

BUILDING COLLECTIVE BREATHS **CONSTRUINDO RESPIROS COLETIVOS** GABRIELA PEREIRA - GAIA, JOANA D'ARC DE OLIVEIRA

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Marcelo Tramontano: On behalf of the editorial committee of VIRUS Journal, I thank Profs. Drs. Gabriela Leandro Pereira, *aka* Gaia, and Joana D'Arc de Oliveira for accepting our invitation for this interview. For our twenty-fourth issue, we decided to invite a prominent researcher in the field related to gender issues intersecting with blackness, who, in turn, invited a researcher of her choice to be interviewed. This is how we are honored and privileged to participate in this conversation between these two black women who are outstanding in their fields and who kindly accepted this challenge.

Joana D'Arc de Oliveira: Good afternoon everyone. The editorial team of the VIRUS journal made me this powerful invitation, instructing me to select someone whose role I consider crucial in the approaches related to counter-hegemonic architectures, which is the subject of the journal's twenty-fourth issue. Gabriela Leandro Pereira, known as Gaia, is someone whose work and trajectory I have been following for some time with great admiration.

I thank you, Gaia, for having accepted our invitation. I want to say that it is a great honor to share this space with you. To start our dialogue, I would ask you to tell us about your journey.

Gabriela Leandro Pereira - Gaia: Thanks, Joana and the journal team for the invitation. I am currently a professor and researcher at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Brazil, but I come from Espírito Santo. I attended undergraduate studies at the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), where I returned this year for a postdoctoral internship after sixteen years away. Therefore, I migrated from the Southeast to the Northeast region, from a state almost on the periphery of the Southeast in terms of the Brazilian centrality of the academic field and major publications. The Espírito Santo state does not lie on the Rio-São Paulo axis but at the crossroads between the states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and Bahia. It is a very interesting place to be.

I studied architecture in the early 2000s, right at the turn of the millennium. It was the end of the FHC¹ era, in the transition to the first Lula's government when the Ministry of Cities and then the Statute of the City was created, and many master plans were yet to be done. Throughout the course, at the same time that I came across some issues that seemed strange to me, I also found some powerful paths, especially a big bet on social movements and popular participation. These issues took on great importance in my education, helping me think about issues that seem central to me today, such as raciality. At that time, they seemed somewhat secondary because there was a great urgency to think about a political project for a more left-wing country, largely based on the demands of urban reform together with social movements.

These events took place at universities that were much whiter than they are today. Although architecture courses are still predominantly white today, in the early 2000s, they were much more so, and the racial debate was absent. At most, the debate existed in an unnamed place on the urban outskirts, alongside social movements, but it was not an academic topic. I worked on several urban master plans in cities of Bahia state and the Metropolitan region, which made me experience many contexts and face some difficulties. In the university background I came from, I had also participated in research work from the middle of the Architecture undergraduate course, but at the same time, I took part in extension projects at the university's projects office, which was a place of practice and militancy. After graduating, I started working in urban planning, and I knew this was the place of my interest, the place of community readings, dialogues with movements, and facing the difficulty of incorporating the demands of social movements into institutional planning. After a year and a half of working on various plans, participatory processes, and community readings, I realized that I needed to go back to the academy to critically analyze this experience, which was the greatest bet of my education.

I decided to apply for a master's degree in Salvador, a crucial decision as the city is radically pulsating, either in its intensities of various natures, or insisting on constantly demonstrating the conflicts and coexistence until then incomprehensible to me. When I entered the Graduate Program in Architecture and Urbanism at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) in 2007, 80% of Salvador's population was black, but the Graduate Program was completely white. It was a great shock to realize that. I was coming from the city of Vitória, where 52% of the population was black, but such a fact was not part of the discourses about the city, which privileged a narrative about Italian and German immigration from the end of the 19th century, taking a

¹ Presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-1998, 1998-2002).

huge place in the city imagery.

But Salvador is an undeniably black city, and I was shocked to see that, even though UFBA was already an incredible college in 2007 for debating ideas, 100% of the graduate faculty was white, and so were approximately 80% of students. In this context, I started trying to name those issues that became impossible for me to neglect. In my doctoral dissertation, I turned this search into a motto that guided research reflections. Thus, in my teaching career at UFBA since 2016, I have mainly sought to structure a way of working with issues of raciality and intersectionality within the field of Architecture and Urbanism, from the perspective of theories and history, but also urban planning and criticism.

JDO: At what point in your work, your approaches, analyses, and reflections did you realize that it was essential to select and integrate the racial aspect to understand territorialities, the city, its hierarchies, and dispositions? From what moment did you place yourself in the role of a black female researcher who analyzes cities from a racial perspective?

Gaia: In my master's research, I developed a proposal to build a critical and cartographic analysis of an urban occupation I had already worked with since my undergraduate studies. This occupation lay on the outskirts of the metropolitan region of the city of Vitória. Today, this is the Alice Coutinho neighborhood, located on the border between the rural and urban areas of the municipality of Cariacica. Throughout the undergraduate course, I worked with fellow students on a university extension project to advise the movement that organized this occupation. I moved to Salvador to take distance from the extensionist and advisory practice, which demands involvement in daily struggles. But I also wanted to keep a reflective distance to understand what led those families with different backgrounds, some similar and many marked by violence, to settle in that isolated occupation. The fact that it lie on the boundary between urban and rural made it simultaneously an achievement and a hiding place.

Occasionally, the Child Protection Council referred some families who had been victims of domestic violence to this occupation, in agreement with the movement, considering that it was a somewhat protected place, far from the families' aggressors. Thus, many hopes for the continuity of life converged there, but also crucial differences and very striking trajectories. In my master's research, I tried to understand these trajectories, seeking to study this occupation beyond the movement's agenda as a common space for families with such remarkable histories. I had already experienced powerful dialogues with social movements as I worked on the master plan for that municipality. At the end of the process, this occupation became a neighborhood that we managed to incorporate as a ZEIS².

One major achievement of this occupation was the construction of a nursery, which the community managed to keep as a public space for collective living. It was built through public bidding by the winning company that offered the lowest price. Shortly after the inauguration, the building collapsed due to constructive precariousness, namely the use of inappropriate and low-quality material. Three children died. Realizing that even extremely desired achievements were dismantled in such a tragic way made me think that there is something in this system that structures precariousness, obviously in a mix of several factors.

Something conditions these peripheral subjects' lives and it goes beyond the processes of rethinking politics. The question of raciality became central to my research from that moment. Perhaps if I had looked at disputes over land and markets elsewhere in the city, I would have found a different picture. Such deaths in the periphery do not generate commotion. They are perceived only as ordinary deaths. Thus, raciality became a fundamental analysis element for me since it is impossible to think about the city without considering the racial point of view. Reflecting on these processes in the academy generates a feeling of impotence. But I had to go back to the place of education, which is more than a place of research. I have a great interest in thinking about education. Among everything that forms the academy, the classroom as a training place excites me the most. So I brought up the issue of raciality as a central theme in my doctoral research but avoided closing myself in the academic environment away from militancy. Because I understand that perhaps the place of militancy at this very moment must be somewhere else. Academic reflection can help me rethink how I reposition myself in militancy and understand the

² Special Social Interest Zone, from the Portuguese Zona Especial de Interesse Social, our translation.

processes that structure our cities from a racial perspective.

JDO: I would like you to comment on what you learned from Carolina Maria de Jesus³ throughout your doctoral research. What did she teach you? What marks did she leave on Gaia that pervade you with a different approach and program when in a classroom? What did she bring to you and your practice in architecture and urbanism?

Gaia: As a coincidence, I have here by my side the book "The Trash Room: the diary of a favela woman"⁴, a beautiful new edition released in 2020, which is in relation with my speech and with what I learned from Carolina. I started my doctoral research inspired by her narrative, but I was not sure where I would end up. I was studying the soirées [saraus] on the outskirts, but I didn't want to go into the field to question people. The periphery is always expressing many things. It is time to perceive this expression less as something information can be extracted from and to understand that it has the power of reflection. Perhaps, looking at the textualities constructed differently from the academic text in a less childish way. The periphery has been talking for a long time. Who are its residents? Where are these people? Where do they find these texts? And if they are not texts, what are they? At first, I tried to map places of cultural production that would generate some content, products, and works, places for soirées and collectives, from 2010 onwards. But when I started to investigate places of literary production, Carolina appeared as the main reference. In the speeches of various cultural producers, writers, poets, and those who participated in hip-hop battles from the periphery, Carolina Maria de Jesus appeared at some point, and I didn't know anything about her until then.

It had been a long time since her books had been released, since her production was not in great demand. When I managed to find these books and started to read her production, I was astonished to see "The Trash Room", a book that talks about the favela of Canindé in 1960, cleared in 1961. How come this is not mandatory material in the Urbanism course? A favela was cleared in 1961! Written in 1960, the book is a gem about everyday life in a favela. Afterwards, I read "Diário de Bitita" [The Bitita Diary]⁵, which covers her journey from Sacramento, in the state of Minas Gerais, to the city of Sao Paulo. The covered period starts in 1914, at her birth as the granddaughter of an enslaved person and the daughter of a woman born under the Free Womb Law⁶. Carolina was born in the rural area of the Minas Gerais state, in a society still living according to slavery standards. What did it mean for her to go to Sao Paulo, a big city that was becoming a metropolis? I fell in love with the power of her writing. She was aware of the importance of what she was doing. She was sure that being a writer was her destiny in life. She was very attentive to the political debate, with very few years of schooling – one or two years – but she had the sagacity to understand the political and historical moments and reflect on them in her texts. Carolina is, in fact, a very clever writer who is tying knots in her own story, which she tells us ingeniously.

Finding Carolina was a radical experience for me in terms of recovering this long-forgotten literature. Perhaps in Literature and Literature, she was still present, but in other fields, she had disappeared. On the centenary of her birth in 2014, she resurfaced unimaginably. It was nice to see this resurgence and the articulation of black women writers and black publishers from the periphery. It was decisive to realize that there was an organization of the black movement and black intellectuals to bring Carolina to a prominent place in academia. She was a bestseller in the 1960s but quickly consumed as an exception. Thus, I endeavored to bring her narrative into line with the narrative of the city's urbanization processes.

I tried to bring Carolina's narrative closer to authors in our field, especially urban planning researchers. She brings elements related to race that urbanism and urban planning studies almost do not touch. I then structured a dialogue between the established field of urbanism and planning and Carolina literature and other interlocutors from the Arts and Literature who contributed to shaping the conversation. Carolina helped me think about paths. I take her texts as a guide that dialogues and rubs, but above all, it helped me to move through the already established academic literature without letting myself be limited by it.

³ Carolina Maria de Jesus (1914-1977) was one of the first Brazilian black writers, as well as a musician and poet. Known for her book "The Trash Room: Diary of a Favelada", published in 1960. More info: <https://bit.ly/3W4HneF>.

⁴ Jesus, C. M.; Dantas, A.; Teixeira, A., 1960. *Quarto de despejo: diário de uma favelada*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria F. Alves.

⁵ Jesus, C. M., 2015. *Bitita's Diary*. Routledge.

⁶ Brazilian law enacted in 1871.

JDO: Some intellectuals, theorists, artists, and people from the black community used to think about all the violence brought about by urban processes, especially in the early 20th century, when proposals for the modernization of the city and a project of marginalization and exclusion of black bodies were produced. So there is a black production thinking about all these processes, from Lima Barreto to other intellectuals such as geographers Andreino Campos and Renato Emerson dos Santos who are anchored in these approaches to understand the city. Apart from theorists, writers, and authors who are thinking about the city they live in or from a historical perspective, how do you see the role of black movements? How do black movements deal with urban transformation processes that directly impact the lives of black people in various aspects?

Gaia: From an institutional point of view, my approach to black movements is very recent. I entered the university before the quota policy was created, as the second generation of the family attending the university. The path to academia was a “natural” path for me, which in the early 2000s put me in an exceptional situation concerning many young black Brazilians. At the time, the stories of my black peers in the architecture course were very similar to mine. Almost all of them had also attended federal technical schools and then entered college. We saw the black movement as a movement that built paths, and I walked that path without acting directly alongside the movement. I got closer to the black movement in the debates on quotas and affirmative actions policies when I understood the relevance of the movement for these newly opened paths.

Currently, thinking about very recent movements such as the Black Coalition for Rights⁷, which brings together several black movements and organizations to build an agenda of relevant themes and issues, the right to the city and housing are central issues. It is interesting to observe how these movements and organizations claim specific aspects of urban or territorial issues, such as *quilombola*⁸ organizations. But at the same time, in the construction of urban reform and the debate in the field of urban planning, even when carried out in the progressive field allied with movements fighting for housing, the racial issue does not appear as a matter of urban planning or other areas involved in the construction of Ministry of Cities urban policies. This debate also needs to be racialized in partnership with the black movement. It was inserted on different fronts, demands, and issues. Racial issues are also urban issues, but are not on the official agenda of urban-specific movements. On the other hand, black movements actively participate in public debate and build a lot. Because even if they may not formulate urban policies along the lines of urban reform, they are the ones who are sewing policies into everyday life that directly affect peripheral territories. The theme of the right to the city and urban planning issues is a topic at the various black movements and organizations' debates. It is time for this agenda to become official, to be presented as an agenda for the right to the city, as black movements are also disputing and tensioning what this debate would be. Because popular courses⁹ are in the territories, in cultural spaces as well as in the network that articulates all support to communities, from the distribution of food in the Covid-19 pandemic. It is urgent to understand how peripheral territories operate and how it is possible to build networks there. Black movements are those who dominate these territories, and this is a major fact. We are now articulating these agendas and seeing how we can build something together, at least in the field of urban planning.

JDO: Now I would ask you to talk a little about how black people spell the territory. In addition to the policies of exclusion, imagination, etc., how are these spellings expressed? What is your perception of these spellings, which many call black territorialities and spaces of resistance?

Gaia: The black presence is inscribed in cities in many ways. Thinking with authors like Maria Estela Ramos¹⁰, who studies black neighborhoods, and Diosmar Filho¹¹, a Geographer with whom I have often worked on black territories in Salvador, I understand that the “white” city is also black. This city does not rise from anything, does not rise without its builders. I have

⁷ The Black Coalition for Rights is an organization in favor of the black movement in Brazil. It brings together more than 200 associations, NGOs, collectives, groups, and institutions. Additional information at: <https://coalizaonegrapordireitos.org.br/>.

⁸ A quilombola is an Afro-Brazilian resident of quilombo settlements first established by escaped slaves in Brazil. They are the descendants of Afro-Brazilian enslaved people who escaped from slave plantations that existed in Brazil until abolition in 1888. More info: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quilombola>.

⁹ Free popular upgrade classes for university entrance exams in poor neighborhoods.

¹⁰ Maria Estela Rocha Ramos Penha. CV: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/3100513551876982>

¹¹ Diosmar Marcelino de Santana Filho. CV: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/3918996705603114>

been thinking a lot about this effort since the material history of cities is a history of black commitment. I do not believe in a hermetic debate based on understandings such as "this neighborhood is black" and "that neighborhood is white". The issues are more complex, and negotiations are continually taking place. That is why it is not possible to study the city as if it was raised dissociated from the black presence.

There is an American researcher I really like called Adrienne Brown¹² who argues that the history of architecture is the material history of races. All architecture is racial architecture. This argument shifts the discussion elsewhere. I believe that there is a way of writing for black people in cities, but this way can also be presented in very different ways. In the cities of Vitória and Salvador, I find overlapping issues in terms of organization of territories with a black majority, but at the same time they show specificities. Some neighborhoods in Salvador grew from the presence of *terreiros*¹³, in a process very poorly handled by the field of Urbanism, given the small number of researchers working from this perspective. When we study the Salvador urban history, we find justifications for the growth of the periphery, arguing that the center expels residents there. But we also find the agency of the *terreiros* in bringing people together around them, in building neighborhoods and communities. This process was not yet sufficiently described in the history of Salvador. In the city of Vitória, where the presence of *terreiros* is not as expressive as it is in Salvador, or it is expressed otherwise, we need other lenses to understand how these communities were structured, sometimes in the periphery, sometimes in the hills, sometimes in the strip between the urban plan of Saturnino de Brito and the hills.

One of the great challenges is, therefore, to understand the racial evidence in the production processes of cities and the creation of spatialities, but also to understand the persistent negotiation between the different ways of organizing the territory. These ways are not necessarily exclusive, but overlap, contaminate, and influence each other, and are different over time. I believe that time creates overlaps that demand us to understand what are the layers in this huge palimpsest that accumulates inscriptions in the city. I have thought of this issue as a major challenge that does not set aside the supposedly "white" city, and that does not prevent us from thinking about the city as a place where racialities also organize the ways space is produced.

JDO: What do you suggest to improve the education of architects and urban planners, in addition to including black authors and racial themes in undergraduate and graduate courses? There are some discussions about the contributions of African knowledge to Brazilian architecture. What would be essential to be clear for teachers to train future professionals? How to bring to the education process a greater engagement of these guidelines?

Gaia: Returning to Adrienne Brown's debate, all architecture is racial architecture. The material history of architecture is the material history of races. We must understand that the history of architecture and urbanism are imbricated in racial events. They are connected, and they are not neutral. Architecture is not just naively responding to a state of affairs. Understanding architecture, technologies, and theory from this perspective makes our reflection start somewhere else. I have been very resistant to giving elective courses. I am more interested in teaching mandatory seminars, even though they are traditional mandatory ones. Because even if I use a bibliography that does not address these issues, the way I approach it says something else about it. From the questions I ask, the questions I bring, and who I choose to dialogue with in this literature. And, of course, we need to create new, more specific seminars, such as studies of African architecture around urbanism produced in Africa. We must ask whether it is urbanism or what other names we give to millenary space organizations that are there and that we ignore. In this case, it is a matter of content, as this content was never presented before to us.

But beyond the content, I have been thinking a lot about how we approach the field, technology, and history. In addition to seeking further references, this approach demands a critical and practical gesture. For example, in a design studio, even if it is not a project about African technologies, which technologies do we choose to answer which questions? To what do they respond? And what do they also rock when responding? The Brazilian urbanism of the beginning of the 20th century, an urbanism of eugenic improvement, is another example. But even avoiding the eugenics discourse, this urbanism is all about

¹² Adrienne Brown is a Professor at the University of Chicago specializing in American and African-American Cultural Production in the 20th century, with an emphasis on the history of perception shaped by the built environment.

¹³ Places where ceremonial rituals take place and offerings are made to the orixás, or African gods.

the de-Africanization of the city. Thus, in addition to questions around health and all the eugenic heritage inherent to hygienist urbanism, the hegemonic posture carries a desire for the disappearance of certain ways of life, which shapes in the 1930s the discourse of romanticization of miscegenation. This is what architecture is responding to.

I am enjoying following a certain debate from the Global North. I am very interested in diasporic issues, even though the South has several crucial questions about decoloniality. But to think about diasporic topics, it is not enough to think about a South-South dialogue, although the dialogue with Africa is fundamental. But considering that the diasporic experience is also a North experience, I have been looking for authors in architecture and urbanism who think about this disciplinary field from a diasporic perspective. Thus, we can dismantle the idea that the field is neutral. Understanding the architecture and urbanism production as immersed in the ideologies and racial events provides us with other ways of building pedagogical practices, reading texts and critical possibilities, and imagining new practices.

I am currently studying the mountainous region of the state of Espírito Santo, from where part of my family came. It is a region where many descendants of German and Italian immigrants live but where all the technology employed in agricultural production is a mixture of indigenous and African techniques and the techniques of the settlers. In the official narrative, this resulting technology is completely whitewashed. This version claims that the European settlers were successful farmers, unlike the indigenous and Africans who stayed there so long and would not have been able to produce anything. What understanding is this? I don't have practical answers, Joana, but maybe my answers are questions: how do we approach the field? What questions do we ask the field? And how can we bring questions of racial evidence as a bet to understand the city, architecture, theory and criticism, and the field of urbanism? That is how I have tried to think about pedagogical practice.

But this practice also demands racial literacy. What can I criticize if I am so far from a debate based on a racial perspective? There are two movements: one, looking at the field from a racial perspective, and the other, how we build racial literacy, such as the recent Federal Law 10.639¹⁴, which made the study of African and Afro-Brazilian history mandatory in schools. This is a grand achievement of the black movement, perhaps one of its most relevant achievements, considering its impact on the field of education. But when you get to college, this understanding disappears. Each disciplinary area already has its specificities and a list of canonical debates. How make this racial literacy happen and bring it into our spaces, so that we can look critically at canonical and non-canonical issues?

JDO: Your reflections, Gaia, are meaningful in the deconstruction of hegemonic architecture, in understanding the production of cities from a racial perspective, recognizing the participation of black subjects in building a city that is also white. I would like you to talk about perspectives for us to reach the potential you brought, through racial literacy, the insertion of racial approaches in the architecture and urbanism course program, and the relationship with practice. A crucial point of your speech is how we look at the questions we must ask. It all makes a big difference. What perspectives do you foresee for such aspirations, which occur on multiple college campuses, but often in isolation? How do you see it? We both started our research history in 2000, and we entered graduation at the same time. I started my doctorate in 2010 studying this topic, following a long, exhausting, but breathtaking trajectory. Carolina de Jesus' work did not have the repercussions it has today. We have achievements, but we have many challenges that we still need to overcome. What are your perspectives on this teaching of architecture and urbanism to produce professionals who see the city from a plural, racial, cultural, ethnic, and social perspective?

Gaia: It is a long, arduous road, with much still to be done. Thinking about possible steps, in recent years, I have been trying to build a very close dialogue with incoming students, especially those coming from affirmative actions and quota policies. We try to think together about the issues they are raising in a plural way. Because the students who are entering now bring their contexts from specific peripheries, from family histories, from different backgrounds. And, in the end, how does this impact our disciplinary field? What will their presence demand from the field? I have been thinking a lot about issues common to many students or those we have to build as we find them meaningful, such as design issues.

References are a huge demand from students. They don't have references, so we search. In general, design studios occupy

¹⁴ Brazil. Law nº 11.639 of January 10, 2003. Guidelines and bases of national education, to include in the official curriculum of the Education Network the mandatory theme "History and Afro-Brazilian Culture", Brasília, DF, 2003. Available at: <https://legislacao.presidencia.gov.br/atos/?tipo=LEI&numero=10639&ano=2003&ato=431MTTq10dRpWTbf4>.

a large part of the workload of Architecture and Urbanism courses. At UFBA, our university, we give 12 hours of design studio per week, which means that most of the time, students are concerned with the design and design references. They have a constant demand for black architects who are pushing the design field. We started to raise and share references, and bibliography, create a blog, promote debates, and see which issues could be addressed by the projects.¹⁵ In this way, the project becomes a critical issue in the debate of race and the peripheries. What outskirts are these? What are the untold stories of these territories? How do we superimpose their narratives on the official ones of established places?

The debate is not necessarily on places or objects we don't know or where we have never been. When we are willing to approach these same objects and themes from questions and paths that are absent from books or research papers but that students bring along with their own experiences and stories, it becomes clear that there is much to be done. Be it from a place, from a specificity of practice, criticism, theory, or history. I thought about how often we kill young students when they arrive at the college, filling them with canonical content that they have to learn so that only later can answer the questions they bring that are not in the canon. In recent years, this has become a big challenge for me. How can we feed students and not let the faculty annul the references they bring? Or how can we build collective breaths? Because it is heavy for undergraduate students to have to deal with all the canonical references – which, in many aspects, are foreign to them – and still have to construct arguments to refute it.

So how do we communicate with the students' reality, not only those who come from peripheries but the reality of the contemporary world, where the 20-year-old generation now entering college lives? Beyond the debate in the field and the issues not addressed, dialoguing with students brings fresh and new things. We are not even able to perceive them, despite our race and gender experiences, and even though we are already used to the academic universe of architecture and urbanism. I believe they bring up things that I don't understand, very new things, and this dialogue helps me wake up, takes me out of my comfort zone, and makes me think about issues beyond the universe I believed to dominate.

The effort always ends up involving students by understanding their issues but also that the university is a tiny part of their lives. I have been trying to integrate the history of the students' families in research, projects, and on several fronts. In our study group, we have been carrying out a series of works and projects that include rescuing a little of these family histories and thinking of them as spatial histories. This path seems to be very powerful as it is part of academia but goes beyond it because, in order to be carried out, it mobilizes other people, close people and people who are interested. They also start looking at their personal trajectories as something that matters to academia, starting with their children and grandchildren. This is a suggested path.

Recently, at the São Paulo International Architecture Biennial, I proposed the installation of a research that I have been conducting with my sister, which is called "The Fabulous Inventory of My Grandfather's Works"¹⁶. My two grandfathers were builders, as they worked in construction. One of them was a *cavoqueiro*, a professional who extracted the rocks that later became streets paving, curbs, and retaining walls. This profession disappeared with new technologies, I don't know if it still exists, but officially he was an employee of the city hall. My other grandfather was a marble worker. Talking to them, we realized how much they liked to talk about the works in which they participated. We don't usually look at these works as part of the city's material history as we study, investigate, and turn other architectures into reference. This experience has been very significant for us. We have been sharing with students who are also in search of their grandparents and builder parents. Suddenly, we found what we call the heirs of the city, the heirs of the legacy left by parents and grandparents. They never appear in the references, in the inventories of listed architectures, such as, for example, Vitória's Acoustic Shell in Moscoso Park, where one of our grandfathers worked. We sought inventory documentation. We knew, obviously, that we would not find his name in the documents, but searching confirmed that these subjects are anonymized by historiography, despite having been building the city's architecture.

When we talk about the builders' trajectories with students who reach university through affirmative actions, we confirm that poor black men in this country mostly work in civil construction or have worked in, or that someone is the grandson of a

¹⁵ See the research website "Black Architect Women and Men around the World" at: <https://arquitetasnegras.ufba.br/>.

¹⁶ 13th São Paulo International Architecture Biennale | Crossings. "The Fabulous Inventory of my Grandfather's Works". More information at: <https://bienaldearquitetura.org.br/en/programacao/activation-of-the-work-legacy-fabulous-inventory-of-my-grandfather/>.

grandfather who worked in, or migrated to the city to work in. They are children and grandchildren of women who were or still are domestic servants. A student who defended his Final Graduation Project today said: “how can I design a maid's room if my mother and sister are maids? But designing maid's rooms is mandatory in the offices where I do my internship”. This debate is part of his project.

These stories are spatial, material, and design stories that speak of our disciplinary field. Even if seen from other subjects and perspectives, they seem to point to powerful paths capable of exploding the limits of academic reflection, academic exercises, and subordinated individuals made invisible by the field itself. It is a bet towards thinking about how they can radically affect places and lives that are not the target of attention and care. So, it's about race, it's about raciality, and it's about architecture, urbanism, about many other things, many other racialized lives. It's not just about violence but how we can think of fulfilled lives and even reposition these anonymized subjects, who now have names. Who anonymize them? They are grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, and uncles. They are dear people who play the guitar and go to the beach with their families. This action re-humanizes them. It is such a trivialized relationship that we continue to build hierarchies between architects, builders, and all the other subjects that make up the civil construction chain of which we are a part.

This has been a beautiful path, which I believe will not change the field radically. But it will change practice and the lives of people who matter, starting from their arrival at the university.

MT: Gaia, I have one last question for you that we ask all of our interviewees: does the future look promising to you?

Gaia: Yes, it looks so to me! I think it needs to look like this. It seems promising to me but also challenging, unstable, and always under threat. That is a constant warning, but as long as it exists, the future is real. I am faithful to the promising future, but I am aware that it is threatened all the time. Which makes the work of keeping it alive and promising extremely arduous and essential.

MT: Joana, may I ask you the same question: does the future look promising to you?

JDO: Yes, I also see the future as promising, mainly anchored in the active participation of students, as the new generations that are arriving eager for other approaches and further knowledge. As Gaia so well explained, they take us out of our comfort zone, inviting us to think beyond academia, programs, and theories, which are crucial but must be understood in convergence with other processes. I see several potentialities for the future and threats in the economic, racial, and social fields. Racial clashes are historic and remain in our society, impacting the lives of young black people in peripheral neighborhoods. I believe we can think of attitudes that dialogue with a broader, more diverse, and more plural society through the academy. I see education as an essential transformation tool, both for the fight against structural racism, current in architecture, urban planning, and in varied fields, as for a process of insertion and emancipation of the subject. Education is transforming, still in dialogue with Paulo Freire.

One issue Gaia brought up is very dear to me: family histories, understanding how much the individual carries the knowledge of ancestry and history. As I work on houses and backyards, I think we must understand how the spatiality around the house and the backyard connect with the education of individuals and how to bring these guidelines to the academy. We need to receive these students at the university in a more welcoming way. I care about this approximation with them, listening to what they bring and experiencing this exchange daily. And I also believe that racial literacy is something to be debated by all professors, all students, all university employees. The deconstruction of racism is always a collective struggle.