limbo. So, it is a very interesting case to observe, first, her social circulation as an artist, the negotiations that took place and the type of institutional violence she suffered. So, she would be an interesting reference.

There is also another figure who is Georgina de Albuquerque. Georgina, white, okay? White, painter. She was director of the Academy of Fine Arts of Rio de Janeiro. The first and one of the only women to coordinate. She was a painter of historical character, which is quite difficult to achieve within a very traditional academic language. But she is also an interesting figure because of the kind of public negotiation she performs being an artist, teacher, academy director, professional and, at the same time, having to affirm, "above all I am a mother, above all I am a wife."

Look for the work of Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni, who is a specialist in 19th-century Brazil. And then she's going to be better able to help you track down those artists. Because, in truth, there are several. Several. But it is only very recently that studies and publications are emerging and bringing these figures to light. And its historical conflicts as well. Because, right? Being a woman is not easy, no. Being a sexual dissident is not easy, no, people. It is complicated.

ALI:

(in Spanish)

Any other person, comment, question?

STUDENT:

(in Spanish)

How, in Brazil, right? Uh... how has feminism been depicted at some point in time in a derogatory way and how is that issue going on at this moment in the country?

Feminist Spring

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Look, we have a moment in Brazil, which is 2015, that we call the "feminist spring," right? It is part, precisely, of that period of a series of marches, of young girls who begin to organize themselves in collectives, who go to the streets, who elaborate projects of social criticism and support. So, we have that feminist uprising, let's say so, that feminist spring in 2015. But, then, we have Bolsonaro, don't we? And there, 2017, big trauma. And, from then on Bolsonaro comes in, these movements need to become more strategic, more silent, because institutional security is lost. In addition, of course, to all this dissemination of a traditional macho discourse.

It is in Bolsonaro's government also that we are going to have a very high number of cases of sexual violence and domestic violence, because those subjects felt, and still feel, authorized to do those kinds of things. And, even with the return of the Lula government, the feminist movement, in a more public, more mediatic sphere, no longer has the same presence.

I usually say that it went out of fashion, mainly in the artistic field, because after we had the arrival of the exhibition *Mulheres radicais* [radical women] which went to the Pinacoteca de São Paulo in 2018, and then the MASP [São Paulo Museum of Art] did the collective exhibit *Hisorias das mulheres, historias feministas"* [Women's History, Feminist Stories], we no longer had any more big exhibitions in big Brazilian institutions with that focus. There are singles pieces by women artists, but their feminism is included as a footnote. One of the reasons I'm so grateful to the Mellon Foundation for paying me to be here, right? Because there is no more funding field for researcher there, right? And women artists who position themselves as feminists, they, time and again, have to negotiate that narrative.

They choose the spaces in which they effectively position themselves. Because Brazilian collectors, who are the ones who move the circuit, they are conservative, voted for Bolsonaro. It is a profound contradiction to see them buying works of art by indigenous artists, Black artists, trans women, trans men.... and, publicly, they say no, that we must end this policy of diversity, end the quotas. In short, contradictions of the system. You have to organize the rage, basically.

ALI:

(in Spanish)

Thank you, Talita. And a little bit picking up on the topic of negotiation, on strategy in the times that, in the context we are living in, and also in the origin of the project that you mentioned before in the introduction as the process of whitening as well, and the implications of the construction of those femininities, of that project as well... In that line, why would it be, or if it is important for you, the collective work, for example, curatorial? It is a compound question. Why would collective work be important? And what do you also think when you see the blank space? How do you feel when you go to curate a work? Why do you choose what you choose? What drives you to do that?

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Look, above all, curatorial work is a collective work. Despite all the narcissistic delirium of the curator, right? Curatorship is a teamwork; it is negotiation work. It's not that diva moment, "Oh, I'm going to create a narrative about the artist's work." No. You are developing a work of listening, of reception of these works. So, most of my curatorial projects were collaborative, you know? In duos, because I really believe that this way the narcissistic place of this type of work is eliminated.

And with regard to white space, alas, I loathe the white cube, people! I hate the white cube. I believe that to think of curatorial work is to think of a way of presenting a narrative. So, it is important that you consider the contingency space in which these works will operate. They are not detached from reality. They are inserted in a historical, social context, aren't they? So, really, I understand curatorship as a work of negotiation and listening. So much so, that I have a feminist artists' studio group. First semester, when a new artist comes in, I tell them, "Take your ego off the table. This here is not about you. You are working in a group. You do your work in your

workshop, but when you come to the group, it's a collective exchange. You bring your problems to share collectively, but it's not a platform for a me, me, me, me, me discourse." We already have plenty of that in the commercial art system. I am not interested in that sense.

ALI:

(in English)

If we have time, we can also continue the conversation. In the process, when you were showing some of the images, and if I remember correctly, during the master's degree you worked with the artist Regina Vater.

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Yes.

TALITA:

(in English)

I have a photo.

ALI:

(in English):

What did it mean to you to work with Regina Vater's artistic fabric?

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Okay. Regina was an accidental find. I was looking at a compilation of artists who participated in a group exhibition in Brazil, and then I saw a photographic work of hers—it's not this one, it's another one—in which she photographed the construction of an Umbanda altar on a beach. And that clicked for me. But, for God's sake, this woman is working with everything that is rejected in the official narrative of Brazilian art! So, there is a predominance of female images of Saints, of Orixás. And then, she was living at the time in Austin, which is a coincidence, because I'm in Austin today. And we were talking by e-mail, she was sending me the material, and it was a very

interesting case to see how she was an artist who participated in so many relevant activities in the art world, both in Brazil and in the United States, but nobody mentioned her. It's a classic, isn't it? It is a classic with many artists.

And then, in those conversations, she showed me the material, opened her archive, and it was possible to reconstruct a professional and biographical trajectory of her activity. Regina is one of the few artists who assumed herself as a feminist at that time. And he paid a price for that, of real professional rejection. It's no coincidence that you moved to the United States at a certain time, because you couldn't find work here, is it? So, it was cool, it was good. Working with her was interesting. She was a starting point to later think about a much broader panorama of the presence of women artists, which was what I worked on in my doctorate.

ALI:

(in English)

Well, thank you very much to Dr. Talita Trizoli. The clock is ticking. Thanks again to the UPR Caribe Digital project, the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Puerto Rico for this experience. And may more invitations like this come to give continuity and, above all, weave experiences also with the Caribbean and Central and South America and those conversations. So, thank you very much, Talita.

TALITA:

(in Portuguese)

Thank you.