

Stripping Time: erotic-political rifts in the performance project *Strip Tempo - contemporary stripteases*

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ABSTRACT – Stripping Time: erotic-political rifts in the performance project *Strip Tempo - contemporary stripteases* – This article instigates relations between an artistic creation and its composition with a political time by examining the artistic project *Strip Tempo – contemporary stripteases* (2018). The live version of the project premiered the same week Jair Bolsonaro was elected president of Brazil. Its online configuration, *Web-Strips* (2021), took place during the pandemic. The text begins with a political and aesthetic contextualization of these performances; then, contributions from psychoanalysis and burlesque arts, along with the notion of performative archive, dialogue with the artistic proposition of stripteases. The conclusion affirms that the stripteases – in their live and remote versions – aesthetically and erotically summarize the trajectories of these contemporary artists. They also mobilize discussions about the naked body – whether as the last frontier of an ultra-conservative morality in Brazil, or as an experience that expresses an erotic drive in the arts.

Keywords: **Striptease. Nudity. Erotica. Memory. Archive.**

RÉSUMÉ – Temps de mise à Nu: ruptures érotico-politiques dans les *Strip Tempo - strip-teases contemporains* – Cet article met en rapport la création artistique et sa composition dans un contexte politique, articulation qui se fait à partir du projet artistique de Bahia *Strip Tempo – stipteases contemporâneos*, dans sa version présentielle (2018) – dont la première a eu lieu la semaine de l'élection de l'actuel président – et dans sa configuration numérique, *Web-Strips* (2021), tenue au moment de la pandémie. La psychanalyse, les arts burlesques et le registre performatif génèrent dans ces pages des interlocutions théoriques en dialogue avec le projet susmentionné, qui chorégraphie des solos en format striptease, réalisant une sorte de résumé esthétique et érotique du parcours d'artistes contemporains et mobilisant des discussions sur le corps nu, soit comme dernière frontière d'une moralité ultra-conservatrice dans le Brésil d'aujourd'hui, soit comme expérience d'un désir pulsionnel dans les arts.

Mots-clés: **Strip-Tease. Nudité. Érotique. Mémoire. Archive.**

RESUMO – Despindo o Tempo: fendas erótico-políticas no projeto cênico *Strip Tempo - stipteases contemporâneos* – Este artigo instiga relações entre uma criação artística e a sua composição com um tempo político em articulação com o projeto artístico baiano *Strip Tempo - stripteases contemporâneos*, em suas versões presencial e a digital, realizada na pandemia. Inicia-se com uma contextualização

política e estética de tais performances; na sequência, conceitos da psicanálise e contribuições das artes burlescas dialogam com a proposta dos stripteases cênicos, além da noção de arquivo performativo. Como conclusão, afirma-se que os stripteases resumem, estética e eroticamente, os percursos de artistas contemporâneos e mobilizam discussões sobre o corpo nu, seja como última fronteira de uma moralidade ultraconservadora no Brasil de hoje ou como experiência de um desejo pulsional nas artes.

Palavras-chave: **Striptease. Nudez. Erótica. Memória. Arquivo.**

A time

On 1 November 2018, on the very week that Jair Bolsonaro was elected president of Brazil – body and performance gave rise to a new far right in the country and the world – ten artists from Bahia removed their clothes on the stage of the Goethe Institut Salvador (Bahia) in an experimental performance in the format of a striptease. The work took place in the same cultural space where one year earlier the artist Wagner Schwartz had presented the work *La Bête* in the program of the eleventh edition of IC - Encontro de Artes¹, realized by the same producer and creative platform – Dimenti Produções Culturais. At the end of that session, the artist, still naked, as he was during the performance, was applauded by the public as he held hands with four children who were part of the presentation – which had an expressly relational dimension. In this episode in the Bahian capital, the children were accompanied by their family members and guardians, who celebrated the coexistence of the children, youth, and adults in an artistic space. The performance in Salvador preceded the presentation of the same work at the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM) of São Paulo. At this time, a photo of a child touching the ankle of the naked artist went viral in the same political agenda that elected that president.

In an article in the newspaper *Jornal Correio* (Ribeiro, 2017), Jorge Alencar – one of the curators of the IC – Encontro de Artes e diretor de *Strip Tempo*, was quoted as declaring: “We are certain that art understands the naked body far beyond sex. It is us. It is a place of resistance and liberty. This conservative wave strengthened by social networks, blames nudity. A naked body is a poetic place”.

In the effort to remove any blame from naked bodies and reconstitute the strength of their drive, this article considers how an artistic project composes with a political time. Not necessarily in the sense of establishing a ho-

mogenizing adhesion, but a erotic and vital confrontation. *Strip Tempo*² appeared in Brazil, and more specifically in Bahia, at a hostile historic moment, with the potential to produce a document by means of performances that realize concrete and symbolic disrobings of the creative paths of a generation of artists, and of a time when the naked body in art appears to be the final frontier of an ultraconservative morality. If, on one hand, what hides a body from its original nudity is removed, on the other, even unclothed, a body is not naked, given that it carries statements, dramatic, aesthetic, and historic markings, as well as interdictions.

Through the rifts we glimpse chaos. In July 2017, the artist from Curitiba Maikon Kempinski's performance *DNA de Dan* was interrupted by military police in the city of Brasília. In an open space in front of the Museu Nacional da República, Maikon was positioned inside a plastic bubble, after having applied to his naked body a substance that gradually dried, until it formed a type of second skin that cracked as he breathed. A sudden disturbance generated by the sight of a naked body convoked authorities to repress the situation. We call attention to this portion of an article in the newspaper *Correio Braziliense*, which documented the event: "Maikon was interrupted by military police who ordered him to get dressed. Then he was placed in the back seat of a police car and taken to the police station" (Rezende, 2017). It is curious that the first order of the police was: get dressed. The primary crime was thus to reveal his own body.

Then, in September, the exhibition *Queermuseu - Cartografias da Diferença na Arte Brasileira* [Queermuseum – Cartographies of Difference in Brazilian Art], at the Santander Cultural de Porto Alegre, curated by Gaudêncio Fidelis, was closed weeks before schedule after a series of protests on social networks that circulated accusations of religious blasphemy, pedophilia, zoophilia, and other crimes. Conservative politicians and activists, such as the Movimento Brasil Livre, accused artists like Adriana Varejão from Rio de Janeiro of inciting pedophilia, using as an example an image from the work *Cena de Interior II*.

Dissidences of the body. In a process of mapping in a tempestuous historic moment, naked bodies take positions to raise ethical demands involving compositive and curatorial practices. This article articulates artistic practice with a theoretical reflection, configuring itself as a research project

through the arts, or research in the arts (Borgdorff, 2012). More than articulate practice and theory, the article begins with the presumption that artistic practice composes, in an essential manner, both the research process and its results. It uses a performative research perspective, whose starting point is precisely the enthusiasm for the practice (Haseman, 2006).

What drives the relations established between body and politics in this text is supported by the understanding of the body as an “agencier” of (com)positions of a common performance, being simultaneously singular and collective, historic and imaginative. Even if the interdictions suffered by artistic work and artists in Brazil today permeate the institutional field, here, the notion of politics – incorporated and relational – goes beyond the frame of institutional politics.

In consonance with Rancière (2005), we understand that art and politics have the potential to intervene in the fabric of sensibility, in what is visible and invisible, as collective modes of enunciation, a way of conceiving the arts as forms of inscription of sense of community. These forms “define how works or performances ‘make politics’, with whatever intentions that guide them, the types of social insertion of artists, or the way that artistic forms reflect social structures or movements ” (Rancière, 2005, p. 18).

The creation of this common scene or world and its (com)positions is also expressed by the perspective presented by Marina Fervenza and Henrique Seidel (2020, p. 05), who are artists and researchers active in Brazil’s burlesque scene. They consider:

Politics as positioning and action in relation to and in the world, in the public domain, in society, even if this positioning is a question, an unnamable dissatisfaction, a desire that still does not have a shape, an intuition that something must be done, here and now. To think of the political dimension of a performance is to think of it in its historic and social context, and to think of it as a creator of context, always in perspective, always connected to the fabric of forces that guide society, it is to think of it, beyond aesthetics, aesthetically, it is to think of it in the world as a being created by and for the world, individually and collectively, it is to think of the quality and of the consequences of this very close relationship with spectators, and of the effects that this closeness has on artists and non-artists. Aesthetics, erotica and politics are thus seen as inseparable approaches that are mutually determinant.

A dream

Naked and before the audience, the performer, researcher, and psychologist Lia Lordelo is on stage holding a microphone and speaking about fundamental Freudian concepts:

The other night I had a dream. I was just like this: standing before a full auditorium and completely naked. Freud spoke of the dream as emotional material full of meaning, like other manifestations such as Freudian slips and jokes. Freud would say that dreams are expressions of unconscious desires, things that we desire without knowing precisely what we desire³.

Previously, on the stage, Lia had emerged from a pile of dolls, singing, and making coffee. A series of actions that intertwine preformistic materials of works that she had previously performed along her path as an artist, and are part of her solo performance in the project *Strip Tempo - stripteases contemporâneos*.

The project, which opened in 2018, combined solo performances in a striptease format that revealed not only bodies, but also the aesthetic and erotic summary of the trajectory of contemporary creators from Bahia. Directed by the director, choreographer, and audiovisual artist Jorge Alencar (2018), each solo performance proposed a composition of scenes, costumes, soundtracks, texts, studies in movement and other aesthetic elements that had been present in the career of each participating artist. While they undress before the public, they provide glimpses of their worldviews, poetics, compositional logics and ethical-aesthetic perspectives. *Strip Tempo* stirred up zones that are not always visible in works (and in the body) of each artist involved.

How can poetics be stripped bare? What materialities and performativities give poetics body? What are the questions that move the works and subjectivities of each artist? With what dramatic texture do they organize their discourses? What principles animate their compositions? From what sources do they drink? How do their works invite (seduce?) their publics? These questions motivate the composition of the solo performances of *Strip Tempo*, and this article ventures responses.

Even as they undress, the artists in *Strip Tempo* inform and reveal what they wear, in the sense of a statement, a language, a marking whose

strength is in the singularity that is not presented naked, but with accentuated marks, given that “the present revealed by the striptease is identity” (Saidel; Fervenza, 2020, p. 15).

The season of the launching in Salvador (BA) was organized in two volumes, each one embracing five different solo performances. Volume one included the dancers and performers Isaura Tupiniquim and Jaqueline Elesbão; the performer and musician Leonardo França; the actor and dancer Neto Machado and the drag queen Rainha Loulou. Volume two featured the singer and actress Lia Lordelo; the actor and dancer Fábio Osório Monteiro; the dancer Jorge Oliveira; the dancer, *capoeirista* and pilates teacher Douglas Gibran; and the dancer and cyclist João Rafael Neto.

Penetrating the environments of the cabaret and drag art, the work helped to make visible an expressive generation of artists from the state of Bahia whose experimentation in art is their underground cabaret and their position in the world. *Strip Tempo* was sustained by the strong vitality of the articulation between contemporary art and the burlesque arts by relating aesthetics and erotica.

Giorgia Conceição (Miss G), a researcher, performer, and reference in contemporary burlesque in Brazil, relates the burlesque to the performative production of bodies whose subjectivities and identities do not fit into homogenizing or canonical standards of official historiography and artistic criticism. “I understand *burla*⁴ as action and the burlesque as a strategy of production of difference. In this sense, its use destabilizes authoritarian politics. The *burla* of the body breaks with normalizing logics and practices, creating possibilities for reinvention” (Conceição, 2018, p. 10). With striptease as one of its main performatic components, the burlesque arts are incorporated in the performance of marginalized bodies.

A drive

It is symptomatic that we gradually have become, especially since Brazil’s parliamentary coup of 2016, a more reactionary, more moralist society – less secular. It is worth recalling (Conceição, 2018) that increasing restrictions and control over bodies; especially bodies that reveal themselves, exposes the revival of these restrictive paranoias, as occurred with the artists mentioned.

We can risk affirming that a naked body is perfect bait – only because it is so obvious. It is as if seeing someone undressed would cause a type of moral alarm to rise that goes beyond, or in a certain way is not able to access, any possible meaning that can be constructed about that nudity. And what is most curious about this alarm is that it can function as a false indexer: the fear of the nude hides questions that are more instigating, complex and destructuring for our human subjectivities. In a certain psychoanalytical sense, the energy that we use to distance ourselves from something is related precisely to the impact that this something causes in us. It would be more honest and productive to understand these fears, hates and disgust as dimensions that constitute us.

In addition to other fundamental concepts, like those presented by the performer Lia in her solo performance in *Strip Tempo*, some of the Freudian ideas are important for us to be able to dialog with these rifts hidden by the naked body. One of them is the notion of drive, first presented in the seminal work *Three Essays about the Theory of Sexuality* (Freud, 1974b). Defined as a type of excess energy, drive is a force inside us that we cannot eliminate; or completely satisfy. From drive comes the desire that moves us and this is an unescapable reality.

The psychoanalyst Perci Schiavon (2019, p. 149) understands drive as an ethical and clinical force of nature that is needed to refine the listening that identifies a type of criteria of life that evaluates the conditions of a process; however, “what we call drive in psychoanalysis is not a state of nature, in eventual confrontation with egoistic and cultural elements, but the active and constant reconstitution, through subliminal essays and acts, of that real multiplicity”.

In its ethical-aesthetic dimension drive requires exercise, given that to exist is, in fact “to act at the level of the drive” (Schiavon, 2019, p. 248). To exist in act, in a voice with integrity, in which drive is defined as a mode of processual subjectivation that takes place by the strength of a continuous action, by means of sublime-action. Whether in psychoanalysis or in art, sublimation is “the direct exercise of drive, its original active feature, and there is no other reality other than its practice” (Schiavon, 2019, p. 155), acting and composing in the world in a pragmatic and experimental manner.

To staunch our drives generates disgust in the body, its framing, and control. This is because the real cannot be contoured. In this real, we must confront our mistakes, and even our differences – alterity, and it is through this that eroticism is forged.

And what is this eroticism? Susan Sontag (1987) denounced an excess of interpretation in art criticism, in the 1970s, and called for an erotica of art (Sontag, 1987). The erotic potential of a poetic work is nothing more than the connection that it makes with life and “with the particular subjective experiences that are processed through social ties” (Santos, 2020, p. 327).

Going against the current of interpretation and hermeneutics, Sontag proposed a pulsating and erotic criticism that is related to creation in art without it being necessary to seek any meaning outside and beyond the work, without the relationship with it being measured by criteria of apriorist and universalizing evaluation. In dialog with the perspectives of Sontag and Schiavon, we understand here that the dimension of drive and erotica in artistic experience implies considering each work in its singularity and in its immanent character, and thus not subject to any other law if not to the parameters established by it and its process.

Continuing with a psychoanalytical contribution, Fortes (2007) affirms that erotic experience allows a subject to live a pleasure intensely, and enumerates three theoretical places, in Freudian thinking, based on which one can glimpse this pleasure – masochism, polymorphous perverse sexuality⁵ and the aesthetic experience – and that these places are found at a common point: in the attitude of the subject submitting to an alterity that is disturbing precisely because it is a source of arousal (Fortes, 2007, p. 43).

And if this is the case, if the corpo pulsional permanently marks its difference in light of other bodies in social space (Birman, 1994), this returns us to Maikon, to Wagner; and to *Strip Tempo* in particular. In the group of solo performances, in their cabaret framing, and in their burlesque quality, the fetish of undressing is taken to the scene by means of bodies that move as they develop and reconfigure their artistic territories, in an act that is simultaneously poetic and political. Here is the *burla* of the body conceptualized by Conceição (2011): an action that signals difference, celebrates memory and comments on the body.

A register

Strip Tempo articulates art and memory, given that its principal creative material is pre-existing works, produced in recent years by the participating artists, making the previous repertoire in movement the motor of these new solo artistic works. The practice of taking pre-existing works as material for artistic creation in the production of new compositions touches that which Rancière (2005, p. 36) proposes about the aesthetic regime of the arts, which, according to the author, is “firstly a new regime of the relation with the old”.

In dialog with the ideas of Walter Benjamin (1996), André Lepecki (2016), when thinking about the practice of translation of works and *reenactments*⁶, calls attention to a certain original and radical incompleteness of artistic works that carry within them, since their creation, a potential for futureities. From this creation, each work would compose materials of future relations, whether in processes of perception that are opened in new historic contexts or as possible sources of translations and transcriptions.

In *Strip Tempo*, this articulation mobilizes a type of sustainable composition that recycles, reuses, and reactivates artistic materials from other contexts and epochs actualized in the present moment, as a living archive that activates the power of previous work. This movement of archiving, through the body, also investigates how the political-performative force of artistic creation weighs its own historicity, recreating complex temporal economies that synchronically transform, present, past, and future.

Lepecki reflects on this movement of archiving and *reenacting* in dance, questioning why these operations take place in the body, which is simultaneously mobile and privileged, with a constitutive precariousness, blind points, linguistic indeterminations, lapses of memory, but even so “the body as archive re-places and diverts notions of archive away from a documental deposit or a bureaucratic agency dedicated to the (mis)management of the ‘past’” (Lepecki, 2016, p. 123). These ideas approach the proposal made by Roberta Ramos (2021) when examining the work ‘Biblioteca de Dança’ (2017), another work directed by Jorge Alencar and Neto Machado. This project is also interested in a practice of performative archiving: “the traditional understandings of archive are also destabilized: as a repository, storage, register and

classification of documents, vestiges and traces of the past, it comes to be thought of as a complex formative, transformative system, that is disperse and dynamic” (Ramos, 2021, p. 90).

In this sense *Strip Tempo* generates visibilities both for a generation of creators and for a given temporal and geographic context, constituted by singular and heterogenous productions. The project experiments with forms of choreographing artistic paths, with the desire to create a living history, documenting careers of contemporary artists by means of body and performance.



Figure 1 – The artist Jaqueline Elesbão in *Strip Tempo*. Source: Photo by Patrícia Almeida.

Strip Tempo is part of a group of artistic and curatorial works that propose relations between memory, history, archive, document and register thought of in terms of choreographic composition, understanding history and memory as factors that deserve to go beyond any “official history” or to be told exclusively by “official voices”, and can be animated by its own agents. Beyond *Strip Tempo*, the artists and researchers Jorge Alencar and Neto Machado – a dancer and codirector of *Strip Tempo* – interlink memory and erotica as ignitions for artistic creation in various creations, among which can be highlighted: *souvenir* (2012), a dance piece presented

in backyards through components and principles of works from the artists Neto Machado, Leonardo França and Fábio Osório Monteiro; *Pinta* (2013), a full-length film that reviews and reactivates performative materials from the first decades of the work of the Dimenti; *IC - Encontro de Artes*, a festival realized in the city of Salvador (BA) by Dimenti Produções Culturais and by Conexões Criativas, which in 2013, took as a curatorial theme “Memória como Motor” [Memory as Motor]; *Chama - Coreografia para Artistas Incendiárixs* (2018), [Flame – Choreography by Incendiary Artists] a piece created with the Balé do Teatro Castro Alves (BA), which was inspired by the fire at Brazil’s Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro in 2018 to instigate the memory of the trajectory of the company, safeguarding it from concrete and symbolic attacks.

The desire to understand memory as a creative and curatorial asset is related to the possibility to reach compositive dimensions beyond opposing pairs such as: past x present, old x new, yesterday x today, back x front, making the performance and the body platforms of vitality and eroticism, in the sense of being potentially transformative, woven from pre-existing artistic materials in a continuing process of reincarnation. An ethical-aesthetic project that drinks from the writings of Leda Maria Martins (2021) and her concepts of spiral time. By treating the question of ancestrality, Martins (2021, p. 63) refers to a curved, recurrent and spiral time, that:

[...] returns, re-establishes and also transforms, and that affects everything. It is a time that is ontologically experienced as continuous and simultaneous movements of retroaction, prospection and reversibility, dilation, expansion and contention, contraction and discontraction, synchrony of instances composed of present, past and future.

In research for his master’s, Neto Machado (2014), codirector of *Strip Tempo*, considered register in dance as a possible choreographic act capable of engendering actions that are activators or actualizers of the memory of dance based on itself, being a politically motivated practice in a performative context. Machado, an artist and researcher, affirms that the relations between work and register are often supported by the ideas of fidelity and authenticity, generating recurring mistakes that hierarchize the superiority of the work in relation to register, with the register always being “beyond” the work, always subject to it in its questionable aesthetic dimensions. The

solos of *Strip Tempo* establish through the work that they are sources of relations of documentation and register, without pretensions of recurring to notions such as fidelities and nostalgia.

The performances created in the project are autonomous in relation to their source-works: not more or less than them. To the degree that they seek to stimulate the public's curiosity so that it wants to know and access the previous works from where the components of each solo piece came, the stripteases in the project are aesthetic and erotic registers of the paths of these artists, without a need to account for the experiences from which they are derived.

In this sense, in *Strip Tempo*, the performances and bodies are the means and modes for documenting what those bodies produced as performances and corporalities in previous experiences, as sensorial, tactile and libidinal devices. The project documents artistic paths by means of emphatically erotic filters, mainly in relation to the processes of mediation with the public for which each striptease is directed. It choreographs maneuvers of looking, sensations, intensities, durations and spatialities that play with approximations and distancing of source-works, to tease and reveal gradually, layer by layer, producing openings, either frontal, or indirect, but always inviting.

Some layers

Prologue: The lights in the audience are always lit. Assembled with male clothes of their drag king Vitor, Jaqueline Elesbão enters from the rear of the stage taking a position in front and in profile, in reference to the initial scene of their play 'Entrelinhas', which refers to police mug shots. From the rear of the stage, they approach the audience, while punctuating space with iconic poses of Vitor, accentuating a recognizedly masculine performativity as seductive as it is archetypical. Vitor kisses the hand of someone in the public. The introduction to the song 'Te amo desgraça' by Baco Exu do Blues begins to play⁷.

What can be identified in the work of the artists as a possible material of a performative undressing, highlighted by the solo works or in which the artist affirms positions of accentuated authorship? What contrasts and or connects with these pre-existing works in terms of themes, recurrences and materialities? Does something constitute the work of the artist that is subject to a compositive condensation, a metonymy? Are there are elements in

the pieces realized by each artist that speak more or less explicitly with the multiverse of the striptease, that is: the naked body, the erotic, the provocative exhibition, the acts of hiding and revealing, the comedic or mocking commentary, the relations between layers of clothing and skin, the gradual access to hidden zones of the body? How can dramatic connections and continuities be created with apparently discontinuous materials – like composing on an editing table – given that they come from different works?

To create the stripteases, each artist decided what they would make available to the director to be considered as possible material for the composition of the solo performances, such as video registers of their work, photographs, published criticisms, notes from the process, bibliographies, and other sources. The selection of the material to be accessed and considered thus had an ethical-methodological character that took as its main parameter what the artist wanted to give and see and highlight within everything that they had been producing in the past decade.

From this foundation an initial script was prepared that proposed connectivities between different materials of previously existing works in the direction of a new autonomous composition: which is unique and related to the trajectory of each artist. The initial script of each solo piece was taken to the rehearsal room to be experimented with each participant. This movement to a new composition made from already existing materials allowed both a familiarity with the materials and a certain distancing, which generates our dramatic synapses between materials that come from distinct contexts.

In a fictional field of intertwined authorships, the new solo works created for the project was inspired by each artists' compositional logic, and from materials that the artists mobilized, and were placed in the script by someone who made a curatorial selection of some of the materials amid sources provided, and "edited" them, making it possible to go beyond the source-configurations of the works accessed. The director and writer intervened in this pact of creation of decentered authorship as a participative voyeur, who touches, penetrates and composes.

Epilogue: After removing various layers of bras, Jaqueline Elesbão has their back to the audience, and turning towards the public, reveals on their face a tin mask. They repeat the positions from the initial profile, and gradually conducts movement with their arms

that allude to the ballet “Swan Lake”, which is cited in one of the verses of the play ‘O Samba do Criolo Doido’, directed by the choreographer Luiz de Abreu, in which Elesbão had performed. The movement intensified. The swan with the tin mask is in agony and slowly leaves the stage.

An intimacy

SCENE 03 INT. OFFICE OF LIA LORDELO - DAY

Lia is naked, wearing only her eyeglasses. She prepares her home office for an online session. She speaks directly to her cell phone as in a lecture.

Lia - Freud proposed the concepts of id, ego, and superego. In this perspective (with her hands, she makes a gesture to design a rectangle in the air). The id, basically, responds to our most primitive instincts, related to sexual and aggressive drives. Its forces seek immediate satisfaction, they function in accord with what we call the pleasure principle. To control this psychic energy and have it interact properly with the real world, we have our ego, a mediator of interaction between id and the outside world. It is the ego that obeys the principle of reality and struggles to satisfy the instincts of the id. One does not exist without the other. The third element of our mental life is the superego, which is an instance of censorship⁸.

During the pandemic, a digital transcription was made of the project *Strip Tempo* entitled *Web-Strips*. In it were stripped not only the bodies and careers of six of the artists who participated in the in-person version, but also their homes, the intimacy of their domestic spaces, the architectural body of various artistic actions during the pandemic due to the imperative for social isolation.

Web-strips, the online version of the project, in the format of a video-performance, with an average length of four minutes each, sought to penetrate a specific environment within the digital platforms: the function called *Close friends*, found in *Instagram* stories, which allows the user to direct their publications to specific contacts, in this case, the public that purchased tickets. One of the ways that this tool is used concerns the production of more provocative contents, a type of private space amid the broad diffusion of other contents displayed on the app. The photos or videos published in *Close Friends* remain accessible for up to 24 hours, and afterwards, disappears immediately, and because of this reserved ephemerality (a dimension so dear to the arts of presence) a field is open to exhibitionism, and to secret exchanges in private messages. Thus, the digital version of the project penetrated the dramatic dispositions and practices of interaction already present

in that specific environment, even producing the videos in a vertical format as proposed by the aesthetic of *stories* on the *Instagram* platform.



Figure 2 – The artist Lia Lordelo in *Web-Strip*.
Source: Photo by Larissa Lacerda.

At a time of social isolation, a platform for buying and selling images of naked people exceeded 100 million users worldwide, according to a report on the site Olhar Digital (Lima; Barros, 2021), becoming a source of income for many uninhibited people. The project *Web-Strips* made good on the infamous proposal to *send nudes* as an interactive ignition to adapt the original project. Once again, the project was responding to the times, formulating art from the memory of dance, documenting it, this time in ephemeral digital format, in the domestic spaces of each artist confined by the pandemic. A *peep-show* at home, an intimate environment that in the pandemic by means of an intense digital mediation, raised, aesthetic, public and political dimensions.

The scripts of the *Web-strips* used layers of meaning carried by each room of the house, each one favoring certain intimate/individual or collective/common practices, considering that each spectator would access this intimacy – of the artists and their homes – from the privacy of their home and their technological device. The psychoanalyst Eduardo Leal Cunha (2021, p. 33) portrays relations between intimacy and politics in contemporary times, from the impeachment of Brazil's president Dilma Rousseff in 2016 to the pandemic, arguing that, in some way “the Greek *polis* was reduced to the bedroom, especially at a moment of intimacy before the computer”.

In the experiences of *Strip Tempo* and *Web-strips* the intimate is material for political intervention, whether as substance intrinsic to the poetics of each participating artist or as nudity of a body that, once unveiled in a hostile and unprecedented historic moment, is interdicted, as an institutional and authoritarian response.

In this context, to share intimacy and guarantee space for the radical exercise of difference in public performance, operating its transformation on a common stage can be, according to Leal Cunha, an act of affirmation that is not only political but also subjective. For a variety of people in Brazil today the possible overlapping between politics and intimacy is also a counter-hegemonic survival strategy that seeks to collectively legitimize various forms of existence, mainly for those presences marked by dissidence. These include women, Black people, trans, transvestites, the non-binary, those with disabilities, *bichas*[fags], experimental artists from the Northeast

who dare to strip. They reaffirm the autonomy of their bodies, as well as emotional, ethical, and erotic ties with themselves and with others.

(By) a hole

The article begins and ends with naked bodies. We began the text by reviving a historic time that is not very distant, when censorship and attacks against artistic works in Brazil intensified, and nudity was a scapegoat. Precisely in this context, or perhaps for this reason, works like *Strip Tempo* were released and flourished; because each time that we are pressured or impeded, a drive appears to convoke us once again to conviviality, to encounter, to life. This ambivalent movement of repulsion and hyper-emphasis on the naked body is discussed in the light of some contributions of psychoanalysis; in particular, the notions of drive and erotica.

In addition, *Strip Tempo* was inspired by the language of the burlesque, which fetichizes, celebrates and spectacularizes singularity and difference; and as a compositive procedure, from the idea of register and memory of the arts of the body documented by means of the body itself and performance. This action of performative registering and archiving conducted in *Strip Tempo* is also located in other creations of its director, Jorge Alencar, in partnership with the codirector of the project, Neto Machado.

From the extreme amplification of the body undressed on stage, during the Covid-19 pandemic the *Strip Tempo* project developed into a version for digital voyeurs, accessing its artists inside their homes, raiding their bedrooms, kitchens, offices and backyards. *Web-Strips* thus created indiscrete poetic windows by means of the Close Friends tool on the Instagram platform.

The naked body is more than a naked body. The gaze at someone's curves, angles, and orifices, as well as the examination of the personal objects in their bathroom cabinet, the magazines and books in their bedroom, or the history of messages and images exchanged with a lover on a cell phone, provide entrances to creative motivations, skills, zones of connection and affects. And for this reason, the intimate is political. The stripteases – in person and remote, via social network – aesthetically and erotically summarize the paths of contemporary artists and mobilize discussions about the naked body, whether as a last frontier of an ultraconservative morality in Brazil today or as an experience of a driving desire in the arts.

Notes

- ¹ Held annually in the city of Salvador (BA), since 2006, by Dimenti Produções Culturais in partnership with the Associação Conexões Criativas, IC Encontro de Artes is a plural artistic platform for creation and diffusion of contemporary arts. Each edition is permeated by a specific question that guides the curatorial process and the composition of the programming, which is currently dynamized by Ellen Mello, Jorge Alencar, Larissa Lacerda and Neto Machado.
- ² Credits for *Strip Tempo*. Direction and screenplay: Jorge Alencar / Codirection: Neto Machado / Assistant director: Marina Martinelli / Creation and performance: Douglas Gibran, Fábio Osório Monteiro, Isaura Tupiniquim, Jaqueline Elesbão, João Rafael Neto, Jorge Oliveira, Leonardo França, Lia Lordelo, Neto Machado and Rainha Loulou / Conception of Lighting and editing of the soundtrack: Moisés Victório / Lighting operator: Moisés Vitório and Ruhan Alves / Original music: Leonardo França and Moisés Victório / Visual identity and art direction: TANTO – criações compartilhadas (Daniel Sabóia, Fábio Steque and Patricia Almeida) / Clothing supervisor: Neto Machado / Direction of Production: Ellen Mello / Production: Marina Martinelli and Natália Valério / Financial administration: Marília Pereira / Communications: Marcatexto / Realization: Dimenti Produções Culturais.
- ³ The passages from the performance were transcribed from a video recording of *Strip Tempo*. Because it presents nudity, the work is not available online.
- ⁴ According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, the word burlesque originates from the Spanish word *burla* or joke and the late Latin *burra* or trifle, bit of nonsense.
- ⁵ The notions of masochism and polymorphous perverse sexuality are presented, respectively, in the texts of Freud (1974a; 1974b) *O problema econômico do masoquismo* and *Três ensaios sobre a teoria da sexualidade*.
- ⁶ According to Lepecki (2016) e Ramos (2020), we understand reenactment as a practice of reenactment / reactivation of pre-existing performative works and actions in dance, which use memory and history as incorporated and compositive experiences. For De Laet (2018), in the field of History, the concept was initially developed by British historian and philosopher Robin George Collingwood (1889-1943), in order to understand the action of historical agents in reconstructing their thoughts and motivations. The English term reenact-

ment dates from 1780 and refers to the act of constructing or reconstructing an experience or past situation.

⁷ Idem note 3.

⁸ From an unpublished screenplay of *Web-Strips*.

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