

# FILMES DE PLÁSTICO'S PLURAL REALISM

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**Filmes de Plástico**, the production company founded by André Novais Oliveira, Gabriel Martins, Maurílio Martins, and producer Thiago Macêdo Correia, has defined a new “plural” realism outside the margins of the Rio/Sao Paulo axis.<sup>1</sup> Filming with locals and actors in their place of origin, Contagem, a metropolitan area surrounding Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais, foregrounding the Mineiro accent (with its connotations of hick naivete) in idiosyncratic idiolects and thoughtful dialogue, the filmmakers have turned the intimately recognized streets and rolling vistas into occasions for contemplative epiphanies grounded in the local dreams and dramas that feed their cinematic engagement.

The Filmes de Plástico (FP) group has declared an intention of making “a *cinemão* [a popular cinema assertive in its technique and language] at their very doorsteps.”<sup>2</sup> To do so, it has strayed from the naturalist record usually expected from films about the periphery, turning instead to self-reflexive, allegorical, and poetic means. The plastic black dolphin with cartoon-like eyes in the group’s logo becomes a conspicuous prop in an improvised beach scene in Gabriel Martins’s first short, *Filme de sábado* (*A Weekend Film*, 2009). Plastic toys associated with cheap materials and imaginative play index the very plasticity embraced by the FP directors, who freely mobilize the cheesiest and most sophisticated effects to expand their realities.<sup>3</sup> A hip-hop remix sensibility and an eclectic love for cinema (from Spike Lee to Abbas Kiarostami to James Gray) manage to coexist with their commitment to local realities and the bodies that people their imaginaries.<sup>4</sup> Theirs is a periphery cinema made from within; much like the films of the American cinema’s Charles Burnett and the Brazilian filmmakers Carlos Reichenbach, Adirley Queirós, and Afonso Uchôa, its concrete texture and universal reach emerge from an assured narrative poesis.<sup>5</sup>

Their work’s beauty matches the desolate, makeshift, and contingent realities that are filmed with a fully realized dramatic and formal logic. An emphatic “How ugly is this neighborhood”—voiced whenever a character passes in front of a smelly lagoon, exits a cramped interior for a moment of privacy, or hangs out in dimly lit streets—affirms the characters’ need to express a sensibility of resistance in the face of consistent precarity and systemic neglect. This refrain also testifies to the thick social and historical density visually embedded in their location choices and frame composition.

In *Temporada* (*Long Way Home*, André Novais Oliveira, 2018), Juliana (Grace Passô), the protagonist, moves into a nondescript space in back of another house—an architectural configuration typical of the early development of the Amazonas neighborhood. In that era, someone would buy a plot of land but, anticipating financial difficulty, would reserve the small house on the courtyard in back to rent.<sup>6</sup> Marcos’s (Leo Pyrata) home in *No coração do mundo* (*In the Heart of the World*, Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins, 2019) barely contains his presence. Marcos snacks on the doorstep while his mother inside fills bottles with colored homemade products. The scene starts with a girl with a dog mask (a direct homage to Charles Burnett’s *Killer of Sheep*, 1978) playing with a turtle in a cramped common area; the girl recedes into her house; then she and the turtle return. His mother berates him for being a good-for-nothing—“can’t even feed the turtle”—while the girl, framed by the window and amplifying the lack of privacy in these close quarters, catches Marcos’s eye after the embarrassing confrontation. In this shot, with its series of internal frames, nothing holds the center of attention: the doorway, the Jesus image, a bad painting on the wall, the flickering TV image to the side—all work in tandem to destabilize Marcos’s body as, tightly framed and uneasy in the space, he weakly rebuts his mother.

*Temporada* and *In the Heart of the World* (ITHW) de-dramatize plot through their long, real-time dialogue and a textured recovery of neglected corners and people at the margins, placing them firmly within a realist tradition, but with a distinctive pace and mode defining each of



Neglected corners and people at the margins, in *Temporada*.

these multicharacter narratives' ambitious social reach. From the episodic, cumulative development of delicate conversations across *Temporada* to *ITHW*'s surprising shifts between banal moments and action-genre tropes, what is most striking is how the films' precise tempo and choral punctuation lend collective transcendence to individual drama.

The films' realist moves and countermoves, the manner in which they construe their characters' shared plurality, and their imbrication in a community are strikingly original and assured. In *Temporada* and *In the Heart of the World*, choral impulses pulse through two forms used to dramatize and expand their social worlds: the portrait and the vista, understood literally but also as figures for dramatic, performative, and epic inflection.<sup>7</sup>

The inclusion of referential material (photos, family members, historical references) is an example of the portrait's expansive propensity. As a form of characterization, the reiteration across a film's narrative of a person's singular traits grants performative density as well as diachronic depth to individuals, whether they are fictive characters or actual persons. By converting personal matter into cinematic material, photos and family members render the fictional register of the films ambiguous, creating a correspondence between existing individuals and major and minor fictional characters that stretches the film's universe

from within. An audience may not know, for instance, that Dona Zezé in *Temporada* and *Ela volta na quinta* (*She Comes Back on Thursday*, André Novais Oliveira, 2014) is actually Novais's mother, or that the character of Dona Fia, Marcos's mother in *ITHW*, was inspired by Maurílio Martins's neighbor in whose house they filmed and with whom the actress even workshopped her portrayal. But this inscription of real people has an impact on script and performance that informs the films' social ethos and affect through its extra- and intradiegetic equivalences.

Besides the performative extension of an intimate sphere into a social one, FP represents a common social universe through its dramatic and visual strategies: sequences of talks and echoing dramas grant plural resonance to individual portrayals, while vistas such as the shared referential horizon of Minas's hilly topology provide a spatial correlation for gaining perspective on a social whole. Bracketed by a unifying score or by visual montage, a series of vignettes or portraits can, like an all-encompassing vista, enunciate the narratives' collective and epic dimensions.

### ***Temporada's* Tentative Tempo**

*Temporada*, titled abroad as *Long Way Home*, could be translated more appropriately as *For a Time* to convey the

temporal indeterminacy of the protagonist's journey and to capture the delicate rhythm of Juliana's transition into a new job as an agent for the prevention and control of dengue in Contagem. Her unanswered calls to the husband who has stayed behind, and a brief visit to her prior home and to her father at night, quietly undo her final ties to her native Itaúna as, without drama, she furnishes her new place, makes new friends, and has sex with a new man.

Guided by Juliana (Grace Passô), the film paints a group portrait. Tactful one-to-one talks gradually trace common sentiments, whether they occur while admiring the ugliness of a construction site or sitting on a bench against a backdrop of sprawling urban vistas. These conversations shape the film into a concert of pauses, defining both its tempo and the protagonist's natural reticence. It is only bit by bit and with minimal affect that Juliana tells her cousin, over a glass of cachaça on a kitchen table, about losing her child in an accident during her pregnancy.

Juliana's empathetic stance invites singular revelations about each character's stress: Russão's plan to open a barbershop (with no experience at cutting hair) to augment his pay; Helio, the oldest employee at the dengue control center, weighed down by being stuck in such a low-paying job; and the reactions of relief when the group is notified their paychecks have finally been deposited. The alternation between the said and the unsaid—a genius combination of Passô's acting and Novais's dialogue—indicates Juliana's growing confidence in her new life. The process concludes in an outing by a waterfall where she recounts to one of her female colleagues that she'd stopped talking for three years as a child, restarting only in order to scream a warning of a fire in her neighbor's kitchen. Juliana's deep relationship to silence is introduced with no psychological explanation, almost casually. A simple scene of Juliana alone and pensive by a rock at the start of this confession transforms her into a cypher of existential depth, potentially coloring all prior exchanges (and characters).

If conversations are one way to flesh out a common universe, the job of performing inspections for dengue provides another pretext to cross into private spaces that range from hazardous and unattended junk to interiors full of personal history. In one of the visits, Dona Zezé (Novais's mother) welcomes Juliana with *cafézinho*, while the camera scans her family photos (which are also the director's). Through their indexical and physiognomic properties, portraits cue existences beyond the scene. More than an effect of the real, they point to the unique significance of familiarity as a catalyst for FP's realism.



Family photos, in *Temporada*.

This notion of inclusivity and self-recognition is implicit when, in a discussion on the Black presence in FP films, Maurílio Martins mentions that, since the filmmakers “coexist with these bodies that are black or fat, it was natural they should enter the films. . . . [They] thought of Grace Passô because she is Grace Passô, not because she is Black. There is no fetishism or empty discourse.”<sup>8</sup> Passô is an Afro-Brazilian playwright, filmmaker, and actor in FP features. She has also personally claimed the marginal bodies featured in FP's films as being like “the ones from my childhood, that live in my dreams. . . . I recognize the people . . . physical traits . . . my nephew, my desire for the future and my ancestry.”<sup>9</sup> *Temporada*—like Novais's first feature, *Ela volta na quinta*, also featuring his family—affirms the potency and performative valence of “familiarity” as an internal mechanism of social expansion.<sup>10</sup> As Fábio Andrade has noted, not only does Novais's mother become part of his film world, but Passô, in turn, by acting in the film, becomes family.<sup>11</sup> The reciprocal, affective and aesthetic contamination that is operative between family and actors, including the jumbled temporality of ages in the synchronic display of photos, extends to a dialogue in which Dona Zezé asks news of the “young men of dengue,” one of them a friend of her son Novais (who worked at the same control center in 2007).

In another inspection, Juliana contemplates the view from above after climbing to check for stagnant water on a dwelling's roof. Her conversation with the owner, juxtaposed with distinct vistas, generates a mini-essay on the neighborhood in a montage that progresses from medium shots of surrounding streets and passers-by to distanced takes of urban development. Amid his description of the area's drastic changes, the man calls out, “Look, it's Vanderley, my brother-in-law. Hey, Vandinho! . . . Part of the people here came from the Vila dos Marmiteiros, where the expressway is now, you know. My father said they





A vista of the hills of Belo Horizonte, in *In The Heart of the World*.

were thrown out by force, city hall expelled everyone, carrying all their stuff on their backs.”

Significantly, this mention of traumatic displacement is accompanied by pans across ever more haphazardly crammed urban vistas in a signal to remember the Vila dos Marmiteiros, a community close to Belo Horizonte well known for its historical role in fighting against the forced removal of periphery workers in the 1950s, as well as for initiating the organization of a broader movement of favelas.<sup>12</sup> André Novais Oliveira’s skillful linkage of the sighting of Vandinho, the building owner’s almost reachable relative who passes by, to an invisible and anonymous mass, spread across a historically and politically charged space and time, fluidly articulates the ground of Juliana’s Contagem. Weaving pockets of deeply personalized experience with a social geography visited up close—in its junk, smells, and memories, as well as the wall of photos—*Temporada* posits Juliana as the conduit for its densely layered world.

### The Epic Beat in the Heart of the World

In FP’s works, portraits and vistas are traversed by both personal and aesthetic vectors. A recurring vista from a hill in *ITHW* literally encompasses the worlds of the two directors, Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins, who live in the Milanês and Laguna neighborhoods, respectively. It

is not irrelevant then that the subjective shot of Marcos, the protagonist, looking onto distant neighborhood lights bridges the dramatic and documentary elements of Contagem in the film’s prologue.

The film opens on a provincial square in Laguna with a public-radio announcement of Marcos’s birthday, a gift from his girlfriend, Ana (Kelly Crifer.) They kiss, a shot is heard, and a cut reveals that Marquinhos, as he is known, is behind the killing. The dead body (Gabriel Martins), colored by flashing police lights, lies on the ground as his older mother stands by, consoled by a man.

After this sleek teaser Marcos contemplates the sprawling district view of Laguna at night. An epic Western score tinges this scene with an existential melancholic quality. A scene of motorbikes popping wheelies in the empty highway at night drives the film into yet another register, with a choreographed montage beating to a trap refrain: “Welcome to Texas, BH is Texas, Contagem is—the motherfucking Texas... power dispute... favela... funeral... funk pagoda...”<sup>13</sup> The filmmakers show staged scenes of teens dancing and posed portraits in energetic cuts that flash by in slow motion and in still shots: a smiling garbage man hanging from a truck, a cart pulled by horses amid this village-like city, a kid with a Spider-Man mask near a Brazilian flag. This gallery of common people who never become characters in the film instead

comprises a choral formation: detached from the film's narrative, this performative credit sequence roots and expands the drama socially, as do many others.<sup>14</sup>

Flirting with multiple genres, *ITHW* is centered on a few characters living in economic precarity, barely getting by with underpaid jobs or small-scale, illegal schemes. These characters include Marquinhos, a do-nothing drifter; Ana, his fiancé, who works as a *trocadora* (making change as a ticket seller on the bus) and cares for her disabled father; and Selma (Passô), a friend of Marquinhos who invites him to partner on a side business taking school photos—and to help in a burglary. Performed in the dark with flashlights, this burglary imprints the film with stylish suspense but confirms, when botched, the pervasive sense of failure and weariness in Contagem.

A host of other related characters recur sporadically: Rose (Bárbara Colen) and her lover, Miro (Robert Frank, one of the film's composers), the brother of Beto (Renato Novaes, Novais's brother), the clueless killer in the film's opening; Dona Sônia (Rute Jeremias), who shoots her son's killer in a brilliantly executed scene; Brenda, Marquinhos's old friend and weed dealer (played by the famous MC Carol from Niterói); and Dona Fia (Glaucia Vandeveld), Marquinhos's mother, peddling homemade products from door to door. These characters are woven into a communal microcosm of muted violence, birthday parties, evangelical chants, and women's conversations.

*In the Heart of the World* has a "dysrhythmia" that manifests itself in surprising shifts in register and address, a constant rebalancing of minor and major events, of intimate or suspenseful drama and choral moments.<sup>15</sup> The burglary plotted by Selma may be momentarily forgotten as time stops for her to catch up with her friend Rose; another decisive conversation about the burglary plan is delayed when, instead of following Marquinhos and Ana to the terrace, the camera stops at the courtyard to film and listen to an evangelical chant sung by Dona Fia, Dona Sônia, and their neighbors, gathered for their weekly church cell meeting.<sup>16</sup> The refrain bellowed by a fervent Dona Fia with her palms raised and the portrait of Dona Sônia's murdered son on her T-shirt amplify the scene's confrontational stance.

Other choral clusters radiate out from the highly constructed photo session at the film's heart. Selma is heard midconversation over a landscape that is soon revealed as an artificial backdrop for the middle-school photos she and Marquinhos have contracted to do. She tells him that she almost had to abort her baby and mentions that Contagem had once been her "heart of the world." As they confer

about image quality, a pan left shows Selma's face framed by the control monitor. With his typical drawl, Marquinhos asks her "about this thing, the heart of the world." From the screen within the screen, Selma gradually taps into her feeling: "It is the next place, better, much better, the one where our desire leads. . . . Here is no longer that." The door opens, and uniformed children start filing in.

Throughout these discrete reframings—from the trompe l'oeil landscape to Selma's personal revelation on a reframed monitor—the scene's dramatic design is punctured by poignant guitar notes. Selma's speech encapsulates the deflated aspirations of mobility that are disseminated across all the halting talks and plans between lovers and friends. The sweep of her speech on the need to move on is confirmed first by a substitution: a schoolgirl takes Selma's place at the desk and sits posing for the photo, her pose bleeding into the next scene—a four-shot sequence featuring some of the film's main women characters: Brenda, obese, slowly ambles up the street with her ailing grandmother in tow, center screen; Dona Fia sells her cleaning products; Dona Sônia emerges up another street holding a box; and Ana leaves the bus depot.

This sequence of little more than a minute is the first to have so many different characters since the Contagem portrait gallery in the opening credits. Although this montage relays the tenor of everyday life in the district, it is structurally and formally discrete. Its frontality, symmetry, and equality of shot length qualify it rather as a choral confrontation.

But what do these choral punctuations add to a film that so expertly navigates a suspenseful action plot involving Ana, Marcos, and Selma's burglary? The flashing poses of the credits, the evangelical chant that stops the camera in its tracks, and the series of women all share a particular manner of flatly confronting the camera. It is indeed this facial emphasis of the images that personifies them further regardless of whether they are recognized as fictional characters or as actual people; when looked at long enough, a figure claims its singularity, powerfully returning the gaze.

Momentarily detached from the plot, the collectives manifested through these portraits claim a discrete existence made possible by the expansive realism of *ITHW* and Filmes de Plástico's body of work. Only in film, and only through the generous diversity of Maurílio Martins, Gabriel Martins, and Andre Novais de Oliveira's aesthetics, can these bodies project at once their individual singularity and their shared plurality.





Dona Fia (Gláucia Vandeveld) sells her cleaning products in *In the Heart of the World*.

Plural realism refers both to Filmes de Plástico's broad expressive range and the group's repeated burrowing within Contagem's imaginary. Such traditional strategies of classical realism as casting local anonymous figures and "chorality," the figuration of groups or common voices identified in neorealist cinema, gain singular inflection as *Temporada* and *ITHW* represent a shared world that feels infinitely expandable.<sup>17</sup> Much as in neorealist cinema, the very nature of their amplification of the common varies aesthetically. The filmmakers, well aware that their representation of new bodies from the periphery grants their cinema an instant aura of resistance, have cautioned that their cinema's oppositional value depends on the fictional charge of their characters.<sup>18</sup>

Casting is central to this fictional charge, and FP has actively sought modes of embodiment that expand the very notion of a common social world. In that sense, choosing women for roles initially meant for male actors in *ITHW* was as consequential as the performers' public personae. MC Carol of Niterói is a black rap star from the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, an activist who ran for state congress and who was encouraged to enter politics by Marielle Franco, the black and queer Rio congresswoman who was assassinated by fascist militias in 2018. She plays Brenda, a character who imparts to Marcos her hard-won wisdom in juvenile prison in between joints, reminiscing about their neighborhood. She is one of the women who, at the end of the film, leave Marcos literally stuck at a crossroads, in a scene that condenses the film's themes of mobility and stagnation. Grace Passô (who plays Juliana and Selma) is a playwright and filmmaker who has plumbed the

concrete materiality of her Black presence through powerful monologues and a mise-en-scène informed by a claustrophobic theatricality in *Vaga carne* (*Dazed Flesh*, codirected with Ricardo Alves Jr., 2019) and *República* (2020).

The interchange between world and film that is activated by the presence of these public personae is also operative through the constant casting of anonymous family relations. The familiarity that is one of FP's tactics of social expansion is at work in many of Novais's films. In *She Returns on Thursday*, a horizontal close-up of Dona Zezé momentarily pierces the screen once she tenderly tells her son (the director and actor) to not give up on his artist's dreams. The meld of document and fiction—a hallmark of modern cinema since neorealism and François Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups* (*The 400 Blows*, 1959)—continues to power personal inscription in cinema, leading to an intricate understanding of the porosity of cinema's realities.

Another direct address in *ITHW* causes the status of Passô's character to waver momentarily when, exasperated at Marcos's clueless suggestion that Selma drive to the burglary, she exclaims: "Are you stupid? I'm Black, damn it! In which world do you live?"<sup>19</sup> The performative register of the scene illuminates the impact of being Black within and outside the film's world. Selma's claim of her difference, directed at the camera, is, however, importantly reabsorbed into the narrative when Selma's line of sight encompasses, within the shot, Marcos—her fictional addressee. This turn suggests that the film's force does not rest on a single rhetorical or narrative strategy but on the

risks taken when one veers off and ambitiously claims, as Filmes de Plástico insists on doing, a plural cinema.

These performative instances exemplify an internal expansion of the film's world, but the makers' choral precision is also manifested in the singular manner in which each film sums up its trajectories across many characters. *ITHW* multiplies its exit scenes, distributing them among Selma, Ana, Brenda, and Marcos's mother in a sort of dissipated feminist salvo. *Temporada* projects a shared disenchantment instead, via a centripetal gesture by an eerily unmotivated camera. Its gaze leads the audience through an empty living room, past a TV broadcasting new efforts to combat dengue, and out into the street as a clarinet score, a minimal fumigation crew, and a motorcycle fill the streets with smoke and an uneasy sense of closure.

At stake in these films' traversal of their characters' realities is a sense of potentiality.

Attentive to the multiple dimensions of lives found in the corners of Contagem, Filmes de Plástico makes each one of its stories count.<sup>20</sup>

## Notes

1. See FP's shorts and feature trailers at [www.filmesdeplastico.com.br](http://www.filmesdeplastico.com.br). The site includes their impressive list of festivals and prizes. The filmmakers often mention that they are the beneficiaries of Presidents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva ("Lula") and Dilma Rousseff's cultural policies—a decentralization of production resulting in multiple new production nuclei in, for example, Ceará, Bahia, and Pernambuco. Kleber Mendonça Filho, from Pernambuco, points out that, with the new Bolsonaro regime, "important decisions around Brazilian cinema are no longer democratic . . . and again are concentrated in Rio and São Paulo." Fábio Andrade, "An Interview with Kleber Mendonça Filho and Juliano Dornelles," March 5, 2020, <https://wp.nyu.edu/fabioandrade/2020/03/05/an-interview-with-kleber-mendonca-filho-and-juliano-dornelles/>.
2. The FP group has repeated this statement in numerous televised interviews.
3. For an enlightening reading of this cinema's transformational spirit, see Juliano Gomes's "Mundo Incrível Remix, de Gabriel Martins (Brasil, 2014): Além é o que se vê," *Cinética*, February 14, 2014, <http://revistacinetica.com.br/home/mundo-incrivel-remix-de-gabriel-martins-brasil-2014/>.
4. The directors are very particular about naming and filming in their distinct Contagem neighborhoods: Milanês (Gabriel Martins), Laguna (Maurílio Martins), and Amazonas (André Novais Oliveira). Thiago Macêdo Correia is from the interior of Minas Gerais. The directors cite Elia Suleiman, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, John Cassavetes, and Brian de Palma as influences.
5. Carlos Reichenbach was a key director in Brazilian cinema focusing on characters from the periphery with a mix of genres and a realism similar to Filmes de Plástico's work. After watching *Contagem*, an early FP short, Reichenbach wrote a blog titled *Let There Be Light in Contagem*, establishing the group's reputation among cinephiles. *Vizinhança do tigre* (*The Hidden Tiger*, 2014), by Affonso Uchoa (who directed *Araby* [2017] with João Dumans), is a striking film about yet another area in Contagem. Adirley Queirós, the brilliant maker of *Branco sai preto fica* (*White Out, Black In*, 2015) and *Once There Was Brasília* (2016), focuses on a radical rethinking of the history of exclusions in Ceilândia, at the periphery of Brasília.
6. André Novais Oliveira mentions his interest in registering the architectural history of the periphery in an interview; see Claire Allouche, "André Novais Oliveira: De saison," *Débordements*, November 20, 2019, <http://debordements.fr/Andre-Novais-Oliveira>.
7. Portraits and vistas are primarily discussed in art-history contexts. My interest here has to do with narrative and dramatic strategies that can be transferred to cinema, including questions of indexicality and referentiality.
8. In an interview for Rede Minas's *Agenda* on August 2, 2019, Gabriel Martins, Maurílio Martins, and Grace Passô talked about Filmes de Plástico. See "Filmes de Plástico completa 10 anos com 'No coração do mundo,'" [www.youtube.com/watch?v=f\\_mzrkW3ZAg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_mzrkW3ZAg).
9. Passô, interview for *Agenda*.
10. A great example is Novais's reference to filming his mother packing: "In *Backyard* [*Quintal* (2015)] there's a scene where my mom is putting her stuff in her bag, before going to the gym. In; *She Comes Back on Thursday*, she appears packing to travel to Aparecida do Norte [a pilgrimage destination for Catholics in Brazil]. It's the same framing. And the thing is that when I think of a shot of my mom packing in her [small] room, I can't imagine a different shot. So I shoot the same shot one more time." Fábio Andrade, "An Interview with André Novais Oliveira," February 10, 2020, <https://wp.nyu.edu/fabioandrade/2020/02/10/an-interview-with-andre-novais-oliveira/>.
11. Andrade, interview with Novais Oliveira.
12. The term *marmiteiros* refers to workers who bring their lunch boxes (*marmitas*) to work with them. According to Samuel Silva Rodrigues de Oliveira's study on the favela movement from the late 1940s to Brazil's coup d'état in 1964, "In 1948 the dwellers of Vila dos Marmiteiros mobilized to fight the eviction action initiated by the Empresa Mineira de Terrenos and other private entities. The defense of land occupation continued until 1957 when the county bought the disputed land." Samuel Silva Rodrigues de Oliveira, "O movimento de favelas de Belo Horizonte e o Departamento de Habitações e Bairros Populares (1959–1964)," *Revista Mundos do Trabalho* 4, no. 7 (January–June 2012): 100–120.
13. Trap is a slower rap from the Texas rap scene, which is less well known than the New York or LA scenes, just as the music scenes in Belo Horizonte (BH) and Contagem

compare with those in São Paulo and Rio. Maurílio Martins has revealed that he and Gabriel have made their films in such a way that the colors of Contagem, a region between Laguna and Milanês, match those in a Western. MC Papo's "Texas" lyrics reinforce the idea of Texas as an imaginary. That's why they opted for a soundtrack with elements taken from Sergio Leone's composer Ennio Morricone, "this epic thing... a 1980s high-tech Western soundtrack." Alessandra Alves, interview with Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins, "No coração do mundo: Periferia universal," *Cinema em Cena*, <https://cinemaemcena.com.br/coluna/ler/2456/no-coracao-do-mundo-periferia-universal>.

14. For this love letter to Contagem, the directors filmed on their own, searching for a completely different texture and tone. See Allouche, "André Novais Oliveira."
15. Vitor Guimarães characterizes the film's unpredictable registers as a dysrhythmia, registering the film's emotionality but also its passionate embrace of multiple genres. See Vitor Guimarães, "Coração no olho," *Cinética*, August 28, 2019, <http://revistacinetica.com.br/nova/coracao-no-olho/>. Luiz Soares Júnior reads the film as a radical expression of irreconciliation pointing to the fact that the film's expressions of authenticity are constantly reframed, mediated, and negated in order to retain its focus on precarity, insoluble debt, and desolation. See Luiz Soares Júnior, "O fundo do coração e outras superfícies," *Cinética*, December 2, 2019, <http://revistacinetica.com.br/nova/ncdm-lsjr/>.

16. *Células* (cells) are small evangelical church groups composed of family and friends who gather weekly at someone's house to pray, discuss issues, and sing in praise of Jesus.
17. For an enlightening discussion of the plural propensity of neorealist cinema, see Elizabeth Alsop, "The Imaginary Crowd: Neorealism and the Uses of *Coralita*," *Velvet Light Trap* 74 (Fall 2014): 27–42.
18. The directors have all mentioned the tendency to see their work, especially the films with family members, as documentary. Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins also underline, in an interview, the burden of resistance that is operative, in that "these people are [the ones] facing the world and Brazil, and for a long time already." See Bruno Carmelo with Maria Clara Guedes, "No Coração do Mundo: Diretores e Grace Passô falam sobre o faroeste 'maximalista' que mostra outro lado do Brasil," *AdoroCinema*, August 2, 2019, [www.adorocinema.com/noticias/filmes/noticia-149812/](http://www.adorocinema.com/noticias/filmes/noticia-149812/).
19. At this point, "Negro Drama," by the hip-hop group Racionais MC's, from the periphery of São Paulo, plays on the soundtrack.
20. On the question of singularity, Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins question what stories are behind a headline such as the one they took for the title of their short *Dona Sônia pediu uma arma para seu vizinho Alcides* ([Dona Sônia Borrowed a Gun from Her Neighbor Alcides], 2011). Alves, interview with Gabriel Martins and Maurílio Martins.