THE POETICS OF MOCKERY AGAINST THE FAR-RIGHT DISINFORMATION MACHINE IN DIGITAL PLATFORMS

A POÉTICA DO DEBOCHE CONTRA A MÁQUINA DE DESINFORMAÇÃO DA EXTREMA DIREITA EM PLATAFORMAS DIGITAIS

Luciana Mizutani

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8936-5780

The poetics of mockery against the far-right disinformation machine in digital platforms

Abstract: This article examines the attacks by far-right movements on one of democracy's core principles: the concept of truth. The analysis details the workings of the global disinformation machine operated by these groups and proposes strategies to tackle it. Identifying disinformation as a central factor in the radicalization of the electorate—a force that dissolves shared reality and creates an episteme detached from other sectors of society —, the text suggests artistic principles to set up tactics that explore the vulnerabilities of this machine. Digital art is highlighted as a strategic tool against the far right, exemplified by the experience of the artist herself who, in the 2022 Brazilian elections, used humor and entertainment on digital media as a form of militancy. The initial work, aimed at "vote-shifting," consisted of scenes composed of materials from heterogeneous fields that poetically reorganized the news from an alternative perspective to that of the mainstream media. This practice became a strategy to challenge the epistemes of the far right, encouraging a political debate that transcends *stricto sensu* rationality. The article perceives digital action as vital to amplify social movements and deconstruct radicalization, promoting a balanced information environment and contributing to a more inclusive and shared world.

Keywords: disinformation; far-right politics; digital activism; digital platforms; digital scene.

A poética do deboche contra a máquina de desinformação da extrema direita em plataformas digitais

Resumo: Este artigo se debruça sobre os ataques das extremas direitas a um dos fundamentos da democracia: o conceito de verdade. A análise detalha o funcionamento da máquina de desinformação global operada por esses grupos e propõe estratégias para enfrentá-la. Identificando a desinformação como um fator central na radicalização do eleitorado — uma força que dissolve a realidade compartilhada e que cria uma episteme apartada de outros setores da sociedade — o texto sugere princípios artísticos para montar táticas que explorem as vulnerabilidades dessa máquina. A arte digital é destacada como uma ferramenta estratégica contra a extrema direita, exemplificada pela experiência da própria artista que, nas eleições brasileiras de 2022, utilizou humor e entretenimento nas redes digitais como forma de militância. O trabalho inicial, voltado ao "vira-voto," consistiu em cenas compostas de materiais de campos heterogêneos que reorganizavam poeticamente as notícias sob uma ótica alternativa à da grande mídia. A partir dessa prática, emergiu uma estratégia para desafiar as epistemes de extrema direita, incentivando um debate político que transcende a racionalidade *stricto sensu*. O artigo percebe a ação digital como vital para amplificar movimentos sociais e desconstruir a radicalização, promovendo um ambiente de informação equilibrado e contribuindo para um mundo mais inclusivo e compartilhado.

Palavras-chave: desinformação; extrema direita; militância digital; plataformas digitais; cena digital.

1 Introduction or the choice of battles

In martial arts, the effectiveness of a technique or action varies according to the contexts in which they are applied, such as the extent and layout of the battlefield, available resources—such as allies and weapons -, and the ability to agency these resources within the specific time in which the fight unfolds. Understanding the interconnection between the elements within the overall framework allows developing strategies that seek favorable contexts and having criteria for choosing battle fronts and entering into cooperation agreements. Considering the current global wave of far right movements as a battle, as members of the resistance groups, we depend on mappings to guide our actions on multiple fronts in the defense of democratic principles.

Jason Stanley[1] associates democracy with three fundamental concepts: institutions, voting, and truth (Stanley; Iamarino, 2020). These concepts are interdependent: institutions ensure rights such as voting and regulate the media, while the main institutional positions related to politics tend to be occupied by elections; in turn, the notion of truth guides public opinion and influences decisions at the individual, institutional, and structural levels, being the basis for the functioning of social pacts and organizations.

Far right movements—including far-right populism, neo-fascism, neo-Nazism, and anarcho-capitalism -attack these democratic pillars by systematically weakening them. This article focuses on one of the types of attacks promoted by these groups: the spread of fake news, which erodes the shared factual reality, making dialogue unfeasible and undermining the collective praxis of citizenship. The cartography of both the structure of disinformation and combat actions reveals fundamental lines that demand strategic occupation. A more detailed analysis also indicates that the individual processes of radicalization create an episteme disconnected from reason and facts, anchored mainly in personal desire, will, and faith. Given this, we propose an intervention in the field of experience, employing artistic means. This approach culminates in an antifascist digital scene-militancy, constituting one of the many lines of escape needed to confront disinformation. This article therefore maps the disinformation machine, from which clues emerge for the creation of a digital resistance scene, with the aim of strengthening this front line in the fight against the far right.

---

1 Jason Stanley is a professor of Philosophy at Yale University, with publications on political philosophy. His work stands out by the analysis of the mechanisms of propaganda and authoritarian rhetoric, as well as by the investigation of the structural pillars of democracy. One of his main works is "How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them" (2018), in which he examines how social divisions are instrumentalized to weaken democratic institutions.

2 The territory or machine of disinformation

In the digital information age, forms of content production and dissemination are being reconfigured, in a hybridization between news portals, digital networks, and traditional models of mainstream media. The amount of information has become massive. However, instead of a "natural selection" that privileges factual and reliable content, we observe the amplification and dissemination of false information, which spreads easily.

The avalanche of disinformation we are dealing with is not the simple result of ignorance, educational gap, or disinterest in news and politics. Today, disinformation hardly occurs in isolation or sporadically, since it is the result of a professional structure that operates systematically. In Brazil, during the Bolsonaro government, there was a formal office that created strategies that still operate today, which became known as the "Hate Office" within the fake news CPMI [2]. This office was financed with public resources, employing professionals to produce and promote disinformation content on multiple platforms in textual, visual, and audiovisual formats, using bots—robots that simulate interactions as if they were real users—, and applying other digital communication techniques to maximize their influence. The effectiveness of this structure allowed the far right to rule and dominate public debate, deflecting the focus from unfavorable issues and promoting its "achievements." This apparatus, structured in advertising molds, reveals the sophistication and organization behind disinformation, making it naive to imagine its combat without an equally robust strategy.

Understanding the complexity and totality of the disinformation machine is a challenge, particularly because its structure simulates the agendas of the extreme right as an organic movement both in the digital space and on the streets. Moreover, its effectiveness in hiding the orchestrated character of its operations stems from its appropriation of real dissatisfactions of the population, such as the precariousness of work, the lack of purpose given the social context, and the impossibility of achieving dignified lives. The necropolitical scenario[3]—in which the surplus for production, including people, is discarded—, when combined with a meritocratic perspective, aggravates precariousness and generalized dissatisfaction, since extreme individual efforts do not lead to the acquisition of the desired goods of symbolic status that this type of dedication should, according to this worldview, provide (Souza, 2018).

This disinformation system instrumentalizes frustrations and, instead of seeking explanations in systemic dynamics and social inequality, channels discontent to minorities and vulnerable groups, such as immigrants, black people, LGBTQIAPN+ people, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and indigenous communities. The constructed narrative positions these

2 Initiated in 2019, a Joint Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPMI) was formed to investigate the network that produces and shares fake news and hate on digital media.

3 We adopt here Achille Mbembe's concept from his book "Necropolitics" (2018).

groups as "guilty" for depriving the "deserving self" of what is its right[4]. It is a radical inversion of perspectives, in which the oppression and violence experienced by these minority groups are resignified within the extreme right as a type of "justice."

Political alignments, in all their aspects—partisan or not, micro or macro—are based on different perceptions of justice. For example, the quota system is based on a perception of justice that is historical, recognizing racial and gender inequalities as social and historical constructs. In contrast, classical liberalism rejects quotas, considering them unfair under a perception of merit-based justice. Neo-fascism, for its part, only aligns itself with classical liberalism when institutional decisions validate its worldview; when decisions go against this vision, signs of rupture with institutions emerge, with the claim that the system is corrupt and flawed. Institutional disruption opens the door to practices of "vigilantism," which are perceived by extremists as "legitimate justice." Examples such as the attempted coup d'état on January 8, 2023 in Brazil illustrate how this process of inversion leads to direct action, marked by an attempt to impose a "justice" that would begin with the destruction of institutions.

In theatrical realist aesthetics, when the worldview of the performer reveals itself in the performance and conflicts with that of the character, directors often guide actors and actresses to "defend" their characters. After all, the maintenance of the fictional illusion demands the performance to be faithful to the perspective of the characters. This process reflects a psychological characteristic: as protagonists of our own stories, we rarely consider ourselves unfair and, in general, we find justifications for our actions. The story we tell grounds decisions, worldviews, and desires. Therefore, the quality of the information we have is crucial, because it supports the story we tell and it can become the "justification" for breaking social pacts and, in more serious cases, for barbarism such as lynching, democratic rupture, torture, and genocide.

This is it.

The point in which common ground becomes diverging paths. When the border that so often seems insurmountable is formed. It is at this point that a driving force for radicalization emerges: in the manipulation of the perception of justice.

Disinformation, therefore, must be understood as a means and not as an end in itself. Like the spectacularization of politics, disinformation is a strategy of co-opting adherents to the far right, to gain votes, engagement, and influence. In other words, the far right uses disinformation to achieve its power project. In this sense, disinformation works in a way analogous to advertising, acting as propaganda for political agents and agendas without informing about the advertising nature.

In the digital reconfiguration of the media, the visibility of candidates is linked to online platforms. Although known as "social networks," the old nature of horizontal interaction between

---

4 This dynamic in the context of fascism is analyzed in detail by Jason Stanley in "How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them" (2018).

acquaintances or enthusiasts of certain themes was losing space as platforms began to prioritize the delivery of advertising and online trading. With this, the platforms have assumed their character as advertising companies that, in order to profit, optimize user retention. This relationship between retention and advertising is the basis of the so-called attention market, which is made with personalized content for each user and by exploiting extreme feelings that generate engagement, such as feelings of inadequacy, fear, anger, and indignation. This architecture makes digital networks the ideal habitat for the flourishing of the far-right disinformation machine that feeds on these feelings.

Giuliano da Empoli[5], in his book *The Engineers of Chaos* (2020), describes the development of these digital disinformation machines and how they have become a method that is being exported by the far right internationally. The author identifies the beginning of this current model with Matteo Salvini in Italy, in which his team interacted with pseudonyms on websites and blogs, simulating the participation of ordinary users. Subsequently, in the United States with Donald Trump and with advice from Steve Bannon and the company Cambridge Analytica, the massive analysis of information, or big data, along with the use of algorithms on digital platforms, has made it possible to identify individuals susceptible to radicalization, facilitating the delivery of extremist materials. The saying "when you don't pay for the product, the product is you" becomes especially cruel in this context, as algorithmic personalization has made it possible to efficiently manipulate people. It became possible to "produce" a "customized" electorate for these radical political agents. In Brazil under Bolsonaro, the machine worked heavily in messaging applications on mobile phones, which makes it even more difficult to trace the origin of materials. In this case, the shared content disassociates itself from a visible source, requiring some technical expertise to identify and trace the origin of information.

Thinking about the political motivations and architecture of the spread of disinformation, these questions arise: how can we confront it and promote an effective dialogue with those who are targeted by the radicalization machine? What would be the materials and strategies for this task? What are the contributions of the art field in this scenario? Or, what would be the lines of escape?

3 Ongoing actions or fugitives on the road

The initial and intuitive answer to dealing with disinformation is to promote the circulation of information, documentation, symbolic restorations based on factual truths. For this reason, we saw after 2018 the increase of historical documentation initiatives, independent news portals,

---

5 Giuliano da Empoli is an Italian-Swiss writer, author of *The Engineers of Chaos* (2020), a work in which he explores the strategies of manipulating public opinion by technology and social networks. He examines the role of populists and communication experts in contemporary political radicalization and polarization, especially in the context of far-right movements in Europe and the United States.

fact-checking agencies; judicialization of crimes of injury and defamation; awareness campaigns and media education; academic research that aims to map the structures and conceptualize the reconfigurations of the context before the current wave of far-right extremism, as well as propose ways out of them.

When thinking about these multiple fronts, we highlight as a high priority the implementation of legislation aimed at regulating digital content. As already discussed, one cannot expect an ethical stance focused on social welfare on the part of platforms, whose dynamics are structured around profit by the attention market. Legislation brings responsibility beyond the individual or collective responsibility of society and reflects the recognition of disinformation as a citizen issue, which requires an institutionalized response based on current social agreements. Political moves have been made in this direction, such as the social networks bill—which provided for transparency of digital platforms—, but until the moment of writing this article, no bill has achieved success in legislative votes. It is worth remembering that work in the political field is interconnected with the previously mentioned individual and collective initiatives, since they create mass to move public opinion towards the social pact.

Looking at the issue from another perspective, those who have exercised political militancy in Brazil since 2018 reveal that these efforts based on factual truths are not infallible. There have been many reports of frustrating experiences in which, despite the presentation of evidence and patient conversations exposing incongruities, some people remained inflexible, clinging to beliefs that had no input in factual reality—from theories that there are bills to create "unisex toilets in schools" to the use of vaccines for implanting chips in humans.

Factual truth is effective in many contexts and serves as the basis for initiatives such as those cited above. Therefore, I do not intend to invalidate approaches aimed at promoting correct information. But I advocate for approaches that adopt strategies seeking to act outside the strict rational field. Meaning: dialoguing with an audience bombarded by disinformation and conspiracy theories requires communication that transcends verbal rationality. As disinformation deepens, a disruption in the collective sense of reality begins to occur, so that even the most absurd theories begin to make sense to those immersed in the conspiratorial narrative, rendering the dialogue ineffective.

In front of an isolated fake news, however laborious it may be to deny it, it is possible to repair reality and restore a consensual sense of truth. However, when faced with the cumulative effect of a continuous bombardment of false information, such repair becomes impractical. The multiplicity and intensity of lies shatter the fabric of ordinary reality to the point that it ceases to exist. The common parameters or ground disappear along with reality and communication loses its effectiveness, since the shared meanings, that is, the semantic and conceptual references, cease to converge, and become distinct languages.

The disinformation machine therefore constructs an alternative "episteme," a new way of seeing and understanding the world that is, in many ways, closed and self-referential. On the far right, worldview structures tend to be rigid, with clearly demarcated boundaries of belonging supported by a moral dichotomy. Although there are variations between the epistemes of the far right—with specific emphases on religion, economics, racial prejudice, among others—, one can observe a great overlap of values between them. Thus, I adopt a simplification here when treating them in an analogous way, especially in this study that deals with their instrumental use of disinformation. In each of these groups, there is an intense distinction between those considered "deserving" and victims of usurpation and those classified as "undeserving," accused of unduly usurping rights (Stanley, 2018). Each group offers, for those who integrate into it, not only a sense of identity and belonging, but also a purpose of existence in its "struggle against the great evil," represented by those who diverge from this worldview. This combination of purpose, belonging, and Manichaean view of outsiders makes it intensely difficult to break out of radicalized epistemes.

The Meteoro Brasil digital multiplatform channel[6], founded by Álvaro Borba and Ana Lesnovski, in their book *Tudo o que você precisou desaprender para virar um idiota* [*Everything You Needed to Unlearn to Become an Idiot*] (2019), discusses how fake news sometimes amalgamate into a whole, becoming a conspiracy theory. With the rupture of the fabric of objective reality, conspiracy theories come to belong, according to the authors, to the field of faith—an unshakable belief located outside the domain of reason. Rational arguments become insufficient, even in the face of evidence, because the believer creates successive justifications to protect the belief that gives meaning to their existence.

Given this scenario, the question that arises is: how to respond to this? Are there alternatives to dealing with faith that is the product of manipulation? Journalist Jenny Senko offers an instructive perspective in her documentary *The Brainwashing of My Dad* (2015), in which she explores the process of radicalization of her own father under the influence of disinformation channels. Senko reports that her mother implemented a "detox environment" similar to a drug rehab. To this end, she blocked television channels such as Fox News, known for broadcasting disinformation and conspiracy theories in the United States, and unsubscribed his email from the far-right advertising mail, replacing them with moderate sources of journalism and politics. That is, she made a process of de-immersion of fake news and immersion in a more moderate field.

This process of de-immersion shows that, by removing the individual from the environment of disinformation and inserting them into a more moderate and rational field, it is possible to reverse, at least partially, the effects of radicalization. Senko demonstrates that, unlike a merely argumentative approach, the creation of a mediated information environment can provide an effective alternative for dealing with membership in radicalized groups. This perspective offers a

---

6 Meteoro Brasil is a channel that addresses topics on culture, science, politics, and society. The channel is known for its accessible informational content and in-depth analysis on current affairs. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/@ Meteorobrasil. Access on: Nov. 12, 2024.

possible way to rebuild ties with shared reality, promoting the reopening of channels of dialogue and reconnection with reliable sources of information.

An immersion involves inserting an individual into a culturally distinct environment, stimulating multiple senses and promoting active participation in diverse cultural practices. It is not just about engaging with specific elements, but about exploring a new reality with varied crossings that go beyond the surface, thus reaching the field of experience. If we consider disinformation as the generator of an episteme—a worldview in which people have been immersed as part of a power project—, the "de-immersion" of this view must occur on multiple fronts, stimulating different senses and proposing alternative practices that break with it.

Political and social militancy often acts, consciously or intuitively, with broad approaches, in which each field builds its own paths of resistance. The panorama presented so far seeks to foster a conscious reflection on the environment created by disinformation machines, aiming at the organization of collective escape plans in a more effective way.

Given this context, this is a front of militancy that can be claimed by the arts, for its ability to organize multiplicities—even contradictory ones—in the form of experience (Melendi, 2017). The arts also offer a valuable contribution supported by an extensive history of studies and research on the composition of works that stimulate the senses, provoke feelings, or in which verbal communication is not hierarchically imposed on the content. This characteristic is particularly valuable for militancy, since they are perspectives capable of circumventing the subterfuges used to ignore factual truths, contained in the far-right epistemes of faith.

4 An anti-fascist experiment or a poetics of mockery

The scenic experience that we will address below, although based on facts and verified news, had no informative focus: its main objective was to serve as a strategy to shift votes to the left in the Brazilian elections of 2022. This period was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, the dismantling of public institutions and social support, and the rise of neo-fascism, in which the disintegration of reality seemed to put us in a fully functioning "blender" in which we were "shaken" by the whirlwind of news, fake news, truth restoration initiatives, and the actions of the Bolsonaro misgovernment.

Some challenges presented themselves: first, the action of face-to-face militancy involved risks of contamination, which led me, as an artist of the scene and presence, to migrate to digital networks. Second, one had to captivate the audience—both those whose vote I intended to shift, and those already exhausted with such barbarism, whose indignation was fatigued. The latter, in the best case scenario, could expand the vote-shifting movement, adhering or returning to the trenches of militancy. Furthermore, when looking at the issue through the field of arts, with collective reality unraveling under the attacks of the disinformation machine, new formats, aesthetics, and poetics became necessary. Thus, what elements should be present to dialogue not only with people, but

with this context—pandemic, disintegration of reality, neo-fascist rise, Bolsonaro misgovernment, and digital networks? Developing a scenic language coherent with this reality became, then, one of my main artistic concerns.

I did not want to exploit extreme feelings like the far right does on online platforms; however, what other types of content could generate engagement and be minimally distributed when entering the territory of the attention market? Political issues on the "pure" left spectrum tend to have low distribution and consequently low visibility. For this reason, it is common for some progressive relevant channels to add other niches, such as Tempero Drag[7] with cuisine and Meteoro Brasil with pop culture. Some subjects that tend to be encouraged—probably for their commercial potential—include cooking, entertainment, beauty, health, tourism, tutorials, pop culture, or topics linked to recent events such as news, concerts, and releases. Since we were still in the midst of the pandemic and many of these topics were either not my specialty or seemed poorly suited to the context, I decided to explore the potential of entertainment as my main engagement tool.

To achieve this goal, I chose a light approach, avoiding accusatory tones filled with rancor and seeking a humorous tone. This strategy was intended to counterbalance the oppressive atmosphere that had become news reporting in both mainstream media and independent portals. Moreover, to engage with an "unconverted" audience and break through information bubbles, the platform that seemed best to align with the conjuncture of factors was TikTok, with its fast-paced and youthful dynamics.

In my scenic composition process, I adopted the principle of combining at least two raw materials from distinct contexts that related to the news of the moment. This approach allowed a new look at terrifying news, using scenic aesthetics as a filter, which sought to communicate the facts with gravity, but without intensifying the horror of the content also in the poetics of the scene. The intention was to move away from the traumatic experience of events, observing them from other perspectives and feelings.

An example in which it was particularly difficult to maintain some degree of lightness, without falling into accusatory tones, was when cases of political violence escalated during the elections. About a week after the assassination of Marcelo Arruda, treasurer of the Workers' Party (PT), at his birthday party, I had not found a way to address the issue directly. Thus, I chose to build a scene with an employee from hell who believed there was a bug in the system, due to a certain Jair who was sinning too much. In the scene, many layers overlap: the bureaucratic work of a low-level employee of a large company; the daily challenges with technology; the imaginary of hell, which has gained strength with the expansion of evangelical churches; and the news of political violence translated as "sin" as a background context.

---

7 Tempero Drag is a channel hosted by Rita Von Hunty – drag character performed by Guilherme Terreri Pereira. The channel covers topics on politics, Marxism, philosophy, history, and culture. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/@Temperodrag. Access on: Nov. 12, 2024.

The choice of perspective of a character who is not at the center of the action resembles Mistero Buffo, by Dario Fo—Italian buffoon and playwright. In his playwrights, Fo often brings the perspective of a people's person to tell familiar stories from the Bible. For example, in the wedding at Cana passage—known as the first miracle of Jesus or "the wine miracle"—the story is told by a drunkard who was present at the feast. On the other hand, Jesus' Road to Calvary, carrying the cross, is told by a blind man and a cripple who live on the charity of others (MISTERO [...], 1977).

Another example occurred during the controversy in which Pastor André Valadão apologized for the use of a non-religious song in a religious event and Brasil Paralelo had its social networks suspended by the Supreme Court (STF). To address this moment, I produced a video (Image 1) with two layers of interpretation. The first layer consisted of a satire on apologies often made after embarrassing situations, in which public figures try to minimize the repercussions of their actions. In the second layer, I used discourses conveyed prior to canceling, or with fewer social filters, preserving the authenticity of their "original" worldviews.

Image 1 - QR code for the TikTok video
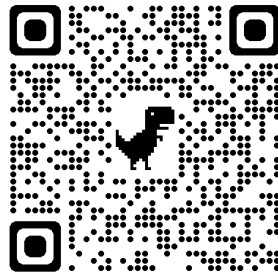
Source: Mizutani, 2022a

During the election campaign, the videos blended diverse styles and content. There were rituals for getting rich during the scandal of the 107 properties bought with cash by the Bolsonaro clan; an ASMR[8] from the left; and a parody in which Galvão Bueno and Casagrande commented on the "democratic game" after the 1st round of elections in analogy to the 1st half of the football match.

It is not possible to obtain precise parameters to understand the enjoyment of spectators in relation to the production, after all there are no laws that oblige platforms to be transparent with the data they store or how the algorithms are structured. Therefore, my perception had to be based on: conversations with fellow artists of militancy; chat messages and private messages on the platforms; and the intuition of algorithmic trends with support in the numbers of views and shares. This

---

8 "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response" refers to a pleasant tingling sensation that some people feel when listening to certain soft sounds or when observing certain movements. This phenomenon is very popular on video platforms, in which creators produce specific content to promote the feeling of ASMR, with the aim of helping people relax, reduce anxiety, or fall asleep.

conjuncture points to the reading that mockery humor and poetics, which proposed unorthodox dialogues between form and content, became attractive for being an escape valve, that is, an escape from horror for those who accompanied the productions. Additionally, the videos became a way to break the prostration that so often seemed irrevocable regarding the social context, both for me and for viewers, as they made a new form of militancy tangible. Mockery against barbarism emerged as a way to escape the tone of tired indignation that has become common on digital networks, caused by the floods of terrifying news that ruled the news reports daily. By "vibrating" in another register, this content brought together people from different political spectra and others who returned to the trenches after moving away from politics and the news for sanity. The call for militancy was made and the interactions in the trench drew on this scene of digital militancy.

Each content generated reflections, in artistic self-criticism in the face of criticism from fellow artists, in the feedback from colleagues in the militancy, or in the comments within the platforms. Although each video was thought within the time frame of the moment, the reflective exercise and the dialogue with peers and audience began to link the work as a whole. It was then that I perceived the work as a totality constituted by these multiple and brief contents, as if it were a comic strip within the totality of a cartoonist's work. Therefore, inspired by the revue, which staged and commented on the events of their societies, I began to think of this scene model as a virtual theater of comic strips.

The reflective exercise on the work caused these various formats to create unity and to be amalgamated and transformed. Instead of the different layers of material crossing the scene in a linear manner, the gluing of materials has become more fragmented, fast, and polyphonic. The multiple characters that emerged in the productions began to merge into a single persona, something between a performative body and myself. The hybridization of materials for each content became a striking feature of the production, which resulted in a poetics of political mockery.

An example of this approach can be seen in the following video:

Image 2 - QR code for the TikTok video
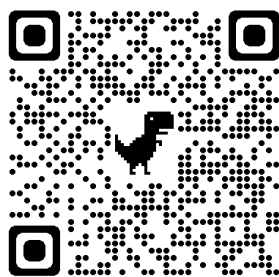
Source: Luciana Mizutani, 2022b

This virtual scene, due to the multiplicity of layers, polyphony of materials, and search to provoke sensations that transcend verbal logic, is configured as a micro-proposal of antifascist experience, organized by a poetic of mockery.

The artistic actions described here aimed to catalyze a response against the rise of neo-fascism, in which art strategically contributes to resistance in the context of disinformation and polarization. This approach is in line with the thinking of Ruud Koopmans (2004)[9], who tells us that, in the current scenario, political changes are no longer determined only by direct and face-to-face confrontation between social movements and political authorities. According to the author, there is a media mediation on how political movements and events are portrayed in the mainstream media that, nowadays, connects with digital networks. In this sense, digital art and online militancy emerge as crucial spaces for the visibility of social movements. Although Koopmans points out that collaboration between social movements and digital networks does not always lead to the subversion of the status quo, he recognizes that in democratic societies, digital networks offer a platform for some agents to become visible and thus be able to generate social resonance and give space to relevant social agendas (Koopmans, 2004). There are countless examples of how the reverberations in the networks influence political decisions, such as: the defeat of the bill that provided for a greater penalty for those who aborted than for their rapist; the retreat in the project that allows the privatization of marine areas; as well as the engagement with the debate on the reduction of working days.

From this perspective, digital artistic actions can be thought of not only as an instrument of visibility and promotion of social movements, but can also contribute to rethinking the very forms of militancy in the digital age. In this context, the art that fights barbarism would have an active role in change by acting in different fields of dialogue, encompassing sensory, emotional, and narrative elements, which would modify the praxis of militancy.

5 Conclusion or an invitation to the trenches

Academic conceptualization, with its own methodologies and pace, tends to take a longer and more reflective path, different from practices that navigate through more intuitive and experimental fields. Today, by being able to reflect theoretically on what I have developed, I recognize more clearly the possibilities of action of digital scenic militancy. With this understanding, I am able to articulate these experiences more generously, contributing with clear clues for those who wish to explore similar paths. This reflection not only enriches my own practice, but also contributes to the construction of a collective space of learning and creation in the field of political resistance. The creative and reflective process, developed by the virtual scene, opens an invitation to militant action in which the mapping of the context presents points in which art would have advantageous terrains of action and artistic expression could be an active agent in social and political changes.

---

9 Ruud Koopmans is a Dutch sociologist and political scientist, with research in current politics. He is a professor at the Humboldt University of Berlin.

Ultimately, it is important to emphasize that the great civilizational milestones demand the commitment of entire generations dedicated to seeking alternatives and solutions to the problems that afflict us. Furthermore, these advances often depend on events or circumstances beyond the control of social and political movements, catalytic events that have the power to mobilize and drive the forces of social change. For us to take advantage of these opportunities, we must be organized and prepared for when these triggers of change occur, as our chances of reversing adverse situations and promoting lasting transformations will be significantly greater. In this case, fighting against the worldviews that, in far-right movements, are characterized by divisions and exclusionary inequalities. Therefore, collective efforts are imperative so that the worldviews shared by everyone prevail over those of divided worlds. So, let's go ahead! We're still together!

References

EMPOLI, Giuliano da. *Os engenheiros do caos*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Vestígio, 2020.

FASCISMO explicado (por quem entende). Atila Iamarino entrevista Jason Stanley. [*S. l.*]: Atila Iamarino, 2020. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EKXzhJh2As. Access on: Apr. 14, 2025.

GREG News. Gregório Duvivier. HBO Brasil: São Paulo, 2017. Available from: https://www.max.com/br/pt/shows/greg-news-com-gregorio-duvivier/722f1c46-01f8-48f7-8936-26c4f2d61dc7. Access on: Apr. 14, 2025.

KOOPMANS, Rudd. *Movements and media:* Selection processes and evolutionary dynamics in the public sphere. *Theory and Society*, [*s. l.*], v. 33, p. 367-391, 2004. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1023/B:RYSO.0000038603.34963.de. Access on: Apr. 14, 2025.

MBEMBE, Achille. *Necropolítica*. Tradução de Renata Santini. São Paulo: n-1 edições, 2018.

MEDO e Delírio em Brasília. Pedro Daltro e Cristiano Botafogo. Central 3: Brasília, 2025. *Podcast*. Available from: https://open.spotify.com/show/4GTrddwqYaFDOuNUPcsRaX. Access on: Oct. 21, 2024.

MELENDI, Maria Angélica. *Estratégias da arte em uma era de catástrofes.* Rio de Janeiro: Cobogó, 2017.

METEORO BRASIL. *Tudo o que você precisou desaprender para virar um idiota.* São Paulo: Planeta, 2019.

MISTERO buffo. Peça teatral por Dario Fo. RAI: Roma, 1977. Available from: https://www.teche.rai.it/2017/04/40-anni-mistero-buffo/. Access on: Apr. 14, 2025.

MIZUTANI, Luciana. *#castigo #ti #inferno #fy*, [*s. l.*], 2022a. TikTok: @lucianamizutani. Available from: https://www.tiktok.com/@lu_mizu/video/7156964252253703429. Access on: Apr. 23, 2025.

MIZUTANI, Luciana. #fuga #italia #eua #bozo #mudanca #gregnews, [*s. l.*], 2022b. Available from: https://www.tiktok.com/@lu_mizu/video/7165225728672288005. Access on: Apr. 23, 2025.

SOUZA, Jessé. *A classe média no espelho:* Sua história, seus sonhos e ilusões, sua realidade. Rio de Janeiro: Estação Brasil, 2018.

STANLEY, Jason. *Como Funciona o Fascismo:* a Política do "nós" e "eles". Tradução de Denise Bottmann. São Paulo: Leya, 2018.

THE BRAINWASHING of My Dad. Direção: Jen Senko. Estados Unidos: Gravitas Ventures, 2015.

Academic Biography

Luciana Mizutani - Institute for Psychoacoustics and Eletronic Music (IPEM)
Postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Psychoacoustics and Eletronic Music (IPEM),
Department of Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies, Gante, East Flandres, Belgium.
E-mail: lumizu@gmail.com

Ethics Committee Approval

Not applicable

Competing interests

No declared conflict of interest

Research Context

No declared research context

Contribution of authorship (CRediT)

Not applicable

Evaluation Method

Double-Blind Peer Review

Editors

Christina Fornaciari
Júlia Guimarães
Júlia Morena Costa
Juliana Coelho
Raquel Castro
Thálita Motta

Peer Review History

Submission date: 19 November 2024
Approval date: 24 March 2025