

# Ve

visual ethnography



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## **Ethnographically grounded music videos: experiments in musical ethnofiction**

issue edited by Dario Ranocchiaro and Eugenio Giorgianni

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**COVER IMAGE:** The MuchilottuBhagavathi anda war goddess in its complete form. Kerala, India.  
(photograph by Anil Gopi)

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## FABRIK FUNK: THE FABRICATION OF THE EVERYDAY REALITY OF A DREAM

Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier, *University of Victoria*

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Sylvia Caiuby Novaes, *Universidade de São Paulo*

### ABSTRACT

Fabrik Funk (2015), an ethno-fiction co-directed by the authors of this article, was shot in Cidade Tiradentes, a popular neighbourhood on the outskirts of São Paulo, considered by some of its residents to be the ultimate “funk factory.” The film tells the story of Negaly, a young woman who dreams of becoming a famous funk music MC. This article approaches ethno-fiction as the fabrication of the everyday. Producing an ethno-fiction encouraged the authors to reflect on the tensions arising between contrasting concepts such as real and imagined, documentary and fiction, familiar and exotic, and self and other. In Fabrik Funk, music videos act as bridges, connecting what is real to what is imagined or desired by Negaly, the main participant. Through an analysis of three musical sequences borrowed from the film, the article reflects on how music videos shift the cinematic narrative away from events happening in the real world, and towards a state associated with dream, imagination, desire, and hope.

### KEYWORDS

ethnofiction, music video, São Paulo, visual anthropology, funk, music, collaboration

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## Introduction

The film *Fabrik Funk* (2015), an ethno-fiction co-directed by the authors of this article, was entirely shot in Cidade Tiradentes, a popular neighbourhood located in the outskirts of São Paulo.<sup>1</sup> With more than 300,000 inhabitants, this neighbourhood is one of the biggest social housing projects in Latin America. The film tells the story of Negaly, a young woman who dreams of becoming a famous funk music MC.<sup>2</sup> At the time of production (2014), the performers appearing in the film were young people who lived in Cidade Tiradentes and who were involved in the funk scene. In this article, we refer to them as actors and/or participants. Daniel Hylario, a cultural promoter, hairdresser and activist who lives in the neighbourhood, joined the anthropologists in co-writing the script and co-producing the film, in addition to performing in it. The short-length film is accessible in Portuguese (original version) with French and English subtitles on the website of the Laboratory of Image and Sound in Anthropology (University of São Paulo), and in Portuguese on the Funk TV YouTube channel.<sup>3</sup>

### FABRIK FUNK ENGLISH VERSION LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/121777735>

The *Fabrik Funk* project emerges from a desire to develop a collaborative work (first and foremost between the three authors) to comprehend a youth popular culture flourishing in São Paulo. Our aim was to create an ethno-fiction that would speak to these same young people. During the production process of the film, we further interrogated ourselves on the potential of fiction to address how anthropologists construct a sense of the everyday. Producing *Fabrik Funk* became our ethnographic enterprise; it enabled us to investigate, from various angles, the funk phenomenon in the outskirts of São Paulo.

In this article, we discuss the issue of ethno-fiction as fabrication of the everyday by reflecting on the role played by music videos in shifting the cinematic narrative away from events happening in the real world, and towards a state associated with dream, imagination, desire, and hope. Producing an ethno-fiction forced us to reflect on the tensions arising between contrasting concepts such as real and imagined, documentary and fiction, familiar and exotic, and self and other. It enabled us to understand and articulate these concepts not in terms of binaries, but rather in terms of continuums. In *Fabrik Funk*, music videos act as bridges, connecting what is real to what is imagined or desired, and connecting by the same token with the dreams of Negaly, the main participant. The music videos create a continuum between these apparent binaries, contributing to the emergence of the storyline of this ethno-fiction.

*Fabrik Funk* is both a musical film and a film about music, which means that music plays an important role in defining both the film's aesthetic as well as its content. In order to examine the different roles music videos may play in a film, and their specific connections to the reality and dreams of the participants, we explore three main musical sequences borrowed from the film. First, the music video of the upbeat song "Mais Mais da Quebrada" by MC Negaly is used in the film to contrast with the character's harsh everyday life, and to play with ideas of dream and imagination. Second, a behind-the-scene clip in which female actors audition to dance in a music video highlights issues of gender in addition to displaying the background reality of the fabrication of the funk culture. Many young women dream of participating to a funk music video, but Negaly realizes at the audition that she would prefer to become a MC. Third, a short instrumental scene during which an original music video was composed stresses a change of mood in the narration of the film, accentuating the challenges met by the main performer to fulfil her dreams and break with gender stereotypes associated with the funk music scene. This third example acts as a musical moment that encourages the viewer to pause and empathize with Negaly. When taken together in chronological order, the three music videos construct the main narrative arc of the film: from the first revelation of Negaly's dream, to the challenges met, and finally, to the realization of what she really desires to achieve. The music

<sup>1</sup> Rose Satiko Hikiji and Sylvia Caiuby Novaes are funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPq and received grants #2013/50222-0, #2016/05318-7, #2018/21140-9 from São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP).

<sup>2</sup> MC means Master of Ceremonies and refers to a singer / rapper.

<sup>3</sup> The full version of the film is available on LISA's Vimeo. English Version: [vimeo.com/lisausp/fabrikfunkeng](https://vimeo.com/lisausp/fabrikfunkeng); Original Portuguese Version: [vimeo.com/lisausp/fabrikfunk](https://vimeo.com/lisausp/fabrikfunk); French Version: [vimeo.com/121590835](https://vimeo.com/121590835). *Fabrik Funk* is also available on the Funk TV YouTube channel, run by producers based in Cidade Tiradentes, and who are also protagonists of the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyT0uHADjdo>

videos give shape to the “reality of a dream”; they reflect the dream of a young female MC whose hope is to succeed in the “funk world”.

### **Ethno-fiction**

The cinematographic work of Jean Rouch was a key source of inspiration for the production of *Fabrik Funk*. Most notably, his films *Moi, un noir* (1958), *La pyramide humaine* (1961) and *Jaguar* (1967) encouraged us to think about the crossing of boundaries between cinematic genres, especially in terms of playing with the notions of reality and dream. These films are described as ethno-fictions, a term that was not used by Rouch, who, rather, suggested “cine-fictions” or “science fictions” to describe these specific films (Henley 2009:74). An anthropologist-filmmaker, Rouch understood cinema as a way of sharing anthropology, not only with his colleagues, but also with the participants who took part in his films. Reflecting on the duality of being an anthropologist-filmmaker, Rouch never accepted the strict separation between art and science. He leveraged the imagination and drew on his adventurous and subversive spirit to challenge the stability of conventional dichotomies such as white/black, irrational/rational, rural/urban, truth/fiction, Africa/Europe, disrupting the boundaries between art and science, documentary and fiction, and real and imaginary. His cinema destabilizes oppositional rules and offers audiences the possibility to imagine his vision of anthropology outside the confines of dichotomies.

Following the footsteps of Jean Rouch, Johannes Sjöberg (2008b:232) defines ethno-fiction as a genre that relies on a shared anthropology, one that adopts a spirit of collaboration and reflexivity, and uses elements of improvisation to guide the actions of performers. Similar to films “inspired by a true story,” which intrigue viewers in part because they are based on events that supposedly really happened, ethno-fictions allow anthropologists to extrapolate on the everyday by building a story that stimulates viewers’ imaginations and that creates a connection—often through the characters’ performance—with viewers’ own memories, emotions and personal experiences. In *Fabrik Funk*, participants were asked to play a role that spoke to their real lives, but was not an exact replica of them. The act of performing a role that was close but not identical to their own, involved a form of performance that demanded both a detachment from and a close reflection of how the participants perceived themselves. The participants’ improvisational work was key to our exploration of how ethno-fiction can become a powerful tool to portray their everyday, a concern that has been repeatedly discussed in relation to ethnographic writing since the crisis of representation in the 1980s, but that has yet to receive in-depth attention in relation to the visual (Calzadilla and Marcus 2006; Marcus 2010).

Similarly to Geertz (2000:15-16) who defines anthropological writings as interpretations and fictions that are made and fashioned, we approach the process of producing an ethno-fiction as an act of fabrication. We understand fabrication as a creative process that *carries on* (see Ingold and Hallam 2007), which implies that the anthropologists and the participants are in a constant state of creation and improvisation. Bruno Latour (2005) suggests that fiction is a solution for making visible the traces left by objects on social relations. He argues that in this sense, sociologists have much to learn from artists (ibid:82). We believe that fiction also encourages anthropologists to question some components of Brazilian culture, i.e., the ways in which objects, humans, places and thoughts can be purposely assembled to give shape to the social and aesthetic dimensions – in our specific case, associated with the Brazilian funk culture.

Furthermore, the term “fabrication” accentuates the fact that *Fabrik Funk* emerged as a process of assemblage and cinematographic montage that is also marked by a creative and improvisational process. Finally, fabrication refers to the title of the film *Fabrik Funk*—the funk factory—which in the film is a reference to Cidade Tiradentes, the neighbourhood where the film’s characters come from and where the film was shot. In order to expand on the idea of ethno-fiction as fabrication of the everyday, we explore not only the ways in which the actor-participants create other selves when portraying their own lives, or something close to their own lives (a position we developed in Boudreault-Fournier, Hikiji and Caiuby Novaes 2016(a); 2016(b)), but also how music videos contribute to bridging the narrative of the film from a setting based in real life to one that addresses important dimensions associated with imagination and

dreams. In this sense, the music videos transport the viewer from the real world as lived by Negaly in the film, to an imaginary one that speaks to her dreams and hopes.

### **Fabrik Funk**

The first people we spoke to in Cidade Tiradentes in order to undertake the ethno-fiction project were Negro JC and Montanha, who are the owners of the production company Funk TV, and are also video directors, and at that moment key actors in the audio-visual market associated with the funk phenomenon. Some of the music videos produced by Funk TV have received millions of views on YouTube, which is the main source of revenue for the production company<sup>4</sup>. Both directors are extremely knowledgeable about what cultural products people consume the most, and about what is emerging among young people. Various conversations with the directors in the Funk TV headquarters deepened our knowledge associated with funk music, from musical and social dimensions, to gender, fashion, and ideology. According to the directors, “all the boys [from Cidade Tiradentes] dream of becoming MCs” which explains in many ways why the neighbourhood became something of a “funk factory.”

After learning about our ethno-fiction project, Negro JC and Montanha recommended asking one of the artists they represent, Karoline (alias MC Negaly), to be the main participant of the film. MC Negaly was at the time the host of the TV program *Visita*,<sup>5</sup> a kind of talk show broadcast on the Funk TV YouTube channel that covers topics related to funk music in São Paulo. To our knowledge, she is also one of the few female MCs to acquire a significant level of fame in Cidade Tiradentes. At the time we met her, she was performing her best-known songs at various local events, private parties and happenings. It was during a recorded interview we held with Negaly in the Funk TV studio that we introduced the film project to her, and she immediately agreed to play the role of a young girl who dreams of becoming an MC.

Previously, we had organized a potential cast for the film through a series of short meetings between Daniel, a local activist, thinker and close collaborator, and the three anthropologists. When we began thinking about the film’s storyline, we did not necessarily have a preference regarding the gender of the main character. However, after hearing about Negaly from Negro JC and Montanha, and then meeting her, we were convinced that telling the story of how she became an MC in a male-dominated industry would be extremely appealing to us and to various audiences. Based on what we knew about Negaly from Negro JC, Montanha and Negaly herself, the three anthropologists and Daniel crafted a general storyline based on eleven scenes, each with its own main theme and shooting location. Negaly’s life story provided the general arc of our film and we worked on the script that would reflect some of the past challenges and successes she encountered during her journey to become a MC.

This work resulted in the following storyline for *Fabrik Funk*: a young woman, Karoline, works (like so many others living in the urban outskirts) for a telemarketing company pervaded by the noise of operators all speaking on the phone at the same time. The work, which is dull and monotonous, does not require any professional qualifications. Karoline’s morning commute to her workplace is more than two hours long. She feels bored and disillusioned. Her dream is to become an MC. After hearing that Funk TV is auditioning female dancers for the next music video of a local MC, she decides to introduce herself to the production company. However, before auditioning, she realizes that dancing is not what she wants to do. Friends at a hair salon encourage her to follow her dreams, whatever they might be. After deep reflection, Negaly decides to take the bull by the horns and record and distribute one of her own funk music compositions.

Being a woman in the male-dominated funk industry is one of the central challenges the film addresses. However, the film also deals with conflicts between different generations and different lifestyles: clashes occur over musical taste (aside from funk, the film’s participants listen to samba, pagode, gospel and rap), leisure and consumer habits, forms of communication, and the dreams and utopias of different generations – which are portrayed through Karoline’s conflictual relationship with her mother. Overall, and as discussed

<sup>4</sup> For example, the song "O gigante acordou" (2013) by MC Daleste, young funk musician who was murdered in 2013, during a show inspired the social movements of June 2013 in Brazil, and had over 21 million views on the Funk TV channel. The clip is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3tavFBcH4E>.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, she hosts this program available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G16jEzgilDw>. The video was first posted on November 2014 and viewed more than 360,000 times.

further below, the three music videos work in tune with the film's storyline in building bridges between the main protagonist's reality and dreams.

### **Funk music in Cidade Tiradentes**

In the 1970s, North American funk music became popular in Brazil, along with disco music. Funk was a social genre, played at house parties and listened to among family and friends. Over the 1990s, funk carioca, a Brazilian funk distinct from its US counterpart,<sup>6</sup> emerged in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, populated in large part by Afro-Brazilians. It has since gained significant ground: impressive performance stages are built in the middle of the street; "rolezinhos"<sup>7</sup> take place in shopping centres where funk is sung loudly by hundreds of young people; and "fluxos"<sup>8</sup> block the streets of the outskirts and emit the sound of funk. At the time of producing *Fabrik Funk*, a subgenre of ostentatious funk (funk ostentação) was already perceived as somewhat of a musical trend of the past by the young people we spoke to. A new style more in vogue, called "putaria" ("bitch style"), characterized by overtly sexualized lyrics, was emerging.

At the time of shooting *Fabrik Funk*, the scene was characterized by extremely young MCs—between 10 and 20 years old. The most famous ones could play up to six concerts a night in different private and public venues. Even with only two original recorded songs, they could fill out a twenty-minute concert with their own and other MCs' most successful samples. Concerts usually took place between Thursday to Sunday nights, both in the outskirts and downtown.

In well-equipped home studios, a legion of young MCs recorded songs, which were mixed by DJs, uploaded to YouTube, and played loudly in the neighbourhood via loudspeakers in cars. Some videos were hugely successful, generating millions of views and ensuring a good turnout for the MC at the funk dances, or *bailles*. For instance, the video "País do Futebol" by MC Guimê, first recorded in a home studio, was viewed more than eighty-nine million times,<sup>9</sup> reflecting the fact that many people in Brazil considered it to be the unofficial musical theme for the opening of the World Cup in the summer of 2014. Payments for concerts are often negotiated in terms of how many views an MC garners on YouTube.

Consumption is a dominant theme associated with the funk phenomenon. According to activist and local producer Daniel, this music, which is sung and danced to by people of all ages, becomes a "means of integration into the world" for the poor classes. Indeed, consumption can be understood as a form of symbolic power for the working classes.<sup>10</sup> In a context in which consumption goods are tied to identity formation, a range of brand products are highly desired and fetishized. Some are luxury products, which most dream of owning, but few—including some MCs—can actually acquire (for instance Audi, Captiva and Hyundai cars, and Hornet and Hayabusa motorcycles). Other coveted products that are still expensive but somewhat more attainable, even if they represent two months' salary (like the "Mizuno mil," a type of running shoe that is part of Brazilian teenagers' imaginary) become obsessions for young consumers. In an article on ostentatious funk, Pereira (2014) draws attention to the importance of the imagination in connection with new communications technologies for understanding this genre. Ostentatious funk invites listeners to imagine themselves otherwise, not necessarily as belonging to another place or country, but rather "as belonging to another social class, in another sociocultural context, in another material reality, in another world of consumption" (2014:8; our translation). In many ways, dreams of consumption echo Negaly's desire to become a famous MC; her success in the funk industry would allow her to purchase consumption products that would otherwise be inaccessible. In contrast to rap culture, which tends to situate itself within the ghetto and reaffirm a marginal identity, funk incorporates the outskirts' inhabitants into dominant value systems, and forges an identity that is articulated in relation to the dominant classes.

<sup>6</sup> Palombini (2010) has investigated funk in Rio de Janeiro and discussed its relation with African North-American music. He also provides a description of the emergence of black pride in Brazilian popular music. Freire (2012) and Pereira (2014) draw a link between "funk ostentação" in São Paulo and imagination, consumption and new technologies. Hikiji (2015), for her part, takes stock of the tensions between funk and rap in the outskirts of São Paulo.

<sup>7</sup> For more on the "rolezinho" phenomenon, see Pereira (2014) and Pinho (2014).

<sup>8</sup> Spontaneous meeting without any pre-arranged appointment during which thousands of people meet up around cars equipped with loud music systems.

<sup>9</sup> 89,178,937 views as of July 4, 2020 at this address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWnS2dIDgQA>

<sup>10</sup> According to 2013 data from the Instituto Data Popular (Alvarenga 2015), class "C" families (with monthly revenues per capita from 320 to 1120 Brazilian reais, mainly associated with professional occupations related to beauty services, banks, stores and supermarkets, including commercial representatives, vendors and customer service agents) spent more than 1.17 billion Brazilian reais in 2013, which equates to 58% of the credit movements in Brazil.

Consumption becomes a way to create a sense of equality with privileged social classes, or at least to move closer to equality.

***Fabrik Funk: Imagining everyday life***

Ethnography can be considered as an act of performance (Calzadilla and Marcus 2006:98), a symbol of the social imaginary, a *mise-en-scène* (Calzadilla and Marcus 2006; Marcus 2010). The ethnographic truth, to echo Gonçalves (2008), is created through associations, connections and relations that anthropologists observe and consider relevant to the understanding of a social phenomenon (i.e., familiarization). The *mise-en-scène* of ethnographic fieldwork implies bringing into play elements, objects, people, events, places and artefacts with the intention of furthering analysis of a social phenomenon (Marcus 2010:268). The notion of *mise-en-scène*, which Marcus borrows from theater and cinema, can be applied to the process of creating the everyday through ethno-fiction, as we did through the production of *Fabrik Funk*. Music videos contributed to the fabrication of the everyday in adding sensorial components such as visual effects, sounds, feeling and vibes. They became another mean of connecting with the lives of the young people who identify with funk music, in addition to conveying emotions, and, as we will discuss later regarding the three examples we highlight from *Fabrik Funk*, to emphasizing the transition from the real to the dreamed and the imagined worlds. Anthropological knowledge is there constructed not by description, but by a form of acquaintance, to use MacDougall's words (1997:286).

The process of creating the film's storyline enabled us to identify key components of funk, as well as of the lives of those who identify with this music. Without detaching ourselves from the "real," our intention was to represent the funk phenomenon, as it is lived today in the outskirts of São Paulo, by creating an atmosphere, as well as a story, that would be representative of a possible and realistic situation. The log line, "The reality of a dream," that we adopted to promote the film proposes this juxtaposition of the real and the imaginary, not as a dichotomy, but as two complementary entities along a continuum. "The reality of a dream" encouraged us to think in terms of desires and fantasies without abandoning the real or the imaginary. More specifically, drawing closer to the imaginary enabled us to generate a new interpretation of the lived experiences and expectations of the participants with whom we collaborated.



**IMAGE 1:** Poster of *Fabrik Funk*. <https://vimeo.com/121777735>

Daniel and the other participants became barometers of the realities in the outskirts. They revealed common practices in terms of language, attitude, social relations, thoughts, etc., that characterize the lives of young people in São Paulo today. In *Fabrik Funk*, the lives of the characters played by the actors are similar to their own lives to different degrees. All of the MCs appearing in the film were MCs in real life. They were

key actors in the funk industry. They composed the songs that they performed in the recording studio and in the music videos that are shared on YouTube.

Through conversations with the participants before, during and after the production of the film, we deepened our understanding of the youth culture associated with funk music. It became clear to us that producing an ethno-fiction meant more than engaging with a cinematographic genre; it constituted a methodological approach based on collaboration and participation (also Sjöberg 2008a, 2008b). For instance, after deciding that we should include a scene of Negaly recording a song, we asked her where we could find a recording studio. In minutes, we walked to the DJ Bruninho Studio FZR, one of the home-based recording studios used by some of the main MCs of São Paulo to record their singles. Without any obvious external signs or advertisements, the well-equipped studio was located at a few meters from Negaly's house. One phone call sufficed to organize the recording session for our film. The logistics of organizing the shooting of the scene revealed numerous spatial and technical aspects of this kind of music scene: the local availability of audio recording and editing equipment, the possibility of building a musical recording studio in an auto-constructed house located in a poor neighbourhood, the musical knowledge necessary to produce this kind of music, and the impressive knowledge of young people who know how to manipulate its musical, technical and spatial elements.

As we moved along the production of the film, we explored the funk music scene in ways that allowed us to better grasp its multiple dimensions. The production of the film generated various occasions to pause, learn, and converse about not only funk music and life in Cidade Tiradentes, but also about our (the anthropologists' and Daniel's) respective socio-economic backgrounds, thoughts, stereotypes and expectations. Towards the end of shooting the various scenes of the film, we were wondering how to come up with a finale. We knew that according to the general arc of the film, Negaly's mother would end up inadvertently listening to one of her daughter's songs and feeling proud about it, suggesting a change of perception and a new appreciation of her daughter's passion. We also knew that she would hear the song playing from the stereo of a passing car – a mode of music dissemination quite common in Cidade Tiradentes, especially among funk aficionados. What we did not yet know was how to stage the specific event of the mother hearing the song. Would she be shopping, cooking, or sitting in her living room? Would she be alone? As we shared our ideas with the actors and neighbours, someone spontaneously suggested that the mother could be standing at the window chatting with one of her girlfriends who was passing by. Everybody from the neighbourhood agreed that this was the most plausible situation and that it simply made sense as an occurrence for people living in Cidade Tiradentes. This contribution, which the three anthropologists, from different backgrounds, might not have thought about as a possibility, exemplifies more than just a detail about how to end a film. It reveals the social side of the “funk factory” where many MCs have lived all their lives.

Despite the fact that the general arc of the film – made up of 11 scenes – emerged from conversations between the three anthropologists, Daniel and Negaly, the script was simple enough to allow the actors-participants to appropriate the story and to improvise it according to their own perceptions and understandings of the context in which the storyline was taking place. For instance, the script of scene #6, called “Funk TV,” included the following details:

Negaly enters the Funk TV headquarters. She walks beside an in-progress recording of a Funk music video that shows some sexually suggestive moves. In the hallway leading to the studio, she meets the other women, “paniquete” style, who are also auditioning for the music video. The “paniquetes” look at Negaly up and down, with a condescending look on their face. Sad, Negaly decides to leave.

At the time of shooting, little went according to the script. Each scene was adapted according to input from the participants/actors, and the people who happened to be in attendance (for example, other employees in the Funk TV headquarters, a neighbour who happened to be there, etc.). We never wrote the dialogue between the actors in advance, instead inviting the actors to improvise the dialogue and to change and adapt their performance as they wished.

### **Three music videos**

The three case studies explored below provide concrete examples of how the music videos inserted in the narrative of the film contributed to the fabrication of the everyday by bridging a portrayal of the life of the main participant with one of her dreams and hopes.

### 1- *The dream*

*Fabrik Funk* begins with Negaly working as a telemarketing operator in São Paulo. Her conversation with customers is interrupted by parallel exchanges Negaly has on her phone and on social media. We decided to develop the theme of consumption and brand fetishism in this first scene because of its key presence in funk culture. Observations, discussions and media posts we collected during the shooting of the film inspired the content of MSN dialogues. Creating the MSN exchanges required a constant balancing act between on the one hand integrating our ethnographic research into fiction, and on the other, associating and connecting different components to create what we thought an MSN conversation between two young people would look like.

After the opening scene at her workplace, Negaly embarks on her long commute home –a common phenomenon for people who live in the outskirts and work in the city centre. During the two-hour bus ride, Negaly feels bored, falls asleep and dreams of being a MC. Her dream takes the shape of a music video in which she is the main MC. In the music video, Negaly sings, dances and is obviously in her element, surrounded by funk cultural referents, including the fetishism of consumption (cars, clothing, accessories, phones, etc.).

With MC Negaly's approval, we inserted in the film the already-existing music video of her song "Mais Mais da Quebrada," published on the Funk TV YouTube channel in 2013. By mid-2020, this music had been viewed more than 86,000 times on Youtube, and more than 110 viewers had left comments –largely positive ones, emphasizing the talent of this young female artist.<sup>11</sup> The cinematic technique of inserting already-existing music clips has been used by Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji in her short- and medium-length feature films *From over on the East Side* (2010) and *Art and the Street* (2011, see Caffé & Gitirana Hikiji 2019),<sup>12</sup> as well as by Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier in her medium-length feature film *Golden Scars* (2010).<sup>13</sup> We found this device to be very effective for connecting with the participants of the film by using an aesthetic that is associated with the funk world and industry. The scene ends with Negaly waking up and getting off the bus. The music video provides a visual and musical device to represent what Negaly dreams of achieving, a dream that contrasts with a life that does not satisfy her. This is achieved using the visual and sonic aesthetics that permeate the funk music scene.

### 2- *The backstage of reality and the clash with the dream*

When we arrived at the Funk TV headquarters to shoot scene #6 (see script #6 reported above), we explained the general storyline of the film to the two young women who played the roles of the dancers, as well as specifying the gist of scene #6 and their roles in it. More precisely, we explained that for the scene, they were supposed to dance as if they wanted to be selected for a funk music video. We told them that they could practice in the hallway of Funk TV while we set up our recording gear. We asked Negaly, the main character of the film, to observe the young girls with a suspicious look on her face. In the film, this is the moment she realizes she is unwilling to audition because she feels uncomfortable. Through the backstage perspective of producing a music video, and the fabrication of what an audition for female dancers might look like, we show the clash between Negaly's hope of entering the funk music industry and the reality it may entail.

The production of this scene was especially useful for revealing the gendered power dynamics of the funk industry. The instructions provided to the participants before shooting the scene were sufficiently broad for them to be able to improvise the rest of the scene based on what they thought their characters would do and say in a similar situation. Scene #6 is probably among the most powerful in the film because of the sensuality that emanates from the performance of the dancers, a sensuality that is a key characteristic of the funk universe. The actors, initially shy, expressed through their dance an embodied knowledge of funk music and culture, which is governed by explicit and sensual images of female bodies. In this scene, Montanha,

<sup>11</sup> Date of the viewing: July 4, 2020. The song "Mais Mais da Quebrada" was composed and interpreted by MC Negaly and recorded in the DJ Bruninho Studio FZR. The music video is available here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhDc0\\_c\\_L\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhDc0_c_L_U).

<sup>12</sup> *Lá do Leste* (From over on the East side) is available here: <https://vimeo.com/57393706> and *A arte e a rua* (Art and the Street) is available at this address: <https://vimeo.com/57370633>.

<sup>13</sup> *Golden Scars* is available here: <https://vimeo.com/69532639>.

one of the directors of Funk TV, played the role of a video director who encourages the sexual references made in the lyrics of a song by MC Mini. His song “Doida De Tequila” (2014; Crazy about Tequila),<sup>14</sup> which already existed before the production of the film, associates female sexuality with the consumption of tequila. Montanha suggested that we use this song because it was easy for him to contact MC Mini and ask for his participation in the film. When he played his character, Montanha, who had already produced various music videos, opted for a posture that reinforced the erotic essence of the song: behind the cameras, he coaches the young girls by asking them to sensualize their movements. We did not ask Montanha to adopt this controversial attitude (from the anthropologists’ point of view), but he thought it fit well with the storyline and the idea of the scene—mainly, the idea that Negaly would decide not to audition. Indirectly, the performance of this male producer looking at young women and directing them to dance sensually speaks volumes about how women are treated in this music scene. Montanha decided to adopt this attitude on his own, which taught us about the misogynist arrogance towards women in this music industry that is not often referred to in the public discourse. The character adopted by Montanha during the shooting of the film was very different from the person we had come to know. Yet, when we turned on the camera, his character took control of the scene both verbally and physically, and this shift revealed some of the power dynamics present in the production of funk music and music videos.

### 3- Realizing the dream

In several scenes of the film, Negaly wears a T-shirt displaying the words “Follow the Black, Never Stop Dreaming.” In the middle of her t-shirt, there is a plain black figure of Minnie Mouse between both ears. Negaly decided to wear this specific T-shirt for the shooting of the film. She wears it in a scene when Daniel, who plays the role of a hairdresser and friend of Negaly, tries to cheer her up after she comes back from her failed dance audition. He tells her that she has to follow her dreams, a piece of advice we did not explicitly include in the script but that came up spontaneously when we shot the scene. Daniel shows Negaly the tattoo of Angela Davis he has on his arm. He tells Negaly that Davis represents an inspiration for him in his life; she is a woman who struggles for the rights of Black Americans. This was also an unexpected addition to the script.

At the time of the film’s editing, Leo Fuzer, the editor from the Laboratory of Image and Sound in Anthropology at the University of São Paulo, who worked on *Fabrik Funk*, chose to include a close up of Negaly’s T-shirt, to accentuate the idea of pursuing a dream suggested by Daniel. The music composer Ewelter Rocha, who worked on the original soundtrack of the film, mentioned that Negaly’s T-shirt inspired him to write a song that would reflect the idea of realizing one’s dreams. This song created the atmosphere for the editing of a simple but effective music video, a type of musical transition that emphasizes the difficult period Negaly is going through.

In contrast with funk musical and visual aesthetics—quick rhythm, jumping images with special effects—this short musical transition is characterized by a calm instrumental composition (piano, no voice) that pushes the viewer to connect with Negaly at an emotional level. The failed audition and the advices she received from her friend in the hair salon, to pursue her dream despite the challenges and obstacles she may meet, pushes her to think about her life and what she wants to accomplish. Standing on a hill, she looks at her phone, fixes her hair, and contemplates the urban landscape of Cidade Tiradentes. The music video offers a moment of deep reflection and pause, but also of transformation and rebirth. It brings the viewer closer to Negaly’s dream, and to her decision to pursue a career as an MC in the funk industry. It further creates a shift in the narrative of the film: after this moment of contemplation, Negaly decides to actively pursue her dream of becoming a famous MC in the funk industry.

### Conclusion

During the production of the ethno-fiction *Fabrik Funk*, we moved beyond an understanding of reality and fiction as opposites. The use of music videos at three specific occasions during the film played an elemental role in shifting events happening in Negaly’s “real” life to dreams and hopes located in the imaginary realm. The music videos expressed, sometimes in antagonistic ways, the main participant’s hopes

<sup>14</sup> The song is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GVwBcKDtx4>.

and desires within a musical context that characterizes the funk music scene in São Paulo. As such, they destabilized the binaries between the actual and the imaginary world.

Furthermore, the music videos in *Fabrik Funk* helped fabricate an ethnographic reality that extends beyond the storyline of the film. The production of the ethno-fiction in combination with the music videos contributed to a more in-depth comprehension of various elements, including aesthetics, that compose the funk scene. While working on the production of the film and the music videos, the anthropologists were constantly stimulated by new elements and vibes that allowed them to better grasp the dynamics at play in the funk factory. In a similar way, Eugenio Giorgianni (2017) argues that making a music video with young musicians living in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, generated a common ground that facilitated bonding with the participant-collaborators. In addition to strengthening his relationship with them, crafting the video became a creative way to stimulate a dialogue about the musical ecology of Goma, including the networks of music production, consumption and dissemination. The production of the music video kindled discussions of topics that were not necessarily sonic nor musical, but related to other spheres of the social world in which the musicians lived.

In addition to the three case studies developed above, the directors occasionally used photographs taken by Sylvia Caiuby Novaes, one of the director-anthropologists, to create a form of rhythmic transition from one scene to another. The photographs appear on the screen with background music to give the impression that a series of photos are being taken on the spot (the sound of a camera shutter accentuates this effect). These series of shots simulate the imaginary presence of fans and paparazzi who would take photos of our protagonists. They accentuate the sense of stardom associated with the dream of success in the funk industry. Significantly, the role of the three music videos mentioned above goes further than transitioning one scene to another. In enacting “the reality of a dream”, they contribute to the story of the film. They help reflect on how the fabrication of everyday life implies the inclusion of hopes and desires. With their contrasting vibes and rhythms, they allow for the *mise-en-scène* of another possible world. In the case of our ethno-fiction, the music videos fabricate the funk factory, not only its lived everyday life but also its dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow.

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