

**Global Feminisms
Comparative Case Studies
Of Militant and Intellectual Women**

BRAZIL

Nataraj Trinta

Interviewed by Renata Saavedra

Rui de Janeiro, Brazil

December, 2014

**University of Michigan
Institute for Research on Women and Gender
1136 Lane Hall Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1290
Tel: (734) 764-9537**

E-mail: um.gfp@umich.edu

Website: <http://www.umich.edu/~glblfem>

© Regents of the University of Michigan, 2015

Nataraj Trinta was born in 1983 in Rio de Janeiro. She received her bachelor's degree from the Federal Fluminense University (*Universidade Federal Fluminense*) and is a specialist in Women's History and Brazilian Iconographic History. She worked as a researcher in the Journal of History of the National Library (*Revista de História da Biblioteca Nacional*) from 2006 until December 2014 and was the iconography editor of the journal between 2007 and 2010. In 2010, together with other women artists and feminists, she created the Feminist Urban Art Network (*Rede Feminista de Arte Urbana – NAMI*). She became a graffiti artist, joined the Articulation of Brazilian Women (*Articulação de Mulheres Brasileiras*) and started offering graffiti workshops and speaking about violence against women in low-income communities in Rio de Janeiro. Between 2011 and 2013 she organized the *SlutWalk* (*Marcha das Vadias*) in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Nowadays, Nataraj Trinta works as the historian in charge of the Memory Center named for Public Attorney João Marcello de Araújo Júnior at the Public Ministry of the State of Rio de Janeiro (*Centro de Memória Procurador de Justiça João Marcello de Araújo Júnior no Ministério Público do Estado do Rio de Janeiro*) and serves as a researcher and content manager for the companies N30 Research: Images, Text, Production and Art (*N30 Pesquisas: imagens, texto, produção e arte*) and N30 Editorial.

Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1986, **Renata Saavedra** is a journalist and a historian. She works with research and communication, especially with topics in the area of culture and gender. She is currently the communication manager at the *ELAS* Fund, which is a social investment fund that mobilizes resources to support projects by women's groups that strengthen women's leadership and their struggle for rights in Brazil. She is also a doctoral student in Communication and Culture at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (*UFRJ*).

The **Global Feminisms Project**, located at the University of Michigan, started in 2002 with funding for interdisciplinary projects in partnership with institutions from other countries. The virtual archive includes interviews with activist and intellectual women from Brazil, China, India, Nicaragua, Poland and the United States.

Our collaborators in Brazil are researchers from the Oral History and Image Laboratory (*Laboratório de História Oral e Imagem – Labhoi*) of the Federal Fluminense University (*Universidade Federal Fluminense – UFF*) and the History, Memory and Document Center (*Núcleo de História, Memória e Documento – NUMEM*) of the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (*Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - UNIRIO*). The interviews in Brazil were conducted with the support of the *Third Century Learning Initiative* and the *Brazil Initiative* at the University of Michigan and, in Brazil, of the Foundation for Research Support of the State of Rio de Janeiro (*Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro- FAPERJ*) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (*Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico – CNPq*).

Renata Saavedra: I am Renata Saavedra, we are here today at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (*Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – UNIRIO*) conducting another interview for the University of Michigan’s Global Feminisms project. Today we are here with Nataraj Trinta, who is a historian and feminist activist who currently participates in the Brazilian Women’s Articulation (*Articulação de Mulheres Brasileiras*). So, to get started, I would like to ask you to introduce yourself, and to talk a little bit about how the Brazilian Women’s Articulation started and how it has been working.

Nataraj Trinta: Ok. Well, in college, people, my friends used to say to me “ah, you are a feminist, are you a feminist?” And one day a research position was posted at the University. It was to work with a Professor who was no longer teaching undergraduate courses, she was only teaching in the graduate program. Her name is Raquel Soihet and the project was about looking for traces of antifeminism during the feminist campaign, in the second wave of feminism. While doing this research, I also had the opportunity to interview several women and to learn what gender studies was, what it was to be more or less a feminist, by hearing different voices, different discourses. [I learned] what they did [for example], to help women who suffered violence, to help in a very... There was no police station (although, nowadays, our police stations do not work as they should). They helped by bringing them to their home, organizing a collective of support and solidarity, at a time where the dissemination and the communication of information had its shortcomings, of helping them with the most basic things, but also by going out to the streets and protesting by painting walls, for instance, denouncing Ziraldo, because he expressed extremely macho positions in *Pasquim*, even though it was a leftist newspaper. So there was already this concern, these women were already questioning the machismo they suffered within the left, although they were doing leftist social activism.

Also, other women were making other pressing demands, such as, for example, the fight for the legalization of abortion. In 2004, there was a need to fight for it, and, in 2014, there is still a need to work toward legalization of abortion. When I was doing interviews in

2004/2005, I got to know Ligia Coelho. She is a physicist here at the *CBPF* (Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Físicas, Brazilian Center for Physics Research). She said, “so, let’s create a group at *UFF* (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Federal Fluminense University). I can go there every once in a while; other times, people from there can come here to Rio and we can discuss feminism, do some feminist readings, and especially fight for the legalization of the abortion.” I found that very cool, it was a way of engaging in practice... I always liked assemblies and political connections and also the area of reproductive and sexual rights. [But] I could not get a group together. I talked to my friends and everyone thought that it was very important, very relevant, cool, but no one was available to meet during the meeting times, something that changed a lot between 2005 and 2014. In 2009, 2010, I think collectives (I don’t really know if it was actually by that time, but I think it was...) I think the collectives really moved forward. No doubt the internet [played a role], I mean, the internet already existed of course, but it was less widespread. Facebook is a social network that really connect people a lot.

And, you asked me also about the Brazilian Women’s Articulation. Well, that period was a period of study, of research, it was when I wrote my thesis about the magazine *Claudia*, which featured [feminist columnist] Carmen da Silva, during 1975, which was the International Women’s Year. At that time, the magazine itself was bringing up quite schizophrenic questions, because although it tended to take a more traditional stance, it began to address demands that were proposed by social movements, such as divorce and women in the labor market, which were appearing in advertisements, images, etc. By that time I also joined the *Revista de História of the National Library* (Journal of History of the National Library). Even before graduating, in 2006, in March, in May of 2006, I joined the Journal, started to work with visual images, and to study art. And I found that feminism...Well, the social movement was not moving forward, and even though I liked gender studies and feminism, I was feeling very much connected to all of that. I already had the sensation of moving from not knowing whether I was a feminist, to turning into a feminist and saying “I am a feminist, I think that the movement is important, the movement makes me feel good.” I also think that I was then very taken up by these questions, I couldn’t distance myself from that. I didn’t want to do research any longer.

[Before that], I had wanted to do research in the field of the history of modern art, contemporary art and images, and to work with iconography. I went to do a master's degree in that area at PUC (Pontifícia Universidade Católica, Pontifical Catholic University), in Art History, and chose to focus on abstract expressionism and post-war art, specifically Rothko. I started to work with secondary sources, and, from there, something started to echo within me, like "what am I doing?" [laughs]. What was I doing? It was a difficult question, I couldn't...Ok, for a master's you do not need to be original, but I was feeling like a reader of books, I was just compiling things. I love Rothko [laughs], I still love Rothko. But then, by that time, I passed the qualification requirement for my Master's thesis, Paulo Knauss was a member of my committee, so, that is...The other members weren't from History. And at that time, I entered into a super crisis, that was in 2010 or 2009, so in the middle of that crisis, and working on Rothko, who was a very distressed guy too, right? And he had a hands-on relationship with his work, he worked with children, and it was very much about making a point, taking a stand. And even with ideas like these -- I was reading Kant, I was enjoying it a lot, and there was that thing of becoming an adult, handling my own life. I said, no, I am quitting this, it doesn't make me happy, it's not ok, I am going to start doing graffiti.

Why graffiti? Graffiti is this thing, the wall is there...you... In Brazil there are more opportunities, graffiti...there was even a state political project that disassociated it from tagging. So yes, there was a space for it. [I thought], I am going to start doing graffiti, the graffiti depends only on me now, on the paint, you know? We have to think, it is difficult to make abstract art, it was interesting to see how it is difficult to get out of the abstraction, but it was a necessity at that moment. And in this moment of doing graffiti, of starting to do graffiti, I met Pamela [Castro], who had the idea of connecting women artists with feminism. When I met her, there were some people who alerted me that Pamela was a difficult person to get along with, but she also generates a certain seduction, because she is an artist who was involved in feminist issues, and I was kind of a feminist involved with artistic questions, and therefore wanted to have a praxis in art at that time. Well, that's how it was at that moment. Pamela outlined the idea of the NAMI Network (*Rede Feminista de Arte Urbana*, Feminist Network of Urban Art). My sign is Taurus, so I love to have things

to build and to do. And after she proposed the idea, I ran with it and I started to work around it. I already had that thing of...It was the time in which I had quit the master's program and I was working as the iconography editor of that journal. It was just at that moment, I was frantically searching for something else to focus my energy on. And so, I returned to the feminist movement. That's how I returned to it.

I connected with the Brazilian Women's Articulation, since that was how we had connected, Pamela and I. We were invited by the *AMB* (Brazilian Women's Articulation) to be part of their group with the *NAMI* network. We did a lot of things. It was a one-year period in which I worked hard on the regulations to establish *NAMI* as an official organization. I managed to also work to achieve something of value, to get something out of our first project, for the girls to have some work, to set *NAMI* up. But the problem with *NAMI* was that it was a space for exchange where it should have been ...at least the idea was for it to be, a space of multi-level horizontal participation, "women's art to change the world." So, it had the idea of a relationship, of connection, but of a horizontal political connection. And I was there in *NAMI* as vice-president, the title was very strange to me, and to talk like that. Pamela was very difficult to deal with, and her idea of it was practically to have a company, that was becoming more and more clear. One time, talking with someone from *Mama Cash* in the Netherlands, she asked me: how many are you? And I was like... I used to work at Pamela's house, she worked at my house, we were actually just the two of us, and we contacted the girls when we had a job for them. I understand that they needed the work, but they didn't participate in the political side of the project, since the relationship with Pamela was so vertical, and managed under such a commercial vision.

The truth is, that was what she wanted, social branding for her work. She already had a more concatenated artistic language, it was easier...And also, she had this thing of being a woman graffiti artist in a masculine environment, and with that social title, associating herself with that social question, she promoted herself better, and she even managed to be covered by *Newsweek*, she appeared in *Newsweek*. So, she had a vision that was very...I remember one time she told me: "You know what the problem is? While you studied all of these books, philosophy, and all of that, I read about marketing." And that was

the other side of the NGOs, not all of them are like that, of course, but you do have some like that. Sometimes you have a wonderful idea about them, but when you look deeper you see that it is private property, like someone's small fiefdom that is spreading a message from a capitalist perspective.

At that point, there were a few minor things, actually they were not minor things, and I was finding them very unpleasant. I also thought that she was being disrespectful to other people and to me as well. So I called an assembly, and then I was expelled from the group, without even the minimally democratic act of meeting and talking with the whole group. When that happened, the Brazilian Women's Articulation, where I was participating, also had some people participating who were from the *NAMI* Foundation. They noticed what had happened, and told me "Listen, come to the Articulation and leave that, leave that place, you don't need it, you did not want a business, you don't need to think about it, leave her with her arrogance, because that's her character." So, we work through a platform, an articulation that is not a party, that is not a non-governmental organization, that is a connection among women from different states, of diverse ages, of various age groups, of different social realities, in which you have indigenous people, people from the *quilombos* (*quilombolas*, ancestral territories of fugitive slaves), independent professionals, and it is a national connection, that seeks to discuss politics, that aims to guide issues, to foster campaigns. One of the possible campaigns for the next year will be parity, parity in politics, and the issue of political reform that had already started. It wasn't in 2004, but in 2013.

So we were discussing these topics, from a learning perspective, from a space open to debate, a space for exercising political voice and for learning, a space that you feel very comfortable, even when you go to other spaces. But I do not have any intention of...I like social movements, but not to be in a prominent position; I like social movements as a perspective like having to organize a house, doing the laundry, doing I don't know what. So, you have your normal activities and you are also part of the social movement, it is possible, it is necessary, you are not completely involved in it, you are not engaging in all spheres, but you do a little, but in a specific area. So, it is like that, a shared leadership, it is a place of

sisterhood, which is this solidarity, because things are not in dispute there, we are all on the same page.

And then you see groups, like these ones, and sometimes one like the *Loucas de Pedras Lilás* (Crazy Women of the Lilac-colored Stones) who are two wonderful women, more than sixty years old now, and who have been working on this since the 1980s, with many other wonderful women, to write sketches, to make music, because of our big...One of our biggest challenges is the following: feminists suffered years of antifeminist campaigns, so in spreading our message, we have to avoid being tedious, so people don't reject it right from the start.

And then you have the people of *Artivismo* ("Artivism") a group that works with this perspective. So they say "ah, we can join the graffiti group, that is good, the stencil work, that is cool, the music, the sketches." The *Loucas [de Pedras Lilás]* have been doing that since the decade of the 1980s. They are a French woman and a Uruguayan woman who have lived in Brazil, in Recife, since the decade of the 1980s, so they are there, you can connect with the *Loucas* there. Then they came to Rio for the *Rio+20* conference, they had a sketch. I was also part of that sketch. It was a street performance. I had always wanted to do that, I always enjoyed performing, taking risks, and feminism allowed that. You have several areas under construction, and it is a lot like that. It was like that in feminism as well, this new feminism was like drawing on the wall, like graffiti itself, that place that is already there. So let's go, let's do it, let's put things together and do it, you don't have to wait for permission, you don't have to...The space is open, the social movement is that, it is joining together, who is going to work now, who isn't? Who is going to prepare the meals? Who is going to take care of the children? Who is going to, you know, write the report, who is going to present the agenda? So it is a place for experimentation.

RS: You also participated in the organization of the SlutWalk (*Marcha das Vadias*), which began in Canada, and ended up spreading to several countries, including various states here in Brazil. Did you participate in its formation here in Rio?

NT: I did. The SlutWalk was what appeared after *NAMI*, when I was thinking “Where am I am going to put energy?” And then, in 2011, in 2011 that situation with a Canadian policeman stating that for women not to be raped they should stop dressing like sluts happened. And here in Rio a colleague from the Brazilian Women’s Articulation said to us “did you see that? We need to do something.” That was in 2011, some parades were already happening, they were for legalization, anti-prohibition. There was this thing happening with groups, different collectives forming around these topics, right? You have already had the Occupy *Cinelândia*,¹ I think this had already happened, I’m not certain but still, you already had that... And it was centered around rape, which is a reality that touches many women from different places, it is not distant. It is funny that I went to...I heard from your question the idea of international connections – I don’t have many international connections, but I went to Germany, to Berlin, to meet the girls from the SlutWalk there, it was interesting, because it is very nice, well, actually not very nice, it is very sad, but it is very good as well to meet women who are involved in the same struggle, maybe those women about whom you thought “no, Berlin is not going to have something like that, a place that’s so trendy, it is not going to happen there. The Netherlands, Amsterdam is not going to have that. Having the SlutWalk, for what reason? Oh, Canada.” And there you see that the reality still demands this type of voice. So, the SlutWalk happened like that. Daniela was always saying “let’s do the SlutWalk, let’s do something.” Daniela Montper, she came from one of these anti-prohibitionist parades. I can’t remember if it was for the legalization of the marihuana. Together with Rogéria Peixinho and Jandira, the three of them got together in a bar. Rogéria was also from the Brazilian Women’s Articulation, Jandira wasn’t, but she was an activist for LGBT rights for a long time. And then they sat down, they said ok, let’s go, let’s go, from here we are going to send the invitations at least for one initial meeting.

So then I was at the first meeting, and then we met at the IFCS (Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro). It is always at the IFCS, the IFCS is a great platform for social movements, it is a central place. And I then participated in organizing the 2011, 2012, and 2013 SlutWalks. In 2013, with the visit of the Pope, we were trying to organize not a direct confrontation, but a debate of ideas. We

had a different context, a new Pope, a Pope who was outlining new discourses, but we also had the reality from the streets, the existence of a street movement that was already growing, and of irresponsible acts, such as the ones involving the crucifixes and the image [statue] of the saint, in which the saint's image was destroyed. That didn't have any relationship with the SlutWalk. But that is how it is, in the streets you can't...We even had the support of the Catholic Women for the Right to Decide (*Católicas pelo Direito a Decidir*), and from other groups. And we had guaranteed that we were going to avoid physical violence, that we were going to protect all the groups, all the *Artivistas* and everything. And then, the *Coiote* Group did something that left many women in a vulnerable situation, including me, because I was at the forefront, talking a lot to the media. And I have appeared; it was the walk in which I appeared the most, you know, without any costumes. I went out there and I took off my blouse, it was the walk in which I felt most empowered. That generated several threats of rape, death-threats. I had to go to the police station. I panicked a little bit, I didn't like to be threatened like that, my name is also uncommon, and I worked for the *Revista de História* so it wasn't hard to identify my name and to track me down, I was...I did not like it.

RS: But do you relate this to that demonstration, to the performance of the *Coiote* Group, or simply to your visibility, of you appearing publicly because of the SlutWalk?

NT: I think that it was, a lot of it was that the walk could already provoke resistance and anger, but the action of the *Coiote* Group was very powerful, right? In this sense, it was a de facto action of disrespect, in my opinion, of disrespect for religious freedom, and although we can criticize, and we know about the influence of Christian culture, you have a whole spectrum there, right? The importance of Christianity, the Christian groups and their role in *abertura* of the military regime,² you have an idea of faith. It is like...we were in a process...the idea was like this: how could we disseminate our messages? They were urgent matters, necessary ones, these women were coming from a fight, you know, from suffering, because there were deaths, there were bodies, there were lives, you know. So, it was a very heavy situation, difficult, how to be able to talk about that in order to mobilize people to join/participate and be on our side? That was a big challenge. It was about how to

transform that message into a message that could be accepted by many women, and even many men. It was also resisted by those who benefited from that situation. It was a difficult message, hard, the question was how we were going to be able to “carnivalize” that but also to turn it into a serious message when it needs to be serious. That message from the *Coiote*, their performance, the fact that they also did not make any declaration after the event, generated what happened afterwards: all the people who were in dialogue with the media were threatened. Some others who appeared were threatened as well, and what happened was that those who were not exposed thought that it was great, “freedom of expression.” But they didn’t want to go to the media to talk about that. Other than that, you always have people who think that adding some tension, taking more radical action is the best strategy, or better...Those who were exposed couldn’t continue, couldn’t keep talking, but still, I personally did not condone that either, it was a process from which I am now understanding what was going on. I did not condone it because we had an agreement, an agreement of minimal divergence at that moment: we knew that it was going to be tense, we knew that the Pope was there, we knew of the number of young people and Catholic people. Already we had an audacious message, we were working around that.

Now, what was funny is that our audacious message was just a message of freedom, of autonomy, of saying that the first territory that we have is our body, it is a bold message that is even...that it is even ridiculous to say that it is audacious, because it is so basic, it is an essential freedom, which is the right of being without these ties, to be respected equally. That a naked person should be as equally respected as a dressed person because both of them need it, they demand a minimum of respect. But it is like that.

Around that question, the SlutWalk and also the *Coiote* ended up having an internal split, a rupture, so from that...That emerged and exposed other cracks. For instance, I was talking to the media, Rogéria was talking to the media too, we are from the Brazilian Women’s Articulation. And in the SlutWalk, since 2011 we have made the following pact: listen, what appears here are our guidelines, since then you have that little micro thing of the social movements, that is this difficult thing that you have to negotiate, which means that the agenda is much more important than the names of the people, than the groups. We

respected that. However, in 2013, even though we were still respecting that, we suggested inviting other women from different states to the SlutWalk. The SlutWalk didn't propose any other project, nothing, so Rogéria and I put together a proposal to invite women from several states. Then we called the group *Tambores de Safo*, other women who were organizing the SlutWalk in their states. They weren't only women from the Brazilian Women's Articulation. We held an event one day before the walk, an event about lesbian women and the violence towards these women as an event that could connect to the walk, that could open a space for them to be part of the end of the walk in Rio. So, we also managed to bring women from several other states, and it was very good. The 2013 SlutWalk was beautiful. I did not see the *Coioite* group, I can't remember them being there, because my walk, the walk that I was experiencing was like that: signing, being with several people I like, being part of it. However, the walk wasn't just being there and being part of it, right? The SlutWalk that we were building wasn't just a movement but there were several actions, it was a group that met to engage in different actions.

So all of this [was happening] in 2011, 2012, and 2013. During these three years I was very involved with the SlutWalk, they were years of a lot of...I think that this is why I didn't return to academia, it was because of that. Well, it is not that I think that was the reason, I am sure it was because of that. It was very enjoyable, I did it with a lot of dedication. I was involved in the communication area of the SlutWalk during these years, especially in 2012 and 2013, so I posted many messages. Sometimes, after a while, I even sort of reflected on the power of the messages that you post on social media, like in the film *The Wave*. I mean, what you are endorsing and what are the limits of what is being passed on. For instance, when *Pagfunk* (a feminist funk group) say "I am going to cut your dick." It is interesting how there is a certain empowerment on the one side, but also you have a discourse of violence that is being repeated and this is problematic. And then, in 2013, I think it was actually in 2013, there was a meeting of feminist artists, to which we went, and then I remember that it was very interesting, very intense, but at the time of that performance I managed to leave. I no longer felt the same emotional energy for unrestrained activism. It's like, I think that after the SlutWalk, being more careful with that idea of acting with an "open chest" [*peito aberto*," colloquially, "arms wide open"]. I think

that it was even a...It was being more careful with how that information circulates, how these messages are being received, and which groups they are reaching. You are not going to have a message that circulates in a single way, there is no discourse that means from the beginning only one thing, but...

RS: So, to move forward from there: you already mentioned the proliferation of young collectives over the last few years, and the fact that you, for instance, were not able to create a group when you were studying History at UFF in 2014. Today people are... the universities have their women's groups, right?

NT: Strong ones.

RS: Strong and well-connected, and groups that work with different artistic languages, like the *Pagfunk*, which is a group from the Baixada that uses funk, also *Tambores de Safo* and some others. How do you see this moment but also, as you have just said, how do the messages reach these young women who are entering into feminism, many of them through these groups?

NT: Yes. In these groups, it is interesting to see that they are not always from the university, they are also generated, they are also created in a space that is not always the university. Between 2006 and 2014 we had a significant increase in the rates of violence, in cases of rape. You could argue that "maybe now people are reporting them more than before." In fact, the violence has not decreased, whether you report it or not, and it has now been several years, six years now since the law Maria da Penha, if I'm not wrong. Reporting it or not, these are lives, we have the reality that the violence against women reaches different classes, all the social classes. As well as the question of abortion, as well as the need for daycare centers, as well as the fact that we, women...This specific thing is like, when you look at it in perspective, and those who have the experience of motherhood know this, that all of this falls on women, and if a woman from a particular age group is compared with a man from the same age group, she will surely be earning less than the man, or much less, and if she is a black woman she will earn much less than other women,

who are not black. So we have some conditions that remain the same throughout time, are perpetuated, you know, a relationship with the media, a media that hates women, because the media that I am talking about is TV, sometimes radio... At the same time, women have a higher level of education, there was a nice revolution in this sense for Western women in the twentieth century. If there is a field in which we won, it was education. So we have a good level of education alongside urgent demands for [solutions to] problems that are sometimes passed down from the nineteenth century, [such as] the perpetuation of violence. Well, many things have also improved, even in the field of violence, I am not saying that it has not improved, but this role of the woman as the one who cares, who is a caretaker, that place of taking care of the family, we still need to question that.

And then we come to a new reality of more participation, where social networks have become a new meeting place. This represents great power, because you no longer need to be at the university to meet people who have the same ideas that you have, you can be a professional, you can be involved in different areas, and around a specific demand. And because of different experiences -- and we certainly don't lack bad experiences, you can feel outraged -- the existence of social [media] networks is good, because they are networks in which you don't have direct contact, allowing you to gradually approach your interests or the people who are working in these groups. So you don't participate in person, but you are already part of the discussion. I think that social networks had a fundamental role in this new creation of social movement.

Still, some traditional movements remain...remaining doesn't mean bad, and new doesn't mean good, but I see a big difference. Between the Brazilian Women's Articulation and the SlutWalk there is a big difference. In the beginning I was even feeling very enthusiastic about the SlutWalk, because I was able to connect with other young women, you know, all of us wanting to act, wanting to paint the next wall, wanting to take off our clothes, that was all so cool...A strong energy that you can find in the Brazilian Women's articulation, but there there's also another side, you have the thing of "stop, let's think about it, let's see what the consequences are." And then you have the younger women who are sometimes doing some things, and the most prepared/experienced ones start to think

about defense, even the defense in relation to lawyers, the negative possibilities. Lidi, for instance, who is not from the Articulation, but she is in contact with many who are from the Brazilian Women's Articulation. Then you also connect with each other, we have information about these networks, of the different groups, even the anarchist ones.

And so those groups that connect to each other through the internet are much more fluid, they are much more impulsive, they are, in general. they have many more younger girls, who have had little contact with feminism, and they react like that...And then they ask "ah, my boyfriend did this, is that machismo?" You have a side like that, a little...a channel of entry, you know? They are also seeing "ok, who are these feminists, what does it mean to be a feminist?" You have an initial place to experiment and to acknowledge yourself, to feel empowered; it is this process that we call empowerment. I think it's very cool, but on the flip side you have the the time of maturity...Things are decided faster. The way organizing happens. For instance, in that second Gay Parade, which would become a new Gay Parade, I was a little bit involved in the organization, too. I identify myself as, like, I am bi, but in practice I'm heterosexual, but this is in relation to how I enjoy and understand sexual and reproductive rights. It is an important demand. But I ended up being part of it also in order to connect feminist movements to that march. And then you have that, you have the objectives of different organizations, but you are also part of it. You organize it, but it is more like a carnival block. You know, you are part of it, if you are there, everybody is super important. You don't have a particular person associated with the memory of a specific organization or connection, you have a more fluid leadership. I think that's very cool, but the time for discussion, in which you debate the issues, is something that does not work well, it's missing. You know that evaluation, that thing of let's listen to other voices, let's do some research, that was good, there wasn't, a deeper discussion...Because it is also the timing of the network, you know. In that Gay Parade, for example, a black boy who was stealing was stopped by the police, and some people continued on in the parade. Some said that parade was beautiful, and then others said "listen, but what is going on here is very bourgeois, it's on the waterfront and all that." And you don't have time to discuss it more fully. I think that there wasn't even a space for criticism, or for those who were the target of criticism to respond as a collective. But this is what usually happens, the movements...

Ah, something important about the Brazilian Women's Articulation, that is worth mentioning, is that it is an articulation that sees itself as anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and feminist. And in this sense, even though you have...In fact, this identity is very strong, these three strong pillars, but still, no matter how much you have them, there will always be someone who says something like, "ah, you don't have any black woman here, you don't have any indigenous woman in the room," and then it will always be "ah, but this research here is only looking at self-employed women, you know, from urban centers, white, non-black, non-indigenous," which is a necessary critique, because social movements are like that, and the people are demanding to hear voices that are daily, historically silenced, and I think that...

RS: You just mentioned a gathering of feminist artists in which you participated last year, right?

NT: Yes.

RS: How was that meeting, who organized it? Are you still performing as an artist?

NT: The group that organized it was *Cfemea* (Feminist Center for Study and Consultation), and it was called REAL (Residência Artivista Libertária Feminista, "Artist" Libertarian Feminist Residence), the first feminist REAL. After the first REAL there was a second feminist REAL in Fortaleza. I went to the first one, which was in Brasilia. I did not participate in the second one in Fortaleza, which took place before the BRICS meeting. The meetings often happen during important moments, so it is a way for people to come together, to discuss and to take action afterwards, and because we do not have many resources available to raise money to bring women from other states.

I, by the end of the last year and during this year... OK, so I lived in Niterói during college. Before graduating I left Niterói and came to Rio because I was already working. I

started to work in Rio, I worked at the State Public Archive, at the National Library, at the *Revista de História*. I came here to Rio, I lived in some neighborhoods on the outskirts, and it was then that I wanted, I thought: "Ok, I want to be an artist, I want to be an artist." And I went to Santa Teresa. But real estate speculation last year closed almost all the studios. Those who didn't have their own space and were renting couldn't afford it. And I was working a lot with pottery, I even started with pottery before doing graffiti. I love pottery. But that constraint...because pottery is something that requires a studio. And the walls...what happened is, I started to work, well, I was already involved in political activism at that time, but that year was a year when I did a lot of work. I did research for an exhibition at the Rio Art Museum, which was "Do à Favela," and I am also now finishing a book about the iconography of Salvador in the National Library. So I ended up opting for that, because that is what pays my bills. But it is not just that, it is also a profession that I like. In fact I really like to work with images. And I can't do everything, I would love to, but I can't. And I am really missing academia, I would like to go back to it, so I am leaving production. Ah, this role of the artist is also about that, you have to market yourself, you have to make concessions to the market, you have to be kind of multiple. And I think that the role of the researcher fits me better, fits my personality better than work in which you have to market yourself, to make a portfolio, I don't know what, I don't know where.

RS: But from what you have told me, your relationship with art has also been very mixed with your relationship with feminism, was it also because of this that you were in these encounters of activist feminist women?

NT: Yes. Well, I started with pottery without any feminist proposals like that, but the place of feminist language and artistic language are actually very close. I was able to experiment a lot in the feminist movement, you know? I did not go to EBA (Escola de Belas Artes, School of Fine Arts) but through feminism we had performances in the streets. I think that also the SlutWalk, when I became part of the SlutWalk, it was a performance, too. I don't feel myself like...taking off my clothes and starting to sing, I have a different personality, another objective, another use of the body. It is even funny that in the SlutWalk, where I took off my clothes the most, there was someone there whom I was dating, someone I

really liked, and then every time I was near him I would put my clothes back on. When I didn't see him near me, then I would take my clothes off, I would speak into the megaphone and a friend said something to me like: "bitch, I am not understanding you" [laughs]. But there was this sensation that there, like, when I was there, it wasn't really me, I was an activist character that empowered me, that was making me feel like... [this character] was giving a breath of life for you to start, for you to realize that you have a voice to speak with and to sing, that people sing too, that then you can pass the megaphone to another person, and that others sing and you sing following them, it is cool, it is good that way.

But on the flip side, during these years I also left my academic studies in a way. I continued reading, studying, working with history, and in the Journal I had that place of being reading academic work, to be going back and again to the books in a different way. And in the exhibitions too. I am now doing another exhibition, this is going to be very cool about "Modern Women." And also at MAR (*Museu de Arte do Rio*, Rio de Janeiro Museum of Art), I am going to start that research in May. Timing is going to be tight, but it is going to be good. But that's the way it is, this is how I am right now: I am thirty-one years old, I loved all I did up to now, but I am also seeing my friends passing public competitive examinations to become history professors. I like that, I am very happy for them, but I am also asking myself: where is the profession that I chose, without blinking, you know? When I took my college entrance exams, when I was critical during my undergraduate years, so much that I left that place; some friends and I call [the people there] "historians by blood." But at the same time, I love it. I've been thinking, ok, I need to grab that *Luz Del Fuego* thing, I need to work with that. And some other times I say, all right, I already did so much work and research on images of Rio de Janeiro, why not put all of that together and write a little bit as well? It's like playing in a new way.

RS: As we are getting closer to our ending, I would like to ask you: How do you contextualize your trajectory as an activist within feminisms at a national level, but also at a global level?

NT: Well, I think that you have a little bit of that thing that I already talked about, we have a strong demand, feminism is still a... We don't have feminism, we have feminisms. It is hard to place myself in this analysis this way. I joined a movement at the time that the possibilities for organizing energetic collectives, was facilitated by the tools of internet, of new spaces, but the fact of me also being a feminist, that I already knew I was a feminist, to know that identity, you know, the possibilities of feminist identities, those which I profess, which was something more radical... I perform activism that I consider more anarchist, because I am not attached to any political party, and I don't have this intention of, you know, being a leader or a professional, I am not saying that is something bad, only that it is not... So, (I like) the idea of multiple leaderships. It is an act, I see it as an act of citizenship, my connection in relation to feminism and to the world, I have... We receive some information sometimes, right?

I now work for feminism like, let's say, what type of contribution am I currently offering? I am part of communications, of the communications area in the Articulation. So, it is like that: we meet, and whoever feels like disseminating the message is going to work around that, internally and externally. The Articulation in Rio is a little bit inactive right now, because you also have an age issue. Also within the Articulation, I discuss or go from time to time to meetings that talk about sexual and reproductive rights, to find out what's going on, what it is doing, who is going to take part in actions at the Congress. However, I don't take part in actions in the Congress, at the National Congress, I stay very much at a local level and sometimes also call and invite people to these street movements, things that more and more this year I will have to do less of. This year I am going to do less because [laughs]... I am going to do less. But that's the way it is, doing less is not a problem, because other people will step in. For instance, Lidi was saying like ... I think that during these years what's possible for me, is a network to connect through communication, she was saying "all right, I want someone, I think the Baixada is important, the movement should take place in the Baixada." I am not a resident of the Baixada, but it doesn't mean that I do not have a relationship with them, a sisterhood. However, it is important that leadership is local, that the practice is local, and all of that. So, sometimes I help with that or I even go to some of the events, but I also take the perspective of greater self-care. It wasn't only feminism, but I

gained a lot of weight with the social movement. And I have been thinking, we have a relationship with the...even talking to a friend, we are thinking about the future of the people we care about, of the people who work with us, and, in a closer space, of our family. It is amazing because many activists have several health problems, including cancer, etc., we deal with things that are very heavy, it always reaches us, it will reach us, news travels fast. And sometimes, you have to react in a certain way and to connect people very quickly. That reality, why these activists have so many health problems and sometimes even financial difficulties is an important issue. And then there is a person, who is in Rio now, she is from Serbia, she even wrote a book, "What's the use of revolutions if we cannot dance?," and it is a little bit like that, you know, about carrying too much, about dealing with things that are very heavy...It is important, I think, this circularity of practices so people can regenerate, too, can deal with the heavy stuff but also with the sunrise, with the sunset and this is how you take care of yourself. There is a big debate currently going on about self-care in the feminist movements, and that, in fact, is self-care against the system, against that...It is not just against the machismo, but against a bigger system than machismo.

RS: Would you like to add anything else?

NT: I don't think so, I think that I talked a lot.

RS: So that's it, we will end up here I would like to thank you, Nataraj.

NT: Thanks also for the invitation.

RS: It was great too, thank you.

¹ The plaza in front of the Rio de Janeiro city council building.

² The political "opening" beginning in 1974, which led to the end of the military regime of 1964-1985