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It is entitled:
In the Favela: Questions of Participation and Community Engagement in the work of Hélio Oiticica, Vik Muniz, and JR

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In the *Favela*: Questions of Participation and Community Engagement

in the work of Hélio Oiticica, Vik Muniz, and JR

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

Brazilian favelas (shantytowns or slums) first formed in the late nineteenth century when soldiers and former slaves could not afford housing in urban cities. The growth of the favelas accelerated in the 1940s when Brazilians migrated from rural towns to find jobs. Several artists have worked in these communities in Brazil including Brazilian artists Hélio Oiticica (1938-1980), Vik Muniz (b. 1961), and French artist JR (b. 1983). Oiticica began as a painter, later moving toward more overtly political and radical creations such as his wearable sculptures in the 1960s and 1970s. Muniz formed portraits of favela community members in his Pictures of Garbage series (2008) and JR also photographed people of the favela in his Women Are Heroes project (2008-2009). All three artists engage with marginal communities to create artworks and cultural experiences, increasing the visibility of socio-economical issues in the favela.

A close analysis of each artist’s body of work in regards to authorship, audience, and participation aids in discussing how these projects function within the favela community. Oiticica’s Parangolés combine sculpture and performance in order to catalyze an experience in which the body and art become one. Nicolas Bourriaud’s theories of relational art lend to an idea of a convivial atmosphere for the participants. Claire Bishop’s idea of antagonism conversely presents itself through Oiticica’s audience.

Conviviality also plays a part in Muniz’s project in Rio where he shares authorship with participants in order to directly impact their lives through proceeds. Muniz appropriates art historical works in the form of garbage, creating new forms of beauty. The participants experience materials they work with each day in a new way, aiding in the production of large
mosaics. The final photographic works sell at auction and Muniz donates the proceeds to the favela community. His ability to directly impact a community of participants relates to a broader question of philanthropic projects.

JR’s monumental pasted photographs highlight women of another favela community. He uses participation to create discussion surrounding these sociopolitical and economical issues. JR allows for a global audience to view his work through installations and web-based media. JR’s international notoriety aids in spreading awareness of the women’s stories and importance of supporting their own community.

All three artists reconfigure how art can change perspectives of the world and also raise more questions about the importance of participation in marginal communities. Each project approaches social issues in the favela differently, demonstrating how participatory art provides an array of possible impacts.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .............................................................................................................................................. ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ......................................................................................................................... vi

INTRODUCTION: Participation in the Favela ................................................................. 1

CHAPTER ONE: Hélio Oiticica’s Parangolés: Embodying Community ......................... 7

Chapter One Images ........................................................................................................................... 19

CHAPTER TWO: Vik Muniz’s Pictures of Garbage: Engaging in Human Detritus ........ 21

Chapter Two Images ........................................................................................................................... 35

CHAPTER THREE: JR’s Women Are Heroes: Highlighting Women of the Favela .......... 39

Chapter Three Images ........................................................................................................................ 53

CONCLUSION ......................................................................................................................................... 58

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................................................................................................................... 60
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INTRODUCTION

Participation in the Favela

Brazilian favelas (shantytowns or slums) first formed in the late nineteenth century when soldiers and former slaves could not afford housing in urban cities. The growth of the favelas accelerated in the 1940s when Brazilians migrated from rural towns to find jobs. Several artists have worked in these communities in Brazil including Brazilian artists Hélio Oiticica (1938-1980), Vik Muniz (b. 1961), and French artist JR (b. 1983). Oiticica began as a painter, later moving toward more overtly political and radical creations such as his wearable sculptures in the 1960s and 1970s. Muniz formed portraits of favela community members in his Pictures of Garbage series (2008) and JR also photographed people of the favela in his Women Are Heroes project (2008-2009). All three artists engage with marginal communities to create artworks and cultural experiences, increasing the visibility of socio-economical issues in the favela.

In this study I address questions of authorship, participation, and audience relating to the work of these three artists. Although participatory art continues to gain momentum, much more research and scholarship is needed in the field. This is the first study to focus on the art of Oiticica, Muniz, and JR collectively in relation to their engagement with the favela.

In relation to the favela, it is important to understand the context in which these issues are discussed. Mike Davis’s book Planet of Slums is helpful in gaining a foundational knowledge of the Brazilian favela communities. He states,

São Paulo’s favelas—a mere 1.2 percent of total population in 1973, but 19.8 percent in 1993—grew throughout the 1990s at the explosive rate of 16.4 percent per year. In the Amazon, one of the world’s fastest-growing urban frontiers, 80 percent of city growth has been in shantytowns largely unserved by stabled utilities and municipal transport, thus making “urbanization” and “favelization” synonymous.¹

¹ Mike Davis, Planet of Slums (New York: Verso, 2006), 17.
Davis also provides several charts that analyze slums all around the globe. In one figure, the percent of the poor living in Rio’s inner-city slums is 23 percent while 77 percent live in peripheral slums. These percentages represent communities in which crime continues to flourish in Rio and other cities. Davis writes:

In the 1960s and 1970s, for example, the Southern Cone military dictatorships declared war on favelas and campamentos which they perceived to be potential centers of resistance, or simply obstacles to urban bourgeoisification. Thus, writing about Brazil after 1964, Suzana Taschner says, “the beginning of the military period was characterized by an authoritarian attitude, removing squatter settlements compulsorily and with the aide of the public security forces.” Evoking the threat of a tiny urban foco of Marxist guerrillas, the military razed 80 favelas and evicted almost 140,000 poor people from the hills overlooking Rio. With financial support from USAID, other favelas were later demolished to clear the way for industrial expansion or to “beautify” the borders of upper-income areas. Although the authorities failed in their goal of eliminating all “slums within Rio within a decade,” the dictatorship ignited conflicts between bourgeois neighborhoods and the favelas, and between police and slum youth, which continue to rage decades later.²

This historical conflict and criminal history continues to impact the favelas today, as I discuss in relation to Muniz and JR’s work. The gangs present in these communities also influence living conditions while the police officers can be just as corrupt as the criminals. This sense of danger and lack of safety crosses other areas as well.

The geographical locations of these favelas also demonstrate a low quality. Many of the favelas are located on hills and unstable land. Davis writes, “Rio de Janeiro’s more famous favelas are built on equally unstable soils atop denuded granite domes and hillsides which frequently give way with truly deadly results: 2000 killed in debris flows in 1966-67, 200 in 1988, and 70 at Christmas 2001.”³ Thus, these social, economic, and environmental issues contribute to the overall condition of the favelas. Although it is difficult to truly understand

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² Ibid., 108.
³ Ibid., 122.
these conditions without living there for oneself, it is possible to see how these issues relate to the projects of the three artists discussed in the following chapters.

In order to explore these questions of the *favela* in relation to these art projects, I consider the groundbreaking text by French art critic, Nicolas Bourriaud, entitled *Relational Aesthetics*. Drawing on his theories, I use concepts from art historian Claire Bishop, regarding participatory art from “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics” (2004) and *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (2012). Bishop’s ideas, opposing those of Bourriaud in regard to antagonistic viewership, drive these questions of participation within this study. I also use a phenomenological standpoint to address the artists’ works, discussing the body as a source for understanding and perceiving the world.

Formal analysis of specific artworks informs the study of each artist and how these art objects come to represent catalyzed experiences. The physical aspect of the works at hand is pertinent to investigating elements of participation, authorship, and audience. Each artist’s own words relating to his work will also drive conversation surrounding his intentions for the projects.

The most comprehensive compilations of writings, chronology, and plates of Oiticica’s work is *The Body of Color* (2007), with essays by Mari Carmen Ramírez, Luciano Figueiredo, and Oiticica. This book organized by the Tate Modern (and part of a catalog raisonné project) examines the life of Oiticica in relation to the Brazilian context in which he strived as an artist, also focusing on the theme of color. This exhibition sparked a renaissance of interest in Oiticica’s work and led to the writing of other informative texts.

An article entitled “Tactile Dematerialization, Sensory Politics: Hélio Oiticica’s Parangolés” by Anna Dezeuze has been particularly useful in addressing notions of body and
touch. Dezeuze is perhaps one of the only scholars to wear one of Oiticica’s works in order to experience its sensory and corporeal qualities. Drawing on her experiences, Dezeuze argues that the participatory element of the pieces is specifically important to the Brazilian community in which they were created and worn. Dezeuze uses a phenomenological approach to the work in regard to participation and spectatorship. These texts, among others, serve as the basis for an investigation of Oiticica’s art in terms of participation.

Muniz is best known for his recreation of famous imagery in the form of objects (chocolate syrup, sugar, and garbage), captured through photography. Little has been written about his *Pictures of Garbage*. The most informative source on the project is the documentary film *Waste Land* (2010) by Lucy Walker. This film serves to investigate the process, relationship, and context of Muniz’s work in Brazil. Among other articles that inform this study is Hanna Musiol’s “Museums of Human Bodies.” Through this article, I use her ideas to address notions of beauty in Muniz’s work alongside Immanuel Kant’s theories of the *sensus communis*.

In relation to JR, perhaps the most informative source is the Ted talk (2011) in which he discusses his hopes to “turn the world inside-out.” This short video enables the audience to ascertain the view of a semi-anonymous artist and his mobilization of participation and interest in marginal communities. His film accompanying the project *Women Are Heroes* also helps to evaluate the *favela*’s community members and their participation in the project. Not many scholars have written about JR’s work; however, Bertie Ferdman’s “Urban Dramaturgy: The Global Art Project of JR” is used to discuss the morals surrounding the project. Alison Young’s article “The Art of Public Secrecy” and book *Street Art, Public City: Law, Crime and the Urban*...

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4 “My Wish: To Turn the World Inside Out” (USA: TED, 2011), https://www.ted.com/talks/jr_s_ted_prize_wish_use_art_to_turn_the_world_inside_out.
Imagination aids in addressing the artist’s ability to provoke thought surrounding public secrets in everyday life and social order.

In Chapter One: “Hélio Oiticica’s Parangolés: Embodying Community,” I explore how these works combine sculpture and performance, creating new experiences in which the body and art become one. This sensorial experience produces a convivial community of participants (similar to that of Bourriaud’s relational art theories), but also produces an antagonistic group of viewers (as discussed by Bishop). Oiticica worked alongside dancers from the Manguiera samba school in the favela with his Parangolés. These participators engaged with the capes, dancing samba while others watched. The artist’s idea of vestir (to wear) and assistir (to watch) created a metaphysical atmosphere in which his art became complete and one with the participators.

I investigate notions of authorship, audience, and participation in regard to Oiticica’s final and somewhat climactic works. In order to discuss authorship, I draw upon Oiticica’s own writings and artworks. Formal analysis aids in questioning and discussing the qualities of the physical sculptural works. Questions of audience will require information surrounding Oiticica’s display of the Parangolés in the public sphere as well as museum institution. I also analyze the participation of the Brazilian people, such as Oiticica’s choice of the Manguiera School and how their engagement was necessary in completing these works.

In Chapter Two: “Vik Muniz’s Pictures of Garbage: Engaging in Human Detritus,” I argue that Muniz uses this project of iterations to engage in a Brazilian community to create art and also improve social and working conditions. I investigate, again, notions of authorship, audience, and participation in this body of work. Bourriaud’s idea of conviviality lends to a discussion surrounding the project with the catadores (garbage pickers). Muniz’s project brings about questions of authorial morality as well as the role of the artist and participants. In this
chapter, I question Muniz’s intentions to better the lives of the *catadores* through the creation of artworks. I also investigate the results of the project in relation to the *favela*. I analyze how Muniz guided his participators in creating the mosaic works. A closer analysis of the film helps in recalling the narrative of Muniz’s production.

In Chapter Three: JR’s *Women Are Heroes*: Highlighting Women of the *Favela*, I argue that JR sheds light on the women in the community and provides a backdrop in which viewers may discuss these social issues. I question how these works use participation to create conversational public displays and if JR provides insight into his own political opinions, or whether he creates more questions surrounding these issues. JR’s somewhat anonymous identity as an artist will inform discussion regarding authorship for this particular body of work.

French philosopher Roland Barthes’ famous essay “The Death of the Author” informs the discussion on JR’s authorial role as an artist for these works, and the viewers’ role in reading the images. I also investigate levels of participation in creating the photographs, video, and the production of the overall street exhibitions. This ties in with questions of the audience in relation to the project. I also address the location of the works and their visibility within and surrounding the *favela*.

Through this study of the artwork of Oiticica, Muniz, and JR, I examine concepts of authorship, audience, and participation in the Brazilian *favelas* and raise questions as to how these concepts operate in their work. The investigation involves a close, comparative analysis of specific bodies of work from each artist, showing how each blurs lines between art and life.
CHAPTER ONE

Hélio Oiticica’s Parangolés: Embodying Community

The Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980) is known for many things, including his participation in Grupo Frente, a Neo-Concrete group founded by Brazilian artist Ivan Serpa (1923-1973) in 1954. Oiticica’s oeuvre includes paintings, installations, sculptures, and participatory works. His climactic Parangolés embody his philosophy as an artist and activist during his short-lived artistic career. Through these works, I argue, Oiticica combined sculpture and performance in order to create experiences in which the body and art become one, serving as a universal method of addressing sociocultural issues.

Oiticica was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the presidency of Getúlio Vargas (1883-1954) and the Estado Novo (New State) during which political activists were exiled. Oiticica’s intellectual development was strongly influenced by his grandfather, José Oiticica (1882-1957), a highly reputed philologist, teacher, writer, and renowned anarchist. In 1953, Oiticica and his family visited the II Bienal do Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, where Oiticica would view several modern artists’ work such as Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Alexander Calder (1898-1976). The following year, Oiticica and his brother began studying painting with Serpa, as Oiticica later joined Serpa’s Grupo Frente.

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5 “The neo-concrete movement was a splinter group of the 1950s Brazilian concrete art movement, calling for a greater sensuality, colour and poetic feeling in concrete art.” Tate, http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/n/neo-concrete.
Oiticica’s career launched in Brazil and he began exhibiting at several group shows to gain notoriety. In 1957 he displayed his Metasquemas, in 1958 his Série Branca (or White Series paintings), and in 1959 his Bilaterais (bilateral paintings hung from ceiling). During the same year, Brazilian artist Lygia Clark (1920-1988) and art critic Ferreira Gullar (b. 1930) invited Oiticica to join the Grupo Neoconcreto in Rio de Janeiro, from which moment on he classified his works as não-objets according to the “Teoria do não-objeto” (“Nonobject-based Theory”) by Gullar.  

Oiticica’s participation with the Neo-Concrete group would help evolve his work as he created his Relevos Espaciais (or Spatial Reliefs, 1960). These works demonstrated his new concern with three-dimensional space, protruding wooden structures and color into the viewer’s environment. He later worked with his Núcleos (or Nuclei series, c. 1961) and Bólides (plywood boxes, c. 1963). Oiticica reached a turning point in 1964 when he traveled to the Museu Nacional da Quinta da Boa Vista.

Oiticica viewed a structure made by a beggar at the Praça da Bandeira, constructed from four wooden slats, ropes, barbed wire, and other materials, with the inscribed phrase “here and…Parangolé.” This experience would then lead the artist to create his sculptural works, which he named “Parangolés.” During this time, he was also introduced to the Escola de Samba Estação Primeira de Mangueira (Mangueira School of Samba in one of the city’s oldest favelas) in Rio de Janeiro in which he would later recruit members to use the Parangolés during performances.

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7 Ramírez, 361.
8 Ibid., 373.
9 Samba is an Afro-Brazilian dance performed in Brazil’s Carnival.
The word “Parangolê”\(^\text{10}\) must be defined within Oiticica’s oeuvre before analyzing the participation of this community. Oiticica stated,

> The discovery of what I call *Parangolê* signals a crucial point and defines a specific position within the theoretical progression of all my experiments with color-structure in space, especially insofar as it refers to a new definition of what the “plastic object” may be within this same experience. What is at stake—as one might be misled to believe by the word *Parangolê*’s derivation from folkloric slang—is neither a merger of folklore with my own experience nor any such identification, whether transposed or not, both of which are totally superficial and useless.\(^\text{11}\)

Thus, Oiticica seems to have adopted the word for his own use, contrary to previous definitions.

He detached this word from its original linguistic meaning and displaced it onto something else.

He also found elements of the *Parangolê* in urban or rural landscapes, specifically the Brazilian *favela*. He stated that,

> One example of which may be seen in the organic quality of the elements that constitute its structures, their internal circulation and the external disjointedness of those constructions, there being no abrupt passages from “room” to “living room” or “kitchen,” only an essential definition of each part as it connects to the next part in continuity.\(^\text{12}\)

Therefore, Oiticica drew upon his surroundings in order to reflect a physical object, the *Parangolê*, to combine with the participation of the Mangueira School. This blurring of art and life are paramount for Oiticica’s *Parangolês* and his focus on participation in the *favela*.

\(^{10}\)Hélio Oiticica, “November 1964,” in *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, (Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, 2007), Mari Carmen Ramírez, 297, translator’s note: “The origin of the word *parangolê* is obscure, and its earliest appearance may be traced back to c. 1950 in Rio de Janeiro, where it was variously used to qualify nonsensical, uninteresting, pointless conversation. More to the point, Oiticica was probably aware of its additional senses of artfulness or astuteness, as used to designate the cunning and street smarts generally associated with the Carioca figure of the dandylike *malandro*, typified by his individual ethos, existing at the margins of society and surviving by his wits through improvised activities such as grift, petty theft, and pimping. As such, by the late 1960s this somewhat romantic character had long since become a quasi-caricatured urban myth. *Parangolê* also signifies dishonest behavior intended to deceive.”


\(^{12}\) Oiticica, 297.
The physical object Oiticica created, the *Parangolê*, was partly conceived by the artist’s experience seeing a person’s banner in the *favela*. He states,

From the first “banner”—intended for the spectator to *dance* with or *carry*—a relationship to dance is already evident in the structural development of these works insofar as “manifestation of color in environmental space” is concerned…Action is the work’s pure expressive manifestation. The idea of the “cape,” which came after that of the banner, further consolidates this point of view: the spectator “dons” the cape, which is made up of layers of colored fabric which reveal themselves through movement generated by running or dancing. The work requires bodily movement; in addition to dressing the body, it calls for movement and, ultimately, *dance*. The very “act of wearing” the work implies a transmutation of bodily expression by the spectator, which is the primordial characteristic of dance, its first condition.\(^\text{13}\)

Thus, Oiticica’s creation of these tactile objects directly relates to the movement and experience of the wearer within the favela.

Oiticica used common Portuguese words to refer to the sensorial experience of wearing a *Parangolê*. *Vestir* (to wear) relates to the participant’s actions of wearing the sculptural cape, often times dancing the samba. *Assistir* (to watch) relates to not only those individuals watching the performance, but also the participant watching his/her own body moving within the *Parangolê*. By allowing the participant to become one with the artwork, Oiticica created a new experience that was not previously present in his other solitary works.

Through the participation of the *Mangueira* School, Oiticica yielded his artistic authorial role to produce what one might call a “convivial” environment. Bourriaud’s idea of conviviality through his theories of relational aesthetics may be applied to Oiticica’s catalyzed artistic experiences.\(^\text{14}\) Bourriaud defines relational aesthetics as “A set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social

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\(^{14}\) This term comes from Bourriaud’s *Relational Aesthetics* (1998), which was first used in the catalogue for the exhibition he curated, *Traffic* at the CAPC (Centre d’arts Plastiques Contemporains, Bordeaux) in 1996.
context, rather than an independent and private space.” These theories harken back to the radical 1960s. Bourriaud writes:

The constitution of convivial relations has been an historical constant since the 1960s. The generation of the 1990s took up this set of issues; through it had been relieved of the matter of the definition of art, so pivotal in the 1960s and 1970s. The issue no longer resides in broadening the boundaries of art, but in experiencing art’s capacities of resistance within the overall social arena. Based on one and the same family of activities, two radically different sets of problems emerge: yesterday, the stress laid on relations inside the art world, within a modernist culture attaching great importance to the “new” and calling for linguistic subversion; today, the emphasis put on external relations as part of an eclectic culture where the artwork stands up to the mill of the “Society of the Spectacle.” Social utopias and revolutionary hopes have given way to everyday micro-utopias and imitative strategies, any stance that is “directly” critical of society is futile, if based on the illusion of a marginality that is nowadays impossible, not to say regressive.

These ideas of art and the social arena connect to the artwork of Oiticica in the 1960s and the following contemporary artists in the next chapters, producing an analysis of how conviviality plays out in participation art. Viewing a documentary image from one of Oiticica’s participants wearing a Parangolé (Fig. 1), the experience and environment reflect Bourriaud’s idea of relational art.

We see Niniha Xoxoba, a participant, wearing a Parangolé. She moves about in the pastel pink and blue cape as she smiles at the camera. The shiny fabric envelopes her body as she swings one of her arms to the left of the composition. Several children watch in the background, some standing barefoot on the dusty street. The image blurs the faces of the children, but the viewer is aware of the spectatorship in this performance. Other numerous photographs capture the smiles of samba dancers from Mangueira as they twist and twirl inside the sculptural textiles.

16 Ibid., 2002:31.
But why the *favela*? Art historian Mari Carmen Ramírez writes:

In Pedrosa’s view, Hélio’s descent from “his ivory tower, his studio” in the skirts of Jardim Botânico was a necessary step. That is, if the “aristocratic” southern Rio artist was ever to shed completely his Concrete baggage, he would have to enter the impoverished Mangueira Hill—*the reality of the matter* in the north sector of the city. In Neo-Concrete terms this step would be considered the equivalent of the “naïve, springlike stage of primal experience” leading to *the reality of the spirit*. Hence, it was during this initiation into samba’s underworld that Oiticica merged the tactility, movement, and lush sensuality of materials into the total chromatic experience.17

Ramírez sees Oiticica’s choice of the *favela* in relation to his increasing concern with color and the body. This “primal” experience through his chromatic structures would present itself possible through the participation of the *favela* community members.

One art historian took it upon herself to test the applicability of these works in a different context. Anna Dezeuze wore a *Parangolé* in both a photography studio and local park in order to analyze the works outside of their Brazilian environment. Defining the works as a type of political banner for the marginal community and using a phenomenological approach, Dezeuze’s article “Tactile Dematerialization, Sensory Politics: Hélio Oiticica’s *Parangolés,*” seeks to explore the sensory aspects and purpose of freeing the participants of sorrow. Dezeuze’s reading provides useful ideas relating to Oiticica’s *Parangolés* as art that joins with life in order to create a convivial environment with the participants.

Oiticica, I propose, chose the *favela* as a source for creating art-in-action in order to address his own political ideals. Dezeuze identifies the artist’s intent to “create a ‘suprasensory’ (suprasensorial) state, a space where people can feel liberated from the rules and regulations of a repressive regime and thus discover their capacity to revolt.”18 Thus, Oiticica allowed his

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participants to not only have this experience through the artwork, but to also complete his art in a
way that would not be possible if it were exhibited on a gallery wall.

Dezeuze does not think the Parangolés may be used by participants outside of the favela
with similar results, although Oiticica stated otherwise. His participation with the community in
Mangueira speaks to his specific concern with their marginality and living conditions in Brazil.
In this way, he allows the participants to wear his art in order to have a supersensory, tactile, and
convivial experience with themselves and each other. This is possible through Oiticica’s divided
authorial role with the artwork as he created the Parangolés, but also allowed participants to
freely move about within the works. These convivial and relational happenings do not cross all
avenues, however.

The Brazilian musician Caetano Veloso speaks about the controversial aspect of
had involuntarily contributed to the name of the Tropicália movement by Veloso and was
present at an event held at the Club Sucata with one of his banners. Veloso states,

His homage to the slum bandit Cara de Cavalo, who had been shot by the police:
a banner with a photograph of the dead body lying on the ground, and beneath
that image the words: BE A CRIMINAL, BE A HERO… One night, a judge who,
for whatever reason, had come to see our show at the Sucata became incensed
with Hélio’s banner. Under a military dictatorship, it didn’t take much to provoke
a moralistic reaction to a work of art glorifying the misfit or criminal…the judge
saw to closing down not only the show but the club as well.19

This is just one example of Oiticica’s work creating an antagonistic viewership, relating to
theories of art critic Claire Bishop. Her essay, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics,”
criticizes Bourriaud’s focus on the previously discussed conviviality in participatory art.

Though this banner (Fig. 2) was not created to be worn as the Parangolés were, it

19 Caetano Veloso, Tropical Truth: A Story of Music and Revolution in Brazil, (New York: De Capo
demonstrates Oiticica’s political agenda and ability to produce antagonism in his viewership. Like the *Parangolés*, the banner addressed social and political issues present in the *favela*, such as corrupt police officers, poverty, crime, and murder. The end result of the banner’s exhibition was the total removal of the work because of its antagonism against certain viewers. This type of antagonism, I argue, relates to Bishop’s ideas drawn from theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. With reference to this text, Bishop explains antagonism in this way: “...The presence of what is not me renders my identity precarious and vulnerable, and the threat that the other represents transforms my own sense of self into something questionable.”\(^{20}\)

In the case of Oiticica’s banner, the presence of a sole image of a *favela* community member, alongside powerful text, rendered the judge’s identity vulnerable in the presence of the Other. This type of antagonism is present in Oiticica’s *Parangolés* as well. During the first public display of the works at the opening of the 1965 exhibition *Opinão 65* at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio, Oiticica and his participators experienced a similar antagonistic viewership.

Deuzeze writes: “The irruption of the poor into the bourgeois atmosphere of the museum caused such a scandal that the director had them evicted.”\(^ {21}\) Was this, again, due to the presence of the Other, causing viewers’ identities to become questioned and threatened? If the participators had not been adorned with the *Parangolés*, would the director still have forced them to leave the museum? Indeed, the reception of Oiticica’s retrospective in 2007, *The Body of Colour*, at the Tate Modern was not at all antagonistic, but rather, full of praise and veneration. However, in Rio, the reputation of the *favelas* and its peoples has a stronger hold and has in fact, caused controversy.

\(^{21}\) Deuzeze, 59.
The notions of audience and authorship discussed above prove, I argue, that there is no singular production and/or reception of Oiticica’s Parangolés. These ideas relate to the art theorist Peter Bürger’s essay, “The Negation of the Autonomy of Art by the Avant-Garde,” in which he argues that avant-garde art has no singular production or reception. In this way, Oiticica’s work fuses art and the praxis of life, creating individual experiences for the participants and viewers. The structures formed from found materials become one with the viewer/participator when worn. The participant brings life to the object when s/he moves about within it. S/he not only views the artwork while wearing it, but other spectators interpret it through the participator’s movements. Because the production and reception are not autonomous, how then, can one explain the purpose and/or intent of the Oiticica’s Parangolés?

Oiticica was not the only artist working with sculptural participatory works in Brazil during his time. He had a close relationship with the aforementioned Brazilian artist Lygia Clark and conversed with her through letters concerning both of their artwork. Clark’s attention to corporeality and participation was also demonstrated through her work. In the book, Brazil: Body and Soul, art critic Agnaldo Farias states, “By the time she produced the Relational Objects of 1966-68, Clark had entered the sensorial phase of her career. Made up of masks, gloves, and goggles, these works address what she termed the ‘nostalgia for the body.’”

In Clark’s The I and the You: Clothing-Body-Clothing Series (Fig. 3), two figures wear blue suits with masks, touching one another’s hands. These articles of clothing were used to temporarily alter the personality of the wearer. Constructions such as these demonstrate Clark’s concern with art and the body becoming one, similarly to Oiticica’s Parangolés. Clark identified the unique roles that she and Oiticica played through this type of artwork, stating,

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23 Ibid., 452.
“Hélio is like the outside of a glove, very much linked to the exterior world. I am the inside. And the two of us exist from the moment there is a hand, which puts on the glove.”

Both artists aimed at their artwork as a catalyst for the viewer/participant. While Clark focused more on a “structuralization of the self” through which her work acquired therapeutic functions, Oiticica’s work engaged with the participants and the exterior world. Though both artists functioned somewhat differently, I argue that their artwork draws on their ideas of “anti-art” and its ability to operate alongside the human body and social context of Brazil. This brings back the question of the purpose of Oiticica’s Parangolés.

Oiticica writes in his diary in 1965:

Before anything else I need to clarify my interest in dance, in rhythm, which in my particular case came from a vital necessity for disintellectualization. Such intellectual disinhibition, a necessary free expression, was required since I felt threatened by an excessively intellectual expression. This was the definite step towards the search for myth, for a reappraisal of this myth and a new foundation in my art. Personally, it was therefore an experience of the greatest vitality—indispensable, particularly in the demolition of preconceived ideas and stereotypification, etc. As we will see later, there was a convergence of this experience with the form that my art took in the Parangolé and all that relates to this (since the Parangolé influenced and changed the trajectory of the Nuclei, Penetrables and Bólides). Moreover, it was the beginning of a definitive social experience; I am still unaware of the direction which this will take.

His term “disintellectualization” serves as an interesting point for analyzing his work with the favela community. In this statement, Oiticica demonstrates his desire to move away from academic stereotypes of art. Perhaps this is one of the reasons he chose the favela. These communities lie outside of the intellectual art world, especially during Oiticica’s lifetime. By adding a bodily element to his works, Oiticica removes a layer of intellectual interpretation.

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25 Ibid. 222.
required for his previous paintings of color.

Through further investigation, Oiticica’s theories and close relationship to his contemporary, Clark, I argue that his structural artworks function specifically in the Brazilian social milieu, but also create a universal method of engaging in community through art. These Parangolés serve to address socioeconomic issues in the Brazilian favela, but also, allow the spectators to relate these to their own social context. This can be seen through Brazil’s multicultural influences and Oiticica’s theory of Tropicália.

Oiticica’s Tropicália installation (Fig. 4) also mirrors the structural design of the favelas, similar to the Parangolés. Art education scholar Flavia Bastos states that he “revisited Anthropophagy’s ideas to inquire into national identity and representation. Oiticica attempted to impose an obviously Brazilian image upon the current context of the avant-garde and national art manifestations in general.” Thus, Oiticica’s artwork builds on Brazil’s identity as well as national ideas of art and culture. Because of the necessity of the spectator to engage his/her body with the artwork, these notions of socioeconomic issues, cultural identity, and art may be explored.

This connection between artwork, the human body, and community in Oiticica’s Parangolés and other works creates communities of viewers. As aforementioned, the convivial community of participators and the antagonistic viewership created through these works lends to a broader view of participatory art. Oiticica’s Parangolés serve to heighten the public’s awareness of the issues present in the favela, but also to provoke thought about issues present globally. Oiticica’s project functions directly in its original context, perhaps not making visible

27 Brazilian poet and writer, Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954), wrote the Manifesto Antropófago (Cannibal Manifesto) in 1928, relating to Brazil’s “cannibalization” of many cultures.
impact but reconfiguring how artists can interact with a community in order to create art. These ideas lead to an analysis of the work of Vik Muniz (b. 1961) and JR (b. 1983) in which the favela’s community provides a place for different methods of participatory art to raise other social questions, allowing for art and life to connect. Combining the movement of individual participants in a collective performance, Oiticica created new experiences in which the body and the work of art become entwined.
Fig. 1, Andréas Valentim, Niniha Xoxoba with *P 08 Parangolé*, 1965, Hélio Oiticica, *P 08 Parangolé Cape 05 “Mangueira”*, in the Mangueira Favela, during the shooting of the film *HO* by Ivan Cardoso, 1979

Fig. 2, Hélio Oiticica, *Seja Marginal, Seja Herói*, 1968, medium unknown, dimensions unknown
Fig. 3, Lygia Clark, *The I and the You: Clothing-Body-Clothing Series*, 1967, interactive objects, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Clark Family Collection

Fig. 4, Hélio Oiticica, *Penetrables*, PN 2 “Purity is a Myth” and PN 3 “Imagetical,” 1966-67, (detail from *Tropicália Series*), medium unknown, dimensions unknown
CHAPTER TWO

Vik Muniz’s *Pictures of Garbage:*
Engaging in Human Detritus

Vik Muniz (b. 1961), a Brazilian artist based in New York, is best known for his conceptual works using nontraditional materials to appropriate historical works of art. In 2008, Muniz traveled to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to work at the world’s largest landfill: Jardim Gramacho (or Garden Gramacho). Filmmaker Lucy Walker documented Muniz’s work and creation of his *Pictures of Garbage Series* (2008) in her film *Waste Land* (2010). In the project, Muniz demonstrates his ability to transform the lives of those who assist him in the creation of his artwork in a nuanced series of iterations.

One of Muniz’s most famous works, *Action Photo, After Hans Namuth* (Fig. 1) from his *Pictures of Chocolate Series* (1997), demonstrates his interest in materials and also commentary on the art world, similar to many artists using appropriation. He used this image with chocolate syrup instead of paint and mastered it after the famous photograph of the abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) by the photographer Hans Namuth (1915-1990). Many other contemporary artists have also created appropriations of artwork, commodities, and popular culture items. Some artists create such controversy with their works, as to incite court cases, such as Richard Prince (b. 1949) and his work that stemmed directly from photographer Patrick Cariou’s photograph. Many other artists have worked in this vein such as Andy Warhol (1928-1987), Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), and Shepherd Fairey (b. 1970). What sets Muniz apart is the wide range of materials in his oeuvre such as sugar, found objects, and trash. In his
Pictures of Garbage Series his engagement with a community and their participation in creating the final artworks also differentiates him from other artists using appropriation as method.

In Walker’s film, one may see the journey from Muniz’s studio in New York to the very outskirts of Rio at the landfill. Though Muniz grew up in Brazil, he lived with his middle class parents and never truly experienced life in the favela. Muniz chose to travel to Jardim Gramacho to begin a project with the workers. This favela and landfill is located far from the city center and excluded from most of society. Those who work there are also considered by the middle class to be the lowest of the low, as they work their days in the trash heaps searching for recyclable garbage.

In Waste Land, Muniz questions whether art can change people and states that he desires to do so through this project. He also hopes to step away from fine arts because he finds it too restrictive for how his career is moving along. Muniz says that he intends to change the lives of the catadores (or garbage pickers) in the landfill with the same materials they work with each day: recyclable garbage. Through the film, Muniz’s purpose in this project is quite clear, but will he meet his objectives in the end? Will the participants be changed for life, or just shown another world that may not be so easily attainable?

Before analyzing Walker’s film and works by Muniz, one must understand the location of the landfill and the living conditions of the catadores. In a satellite view of Jardim Gramacho (Fig. 2), the small red circle points out its location, north of Rio’s downtown and near Guanabara Bay. Looking even closer (Fig. 3), the circular landfill is surrounded by water on three sides: the bay, the Sarapuí River, and the Iguaçu River. Because of the surrounding bodies of water, the truck drivers had to carefully spread the waste as not cause movement on what was almost like a plate of jelly.

The website for *Waste Land* also notes important information about the landfill, stating,

The site receives more trash every day than any landfill in the world. 7,000 tons of garbage arrive daily making up 70% of the trash produced by Rio de Janeiro and surrounding areas.

Established in 1970 as a sanitary waste facility, the landfill became home to an anarchic community of scavengers during the economic crises of the 70’s and 80’s. These *catadores* lived and worked in the garbage, collecting and selling scrap metal and recyclable materials. They established a squatter community (the *favela* of Jardim Gramacho) surrounding the landfill, which is now home to over 13,000 people who are entirely dependent on an economy that revolves around the trade of recyclable materials.

In 1995, Rio’s sanitation department began to rehabilitate the landfill and formalize the job of the *catador*, granting licenses to *catadores* as well as enforcing basic safety standards, like the banning of children from the landfill. They also began a pilot project to create a carbon negative power plant fuelled by urban solid waste. On their side, the *catadores* formed ACAMJG, the Association of Recycling Pickers of Jardim Gramacho, whose president, Tião Santos, is featured in *Waste Land*. ACAMJG lead the way in community development. Under Tião’s leadership, ACAMJG has created a decentralized system of recycling collection in neighboring municipalities; the creation of a recycling center, professional recognition of the *catador*, enabling *catadores* to be contracted for their services, the creation of a 24 hour medical clinic, and the construction of a daycare center and skills training center.

With this large and unique community of people, Muniz chose to work with just a few individuals, including Tião. Although the film’s website gives information on each participant, it is also important to note that Jardim Gramacho closed in June 2012. Its closure was part of an initiative to shut down all of Rio’s five open-air landfills by 2014.

The film does not reveal whether or not Muniz knew about the fate of Jardim Gramacho but he shows that he hoped to impact the lives of those he engaged with through art making. The film documents Muniz’s thoughts in New York before his travel to Brazil. He speaks about Brazil’s culture, discussing how classicism is the worst part of the society there. Perhaps this

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project was a way in which Muniz could experience a community he had not been a part of during his upbringing. One may also speculate that Muniz used this as a philanthropic endeavor for media attention. What exactly are Muniz’s intentions with this project and his authorial role as an artist? Does Walker heoricize Muniz through her film?

First, an analysis of Muniz’s method of working in this project will aid in the discussion of his authorial power and role. The first step in the creation of these works is Muniz’s photography at the landfill. Muniz and his assistant, Fabio, appear at the site taking several photographs of the *catadores*. Tião (or known as Sebastião) models for the camera, sitting in an old bathtub thrown into the garbage dump. This portrait follows the work by Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), *The Death of Marat* from 1793 (Fig. 4).

During this session Muniz guides Tião in recreating the scene from the famous painting of the French revolutionary leader. Though Muniz does not state his reasoning for choosing this portrait, I argue that he makes a parallel to Tião, who leads the ACAMJG group, always fighting for better working conditions and benefits for the *catadores*. Muniz also captures other individuals’ photographs at the landfill, including Irma, Magna, Isis, and Suelem.

In Muniz’s studio in Rio, he again guides the *catadores* in making the artwork, creating a convivial atmosphere with the participators. Muniz uses a projector to create a large template on the floor of each image. He asks the *catadores* to use recyclable materials to recreate the portrait in a mosaic form. The film shows these individuals working on each portrait, placing bottle caps, string, and PVC along the shadows on the floor.

The conviviality Muniz created through this experience, I argue, parallels Bourriaud’s theories of relational art. Bourriaud discusses the notion of “Artwork as Social Interstice” in his book *Relational Art*. He states,
The possibility of a *relational art* (an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space), points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art. To sketch a sociology of this, this evolution stems essentially from the birth of a world-wide urban culture, and from the extension of this city model to more or less all cultural phenomena…Because of the crampedness of dwelling spaces in this urban world, there was, in tandem, a scaling-down of furniture and objects, now emphasizing a greater maneuverability. If, for a long period of time, the artwork has managed to come across as a luxury, lordly item in this urban setting (the dimensions of the work, as well as those of the apartment, helping to distinguish between their owner and the crowd), the development of the function of artworks and the way they are shown attest to a growing *urbanization* of the artistic experiment… In other words, it is no longer possible to regard the contemporary work as a space to be walked through…It is henceforth presented as a period of time to be lived through, like an opening to unlimited discussion. The city has ushered in and spread the hands-on experience…Art turns out to be particularly suitable when it comes to expressing this hands-on civilization, because it *tightens the space of relations*…

Muniz’s project, I argue, encompasses these ideas set forth by Bourriaud. The studio where the *catadores* created the large mosaics provides a space in which conversation surrounding the artwork is endless. Muniz guided them in placing the objects, which in them hold meaning relating back to the landfill and their life surrounding it. This method relates to Oiticica’s choice of material for his *Parangolés*. The form of these structures directly mirrored those of the *favela’s* haphazard buildings and rooms. With Muniz’s project, the garbage used to create the artwork also directly related to the work of the *catadores*. The recyclable materials in this case are not at all luxuries as Bourriaud discusses. These items have been thrown away and deemed useless by their previous owners.

Muniz guided the *catadores* in creating the artworks and also sparked conversations surrounding art. In the film he makes a parallel between the city of Rio and the works they are creating. Muniz states that from far away Rio appears beautiful, but when looked at close-up,

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one will see garbage, dirt, and pollution. He says this is similar to his photographs created with garbage;\(^{33}\) the viewer sees a beautiful portrait and when moving closer, sees all the tiny details of the garbage. Through these conversations, Muniz “tightens the space of relations” between the catadores.

The film shows the group working on the mosaics and conversing with one another. This collective creative process relates to Bourriaud’s concept of conviviality and an experience of how art may be lived through. Rather than creating an art object, Muniz catalyzed an event that also contains significance in relation to the physical object. Though Muniz’s project does not produce the direct bodily experience as that of Oiticica’s *Parangolés*, in that the participants’ interactions become part of the work, this collective process guided by Muniz aids the participants in experiencing their world and material in a new and different way.

Muniz’s intentions and role are emphasized throughout the film. He states that he wishes for the catadores to feel as though they aided in creating the works and that they also helped themselves in the process.\(^{34}\) Muniz had the participants use the very materials they work with each day, to create new meanings through the artwork and through the tactile results of the filmed auction at Philips de Pury. Through a closer analysis of each work Muniz’s authorial role and authorship in this project can be analyzed further.

As mentioned above, Muniz used *The Death of Marat* as inspiration for creating *Marat/Sebastião* (Fig. 5). The catadores used a plethora of materials to create this portrait of Tião, the president of the ACAMJG group. The top of the composition is filled with an array of plastics, toilet seats, and even traffic cones. Tião’s figure appears with minimal dusting and outlining with a dark material. The film follows Muniz forming these areas on several of the


\(^{34}\) Ibid.
portraits in his studio. The viewer also sees the catadores placing and even dumping bags of recyclables on the white, concrete floor of the studio.

Muniz captures another photograph to re-create Suelem and her children\(^\text{35}\). Although he takes photographs of her in the landfill, he chooses to also bring in her children for a studio session. This final work entitled Mother and Children (Suellen) (Fig. 6), is reminiscent of a Renaissance Madonna figure with children. Here, as with his choice of Marat, Muniz chose art historical “canon-worthy” subjects that would be easily identifiable for many museum visitors. Hannah Musiol argues in “Museums of Human Bodies,” that,

Muniz’s maneuver was paramount, since the catadores’ lives were “not considered lives” precisely “because they [didn’t] fit [a] dominant frame for the human.” Muniz understood that in order to make his catadores legible he had to transform them into aesthetic objects to restore their “aura.” By first staging and literally framing them, he constructed them as objects of another’s aesthetic scrutiny, enabling them to “earn” the look of empathy or approval associated with legal personhood.\(^\text{36}\)

In this way, Muniz used an art historical template, typically deemed beautiful in relation to its concept and religious significance, and places the catador in the place of the Madonna. He continues this in his other works created in the project as well.

Muniz suggested that the catadores use familiar materials in order to create a different experience (one outside of the trash heaps), but also to render themselves with a different type of worth. Through this experience, I argue, the catadores explored another world through the aesthetics of art, framing their identity on the walls of galleries. Through this process, the catadores become authors of the artwork, similar to the individuals wearing Oiticica’s

\(^{35}\) The film’s website spells her name “Suelem” while Muniz’s website spells the name “Suellen.”

Parangolés. However, unlike Oiticica’s authorial role, Muniz enables the *catadores* to produce change in their lives through the artwork.

Musiol writes: “By moving objects and humans from one exhibition category (the dump) to another (the museum), Muniz renders ‘bare life’ legible and human again to consumers of art.” He produces a two-fold experience and outcome from the project. First, through the participation of the *catadores*, they are able to learn more about art making and more importantly, choose to take more pride in their job or gain the ability to search for another career. Secondly, Muniz sheds light on the *catadores*’ conditions in the form of art in recognizable appropriations. These ideas lead to the questions of audience in Muniz’s project.

In relation to the audience and participation of the *catadores*, Muniz helped by providing a physical outcome that changed the lives of the individuals in the landfill. The film follows Muniz and Tião to the Phillips de Pury auction house in London, England where *Marat/Sebastião* sells for $50,000. In this scene, Tião begins crying because he knows this money will go to the *catadores* and their initiatives for better working conditions.

After this scene surrounded by the white, pristine gallery walls, the camera follows Tião back to Rio for the opening of the exhibition of Muniz’s *Pictures of Garbage*. The group of *catadores* goes to the opening and expresses their gratitude and excitement for participation in this project. This scene, again, reiterates the ability of art to connect and change lives. The tightening of spatial relations that Bourriaud discusses, I argue, relates directly to the experiences catalyzed through the creation of this project and through the *catadores*’ participation.

This conviviality is strengthened through the specific type of participation seen in *Waste Land*. Immanuel Kant’s notion of *sensus communis* may be applicable to the participants’ experience of art making. He states,

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37 Ibid.
But under the *sensus communis* we must include the Idea of a *communal* sense, i.e. of a faculty of judgment, which in its reflection takes account (*a priori*) of the mode of representation of all other men in thought; in order as it were to compare its judgement with the collective Reason of humanity, and thus to escape the illusion arising from the private conditions that could be so easily taken for objective, which would injuriously affect the judgement. This is done by comparing our judgement with the possible rather than the actual judgments of others, and by putting ourselves in the place of any other man, by abstracting from the limitations which contingently attach to our own judgement.\(^{38}\)

In this way, the *catadores*’ community of creating the artwork enables them to join in an aesthetic communal sense and compare their judgments with the reasoning of humanity. Their commonalities also help create this convivial relationship in which they begin to judge the artwork and their experiences communally.

This ability to perceive and judge things around them is harnessed in a way of mind, body, and sight. I propose that the *catadores* experience and perceive their world in a new manner, paralleling the ideas of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s theories in his essay “Eye and the Mind.” He states, “That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the ‘other side’ of its power of looking.”\(^{39}\) In this way, the *catadores* look and touch the recyclable materials (which they touch almost everyday) and recognize them as becoming art.

The “other side” of the *catadores*’ power of looking, through Merleau-Ponty’s theories, becomes a way in which they experience their world and surroundings in the form of art and authorship. This *sensus communis* is realized through the process of the *catadores* making the artwork in a collective atmosphere. However, a universal aesthetic and experience does not, I argue, apply to the rest of the audience in this project.

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The theories of antagonism Bishop proposes do not produce the same outcomes in this project as those of Oiticica’s *Parangolés*, discussed in Chapter One. In regard to Oiticica’s participatory works, I argued that an antagonistic viewership spurred out of the bourgeoisie viewing of the lower class wearing the *Parangolés*. In this way, the audience of viewers was presented with the Other and that caused a questioning of their own identity. However, this plays out quite differently in Muniz’s *Pictures of Garbage*.

There are no known uprisings related to Muniz’s exhibition of these works. In fact, he garnered praise and veneration for his work in the landfill and his ability to give back to the community. Viewers in the gallery setting differ drastically from that of the *catadores*. Muniz’s work does not directly create a convivial atmosphere while the photographs are on display at a museum and/or gallery. The viewers cannot touch and move the objects about, considering the final works are in the form of photographs instead of the large mosaics.

The way in which Muniz creates antagonism in this project is through his “social responsibility” as an artist. The scholar William J. Norton, Jr. writes about this topic in his essay, “Modern Art and Social Responsibility.” He states,

> Since art is the communication of the artist, it must reflect his scheme of values in the contents imparted. To this extent, all art instances at least the moral-value of its creator—i.e., in the communication of what he thinks valuable enough to express well. But since all art is a communication of a conscious mind, the fuller understanding of its nature demands moral categories. In maintaining this, I am only asserting that art as objective effect is logically related to its human cause by revealing in itself the subjective intentions of the artist. Since moral categories are presupposed in the artist as man, they must likewise be presupposed in the man as artist, for the latter is consciously and inseparably a piece with the former.⁴⁰

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Viewing Muniz’s project in this light, I argue, one may see how he communicates with his viewers, questioning their morals and presenting a morality related to that of marginal communities.

Audiences of the film may ascertain Muniz’s affirmation of the *catadores* and the work they do in the landfill. This transposes itself onto the artwork created by Muniz alongside the *catadores* and communicates their social condition to the viewer. Muniz donated the proceeds of his artwork directly to the landfill and the participators. However, I argue that Muniz invents a new kind of beauty through these works.

As discussed before, the *catadores* are not viewed as creators of beauty in their career as trash pickers, collecting recyclables in a field of dirty garbage. However, when taking into consideration the theories proposed by Norton, Muniz communicates a beauty through his artwork. Norton states,

> And in realizing that in the expression of any contents one can achieve a certain degree of beauty, the adherents of the moralist theory should feel the obligation to select their subject-matter wisely not only in terms of the intended effect on others, but also express it in such a way as to bring forth a new aspect of beauty.  

I would argue that Muniz’s choice of materials collectively expresses an image of beauty. When viewed separately, trash is generally not considered beautiful. However, Muniz takes these objects, alongside the activity of humans who are considered lowly and dirty in Brazilian society’s eyes, and refigures them as beautiful, perhaps at the same time attempting to redefine prejudices and values.

Another work Muniz created with the *catadores* demonstrates again this notion of redefining beauty through the lens of historical artwork. *Woman Ironing (Isis)* (Fig. 7) recalls yet another canonical work of art. In this work, Muniz appropriates Pablo Picasso’s *Woman

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41 Ibid., 330.
Ironing (La Repasseuse) (Fig. 8) from 1904. Muniz makes another parallel to depictions of the working class in art. Picasso’s work was painted during his Blue Period, in which many works evoked a sense of gloominess and sensitivity. However, in Muniz’s depiction the bright colors of the recyclable materials create a contrasting backdrop to Isis. As with Picasso’s work, Isis’ face tilts down while her neck becomes parallel to the ironing table. The angularity of this work is not like that of Picasso’s painting. In this mosaic, green glass bottles, black rubber tires, blue tarps, and yellow plastics cover the floor while dust creates slight tonalities in the subject’s face and body. Through this work, as the others in the project, I argue that Muniz nods to art historical works and creates new meaning through them in the form of garbage with the catadores as subjects for beauty.

Through Muniz’s choice of appropriations, I argue that his physical artworks create an audience of museum visitors and other art educated viewers. This differs from Oiticica’s Parangolés in that they were originally created for the favela’s participation and involvement. In Muniz’s case, his final works were exhibited in galleries and sold in order to directly impact the catadores. When Muniz chooses to appropriate popular artworks and exhibits the photographs in galleries, he does so in a way that the audience will recognize. Although the participants view the photographs at MAM in Rio, the setting is typically associated with an audience of viewers familiar with art and art history.

Muniz’s ability to auction off one of his works for $50,000 demonstrates his knowledge of the art market and his notoriety as an artist. However, it seems his main concern with this project is the participation element and the impact he intends to have on the catadores. The final artworks do not seem to be afterthoughts, but rather, objects that may produce change in the lives of those that helped create them.
It is important to note that the information garnered from the film in relation to these ideas is solely one point of view. The film does not offer total truth or a final word on Muniz’s intentions and actions in this project. Of course, like any other documentary, moments can be left out of view that may change the viewer’s perception. However, one scene with Muniz and his wife lends to an opposing view of the project.

In *Waste Land*, we see Muniz sitting down with his wife and she questions his intentions before the project begins. She asks whether it is a good idea to show this community another world: the art world. She argues that it may be harmful in the end to expose the *catadores* to something that may not be so easily attainable. However, he argues that this project may give them insight into a different view of the world. The point is similar to the notion that whether it is better to once have sight and become blind than never to have seen at all. Though this scene is quite curt, it does reveal more of Muniz’s ideas and morals behind the project and what may draw him to different notions of beauty. Through this creation of beauty, Muniz’s work transforms common ideals of beauty. Why do others view these individuals as dirty in the context of their job? Why are these images rendered beautiful although they contain trash and debris? Were Muniz’s proceeds and work with the *catadores* beneficial in the long-term scheme of the community? Muniz’s photographs contain the ability to present these and other questions to the viewer.

Muniz shares his authorship of these works with the *catadores*. The *catadores* also become an audience in which they experience their world through sight, body, and mind, creating new aesthetic judgments about the materials they work with each day. The conviviality between these participants acts to catalyze new views of the world in which they live. *Pictures of Garbage*, in turn, face viewers with antagonizing questions of morality and beauty. Muniz and
Oiticica both provide interesting concepts relating to participatory art. Oiticica’s *Parangolés* issue conviviality through art and body becoming one while Muniz’s photographs join the *catadores* with familiar materials to share their story internationally. Through Muniz’s project, he creates a more tactile and small-scale impact on the participants. His ability to garner participation in order to aid a community is helpful in discussing participation art in regard to other artists as well. The French street artist, known as JR (b. 1983), uses participation in a different manner, but with shared nuances of conviviality.

Fig. 2, Satellite view of Jardim Gramacho, Google Earth, accessed 2014, https://www.google.com/maps/place/Jardim+Gramacho,+Duque+de+Caxias+-+State+of+Rio+de+Janeiro,+Brazil/@-22.7545645,-43.2704622,5729m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x9970dc54ed4e73:0xed4c58e24965cde4
Fig. 3, Close-up of Jardim Gramacho, Google Earth, accessed 2014, https://www.google.com/maps/place/Jardim+Gramacho,+Duque+de+Caxias+-+State+of+Rio+de+Janeiro,+Brazil/@-22.7545645,-43.2704622,5729m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x9970dc54ed4e73:0xed4c58e24965cde4

Fig. 4, Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Marat*, 1793, oil on canvas, 162 x 128 cm
Fig. 5, Vik Muniz, *Marat/Sebastião*, 2008, digital C print, 231.2 x 180.4 cm

Fig. 6, Vik Muniz, *Mother and Children (Suellen)*, 2008, digital C print, dimensions unknown
Fig. 7, Vik Muniz, *Woman Ironing (Isis)*, 2008, digital C print, 103 3/4 x 74 3/4 in.

Fig. 8, Pablo Picasso, *Woman Ironing (La Repasseuse)*, 1904, oil on canvas, 45 3/4 x 28 3/4 inches
Chapter THREE

JR’s Women Are Heroes:
Highlighting Women of the Favela

Contemporary French street artist JR (b. 1983) travels all around the world completing large-scale photography projects. The artist’s full name is unknown to the general public, originally due to his illegal artworks created in the beginning of his career. JR’s work focuses on social issues, continually raising questions in different communities abroad. Specifically, his Women Are Heroes project in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, highlights women of the favela through the participation of the community in creating monumental public photographic works for a global viewership.

Much of JR’s biographical history is unknown due to his anonymity as a street artist. His website states,

JR owns the biggest art gallery in the world.

He exhibits freely in the streets of the world, catching the attention of people who are not typical museum visitors. His work mixes Art and Act, talks about commitment, freedom, identity and limit.

After he found a camera in the Paris subway, he did a tour of European Street Art, tracking the people who communicate messages via the walls. Then, he started to work on the vertical limits, watching the people and the passage of life from the forbidden undergrounds and roofs of Paris.42

JR’s projects continue to flourish, even when illegally exhibited on Parisian buildings. In 2011, he received the TED Prize and began his Inside Out project in which participators around the

world began making portraits, plastering them on walls of buildings for the community to view. Though there are other famous street artists with a certain level of anonymity, such as Banksy and countless other street and graffiti artists around the globe, JR creates his work with the participation of local communities. The importance of discussing his work among the artwork of Oiticica and Muniz, is that he draws on their ideas, whether consciously or otherwise, and makes his artwork available globally.

JR and Muniz have posted photographs with one another through the popular mobile phone application “Instagram.” Though they have not publicly announced any sort of collaboration, their shared interests become apparent. Most recently, the two artists convened in Brazil at the Escola Vidigal (a community art school Muniz has supported) while JR captured an image of Muniz, commenting, “This guy is making magic in Rio.” Muniz also posted various images of the two artists interacting in Brazil. The fact that these two artists have demonstrated similar interests in the favela and participatory art confirms the importance of this study that investigates them in proximity to one another.

JR is currently working on participatory artworks including the Inside Out project and other collaborations with artists and groups. Some of his collaborations include The Wrinkles of the City (2012) with Brooklyn-based artist José Parlá, JR Through the Eye of Liu Bolin (2012) with Chinese artist Liu Bolin, and a mural installation in Berlin with Italian artist Blu, who also conceals his identity (2007). JR also collaborated with the New York City ballet to create a ballet performance entitled Les Bosquets, inspired by his first project Portrait of a Generation (2004-2006) and the riots in France in 2005. These numerous projects around the world

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43 “The TED Prize is awarded to an individual with a creative, bold vision to spark global change. By leveraging the TED community’s resources and investing $1 million into a powerful idea, each year the TED Prize supports one wish to inspire the world.” TED.com.
demonstrate JR’s ability to operate in different cultures in order to produce public artworks. JR’s growing public profile deserves further discussion, I argue, in the framework of participatory art in the favela in regards to relational art and conviviality.

JR’s Women Are Heroes project in Rio provides an interesting comparison with that of the previously discussed bodies of work by Oiticica and Muniz created in Brazil’s favelas. JR’s project aids in furthering the discussion of participatory art in Brazilian marginal communities, highlighting sociopolitical and economic issues throughout the world.

During 2008-2009, JR completed a project in the Morro da Providência favela in Rio de Janeiro. A Google satellite image shows its location within the city of Rio (Fig. 1) and another shows the community a bit closer (Fig. 2). One of Rio’s oldest favelas, this community is located near the port and the central city of Rio. In the book accompanying the art project Marco Berrebi writes:

Morro da Providência is a place that has become synonymous for violence in Rio de Janeiro. However, the reason this favela located in the center of Rio appeared on television screens in August 2008 wasn’t the regular scenes on clashes between drug dealers and the police, but to present the art exhibition Women [Are Heroes].

In order to pay tribute to those who play an essential role in society, but who are the primary victims of war, crime, rape, and political or religious fanaticism, JR pasted huge photographs of the faces and eyes of local women all over the walls of the favela, suddenly giving a female gaze to both the hill and the favela.44

During his 2011 TED talk, JR discussed his interest in Rio and these ideas. He was watching the news when he heard about a violent killing in the Morro da Providência favela. This caught his attention and he stated he wanted to go there to hear the women’s stories. JR said that women tend to be the first targeted when conflict arises. Once he traveled to the community and met one

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of the mothers of one killed boy, he said she told him that the community was hungry for culture. Thus, he began the project along with the participation of children and adults in the *favela*.

Though JR’s website, TED talk, and books give some insight to his work, questions still remain surrounding his authorship, audience, and the participation of the community. Just how much of a role does the artist play in creating the final plastered photographs? Why does he choose to engage with these marginalized communities in such a way that reveals the community’s struggles and everyday life? Who does JR wish to view his artwork, both in the local communities, and in the museum setting?

The most striking difference, I argue, between JR, Oiticica, and Muniz, is JR’s anonymity. Unlike Banksy, JR does in fact appear publicly. However, he does not surrender much information to the general public about his biographical background. This may be, perhaps, that he deems it unimportant for the viewer and art critics. Or, he holds tightly onto the street art persona he once held while creating illegal art in Paris. He states, “If I had to disclose my real name…it would deviate from the people and meaning of my work.”

JR’s anonymity allows the viewer to focus more on the art rather than his background and how it may influence interpretations of his artwork.

In her book, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Claire Bishop discusses the artist Jeremy Deller’s (b. 1966) work, *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001). This performance harkened back to a historic event when miners were on strike in the UK. Bishop writes:

His authorial role is a trigger for (rather than the final word on) an event that would otherwise have no existence, since its conceptualization is too idiosyncratic and controversial ever to be initiated by socially responsible institutions. In short, *The Battle of Orgreave*’s potency derives from its singularity, rather than from its exemplarity as a replicable model.46

Bishop argues that Deller catalyzed the event (the artwork), rather than simply creating the entire work on his own. Because of his role as an artist, this event took place when it otherwise would not have.

Though JR’s photographic works do not produce the same type of controversy as Deller’s piece, they do create interactions with the community that would not have otherwise occurred. In relation to Bishop’s statement above, would socially responsible institutions create these large-scale photographs, and paste them on the walls of the crumbling favela? In this way, JR’s authorship as an artist lies in his ability to spur a community of viewers and participators to continue creating the work of art (not only the physical work, but also interactions created from it). Unlike Deller, JR recreates this template of works in several communities. Although each community he visits has different cultural ideals and sociopolitical issues, he uses the same idea of highlighting women who seem to hold the community together.

I also argue that JR does not produce the “final word” on these social issues within the communities he works with. Contrary to the work of many other artists, JR does not reveal his own political opinions through these works. Rather, he highlights the issues present in marginal communities. His *Women Are Heroes* project focuses on women of Sierra Leone, Kenya, Liberia, India, and Cambodia. At times, the works serve utilitarian purposes as well, such as the rooftop photographs in Kenya providing shelter from the rain. These works allow the viewer to produce his/her own interpretation, either in the community or museum setting.

The French theorist Roland Barthes provides an interesting view in his famous text, *The Death of the Author*. He argues that in order to have the “birth of the reader,” there must be a “death of the author.” In other words, the author’s role in writing a text is transferred to the reader. The reader may interpret the text in a new and different way than the author intended.

In relation to JR’s projects, he allows the viewer and the participator to become the “reader” and interpret the works in his/her own way. One method of allowing this is the absence of text from the *Women Are Heroes* works, as well as many other projects. Unlike Oiticica, JR does not place controversial and/or jarring words or sentences along with his large plastered photographs. Oiticica’s *Parangolés* often times contained a type of text in which the viewer could steer toward a specific reading of the work. In Muniz’s *Pictures of Garbage*, the materials used in the photographs correlated directly to the lives of those participating in creating the art. However, with JR’s works, the viewer must produce his/her own reading of the portraits of women. The images contain no text, no objects related to their lives, and no color, simply a black and white portrait of the subject. But why does JR choose the *favela* in Brazil to create these portraits and how does he gain the participation of the community there?

Alison Young discusses this project in her book, *Street Art, Public City: Law, Crime, and the Urban Imagination*. She writes:

JR’s goal is to remind the spectator of the discrimination and violence conducted in the name of race, gender, ethnicity and poverty… In these places, JR met with women who have survived horrific violence at the hands of family members, government troops, rebel soldiers and police officers. He encouraged them to tell him something of their experiences and then photographed each participant, as per his usual style, making a ‘grimace’ for the camera. Putting up images of ‘anonymous women’ in public space is a political act for JR, in recognition of the ways in which men tended to occupy public space, while women are often officially or unofficially segregated in the home.  

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Young’s study tends to lean toward a feminist reading of this project. Although this method would provide interesting discussion, this study does not allow for an in-depth analysis under feminist terms. However, the idea of publicly displaying individuals that often times are anonymous and/or considered as unimportant to society demonstrates JR’s interest in giving the world access to their lives. Perhaps this approach of highlighting these women allows viewers to reconsider their own context.

The book accompanying the project recounts the stories and original photographs of these women. Each participant tells something of her experience and life in the Morro da Providência favela. Often times, the women state how they love to live in the community but also speak of the violence present as well as family and friends who have died because of it. One woman who participated in the project, Juraci Vilela Gomez (Fig. 3), states,

\> Unfortunately, we’re hostages here. We’re in danger all the time. You could be coming home from work and all of the sudden there’s a shootout and there you are in the middle of it without a clue. They always tell people who live here that it was due to a random shot, and they never support our claims because we live in the favela. The things people say mean nothing. I’m no dreamer, but sometimes I think about winning the jackpot and getting out of here. But I still like this place a lot. I got attached to it…\^48

Another woman, Maria Odontina (Fig. 4), states, “This favela is the best place I know. When strange things happen and there are shootouts, I feel like leaving, but when everything calms down I’d rather stay here and not leave the house I bought. I really think I’ll stay here.”\^49

Stories like these are continually presented in the interactions with these women of the community. In an image of several women grouped on a wall (Fig. 5), the large plastered photographs reveal another side to their personalities. Works such as these were placed all throughout the favela, revealing the grimaces and comical faces photographed by JR.

\^48 Berrebi, Women Are Heroes: A Global Project by JR, 164.
\^49 Ibid., 166.
The black and white images contain contrasts of dark eyes, wrinkles, and hair with brighter areas of light. JR’s use of black and white, rather than color photographs, allows the viewer to focus in on the subject’s facial expressions. These contrasts parallel the light and dark of the *favela*: the safety of friends and family and the danger of crime and death. This dichotomy peppers the hills of the *favela*, presenting these women who stand strong in their community.

Not only does JR use the participation of the community to create the works, he also places them in the same neighborhood for viewing. This allows the audience to identify the subjects of the artworks and begin conversation surrounding them. In this way, a backdrop in the form of artwork enables viewers to enter into a discussion about the personalities of their neighborhood. The exhibition’s visibility goes beyond the initial place of origin, and spreads to other areas of Rio.

In an image of the installations (Fig. 6), the eyes of the *favela* women appear throughout the hill. The black and white pasted photographs stare out, as if to peer onto all other surrounding neighborhoods. In JR’s film, *Women Are Heroes*, one woman yells, “Caramba! The eyes of the hill are open!” These eyes, I argue, signify a deeper meaning and significance to the women in the *favela*, a glimpse into their souls, and also an enticing glare to others outside of the community.

JR’s exhibition of the photographs in this project allows, I argue, for a broader arena of audience. The *favela* hills become more visible to other surrounding communities of perhaps different economical situations. JR takes this even one step further, and displays some of these photographs in Paris, out of their original context. In September 2009, JR covered the walls of Ile Saint Louis and Pont Louis-Phillipe with photographs from the project in Brazil. This installation demonstrates JR’s concern with reaching a larger audience.
One may question JR’s intentions with the photographic works in Brazil and in turn how the audience may relate. First, the immediate audience of the favela community may seem obvious. Because of the display of these works in their original context, JR re-presents these women to a community in which they interact each day. In this case, why would he choose this method?

Considering JR’s choices in locations for his projects, many people question whether or not he desires to change the social and/or political issues in these areas. Ferdman quotes JR discussing a project in Clichy in her essay, stating, “First of all, this is not a social or political project. It is first of all an artistic one, which is why I am not a spokesperson for the youth of Clichy, so I don’t search to change things in that way, but it is really a project we did together.”

JR states in his 2011 TED talk,

In some ways, art can change the world. I mean, art is not supposed to change the world, practical things. But it can change perceptions. It can change the way we see the world…Actually the fact that art cannot change things, makes it a neutral place for exchanges and discussion.

Through this light, the Women Are Heroes project in Rio may change the perceptions of those living in the favela and provide a context for discussion. Bourriaud’s theories about “The Criterion of Coexistence (Works and Individuals)” provide an interesting method of discussing JR’s audience. Bourriaud uses Félix González-Torres’ art to say that “it belongs within a specific history: that of artworks that make the viewer conscious of the context in which he or she finds himself/herself (the happenings and ‘environments’ of the 1960s, and site-specific installations).” Through JR’s works, the spectators in the favela become aware of their

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51 “My Wish: To Turn the World Inside Out.”
surroundings in a different way. Similarly to Oiticica’s *Parangolés* and Muniz’s project at Jardim Gramacho, this community and participatory art allows the viewer and participator to reevaluate his/her own context.

Bourriaud discusses other artists that provide these situations, stating that they,

…bring us face to face with exhibition situations inspired by a concern to ‘give everyone a chance’ thanks to forms that do not give the producer any *a priori* superiority (let’s call it divine-right authority) over the viewer, but which negotiate open relations that are not pre-established. The status of the viewer alternates between that of a passive consumer, and that of a witness, an associate, a client, a guest, a co-producer and a protagonist. So we need to pay attention: we know that attitudes become forms, and we now have to realize that forms induce models of sociability.\(^{53}\)

In this way, each of these examples may be found through JR’s work in Rio. The “passive consumer,” I contend, is the spectator that simply walks by these installations in Rio and Paris. S/he may view the artwork and keep walking, failing to spare time for a reflection. A “witness” to JR’s work is the *favela* community that does not become directly involved in creating the artwork, but witnesses the processes taking place. An “associate” can relate to those closely involved in the concepts behind the artwork and the follow-through. Certainly, “co-producers” can be identified in JR’s project as those aiding in creating the works and exhibition installations in the *favela*. And finally, the “protagonist” may relate to the individuals viewing their own portraits or even, perhaps, those who may identify with the subjects of the artwork.

Bourriaud argues that these forms produce sociability. Using this idea as a springboard, JR’s works produce sociability through the audience’s participation in the above roles. Though the *favela* community as an audience may be quite unique (due to its relationships with the subjects), the broader audience can also participate in this sociability.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 168.
One example of a broader audience created through the artwork is *Casa China* (Fig. 7) in the *Women Are Heroes* project in Rio. JR met a family living in one of the last wooden houses in the *favela*. JR spoke with members of the community about Georgina’s house (known as China). He decided to turn this house into an artistic center, using it as an empty shell in which he would set up a video installation for the exhibition at the Casa Franca Brasil (April-June 2009).\(^\text{54}\) This house was built by carpenters and residents and then traveled to Paris where another audience was able to view it in a different context.

Through Bourriaud’s theories, JR enables spectators in Paris to also become aware of the context in which they live and also that of the subjects in his works. These instances become strengthened by JR’s site-specificity of the works. One iconic piece from the project (Fig. 8) uses a long set of stairs to display the photograph of Bendita Florencio Monteiro, whose grandson was killed and cut to pieces. This same set of stairs is where her grandson was arrested, along with other boys, and taken to an enemy *favela*. Her pensive expression faces numerous individuals as they walk this path, confronting each person with her despair and grief.

Another image shows this work after it has begun to peel and wear off the stairs (Fig. 9). The work’s short life becomes a metaphor for people in the *favela*, relating to the many individuals killed by soldiers and gang members. The temporality of this work and the others is a stark contrast to the conventional ideas of conserving artwork. However, JR allows time to take its toll on these works, which nods to his ideas relating to change through art. He states,

> The inhabitants got a real buzz out of the project. On our last day there, they threw a little party for us. Even big tough guys of the favela, with guns and bulletproof vests, were sad to see us leave…Of course, we’re not going to change the favela. Life will very quickly go back to what it was before, like after a murder or when the army was occupying, but I hope we opened a new perspective. I am sure that new initiatives will appear.\(^\text{55}\)

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 145.
Thus, through the participation of the community, JR catalyzes new experiences for the community. His works also reach a broader audience outside of the original context of the project in order to question spectators’ morals. JR exhibits his work in museums and galleries, engaging other types of viewers.

At the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, OH in September 2013-February 2014, JR exhibited several photographs of his projects, including images of the *Women Are Heroes* project. Most of these images were displayed in traditional gallery fashion. One may say that the viewer could not fully experience the works as they were originally created and publicly exhibited. However, JR’s film in tandem with the project, allowed viewers an inside peek into the *favela*.

Young discusses the film, stating,

The remainder of the film mainly comprises sequences in which the camera races down alleyways and halts in front of an individual—sometimes a woman, often a child, occasionally a man—or follows someone through the interconnected rooms of their home. It often ends up with that individual standing on a flat roof of their home with the contours of the *favela* rising and falling around them. Yet the camera never halts; cinematic stasis is never reached. The camera is in constant motion...In this way, the film’s cinematic form attempts to convey how trauma registers within the everyday life of the community and its inhabitants.\(^{56}\)

The film also includes voices of women telling their stories of life in the *favela* while the spectator views some smiling individuals. This film demonstrates the same kind of love/hate relationship with the *favela* that the women speak about, documented in the project book. The first person viewpoint in the film allows the spectator to become engaged and create a feeling of presence. The images of the installations can only produce a distanced experience for the

museum visitor. However, the film brings the viewer into the context of the favela, shedding light on the issues and environment.

Unlike the Waste Land documentary with Muniz, this film does not show JR interacting with the community and participators. It does not create a narrative of the whole project, but rather, provides a feeling of walking through the favela and hearing the words of the women throughout the community. The absence of JR allows the viewer to gain focus on the urban landscape of Morro da Providência and the individuals that appear in the artwork. Although all films may be considered perspectives of a story, this film differs from Waste Land in that it does not provide the viewer with a strong perspective, I argue.

The Women Are Heroes film provides the viewer with a sense of feeling present in the favela without telling the viewer how to feel or how to act on his/her feelings. Young argues,

> It seems to me that the film captured a tension between love and loss, JR created an artwork out of the favela itself, an artwork in which the faces of the community look outwards at the state that has inflicted such harm upon them. As night falls over Rio de Janeiro and these faces, bodies and eyes fade to black, the camera judders and neon streetlights blur. The film ends, in blackness, but there is no end to what we have seen.\(^{57}\)

In this way, the viewer leaves with a sense of tension and need to consider his/her own context. With Young stating that there is no end, I argue that with these images and stories the viewer will never know the end of the story. Through these works, JR highlights the hardships, the love, and the living conditions of these women, but does not provide the viewer with a conclusion. He seems to throw out questions for the viewer, but does not give up his own thoughts or answers.

JR does provide glimpses back to the communities in which he worked. Most recently, he appropriated his own photograph of Rosiete Marinho (Fig. 10). He wrote that he sees her every year when he visits the favela and that she “has the same energy that made the project

\(^{57}\) Ibid.
possible in such a complicated place.” This demonstrates JR’s unfailing interest in the *favela* and his relationships with some of the participants. Though it is impossible to prove without further investigation in-person in the *favela*, one may say that the participants of the project further their relationships with one another. Through JR’s *Women Are Heroes* project in Rio, the artist highlights women of the community through his monumental public photographic works. He catalyzes interactions with the community, while creating global viewership by installing the same photographs outside of their original context.

JR’s ability to provoke thought surrounding sociopolitical issues without stating his own views allows for art to change perspectives of a variety of viewers. Like Oiticica and Muniz, JR’s work draws the community in, providing a backdrop for discussion. In his TED talk he notes a participator’s comment about the projects. The participant was confronted by viewers that had been watching him and others pasting photographs. The participant told them that instead of thinking about what tomorrow brings, they were engrossed in discussing the artwork and trying to figure out its significance. In this way, JR makes a local impact through his projects but also presents them globally. Although he does not produce proceeds benefitting these marginal communities, as Muniz did, his *Women Are Heroes* project creates interactions and viewership on a much larger scale. Through the *Women Are Heroes* project in Brazil, JR highlights women who hold the community together and allows viewers across the globe to reconsider their own contexts in everyday life, reconfiguring how art can alter perspectives of producers and viewers.
Fig. 1, Google Satellite Image, Morro da Providência, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
https://www.google.com/maps/place/Morro+da+Providencia+-+Gamboa,+Rio+de+Janeiro+-+RJ,+Brazil/@-22.9002773,-43.1952778,3044m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x997f3fe0797d35:0xd2c7973a79c1c170
Accessed January 2, 2015

Fig. 2, Google Satellite Image, Morro da Providência, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
https://www.google.com/maps/place/Morro+da+Providencia+-+Gamboa,+Rio+de+Janeiro+-+RJ,+Brazil/@-22.9002773,-43.1952778,3044m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x997f3fe0797d35:0xd2c7973a79c1c170
Accessed January 2, 2015
Fig. 3, JR, *Untitled* (Juraci Vilela Gomez), c. 2008-2009, *Women Are Heroes*, medium unknown, dimensions unknown

Fig. 4, JR, *Untitled* (Maria Odontina), c. 2008-2009, *Women Are Heroes*, medium unknown, dimensions unknown
Fig. 5, JR, "Untitled (Morro da Providência installation view), c. 2008-2009, Women Are Heroes, medium unknown, dimensions unknown"

Fig. 6, JR, "Untitled (view of Morro da Providência), c. 2008-2009, Women Are Heroes, medium unknown, dimensions unknown"
Fig. 7, JR, *Untitled (Casa China)*, c. 2008-2009, *Women Are Heroes*, medium unknown, dimensions unknown

Fig. 8, JR, *Untitled (Bendita Florencio Monteiro)* c. 2008-2009, *Women Are Heroes*, medium unknown, dimensions unknown
Fig. 9, JR, *Untitled* (Bendita Florencio Monteiro) c. 2008-2009, *Women Are Heroes*, medium unknown, dimensions unknown

Fig. 10, JR, *Untitled* (Instagram image of Rosiete Marinho), 2015, medium unknown, dimensions unknown
CONCLUSION

This study has investigated art projects by Oiticica, Muniz, and JR, specifically their projects in the Brazilian favelas. Each body of work, Oiticica’s Parangolés, Muniz’s Pictures of Garbage, and JR’s Women Are Heroes engages with the marginal favela communities in Brazil in order to produce artwork that creates convivial and antagonistic viewership. The theories of Bourriaud and Bishop prove helpful in discussing these works and how they impact the viewer and participator.

Oiticica’s Parangolés combined sculpture and performance, intertwining the human body with physical art. He allowed the community of participants to complete his artworks by dancing while wearing his structures that mirrored the architecture of the favela. The act of wearing the artworks, watching oneself dancing, and also viewing others performing in the Parangolés reconfigured how artwork could and can function within a community. Although Oiticica’s works were radically political, the impact on the community was not concretely measurable. Perhaps his relationship with the Mangueira school altered their perspectives and also the views of the museum audience. However, I argue that he set a new precedent for direct participation with a community in a way that shares authorship. Oiticica’s Parangolés produced relationships between artist and participant in which the body and art become one to view the world in a different way through the senses.

Muniz’s Pictures of Garbage project allowed the catadores to experience their personal everyday materials in the form of art, directly benefitting them in the end. These portraits raise questions about morality in socio-economical situations. Muniz appropriates well-known art historical works using garbage and the catadores as subjects, reevaluating common ideas of
beauty. Muniz shares his authorship with the participants in producing the large mosaics that later sell for thousands of dollars. He guides the *catadores* in using their everyday materials to give them a new sense of value through art making. Through this project, Muniz garners the participation of a *favela* community in order to transform their lives through the proceeds of the artwork. Although the impact of this project may be small-scale and only applicable to the *catadores* involved, Muniz’s artwork lends to a larger discussion surrounding philanthropic and participatory art projects.

JR’s work in the *favela* highlights individuals who are the victims of conflict in their community but also hold the neighborhood together. The artist creates questions of socio-political issues without revealing his own opinions. The monumental photographic works in his *Women Are Heroes* project directly engage with the Morro da Providência community. JR produces local audiences in which his art becomes a backdrop for discussion. He also allows these photographs to reach global audiences through international installations and web-based media. Each project gains participation from a different community, producing specific sites of impact but perhaps temporal just as the plastered works are. JR highlights the women of the *favela* by allowing them to tell their story through the art and also raising questions for other viewers in different social milieu.

More art historical research relating to these artists and others working directly with marginal communities is required. With more research and active engagement in the community, one may be able to further discussion regarding each community’s thoughts surrounding public and participatory art. Though many argue that art cannot change lives, it is important to analyze how art may change perspectives and impact how individuals view the world.
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