


**CLOWN NOSE:**  
**views about the documentary “Achei o meu nariz [I’ve found my nose]”**

NARIZ DE PALHAÇA:  
olhares sobre o documentário “Achei o meu nariz”


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**Clown nose:**

**views about the documentary “Achei o meu nariz [I’ve found my nose]”**

**Abstract:** This article proposes a collective reflection on the documentary “Achei o meu nariz” (I’ve found my nose), which tells the story of a journey through the world of female clowning, presenting the trajectories, difficulties and achievements of the clowns from the groups “As Marias da Graça”, “Casa 407” and “Palhaça Catha Vento”. This analysis discusses, from the perspective of Cultural Performances, the construction of the figure of the women clowns and the related aspects between the way they tell their own stories and the narrative language of documentary cinema. The goal is to find an approach that establishes a common dialogue between the research of the three observers, creating a connection between different layers of analysis under the same cultural product.

**Keywords:** cultural performances; women clowns; storytelling; cinema; documentary.

**Nariz de palhaça:**

**olhares sobre o documentário “Achei o meu nariz”**

**Resumo:** O presente artigo propõe uma reflexão coletiva sobre o documentário “Achei o meu nariz” que relata a jornada pelo universo da palhaçaria feminina, apresentando as trajetórias, dificuldades e conquistas das palhaças dos Grupos “As Marias da Graça”, “Casa 407” e da “Palhaça Catha Vento”. Nesta análise são discutidos, sob a lente das Performances Culturais, a construção da figura das palhaças e os aspectos correlatos entre a forma como elas contam suas próprias histórias e a linguagem narrativa do cinema documentário. O objetivo é encontrar uma abordagem que estabeleça um diálogo comum entre as pesquisas dos três observadores, criando uma conexão entre diferentes camadas de análise sob um mesmo produto cultural.

**Palavras-chave:** performances culturais; palhaça(s); contação de histórias; cinema; documentário.



## 1 Introduction – Once Upon a Time...

Six hands set out to write together. Their greatest challenge was to produce an article that reconciled a single shared approach while orienting the three distinct and seemingly non-overlapping lines of research that the three scholars develop in their respective doctoral projects. The proposal for the article emerged in the course “Collective Knowledge Production II,” offered in the Graduate Program in Cultural Performances at the Universidade Federal de Goiás. The course culminated in a final project in which students were to identify points of contact among their research interests, reflecting on the collective and complex production of a web of knowledge that both holds and entangles our learning and research processes, yet helps us unravel this universe of possibilities and discover new ways of thinking.

Veloso (2014) states at the beginning of his article that the production of knowledge—particularly that related to an artistic work—when analyzed on the basis of the work itself, that is, the reduced model of the object “allows for a global, as well as synthetic grasp of its structure,” enabling the apprehension of the tangible through the signs the object bears. Signs that, when structured within a creative process, ultimately convey one or multiple messages depending on how the observer captures and interprets them. In this sense, the artist’s apprehension of reality when creating a work is shaped by multiple processes, structures, subjects, and themes that affect them, producing a work that integrates several modes of knowledge in the construction of a single outcome.

Thus, the trio of minds needed to build a relationship among an art professor who studies traditional stories and their modes of storytelling, a communicator passionate about cinema, and the humor of a curious woman clown. One day, in a moment of reverie, the clown recalled a documentary, and suddenly everything seemed to fall into place. The documentary in question is titled “Achei o meu nariz” (I’ve Found My Nose), and its very title evokes a story<sup>1</sup> of seeking, observing, and hoping. In addition to the challenges portrayed in the documentary, there is the moment of encounter—the instant of victory in reaching one’s goal and finding one’s nose. In the film, the finding of the nose is portrayed as an unrelenting quest for spaces, both physical environments and subjective territories, within the world of clowning. Women who recount their artistic trajectories seek a place in the street, the stage of encounters, and in their own lives, to carry their art forward. Women clowns who confront the gaze directed at an artistic expression historically rooted in a predominantly male universe. Challenges of reaching an audience and being recognized as artists, as clowns, and as women who claim space in the street and in the eyes of spectators.

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<sup>1</sup> The documentary can be found at: *Achei o meu nariz*. Directed by Bárbara Amádio, Diana Magalhães, and Jacqueline Duransna. [S. l.]: Nucine Filmes Maracanã, 2023. Available at: <https://youtu.be/ngiBPZ1m02s?si=k9Yjs-EfGR5rIg2g> Access on: Nov 24, 2025.



The possibility of writing a text with many hands presents us with the considerable challenge of establishing dialogue among disparate research projects. The solution to this obstacle lies within the field itself, for Cultural Performances provide distinctive ways of observing the numerous research objects under consideration and do so through a transdisciplinary lens. The advantage of this approach is the possibility of recovering meanings that may have been lost amid intertextual lines and, furthermore, of pursuing new possibilities. Thus, as Schechner (2006) argues, most objects or situations can be studied as performances.

For Singer (1959), the concept of performance in which we are situated encompasses the study, observation, and perception of everything related to it. For this reason, the term cannot be understood solely as the study of a specific performance or as a particular mode of examining a phenomenon, nor even as an evolutionary stage of a given branch or area of knowledge (Camargo, 2013), which therefore allows us to bring into dialogue the concepts and meanings with which we work separately in our studies—storytelling, cinema (specifically the documentary), and clowning by women—toward an analysis of a shared cultural object.

Accordingly, this analysis begins by outlining several points regarding cultural processes considered relevant to articulate, since the cultural product introduced for discussion includes issues that merit and demand careful consideration. To that end, we recall that Richard Johnson (2014, pp. 12–13) states that “cultural processes are intimately bound up with social relations, especially with class relations and formations, with sexual divisions, with the racial structuring of social relations and with age oppressions.” For Johnson, culture contributes to the differentiation of social groups because it operates within relations of power; consequently, culture is a site of differences and social struggles. In this respect, women’s clowning seeks to bring everyday themes, as well as those most relevant to their lived realities, onto the stage as a means of reaffirming women’s artistic and cultural presence in the arts.

Such discussions, articulated principally by the author, emerge in the documentary “Achei o meu nariz”, in which participants recount the stories of how they found their noses, calling for the introduction of several concepts that support the approach proposed. In general terms, the documentary film is a production committed to engaging with reality. A film that, at first glance, does not operate through fiction; however, this does not imply that it faithfully portrays reality. Like fiction, the documentary isolates segments of reality, offering a partial and subjective representation. Therefore, the documentary and its meaning cover how the protagonist develops a worldview shaped by her own experiences, in either specific aspects of her life or of life more broadly, in relation to their society, their community, or their family. The documentary’s narrative rests on events presumed to be real, and therefore aims to address what actually occurred rather than what might have happened. These are films that may highlight issues around which social interests or debates coalesce. According to Nichols (2013, p. 205), “social issue documentaries consider collective issues from a social perspective. The people recruited for the film illustrate the issue or provide commentary on it.”



In this way, documentary films provide a unique experience in which sounds and images are orchestrated to tell a story that conveys far more than an initial impression. The film presents—or represents—meanings that may or may not be perceived depending on the viewer’s background.

## 2 Who Tells the Tale?

The narrative is first told by Karla Conká<sup>2</sup>, Geni Viegas, Vera Ribeiro, and Samantha Anciães, participants in the *As Marias da Graça* group, who describe their search for a means to make art through a clowning course. The idea of venturing into the street came from the course instructor, who directed them toward a more forceful mode of experimentation. As a site of experience, the street is where the movement and performance unfold, and where stories are simultaneously told and lived. As much as the women clowns, Paul Zumthor (2007) examines street performance through memories of his childhood and youth, recounting the events that shaped both his life and research trajectories.

At the time, a lot of street singers used to perform on the streets of Paris. I loved listening to them and had my favorite spots, such as Rue du Faubourg Montmartre and Saint-Denis Street, around the neighborhood where I lived when I was a poor student. So, what did we perceive from those songs? We were about fifteen, twenty broke kids performing around a singer. We’d listen to an aria, a very simple melody, so that, on its last repetition, we could sing it along as a chorus. There’d be a text, generally quite simple, crudely printed on loose sheets, which could be purchased for very cheap. And, beyond that, there was the game. We were drawn by the spectacle. A spectacle that held me captive, despite running close to the train schedule, which meant I’d have to hurry to the Gare du Nord afterwards (Zumthor, 2007, p. 28).

The author recounts how relevant the event, the arts, and the *performance* are for the spectators; creating moments that linger in the memory and senses of the passers-by. He continues his story by saying: “There a man, a peddler, his jesting as he sold the songs, cried them out and passed the hat around; the loose sheets in disarray inside an upturned umbrella at the edge of the sidewalk” (Zumthor, 2007, p. 28). Therefore, yes, there was the artist, his text, his story, and his theatricality. As a stage, the street is a vital space for the development of the woman clown, because in the street—and from the street—one can expect anything: acceptance, curiosity, and applause, as well as exclusion, indifference, and disregard. In a sense, the street helps the artist confront her own feelings of inadequacy and lack of belonging, much like clowning itself.

The woman clown carries the story within her repertoire, and each day she experiences

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2 “As Marias da Graça” is a group from Rio de Janeiro, founded in 1991 by women who chose the art of clowning as a means of embodying laughter and feminine everyday life in a unique, cheeky manner. They became an institution in 2003 and are now an association of women clowns whose mission is to affirm the art of clowning within the optics of the feminine. For further information, see: <http://www.asmariasdagraca.com.br/historia.html>.



new stories. People who cross the stage—the street—and the lives of the artists who performs in this space of intertwinings. The short documentary shows women clowns performing on the street. The street—the public space—is the stage, and the performers gather and take on the challenge of bringing their dramaturgy, their clown personas, and their stories to an audience that did not set out to see a circus act or a theatrical performance.

What is particularly compelling in this dramaturgical process of storytelling, and of the stories they tell, is that clowning openly performed by women is a relatively recent development, as in the past women clowns typically appeared onstage in male guise. And in the process of discovering this character, there is still considerable estrangement on the part of audiences, who at times do not know how to identify whether the performers are clowns in the masculine or feminine sense. Moreover, dramaturgical challenges persist, as traditional clown numbers do not adequately represent the figures, language, or perspectives of women. For this reason, today there is a strong current of scholarship that encourages performers to create their own stories based on their personal experiences, their vulnerabilities, and even their limitations.

In the documentary, the public moving through the streets encounters a second troupe of women clowns, *Cia Casa 407*<sup>3</sup>, seeking attention for their art and their stories. "Achei o meu nariz" does not set out to foreground circus performance or the mischievous antics of clowns, but rather highlights the humanity of the artists behind the painted faces, the colorful costumes, and their red noses. Women who dress in exaggerated fashion, wear makeup, and put on the nose that characterizes the clown figure. They are often perceived and addressed as "clowns," in the masculine sense, by the audiences, who are not used to the idea that a clown may in fact be a woman rather than a male or hybrid figure. They recount the public's confusion regarding how to identify a woman clown. Their stories convey not only the audience's sense of estrangement, but also their own, as they find themselves having to explain their presence and their feminine identities. These women seek to join these spaces and transform concepts and titles which were previously reserved exclusively for men.

In this process, they recount their adventures and hardships, costume changes, the approach of children and their parents, territorial disputes with other performers, and the emotions that add up to their life experiences and personal narratives that shape the image of their characters—all the real challenges they face along their paths and the sensitivities they live, for the woman clown performing on the street is not a being isolated from the world, without stories or feelings. Everything that happens in their lives and along their trajectories is incorporated into these comic figures, which have names, a gender, bodies, movement, and backgrounds. At a certain point in the film, Elisa Neves, a fellow clown from "Casa 407," complements what Érica Rodrigues and Luisa Machado say about the many difficulties faced when performing in the street, remarking that what truly matters is following the clown's motto—"have fun"—, as this is how emotions,

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3 Composed of Elisa Neves, Luiza Machado, and Kassia Torres, this theatrical collective centers its artistic research on the art of clowning, with an emphasis on female dramaturgy. See: <https://www.facebook.com/casa407/>



expressions, and blunders reach those who take a step closer and identify with the highs and lows that characterize every human being.

Catharina Lessa<sup>4</sup> is among the women who spoke in the documentary, she is the clown Catha Vento, who plays an important role in shaping the film’s narrative. While the other performers appear in groups and complement one another in their interviews, Catha Vento is alone, and thus the camera seemingly sought greater intimacy with her character. Throughout her brief segments, she speaks about her personal search, which involves finding a way to make a living either through the arts or as a clown, and also recognizing the best in each person and, in seeing each one, being able to perceive herself contemplatively, as though looking into a mirror with the wonder of a child discovering something new. It is noteworthy how the cinematic approach chosen for portraying the artist resonates with the way she narrates her own story. Although the site of engagement is the street—depicted throughout the documentary as an open and multifaceted space—the central focus on an actress who is not part of a collective conveys an impression of solitude and of quiet solidarity in her quest to find her own place and, therefore, her own nose.

Seeking the nose entails not only studying the art of clowning, but also identifying oneself as a clown. It involves recognizing the awkward, human, visceral, and childlike traits we all possess—traits that make us ridiculous, rough, foolish, simple, and mischievous. It means seeking our own social, artistic, and cultural place both in art and in life.

Although not in the documentary, Natália Tazinazzo Figueira de Oliveira (2017) also recounts her experience as a teacher who became a clown in order to reframe her relationship with her daily audience, that is, the children at school. She reflects on the need for her body to “grow wings (or noses)” and interprets this clown figure and its relationship with the audience:

“The clown is the character who embodies defiance and ridicule, the jester who can make a satire out of everyone and everything, including the institution. It evokes the mythical and the sacred inherent to the origins of performance, intimately bound to the refuge of imagining and creating, and to the legacy of the world that is presented to those arriving into it. The clown is a storyteller by nature, through its presence, its mask, its skits” (Oliveira, 2017, p. 55).

This clown/narrator recognizes that contact—whether in school or out in the street—is also a means of researching the audience, sensing the gazes that come up with stories the moment the clown figure steps on stage. The author expands the idea: “the narrator clown utters the word as an inhabitant of her own body, capable of teasing, wounding, touching deeply, and mobilizing other bodies” (Oliveira, 2017, p. 55). On the other hand, it is the feeling that the clown may bring forth something meaningful and captivating to the audience. This search is motivating; it is the encounter of sensitivities and identities that simultaneously connect with and stimulate one another. The search for the clown’s own nose is also the search for one’s own self, for the emotional

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4 There is little information available online about the clown Catha Vento or even about the artist Catharina Lessa herself. Only a Facebook page. See: [https://www.facebook.com/palhacathavento/?locale=pt\\_BR](https://www.facebook.com/palhacathavento/?locale=pt_BR).





qualities that will animate and narrate the individual story of each woman clown. At the same time, this investigation into the woman clown pursues the history of the circus and of clowning as practiced by women.

Several questions arise and surface in the documentary, such as: what reasons led the circus and the theater to avoid presenting women clowns? Did women have to hide their identities to perform circus arts? Why was this not documented, or why were women clowns not celebrated in the past? These questions motivate the telling of the stories of women clowns, but also motivate them to remain as a group of clown artists, encouraging the emergence and visibility of others.

These questions motivate the telling of the stories of women clowns, but they also inspire them to remain as a collective of clown artists, encouraging the emergence and visibility of others.

The analysis of the documentary is important because it provides a means of opening spaces for these and other stories to be seen and disseminated. Circulated through web platforms, films enable wide access for people in many parts of the country. Circuses and groups of women clowns can see themselves, identify with, and feel represented by these stories. This search for the clown's nose becomes a network of information for other artists who experience similar situations of prejudice, conflict, and the ongoing work of asserting themselves as women and as clown artists. In a world increasingly saturated with information, the presence of stories such as these creates opportunities for other women clowns to find courage and present their art, their humor, their streets, and their noses in ways that reach diverse audiences and allow them to share life experiences and stories with their stage partners across the country.

In the documentary, the artists' personal stories are shown and narrated in a way that consistently conveys the humanity of each woman who tells them. This is evident in the scenes depicting them applying makeup, looking in the mirror, getting dressed, and seeking connection with the spectators as they speak. Through the analysis of the act of speaking about their experiences and lives, it becomes clear that the presence of the mirror is both motivating and revealing.

"The mirror is in the dressing rooms of our everyday theater, the place where we put on our masks and makeup to present ourselves to the audience that awaits us in the setting of the day. The mirror presents itself as this transformative object, but also as a revealing object. In front of it we see our imperfections, the reality of our faces as they appear outside moments of ecstasy, faces that reveal fatigue, aging, our 'grimaces,' in short, our bodies and emotions reflected before us, prior to the mask and makeup" (Guimarães, 2020, p. 29–30).

Seeing them speak of their discoveries as women clowns at the very moment they are transforming themselves becomes a way of telling their story, a text performed before the mirror and the camera, as they can see themselves and also be seen. A narrative emerges and expands, carrying with it the full weight of facts and emotions as the woman character gradually becomes the clown, without interruption, for life is being narrated, the experience is continuous, and even if the scenes that follow demand shifts in behavior and emotion for the audience, the idea of a story





being told and lived is interwoven with their own lives and the sensations produced by the gazes and smiles that await them. This is the enchantment that gives meaning to new research on possibilities and the crossing of boundaries in order to pursue the ongoing struggle for art and for opening spaces to women artists—sensitive and professional—who are looking to find their noses.

“Finding the nose” is about sensibility and dialogues with oneself. The artist Catharina Lessa, the face behind the clown Catha Vento, speaks of the essence of seeking out one’s hidden feelings and converting them into art and expression. The nose, which is perceived as the ridiculous element of the clown, becomes the means of expanding one’s own ridiculousness, their freedom to err, to reveal oneself as a human being. The woman clown is the figure who errs, in contrast to societal expectations that frame women as people who cannot err, who must always conform, and the woman clown becomes human and amplifies her errors, being able to become whatever she desires.

Finding the “ideal” nose does not conceal but instead reveals, as the actress Drica Santos, who plays the clown Curalina, recounts in speaking about her creative process and the relationship with her past and its re-signification through her encounter with her clown nose. The parallel drawn here concerns the way in which women clowns find their noses within their own realities, bodies, characters, and cultures, bringing them onto the stage as a means of expression, self-affirmation, and the political contextualization of their art.

[...] I bring to this reflection the liberating mask of the clown, one that allowed me to break free of these shackles (referring to the whitening process imposed on black people<sup>5</sup>) and continues to do so ever more forcefully. The smallest mask in the world—the clown nose—revealed the effects of rejection and denial produced by racism and reflected in my relationship with my hair throughout this process. These racist conditionings, stemming from a colonial project reiterated daily and projected onto me, forcing me to perceive myself as the unassimilated, refused, and negated Other, are now falling apart. And I hope that my acting as a black woman clown also provokes this shift in the Western white thought about this Other, the audience. In this sense, the clown’s mask became both the concrete and symbolic mask of the liberation from the shackles that have been living inside me (Santos, 2021, p. 52).

Silences also shape the dialogues and are presented in the film as a generative space that invites reflection. The account given by clown Elisa Neves<sup>6</sup> regarding her conversation with her father leaves words, feelings, and emotions imprinted on the image and in the imagination of the viewer. The spectator hears the daughter’s words as she is questioned by her own father about her future; the response “I want to be a clown” takes us directly into the scene and its awkward silences: a man who expects from his daughter an answer aligned with a professional future centered on financial expectations or on occupations more conventional for women in our current society finds himself confronted with the emptiness uncertainty. Wanting to be a clown elicits silence in

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5 Clown Curalina works within a strand of social critique that promotes the acceptance of Black identity traits through her own figure, as she is a Black woman.

6 A member of “Cia Casa 407.”



the father’s mind and voice, to which he finally replies: “I wasn’t expecting that.” By breaking the silence, the dialogue reveals the sensitivity and expressiveness of the unknown that a young woman presents as something meaningful for her life’s trajectory. It is perhaps an enigma, as clowning performed by women is still a little-told story. The young woman’s emotions are evident in the film through her gestures, her facial expressions, and her silence. This moment in her personal history is narrated by drawing on the memory of the dialogue and the sensibilities that unfolded, and the scene presented in the film is rendered through words and silences; a story teeming with feelings and emotions that reach the audience on the other side of the screen. Silences and pauses shape the artist’s narrative, just as they do in the stories told by a storyteller, moments that draw the listener into the imaginary realm and into the anticipation of what is yet to come. In this sense, storyteller Café (2005) points to the importance of silence in oral narrative and demonstrates the integration of body, mind, voice, and audience:

Pause and silence set up the rhythm of the narrative. The pause is the time of the imaginary, the building up of expectations. Silence is something filled with the imagination of both the storyteller and the audience, built through the communication of the gaze, the moment in which the tale settles, a space intentionally kept for savoring and understanding that which is narrated. The pause directly shapes the atmosphere of the story (Café, 2005, p. 64).

Just as silences, pauses, and words matter, the narrator’s or clown’s expressions are key for conveying emotions to the spectators. Regarding the attentiveness of the audience, Luciana Hartmann (2011) highlights the storyteller as someone who travels and brings their sensations into the narrative:

[...] *the storyteller is someone who travels*. They can focus the attention of the listeners through the account of their wanderings; that is, the content of the narratives comprises episodes from their own *life story*. The storyteller’s formation is necessarily tied to their ability to deal with the setbacks faced in life and, moreover, to transform them into compelling narratives. The narrator is the one who has overcome difficulties, surmounted obstacles, and survived to tell the story—even if only on the imaginary plane (Hartmann, 2011, p. 45, emphasis ours).

Thus, a woman clown who tells her own story and overflows with emotion prompts us to imagine, to dream, and to inhabit an experience that does not make us laughter, but takes us to the moment of “finding the nose”; that is, she walks the path that leads her “Esteemed audience’s” gaze towards that of the clown who delivers the performance on the street, in the circus, on the screen... in life!



### 3 And I finally found that silly nose!

After all, in what ways can a documentary in which women clowns recount their stories influence the stories of future generations of women clowns? What social and cultural issues are embedded in these performances?

The documentary depicts a world that is at times unfamiliar and provides us with a slice—or an imagined construction—of that world, one we can recognize due to its capacity to present situations and events with a certain degree of fidelity: “in documentaries we encounter people, places, and things that we might also encounter offscreen, in a manner that allows us to see the world anew” (Nichols, 2013, p. 28). From this perspective, the object of our study certainly offered not only the spectators but also us, the researchers, a distinct vantage point on women clowns. It is likely that many aspects of these women’s work and lives, such as testimonies recorded in their own workplaces, in performances, and especially during the process of crafting their clown images, were brought into question for the first time.

Despite presenting what appear to be authentic testimonies, it is important to remember that the film was not produced by the clowns themselves. They recount their stories to someone who undertook, through the documentary form, the quest to narrate the stories told. According to Nichols (2013), documentaries may also represent the interests of others, for filmmakers often assume the role of representatives who film stories that would not reach the same audience were it not for the medium that carries them.

Nanook of the North (1922), Robert Flaherty’s excellent story about an Inuit family’s struggle for survival in the Arctic, represents Inuit<sup>7</sup> culture in a way that Inuit people were not yet prepared to do for themselves (Nichols, 2013, p. 29).

In light of this, one may question whether women clowns would have the opportunity to tell their stories and hardships were it not through a documentary. Their performances are very likely restricted to the streets, to clowning festivals, to an audience that may already know them but that often does not know their personal stories and experiences, filled with emotion, truth, and affection.

Yet, as Nichols (2013, p. 30) aptly states, “documentaries can represent the world in the same way that a lawyer represents a client’s interest: they put before us a case for a particular point of view or interpretation of evidence.”

In this sense, documentaries do not simply speak on behalf of others, representing them in ways they themselves could not; these productions play a more active part, asserting what the nature of a subject is in order to secure consent or influence opinions. Documentaries present visual and auditory aspects or representations of a share of the historical world. They signify or represent the points of view

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7 The *Inuit* are members of Indigenous nations who inhabit the Arctic regions of Canada, Alaska, and Greenland.



of individuals, groups, and institutions. They also make representations, build arguments, or formulate their own persuasive strategies intended to convince us to accept their views. How much of these representational elements comes into play varies from film to film, but the idea of representation is fundamental to documentary (Nichols, 2013, p. 30).

In other words, documentary films are not expressions of truth; rather, they present a point of view, narrate a story within another story, and allow for multiple interpretations arising from all the choices made through the filmmaker’s stance, which shows us what and how they hope to show it. Thus, it is important for these new interpretations to be made visible so that the voices of those who are not always heard may also become part of the media and allow for the expansion of communication and perspectives. Often, the meaning of filmed actions escapes the limits of the camera frame, leading us to understand or seek meaning in what lies beyond what is shown. For the women clowns, this “beyond” resides in the harsh realities and difficulties they face, both in the sense of being women and of being clowns/artists.

Given the documentary is the outcome of a long creative process developed by the filmmakers—marked by many stages, from scripting to the selection of stories and images, settings, details, and ultimately the choices made by the directors that lead to the final product after editing—their choice was to reveal a story behind the stories.

For every documentary, at least three stories intertwine: that of the filmmaker, that of the film, and that of the audience. In different ways, all these stories are part of what we watch when we ask what a given film is about. This means that when we watch a film, we become aware that it comes from somewhere and from someone; there is a story about how and why it was made, a story that is often more personal and idiosyncratic in documentaries and avant-garde films than in commercial feature films (Nichols, 2013, p. 93).

Thus, it becomes clear that analyzing this cultural product—developed in such a complex manner, through intersecting processes that result in stories told through the language of documentary—requires exploration through multiple perspectives and concepts, as we have attempted, however modestly, to do in this article.

Finally, it is relevant to remember that, for Graeme Turner (1997, p. 48), “cinema is revealed not so much as a separate discipline but as an ensemble of distinct social practices, a set of languages, and an industry.” For this reason, when we consider cinema, and in this specific case, a documentary film, as a cultural product understood as performance and study it within the field of Cultural Performances, our goal was not merely to understand it as art, but as a component of a sociocultural process composed of multiple layers of performance that integrate and generate meaning.



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