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Playing to the Streets in the "City of Walls:" Intersections of Art, Resistance and Urban Change - Part Two

By Raphael Soifer

NOVEMBER 2007

In my last newsletter (RS-3), I gave an introduction to some of the forces at work in São Paulo's ever-accelerating gentrification, and highlighted how street performances are portraying and confronting these rapid changes. In this newsletter, I will look at three distinct street performances that engage São Paulo as both a setting and a character. Each of the performances discussed below questions the present-day reality of São Paulo's streets, of what happens on them, how they are used, and by whom. In each, the action of the performance highlights the place where the performance is set, and the people in the space, whether they are there as spectators, passers-by, or local residents. Though their storylines are often quite rich, these performances do not so much create situations as responses to the pre-existing realities of São Paulo's streets.

Intersection 5: Avenida Paulista and Rua Leôncio de Carvalho

Cris, our heroine, is on a mission. We know she's a heroine because she told us, on tape, a few minutes ago, and we know she's on a mission because we just heard an older woman assign it to her. The woman is a stranger who Cris approached at about 8:03 on a warm August night on Avenida Paulista. Cris had asked what a heroine could do to improve São Paulo, and her "mentor," without missing a beat, charged her to rid Avenida Paulista of "all the pot-heads who make arts and crafts." Cris searches intently, but can't find anyone making arts and crafts. She can't even find anyone who will cop to smoking *maconha* (although one thirty-something man, when asked, has a suspiciously hard time keeping a straight face).

Cris's quest — which culminates in a sequence involving me, a romantic kiss and a bunny mask — is part of *Super Night Shot!*, a multi-media performance piece staged at the SESC Paulista arts center. Though its English title could easily be a paulistano invention, *Super Night Shot!*, like *O Pior de São Paulo*, is a conceptual import, created by the English-German performance collective Gob Squad, and funded in Brazil by the British Council and the Goethe Institute. In the piece, four videographer-performers set out with cameras to record an hour-long, four-reel, single-shot movie in real time, based on the people and places they find around the SESC Paulista, located in São Paulo's trendy Cerqueira Cesar neighborhood at the southeastern end of Avenida Paulista. After taking to the streets for an hour,



SESC Paulista

the cast (or is it the crew?) screens the final product, which consists of playing all four cameras at once, with live sound mixing, so that all of the storylines are visible while their individual dialogues fade in and out. As the performers return from Avenida Paulista, racing through the entrance of the SESC building, the audience showers them with ticker tape and confetti. The cameras are still rolling, so that this auspicious beginning later transforms into a guaranteed happy ending.

Super Night Shot! has two central components. The first, beginning at 8 p.m., is the hour-long roving performance, consisting of quick segments and innumerable participants as the performers and their cameras take to the streets. The second part, beginning at 9 p.m., is the subsequent hour-long presentation of the video for an audience of about 200. Only this second component, however, is “official.” The press material for the show announces a 9 p.m. start time, and while the performers finish filming, most of the audience mills around the lobby of the SESC building, away from the street. Participants in the first part of the performance hardly overlap with the audience for the second, creating a strong sense of voyeurism. The video becomes a story that we watch from afar until the cameras turn on us, drawing us back into the narrative and the life of a city from which we’ve temporarily excused ourselves.

Cris’s anti-pothead quest draws huge laughs and a few horrified gasps from the 9 p.m. crowd. Long-haired folks hawking handmade earrings and beaded necklaces are a fairly common sight on Avenida Paulista, as they are



Taking to the streets in Super Night Shot!
Photo courtesy of Michel Blois.

throughout São Paulo’s major pedestrian centers. If Cris had walked northwest on Paulista by about a kilometer, she probably would have found at least a couple of them on the corner of Rua Brigadeiro Luiz Antônio. Yet even Paulista, forever evocative of refined, prettified city life, is feeling the effects of a relentless push toward gentrification. On the same night that I watched Cris’ quest at *Super Night Shot!*, friends at a bar a few blocks further up looked on as military cops dispersed pushcart vendors selling corn-on-the-cob and chocolates.

In the work of the design collective BijaRI, which I discussed in RS-3 — including posters plastered around an occupied building, and in-your-face recordings of police action and the consequences of gentrification — art enters public spaces with a clearly politicized objective. *Super Night Shot!*, by contrast, is more of a mirror of city life, bringing São Paulo into focus through a sometimes absurd frame. At 8 p.m., the performers synch watches and video cameras before heading out to Paulista (accompanied by security guards) to capture a one-hour historic quest. In addition to Cris, there’s Cynthia, the location scout, searching for the ideal spot to shoot the romantic climax, Camila, the “publicist,” who raises awareness of the heroic cause by distributing Cris’s photocopied picture to surprisingly receptive passers-by and bar patrons along Paulista, and Michel, who scours the neighborhood for a fitting leading man or woman to enter as the heroine’s love interest. The four communicate over cell phones as they wander Paulista, interrogating anyone who will stop long enough.

As the action progresses, bizarre side plots and images start to insinuate themselves into the storyline. About 20 minutes into the video, the cast performs a lyrically clumsy but impressively timed rap song. Later, Cris — who still hasn’t found any potheads to banish — decides to become a villain instead, which seems to entail her grimacing at pedestrians and thrashing around



while clawing at the door of a tall building. As the video's climax approaches, still without a suitable match for Cris, the cast dons animal masks — a bunny (Cris), a wolf (Cynthia), a cat (Michael), and a rooster (Camila) — which lend an absurd, otherworldly vision to their trajectories. Cynthia, the location scout, films long landscape shots interrupted by her lurking — as a grinning wolf — behind a faraway trash can, or suddenly popping up in extreme close-up and crowding out the camera frame.

I wander into the midst of the madness around 8:45, as I get off the Brigadeiro subway stop to go to the show. At a kiosk a few meters away, Michel swoops in holding a camcorder overhead on a tripod, asking if I believe in love at first sight and whether I'm willing to kiss a bunny. When I agree, he buys me a pack of gum and leads me to an intersection where Camila and Cynthia, masked and ebullient, run up and lead us in a can-can, which each camera films from a different angle.

Soon, Cris floats toward us in her bunny mask, with a feather boa, a tie, and a diaphanous white dress draped over her street clothes. We share a romantic kiss through the mask, with Cris directing me as the rest of the cast races around us with cameras. Next, she holds me at arms' length, presenting her costume pieces with overblown poetic flourishes. "Take this rabbit mask, for it is the window to my soul." "Take this dress, for it has been my skin." I put them on as Cris hands them to me, until I've become a near mirror image of her hero/villain character. Cris kneels, and I kneel with her, because São Paulo is a lonely city and it's hard to find people to connect with, let alone someone offering the bunny mask off her face and the boa off her back. I have a sense, too, that it will look better on

video. As soon as Cris gets up, the actors disappear into a cab, and their producer walks me to SESC, where a comp ticket is waiting for the film's "romantic lead."

After their curtain call, for which Michel and Cris pull me on stage, the actors remind us that "without the banal, there is no extraordinary." I tend to agree, although I think it's worth noting that *Super Night Shot!* puts the banal in focus through a contrast with the sensational and the absurd. The highlights of the finished product are far from banal, but they have the cumulative effect of altering the audience's conventional images of the city, of revealing the story hidden next to the newspaper kiosk, or unspoken by the old lady waiting at the crosswalk.

The film and the performance charm me long after they've ended, but the storyline continues to nag at me. I can't quite get over the absence of the "potheads making arts and crafts," especially after hearing my friends' story of the harassed street vendors a few blocks away from the performance. The banality of Avenida Paulista is a manufactured one, where, as the anthropologist Teresa Caldeira writes in *City of Walls*, "the rich [still] rub elbows with the poor," but where the social order is "guarded by an army of private guards and video cameras."¹

The giddy voyeurism of spying on the city from the comfort of a plush seat in the SESC cinema (even if I did wind up as the film's "romantic lead") sticks with me. It seems especially and disturbingly apt for São Paulo, where looking out at the streets from innumerable bus windows, balconies, and restaurants, I have to fight to keep from distancing myself from the city I live in, from looking at São Paulo's streets as places to observe from afar.



Bruno Rudolph and Raphi Soifer (background) "viewpointing" on Avenida Paulista in *O Que Se Viu Que Você Vê*. Photo by Christian Catanho

Intersection 6: Avenida Paulista & Rua Consolação

In early July, at the other end of Avenida Paulista from SESC and *Super Night Shot!*, I take part in an itinerant performance piece with the *paulistano* street performance troupe OPOVO-EMPÉ (THEPEOPLEONFOOT). Like *Super Night Shot!*, OPOVOEMPÉ's *O Que Se Viu Que Você Vê* (What Was Seen That You See) seeks to highlight the extraordinary in the banal, but with a muted approach. *O Que Se Viu* is a walking meditation compared to the vaudevillian frenzy of *Super Night Shot!* The piece blurs the line between performers and audience, and aims to provide just enough of a frame for spectators and performers alike to take stock of their surroundings and create their own narratives.

Cristiane Esteves, the director of

¹ Caldeira, p. 313

OPOVOEMPÉ, attributes much of her interest in public performance to Carlos Marighela, a radical leftist guerrilla who trained young revolutionaries in armed resistance (or terrorism, depending on whom you ask) during the late 1960s, as the military dictatorship grew increasingly authoritarian. Marighela's notes on training a successful insurgent — someone with "a great capacity for observation," who "knows the landscape," and how to "pass [on the street] and hide"² — struck Cristiane as ideal tools for street performance. Later, she trained in Viewpoints, a dance-theatre technique developed by the American choreographer Mary Overlie and the theatre director Anne Bogart that relies on a similar, instinctual awareness of space and bodies to construct compelling images onstage. Combining the two theories, Cristiane creates street performances based on quotidian images that take an analytic approach to São Paulo and its society. In the process, she creates her own non-violent but subversive insurgency, recontextualizing the awareness of her performances' "participants" and subtly reconfiguring the city.

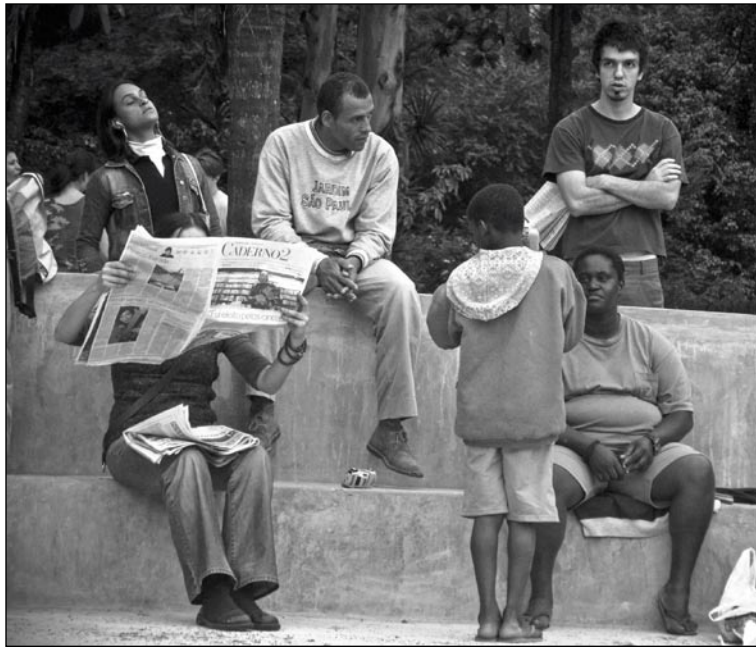
O Que Se Viu Que Você Vê is part of the Verbo performance art festival at the Galeria Vermelho, a hip art space just off Avenida Paulista that attracts a young, rich, and apparently locally famous crowd. The piece, a structured improvisation, begins at the corner of Paulista and Rua Consolação, and ends at the Galeria Vermelho, leading spectators through an urban maze of bus stops, highway on- and off-ramps, and a small plaza frequented by local homeless folks. The piece is gentle in its execution, but ambitious in its aims. Cristiane's directions use variations on a single gesture — the act of holding open a newspaper — to reframe hidden rhythms and interactions of the city. Seven performers — the four *paulistana* women who are core members of OPOVOEMPÉ, along with three guest artists, all of us foreign men — arrange ourselves in moving configurations among pedestrians at bus stops, in the shadows cast by high-rises, and on the shoulder of the highway off-ramp. Our role, Cristiane explains in rehearsals, is not to create a spectacle of ourselves, but rather to draw focus toward the spaces we inhabit. Ideally, our presence is meant to fade into relief, highlighting instead the people, images, and urban configurations around us.

Compared to most of the performances at



(top) Street art and urban hustle (bottom) Manuela Afonso shows off an intersection with two audience members/participants. Photos by Christian Castanho

² Marighela, Carlos. *Manual de Guerrilheiro Urbano*. PDF file downloaded from www.sabotagem.revolt.org/sites/sabotagem/files/Marighella_Carlos_-_Manual_de_Guerrilha.pdf, p. 21. My translation.



(top) *Blurring lines: Performers, audience members and homeless residents share a corner of the praça at the end of Avenida Paulista.*
 (middle) *Performers arranged across the praça* (bottom) *Cristiane Esteves (r), Manuela Afonso (c), and an audience member in O Que Se Viu Que Você Vê. Photographs by Christian Castanho.*

the Verbo festival, *O Que Se Viu* is truly radical. First, the piece involves locations — and therefore, audience members and participants — from outside the rarified world of the gallery. Secondly, it contains movement and a variety of settings and images. Although our gestures are simple, the piece has a physical progression that, unlike most other Verbo presentations, involves barely any writhing on the ground. Finally, I'm happy to report that none of us spend very much time wearing the dour, grimacing expressions that have come to signify Serious Works of Performance Art, which are on display everywhere in the gallery.

Beyond the avoidance of performance art clichés, OPOVOEMPÉ's differences from the rest of the festival extend to a much broader and more democratic conception of what art is and where it exists. The "rules" for *O Que Se Viu Que Você Vê* are simple enough so that audience members and passers-by can float in and out of the action. Especially during our rehearsals, the interest and participation of local homeless people is a major factor in shaping the process. Many of the folks who live on the plaza want to know what we are up to, and a few, hearing the explanation, eagerly grab newspapers and join us. This is not to say that *O Que Se Viu* creates a lasting shift in any of their lives, or that our approach — though well intentioned — is without problems. Wandering through the dirt shoulder of the highway off-ramp below Paulista, for example, a few performers wind up stumbling through makeshift tents and cardboard sleeping pads, a reminder that our haphazard approach to public space can, and frequently does, disturb the people who inhabit it. During the performance, a couple of homeless residents look decidedly nonplussed at the digital camera-toting, gallery-chic audience trudging through their turf.

Yet a wide spectrum of participants in street life — from local homeless residents to pedestrians to Verbo festival audience members — not only watches but also plays along during the final presentation. Their participation speaks to OPOVOEMPÉ's democratic vision of performance, which comes as a much-needed respite from the rest of the festival. In contrast to the expected fare of floor writhing and grimacing, *O Que Se Viu Que Você Vê* demonstrates that art is not exclusively the domain of people invited to present in galleries, and that instead, performance belongs and thrives in the public sphere. My adrenaline rush during the performance is too great for me to remember much of what I did or saw, but the images that stick out — such as newspaper-holding figures at a bus stop, engaging the crowd in a subtle but perceptible dance, or stretched across

the polluted horizon — are powerful reminders that art doesn't necessarily need to be fenced in or looked at from afar. The story of the city may be told best with no narrative, on a street corner, in the open air.

In one of the more difficult training drills of the Viewpoints technique, performers arrange themselves relative to an ever-expanding conception of physical space. Beginning from one corner of a room, the group aligns itself next based on the dimensions and sensations of the whole room; then, the entire building; then the street, neighborhood, city, state, country, and so on. The longer I spend in São Paulo, the more I miss this kind of holistic awareness of space. Buildings, malls, even whole blocks — all of which fall under Teresa Caldeira's notion of "fortified enclaves" — adhere to a logic specific to the micro-communities they contain, but seem to be constructed with a willful apathy toward everything beyond their gates. *O Que Se Viu Que Você Vê*, in contrast, is a choreographed whisper that presents a much larger vision of who and what form the "crowded solitude" (in the words of Tom Zé) that is São Paulo.

Intersection 7: Avenida Ipiranga and Avenida São Luis (Praça da Republica)

Don Quixote makes a pledge to Saint George, Brazil's most popular saint, whose image also represents Ogúm, the warrior *orixá* (deity-spirit) of the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé religion. Quixote will fight against "poverty, injustice, and corruption," and struggle for "honor, honesty, and humanism." After making his promise and sailing the world for 400 years, Quixote arrives at his destination: São Paulo. A pair of disembodied almond eyes and lush lips appear on banners, floating over the famous sea of concrete. The city, it seems, is Dulcinea, the object of Quixote's affection.

O Santo Guerreiro e o Herói Desajustado (The Holy Warrior and the Maladjusted Hero) is the first street theatre piece by the local São Jorge de Variedades (Saint George Variety) company. Beginning in mid-September, the company presents the play three times a week for almost three months on the Praça da Republica, a leafy ring about two blocks from the intersection of Ipiranga and São João. Ringed with palm trees and bordered by the ostentatious, neo-colonial building that currently

houses the Department of Education for São Paulo state, the Praça marks the beginning of the city center. On weekends, its artisan fair draws visitors from throughout São Paulo (even the West Zone), and at all times, the Praça serves as a hangout space and sleeping quarters for many members of the city's homeless population. The Praça is one of the key targets in São Paulo's "revitalization," and City Hall is determined to return it to its origins as a middle-class promenade, forcing or coercing the homeless to find other, less scenic digs. In contrast, *O Santo Guerreiro* — which draws audience members ranging from established theatre actors to local street kids — welcomes its public enthusiastically, bringing all interested parties quite literally into the action.

After the play's narrator has ushered Don Quixote in with a gushing "Bem-vindo, Dom Quixote, bem-vindo... welcome!" the knight sets out with Sancho Panza to explore his Dulcinea. He immediately discovers a group of people sleeping under the open sky, and tells Sancho Panza how impressed he is to see so many adherents to the chivalric code. Taking a closer look, Panza replies that Quixote hasn't found a group of knights at all, just some people with nowhere else to sleep. Quixote is disappointed, but Panza reassures him, saying he's found a house that they can pay off in thirty years with a simple monthly financing plan.

As the singer-narrator compliments Quixote on finding his own house — "the dream of every good paulistano" — the chorus bursts into an up-tempo rendition of "Saudosa Maloca" (very roughly, Shack That We Long For) by Adoniran Barbosa, the author of "Trem das Onze," the tale of a rushed lover mentioned in RS-3. "Saudosa Maloca", an up-tempo but melancholy song, tells in thickly rural Portuguese, the story of three migrants whose self-con-



São Paulo as Dulcinea's face on Praça Roosevelt

(right) Bringing audience members into the action in the opening dance of O Santo Guerreiro e o Herói Desajustado
 (bottom, left) The chorus stuck on a crowded bus
 (bottom, right) "The future of the nation:" a portrait of the artists as glue sniffers



structed home is destroyed to make way for a modern apartment building.

*Pegamos todas nossas coisa
 E fomos pro meio da rua
 Preciá a demolição
 Que tristeza que nós sentia...
 Saudosa maloca, maloca querida
 Que dim donde nós passemos dias feliz de nossa vida.*

We took our things
 And wen' to the middle of the street
 To get out of the way of the demolition
 What sadness we felt...
 Shack that we long for, beloved shack
 Where we done passed happy days of our life.

Continuing the theme of housing, or the lack thereof, the chorus soon reappears as "the future of the nation:" a mass of glue-sniffing street kids. At one performance, a grubby, barefoot 11-year-old with a huge grin threw himself into the show from the beginning. He copied the chorus members eagerly, and they carried him on their backs, showed him how to play the bass drum, and taught him the words to the songs, which he picked up quickly

and sang out in a full voice. Through all this excitement, he kept a tight grip on a telltale soda bottle with a small pool of thick, clear liquid at the bottom. When he heard the cast singing

*É os menino lá/cheirando cola-la
 La la la la*

It's the kids over there / sniffing glue la la
 La la la la...

he sprang up beaming, handed his soda bottle to a friend, and danced across the playing space in a clownish, staggering parody of a glue-stoned street kid. A few scenes later, he was still onstage, but had scored his soda bottle again, which he held clamped to his mouth.

Quixote, alarmed by the city's crowded busses, the traffic, and the addicted kids, demands that the narrator explain who's responsible for trashing his beloved Dulcinea. "Oh, I don't know," she replies. "The politicians, the bankers...if you really want to know the truth, Don Quixote, it's the businessmen." Out pops the chorus, wearing extravagant blue felt sandwich boards — "Buy and Sell You;" "Selling My Mother;" "Plastic Surgery"

— and bartering with the audience. In one performance, an actor wearing a “Child Labor” sandwich board held a toddler gently by the hand and offered the audience a day of the boy’s work for 5 *reais*.

Quixote is unimpressed, until the narrator coos seductively and catches his attention. “Don Quixote, we have something else for you,” she says. “It’s a book of your adventures. Hard cover, bilingual edition with commentary from the doctors at USP, Don Quixote!” Quixote and Panza (along with the chorus, as the gang of sheep Quixote mistakes for an army) soon find themselves in a photo-op. “You’ll be famous throughout the world, Don Quixote,” the narrator squeals. “Hong Kong, Stockholm, Paris, South Africa... *Massachusetts*, Don Quixote, *Massachusetts*!” Quixote smiles widely at the idea of his impending international fame while Sancho Panza and the sheep primp for a photo. After the sheep wander off, though, Quixote and Panza find themselves stuck in the picture, unable to continue with their adventures.

After Quixote’s fierce, losing battle with a group of windmills (spinning *baiana* dancers in traditional wide skirts, with plastic mill headdresses), a bedraggled woman appears. She is Dulcinea, come to life. She is dressed in rags, more than a bit drunk, and she surveys Quixote and the audience with an air of resigned but bitter disappointment. As she staggers around the playing space, Dulcinea fixes Don Quixote with a stare. “What are you



Plastic surgery for sale

fighting against? Against what I, myself, am?” She takes a few more steps, then slumps down as the band begins to play softly. Holding out her hand, she asks, “You got one *real*?”

At first glance, this seems to be the play’s sad conclusion: that Quixote’s quest for “honor, honesty, and humanism” is not suited to a city with São Paulo’s complexities and difficulties. In first seeing an alluringly beautiful face in the skyline, Quixote confused his city (Dulcinea) for something tame and easily conquered. Now, at street level, he sees her instead as disheveled and desperate,



(left) Quixote and Sancho Panza, frozen and sheepless (above) The real Dulcinea

and her people as hopeless. The seeming impossibility of improvement, and the potential fate of earnest, idealistic reformers, is not at all lost on the play's audience. Following one of Quixote's many setbacks, as the narrator looks down and gravely intones, "Don Quixote de la Mancha, you sad knight...," a hoarse male voice calls out from the crowd: "It's Lula!"

Quixote, defeated, bemoans the loss of his Dulcinea, of São Paulo's green fields and clear rivers. He clings to one of the windmill-*baianas*, who leads him in a slow dance as the band begins to play the samba composer Cartola's "O Mundo é um Moinho" (The World is a Windmill):

*Ainda é cedo amor
Mal começaste a conhecer a vida
Já anunciás a hora de partida
Sem saber mesmo o rumo que irás tomar...*

*Ouçá-me bem, amor
Preste atenção, o mundo é um moinho
Vai triturar teus sonhos tão mesquinhos
Vai reduzir as ilusões à pó.*

It's still early, my love
You've hardly begun to know life
Already, you announce that it's time to leave
Without even knowing the course you'll take...

Listen well, my love
Pay attention: the world is a mill
It will grind your petty dreams
It will reduce illusions to dust.

As the song ends, a faltering Quixote sinks to the ground, as Sancho Panza yells for him not to admit defeat. Quixote seems to be dead, and a few members of the



Sancho Panza and Don Quixote's triumphant return on Russo and Rocinante, their trusty steeds.

audience inevitably begin to applaud the sad truth that this first conclusion presents.

Soon, however, Sancho Panza coaxes Don Quixote back to his feet. Quixote protests that he has failed as a knight, that he can't stay in São Paulo, that he doesn't know where to go. His sidekick reassures him, telling Quixote that he, Panza, will lead the way. Quixote protests. "Never, in any of my stories of knighthood, have I heard of a shield-bearer leading his knight." Panza shrugs in response. "Then let's write a new chapter of your story." Slowly, he leads Quixote toward the end of the Praça.

Before the next round of applause dies down, Quixote and Panza approach the audience again — accompanied on some days by percussionists, on others by a local circus or street theatre troupe — followed by Saint George (on stilts) and a standard bearer carrying a Quixote-inspired flag. Two accordionists play a fanfare as the cast sings "*Somos São Jorges e Quixotes brasileiros!*" (We are Brazilian Saint Georges and Quixotes!)

Standing at the head of a large red square of fabric carried in by the cast, Quixote removes his knightly trappings — helmet, sword, armor — and the cast arranges them into a human outline on the fabric. Sancho Panza, donning a Saint George helmet with a broom's head for a bloom, assumes the role of a *pai-de-santo* (a Candomblé priest; literally, "father of a saint"), and chanting in Yoruba,



"The world is a mill."



A motorcycle delivery boy speeds toward his untimely demise in the midst of a traffic jam

blesse Quixote. A lone guitar, backed by heavy percussion, starts up, and the cast leads the audience in a *ciranda* (a circle dance) for the third and final ending.

*Acorda, povo, vem cirandar
É São Jorge e Dom Quixote que hoje vem nos visitar...
Eu sou Quixote, sonhador
São Jorge, guerreiro, sou
Ô, dá licença, que hoje eu quero é ser feliz*

Wake up, people! Come dance a ciranda!
Saint George and Don Quixote come to visit us today...
I am Quixote, the dreamer
Saint George, the warrior, am I
O let me in, because today, I want to be happy.

The multiple endings of *O Santo Guerreiro e o Herói Desajustado* represent important critiques of the excesses of revitalization. These critiques gain even more poignancy for their location on the Praça da Republica, a site that in São Paulo's rush toward gentrification is even more of a "zero mark" than the Praça da Sé. In addition, the piece serves as an alternative vision of social change that's entirely fitting for Lula-era Brazil. Quixote's collapse seems to signal the death of an old order, whose ideas can't comprehend the complexity of modern-day São Paulo. Meanwhile, Sancho Panza's final line in the second ending presents a classically "first shall be last" model. Finally, the piece ends by bringing the audience into a *roda*, a circle of people that is the hallmark of traditional Brazilian performance forms like *capoeira* (a martial arts/dance hybrid) and street corner samba. A *roda* blurs the line between practitioners and

spectators: singing in the *ciranda*, we are all at once watching and performing the final dance.

While *O Santo Guerreiro* is not a protest piece, it is also not a quiet acceptance of the gentrification process sweeping through the downtown. Throughout the show, from the actors beckoning audience members into the action until the final *ciranda* that solidifies audience and players into a single, cohesive unit, *O Santo Guerreiro* creates a space on the Praça da Republica that welcomes all interested bystanders while maintaining an awareness of their profound differences. Whether confronted with a screaming drunk man, a playful street kid, or a shy

college student, *São Jorge de Variedades* welcomes anyone who drops by to come into their circle. The company's instinct is to err on the side of inclusiveness, and it is an instinct that — three days a week, for at least a couple of hours — is frequently rewarded.

Veloso, in the closing verse of "Sampa," sings

*Do povo oprimido nas filas, nas vilas, favelas
Da força da grana que ergue e destrói coisas belas
Da feia fumaça que sobe, apagando as estrelas
Eu vejo surgindo seus poetas...*

From the people oppressed in lines, neighborhoods,
favelas
From the force of cash that builds and destroys beautiful things
From the ugly smoke that rises, blocking out the stars
I see your poets rise...

São Paulo is a city where the ugly smoke still blocks out the stars; where the forces of cash — in the forms of City Hall projects and private enterprise — help fund sporadic public performances while paying for homeless people to be hosed off the street; where, over 50 years after Adironan Barbosa wrote "Saudosa Maloca," humble houses ever deeper into the periphery are demolished to make way for new apartment complexes. Yet the city's poets continue to rise, giving form and image to São Paulo's complexities, telling the stories of the city on its rapidly changing streets. □



Don Quixote holds the key to the city as Sancho Panza looks on.

Current ICWA Fellows

Elena Agarkova • RUSSIA • May 2008 - 2010

Elena will be living in Siberia, studying management of natural resources and the relationship between Siberia's natural riches and its people. Previously, Elena was a Legal Fellow at the University of Washington's School of Law, at the Berman Environmental Law Clinic. She has clerked for Honorable Cynthia M. Rufe of the federal district court in Philadelphia, and has practiced commercial litigation at the New York office of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP. Elena was born in Moscow, Russia, and has volunteered for environmental non-profits in the Lake Baikal region of Siberia. She graduated from Georgetown University Law Center in 2001, and has received a bachelor's degree in political science from Barnard College.

Ezra Fieser • GUATEMALA • January 2008 - 2010

Ezra is interested in economic and political changes in Central America. He is an ICWA fellow living in Guatemala where he will write about the country's rapidly changing economic structure and the effects on its politics, culture and people. He was formerly the deputy city editor for *The* (Wilmington, Del.) *News Journal*, a staff writer for *Springfield* (Mass.) *Republican* and a Pulliam Fellow at *The Arizona Republic*. He is a graduate of Emerson College in Boston.

Suzu Hansen • TURKEY • April 2007 - 2009

A John O. Crane Memorial Fellow, Suzu will be writing about politics and religion in Turkey. A former editor at the *New York Observer*, her work has also appeared in *Salon*, the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Nation*, and other publications. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1999.

Derek Mitchell • INDIA • September 2007 - 2009

As a Phillips Talbot Fellow, Derek will explore the impact of global trade and economic growth on Indians living in poverty. He has served for the past year as a volunteer for Swaraj Peeth, an institute in New Delhi dedicated to nonviolent conflict resolution and Mahatma Gandhi's thought. Previously he was a Fulbright scholar in India at the Gandhi Peace Foundation. He has coordinated foreign policy research at George Washington University's Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies and worked as a political organizer in New Hampshire. Derek graduated with a degree in religion from Columbia University.

Nicholas Schmidle • PAKISTAN • February 2006 - 2008

Nick is a freelance writer interested in the intersection of culture, religion, and politics in Asia. He's in Pakistan as an ICWA fellow, examining issues of ethnic, sectarian, and national identity. Previously, he reported from Central Asia and Iran. His work has been published in the *Washington Post*, the *Weekly Standard*, *Foreign Policy*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and elsewhere. He holds a master's degree in International Affairs from American University.

Raphael Soifer • BRAZIL • April 2007-2009

An actor, director, playwright, musician and theatre educator, Raphi Soifer is a Donors' Fellow studying, as a participant and observer, the relationship between the arts and social change in communities throughout Brazil. He has worked as a performer and director in the United States and Brazil, and has taught performance to prisoners and underprivileged youth through People's Palace Projects in Rio de Janeiro and Community Works in San Francisco. He holds a bachelor's degree in Theatre Studies and Anthropology from Yale University.

Institute Fellows are chosen on the basis of character, previous experience and promise. They are young professionals funded to spend a minimum of two years carrying out self-designed programs of study and writing outside the United States. The Fellows are required to report their findings and experiences from the field once a month. They can write on any subject, as formally or informally as they wish. The result is a unique form of reporting, analysis and periodic assessment of international events and issues.

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