

URBAN SCRATCHES: EVERYDAY ARCHITECTURES AND GESTURES IN DISPUTES IN THE CITY
RANHURAS URBANAS: ARQUITETURAS E GESTOS COTIDIANOS NAS DISPUTAS DA CIDADE
MATHEUS TANAJURA, FLORA TAVARES

Matheus Caldas Tanajura is an Architect and a Master's student in Architecture and Urbanism at the Graduate Program in Architecture and Urbanism at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Brazil. He is a researcher at the Political Cities research group and studies cartography of power relations in the restructuring processes of the Salvador Historic Center. matheusctanajura@gmail.com

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/6054960551802634>

Flora Menezes Tavares is an Architect and a member of the Image and Architecture Studies Laboratory of the Graduate Program in Architecture and Urbanism at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA). She studies the dimension of visibility and the gaze in facing issues of the city and architecture. floramt@hotmail.com

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/3654197016800093>

ARTICLE SUBMITTED ON AUGUST 15, 2022

How to quote this text: Tanajura, M., Tavares, F. M., 2022. Urban Scratches: Everyday Architectures and Gestures in Disputes in the City. Translated from Portuguese by Flora Tavares. *VIRUS*, 25, December. [online]. Available at: <http://www.nomads.usp.br/virus/papers/v25/717/717en.php>. [Accessed: dd Month yyyy].

Abstract

This work is a visual essay that articulates photographs, text and collages, from a critical, aesthetic, political and collective perspective. Seeking to express the complex ways of thinking and narrating the city and the Urbanism, "Urban Scratches" focuses on the city in dispute, pervaded by insurgencies, creative tactics and resistance. Also focuses on gestures of subjects and collectivities that (re)create structures, suggesting other possible spatialities in everyday life. From the gesture of wandering around the city, cell phone photographs were taken, creating a collection of "urban scratches" that makes visible subversive ways of space appropriation. Using this image collection, collages were mobilized as a creative resource, but above all, as a tool capable of provoking reflections on the counter-hegemonic ways of city production. "Urban scratches" align with the idea of science production in everyday life, with a methodological opening for creative elaborations that instigate us to (re)imagine cities.

Keywords: Architectures, Everyday Gestures, City







ABSTRACT

This work is a visual essay that articulates photographs, text and collages, from a critical, aesthetical, political and collective perspective. Seeking to express the complex ways of thinking and narrating the city and the Urbanism, "Urban Scratches" focuses on the city in dispute, pervaded by insurgencies, creative tactics and resistance. Also focuses on gestures of subjects and collectivities that (re)create structures, suggesting other possible spatialities in everyday life.

From the gesture of wandering around the city, cell phone photographs were taken, creating a collection of "urban scratches" that makes visible subversive ways of space appropriation. Using this image collection, collages were mobilized as a creative resource, but above all, as a tool capable of provoking reflections on the counter-hegemonic ways of city production. "Urban scratches" align with the idea of science production in everyday life, with a methodological opening for creative elaborations that instigate us to (re)imagine cities.





URBAN SCRATCHES
EVERYDAY ARCHITECTURES AND GESTURES
IN DISPUTES IN THE CITY

This visual essay intends to discuss the urban complexity of the city of Salvador, in northeast Brazil, from the point of view of "armengues", "gambiaras" and "bricolages" (1). From improvised architectures that transform public space into a political space of use, occupation and resistance. From the gestures of subjects and collectivities that make the city with their implicated bodies and (re)create structures (2), suggesting other possible spatialities in everyday life. From counter-hegemonic constructions that subvert and "scratch" the normalizing apparatus of official urbanism, and evoke the city as a place of diversity, difference, dispute and conflict.

Source: Google StreetView (2018)

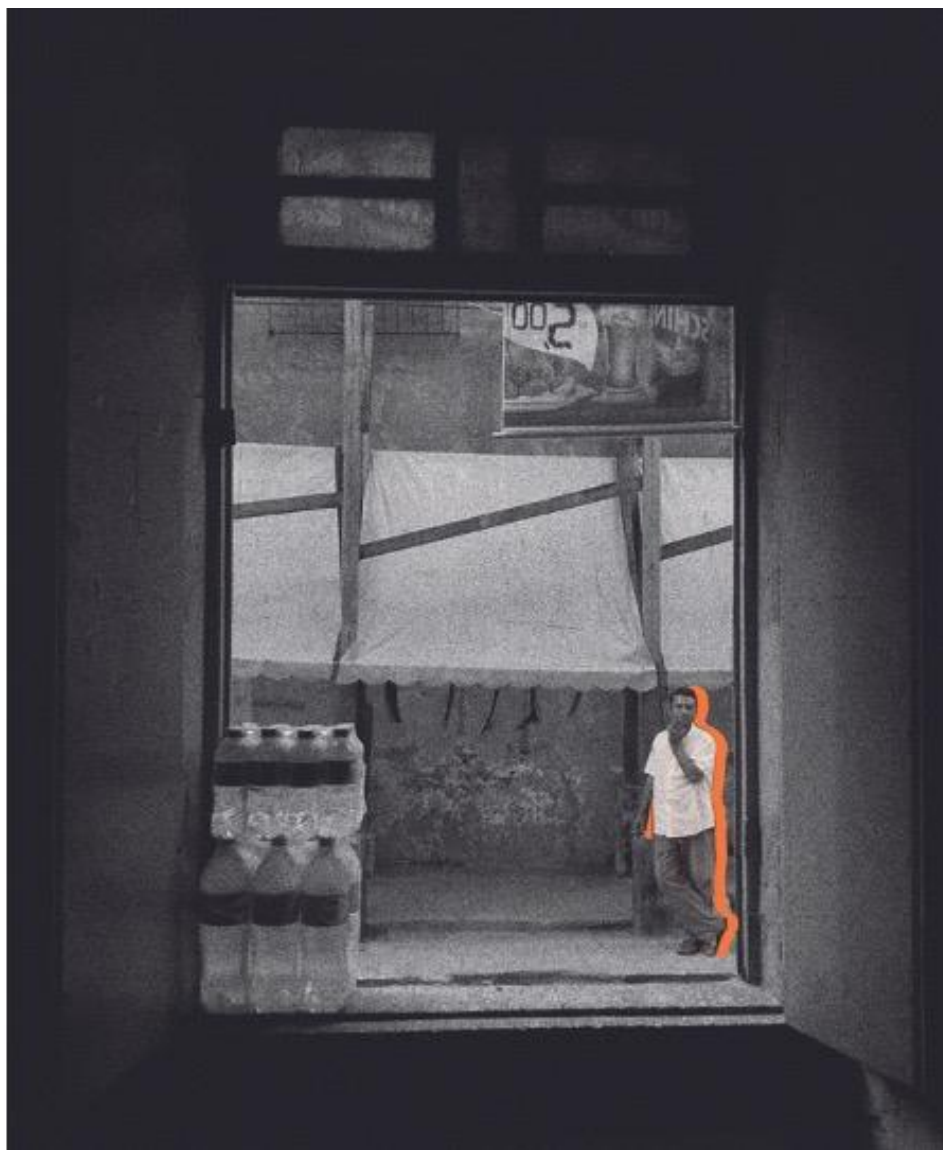
(1) In this text we use the terms *"armengues"* and *"gambiaras"* to describe improvised architectures of daylife. These words, in brazilian portuguese, characterize situations that escape from what is "planned", from a technical-scientific knowledge, and evoke an approximation to popular knowledge, based in experience and experimentations. We perceive these practices as heterogeneous expressions of the city, that show creative gestures and a multiplicity of ways of space appropriation.

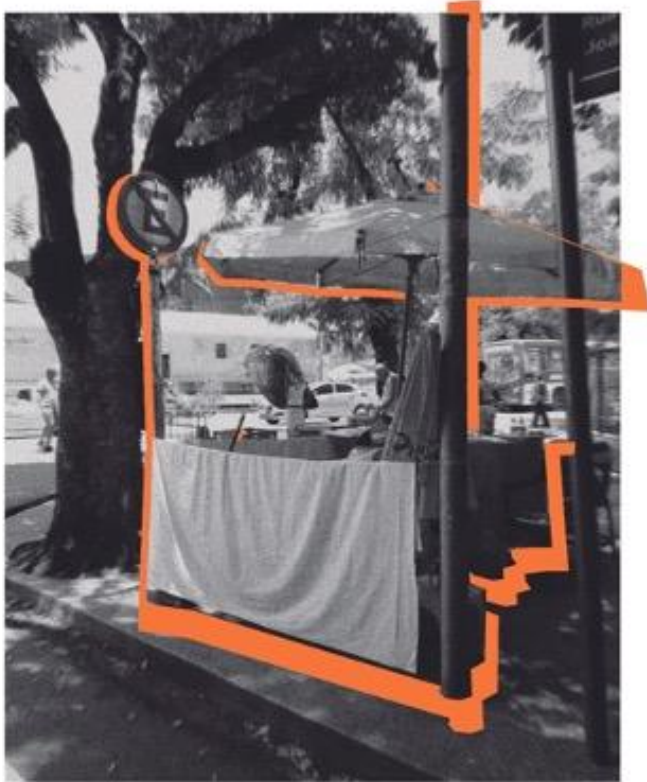


(2) The prefix "re" used in the terms (re)create, (re)think or (re)imagine are mobilized in this text with the intention of thinking in a procedural dimension, based on multiple possibilities of undoing and redoing. A dynamic movement, sometimes ephemeral, which reveals the complexity and multiplicity of the urban structure and social arrangements.

Urban life takes place through the various actions of subjects who, articulated in a social set where different forces act, create spaces through encounters and disagreements, tensions and accordances, order and disobedience. On a daily basis, the city is stitched together by different actions, experiences and powers, revealing itself as a place of heterogeneity.

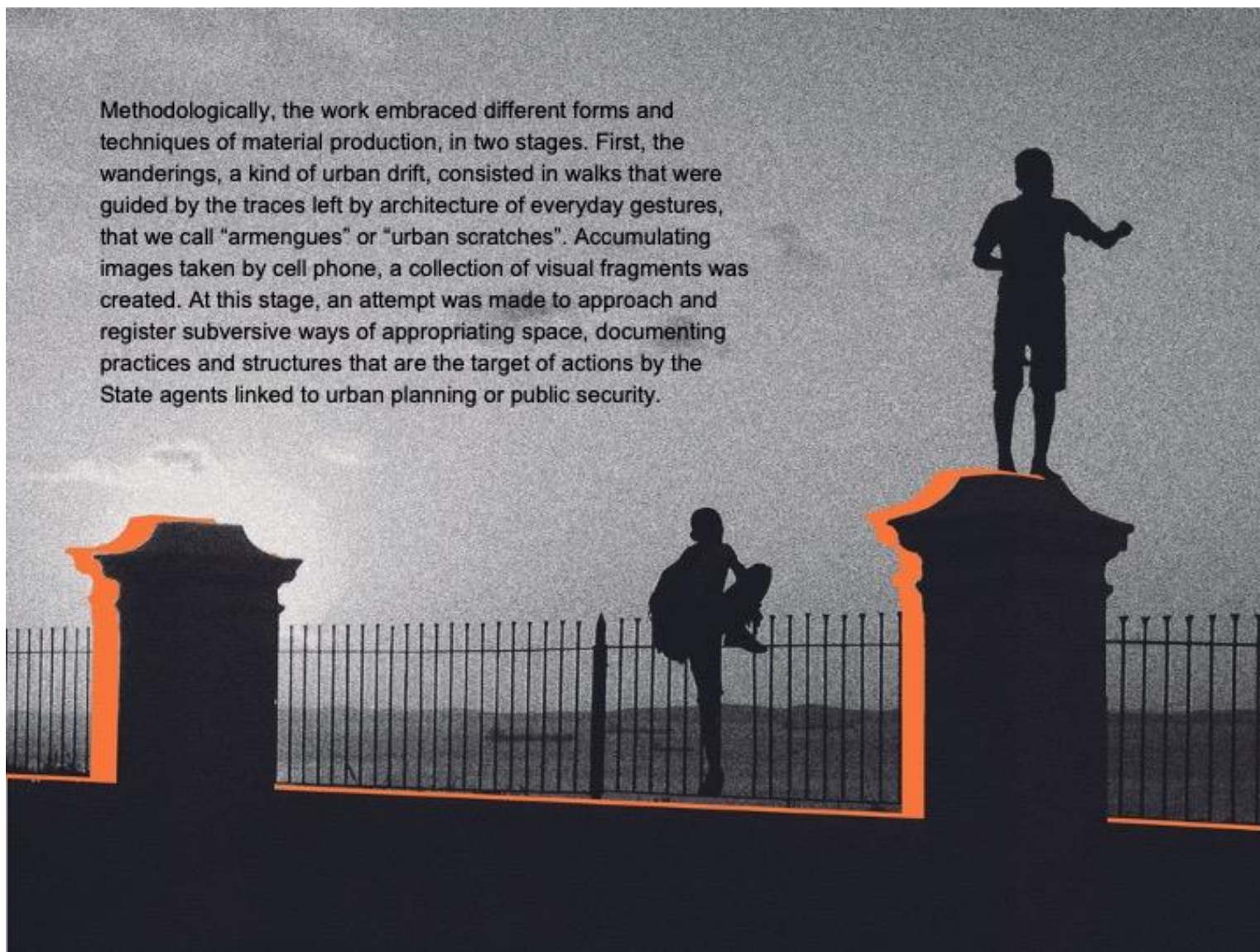
The space, as a result of an intrinsic relationship between a system of actions and a system of objects, effectively is made not only of material links, but also immaterial, symbolic, subjective ones (Santos, 1994).





What we call here URBAN SCRATCHES can be understood as creative tactics and gestures of resistance in the city, carried out through a form of appropriation of the urban space that incorporates elements of the city as part of its own way of existing. These practices, however ephemeral they may be, create roughness (Ribeiro, 2012) in smooth spaces, ordered and standardized by the technical-scientific knowledge that plans the city, causing deviations, gaps and fissures in the 'formal', 'clean', 'sanitized' aesthetics. Such propositions, therefore, end up denouncing the excluding way in which cities are produced, exposing the State's responsibility in the process of making life vulnerable and precarious for social groups crossed by the intersectionality of social markers, such as class, race/ethnicity, gender, among others.

Methodologically, the work embraced different forms and techniques of material production, in two stages. First, the wanderings, a kind of urban drift, consisted in walks that were guided by the traces left by architecture of everyday gestures, that we call "armengues" or "urban scratches". Accumulating images taken by cell phone, a collection of visual fragments was created. At this stage, an attempt was made to approach and register subversive ways of appropriating space, documenting practices and structures that are the target of actions by the State agents linked to urban planning or public security.



In the second moment, collages were made from the combination and/or superposition of the collected visual elements, with the intention of creating graphic narratives that, through a critical, aesthetic, political and collective perspective, sought to express the complexity of the ways of thinking, discussing and narrating the city and Urbanism. Collage, in addition to being used as a support for narration, is also mobilized here as a tool that provokes reflections on counter-hegemonic modes of city production.



More than an artistic technique, collage takes place here as an aesthetic orientation and a possibility of building knowledge. We are often faced with the challenge of imagining and visually recreating the city(s). And cities, as we here understand them, are plural, heterogeneous places, with a diverse urban life, in which multiple identities and cultures interact. There is an overlapping of times, of practices of space, and of disputes. Cities are noisy, fragmented, and discontinuous. Just how collages can be. In order to embrace the complexity of the territories, we chose not to appeal to a single image, but instead, we sought to compose a mosaic of visualities, scenes, textures.



The discontinuity of the collage is also related to the constitution of memories, which are (dis)organized in fragments, never being completely pure or clear. The Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe (2019) argues that this fragmentation is a consequence of people's experience of colonization, making their memories violated, impossible to be reconstituted in their original unity (Alves Cordeiro et al., 2021).

Besides being a tool applied to portray what already exists and contemplate urban diversity, collage is also a creative resource to create new realities. Used to retell history, collage can (re)create and subvert archives. Thus, this concept is an invitation to (re)thinking and (re)imagining cities, through (im)possible fables.

In opposition to the western cartesian order, "messing up" the linearity, in the terms of Luiz Rufino (2019), making a collage opens up possibilities to experiment with the creation of something, without knowing a priori where it will end.



Realizing that the development of collage opens up possibilities for flexible methodological experimentation was essential to this work. The process of collage gradually reveals its own ending, which is often uncertain, due to the constant feeling of incompleteness of the work; without planning or rigidity, something intuitive and intimate leads to the combination of fragments and the composition of layers of the image that is being created. Once again, the idea that there is a correct procedure to follow is rejected.

In this sense, we align ourselves with proposals that, through "a transgressive political positioning based on involvement" (Roy and Rolnik, 2017, pp. 18, our translation) and the idea of "implication as epistemological competence and investigative quality" (Macedo and Macedo de Sá, 2018, pp. 332, our translation), seek other forms of scientific production. A production that opens up itself and is filled with creative elaborations, strategies and social technologies, arising from people who, historically and daily, transform, remake and recreate the urban space, claiming more egalitarian cities.

Methodological experiments that seek to articulate theory and empiricism, seeing the production of science in everyday life, provide such initiatives. Therefore, "implicated research is not only a theoretical-methodological option, but also an ethical and political foundation" (Alves Cordeiro et al., 2021, pp. 6, our translation).



collection of tracks

*/// junction of fragments
that show the visual
universe of the work*











References

Alves Cordeiro, V., Batistoti, A. F., Rodrigues, Z. P., Ferreira, M. S. M., Silva, A. *How to produce knowledge in encounters between women? Reflections on theoretical-methodological experiences with and from the margins of the city.* 23rd ed. Salvador: Dossier Territory, Gender and Intersectionalities.

Macedo, R. S.; Macedo De Sá, S. M., 2018. *Critical ethnography as a learning process and creation of knowledge and implied ethno-research: interweavings.* 18th ed. Bahia: Curriculum without Borders, online.

Mbembe, A., 2019. *Brutal Power, Visceral Resistance.* Pandemic Series. São Paulo: N-1 Editions.

Ribeiro, A. C. T., 2012. *Slow men, opacities and roughness.* Salvador: Redobra Magazine

Roy, A; Rolnik, R., 2020. *Research methodologies to promote housing justice. In: Cartographies of production, transience and dispossession of popular territories.* Removal Observatory, Biannual report 2019-2020. São Paulo: Brazilian Book Chamber.

Rufino, L., 2019. *Pedagogy of the crossroads: Exu as Education.* 9th ed. Santarém: Exitus Magazine.

Santos, M., 1994. *The nature of space.* São Paulo: The University of São Paulo Editions.

ALL IMAGES ARE AUTHORED BY THE ESSAY'S AUTHORS, 2019, UNLESS MENTIONED.