

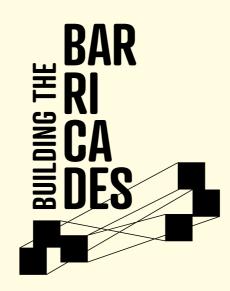


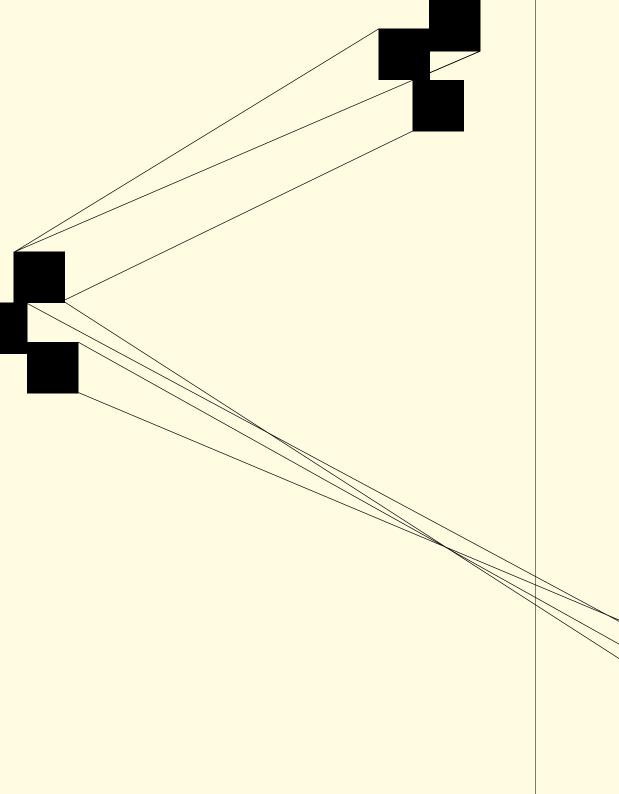


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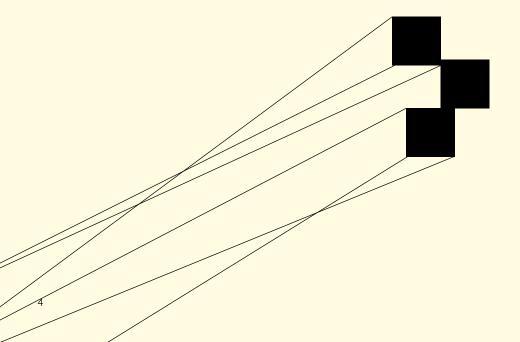
NARRATIVE STUDIES: POETRY, MUSIC AND PHOTOGRAPHY





NARRATIVE STUDIES: Poetry, Music and Photography

Eliana Sousa Silva Catherine Paskell Juliana Farias Paul Heritage Rafael Rocha Raquel Tamaio Tatiana Altberg



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

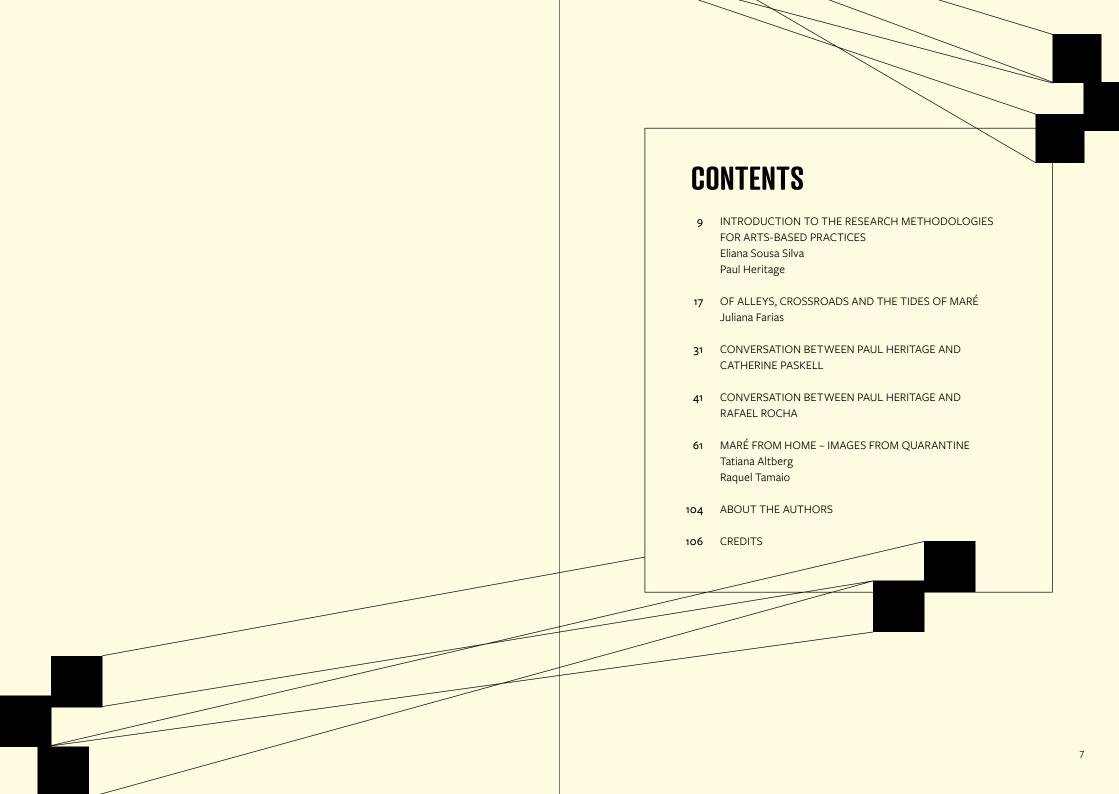
We are immensely grateful to the residents of Maré who opened their doors and their lives to our researchers, courageously and generously sharing personal stories about how they live with – and confront – adversity in their daily lives. Without this, we would not have been able to produce the research Building The Barricades, a first investigation into the mental health of the population of this territory.

We also want to acknowledge the fundamental role of the partnerships established between the three universities that participated in Building The Barricades, as well as the involvement of individual researchers who dared to go beyond the conventional limits of academic research in order to produce new knowledge. We want to pay tribute to and thank the teams at QMUL, UFRJ and UFRGS, who trusted in this work and fulfilled the complex demands of this initiative, even in exceptionally troubled times.

At every stage of this journey we were accompanied by 'critical friends', whose own work sheds light on the intersection between violence, poverty, culture and mental health. We would like to express our special thanks to Silvia Ramos and Pedro Gabriel Delgado, who engaged in constructive dialogue with our team during the process of the investigation. And, last but not least, we would like to thank immensely the dedication and commitment of editor Fabiana Comparato, who has the necessary skills and competence to carry out such a sophisticated editorial project.

This work was only made possible by the long-standing partnership between Redes da Maré and People's Palace Projects, which is sustained by our mutual respect and pleasure in working together.

Eliana Sousa Silva and Paul Heritage



INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES FOR ARTS-BASED PRACTICES

Eliana Sousa Silva Paul Heritage The quantitative survey, qualitative interviews and focus groups conducted during Building The Barricades offered several indications of how participating in creative activities – whether as an artist, participant or the general public – can be considered a significant factor in building resilience against mental health and substance abuse disorders for residents of Maré's sixteen *favelas*.¹ It was therefore fitting that the project also made use of arts-based research practices, to produce new narratives that reflect the complex and constantly shifting stories of how people live with mental health crises and substance abuse disorders in these communities.

Artists and residents of Maré were invited to contribute to the investigation through music, poetry, photography and theatre. The interconnected outputs that made up this process have created a rich narrative study, bringing alternative voices to the research. The possibility of having participants actively produce and share knowledge related to their own understanding of mental health and substance abuse offers diverse and innovative insights.

In March 2020, the Building The Barricades research team had just concluded the quantitative survey – with 1,411 respondents in Maré's sixteen *favelas* – when the rise in cases of people infected by the new coronavirus meant a series of lockdown measures were implemented by Rio de Janeiro's municipal and state governments. Research indicated that Covid-19 would most likely trigger serious mental distress, as had been observed in previous pandemics.²

The combination of self-isolation with the reduction of personal freedoms and the interruption to changes in routine and livelihoods³ – particularly challenging for favela residents – were considered likely to lead to increased feelings of frustration, boredom, bad moods and anxiety.⁴ The first Covid-19 studies undertaken in different global contexts identified specific stressors, such as a lack of social contact, information overload on social networks, lack of personal space at home, reduced autonomy and concern about work and education,⁵ which often led to symptoms of anxiety and depression.⁶ The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, together with social distancing measures, brought a number of linked adversities and risks to mental health.

The Building The Barricades research team designed and implemented three additional studies between April and December 2020. Miriam Krenzinger (Co-I) led a study on perceptions and experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic in Maré's sixteen communities. Marcelo Santos Cruz (Co-I) conducted a study on the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of fifty residents who participated in the original quantitative survey. Leandro Valiati (Co-I) oversaw a territorially specific analysis of the economic impact of emergency financial aid for the arts in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.⁷

6 Brooks et al., 912-920; Zhou et al., 1-3.

¹ For further articles information on the quantitative and qualitative research undertaken as part of
Building the Barricades, see articles by Eduardo Ribeiro for Sudies 1 and 2 on our Publication's webpage.
2 Laura Hawryluck et al., 'SARS control and psychological effects of quarantine, Toronto, Canada', *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 10 (2004), 1206-12; Hyunsuk Jeong et al., 'Mental health status of people isolated due to Middle East Respiratory Syndrome', *Epidemiology and Health*, 38 (2006), 912-20.

³ YaMei Bai et al., 'Survey of stress reactions among health care workers involved with the SARS outbreak', *Psychiatric Services*, 55 (2004), 1055-7.

⁴ Samantha K Brooks et al., 'The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence', The Lancet, 395 (2020), 912-920.

⁵ Guanghai Wang et al., 'Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak', *The Lancet*, 395 (2020), 945-947; Xiaoyun Zhou et al., 'The Role of Telehealth in Reducing the Mental Health Burden from COVID-19', *Telemedicine Journal and E-Health*, 26 (2020), 377-379; Jianyin Qiu et al., 'A nationwide survey of psychological distress among Chinese people in the COVID-19 epidemic: implications and policy recommendations', *General Psychiatry*, 33 (2020), 1-3.

⁷ All three studies are available separately in Portuguese on People's Palace Projects website https://peoplespalaceprojects.org.uk/en/publications/building-the-barricades-reports/

Plans to start the qualitative research were postponed and artistic activities were suspended until we could understand the situation and what conducting research during the pandemic would entail. Three interconnected narrative studies had been planned for the final year of Building The Barricades: a choir project with participants from Maré's open-use drug scenes; a series of photovoice⁸ workshops to be undertaken with residents participating in the qualitative research interviews; and a creative writing project with young poets from Maré. Plans for the photovoice programme were immediately suspended, as were the face-to-face writing workshops with local poets.

All choir activities were cancelled, just as they were about to make their first public performance in the gardens of the Sitio Roberto Burle Marx.⁹ Initiated in September 2019 in partnership with the Espaço Normal,¹⁰ the choir rehearsals were a creative space in which singers and guitarists, percussionists and lyricists, storytellers and dancers emerged from those who frequent the open-use drug scene. The participants called their choir Normal Sounds. However, as soon as we understood that group meetings and singing together represented a high risk of contagion, we temporarily suspended activities.¹¹ During the seven months of activities prior to the pandemic, from September 2019 to March 2020, around 10% of the 200 regulars from Maré's open-use drug scenes became assiduous workshop participants. These workshops were coordinated by teams from the Espaço Normal and People's Palace Projects. This brief experience produced ample evidence of the scope of the methodology we developed to create alternative narratives for this community. Written texts and musical rhythms produced by choir members to explore their mental health experiences were eventually incorporated into an audio drama called *Becos (Alleyways*), created by six poets from Maré as part of the revised programme of narrative studies.

Tatiana Altberg, a research associate responsible for the photovoice workshops, developed a revised photographic project entitled *Maré From Home*, which produced a unique record of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on mental health and well-being during the first five months of quarantine. This work was carried out by a group of six young Maré photographers who created diaries using photography and written text. We also launched a project entitled *From My Window*, inviting the submission of photographs and texts based on what Maré residents saw from their windows. Each month the best photos on the project website were chosen by means of a public vote. The material from both projects were collected by the team and are exhibited on a dedicated website: www.amaredecasa.org.br.

The narrative study undertaken with young artists from Maré's vibrant poetry scene was due to be led by Catherine Paskell, founder and creative associate of National Theatre Wales and artistic director of the awardwinning theatre company, Dirty Protest. The cancellation of Paskell's visit to Rio de Janeiro due to Covid-19 restrictions led us to conduct virtual workshops on a digital platform instead. Twice a week, from April to August 2020, Paskell and Paul Heritage (PI) led three-hour creative writing workshops with six poets: Jonathan Panta, Matheus Araújo, MC Martina, Rodrigo Maré, Thainá Iná and Thais Ayomide. Writing and recording poems, stories, lyrics, soundscapes and dance videos, the group explored the role of creativity in building resilience against mental health crises in their own lives. The poets shaped their work into an audio drama in four fifteenminute episodes entitled *Becos*. Performed by the poets themselves, directed by Heritage and Paskell (via Zoom) and recorded by sound editor Rodrigo

^{8 &#}x27;Photovoice' is a qualitative method used in participatory community research to document and reflect reality. The process combines photography and grassroots social action.

⁹ For more information about the Sitio Roberto Burle Marx, a UNESCO World Heritage Centre, please visit: http://sitiorobertoburlemarx.org.br/

¹⁰ For more information about the Espaço Normal, see article by Eduardo Ribeiro for Building the Barricades Study 2 on our website and https://www.redesdamare.org.br/br/info/14/espaco-normal 11 As we edit this publication in May 2021, the choir's activities are still suspended but the original participants continue to receive support from Redes da Maré and People's Palace Projects. The activities of Normal Sounds will resume as soon as public health guidance allows.

Campelo in his studio in Rio de Janeiro in August 2020, *Becos* is widely available on various digital platforms, as well as on a website dedicated to the project, which includes interviews with the artists and general information about the project.¹² Brazilian percussionist Rafael Rocha accompanied the writing workshops and created a soundscape for the recording of *Becos* in partnership with Rodrigo Maré, one of the Maré artists responsible for creating the audio drama. Later, Rocha also created a new narrative for the research through the production of Satélite, an eleven-track music album in which he revisits and responds to the texts, sounds, images and rhythms produced by the poets and by the choir of regular visitors to the open-use drug scenes in Maré. The album is also available on various digital platforms and on the project website.¹³

What follows are texts that go deeper into the issues, methodologies and results obtained from each of the artistic projects briefly presented above, which together constitute part of the research instruments used to construct the Building The Barricades narrative. We are happy to be able to release so much power into the world from the *favelas* of Maré.

12 https://becos.art.eng/

¹³ https://becos.art.br/album-satelite/

OF ALLEYS, Crossroads and The tides of maré

Juliana Farias

Saturday is market day on Rua Teixeira Ribeiro – the street that runs from the edge of Avenida Brasil, close to Footbridge 09, up to the far end of Nova Holanda, one of the sixteen favelas in Maré, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. From Teixeira, six young poets take us on a journey into their everyday lives: MC Martina, Thainá Iná, Thais Ayomide, Jonathan Panta, Matheus Araújo and Rodrigo Maré. They introduce themselves, exchanging compliments and expressing admiration for the children of Maré and neighbouring *favelas*; for artists, percussionists, Flamengo football fans; for those who know *what it's like to be a black body in this decade; to have sparkling dreadlocks; to live and breathe music; to devour silences;*¹ for the queens and kings of slam poetry; for lives, for stages, for rooftops, for books and, for authors of the *Manifesto of Now.* With their permission, and in their company, we enter *Becos* (Alleys). *Becos* is an audio drama presented as a podcast, which evolved from a creative process developed as part of the research project Building The Barricades in 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.²

Rua Teixeira Ribeiro is a geopolitical landmark in the narrative and the first place we arrive at in *Becos*. It is presented as a *heart* and *thermometer*: an organ that pumps vital energy, that makes things pulsate, that imprints rhythm; just like the parties on that same street do when it is possible to walk by freely and feel the funk beats – blasting out from the huge speaker on the wall – reverberating throughout the body. Rua Teixeira Ribeiro is also a thermometer that assesses the level of risk when the police enter the *favela*. If Teixeira is deserted, it is time to be alert, to carefully finish your journey on foot if you're going to, or coming, from work.... When Teixeira is empty it is a sign of imminent danger, that something is wrong, because – especially on

market days - it is always full of life, as we hear at the beginning of the drama.

A crowded lottery store; a cheap greengrocer; a shop selling religious items; supermarkets; butchers; a pound shop; a kilo food restaurant; a pizzeria and Japanese pasties; a moto-taxi stand; spices; electronics; strainers; flour; herbs; beans; vegetables; a cyclist dodging out of the way; people coming; people going; children running; *forró*³ music playing; Brazilian funk playing; gospel music playing; a neighbour praying; water boiling for coffee; melting ice pops; toasted bread; *muvuca* ⁴ – a typical day in the intense hustle of Maré. In *Becos*, we explore Teixeira's market through text and sound, a *polyphony of information* that brings us into that *muvuca*, that asks us to think about Rua Teixeira Ribeiro as a river and a crossroads, before we accept the play's invitation to dive into Maré.

Becos positions Rua Teixeira Ribeiro as a river, a metaphor that proudly refers to the São Francisco River in the Northeast of Brazil, where most families originated from before migrating and settling in Maré. A rhizome metaphor - a river supplies, nourishes, guarantees life, but is also a channel, flowing into different places, transporting and enabling movement. The junction of Teixeira Ribeiro and Principal marks a crossroads, a powerful conceptual place for both religions of African origin and the urban reality of a city. This intersection evokes ancestral knowledge throughout the play that guides the poets on paths that reach far beyond Maré's streets. The crossroads highlights the complexity of the avenues, streets and alleyways in this urban centre and, throughout the audio drama, fills the narrative with its complexity. In Becos, the crossroads mark a start and an end point, from where everything can be seen and from where paths open up. It is an ethical, political and spiritual cartography, through which we get to know the stories of characters such as Dona Drika, Carlos, Emanuel, Leleca and her grandmother, Francisco, Martin and his mother.

¹ This text was written based on information and content from the four episodes of *Becos*, available at https://becos.art.br/ as well as interviews carried out by Pamela Carvalho with the six *Becos* poets, available at https://www.instagram.com/redesdamare/channel/?hl=pt-br. Terms in italics denote words from the play's original text, as well as answers given in these interviews.

² Building the Barricades/Construindo Pontes is a research project undertaken by Redes da Maré, People's Palace Projects, Rio de Janeiro Federal University, Queen Mary University of London and NECCULT, with the support of the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council.

³ The term *Forró* refers to a musical genre, rhythm and dance from the Northeast of Brazil. 4 The term *muvuca* is a slang word that refers to a chaotic crowd of people.

The gaze is also a place where paths meet: this work of documentary fiction is an audio drama that helps us see. Pressing play provides free admission to the show and gives an audience access to many places in Maré, all seen from one rooftop: different parts of the neighbourhood, housing blocks, these urban landscapes that hold distinct meanings for people who live inside and those outside the *favela*. A new alley opens up, the border between Nova Holanda and Baixa do Sapateiro, the open-use drug scene on Flavia Farnese Street, and everything else one can see from a Maré rooftop.

The memories of these six poets are weaved together, interconnected, and generously shared with their audience. These memories provide the backbone to a script marked by what Pamela Carvalho⁵ called *technologies the favela had to develop to survive during the pandemic*. As MC Martina asserted: We children of the favela have to find mechanisms, technologies and actions to be able to reinvent our reality. Throughout the audio drama, the challenges experienced during the pandemic overlap with the daily struggles faced by those who live in Brazilian favelas and other peripheral neighbourhoods, as well as with the different strategies communities employ to tackle them.

From the first episode, when Thainá buys herbs for the bath, a censer and different-coloured candles, the play draws attention to how religious rituals can provide protection and be a resource for remaining resolute in the face of the various challenging situations that unfold throughout the story. *It's always important to practice that faith, right?* Or, as proposed by Maré's carnival group who discuss the right to come and go freely, blessing yourself works. Knowing how to be born *a fish and swim along the path of faith till you become a shark* is a proverb shared amongst Maré residents and communicated loud and clear throughout this podcast. But it is also a survival technique held in the body: *still standing, still wounded, but with faith; the desire to live raises us.*

This resolute body – that has to stand upright despite adversity – is highlighted by the six poets we meet in *Becos*: MC Martina's rhythmic alliteration echoes throughout the episodes, drawing our attention to the fact that a *hollow poet makes no echo*, that *artists have layers*, reaffirming that the messages each poet brings have evolved from their experiences, but also through the memories imprinted on their own bodies. The sophisticated narrative developed in the audio drama allows us to get to know what we can't 'see' – the bodies – of the cast and of the characters that they refer to – are brough to life as the drama unfolds. Thais Ayomide speaks of *living the body's full range* and, through the podcast, we come to understand the *search for a past that is present in the body*. Thais teaches us that *the black body's response to this state is one of resistance, of remaking*.

To resist by remaking is perhaps the strongest message to emerge from *Becos*, reiterated in one of the most difficult passages: the death of Emanuel. The decision to include an execution in the story, to reconstruct a scene that never should have happened but is part of daily life in the *favelas*, reaffirms the need to urgently resist and denounce everyday violence. Telling about Emanuel's death somehow resurrects everybody forced to the ground – murdered – by the state police in Maré, and so many other peripheral territories in Brazil. To name people – to make them 'present' – honours the lives of other victims of the state's racist rationale, turning all favela territories and their inhabitants into enemies that must be fought.

No, not my son: Dona Drika's harrowing cry announces the tragedy. The characters and the poets raise their voices, not for the first time denouncing crimes unheard by the institutions responsible. *Our names can easily be replaced with just a number...* Emanuel has become a number... laments Carlos, a friend of Emanuel, who is the victim of yet another police operation in a *favela*, which litters the ground with bodies. Such state-sanctioned actions,

⁵ Pâmela Carvalho is an educator, historian, cultural manager, communicator and activist researcher of race and gender relations, and of the rights of favela populations. She has a master's degree in education from Rio de Janeiro Federal University and is a *Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré* coordinator in the fields of art, culture, memories and identities. She lives in Parque União, one of Maré's sixteen *favelas*.

which transform lives into statistics, endorse a racist and perverse logic that objectifies black bodies and *favela* residents – a form of dehumanisation denounced and reconstructed in *Becos*. The sequence of questions and reflections incorporated in the retelling of this execution also makes apparent the underlying feeling that *takes over favela bodies and makes them alert*, a permanent tension that leaves its marks on the musculature of black bodies, which Frantz Fanon explains in detail when reflecting on violence in the first chapter of his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*.⁶

In the same way that the strength of Fanon's theory comes from the body's lived experience, in *Becos* – whether alive or dead – the bodies of people from Maré guide the words: *What goes on in the head of a mother who sees her son get dragged away in a police van? Whose son is removed from home and shoved into a helicopter by the police without his consent? Of a mother when she finds out her son has fallen nine floors? Of a mother who listens from her wounded son, who she holds in her lap: 'Mum, I got shot by guys in a police tank... didn't they see I was wearing a school uniform?'.*

In the reconstruction of this summary execution, Dona Drika – Emanuel's mother – steals the show. In communities like Maré, so many mothers, after their son's death, dedicate their lives to fighting for justice, fighting against the genocide of black people, fighting for demilitarisation. Docudrama? Fiction? Drika's character, played by Thais Ayomide, was inspired by countless other black mothers from the *favela*, among them Bruna Silva, mother of Marcus Vinicius, who was fourteen when he was executed in 2018 by the Federal Intervention Forces in Rio de Janeiro.

Marcus lived and studied in Maré and was in year seven at Vicente Mariano State School when police bullets hit him. His blood stained his school uniform and the backpack he was carrying. From that day on, Bruna made her son's bloody shirt a battle flag. The strength of Marcus's mother added to the historic struggle led by black women looking for justice for their children, a struggle which began in Rio de Janeiro with the Mothers of Acari⁷ and has expanded to the National Network of Mothers and Families of Victims of State Terrorism, formed in 2016 to resist Brazilian state-sanctioned violence in the *favelas*. There are currently more than twenty collectives in the movement, all established by mothers and family members from across Brazil's five geopolitical regions.

As much as we create fiction, our fiction is not removed from reality, reflects Thainá, who created the character Drika together with Thais. We constructed this heroine. Many black women are the reference point here; woven very densely; it's something everyone knows, but people refuse to see. Dressed in the power of all her ancestors; a female warrior, as if forged by the iron of Ogun, Drika is presented as an enemy of this state that violates the right to life: Every time a black child dies, my womb hurts. Have you ever felt this pain? The pain of losing a child? The pain of being skinned alive? The pain of being breathless?... Of having your womb yanked out? Have you ever felt this pain?

Drika is a heroine precisely because she does not pretend that she is not in pain: *My chest is a quarry; even though my backbone supports me it constantly shivers from the cold of getting hit from behind*. A pain that, once again, brings the body into focus. A black body, marked by historical violence: *I still feel the burden of carrying the world on my back; a back bent by the weight of the birch*. But this same body was endowed with courage by the God of the Earth, it can remake itself: *My hands are gale winds; my feet get the strength to walk from the ground*. As Thais explains, mothers unmake and remake the body during their public speeches, during their walks for justice. For this reason, it was important to present the narrative of black mothers as pain, as strength, but especially as hope for the future: *I resist, I re-exist. Mothers reconstruct*

⁶ Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, (Juiz de Fora: Ed.UFJF, 2005).

⁷ In July 1990, eight youngsters and three adults living in the Acari *favela* in Rio de Janeiro and its surrounding communities were kidnapped and murdered, an atrocity that became known as the Massacre of Acari. The victims' mothers began searching for their bodies, beginning the journey of the Mothers of Acari.

narratives of pain and plant seeds of life – and this accompanied the process of creating Drika.

Thus, through the heroine Drika, the audio drama takes another step towards amplifying an important message both inside and beyond Maré. The message to those who don't live in Maré is that *the black mother is the figure that sustains this territory*. For audiences from Maré, it is an opportunity to feel revered or to celebrate mothers, as Thainá explains: We created this image of Drika to be disseminated, by sharing we find power. In the third act of Becos, Drika's power is tangible and the audience goes with her as she transmutes her pain into struggle, as the character Martin reaffirms: It's so anguishing to see strength spring forth from the most extreme sadness. Still, I will contemplate that image every day before going to bed or after getting up, like a prayer. A prayer for justice. It was she, Dona Drika, who made me understand that doing justice also involves giving another meaning to life.

A prayer for justice. Impregnated with pain and strength, *Becos* is a form of prayer, narrated by those who know that to denounce violence is to stand up against it. Those who know that finding the strength to say *today none of us shall die* is to resist, is to remake. For this reason, although discussing violence was not an objective of *Becos*, it was inescapable. As Thais reflects: *There was no way not to talk about violence in a podcast created in the favela during the pandemic.* It's been very painful to live through the pandemic as someone who is black and from the periphery. The first person who caught Covid-19 in Brazil was a domestic worker – a black woman; police operations haven't stopped happening; it's a genocidal state.

Writing, scripting, staging and directing a play during the pandemic was a challenge embraced by the entire team. Reflecting on the creative process, Matheus explained: *Becos leaves a legacy, because we are a group of artists who grew up alongside frustration, silence, fear, and then were faced with a pandemic... it was a time to face frustration head on, to face silence head on. Becos* demonstrates the resourcefulness of this group of artists who continued to circumvent creative and practical obstacles throughout the pandemic. While Thainá said she fed off her own creative processes, her faith in the group's feedback enabled her to move forward. Matheus explained that the studio process was a festival of trial and error: *We look at it today and think* 'how crazy' and at the same time 'what a fantastic thing'. Jonathan Panta gives a sophisticated reflection on his own practice: Artists work within limits – their challenge is to go beyond the limits. And Becos does that.

We also learn from Matheus that some people manage to overcome trauma through dance and theatre, and that one can *only walk alongside fear by being courageous* like Thais – people who know that *there are no rehearsals in life.* MC Martina creates her rhymes by incorporating hacks from the São Paulo poetry scene, and Rodrigo Maré, who, as well as acting in *Becos* is the music director and wrote the soundtrack alongside Rafael Rocha, explains the core components of the composition process: *Sound is a really important raw material and communication tool within the favela, for us to understand the rhythm of the favela; and since we were talking about the favela, the periphery, in the podcast, the sounds were essential to make this place come to life. Sound is an instigator.* Whoever listens is always imagining: what is this place like? What's this *street like?* What's this alley like? This house?

Percussive beats, electronic sounds; overlapping voices; sirens; street vendors; the sound of vehicles going past on Avenida Brasil, heard from inside the bus; the same bus accelerating; the sound of a coin dropping in a jukebox; really loud music playing as the rooftop is swept; children's laughter; *sounds invading from all over the place; a mixture of maracatu⁸ and ijexá⁹*; helicopters circling over Maré. Speaking with pride about his friend's work as music director for *Becos*, Jonathan recalls that Rodrigo had a file of sounds from the periphery: *The salesman selling eggs from the boot of his car;*

⁸ *Maracatu* is a rhythm, dance, ritual performance genre from Pernambuco, Northeastern Brazil. 9 *Ijexá* is originally a rhythm from Nigeria that was taken to the state of Bahia, Brazil, by the enslaved Yoruba people in late 17th century to the mid-19th century.

the sound of electric saws : whoever lives in a favela and has never heard the sound of an electric saw in the morning, isn't from the favela. We also hear a news report about the operation that claimed Emanuel's life. The journalists are telling people to avoid Avenida Brasil in order to avoid the traffic jam. Even in this simple audio clip, it's possible to see the difference between how people inside and outside the *favela* are treated: the city that, during an operation, is divided between those escaping the shower of bullets and those escaping traffic jams. *Becos*, if listened to carefully, is very provocative: a mixture of electronic music and street sounds that Rodrigo alludes to. You don't need to understand music to experience this audio drama. The important thing is to open your imagination.

There is no theatre where we can go and watch the show. But wherever you listen to *Becos*, it is impossible to emerge unchanged, to not be soaked by the tides of Maré. The podcast gives rise to a multisensory experience: we hear and feel the rain, we imagine floods in a Maré that also drench us, a place where one must know how to swim. Jonathan, a musician who discovered himself as a poet during the play's creative process, teaches us that *music is listening before speaking, listening before playing. Becos* reinforces that listening precedes action. In a handful of moments we hear silence. And in these rare moments of rest, we hear the sea. Martin takes us on a journey from the open-use drug scene on Rua Flavia Farnese to Grumari beach, in Rio de Janeiro's West Zone, with a simple question. We are invited to think about how big the sea is – a question with a boundless number of answers: *The sea is infinite. When I look at it, it's like it's endless; the sea is as big as your eye can see, it's as big as your horizon! The sea washes away all impurities.*

We follow Maré's memory like water flowing from a river into the sea, washing away all impurities. *The waterfalls of a powerful stream* that clouded Dona Drika's vision: that *white veil* that *tasted like the sea* of her ancestors. Once again, reconnecting with one's ancestors presents itself as a way of gaining strength, from the histories that live in freshwater, seawater, water that creates a vortex, water that swirls. It is in the circle – the whirlpool – formed by the entire cast, that Dona Drika finds the courage to read her son's poetry notebooks, on the day they would have celebrated Emanuel's birthday. She starts to read but becomes emotional. Carlos takes over, then everyone takes turns. Emanuel is brought back to life through his words:

Lady anxiety 10

I've waited so long to call out all the crap you've done

But you escape somewhere inside me and hide where I can't reach you. I should smash your face in, but in this fight I always get the beating. My nails know what it's like to be ill-treated by you. Some nights you immobilise me and insomnia hits me so hard I wake up with black eyes. Have you seen the bags under my eyes? Not just bodily harm, your crimes involve stolen nights of sleep, overcrowded thoughts and you wait till I get sad to snatch away my self-esteem.

How long now have I mutilated my mental health, thinking I'm a bad person and forgetting I am someone... How long have I thought I'm no one...

It's not because the world demands perfection that I'll stop making mistakes, because I'll never stop trying.

For every mistake I've made, I get twice as many things right, which are never taken into account by those who crucify me and you, anxiety, are so discredited that people think I'm just making a fuss.

A fake smile hides my lack of breath and crying fits at the memory of traumas from which you were born. The race to do everything I dream of comes from the fear of dying young, not leaving behind anything worth remembering.

People like me don't usually last very long. Many of us have already gone.

10 Lady anxiety is a poem by Matheus Araujo, included in its entirety in Act IV of the audio drama Becos.

I understand you, anxiety... But you're an extra-small shirt that doesn't fit me and feels tight when I try to put you on, because I'm much bigger than you. So do like those people I loved and who said they loved me too: Leave! Leave! Leave! Leave!

Because today I'm going to turn on the oven gas, and put my head down and bake the cake for my next birthday, because today I am alive! And you'll never change that.

Emanuel's poem comes to life in a circle made by the group, accompanied by Rodrigo's drums, clapping and a funk beat. It is in such an ancestral whirl that *the inner rubble built up in a short lifetime* can be cleared away. No wonder Thais reiterates that we have to *listen to our ancestors*. No wonder Pamela Carvalho refers to *Becos* as a podcast of *favela knowledge*. Knowledge that involves understanding anxiety as an *extra-small shirt* that no longer fits the body, but also an obstacle big enough to warrant being addressed formally. Emanuel's words manifest resistance. His notebook is a gift from his mother to his community, to whoever reads or listens to his poems. Just as spending time with Emanuel himself was a gift to everyone standing in that circle.

Although Emanuel was a maths teacher, he never stopped writing poetry. He encouraged Carlos to start composing again, when the two of them met on a bus: I think you need to let out whatever is blocking you, like you did before. You never used to have blocks. You didn't, Carlos. Without doubt, man, without doubt you're full of art, ready to fly. Only you can't see it... and we're surprised by Carlos's new funk-influenced soul composition about his journey to work in the city's South Zone. The melody and lyrics stick in one's head. The next day, after he begins composing again, Carlos walks like he is dancing, takes the route to the bus stop as if he had been reborn. Life carries on in Maré. It was never luck, it was always poetry.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN PAUL HERITAGE AND CATHERINE PASKELL

25th February 2021 (via Zoom)

PAUL

We first worked together when I invited you to come to Brazil to direct *The Merchant of Venice* in 2016. A classic historic text, but in some sense one that didn't yet exist because of course you had to construct a translation working in Portuguese with actors from the Brazilian states of Minas Gerais and Bahia. Four years later in 2020 you accepted an invitation to do a project with six young poets from Maré. Is there a relationship for you between these two very different projects?

CATHERINE

I was physically in Brazil for the first project and physically in Wales for the second (working via Zoom). But in all the theatre I make, I try respond to the artists I am working with rather than bringing a preconceived idea to the project. That was particularly important with The Merchant of Venice. I wanted it to be a production that responded to Minas Gerais and Bahia, but still tell the story of what is within the Shakespeare text. The cast and I had to be open to each other's lived experiences. In 2016, we were working against the backdrop of the impeachment of President Dilma which meant we explored what it means to change the rules within the judicial system (which is at the heart of Shakespeare's play). The Merchant of Venice - and the political events that were unfolding while we were rehearsing it - asks what it means to get rid of people who are in a position of power. I was outsider. The cast told me that I was asking questions that they couldn't or wouldn't ask. My questions came from that place of 'I don't know about you and your experiences'. I don't know what will connect with your audience who might not know this play or might have preconceptions about Shakespeare. We ended up with a production scored by favela funk that mixed popular culture from Minas Gerais with the aesthetic of Bahia.

I brought those same instincts to the making of *Becos*. It's not about me, as a Welsh person, teaching young Brazilian artists how to create an audio drama. My question is always: as an outsider how can I provide a structure or facilitate a process that will allow me to work with actors or writers to create something that we couldn't do alone. Making *Becos* was about providing a space for people to be able to say something from a specific lived experience within the political context of Brazil today. Both projects responded to what was happening in the moment for those artists.

PAUL

Before the pandemic the idea was that you would come to Brazil for a one-week immersive writing workshop with six young poets from Maré. The restrictions imposed by the pandemic produced a radical shift, and we ended up working twice a week for four-months on Zoom. How did this change the expectations and ambitions of the project?

CATHERINE

It was an extraordinary and enlightening experience, which really made lockdown not feel like lockdown. It gave me conviction. When you are working online you cannot spend eight hours a day hacking away at things in a way that we could if we were in a physical space together. There isn't that space to decompress or to have a laugh. There isn't that social element that would usually cushion some of the harder bits of making work together physically.

PAUL

At the beginning it wasn't about making an audio drama or any sort of podcast. It was about recovery from where we were. I think it's the closest I have ever been to setting up an arts project because we all needed it. That's what the first workshops were about. They weren't planned. They were just about recovering from what everyday life had become. Then as the process evolved we stared to recover something in that new everyday life to write from and work with. That that was the key dynamic in the online workshops. When reconstructing this process, it's important to remember that the end product was never its purpose. Although the project lasted four months, almost all of the writing was done very early on. The main body of the text was produced in the first month or six weeks. We moved forward by looking back to what we had created at the beginning. Hence there was a sense of recovery all the way through, as we tried to keep a sense of where we are, who we are, what we are doing and to never waste anything. We knew we had to use the moment we were in. It was in its very essence a project about recovery and mental health.

CATHERINE

There were a lot of moments where we were dealing with young artists reliving or going through a trauma. Sometimes it was based on previous experiences and some of it was literally happening in the moment, so it felt that the idea of recovery was very real, not just artistic. Sub-textually the questions were: "Are we going to get through this?", "Is this what it's going to be?", "We have this space, we go through this together." We were discovering ourselves as being alive and as well as we could be. A kind of care that was being taken amongst us, which I think helped to lead to us to where we are now. If we had pushed for an end product, that wouldn't have been what was best for those artists as young people in very difficult circumstances. The why, the how and the what of the project evolved together.

PAUL

You can see that dramaturgically in *Becos*. Each of the four episodes arrives at an endpoint which asks: "Where am I? Why am I here? I am here. That is as much as I can say at the moment but that in itself is a big statement".

In your theatre productions, Catherine, I can't see the connection between the action of the actor and the words of the text. In this project although the writers performed their own texts, they were poets not actors. You love working with actors, yet here you had none.

CATHERINE

Non-actors have still got that core essence of what matters to them and who they are. So even though they don't have the technical skills of an actor and you don't have the shared language of actor/director, the same questions remain: "what's your given circumstance? where are you? who are you?" It is clear there are moments in Becos where Tais is Tais, and Martina is Martina, etc. Perhaps Rodrigo as the rucksack is the truest form of Rodrigo because that is so much what he was like in the workshops: open, celebratory, cheering people on. We never told Rodrigo to write himself as a rucksack, but that's essentially what happened. We created Becos through writing. The performance part was the very last thing we did before editing the audio-drama. By then we already had this bank of knowledge about who the writers were, what they were interested in, what motivated them. When it came to directing them as actors, we could give them specific notes that we knew would tap into something about them, which they would then be able to use to try and explore in performance.

It also helped that they wrote about each other. The opening episode would have been quite different if they had written about themselves and introduced themselves. They were a tight-knit group who had disagreements and were very willing to oppose each other if something mattered to them or if they needed to be heard, and ultimately had great respect for each other. That comes across in the writing. As a director, what was important to me was the authenticity of their performances. Even when performing, it feels authentic to them. Performance is about illuminating the truth of a character. That's what we were asking those non-performers to do with their texts.

PAUL

I was worried in the ten days of recording in the studio that we would lose so much of what we had achieved over the four months in writing. But some of the most creative moments occurred when the poets were writing in the studio as we were recording. The anxious part of me was thinking 'Why weren't we better prepared?'. But there was another part of me that found it beautiful and very moving to watch Matheus and Rodrigo lying on the floor hammering out the next scene. There was a strange sensation of losing but also keeping control because the poets were still there as writers.

Catherine, when you were working on Shakespeare in Brazil you enjoyed rehearsing with actors who were so unfamiliar with him as a writer. Here you were working with six young artists who had no idea what an audio drama is or what a sound effect could do. Even though they are really fluent in editing and all things digital and online, the final result was a total shock to them. How do you think their unfamiliarity with the form affected what they created?

CATHERINE

They were very committed to thinking about sound as music and to the literal uses of sound but struggled with the imaginative possibilities of sound. However, they always wrote imaginatively, so it was just another step to get them to thinking about how you could tell the story to people who cannot see what is happening. We had to constantly ask them to rewrite in sound and they were very open to working in new ways. Their response after they first heard the work was magical, because they finally understood what was supposed to happen, but it was definitely harder for them than creating a poetry slam.

PAUL

How much do you think you learned from them as slam poets? About why they write and what it is to be an artist for them?

CATHERINE

The slam that they write is much more visceral than the sort of slam I have seen and experienced in the UK, where it tends to be a kind of rap word play. The Maré slam poets are able to get everything they want to say into their rhymes, rhythms and structures. Their writing is totally honest and hard-hitting but always with beauty. They write quickly and very effectively. The reason why editing was so hard was because there seemed to be nothing they couldn't write. Our challenge was to frame their writing in a way that audiences would want to follow it on an audio platform. We never challenged their poetry or them as writers. We just said 'What's next? What else?' They have an authenticity of form. I've learned a lot.

PAUL

When Tais heard *Becos* for the first time she said: 'that's what I wanted to do'.

CATHERINE

It represents them as individuals, but also who they are as part of a community and of a generation. They feel it is who they are.

PAUL

Was the Becos project about mental health and wellbeing?

CATHERINE

There were a lot of big moments in those workshops when we were dealing with issues of mental health. That's why Matheus wrote the poem "Lady Anxiety" that ends the final episode. We were always responding to what would be best for those young people in that situation and at that moment. I remember how often you and I asked, 'can we push this?' Can we take them to the next level? Sometimes there is literal dialogue about mental health issues, for example the bus in Episode 2, but at other times it is framed through fantasy: through ordinary lives made extraordinary. I was always conscious in the exercises that we should aim to allow other people into what we want to talk about by elevating our own personal experience into something else.

PAUL

For me the experience of mental health and wellbeing is embedded in all sorts of unexpected ways in the text. When I hear the young poets stand on a *favela* roof top at the end of Episode One and shout out their manifesto, I can hardly think of a better way of saying 'this is healthy'.

CATHERINE

The group told us that a *beco* in the *favela* is where people meet, chat, exchange stories and talk about their everyday lives. We know that part of the way we maintain our mental health is by sharing and talking about everyday troubles and issues. But *Becos* is about opening new paths, discovering new alleyways, creating new streets. We need to open pathways - new possibilities - which can also be dead ends. I think this project was very much about mental health.

PAUL

Becos doesn't say that mental health is the problem of Maré. The problems are poverty, violence, transportation, sub-employment, lack of access to educational opportunities, etc. The play refers to all those issues but never says that they cause mental health problems. Quality of life would be better, but depression, anxiety and mental disorders would remain. These young writers have found a way to integrate the challenges of mental health and wellbeing into their everyday lives in Maré.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN PAUL HERITAGE AND RAFAEL ROCHA

12nd March 2021 (via Zoom)

PAUL

Rafael, we met a long time ago on a Shakespeare project involving readings of *Anthony and Cleopatra*. I'd like to go back to that time briefly because I think that was the first time that we experimented with using percussion to support the rhythm of verse in actors' work (something which was so important in recording *Becos*). During the Shakespeare project in 2004, you demonstrated how a soundtrack can be such an active part of a play's dramaturgy. Do you think that our experience of working on Shakespeare together in five different *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro' has had any bearing on what we did in *Becos* last year?

RAFAEL

When working on *Becos*, one thing that became clear right from the start was that, in an audio drama, each element of sound has a specific role: sound substitutes scenery, art and even costumes. All of the elements that we normally see in a performance had to be incorporated in the audio. We had to consider the position of the sound at all times. For example, what was amplified behind or in front of other elements and how each sound crossed over with others. We had to think about the sound of everything, whether real or not: both fictional and non-fictional sounds. We soon understood the role of photography in cinema, movement in theatre, and that these would need to be transformed into sound. And that's how our game began: listening to sounds with our eyes shut.

PAUL

Shakespeare faced the same challenge, when he transported his audience to other worlds using only the sounds of the words. When we worked together on *Anthony and Cleopatra*, you were responsible for recreating the atmosphere of Egypt, Greece, Rome, war and sex, using sound. Recalling this reminds me of relating to something with our eyes shut: we were in the middle of a *favela*, very far from these places, but your sounds transported us there. On that stage, on the border between the *favelas* Parada de Lucas and Vigário Geral that was marked by the war between armed criminal factions, the word 'risk' was repeated again and again. Everything was a risk. Doing Shakespeare was a risk, reciting verses was a risk, improvisation was a risk. And for me, risk is a word that connects these two projects. Was *Becos* also a risk for you, like doing Shakespeare was twenty years ago?

RAFAEL

Risk is fundamental. In creating something new you're exposing yourself, looking for something that isn't obvious, something outside of your comfort zone. Working on a soundtrack has always been about avoiding the obvious: this is a point of comparison between the audio drama Becos with the Anthony and Cleopatra production in 2004. Back then, we had percussion and the freedom to use small instruments from all over the world to create sound effects and evoke something ancient. The soundtrack was used to highlight specific elements of the text, or was inspired by it, but the idea was also to bring an additional element to the production. We took risks with other sounds, like rubbing our finger on the drum skin to create new noises. Through using the right microphones, these little noises - these sound effects - took on a grand dimension, transforming into the types of sound we're used to hearing in the cinema. Creating something like this always involves risk and, in this specific case, there was the simultaneous risk of being between Vigário Geral and Parada de Lucas, which at the time was a war zone. It is also a risk to believe that art will broker peace. But we need to keep taking these risks. There's a line from a song of mine that goes: 'We feel wounded, protected'. It's important to take risks. I see that your work, Paul, is so connected to risk, and perhaps that's why we work together.

¹ Paul Heritage, 'Parallel power: Shakespeare, gunfire and silence', Contemporary Theatre Review, 15 (2005) 392-405 https://doi.org/10.1080/10486800500280396>.

PAUL

Another thing that still resonates with me from our experience years ago, and recently, is the relationship between melody and drums, melody and percussion. In a traditional soundtrack, the melody is the most important part. But in Becos, and the album Satélite, just as in Anthony and Cleopatra, you create a complex relationship between rhythm and melody, with them both sharing the responsibility.

RAFAEL

I believe harmony – the combination of several notes and different pitches – works very much like emotion. The harmony of a beautiful song makes the melody feel happy or sad. Every melody is also emotional, we relate differently depending on our 'audio biography'. For example, a melody that our mother sang to us forty years ago touches each of us differently. Percussion and rhythm, on the other hand, relate to instinct through which, in a way, we return to emotion. However, if we want to play with separating them – roughly speaking at least – melody lends itself to emotion and rhythm towards instinct. And I really like emptiness; leaving harmonies alone; a harmony on its own can stick in the head of everyone listening to it. With harmonies on their own, the listener can create their own arrangement. This also allows for risk, for the unknown. In the sound design, the soundtrack, the rhythm, I am searching for something unique. We are alive when we create, nothing should be done on autopilot.

In Anthony and Cleopatra, I worked with drums, with percussion, like a traditional sound designer. The type of sound designer who is aware of everything that is happening: who uses high, medium and low sounds, drums, toys, flutes, strange things and mysterious objects to create different moods. In *Becos*, the sound editor – Rodrigo Campello – and I worked as if we were creating something for the cinema. We developed many channels, carefully choosing a sound for each element that appeared in the narrative, always asking ourselves: What is this sound?

Is it in front of us? Is it behind us? To the side? For each component we played with all these possibilities. When we listened to it together - just then I almost said 'watched' - people said: 'Wow! That's quite something! It's like a Netflix series'. We were able to achieve this because we had the equipment that enabled us to be technically sophisticated. We were able to play technically with the content and, working alongside to the young writers from Maré, we had total freedom. The writers did what they wanted, and we supported them by directing the mood, using Rodrigo Campello's incredible technical studio and knowledge to really create the sound design that had a cinematic quality. This was the first podcast I'd done. Some people had told me that doing a podcast was quick: 'You do the interviews by phone, the person sends them via WhatsApp, and it's done'. But what we did, as you like to call it, Paul, was an audio drama, an audio play. So, we had to create intrigue, to tell an original story through poetry. It was really something that hadn't been done before, which is great.

PAUL

In *Becos*, as in Shakespeare, the actors' voices create the harmony. Obviously, you have melodies on your album *Satélite*, but it is as though the tone and volume of the actors' voices were the harmony. More specifically, in the case of *Becos*, there's the issue of how the layers mix together. There's a quote by the poet Thais Ayomide that you use on Satélite, which says: 'Our sound amplifies and fills the world'.

RAFAEL

As the incredible Chico Science said before: 'Where are the notes that were here? I don't need them, it's enough to make everything sound good to the ears'.² That quote from Thaís was said once, in a specific context, whilst creating in *Becos*. But we took that quote, which, if

² Chico Science was a Brazilian singer and composer and one of the founders of the manguebeat cultural movement.

you listen to it in isolation, has a melody of its own, and by repeating it several times we amplified its sound, its resonance. As you explained, the actors voices are the harmony and, in this moment, Thaís' voice is a melodic instrument. Through using a sampler, we do this a lot in Satélite: removing quotes and fragments from the audio drama and putting them in a different context. In altering the quotes, or repeating them, they become music. We cut up the beat and laid it under her quote, playing with the maculelê rhythm. The way we included this quote and repeated it transformed it into a rhythm. Over the decades the evolution of funk carioca³ has been based on this principle – on the sampler – on resignifying elements and lyrics on top of beats. Initially, the beats were more North American, coming from Miami bass and, before that, funk artists like James Brown.⁴ Then, in Brazil, people started to use lowtech techniques to include a rhythm found in capoeira - in Candomblé - which is called maculelê, an Afro-Brazilian artform. In funk carioca, an aesthetic was created using poor-quality microphones and lo-fi equipment. Risks were being taken once again. And, in this sense, the album Satélite really is observing it all: absorbing, analysing, assessing a journey, whether it is through Egypt or Maré. Time passes quickly in the album; it is not interested in passing trends but in human experience. As Luiz Eduardo Soares said to me, there's also something about Satélite that allows you to detach from the content and just follow the sound. There are also moments where the album focuses just on the poetry, using these young writers' quotes and fragments to transcend rhythm.

At the beginning of the process, when everything was being created, we realised that the poets were creating their own place, where each of them belongs. My experience was different in this sense because I don't live in Maré. Whilst I might visit and have friends there, and music can transcend the *favelas* borders, I am a satellite, I'm not a tree rooted there. This is how we arrived at *Satélite*. This album, *Satélite*, represents artistic freedom, Paul – mine, yours and the poets' – in this process of journeying and playing with sound, content, words and poetry.

PAUL

Play comes so naturally to your work. In *Becos*, I remember you playing with a WhatsApp message, and suddenly that message became a funk track. This is the transformative power that comes from the act of playing, whether in a serious text like *Becos* that deals with social justice and racism, and which, on top of this, was created during a pandemic with people from an area so devastatingly affected by the virus, or whether on *Satélite*, which offers something lighter. A satellite orbiting earth but still linked to it.

RAFAEL

When you say the word 'light' in regard to Satélite, I kind of agree, but I see the work more like a colour. A colour that doesn't yet exist, somewhere between gold, pink and light green. It's a place of hope. It really was an active choice not to make a sombre record, even if that choice was made unconsciously. For example, it was a choice not to include the sounds of sirens, police and guns. That decision came from our relationship with these young poets from Maré. It was so important to have some face-to-face meetings after months of isolation due to the pandemic, of course taking all necessary precautions: everyone tested, sanitised, wearing masks, hair caps, et cetera. It's then that we really began to play. The poets are playing all the time, they're so full of brightness and light, always joking with you, in high spirits, in the way that they communicate and hold themselves. Every time there's a silence, someone starts dancing and they lighten up and brighten the atmosphere. They're a collective; I don't know if they're each like that when alone.

³ Funk carioca is a type of hip hop music, also known around the world as baile funk and Brazilian funk, that emerged from Rio de Janeiro's favelas in the 1980s and remains popular today.

⁴ American singer, songwriter, dancer, musician and record producer James Brown (1933-2006), often referred to as as the founder of funk music.

PAUL

And these high spirits are something you managed to convey on Satélite.

RAFAEL

As I was saying, when we're alone – me, you, them – it's a totally different thing to when we're together. When we are together it's hard to be serious. There's no tension, there are no mistakes. The whole time we were together there was a relaxed mood, despite talking about a serious subject. That set the precedent for this levity, colour, hope and the high spirits that *Satélite* tries to capture, which is also something that was evident in the Building The Barricades research. People can feel happy in difficult circumstances. Although, of course, we wanted to take risks and have the freedom to let *Satélite's* sound emerge naturally, for the work to emerge, for the album to emerge, in a way that made us all feel like creators, like painters who experiment by throwing paint around and seeing how it lands. It turned out great.

Satélite has moments when the samples – the fragments from Becos – are hard and powerful, like when the black mother emerges from behind the counter, picks up a machete and points it at the police. At the same time, at the beginning, the album talks about resilience. For instance: 'Maré, a ferocious tide, hold back the tide while the world collapses'. Think of this image, of the community holding back the tide, even though it's literally impossible to grasp as it comes and passes over you. But, in Maré, they are holding back the tide while it's the world that is collapsing around them. While they are there, in that place, excluded by the state, on the periphery, marginalised, finding a way to improve their quality of life. It's okay if I didn't quite manage to capture this, but I think that's what Satélite is.

PAUL

As you referenced, in the research about mental health, the responses show that there is resilience and happiness in such contexts, a more

nuanced and diverse picture than the images usually broadcast about these communities. I remembered a tour we did, led by a resident, to listen to Maré's rhythms. The sounds ranged from birds to rock music.

RAFAEL

Klaus is the perfect example of a guy from Maré: the son of a German and a woman from the Northeast of Brazil. He's a municipal school music teacher and he likes to play heavy metal music. On this tour, which lasted an entire afternoon, we visited a church that plays rock, had a beer at the Angolan bar and listened to West African music, and then went to a classical music project for children. We went to the top of Morro do Timbau and I can also recall all indigenous sounds we encountered. It's important to remember that ancestry. Even before this community existed, there were *Tupinambás⁵* living there. At the top we had an expansive view: we could see the sea in Guanabara Bay, which nowadays is polluted, but which was once Guajupiá - a socalled paradise - where there was an abundance of food, water and fruit, where people migrating to Rio de Janeiro stopped and wanted to stay because it was so wonderful. This place today is home to the sixteen favelas that make up Maré, where migrants from the Northeast, indigenous people and people of African descent, make up a melting pot of identities. Maré is an inclusive and diverse environment, with great strength and great resilience. I think that's what we saw that day on the tour, and what I, as someone whose life is dedicated to music, explored deeply and humbly and tried to reflect in Satélite.

PAUL

The album is also a tour of different rhythms. Can you tell us more about the tracks' rhythmic journey?

 $_{\rm 5}$ One of the Tupi ethnic groups, an indigenous population that inhabited Brazil before Portuguese colonisation.

RAFAEL

My job is to make hybrid rhythms. I like to take different rhythms and put them together in such a way that they can be one thing and simultaneously something else. I don't work by constructing traditional rhythms, I do it playfully – feel it out – always checking if it's pleasurable. I once worked with Arto Lindsay⁶ and he didn't voice their opinions as I was composing, but he *felt* compositions – he felt whether they made him dance or not. And so, when he danced, that's when he thought it was great and we'd continue to follow that path. And it worked; I learned this from him. Sometimes it doesn't have to make sense, but you have to *feel* it.

For example, the song Cara Lavada by Matheus Araújo is a blues track, even though no one thought of it like that at the time. It plays with a melodic pentatonic blues scale and a shuffle rhythm while he says: 'Rain pours down, the street is flooded, no use trying to turn your umbrella into a raft'. We spaced his lines out, with no harmony - no acoustic or electric guitar - but the rhythm and melody of his speech itself had a blues quality. Matheus' song also flirts with rap – which is literally rhythm and poetry. We granted ourselves the freedom to create these hybrids. The album also features funk, which is actually a maculelê beat, made on the beatbox imitating an atabaque drum.⁷ The person who first started using this technique was Mr. Catra,⁸ who – whilst he never earned royalties from it - ended up influencing the music of Brazil and other countries. I wanted to seduce the listener somehow by opening the album with this contagious funk rhythm. For some, this album could even have continued in this vein, but instead it opens up; there's even a moment where you can hear the Caribbean. That's Maré. Maré is made

up of many Marés, and *Satélite* has this multiplicity, this sense of freedom. In the song *Enquanto o Mundo Desaba*, there's a moment when it's almost a bolero.⁹ Yet, it sits alongside MC Martina's song where she speaks with a delay and there is a heavy guitar. In another track, there's a distorted *berimbau*.¹⁰ As I said, this is an album of hybrid rhythms: overlapping rhythms, crisscrossed rhythms, and moments without rhythm. In the song *Liberdade*, in which Jonathan plays the guitar, there's no rhythm but it is still full of melody. It's perhaps the song with the most beautiful harmony on the album. We took his guitar, which has an essence of calm, and then I recorded different voices on several overlapping channels, which we amplified by layering over Jonathan's guitar solo. It's the album's eclipse, the moment of reflection.

PAUL

I want to end with the word 'cure', which was very important at the beginning of our process. Does music have the ability to cure? For example, the act of singing creates the physical impact of sound reverberating in the body and the soul, it's almost like you've created several mantras together with the poets. But then, at the same time, the poets bring agitation and protest to the album, which could almost be considered the exact opposite to a mantra. The album maintains this duality. There are always two elements: the mantra and the protest. In *Satélite* you somehow convey this idea of the mantra, of a controlled protest, which is different to what the poets do in *Becos*.

RAFAEL

This project's starting point was the creation of a live performance, together with the choir from Espaço Normal." With the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire world had to adapt. We had to give up working with the choir, at least for the moment. Against this backdrop I composed a mantra: 'I can smell death, but I prefer the smell of life. Between misfortune and luck, I'm looking for a way

⁶ An American guitarist, singer, record producer and experimental composer.

⁷ An Atabaques is a type of drum traditionally used in the Brazilian martial arts/dance capoeira, but also as a musical instruments in itself.

⁸ Mr. Catra (1968-2018) was a Brazilian singer and actor, known particularly for his contribution to Brazilian popular music.

 $^{9\,}$ A musical genre that originated in Eastern Cuba in the late 19^{th} century.

¹⁰ A *berimbau* is a single-string percussion instrument that was originally from Africa, but now also used commonly in Brazil.

out'. This mantra that I created, that was inspired by the choir, ended up becoming a melody. Jonathan used it to create another idea, which I later modified and resulted in the song that is on the album. So yes, there is this quality reflection and then there is the harmonium, which is an Indian instrument of prayer and meditation, and which we've used in circular and cyclical ways to create a song with layers that spiral. *Satélite* allows you to enter a rhythmic circle and suddenly – if you like the album – one day, you might even find yourself reciting one of the poets' phrases without even realising it. I'm sure that this album will always be heard and experienced in different ways. Depending on where you listen to it – on the bus, travelling, in bed, in the shower – you will take part of the album and help finish it.

PAUL

Where would you like people to listen to the album?

RAFAEL

I think of young people on the bus, crowded together without wanting to be. They close their eyes, with headphones on, and can see themselves in *Satélite*, they become the album's co-authors. I love listening to it on the road. However, since we're not always where we want to be, I hope it's a record that can be listened to anywhere, that can help to transport people and that invites them to become co-authors. I believe that, for those who are willing and open, this is an album that wants to carry you away.

¹¹ Espaço Normal is a community support centre in Maré that tackles issues surrounding drug abuse in the area.

MARÉ FROM HOME Images from quarantine

Tatiana Altberg Raquel Tamaio In March 2020, we were due to start an in-person photography project with Maré's residents and regulars at the *Espaço Norma*l. The project was part of Building The Barricades, a research project carried out by *Redes da Maré* and People's Palace Projects, studying the well-being and mental health of people in the sixteen favelas that make up Maré. March was also the beginning of a global pandemic, when many activities were suspended and others emerged. Projects, plans and meetings had to be postponed, reimagined, restructured and some were even cancelled. Nothing could continue as before. The pandemic, quarantine and social distancing required us to invent new ways of living and looking at life.

We have worked in partnership with *Redes da Maré* for many years. We created a place for socialising and learning, mediated by photography and other creative initiatives to inspire new narratives about peripheral communities. Our work together establishes a dialogue between images and text, literature and photography. We have published two books, one based on Jorge Amado's novel, *The Two Deaths of Quincas Wateryell* and the other based on short stories by Machado de Assis¹, as a guide for exploring the city of Rio de Janeiro and the *favelas* of Maré. We have also made a short, animated film using stop-motion called CAIO, and have taken part in several collective and solo exhibitions. The name of our space, our group, our project, is *Mão na Lata*, meaning *Hand on the Can*, which is a reference to the pinhole cameras that we make from cans. We have been doing this work since 2003. Many different groups have already been trained using our methodologies, always through long-term projects that enable us to accompany a young person or child for several years.

Since it was impossible to carry out our project in the midst of a pandemic as originally imagined, we decided to rethink our ways and means of working with Maré's communities in light of our previous experience and using the scope of Building The Barricades as a guide. We created a project called *Maré From Home*. The project had two parts: a virtual gallery – *From My Window* – where we published photos and reports by Maré residents about what they saw from their windows and how the pandemic has affected their lives; the other part was the *Diaries* kept by six young people from *Mão na Lata*, who are also Maré residents. Over four months of quarantine – from April to August 2021 – the six young people photographed and wrote about their daily lives, their observations and perceptions of external and internal events. At that time, we still had no idea how long the pandemic would last. Four months seemed like a long time.

The *From My Window* virtual gallery was created by launching a series of public calls to the residents of Maré's sixteen favelas, encouraging them to send us photos and texts via WhatsApp. We also held competitions where the public could vote and prizes were awarded to the winners. At the same time, we invited six young people from *Mão na Lata* to create written and photographic diaries over four months: Christine Jones, Fagner França, Jailton Nunes, Jonas Willame, Juliana de Oliveira and Larisse Paiva. We held weekly online meetings with this group in which we read the diaries together, looked at the photos, discussed the challenges – as well as our discoveries – that enabled us to overcome these difficulties. In short, we talked about our experiences each week.

Thrown into isolation, and at the same time each of our worlds being invaded by so many screens, the daily practice of writing and producing images gave us all the experience of the present. At the beginning of the process, the authors of the diaries reported difficulties in finding anything noteworthy in their daily lives: everything seemed the same, as if each day was repeated. Gradually, they all discovered new ways of looking at their everyday lives, including repetition, monotony, strange habits, getting in touch with memories, listening to their own dreams, sharpening their perception of the small things, fine-tuning their hearing to sounds from

¹ Machado de Assis (1839 - 1908), a Brazilian novelist, poet, playwright and short story writer, widely regarded as Brazil's greatest writer.

the street, to neighbours, rekindling family relationships and dormant affections. All this was part of a process of looking outwards and inwards at the same time. Creating the diaries also served as a therapeutic device to try to deal with the difficulties imposed by the situation. It was a device for keeping us present, a process where each person can see themselves, see the other and see themselves in the other.

There is an illness that affects seafarers, who spend many days on the high seas without contact with the mainland, that they call the 'disease of time' or 'time-madness'; they completely lose track of the passage of time and space, and become unable to discern whether days, weeks or months have passed. To stop this from happening, it is necessary to create a routine and write a logbook, which can be referred to and, above all, measure time and space so that they don't become abstract. These activities create an anchor for life. For all of us involved, *Maré From Home* was the way to avoid being afflicted by the 'disease of time'. During the first four months of quarantine, we were together on the same vessel, sharing our uncertainties, anxieties, discoveries.

The production and publication of images and narratives made by people living in Maré are important contributions that help map subjective experiences of the pandemic, but also the ways, means and forms communities adopted in order to cope. After these four months, we created a mosaic of voices and images that, to some extent, reflected the concerns and issues that the experience of quarantine – and the ominous presence of an invisible threat – made common to everyone. Personal perceptions and experiences became a kind of document and record of the authors' experiences; and, as in a mirror, we could see our reflection.

Narrating lived experience is an important instrument for documenting the present and projecting the future, for both narrator and reader. There is a connection between the exercise of narrating, well-being and mental health, since individual experiences take on other meanings when articulated. Telling and listening to stories is a foundational part of all cultures – a way of transmitting experiences and world views, of establishing communities and identity in the face of so many prohibitions imposed by the virus. Being physically isolated at home interrupts many parts of our lives, but not the ability to imagine: to imagine the past, present and future; to imagine better days; to imagine the end and the beginning; to imagine other possibilities; to imagine other imaginations. Narrating is still the most powerful way to imagine.

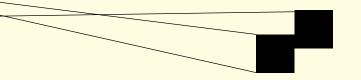
We estimate that more than 1000 images and 1000 fragments of texts were produced in the *Diaries*. In addition, seventy-two people took part in the virtual gallery *From My Window*, each sharing a text and an image. These figures reflect the extensive material produced over four months, but, above all, together they reveal a wide and heterogeneous collection of individual quarantine experiences from across Maré's different *favelas*, and their residents' perceptions of the pandemic's impacts.

Below, we will present excerpts of the extensive material produced by *Maré From Home*'s participants. We highlight some significant elements which, far from summarising the whole of this body of work and its wealth, indicate some commonalities and discoveries.

We invite readers to also visit the project website **www.amaredecasa.org.br** and dedicate some time to reading the participants' full texts and photos.

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DIARIES



CHRISTINE JONES

Among family memories and stories, such as her dad's habit of keeping family photos in his wallet and his sensitive gaze - 'light brown eyes paying attention to everything, even in the midst of his slow-turning thoughts'; her mum's childhood stories, like the one warning her not to drop hair on the floor, because a pigeon might eat it and give the owner a headache forever; a taste for coffee inherited from her grandma Lurdes 'who loved to sit by the front door in the afternoon, coffee in hand'. Among these are reminiscences and the world news coming in: the violence perpetrated against black bodies, such as the murders of João Pedro and George Floyd, and the pandemic's impact on the residents of Maré who go out because they don't have a choice: 'We have to risk it so we don't starve to death.' Between the familiar past and the strange present, Christine articulates her pain, looks at the stains on the wall, sees time fly past her in the blink of an eye and wonders: 'How can I write about nothing?... At what point of the day is your mind empty of everything?' With an automatic gesture she takes a bottle of water from the fridge and asks why she's so restless, what's missing: 'It isn't thirst. It isn't a lack of anything. I don't know what's missing.'

Christine misses the sea, the salty smell, and feels like fear is drying up inside. Her wish is simple: 'To sit down, eat a pastry and drink some sugarcane juice,' or walk around barefoot like she did as a child. She misses seeing her friends, who've changed by now; one must have had his dental brace removed. Many things are changed, disturbed, like the neighbour's routine who no longer waters the plants every afternoon and has a sad look in her eyes.

a The complete Diaries are published on the site www.amaredecasa.org.br. Another version of Diaries, with reworked extracts and photos, was published in individual booklets on the site http://www.ims.com.br/convida/mao-na-lata/ by the Instituto Moreira Salles, as part of the programme, Programa Convida.

Everything around her feels intrusive: the sounds and lights from the street invade her apartment, 'it's a daily exercise to understand how things reflect outside and inside'. And now she tries looking at the world like she did as a child, when she used to do handstands: 'Everything is upside down... I've been thinking a lot about changing perspectives to see more clearly. Maybe it will work out better from now on.' Finally, in the last excerpt from her diary, Christine asks us: 'I hope you always remember that this time we're in now has been running through many bodies, black, *favela* bodies, for many years. Now you know this, what will you do?'

FAGNER FRANÇA

Sitting in the alleyway that he wanders down to have his morning coffee at his mum's, or to meet his friends Zé Toré, Seu Didi, Seu Nenga, Dé and Luxa. who's 'grumpy with everyone', Fagner walks around collecting the stories he's experienced, heard and seen in Maré. Like childhood stories: when 'in the eighth grade I went to the doctor who operated on dolls to buy a doll's eye' at the request of Aunt Celeste, who 'always wore a white dress and looked like a foul-mouthed goddess'; or when he played in Praça do 18 in Baixa and the white motorbike terrified the residents; or when in March 1997 he did everything he could to get some money to take a photo of himself on the zebra. His grandfather knew how to solve other people's dreams, his grandmother knew how vultures die: 'Much of the way I see life came from my grandmother, the rest came from Maré.'

He gathers information from neighbours' houses, which 'are very close, one window facing another'; 'André's wife from Beco do Coqueiro died from coronavirus'. Death stalks us, whether it's the 'brutal death of another black man in the United States' which wounds us, or the 'violent stop-andsearches' we've already endured: 'A shove, a heavy-handed search and insults spoken right into the ear,' killing us little by little. 'Countless times Covid-19 has just seemed like a small issue for me', confesses Fagner. He 'can't even count the number of people who've died from around here on his fingers and toes': Seu Nenga, Jhonatan, Angélica, Dona Dedé. 'The road to death takes less than a second and lasts a lifetime' – not even the pandemic could 'stop or reduce gun battles' in Maré. He notes the territories' contradictory nature, observed by a 'child' of Maré: 'So many people departing and so many people on the streets playing and having fun. Sometimes I refuse to understand, but I understand only too well what it's like to come from the *favelas*.'

Everything becomes writing material on the days when 'once again I wake up on the same day.... Looking at nothing, still lying in bed, I seek inner silence to try to listen as far as possible'. Children are on the street, 'everyone is there, but occupying space in a different way, as if their bodies were radioactive', the quarantine brought forward the time for kite flying. In his quarantine reflections and observations, Fagner gets a little closer to working out who he is: 'It's as if we're suddenly filled with hate and love for someone, for everyone or for oneself.' And the impermanence that reveals that: 'Everything passes. Pain passes, love passes, heat passes. A VW Beetle passes by, the baker and the rubbish truck passes by, the only thing that doesn't pass is the desire to go out.' It's the same thing that makes you realise that yearning is 'one of the feelings that most affects *favelas*', intensified this year, because 'in addition to the bullets, Covid-19 is transforming friendships into yearning'.

Fagner lives in Maré and Maré lives in him: 'Wondering around Maré you come across animals, queer folk, plants, angels, goddesses, gods and other entities, it's just a case of being open to encounters and, if possible, conversations.' Thus, through walking around, chatting and writing, Fagner worked out ways to deal with quarantine: 'During these four months of writing, I found a universe that has always been here, but I never had time for it. Writing with light and painting the sky with letters, I drew memories, relived stories, taking care of the now and travelling in my forever.'

JONAS WILLAME

'Life is the only book that includes all genres', writes Jonas in his diary. From his room, he narrates scenes from daily life in Maré: the neighbours' never-ending barbecues to the sound of samba – which he hates; the typical noises from Maré's workers, the creaking of gates opening, the hurried feet leaving 'every day before, during and – only God knows if – after the pandemic'; through the window he hears 'stories told on a public radio on the corner' by old people during the night. From his room, he even hears couples fighting, gunfights and, 'while the rubbish outside is collected', Jonas also goes 'collecting ideas, so as not to be sad, even if I have reasons to be'.

The routine of going to the bakery every morning offers more encounters and more stories: a woman says she never picks five- and ten-cent coins up off the floor, a superstition she learned from an old man; one of the bakery's staff insists on rude people saying good morning; on the way he eavesdrops on a girl reading a verse on her phone to a friend: 'It doesn't matter how we will live day and night, but we will live.'

Through the window there's the world outside and life passing by inside. Jonas gets lost 'in his thoughts watching the drops of water fall on a bicycle on the street... a passport to the past' – he recalls the happiness he felt when his father gave him his first bicycle. He hears about a woman's death from coronavirus: 'That day it rained, a feeling of sadness came through the window.' He also felt sad to learn of Jorge's death, another victim of the virus, who had a drinks store he'd been going to since childhood.

Besides his room, what comes through its window, and his brief jaunts outdoors, there is another place that Jonas lives: in his dreams. 'My dreams always contain repeated details. Now, I'm always walking along the walls.' In another, 'giant spiders coming from a dark horizon gobbled up and took away many people'. A dream that blends into a series of news items that 'bombard' his imagination: 'A disease has travelled the whole world... demonstrations take over the streets. A man was sent back to space yesterday, it was live on TV. He was taken to the rocket in an automatic, driverless car.' Faced with everything, he asks himself: 'Is this the end of the world?'

As in life, which is 'the only book of all genres', Jonas spends his weeks of confinement experiencing mood swings: 'On Monday I was sad, on Tuesday I was excited, on another day of the week, I don't even remember which anymore, my mood changed a couple of times.' And this 'dumb life' goes on. Writing is maybe like a hiatus that forges some meaning: 'Today was an ordinary day, I ate, drank, showered, stopped to write. We feel a lot of things and sometimes this isn't good, but it also doesn't kill you. What doesn't kill you, fills you, grows. I think this is the breath of life.'

LARISSE PAIVA

At home with her mother and cats, Larisse divides her days between anxiety, dejection and hopelessness on the one hand, and memories, culinary delights and becoming closer to her mother on the other. If 'keeping up with everything that's happening has made me more anxious in the last few days', or if 'there are days when it's difficult to feel hopeful that everything will get better', or even if there are some days that 'it seems we're just on autopilot waiting for the day to end so that, who knows, nothing different happens the next day', another possible horizon also opens to us: 'I can't wait to create more memories in the future.'

Through pain and discoveries from quarantine, Larisse realises that even 'blurred memories can be comforting, in a present so full of uncertainty and insecurity'. Memories become denser as the days go by, even on the 'days when the only thing I want to do is sleep and eat'. She remembers the old recipe book, almost forgotten on the living room rack, a gift she gave her mother as a child; she remembers the moments when she would sit with her grandmother at the table and eat in silence, 'a moment when we needed no words'; she remembers when her mother told her 'you can't take a shower after eating black-eyed peas because it's dangerous', and that her grandmother 'loved to say these things'; the sight of her mother getting some sun on the porch reminds her of when she used to take her grandmother out to get some sun in the mornings, and she asks herself: 'What did she think about in those moments?'; she remembers Joe the cat, but her grandmother only called him Chaninho; she remembers that 'sitting on the couch always made my grandmother "rest her eyes" for a few hours'; she remembers crying over the death of the ants she raised when she was about eight: 'I put some ants inside a tube... but when I went to open it to "play" with them, they were all dead.' The quarantine, that forces Larisse to stay in the house, makes her go inside herself: 'I've been thinking a lot about moments of my life that are really meaningful, and even moments that were banal and which I now see in a different light.' Staying at home produces some symptoms: 'This confinement can really make us nostalgic.'

During these days on loop, banality and its meanings are revealed in small delights, such as 'eating foods sacred to Sundays on any day of the week', or in brief insights: 'While I put the pasta on the stove, I think about how the world outside is still crazy.' The contradictions of the 'outside world' have an impact on Larisse: 'I can't help feeling a little stupid for still cleaning a bag of crisps, when crowds of people gather at the market near home,' but also the 'outside' surprises: 'The sounds of the favela have been gaining new layers with each passing week. I've become an avid listener.' And in this state of being 'on the edge', writing for Larisse becomes a tonic: 'I probably would have freaked out at the very beginning of lockdown if I hadn't been writing this diary. A diary that became my daily dose of sanity. I'm writing this diary for the last time, but am I writing the last part of it? A diary never ends and I will still need my dose of sanity for the next few months.'

JULIANA DE OLIVEIRA

At the beginning of the pandemic, Juliana had symptoms similar to Covid-19. Given the difficulty she has receiving guidance and medical care, she speculates: 'I live in two different worlds,' referring to the fact she studies nursing at university and at the same time has 'difficulty to be seen by specialist doctors to treat my own illnesses'. Aware of this contradiction, she always says: 'I study health to lose my health, in a sad reference to my university and social life.' It's a contradiction she also notices one day while studying parasitology and hears 'a series of shots'; she finds herself in a 'parallel world... between *favela* and university', and understands that, 'in addition to stray bullets', she could 'die from opportunistic parasites'.

Juliana collects a set of reports in her diary about her life and daily life in Maré, like when 'the rat chewed the water pump cable'; or about her discontent when she wakes up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, as she always hears 'neighbours arguing and being violent' which disturbs her and stops her from sleeping. 'Difficult neighbourhood!', she vents, 'and what's worse is the neighbours change, but the practice continues. Fights on top of fights. Fights about food. Fights about the dog barking. Fights because their son didn't block off the hole the rat usually comes through. Fights between couples'. In one fight, a 'woman banged her head against the car several times in a moment of despair.... So many forms of violence affect me that I don't even know how to define my sanity anymore'.

There are also reports about the peculiarities of daily life, such as the 'noise of the tractor', a vehicle adapted to collect waste, 'because on the street where I live there's not enough space for the rubbish truck to get through, as normally happens in other places'; other peculiarities are sunbathing on the rooftop after washing her hair and the habit of putting soap in the clothes drawers, which are then used to shower, 'sometimes they don't have a fragrance anymore, but they still lather and that's what matters'.

And quarantine makes every day seem the same, on repeat: 'Another day like all the others. It seems like what I do today blends into what I did yesterday, the day before, and probably tomorrow. The question this time is whether for lunch I'm going to fry my egg, boil it or make it into an omelette.' These repetitive days, however, have setbacks that make Juliana reflect on her life and the world, such as the tragic 'death of the five-year-old boy Miguel Otávio, who fell from the ninth floor in Pernambuco'. Juliana feels close to Miguel, because, she says, 'we have something in common, my mother is also a domestic worker and raised me with her earnings. I couldn't help but put myself in his shoes, I think that could have been me about eighteen years ago'. Other things flash through her daily life and make her realise things that would have gone unnoticed before, such as the little bird that landed on the bedroom door hook, or that 'there's a pattern like a star' in potatoes, or seeing her mother sleeping on the sofa with Aron, her cat, which reminds her that she did the same as a child.

'This is how I get on with my life here in Maré,' Juliana summarises in her diary; and her life, in this pandemic and quarantine, is becoming more complex, demanding more and more reflections: 'Sometimes I wonder when all this is going to end. And if it ends, what will my life be like after that? I get very anxious thinking about this public-economic-political-territorialcoronavirus-alien-caterpillar-shootings-burning health crisis. I keep thinking about this crisis of living in this increasingly difficult world.'

JAILTON NUNES

Writing challenges Jailton in several ways. He asks himself: 'How can I organise ideas on paper, when my mind is as chaotic as the world outside?' Daily life in quarantine 'is driving us all crazy, some more seriously than others', making everything hypersensitive. Everything affects him, he can no longer sleep properly and feels 'an anxiety that wasn't so present before quarantine'. Anxiety sometimes produced by the news, like the president's speech when he says 'so what?' about the deaths, sometimes by what he sees in people's attitudes who pretend that Covid-19 seems to be 'already behind us': 'They didn't treat quarantine as normal, but they did normalise the many daily deaths. It's as if that wound has already healed.'

Noisy neighbours don't let him hear his own thoughts or sleep; some hammer away at renovations, others have a barbecue with loud music, 'how can I sleep hearing 'take a big slap on the arse'? These funk beats do away with anyone's sleep,' he vents. And, on top of that, the neighbours' fights also don't let him sleep: in one of them 'a television was broken, someone will have to pay 400 reals and someone is drunk'.

From his window he sees 'a man stuck in his house looking at a bird's cage', an image of this current incarceration when time ticks away without moving. 'It's as if the clock strikes midnight and goes back in time, making us live the same day again.' The days go by, but daily life in quarantine makes them 'more and more alike... I don't even know which day of quarantine we are on, have we passed day one hundred, or day thirty?'. And even a busy day feels stuck in the same place: 'The computer has been my transport. This 'new world' is crazy. An interview on Zoom, a course on Zoom, a show on Zoom... I spend most of my days in my bedroom trying to isolate myself from everything. The opposite happens, I'm being swallowed up by the world.' Trapped in this 'new normal', Jailton confesses he 'misses that old abnormal'.

Even in agony 'here and there', with 'a feeling as if I were hoping or searching for something all day long', asking: 'But what am I looking for? I'll only know when I find it.' Even so, he finds some small gaps opening up those days, some small gestures: he helps his mother hang a picture of Our Lady of Fatima on the wall; he looks at the kites in the sky that make his imagination soar and take him to those 'days when I used to go to the beach, to Arpoador's rocks' alone or with friends. He misses his childhood, those 'simple days' when the family gathered 'in the living room waiting for snacks to eat, watching the afternoon session on TV'. He drinks coffee sitting on the bed and the cold that comes in from outside makes him cover his 'legs with a cotton duvet, a gift I got from my grandmother a few years ago'. The feeling of missing his grandmother accompanies the cold. And 'in the midst of all this chaos' a miracle happens: 'Wednesday, 1st July, at 4:30 pm, Cecília Oliveira Nunes, my niece, is born'.

Jailton doesn't know how to finish his diary. He ponders: 'I could say that the fear of Covid-19 is still with me. That my sadness at the countless deaths keeps increasing. I could also say how much I've changed since the beginning of quarantine. How much I've learned about myself. How much I realise I am more sensitive to things.' However, he jokes: 'Until I find a way, I'll get my bag and mask and go to the store. The rice has run out.'

EXCERPTS FROM DIARIES



17th June

Today I took my body out to dance. I miss going out on Saturday nights to the *baile charme*³ party, or any other event with music to dance to. As I dance under the moon that's rising through the night, I remember the days I spent dancing with friends until dawn. I miss going to events in my favela. By saying this, you must think I dance a lot, but I don't. I'm not a good dancer, but I believe there's great power in the act of dancing. The body speaks in different ways. Just stop and observe. You'll know what your body is telling you by simply dancing. I used to love observing all this at night, also telling my stories with my body. I dance in my own way, letting go of the stress of many things. I speak of joys, of achievements and so on. I am renewed when I dance. I miss the freedom that existed in my body.



4th July

Since I was very young, I've made a habit of writing things down and trying to accomplish whatever's on the list. Today, tidying the bedroom bookcase I found several papers including these notes, several lists of things I needed to buy, or obligations I needed to fulfil. What caught my attention was the number of things repeated on several pieces of paper, how many things were dragged out over time and weren't accomplished. I looked at them one by one, and that bothered me. I tried to think about why so many things didn't get done. The worst thing is that I didn't even remember those papers and I already had another one like them inside a notebook on the shelf. Another list of things I needed to do and couldn't forget. After reading each piece of paper, I tore them up one by one. I decided to start from scratch and go slowly, with a smaller list with a maximum of five things. After I finish those five things, I'll start another one with five more. It's best to go slowly, so as not to get lost in my goals and everything just becoming a pile of papers stacking up on top of the bookcase.

Excerpts from Christine Jones's diary

3 Parties that play Soul music and R'n'B.



14th July

I woke up thinking about what art can be, what art is. I thought of the name Apolo for my son. I thought of betting two reals on the animal lottery, on numbers seventy-two and nine. Many thoughts on my mind and nothing resolved, nothing decided. I didn't win on the lottery and didn't choose my son's name. Keeping an eye on everything all the time is very difficult.

I started the week with all the Covid-19 symptoms, all those we know and a few others, to add to my agony and fear.

I was born poor, bro. Not having money most of our lives makes us find other ways to take care of ourselves. But there are people who have it soft, it's easy for them to tell those of us with nothing what to do. White people who haven't left the house at all because they have others to do things for them. Here, if you don't work, there's no way to live, eat, pay the rent or survive.

There's a bunch of white people who spend their lives wanting to teach poor, black, favela residents, as though they were better, smarter, more awesome. Bro, there are distinct types of knowledge and knowing. Show up in these alleys and chat to a child or an old person and see how much you'll learn. In fact, they don't even come here, they stay there. Carry on thinking that you're going to save the world, going to save everything.



7th June

I've been having a hard time writing and taking photos. I read a lot and I always take photos. But there's something happening to me that's blocking me, my mind has become a labyrinth and my heart is crying. However, like the Racionais MC's say, everything is there, it's just knowing how to get to it.

The day looked like it wasn't going to start, cloudy, dark. I woke up with a hangover even without drinking. Every day has been like this. I feel an urge to go out and hug everyone, an urge to take off this mask and speak to people up close, even get a shower of saliva from Dé's wet speech, telling stories and making the tales longer with countless points before ending with thunderous laughter.

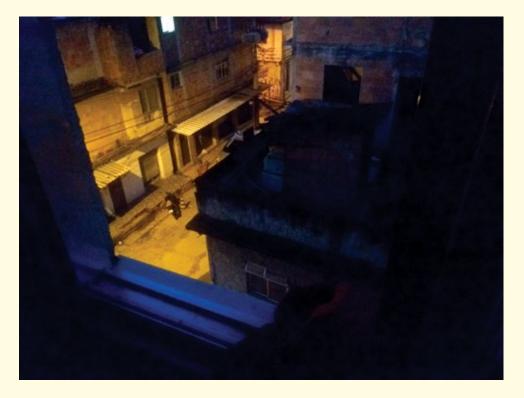
I miss everything, bro, literally everything. I even miss taking the packed 355 to Madureira or coming back home from the South Zone sleeping on the bus and missing my stop.

Excerpts from Fagner França's diary



12th August

Wednesday. So much is happening and so many words to choose, this diary is a spark of – almost a child of – my soul and an expression of it. At the weekend, as well as on Father's Day, I discovered it was Saturday from the truck carrying speakers, confirming there was going to be an outdoor event. They're back! These parties that fill the entrance of the *favela* with taxis, fill the minibuses and the buses in the morning. And fill it with people pissing in the street. I always give them a dirty look and they get scared (I like this bit: frightening them). The bad part is that the pandemic isn't over, but I think God is protecting the *favelas*. They've already had their fair share of deaths through state oppression and neglect. I need a little bit of peace while the world ends out there.



4th May

Waking up at 4am I hear a woman arguing with her boyfriend. She asks him not to touch her, but it seems like he ends up hurting her. Those things, out there, on the street. Nothing can be done!

Through the window I see a drunk talking to himself and leaning on a concrete post. The hours pass. In the morning, some gunfire. The week has begun with a bitter taste. Yesterday the president paraded around without a mask. It's shaping up to be a sad day. I'm feeling empathetic. So many things happening that I haven't had time to process. I write to dispel my emotions, half asleep. While the rubbish is collected outside, I also collect my thoughts together, so I don't get sad, even with all the reasons I have. What photo can I take to represent all this, other than this dark matter imbued in 2020?

Excerpts from Jonas Willame's diary



20th June

Every morning my mum prepares orange juice or green juice, for us both. She says it's good for boosting immunity. And as always, she's right. While my mum gets the honey for the juice, she tells me my grandfather used to keep bees in the North. When he got out the honey, she would take some and eat it with flour, since she loved eating honey like this. Memories become ever more present. I carry on learning a bit more about my mum's life stories.



14th June

While I cleaned my room, I noticed ants coming out of a little crack in the wall. I remembered a time from my childhood: I must have been eight and I decided to raise some ants, since I couldn't have a cat or a dog then. At one point, I put some ants in a tube, one that used to store biscuits and I kept it in a corner. But when I opened it to 'play' with them, they were all dead. I remember I cried a lot, while my mum tried to console me. In my child's mind I had done the right thing, I didn't understand why it had all gone wrong. These recollections of childhood innocence bring a smile to my face. It's always good to think of heart-warming stories in such difficult times.

Excerpts from Larisse Paiva's diary



10th May

In the morning, after more than four days, I washed my hair so that it would be dry and smell beautiful at lunchtime. After washing my hair I went to sunbathe on the rooftop, encouraged by my mum. I made the most of this time to talk to her about a lot of things. And that was really good! From up there, I managed to see a bit of the street. I felt the wind blowing while the sun made me nice and warm. Pigeons were flying and landing on the edges of houses.

Every day I'm feeling better. I no longer have a fever nor does my body ache. I'm responding well to treatment, with the help and care that only a mother can offer.

Going on the roof was one of the best things I did this week, I felt like I was in a different place, it was liberating!



22nd June

I see my mum in the window talking to someone else. I ask who it is. She replies that the neighbours said that the residents' association was giving away gas cylinders, but to get one you needed to bring an empty one. We had one, but we still had to do one thing: put our name down to be called up. My mum gave up on the idea and I didn't go. But it was a great opportunity, like when we discovered, a few hours too late, that they'd been giving away free eggs on the street behind us. Opportunities are like that, if you're not smart, they go by and you don't even notice.

Excerpts from Juliana de Oliveira's diary



29th June

Another Monday. I don't even know which day of the quarantine we're on, have we passed day one hundred, or day thirty? The day began with rain. That's why I didn't do my morning run. I stayed sprawled in bed among the pillows and blankets. Slowly the day got warmer. The sun appeared, I admit I'd stopped waiting for it to appear. I'd lost the will to run. Garfield settled next to my body. Going out of my mind, I hopped between TV channels, looking for something to watch that wasn't about tragedy. I came across an advert for the afternoon film. I'm looking forward to seeing it, it's going to be the highlight of my day. I confess that this desire to see the afternoon session isn't for the film itself but for the comfort it makes me feel. The feeling I had when I saw the TV advert was the same I had as a child. Almost all my afternoons were spent in the same way, lying on the sofa watching films on Globo TV. I've lost count of the number of times I've seen The Blue Lagoon, not to mention The Princess Diaries. Whatever the film, it was good to see, especially because of the time of day. Every time the film ended it was almost time for my parents to come home from another day at work. I remember my sister and I competing to see who'd be the first to hug them, and, of course, take the sweets they'd brought for us from their pockets or their bags.



23rd May

The neighbours are extremely noisy today. From the living room I can hear hammering, probably the neighbours below renovating their house. From the bedroom I hear music. Once again the neighbours at the back are having a barbecue. I also hear music from the kitchen but it's from the bar in front of my house. As if it wasn't enough having six people at home who already make a lot of noise, I still have to listen to other families' noise. I can hardly hear my own thoughts. So I went up to the highest part of my house, the rooftop. There I have a privileged view of Maré. It was already sunset so I made the most of it and sat admiring it. The noise became distant and no longer bothered me. With my eyes moving across the clouds, I managed to go to a silent place, so silent I dozed off. When I woke up it was already 8pm.

Excerpts from Jailton Nunes's diary

BUILDING THE BARRICADES - NARRATIVE STUDIES: POETRY, MUSIC AND PHOTOGRAPHY

FROM MY WINDOW

Between May and August 2021, we put out a public call to Maré's residents, asking them to send us photos and texts, showing us and telling us what they saw from their windows, as well as how the pandemic and quarantine were impacting their lives. There were seventy-six entries, published in two galleries on the website www.amaredecasa.org.br. We also held two competitions where the authors of the photos and texts that received the most public votes were selected and awarded prizes.

The people who submitted photos and text brought up a variety of topics and points, from which we can identify common perceptions, difficulties, desires and ways of dealing with the pandemic, and how they see Maré and its daily life. Below, we have put together a brief overview of some recurring themes and common points in the participants' images and texts:

BIRD IN A CAGE

Confinement, quarantine and social distancing are conditions contrary to the feeling of freedom. Camila Mendes, for example, confessed that she feels jealous of birds: 'They have everything we want: carefree coming and going. Some seem to make fun of us during the morning birdsong, they're always in pairs and one of them must be saying: "Look who's caged up! Perhaps now they'll learn something!", "I don't think so," says the other one.' Through her window, Roberta Maria de Carvalho Andrade sees, among so many things, 'a world of possibilities waiting to be accomplished, for freedom'. She says: 'I see a beautiful day that cannot be taken advantage of, because we're locked up like birds in a cage.'

FEAR, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

These mental states were mentioned a lot in the writers' reports, sometimes as symptoms observed in others. For example, Brenda Souza Fernandes da Silva commented: 'When I go to the gate, curious to see faces that always seem new to me, I notice what they - the faces - have in common: the look of despair, the fear ... hardly ever do the faces convey hope.' Sometimes these mental states are observed in themselves, for instance, as reported by Vania Silva: 'The news about cases and deaths in the community greatly contributed to my fear and depression increasing.' Camila Martins de Souza explained: 'I have so many anxiety attacks that I don't know if I'm dying or if it's just another attack... all this affects you in so many ways: you don't know if you're more afraid of dying, of not being able to pay the bills, or of your children catching this virus that's destroying so many families. You see other people around you not taking care and you could die from their carelessness. It's a mixture of sadness, despair and anger, together with fear.' Likewise, Ana Beatriz dos Santos Siqueira asserted: 'I never thought my generation would go through a time like this, I'm afflicted with uncertainties... sometimes I get nervous and afraid of all of this undermining my chances of getting into public university.'

FAITH IN GOD

'What I see through my window is faith in God and that all this will pass,' writes Maria Josilene. Faith in God soothes many and can bring people the certainty of overcoming difficulties, as described by Sandra Solange Paiva dos Santos: 'I've tried in every way to endure these difficult days, but I confess that sometimes I cry... but my crying isn't a sign of weakness. I wash my face with tears and I have faith, Lord, that you will collect my tears and make me stronger every day. My dreams, plans, projects, and life are in God's hands.' Ana Cristina da Silva dos Santos tells us that 'to be in quarantine is to live under protection, with the certainty that what is inside protects what is outside... it means becoming closer to God and having the certainty that when all this is over, we must be better people'.

THIS WILL PASS, BETTER DAYS WILL COME

If the difficulties are enormous and living conditions are more and more precarious, perhaps there is also hope – in equal measure – that all this will pass and that 'better days will come'. Karen Barros confirms this for us by saying: 'What we're experiencing will pass. Nothing is by chance, in the end all experiences are useful... even if just for learning.' Matheus Siqueira Eusébio elaborates on his hope, saying: 'Despite the fear, the afflictions, the anxiety... I maintain hope and I believe that everything will return to normal. It's just a bad phase, it will pass.' Gabriele da Silva tries to comfort herself by believing it can be overcome: 'As much as the pandemic has harmed me in relation to my work, because I pay rent, I live alone, I buy everything for the house, nonetheless I try not to lose faith... we will have better days, and this will all pass.' Carlos Henrique Vieira da Cunha sees a communal triumph coming from collective action: 'From here, seeing all those connected wires, I feel soothed and my heart becomes warmer with the hope that these brave people will be rid of this soon and everything will be different! There will be, there have to be, better days for these brave people!' Likewise, Natália Fernandes dos Santos asserts: 'Despite all the fear, I carry on believing in my Maré, believing in the day that all the residents will have awareness and that this phase will pass!'

THE FAVELA

Kamilla Valentin Silva is very blunt in expressing her experience as a favela resident: 'We know that many times our fundamental right to life is brutally taken away from us, such as has been the case for the boy João Pedro, Marcus Vinicius, Ágatha and many others. My plea is that at this time we continue to do what we've always done: find creative ways to survive. The favela always finds patches of blue sky and catalyses a revolution!' Crístian Santos Gomes highlights the favela's cultural and affective characteristics: 'We need to uphold this culture (which came from and was created by us): "nobody let go of anyone's hand"; "add more water to the beans so that they go further"; "don't leave home because there's trouble"... the favela has proved to me, during the pandemic, that it's more than a place, the favela is a home, a family.' Anna Maria de Oliveira points to actions undertaken by civil society and the community in facing the pandemic: 'I thank the good Lord and Redes da Maré for all their support to me and other families, paying attention to every call, every concern. This comforted me a lot in the worst days, thanks to all of you who are community angels - you're the ones saving us and I'm grateful.' Ricardo de Araújo Xavier highlights the overlapping violence and the neglect of favela residents by public authorities: 'We don't want what's normal, because in normal circumstances those of us from the favelas have already died. Post-pandemic we want less inequality and more fairness in the world ... there have been difficult days, there have been days that have turned me inside out, have led me to face death. Not that this is new because those who live in favelas know the laws of genocidal police who want us dead.'

WHAT CAN BE SEEN THROUGH THE WINDOW

'The windows of the house offer escape from daily confinement', writes Izabel dos Santos Camargo; the window is a place to observe, it separates the inside from the outside, the one who sees and what is seen. It also brings these two states together in a certain way, in a game of mirroring, as Ana Lya Mello Souza explains: 'From here I can see people going past, the bus lane, cars passing by and my dreams waiting for me.' Larissa Alves da Cunha Souza looks out of the window and notices the fragility of existence: 'In this pandemic I've seen people, who went past my window every day with a smile on their face, being taken too soon.' Through the window you can also see the projection of the future, as stated by Fernando Inácio Francisco: 'Through my window I see hope for normality, but we can't return to what was normal before. We have to change. Will we really change when all this is over? Will it pass? Yes, it will pass. But something will surely change. We will return to the streets hungrier to live, to enjoy every second of our lives.' Through the window a mirror of the present can be seen that is sometimes also seen in other reflections, as said by Rodrigo Alves, who notices from his window 'children at home and the square empty', which reminds him of 'how the favela is when there's a police invasion.'

Looking through the window is imperative for Jefferson Melo: 'Stop and look through your window, observe the value of living together, of the sky, of life.... Look through your window at the sky, the blue, the sun and let that light show you the hope of tomorrow, fill yourself up. Look through your window.' This imperative is similar to what Allan Farias da Silva declares: 'Use the window like a picture,' which Francisco Valdean seems to do: 'My window is a canvas.'

LEARNING LESSONS

'If life gives you lemons, make lemonade' is a popular Brazilian saying that plays with reversing and overcoming difficulties, i.e., turning what is bitter into something sweet. Learning through adversity appears in several texts, including those of Marcelo Wance Soares: 'This pandemic made us "brake" so suddenly that we had to reinvent ourselves. Why not learn to see things that, with a simple glance, we couldn't see before?' Julie Oliveira argues that 'nothing in life is permanent', and this is what she holds onto: 'Not to go crazy – again.' Of everything she learned from 'looking outside, the biggest lesson was looking within. To see myself in a gentle and caring way, so that all the windows of my soul open and I discover new worlds and possibilities hidden in me'.

Gustavo Pablo Januario Vieira discovered 'new ways of living and learning at home'; Amanda Baroni believes that 'many people have had moments to reflect during this period of quarantine, to look within or, better still, to look at things better'; and those moments of pause in the quarantine helped her learn a few things: 'I learned to feel. Feel my body. Taste my food. Feel the silence and the sadness.' It's similar to the insight James Maré had on his rooftop, writing in his notebook: 'The penny dropped heavily, and, I discovered, once again, that I need to love myself. I want to re-learn, as never before, to love myself. I think: what is its quality, what is its nature, what kind of love do I want to love? I want to learn to love myself with a healthy love.'

Fábio Oliveira Guimarães states that at least one lesson can be learned from this time: 'This year everything has been taken away from us... only our eyes remained and everything started to be said through looks... if we end this year without at least knowing how to look in each other's eyes... then this year really will have been wasted.'



This snap represents my learning at that moment.

I believe many people have had moments of reflection during this period of quarantine, to look inside or, better, to look at things differently. I had never really paid attention to the view from my rooftop until it became my only space for leisure, like dancing or sunbathing, for example.

In these past two months of isolation I have realised that in my past routine I was 'trying' to isolate unresolved feelings and thoughts, by always keeping busy with the noise of routine in my head.

While many say that Brazil cannot stop, I think how important it is to stop. A friend once said that pauses are also movement. I saw the movement of nature cleansing itself while we paused – which confirms what she said.

And I am healing myself of countless feelings and thoughts during this pause. I have learned to feel. Feel my body. Taste my food. Feel the silence and the sadness. I have also learned to feel a bit more gratitude in being able to see the day break and come to an end, with fun kite contests at the weekend. I have become more grateful for having a space which allows me to re-signify the value of life and what happiness is, in all its simplicity.

What I can see are the houses around here and part of Rua Teixeira Ribeiro. I lose the view of the horizon a bit because the houses are all similar heights. But the sunset is always beautiful. The angle of the photo shows Rua São Luis.

Amanda Baroni



Breathe, don't go crazy! Breathe, don't go crazy, anxiety yells. It's a struggle every day to hold onto sanity. The world has changed, this is our reality now, who would have thought? Through my window I see hope for normality, but we can't go back to normality as it was before. We must change. Will we really change when all this is over? Will it pass? Yes, it will pass. But something will surely change. We will return to the streets more hungry to live, to enjoy every second of our lives. Breathe, don't go crazy, meditate. The days are all the same, I don't know if today is Monday or Sunday, I don't know what's happening to me anymore. There are good days, I wake up, exercise, write, study, read, smile... Other days are not so good. I just survive. I have ups and downs, sometimes I think I'm getting used to it. Breathe, don't go crazy, allow yourself to do so ... Allow yourself to listen, doing nothing is also doing something. Today I did a lot of nothings and it was great! Slow down a bit, give yourself time. Breathe, don't go crazy, believe. This will pass!

Fernando Inácio Francisco



Ziiiiiiiii, Tec-Tec-Tec, 'Where's your mask, Mrs Maria?' 'Another day when gossip flows from window to window...'

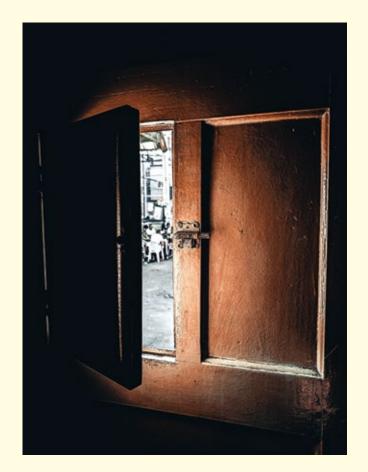
Well, from my bedroom window, I hear more than I see. I'm not so interested in observing with my eyes, but I cannot deny that the listening part is rather fun to get a perspective on social isolation.

Seeing/listening to my neighbours adapt, life having to go on normally (even if not ideal) for financial reasons and this sunshine that projects hope, all make up my 'window' routine. Life is somewhat changed, because isolation brings unwanted companions, such as stress, anxiety, compulsion, among others.... However, I cannot fail to notice this human warmth the *favela* has, this hope that the community transmits and this empathy that permeates our *favela*'s ground and makes overcoming this phase less aggressive.

The pandemic has made me reflect.... It's made me question things about myself, about the future that is destined for them/us (my people) and how we prepare for it.

It also makes me reflect on who is here to guide and look after us in trying times, helping me to understand that we have to be there for each other in unstable times like this, which show us how much we need to uphold this culture (which came from and was created by us) of 'nobody let go of anyone's hand', 'add more water to the beans so they go further', 'don't leave home because there's trouble'.... It's these actions that motivate me to pay attention to what comes through the window. Because the favela has proved to me, during the pandemic, that it's more than a place, the *favela* is a home, a family.

Crístian Santos Gomes



Through the window I see other windows. These other windows don't see me because they're all closed. Before, you could see them all open, allowing sound, air, music, voices to enter. Between the tangled wires, eyes and voices could be seen meeting each other. You could hear 'neighbour, watch the beans!' Not even that anymore.... Everything is grey outside.... We are in troubled, worrying times....

No hugs and kisses. There are those who need to go out... those who go out and don't need to... those who need to not need to... those who don't need to.... Ah, you understand!

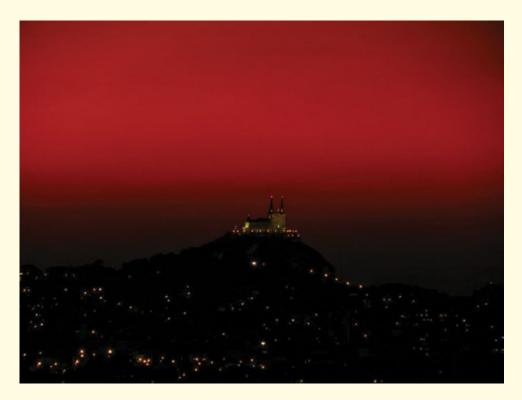
Here life goes on, but not like before....

It will take time to be like it was before... for now, use the window like a picture. In the meantime, enjoy the boredom. Let's get to know each other, read, watch series, love the people we're with... doing nothing is also good! And when it goes back to normal we'll sing *Tarde Vazia* by Ira! Again....

Allan Farias da Silva



I see all this from my window, I have this privilege in my favela. I didn't have a window for a long time. My window was the street. I know that the pandemic is a tragedy, but it gave me a window. And that window gave me this view. **Leonardo da Silva**



I look at this photo and imagine that every one of those dots is a house, each house a family, as if the sky had decided to come down to earth and turn the lights on earth into stars! But reality is different. Just as a photo can be beautiful, it can also have a dark side, with people suffering from violence or hunger. But one thing I do know: everything depends on faith and faith is unshakeable, regardless of religion. May this soon pass!!! During the pandemic I saw that my photographer's eye came back stronger. After all this time, it never left me.

Felipe de Oliveira de Lima



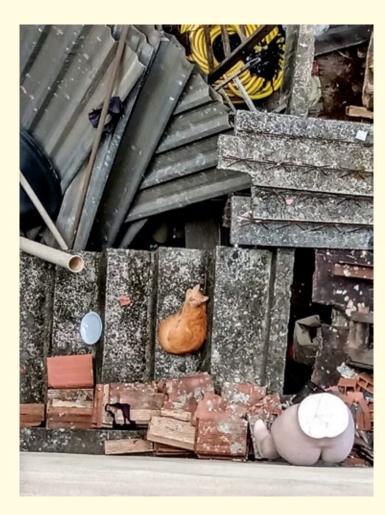
Look how beautiful nightfall in Maré is. May we have more days like this...what peace! Silvana Costa da Silva



Autumn and the Pandemic

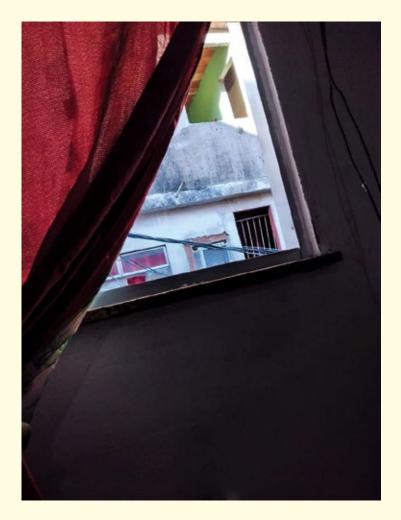
From my father's sweet shop I watch the resilient trees. I realise that they want to tell me that the sweetest thing of all is Mother Nature. They're near the Professor Paulo Freire Municipal School. He was the patron of education. He teaches us to love knowledge. This wisdom tells us about our environment, which today re-emerges from the ashes to assert that not even the pandemic can silence the planet's cry. That despite human negligence it's possible to look at the trees and see that even pollution is not possible to silence, that it's winter and that trees are life.

Hélio Euclides



I lost my focus and I was lost for days, like a boat adrift, battered and afloat after a severe storm. But now, over the months, the anguish has subsided, the despair has passed, and my head is back in order. And today, when I look through the bedroom window, I don't just see disorder, I can also see the small, but precious good things that life can show to anyone who is willing to see and discern. Like this cuddly kitten looking at me. Today I allow myself to see the good things too. And if despair grips my heart again and makes me want to cry, I can just raise my head and look at the sky! And when the day comes for me to leave my shell, maybe I can emerge like a pearl, which only comes from a damaged oyster. After all, life is these wounds, scars and marks that we carry and notice when we look at ourselves in the window called the mirror.

Izabel dos Santos Camargo



At home I rely on books to try to escape the boredom of isolation and keep my mental health strong. Insecurity and fear are constant, in the midst of the chaos we're experiencing. I hope to come out of it well and calm. With books, I can travel and visit various places without leaving home. I've plunged headlong into Brazilian literature to deepen my reading and gain knowledge, even away from the university entrance exam. Books are my compass, my guide. I believe in a better and safer future for everyone. A future where I can go out and travel, not only in books, but in real life too. A future where I can hug people. A future where people are more aware and responsible. A new normal.

Luana Rodrigues Ferro



It fell from the sky. It wasn't rain, it wasn't a bullet. It was a kite! Following this colourful object's rhythmless dance brought me immense joy. It could have visited another 140,000 houses but it chose mine. I know it wasn't luck. Quarantine has made the boys use their rooftops in the best possible way: to fly kites. More than ever. So we have more kites for sale. We have more reasons to enjoy the sky and distract ourselves from the pandemic. I'm not talking about suffering or pain. I'm talking about hope.

Thais Cavalcante da Silva

We'd like to thank the Maré residents who accepted the invitation to look through their windows and share their reflections with us at this challenging time.

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Adrieli Rodrigues Mello, Allan Farias da Silva, Amanda Baroni, Ana Beatriz dos Santos Siqueira, Ana Cristina da Silva dos Santos, Ana Lya Mello Souza, Anna Maria de Oliveira, Antônia Maria Rodrigues, Brenda Souza Fernandes da Silva, Camila Martins de Souza, Camila Mendes, Carlos Henrique Vieira da Cunha, Christine Jones, Cláudio Dias Gomes, Cleide Ferreira da Silva da Costa, Crístian Santos Gomes, Edna Patricio, Eliana Avelino dos Santos, Eunice Paiva dos Santos, Fabiana da Silva, Fábio Oliveira Guimarães, Felipe de Oliveira de Lima, Fernando Inácio Francisco, Francisco Valdean, Gabriele da Silva, Graciana Cunha de Lima, Gustavo Pablo Januario Vieira, Hélio Euclides, Izabel dos Santos Camargo, James Maré, Jefferson Melo, Jocilma Viana Veloso, José Almeida, Juliana Machado, Julie Oliveira, Kamila Camillo, Kamilla Valentin Silva, Karen Barros, Larissa Alves da Cunha Souza, Leonardo da Silva, Luana Rodrigues Ferro, Lucas Pereira Cajazeiras, Marcelo Wance Soares, Marcia Farias, Marcos Aprígio, Maria José Marcelino dos Santos, Maria Josilene, Marinete Soares, Matheus Siqueira Eusébio, Natália Fernandes dos Santos, Paulo Vitor Santos Bastos, Ricardo de Araújo Xavier, Roberta Maria de Carvalho Andrade, Rodrigo Alves, Romário Euzébio, Rosimar Machado da Silva, Sandra Solange Paiva dos Santos, Silvana Costa da Silva, Sonia Maria Santos do Nascimento, Suelem Carvalho de Castro, Tainá Gomes, Tamires Araújo, Thais Cavalcante da Silva, Vania Silva, Viviane de Araújo Costa, Viviane de Lima Barbosa.

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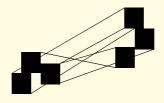
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